At Kent State University, celebrating and leveraging human differences strengthens our community and campuses. Our students and faculty, from all parts of the world, learn and grow in a rich environment where cultures and ideas flourish.

For more information, visit www.kent.edu/diversity.
UHURU
Fall 2008

MISSION
UHURU is designed as a forum of exchange concerning the African and African-American experience. The views expressed herein are those solely of the respective authors, and not necessarily those of UHURU, the Department of Pan-African Studies, or the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. Portions of material herein may be copied or quoted without further permission with the understanding that appropriate citation of the source be included in such copying.

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT
EVAN BAILEY - PRODUCTION SPECIALIST
TAMI BONGIORNI - ADVERTISING MANAGER
LIA IRIZARRY - AD DESIGNER
ALEXANDRA ROSS - SALES REPRESENTATIVE
SANDEEP PATEL - SALES REPRESENTATIVE

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Michael Beaven
Tyler McIntosh
Heather Scarlett
Matthew Lofton

CONTACT US
331 Franklin Hall
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242
Phone: 330.672.2586
Fax: 330.672.4880

COVER
PHOTO BY DANIEL R. DOHERTY
DESIGN BY NICHOLE FRYE
CONCEPT BY MARCHAE GRAIR
Photography by Danny Doherty

From Left: Deanna Stevens, Marchae Grair

Whether you voted for him or not, whether you love him or hate him, you cannot deny the impact Barack Obama has had on this country. I can’t think of anyone else in the modern political realm that has generated as much buzz as he has — good or bad. For the first time in American history, the leader of the United States is not a white male.

And currently, there is no one who better represents our theme of Culture Shock.

Obama inspired the theme of this issue, so in turn, we dedicated an entire section to examine what made the President-elect’s candidacy so memorable. From Obama Mamas who took voters to the polls in the “Yes We Van”, to safety issues that continued to escalate as the campaign continued, to black members of the Republican Party who voiced an unique opinion, we wanted to show exactly how much this year’s political climate affected everyone.

However, when it comes to Culture Shock, the focus isn’t on Obama personally, rather what he represents. When he first came on the scene as a major contender to the presidency, he was accused of not being black enough, something that is not uncommon in the African-American race. What exactly does it mean to be black enough?

We took a look at this issue of “acting white”, so to speak, in our Carlton Complex piece.

So, Obama was accused of “acting white”. Considering the fact President-elect Obama is multiracial, that isn’t really an issue. Since he understands what it is like to be considered a black man and he knows what it’s like to be raised by a white family, he can relate to more people than any other politician on the national stage, black or white.

It’s that type of understanding that this issue will channel. Yes, this magazine is meant to focus on black culture. However, we wouldn’t be doing our job if we didn’t demonstrate how some aspects of black culture have morphed into American culture as a whole. We wouldn’t be doing our job if we didn’t critique how this interweaving of cultures has created a double standard.

A black person isn’t “acting” any sort of way if he or she doesn’t dress in the stereotypical hip-hop clothing. A black person isn’t “acting” a certain way if he or she likes listening to something other than the stereotypical rap or R&B. And most importantly, a black person isn’t “acting” a certain way if he or she follows a path that isn’t usually taken by others in his or her race.

When it comes to the idea of Culture Shock, it isn’t easy. People get scared when they think about losing all of those clear-cut definitions of race, gender, spirituality, etc. But, as this issue points out, it’s fine to be proud of your black culture while embracing aspects of others. Just like it is OK for other cultures to embrace aspects of ours. It’s that spirit of diversity that this country is all about. Whether it is music, relationships or self-acceptance, this issue has something that every person on this campus can relate to, no matter what culture.

— Deanna Stevens
One cannot understand the cover of this issue without a brief lesson in American history.

It was 1968, and civil disobedience was more than just a phrase.

The '68 Olympics, held in Mexico City, honored Americans Tommie Smith and John Carlos for their gold and bronze performances in the 200-meter dash. As the young men stood on the podium, they dropped their heads and raised their fists to protest the unjust treatment African Americans experienced before and during the Civil Rights Movement.

The young black men were suspended from the national team and went home to death threats and disdain from those who saw the black power symbol as a divisive statement.

Few know that the other Olympian on the podium, Australian medalist, Peter Norman, also took part in the protest. He wore a patch on his clothing bearing the letters OPHR, which stood for Olympic Project for Human Rights. The group initiated the protest and asked Olympians such as Smith and Carlos to join them.

Norman’s willingness to protest for a battle thousands of miles from his home is something few remember but teaches a lesson we shouldn’t forget.

Norman, like many others, realized that the empowerment of any people, eventually leads to the empowerment of us all.

We decided to pay homage to this historic moment at the '68 Olympics by using people of different races because the meaning of black power has evolved to encompass more than the African American community.

What does this have to do with Kent State in 2008?

Many of us celebrate Kent State’s diversity without recognizing how segmented that diversity really is.

Students who have different colors, religions, backgrounds, and sexual orientations walk around this campus every day.

We seek solidarity from those who are like us when we could gain so much from those who are not.

A white man, black girl, and an Indian man raising the black power sign together is our way of taking the fear out of a sacred symbol. A quest for equality by any group is a promotion of all humanity.

A flag is the perfect backdrop for our cover because black power is American power. Hispanic-American power is American power. Chinese-American power is American power.

The improvement of treatment for one group does not lead to the detriment of another. It is when we find this reality that we can all truly be free.

— Marchae Grair
Executive shock
Barack Obama's grassroots presidential campaign takes hold in Kent.

Sexuality shock
Living a homosexual lifestyle is difficult in a judgmental society.

Campus shock
How the transition from high school to college is affecting Kent State freshmen.

Global shock
One student shares his experience during a mission trip to Africa.

Audio shock
Underground artists begin to make their way to the top of the mainstream attention.

Social shock
Professor Angela Neal-Barnett searches for what it means to be “black enough.”

Reality shock
BUS sits down with UHURU to set some misconceptions straight.

Vocal shock
Kent State Gospel Choir embraces its diverse make-up.

Heavy weight shock
Wrestler Jermaine Porter makes his way to the top, one pin at a time.

Relationship shock
For one couple, race isn’t as important as love.
President Lester A. Lefton and
The President's Office Staff would like to say...

"CONGRATULATIONS
to all students
involved in producing print and electronic media.

Your CREATIVITY,
INTEGRITY
and inclusiveness make us proud."

Kent State Student Media=Excellence in Action
Going off to college is a big step. You’re fresh out of high school and pretty naive to how college is going to be, especially if you’re a first generation college student. Before I participated in the Academic S.T.A.R.S. program (STudents Achieving and Reaching for Success), I expected college to be totally different. Think about every movie you’ve seen about college. Remember the parties, the drinking and the relaxing? Many freshmen aren’t prepared to adjust to college life because they don’t know what to expect.

The Academic S.T.A.R.S. program is a 5-week retention program that gives 30 African-American students a chance to earn seven credit hours towards graduation and learn about the various resources available on campus. It gives people the chance to see how college-level coursework will be.

After spending the summer on campus, I was prepared for the fall so I was confident. But, based on observation and personal experience, I feel it’s very hard for many freshmen to adjust to life on a college campus, thanks to the veneer that high school placed on us.

Remember all the things you did in high school? Senior trips, prom, the football games; and who can forget graduation? Most think the purpose of high school is to prepare you for college and the real world, but it often leaves many incoming freshmen in a state of denial. In high school, there is not a lot of work and there is not a lot of necessary studying. Not knowing what to expect from college can lead to uncertainty among freshmen.

As a minority on this campus, you might see one or two other people in classes who look like you, making one feel like he or she is alone. This is the case for many freshmen.

Chiara Turner is an African-American student and feels like adjusting to college as a minority is a bit tougher than it might seem.

“High school life is different,” Turner said. “My high school was very diverse and coming here; it’s a shock. There are not a lot of people here that look like me. There also are not a lot of other races.”

She says being a minority is not the only thing that makes her adjustment harder.

“My high school left me unprepared for college in a sense because I went to a performing arts school, so we didn’t have the same
curriculum. We still had math and English classes, but it wasn’t the same, so it’s been harder. The work here is more intense.”

One of the biggest problems that freshmen deal with is separating home life from college life. During the Academic S.T.A.R.S. program, I had trouble separating myself from the work I had to complete and dealing with the pressure to succeed. I constantly found myself struggling because at times, I missed my family, my own bed and my grandmother was sick. The list went on.

Not all freshmen are struggling with that transition. Daniel Caraballo, who is a Puerto-Rican student, seems confident about completing his freshman year. While he has not had trouble adjusting to the campus as a minority, he feels like people of Hispanic descent are under-represented on the campus.

“I have not seen any Hispanics around,” Caraballo said. “I’m sure there are others; I just have not seen any of them.”

He’s also comfortable being a minority on this campus.

“Being a minority on this campus does not affect me at all,” Caraballo said. “I graduated from a majority Caucasian school where I was already in the minority. I already knew what I was coming into.”

Even though he feels under-represented, he’s adjusting pretty well. As a student in the college prep school, Cleveland St. Ignatius, the biggest change he’s had to make was living in the dorms.

Caraballo also acknowledges that he misses home, but he’s in college for a reason.

“When I really miss my family and friends back home, I am out here to continue my life,” Caraballo said. “I know that they are supporting me. If I continue to look back, that will not help me look forward. I definitely feel pressure, but it’s not enough to scare me.”

Another student that has made a smooth transition from high school to college is freshman Christopher Baldwin. He’s a Caucasian student from Nashville, Tenn. Being from out of state has not made adjusting hard for him at all. In fact, it has helped him adjust easier. Going to college away from home has forced him to make friends and get used to the area.

“High school didn’t really prepare me for college. The social scene is completely different, and you have a lot more responsibility to take on.”

TIERNEY ROBINSON
FRESHMAN EXPLORATORY MAJOR
"My whole reason to coming Kent State was because I wanted to get out-of-state," Baldwin said. "I wanted to break out my comfort zone, and there’s no way I’m driving nine hours back home."

He knows that while he’s here at Kent State, getting his education is important. "I definitely feel pressure to do well," Baldwin said. "My parents have made it very clear that they’re paying for me one time through. They aren’t expecting a fifth year or any flunking grades either. They want me to enjoy myself, but they aren’t dealing with me failing or dropping out."

Luckily for Baldwin, he has not had issues with any of his classes. While he is having an easy adjustment to college, he knows that adjusting from high school to college will not be easy for all freshmen. "I think some freshmen are trying to hold onto their high school experience and the memories with all your friends," Baldwin said. "This is the rest of my future, and I’m trying to separate those high school experiences from what’s going on now."

Freshman Tierney Robinson, on the other hand, is having a bit of trouble. As an African-American, she is adjusting to living away from home and being under-represented on campus.

"I’m still deciding if I want to stay here in Kent State," Robinson said. "I miss my family, my friends, and it’s different from what I’m used to. I want to say that I’m going to stick it out because life isn’t easy and college isn’t going to be easy either. At the same time, leaving here will not make me a stronger person. Still, it’s difficult at times."

She also feels pressure to get good grades. Robinson was a leader at her high school and feels pressure to maintain those standards. "High school didn’t really prepare me for college," Robinson said. "The social scene is completely different, and you have a lot more responsibility to take on. I really do not think that my high school helped me transition to college at all."

Even though Robinson feels under-represented, she’s taking it as a learning experience. Getting involved on campus has been an outlet for her. "Being active in high school has driven me to be active in college," Robinson said. "I looked into a few organizations, and I’m a part of BUS. Helping out can be a bit much sometimes because I still have work to complete, but I enjoy it. I’m looking into other organizations as well."

Being a minority affected sophomore Nick Walton during his freshman year. "It affected me as a freshman, and it still does," Walton said. "There was a time when I was with a bunch of students. We were discussing grades and because the teacher was black, they made a joke saying that I got the benefit of a better grade because I was black. It’s affected maybe how some people look at me, but I try not to think about race too much. I grew up in an area where most of the people were white, and I went to a school where most of the people were white. Race has been something I’ve dealt with my whole life, so it wasn’t like a big culture shock for me. It’s affected me, but I don’t use it as a crutch."

Walton participated in the Academic S.T.A.R.S. program during the summer of 2007, and the program gave him an idea of what to expect when he came to campus for the fall semester. "I feel that the Academic S.T.A.R.S. program helped me prepare for the regular coursework," Walton said. "There are a lot of things that I felt that if I hadn’t learned then, I might have been shocked when the regular semester started. I feel that if anything, it did help. It’s hard to tell if I’d be in the same position that I am in now without the program."

Still, being a minority on the campus wasn’t the hardest adjustment for Walton. He learned that he would have to work harder to see the results he wanted from his grades. "My freshman year wasn’t easy; college isn’t easy," Walton said. "I put in a lot of work, and I was sort of disappointed with how my first semester went in terms of results. Even in my second semester, there were things that I improved on. I feel that I’m still improving on areas this semester."

There are many reasons that freshmen have trouble adjusting to college life. However, that doesn’t mean they should let circumstances get in the way of being happy. As a minority on any college campus, it can be overwhelming. Although the environment may not be to what you have grown accustomed, adjusting can be easier than it initially seems. Being able to make it through your freshman year is just one of the many milestones you pass in order to enjoy your college years.

---

**Wasting Energy?**

**Watt’s up with that?**

Did You Know? Keeping a standard 100 watt incandescent light bulb on for one year will cost approximately $87 and will result in 1,200 pounds of CO₂ emissions.

Instead, use "Compact Fluorescent Bulbs" as pictured.

Energy Management
email: energy@kent.edu

**KENT STATE Campus Environment And Operations**
GATHERING, PREPARING AND DELIVERING INFORMATION IS ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING CAREER FIELDS AROUND.

IT’S THE LEADING EDGE OF THE CUTTING EDGE: BE A PART OF IT!

HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WORLD.

COMMUNICATE THE DREAM

NEWS - BROADCASTING  MAGAZINE  NEWSPAPER

VISUAL JOURNALISM - PHOTO JOURNALISM  INFORMATION DESIGN

ELECTRONIC MEDIA - MANAGEMENT PRODUCTION

PUBLIC RELATIONS

MAJORS

“As a graduate, I saw the benefits of being a part of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication from the graduate and undergraduate level. The school provides numerous opportunities for students to shine while at the same time providing solid journalism training. Whether it’s hands-on instruction in the classroom, working in student media, or exposure to internship opportunities, JMC definitely prepares students for the real world. I am so proud of graduating from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.”

TaLeiza Calloway M.A.,
Journalism, Aug. 08
St. Cloud Times (Minneapolis)
MISSION: in Ghana

Volunteer trip opens student's eyes to life in Africa.
Upon arriving in Accra, Ghana, sophomore psychology and communication major Matt Smith was immediately immersed in a new world. Around him, street vendors carried goods on their heads, goats roamed the dirt roads and kids ran after the van he rode in.

“We stuck out,” Smith said. “It was quite the eye opener.”

Smith traveled to Ghana this summer for a mission trip with the ministry, African Hope. He spent his 11-day stay in the city of Gomoa Fetteh with a missions team of 12 people from Ohio.

While in Ghana, his group administered a program about sexual purity for junior and senior high school students. In addition, some group members held a small program for boys and girls about what God wants them to learn. Smith worked with the children’s program, where he and other group members taught about different topics including peer pressure and individual differences.

He said there is no specific reason why he went on the trip, but he has always been interested in Africa and missions.

“The group I went with was complete strangers,” Smith said. “Where we were going, we were complete strangers. I wanted to go into a new surrounding.”

He said Africa particularly interested him because it is typically portrayed as a third-world environment and he has heard stories about the continent.

“I wanted to go see if it was true,” Smith said. “(I do) not want to live my life by someone else’s story. I wanted to have my own story.”

Learning the Culture

He said that sticking out amongst the crowd was intimidating, but he was met with open arms.

“I was told that if you’re a white person in Africa, you are a businessman, tourist or a pastor,” Smith said.

When the natives found out his purpose, they were welcoming. The native language in the town he stayed in, Gomoa Fetteh, is Fante, but they speak English in Ghana as well. A 6-year-old boy taught Smith the language by saying Smith’s English words back to him in Fante.

“They were so eager to teach us,” Smith said.

In addition to being taught Fante, locals also made the effort to teach Smith and his group customs of society. He learned to wave with his right hand and to be careful not to touch anyone with his left hand because he could offend them.

Smith said locals taught him “the nationwide secret handshake” in which one person snaps his or her fingers off the other person’s middle finger.

A Far Leap from America

Traveling from Northeast Ohio to Ghana was a change for Smith.

He stayed in a hotel that didn’t have water some nights, he said. The people washed their clothes by hand. Although Smith was in Ghana during the hot rainy season, with temperatures in the high 80s’, surprisingly, people were “huddling together for warmth,” because the temperature can reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

In addition to temperature differences, their culture is not as time sensitive as we are, Smith said.

“If you didn’t say ‘sharp,’ they wouldn’t come,” he said.
He encountered some interesting people that can’t be found in the United States. There was a man in Gomoa Fetteh who was naked all the time, but despite this, as Smith’s team would drive through, no one would judge the man.

Smith learned even more about the locals when he spent time with children. He said he was amazed at the ingenious things they would find to do. There was a time when an 8-year-old boy kicked a dead clump of grass to him, and then they kicked it back for about 15 to 20 minutes.

He said children in America play with video games and complain about being bored. “Here we have so much ... we become almost dead to what we have,” he said.

He can recall a kid who still played with Smith even though he didn’t have any presents for the child.

“It was cool to see they are human, but willing to stick around when they don’t get what they want,” Smith said.

Overall, he took a lot away from interacting with the children.

“They are so much more passionate and willing to do what’s right,” Smith said.

**Lasting Impressions**

One experience especially stuck with Smith.

He met a child who was named Wisdom by the local people. Wisdom was a deaf-mute, he said. The local people told Smith a story about people who decided to pray for Wisdom to heal him. At the very same time they prayed, his mother, who was with Wisdom, called the group who prayed for her son and said Wisdom heard the ringtone on her phone. Wisdom was taken to a nose and throat specialist who said his hearing was fine.

Smith got to meet Wisdom when he did a program with the children. Since Wisdom couldn’t talk, the group prayed for him. After praying, Wisdom mumbled sounds when Smith addressed him. It was cool to “see a real, authentic miracle,” he said.

Smith said he felt that the locals of Gomoa Fetteh had their priorities right. They didn’t have a lot of money so money wasn’t a priority for them, he said. If a person needed something they didn’t have, another person was willing to give it to them.

In general, he found the people of Ghana and Gomoa Fetteh to be very loving of each other, and they placed family before acquiring possessions.

The common idea that Africa is a devastated continent does not hold true, he said.

“People say they have it bad there—go there,” Smith said. “They are happier than we are.”

---

**MATT SMITH**

SOPHOMORE PSYCHOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION MAJOR

“I do) not want to live my life by someone else’s story. I wanted to have my own story.”

---

**The Honors College**

EXCELLENCE in Action
Explore, Discover, Engage

Learn how our college can help you reach your goals by visiting our website at www.kent.edu/honors

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY**

Committed to Academic Excellence and Student Success

Academic Affairs
Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP)
Commencement and Academic Affairs Events
Diversity and Academic Initiatives
Faculty Affairs and Curriculum
Planning and Academic Resource Management
Special Projects
Institutional Research and Student Success
Undergraduate Studies

Dr. Robert G. Frank, Office of the Provost

Stephens-Johnson Complex
330.672.2312
Email questions to: honors@kent.edu
Happy 102nd Anniversary
to the Brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
From the Brothers of Epsilon Delta Chapter,
Kent State University

“In Loving Memory of our Brother Fredrick Brown III”
From Brothers Charles Fleming, Darrell McNair,
Eugene Shelton, Claude Carson, Richard “Zoom” Scott,
Christopher Tall, Johnathan Trout, & Maurice Stevens.
Love knows no colors

COLUMN BY DEANNA STEVENS

Ever since I was a child, I would always do what was proper. I never disobeyed authority; I never even saw a detention slip. I worked hard in school; I was ranked in the top 10 percentile of my graduating class with a 3.9 GPA. And I always did what was expected.

So dropping a bomb like this on my family must have been a part of my subconscious trying to make up for the lack of a teen-aged, rebellious stage.

Maybe a bomb is a little over dramatic, but I knew my dad wasn’t going to be happy.

The bomb (my boyfriend)

Nate is my boyfriend, my first love.

I was senior in high school when we first met at a local newspaper where we worked. At first I thought he was nice, but a little too sarcastic for my taste. But as we worked there longer, we became closer friends. And the closer we got, the more I realized how much I really did care about him, sarcasm and all.

We began dating in October of my junior year in college. At first we were both hesitant because it was one thing to be friends, but the dynamic of a relationship changes drastically when you put a label on it. While we were trying to figure out how not to blow it, there was a third variable that I knew would come into play.

Nate is white and I’m not.

The race issue wasn’t a problem for either one of us, because in all honesty, it just didn’t matter. I grew up in Stow, which isn’t known for its diversity. When I graduated high school, my class was made up of more than 500 students and there were two black people who crossed that stage, including myself.

And Nate grew up in North Hill. He went to Firestone High School in Akron, and he hung out with more black kids in a regular school day than I would at a family reunion.

It is one thing to talk about equality and tolerance, but it’s different when Deanna doesn’t bring home a black guy. There is a real stigma about interracial dating. How often are interracial couples portrayed positively in T.V. or movies? Remember in “Waiting to Exhale,” when Angela Bassett’s character found out her husband was leaving her for a white woman? There was a collective “oh, no he didn’t!” from black women across America.

Obviously, things have gotten better, but it’s not perfect. People usually believe they are fine with it, until it’s thrown at them.

Nate and I dated in secret for a month before I told my parents. I wanted to make sure Nate and I could figure out this whole relationship thing before I brought everything to the table.

I knew my mom would be OK with it because we’d had the conversation before. But when I told her about Nate, she was upset about one thing.

“I can’t believe you waited a month to tell me,” my mom said. “I understand not telling your dad because he’s a little goofy. But me!”

I knew my dad would have a problem with me dating a white guy. He let me know that dating a white guy was not a good idea. I remember driving with him to a school dance when I was probably 12 or 13.

Thinking that I had not reached the boy-liking stage yet, my dad told me I would soon start thinking about boys in a more grown-up way. When that day came and I realized that I wanted to start dating, he’d prefer that I would not date outside my race because I “deserved a black man.”

Ever since that day, I’d been terrified to date a white guy.

The Big Reveal

After that first month, things were going so well that I knew Nate was worth all the drama my dad could throw at me. Throughout that month, I was preparing Nate for all the drama my dad would throw at him.

I’m the first born, and Nate was my first boyfriend, so he was going to be in for the fatherly interrogation no matter what, but the fact that he is white was just a cherry on top.

I tried to be as honest as I could without making him think that my dad was some kind of bigot. I know my dad doesn’t have a problem with white people; he was more worried I would get hurt in the process by what people would say or do. My dad’s opinion on the subject was more a part of him being overprotective, rather than hateful. Yet, I know because he is so protective of his kids, he wouldn’t be shy about voicing his concerns.

At the same time, Nate isn’t the type to let someone walk all over him, so I knew he could handle himself. With my dad being overly sensitive to his kids and my boyfriend’s sarcasm in full effect, I was a little worried that two most important men in my life were going to come to blows.

I finally got the courage to tell my parents on a Sunday evening. I just left Nate’s house, and I told them I was just coming from my boyfriend’s house. Of course they both looked shocked and screamed, “You have a boyfriend!” But, I was initially relieved because they both looked happy and excited for me.

That didn’t last long.

“Is he black?” was the first thing out of my dad’s mouth.

“No, he’s white,” I responded. Enter my dad’s face sinking into disappointment. I could see him thinking, “I can’t tell anybody that Deanna’s dating a white guy. How am I going to tell your grandmother? I can’t bring a white guy to the Urban League’s company golf outing.”

Maybe I was a little paranoid, but you didn’t see my dad’s face.

Just when I thought things couldn’t get any more awkward, my dad asked, “Are you two having sex?”

I was mortified that my dad would talk to me about my sex life, my nonexistent sex life, yet I was strangely re-
lieved that we got off the white thing so quickly.

My relief quickly transformed back to dread when both my parents insisted that they meet him. All I could think about was how my new awesome relationship was going to be over. Why in the world would Nate want to stay with me after getting drilled by my folks? I just knew Nate was going to realize I was not worth the trouble.

The Lunch Date

Doomsday came in December before Christmas and after finals. I knew after he came over, he was going to call me the next day and tell me “this just wasn’t working out.”

My mom and I made lunch. Nate came over and right away, my dad grilled Nate about his family, school, jobs, etc., while my mom distracted me by making me help her in the kitchen.

From what I could hear, everything was going well. Dad started asking him about school, then his family, which unbeknownst to me, was our saving grace.

Dad asked Nate what his father did for a living. Nate’s dad is a special education teacher. My brother is mentally handicapped, so my dad’s whole demeanor changed from the interrogating “what are your intentions with my daughter?” to a conversation between two people who happened to care about me. I don’t know why I never brought that up to my dad before because that would have been a great selling point. For some reason, it didn’t even cross my mind.

When the conversation went to Madden 08, I knew everything was gravy. Nate was no longer my white boyfriend. He was a guy who liked Madden just like my dad did. He was a guy who played football in high school, just like my dad did. And most importantly, he was the guy who knew what it was like to be around, and be sensitive to, kids with special needs, kids like my little brother.

My dad was happy, and he even told me that he liked Nate a lot. He said that Nate was “a good dude.”

I guess my subconscious is going to have to come up with another plan to act out that rebellious stage. U
For the first time in American history, the head of the Oval Office is of African decent. Welcome to the White House, President Obama.

Here is a look at how he got there:

>>> Kent State shares its opinions

>>> Security takes center stage

>>> Obama supporters do leg work in Kent

>>> Unheard voices of the GOP
Twenty years from now, the 2008 presidential election will undoubtedly be one of the most historically significant elections of all time. Each party added something new to the books. Before people went to the polls, UHURU magazine wanted to know how people felt about electing the first black man to become president of the United States. Kent State students answered the question, “How do you feel about Barack Obama potentially being elected, becoming the first black president in United States history?”

I feel that it would be good for our country because it would be very diverse for once. Maybe there would be less racism because people would see that there really is no difference between black and white people.”

MARY JAWORSKI
FRESHMAN NURSING MAJOR

I feel that Obama, whether black or white, would make a good president because he actually has a plan geared toward helping the majority rather than just the wealthy. His being African-American is a plus because this shows the progression of our people having an equal voice in this country.”

TAJA POPE
JUNIOR EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETING MAJOR

It will be a big change for America. The first of almost anything is always a milestone that will be remembered throughout history.”

MIKE WARREN
FRESHMAN PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

I don’t have an opinion one way or another. I haven’t been following that closely because I get upset when they bash other candidates. He could turn out to be a great president, but as of right now, I’m not exactly sure.”

ASHLEY THARP
SOPHOMORE SPECIAL EDUCATION MAJOR

I am not a fan of Barack. I do not agree with his views. I also do not think he is ready for politics. He has only been a senator for four years, and two of those years he has been campaigning. I just don’t feel he has enough experience.”

MORGAIN ETHERIDGE
FRESHMAN VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN MAJOR
The 2008 presidential election will be remembered for a lot of things.

It was an election of firsts, for both parties. Sarah Palin would have been the first female vice president. John McCain would have been the oldest president at 72-years-old, ultimately, though, Barack Obama became the first black man elected as president of the United States.

The 2008 presidential election may also be remembered as the time a campaign took things too far.

It started innocently enough on the Republican side. In the early going of McCain’s campaign, speakers at rallies made sure to emphasize Obama’s middle name, Hussein, to get Republican crowds in a frenzy. Associating Obama with Saddam Hussein or the Muslim religion may have been dirty, but it was hardly the worst thing ever done on the campaign trail.

These types of tactics may have seemed innocuous enough at the time. But as the campaign wore on, the negativity became a defining feature of the election. The Republican Party ran a campaign based on fear and division, using negative advertising to try to sow doubts about Obama’s qualifications and character. The Democratic Party, while not immune to the same tactics, sought to focus on issues and policies, hoping to contrast with the Republican Party’s divisive strategy.

As the campaign progressed, the negativity became even more pronounced. Attacks on Obama’s past, particularly his association with radical Bill Ayers, were common. McCain’s campaign, in particular, would not shy away from using these tactics, even when they were met with public backlash.

The election was marked by a series of events that raised concerns about the security of the process. Obama’s lead continued to grow against McCain in almost every poll imaginable. An just two weeks before the election, on Oct. 13, CBS News nationwide poll showed Obama ahead of McCain, 53 percent to 39 percent. Similar polls showed Obama ahead in nine of 16 “battleground” states.

“I think anyone who attacks someone personally is desperate,” Halemsaid. “It has backfired in the polls for McCain; you can see that very clearly. People think his ads are much too negative. You only get a rise from your most loyal with ads like that.”

All the negativity is causing politicians such as Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland and Sen. Sherrod Brown to take notice. On Oct. 20, the two made a joint speech in Columbus against the use of negative campaign ads.

Halemsaid that as far as she thinks, the Democratic Party ran a campaign based on truth.

“In many cases these are rumors or outright misrepresentation of facts,” Halemsaid. “We simply give people facts ... When somebody comes in and makes a uniformed remark that they heard from a Republican candidate or a Republican commercial that implies that our candidate is something other than a Democrat, Christian senator, then I have to reply that anything else they have heard is simply untrue.”
Barack Obama unofficially began his quest to the White House on July 27, 2004, when he was the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention.

That night in Boston, Obama delivered a thrilling speech and displayed his natural charisma, eloquence and ability to capture an audience.

Obama, an Illinois senator since Jan. 4, 2005, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on Aug. 4, 1961 to a white mother from Kansas and a black father from Kenya.

Many people throughout the United States were drawn to Obama’s enthusiasm and ability to bring people together who are different genders, races, religions and economic backgrounds.

Four years after his keynote speech, Obama, a Chicago native, has proven he could indeed bring people of different backgrounds together, as he was elected as the 44th President of the United States.

His appeal has advanced throughout the United States, including key states such as Ohio.

Kent State students for Obama

Niki Olabisi, a 22-year-old graduate student at Kent State, is one of many Obama supporters in Portage County who was an unpaid volunteer.

Olabisi said she remembers seeing Obama on television, and she was instantly hooked.

“I think at first I was skeptical,” Olabisi said. “I didn’t think our country was ready for a black man to possibly be the president. I kept paying attention throughout the rest of the year. When he took Iowa, I thought maybe this is going to happen, and here we are now.”

This is Olabisi’s first time getting involved with a campaign. The graduate business administration major, said her knowledge of politics was somewhat limited prior to getting involved.

“This past year my interest in politics has peaked to the point where I would be interested in volunteering,” Olabisi said. “I really feel like we are in a pivotal moment in our country.

“I got connected through one of my professors whom I am close with. She had told me they needed volunteers and gave me contact information, and it kind of snowballed from there. I knew I was voting for Obama ... because I believe in him so much. I believe in the vision and I believe in the change that Obama can bring for the country at this time.”

Olabisi, an Akron native, said she has done a variety of things for the Obama campaign, including data entry, organizing events for campus groups such as choir groups and fashion classes, registering students to vote and helping students with early voting. She said working with the campaign has been a great learning experience and has given her a greater understanding of politics.
“I think just working with the campaign people has been so much fun,” Olabisi said. “Everyone is my age basically, and these people have taken their time to help. No one I work with is from Ohio. People from New York and Arkansas have come to Ohio and helped out because it is such an important state. To see their passion has ignited my passion.”

Kent residents for Obama

The Obama for Change headquarters in Kent was a gathering spot for many in Portage County who are eagerly awaiting the end of the eight years under George W. Bush.

Kasha Legeza-Burton, a 45-year-old Kent resident, was a volunteer receptionist at the Kent headquarters and also worked as a special sections editor for the Record-Courier. Legeza-Burton believes a change in leadership is long overdue and that Obama is the right man.

“I think about four years ago when George W. Bush was re-elected, I was bawling my eyes out, sobbing,” Legeza-Burton said. “I vowed I would never sit back and let something like that happen again. I just adore Barack Obama ... if I think about him winning I cry, and if I think about him losing I cry. This is a very passionate issue, and when I talk to other people about it, I hear similar stories.”

Legeza-Burton said a majority of the workers she sees are college students who are hungry for a political change.

“This local headquarters is really run by college kids,” Legeza-Burton said. “They are so enthusiastic and energetic in this campaign.”

Sandy Halem, a 64-year-old Kent resident, agreed about the increase in student involvement.

“Kids are working with adults on this,” said Halem, the second vice-chair for the Portage County Democratic Party precinct.

“We have students from Kent State and kids that are 18 and still in high school working. I am very excited that more people are helping to make the decision to elect the president. When you work with the young people in their 20s, it makes me feel young.”

Halem said she first got involved in politics in 2004 when John Kerry was running for president. She said the campaigns in the Portage County area were completely different.

“At that point in time, the Democratic Party was not extremely organized (with regional presidential campaigns) under previous leadership,” Halem said. “I helped run that office. I became active and decided that I wanted to get active in local politics.

“It has been a great synergy of the old and the new. We literally have hundreds of new people pouring in to help the cause. They are building a phenomenal campaign all over the county. The challenge of the campaign was to be grassroots.”

Halem said she works on getting information out to both students and older adults in the community. She said the recent requests for yard signs, bumper stickers, posters and buttons have been staggering.

“It goes out as fast it comes in,” Halem said.

Halem put her career as a playwright with The Cleveland Play House on hold because she wanted to help people get involved and felt that they “can’t just wait around for a change.”

“This was more important, Halem said. “I will return and probably have some political plays to write.”

Halem, an American University graduate, is president of the historical society in Kent and started the May 4 oral history project on display in the Kent State Special Collections Library.

“I am very active in the community,” Halem said. “I feel if you live in a community you have to take part and contribute to the community. This is a life-changing election, and we have a lot of people involved for a variety of reasons.”

Halem’s husband and the couple’s daughter also share that line of thinking. Henry Halem, a professor at Kent State for almost 30 years, was involved in the glass program in the school’s art department. Jessica lives in Olympia, Wash., but headed for Kent to help out.

“We are working on this as hard as we can,” Sandy Halem said. “(Henry) helps put the Web site together and drive people around. It’s a family affair with us.”

Sandy Halem said her daughter was the first to tell her about Obama when she lived in Chicago from 1996 to 2008. “(Jessica) told me he was going to be a good Democratic candidate,” Sandy Halem said. “I didn’t know who he was at all at the time.”

That soon changed. Sandy Halem was behind Obama after hearing him speak and reading about him.

“I think we need someone with a new approach and someone who is not afraid to bring in the best and brightest people to solve the problems,” Sandy Halem said. “I like the way he thinks, and I totally reject this whole Republican program that says he lacks the executive skills.”

Halem said she is confident Obama could unite the United States.

“Everybody has to pull together and we have to trust the government again,” Halem said. “I think people trust him.”

Kent’s Obama Mamas

Kara Skora had an idea four years ago and put it in motion – literally.

Skora had adults, mostly mothers, drive anyone, regardless of party affiliation, in minivans to different polling places on 2004’s Election Day.

That concept changed this year.

“This year we wanted to aim it specifically at Obama voters,” Skora said. “We are focusing on the early vote. We have 32 moms, dads and grandparents who drive their vehicles from the parking lot of the Student Center down Summit to the board of elections. We go in with the student and they vote, and we bring them back.”

Skora said the program, which is called “The Mini-Van Obama Mamas’ Yes We Van Effort” ran for three weeks up to and including Election Day.

“There were a lot of students that didn’t get to vote (in 2004) because they stood in line for hours and had to get back to class,” Skora said. “We want them to vote early if they can to shorten the lines. My friend Elizabeth (Tewissen), we are two moms and four years ago we were thinking, ‘Here we are moms, and we want to make a difference.’ Being with first-time voters is very exciting, and the drivers are excited to experience it.”

Tewissen credits Skora as the leader of the “Yes We Van” effort and said they met through their sons, who were teammates on a youth soccer team.
Executive Shock

“The reason we came up with the name was because we are mostly moms,” Thewissen said. “Most of us are soccer moms, and many people consider soccer moms to be Republicans, and we are not. We felt like a lot of people thought we are a group that is likely to go for McCain, but we aren’t, we are going for Obama.

“Overall, I certainly agree with his positions with health care and the economy, she added. “I think it’s really important to have a change from the past eight years under President Bush, and I think voting Obama represents a change. It’s a powerful vote for change.”

Skora’s husband, Kerry, heads up a data team for the Obama campaign. She believes Obama is a welcomed change from the past eight years and will benefit not only the United States, but the rest of the world as well.

“The Bush administration has completely destroyed (the world’s opinion of the U.S.),” Skora said. “People don’t seem to really like us now, which I think is terrible because people in the world want to like America. The world wants a strong America and a democratic government that stands for democracy, freedom and human rights.

“I agree with everything (Obama stands for). I am very far to the left on most social issues. However, I realize I will not get everything I want. Obama wants to work with the other side and unify everyone, regardless of their party affiliation. I understand that, and I am excited to have a leader that can solve these problems and with both sides.”

“People are disenfranchised economically, and this is a hopeful moment for all of us,” Skora said. “The students are really revved up. I think it has an effect on how they feel about being a citizen and will make them want to be involved in future elections. They will be involved from now on because they know how to participate in a campaign, how to vote and how to help others vote.”

Thewissen agreed with Skora regarding the increase in youth participation.

“I think it’s great; if you look at it historically, voting between the ages of 18 and 22 have been low,” Thewissen said. “To have young people engaged in the voting process is great because politics really has an effect on our lives.”

Color crosses party lines.

Some black voters supported Senator McCain.

John McCain held a rally at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio on Oct. 19, and the diversity at the rally was similar to the diversity within the Republican Party—little to nonexistent.

Only a few African-Americans were present in the crowd of about 6,000 people at the rally, and those who were in attendance confirmed that they had not yet decided to vote for McCain as president.

Bryan Curtis, a 22-year-old broadcast major at Otterbein, stood in line for more than an hour outside the Rike Center convention hall just waiting to enter the rally. He also had to go through metal detectors and have security guards inspect his bag just for the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the Republican candidate.

Curtis said he is a Republican because he favors the values of the party, and he hoped to hear McCain’s platform for the next four years during his speech. McCain’s speech should reflect “what people believe” as Republicans, he said.

Curtis said he would like to see the Republican Party resolve the problems with the economy and the war.

Curtis added even though he is black, voting for McCain over Sen. Barack Obama is not a problem because he doesn’t think about race when he is voting.

“I favor McCain because he has more experience in leadership,” he said.

Curtis said other reasons for his choice to vote Republican are that he likes the values of George W. Bush’s administration, and Ohio has been considered a red state in favor of the GOP in the past few years.

“I don’t know exactly what I’m looking for in McCain as the Republican candidate,” Curtis said about why he attended the rally.

Lambert Eigbedion, a 49-year-old Westerville resident, said even as a registered Democrat, he was curious to hear McCain speak.

“I’m open to listening to what he has to say,” he said.

Eigbedion said he hoped to hear McCain speak about the economy because that is the issue he is most concerned about for this election.

“I always felt that the Democratic platform is more compassionate,” he said. “They try to help the average man.”

Eigbedion said he believes Republicans are interfering too much in the current economy and that their policies are failing.

Randy Legair, a 43-year-old project manager from Westerville, said he does not affiliate himself with either party, but he did vote for Bush in the last two elections.

Legair said he wasn’t sure about voting for McCain yet.

After hearing McCain’s speech at Otterbein, Legair said he was “looking for something a little bit more substantial.”

Legair explained he was not fond of McCain’s ideas about taxes because mortgages wouldn’t get lowered and his own personal pay grade would not be helped.

“I don’t see anything that will make a difference for me,” he said.

Something Legair does like about McCain is the candidate’s idea to save American jobs.

Legair said when he votes he thinks about ideology and not the race of the candidate.

“Race has nothing to do with the reason I’m voting,” he said.
Division of Human Resources
Career Opportunities Website: https://jobs.kent.edu

Kent State University's Division of Human Resources commits to excellence in action by attracting, retaining, and developing a community of talented and diverse individuals in support of the University's mission. For the second year in a row, Kent State University has been ranked one of the 99 great workplaces for top talent in Northeast Ohio by the Employers Research Council. A recipient of a 2008 NorthCoast 99 Award, Kent State previously received the honor in both 2007 and 2005.

To Apply for an opportunity at Kent State University, visit our career website at https://jobs.kent.edu and complete an academic data form, unclassified or classified application. You may also contact one of our Talent Acquisition representatives who can answer any employment-related questions you may have regarding the university.

Ms. Judy Brooks
Manager, Talent Acquisition
(330) 672-8312 / jbrook10@kent.edu

Mr. Joe Vitale
Director, Talent Management
(330) 672-8318 / jvitale1@kent.edu
The Cyber-Age
Underground

Alternative music is finally making its way to a new arena — the Billboard charts.

In 2004, Mathangi “Maya” Arulpragasamis 12-inch single titled Galang spun on Wesley “Diplo” Pentz’s turntables at the Fabric nightclub in London. She walked in the club and heard her song playing, and the two of them hit it off.

“Besides me being a white dude from Florida and her being a Sri Lankan girl in England, everything else was the same,” Diplo told pitchforkmedia.com. “We... were going the same direction right now in music, and it was amazing.”

They realized they could help each other out by making music together. By then, she was signed under the label XL Recordings and going by the name M.I.A., and Diplo was in a group called Hollertronix.

M.I.A. sent Diplo some beats and a capellas from her debut album, Arular, which at the time, had yet to be released.

He used what she gave him and fused it with Baile Funk, 80’s, dance hall and hip-hop tracks he was spinning at the time and created Piracy Funds Terrorism Vol. 1.

Diplo told pitchforkmedia.com that the two of them would pass the compact discs out after M.I.A. and other artists’ shows. Piracy Funds Terrorism was one of the first mash-up records of its time. Other mash-up artists, such as produc-
er/artist Girltalk, emerged in following years. The record was a well-crafted publicity stunt, and it is only available online.

Today, M.I.A. has come a long way from 2004, when she and then-boyfriend Diplo, were passing out free copies of their mix-tape. She shot from obscurity to Billboard’s Hot 100 singles chart with “Paper Planes,” the third single from her second album Kala and a song produced by Diplo.

Kala was released in August 2007, and “Paper Planes” was released as a single in March 2008. It was not until the song was featured on the soundtrack for the film Pineapple Express that it was revived and people recognized M.I.A. as a real artist, not an Internet celebrity. Recently, hip-hop heavy hitters TI, Jay-Z, Lil Wayne and Kanye West collaborated on a song called “Swagga Like Us,” where the lyric “No one on the corner has swagger like us,” from the original “Paper Planes” drives the song.

Four years into her career, a creative female rapper who worked her way to the top through the power of the Internet has finally become popular among blacks.

Is that a feat?

Jaaron Oliver, a junior hospitality management major, says there is a lack of acceptance for alternative forms of music in the greater black community.

“Not too many people are open-minded (in Kent),” Oliver said. “They might not like a song because they never heard it before. If you had a party (playing mostly dance music), you wouldn’t get a good turnout.”

Dance, house, techno and electronic music are normally absent during black events in Kent and most other metropolitan cities in Ohio.

Valerry Washington, sophomore visual communication design major, said she thinks house beats are fun and easy to dance to but don’t get played because of the connotations that come with them.

“I think it would be fun to hear house music at parties,” she said. “If house music wasn’t associated with homosexuality, then black people would be more accepting of it. People hear a house beat and automatically start looking for voguers.”

Voguing is a form of dance mostly seen in the black, gay community done to mostly house and club beats. House music is not exclusive, though, as it is also popular among people who jule or Wu-tang in their hometown. People who jule or Wu-tang mostly live in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Chicago, which shows that regional acceptance can be how dance styles catch on.

Ondia Butler, a senior marketing major from New Jersey, compares the New Jersey club scene to Kent’s.

“You mostly hear Cleveland music and Top 40 around here,” she said.

“The last party I went to, they played Baltimore club music and no one danced,” Butler said. “Only the people from (the) East Coast are the ones who got it. I’m from New Jersey, and I listen to Baltimore club music when I go out, and I wouldn’t call (Kent State students) close-minded; they just haven’t been exposed to different types of music. It’s more sexual in Jersey because we play soca and reggae, but it’s diverse because you can go from Wu-tang to go-go.”

Black people do not think the same in every area of the country. People can have different attitudes toward the same song. Many people in Kent like Gucci Mane and go crazy when they hear one of his songs come on at a party. It’s not like that everywhere, though.

Brittany Stephenson, a sophomore broadcast journalism major from Chicago, said the only time she heard Gucci Mane in Chicago was when Freaky Girl came out.

“I liked it as a dance song,” she said.

“I just wouldn’t listen to it more than if I was getting ready to go out because it doesn’t have as much content as other songs I like.”

Stephenson said Chicago is a good place for alternative music. The city hosts many music festivals, including the famous alternative music festival, Lollapalooza.

“Unlike (Kent), you would go to a club that caters toward what kind of music you listen to (in Chicago),” Stephenson said. “There’s a street called Fullerton, where there is all these clubs and there’s a salsa club, progressive hip-hop, drag, etc.”

Washington D.C. is an important place for go-go music, which is live music with a lot of drums, horns and guitar and is usually led by a vocalist. R&B singer Amerie got her start singing in front of go-go bands, and rapper Wale gained his fan base rapping on the go-go scene.

Oliver is a fan of go-go music, but he is only aware of it through his friends’ connections to Washington.

“I like D.C. go-go,” he said. “I have friends that go to Howard, and when they come home for break they give me songs to download.”

There is a rumbling underneath the surface of hip-hop, and it is going to replace what people think rap should be.

---

**Artist Information:**

**DIPLO**

Is a DJ from Philadelphia. He helped M.I.A. start her career. He currently has a podcast called Mad Decent Worldwide Radio.

**GIRLTALK**

Is a mash-up artist who brings his songs from different genres together to make party music.

**M.I.A.**

Sri Lankan born, London bred female rapper. Her music mixes dancehall, barrison, hip-hop, and electronica. Her lyrics are driven with female empowerment.

**WALE**

Is a rapper from Washington, DC. Wale gained his fan base rapping on the go-go scene.
Straight Americans need... an education of the heart and soul. They must understand to begin with - how it can feel to spend years denying your own deepest truths, to sit silently through classes, meals, and church services while people you love toss off remarks that brutalize your soul.

~Bruce Bawer
The Advocate, 28 April 1998
Growing up as an African American, a person understands one thing — family is everything. It is everything, and out of respect, one would follow its traditions and, in some cases, even abide by its religion. Yet, what if a person's heart didn't follow the same beat as their loved ones? What if normal cultural guideposts do not fit one's lifestyle? Should a person hide who he or she really is? Should someone lie to loved ones to keep their respect?

Most college students don't ask themselves these questions, but for a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered (GLBT) students; these are just the beginning of a very different journey, that they normally travel alone. The three people who opened themselves up in this article want people to recognize their personalities and attributes, not just their chosen lifestyle. Each person wishes to remain anonymous to avoid judgment. So, in order to respect their privacy and their wishes, we changed their names to Brandon, Ashley, and Jasmine.

**Brandon** is a 19-year-old male who grew up close to Kent. Because he grew up in a very religious family, he lives a closeted lifestyle. He feels coming out will harm his current career, as well as future career plans. The only people who know he is gay are his very close friends and the young man he has been dating for more than two years.

Q: Have you officially come out of the closet?
A: No.
Q: Why not?
A: Because it would effect how people viewed me in the career I'm in and want to be in.
Q: Do you think your peers would judge you?
A: Not at all 'cause some I have told, but in a way, yes.
Q: Are you in a relationship?
A: Yes.
Q: Is he out of the closet?

**Jasmine** is a 22-year-old student who grew up outside of Cleveland, Ohio. She has kept the fact that she is a lesbian a secret to protect her family and to maintain her privacy. She is in a committed relationship with someone who also chooses not to be open.

Q: Why haven't you come out of the closet?
A: I don't want my business out there. I don't want my name in everybody's mouth. And I don't want people looking at my family a certain way or saying anything.
Q: How does not being completely open affect your relationships?
A: It's easy because 99 percent of the girls I messed with were so secretive about their sexuality that they really didn't even want me to know.
Q: What is it like being in a relationship with someone who's still in the closet?
A: Sometimes it's hard, sometimes it's not. I hate when dudes try to get on with her or call her sexy or baby because they don't think she's in a relationship.
Q: How does it feel to be gay in college?
A: It's the time of opportunity. For every negative comment, there's two curious females who want to know more; they want to experiment. But, everybody is pretty cool about it.
Q: Do you get more hassle form your white or black peers?
A: Black
Q: Why do you think straight females feel like you're always hitting on them?
A: I'm a natural flirt. I can't help that. But the whole thing is where straight females don't want to be friends with gay girls because they're scared to get hit on. First of all, it's probably your imagination because I can't even remember the last time I even hit on somebody. Secondly, they're probably busted and crave at-
tention and just want something to talk about. Lastly, nine times out of ten, my girl looks better than them anyway.

Q. So you don’t flirt with your straight friends? Is it really all in their imagination?
A: If I do it, I don’t know I’m doing it.

Q. Does your family approve of your lifestyle?
A. I’m sure they know, but it’s a don’t ask, don’t tell policy.

Q. Why do they ignore it? Do you ever plan on telling them?
A. Because it’s my business and no.

Q. Do you believe you were born gay?
A. I can’t answer that because I don’t remember if I was developing crushes when I was two. But it has a lot to do with upbringing, environment and yourself as a person. I think it’s a combination of different things.

Q. When do you first remember being attracted to females?
A. I was in kindergarten.

Q. Is it difficult being an African American homosexual?
A. Not really. I feel raw; it’s easier for me than a black male.

Q. Can you elaborate?
A. I can dress in baggy clothes. If I’m rocking Rocawear, Ed Hardy, or whatever’s popular, I get a lot of compliments from guys and girls. But if a black male wants to rock stilettos and such—well, you know what the reaction will be.

Q. Yes, I get your point. Have you ever wanted to be straight? And if so Why?
A. When I was younger because it was normal.

According to my moral values or beliefs, no, I was not born this way. I have to choose not to be gay, rather than choose to be gay. On the other hand, I know this isn’t something I learned.

— ASHLEY

Ashley is a 21-year-old student at Wright State University. She has come out of the closet, but still hides it to be accepted in church. Ashley does not believe that her lifestyle is wrong, but she cares more about appearances than her happiness. Instead of wearing her normal male attire, she’ll even wear heels and skirts at work and church.

Q. Have you come out of the closet?
A. Yes.

Q. Are you in a relationship?
A. No, because I am sick of getting my emotions played with by girls who refuse to come out.

Q. What is it like being gay in college?
A. It’s wonderful. You get to express your sexuality no matter what people think. My school is very big on diversity, and it keeps me from not feeling out of the loop.

Q. Does your family approve of your lifestyle?
A. No, because they don’t believe that it’s of God. They think I should change my lifestyle because of the whole spiritual aspect. It looks better in church.

Q. Do you believe you were born gay?
A. According to my moral values or beliefs, no, I was not born this way. I have to choose not to be gay, rather than choose to be gay. On the other hand, I know this isn’t something I learned.

Q. How old were you when you first remember being attracted to a female?
A. I was 12 when I first became attracted to a female.

Q. Do you think it hard to be an African American lesbian?
A. No, but it’s difficult being gay and a Christian.

Q. Have you ever thought about being straight?
A. Yes I have considered it. My religious views have led me to believe that is what’s right.
STORY BY KELLY PETRYSZYN

Black United Students was the first student organization founded at Kent State University in 1968. Even 40 years later, some students say they still don’t know a lot about BUS.
Sophomore integrated social studies education major Jason Justice said he hasn’t heard of a lot “other than negative things.” The controversy that surrounded BUS escalated last year with various instances of racial tension on campus, including a column written by Kent State alumna, Beth Rankin. To bridge the gap, UHURU approached students about what concerns and questions students had about BUS. Current BUS president, junior fashion merchandising major Ashley Tolliver, sat down with the magazine and answered students’ questions, as well as some questions from UHURU.

Q: What is BUS doing this year to smooth things over with the campus so it won’t happen again? – Jason Justice

A: We are encouraging students to really come to meetings. We feed off what our audience tells us. We understand sometimes we have some members who are going to be rude. It’s negative to say that’s BUS because you had a bad run-in. If anybody has a problem, we rather they come to us and stop by the office. Nine times out of ten, people speculate about BUS about what they heard or what they read in the Daily Kent Stater. Most of the things that are negative about BUS are based on he said, she said. It’s wrong for you to go and speculate about an organization when you have never came to a meeting or talked to the executive board. At our mass meeting we speak about problems. At our first meeting, we had three people address concerns about how we ran our organization. We understand that our community has a lot of problems, and we understand that we are the individuals in our community who want to help others.

Q: Is it only African Americans or other races too? – Sophomore nursing major Amanda Lucarelli

A: We are dedicated to advancing African American students. We want the same privileges as white students. We are open to everybody. People feel they should not get involved because we are a racial organization. All we want as African American students is to have the same privilege as white students. It’s hard to understand until you experience a situation where you’re secluded based on your skin color. We don’t censor what we say with BUS. We are dealing with race—things are going to be said.

Q: What can we do for students to try to promote diversity here on campus? – Junior aeronautical Engineering major Michael Scioli

A: You have to get outside your comfort zone. People who want an integrated environment have to take steps to get familiar with the unfamiliar crowd. We play (the game) link in BUS. If someone says something they have in common with you, the person yells link. (It continues) until the first and the last person are linked. It completes a circle, and you find out everyone has a type of common interest. Yes, we are an organization for serving black students, but we also do programs with minorities and other student organizations because we have a common ground to reach students.

Q: What are the goals of the organization? – Freshman communication major Eric Murray

A: (Our goal is) to provide progressional educational programs to the minority community and provide a historical perspective. We also want to keep the retention rate up. We remind them (members) what they need to leave behind. We tell students who have racial issues to come to us. We service constituents in any way we can. We try to emphasize the importance of voting and Oscar Ritchie. There is no other building like that on campus. The department (of Pan African studies) has made life changes. There was a white student I talked to who grew up with a racist family. Her dad only liked people of European descent. She took Black Experience II because she didn’t know whether to believe either her father or what she saw in the media. The student wanted to form her own view of African American students. In class, she listened to her professor talking about a PowerPoint based on lynching and terrorism. During the presentation, she got emotional and started crying. She didn’t realize black people went through this. She said taking the class was great because she could meet black students and learn things she never knew about black people.

Q: What do you think can be done to try to make people more accepting and open to minorities and cultures? – UHURU

A: It is based upon individuals. You can’t be scared to take a step. If you feel something is unfamiliar about other people, you need to step over that boundary to know what they’re saying. If you’re in a room of people with faces not the same as you, it can be so intimidating. Some people had bad run-ins with people of (another) race. But, you may like what you see and you may like what you learn. Once you get in the workforce, you will be with whichever race dominates. Here (at Kent) there are people from all over the world. You can take different things with you. You become more open-minded. You can be able to separate fiction from non-fiction.

Q: What racist issues still exist on campus? – UHURU

A: There are still a lot of things that go on. In class, some students don’t want to work with me because they feel I couldn’t follow through. It’s the reality we face every day. African American students are called names. We work to better these situations. I had someone come to my office because her roommate called her a racial slur. There is no use crying over spilled milk. We can deal with these issues effectively.
STORY BY JAREL CLAY | PHOTO BY DANNY DOHERTY

The Kent State University Gospel Choir was founded by Dr. Linda B. Walker in 1996. It is known for its excellent local, national, and international reputation. Its members consist of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. The various ages, ethnic and racial backgrounds, disciplines, and religious beliefs involved with this choir make the choir one of the most diverse units at Kent State University. Although diversity is a great asset to this choir, someone who isn’t used to this environment may feel uncomfortable with the transition from prior experience with other choirs.

Valencia Flannigan, 19, is a sophomore early childhood education major. She grew up in Richmond Heights, a suburb of Cleveland. Flannigan is an active member of her praise and worship team at Euclid Four Square. She says their style of worship is relevant to the southern Baptist church with a new millennium twist. However, the transition to gospel choir was not so easy for the alto singer. Flannigan says she was a bit concerned with the diversity in the Kent State choir because of the predominately black choir at her church, to which she was so accustomed. She admits it took her a few practices to get used to singing with so many different types of voices from contemporary gospel to classical and soulful voices.

“I love singing at my church and in the choir here in college,” Flannigan said. “My home church’s choir offers a sense of comfort to my usual style of singing, while the Kent State Gospel Choir challenges my performance with the versatility in its music and people.”

The once concerned freshman is now an active leader as the secretary of the gospel choir. She also participates in the praise dance step team that is now an optional feature to the choir since last spring.

The transition to the Kent State choir was not only a struggle for Flannigan; at first, other students of different cultures had some concerns as well. Rachel Watkins, 18, is a white student enrolled as a freshman at Kent State. She first started singing at Kent State in the Women’s Chorus. Watkins grew up in a small community outside of Columbus and was only exposed to classically structured choirs.

The transition to the Kente Choir was not only a struggle for Watkins; at first, other students of different cultures had some concerns as well. Rachel Watkins, 18, is a white student enrolled as a freshman at Kent State. She first started singing at Kent State in the Women’s Chorus. Watkins grew up in a small community outside of Columbus and was only exposed to classically structured choirs.

Curtis later realized as long as the talent and passion is apparent, any choir with multiple cultures can have a strong, gospel sound.

“I love the sound, the blend and the look of the choir as it stands now,” Curtis said.

Along with Flannigan, Curtis also participates in the praise dance step team.

Flannigan, Watkins and Curtis work with the rest of the choir as one unit despite their completely different upbringings and religious practices.

With the diverse environment of the gospel choir, different opinions exist, and some people are not as acceptable to other cultures as others. This fact will make the transition harder for people from smaller communities to adapt to such a large organization. Since Watkins had a strong background in singing prior to Kent State, she knew the transition from a classical choir to a soulful, gospel choir would be easier for her than most. What concerned her, however, were the personalities of different people in the choir.

I was nervous at the first practice, but after seeing how friendly and acceptable the people were, I was so comfortable singing and performing with the choir,” Watkins said.

Watkins is an active leader in the alto section and participates in fundraising for the choir.

Curtis later realized as long as the talent and passion is apparent, any choir with multiple cultures can have a strong, gospel sound.

“I love the sound, the blend and the look of the choir as it stands now,” Curtis said.

Along with Flannigan, Curtis also participates in the praise dance step team.

Flannigan, Watkins and Curtis work with the rest of the choir as one unit despite their completely different upbringings and religious practices. While Curtis was unsure about the choir’s wardrobe, Walker chose the dress for a very particular reason. “The reason for choosing Kente was to show our differences, but embrace our similarities,” Walker said. “In the Kente cloth, different and bright colors of fabric are woven together to make the pattern. KSU Gospel Choir members are different colors and hues woven together for a singular purpose - to sing gospel music.”

My vision was to have a diverse group. I never wanted an all-black or all-white choir. Fortunately, there has been almost an equal number of black and white students each semester.”

- Dr. Linda B. Walker, Gospel Choir Director

Kente is made by the Asante and Ewe peoples and is the best known of all African textiles. Kente comes from the word kentσn, which means “basket.” The Asante peoples also refer to kente as nwentoma or “woven cloth.”

The Kente Cloth

Kente is made by the Asante and Ewe peoples and is the best known of all African textiles. Kente comes from the word kentσn, which means “basket.” The Asante peoples also refer to kente as nwentoma or “woven cloth.”

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth

The Kente Cloth
The Carlton complex
Racial stereotypes hard to overcome for some black people
Many African-Americans are accused of “acting white” by people of the same race. One example of this type of person is someone who was welcomed to our homes every Saturday night with his crazy cousin Will: quirky Carlton from “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.” Carlton exposed many to the issues of acting white.

The definition of “acting white” isn’t clear. Is acting white speaking with correct grammar? Is it not wearing urban-inspired clothing that a rapper or basketball player advertised? Or is it simply valuing and demanding excellence in academics?

Freshman marketing major Ebonie Parks said her high school had a variety of races, but blacks were still the minority. Even though there was a balance, there were times when black students would accuse her of acting white because of the way she talked and because she was active in school and had mostly white friends.

The Experiment

The accusations of acting white are false, says Angela Neal-Barnett, an associate professor of psychology at Kent State. Neal-Barnett began her research on the topic in February of last year. She and other colleagues researched mostly college students, but from time to time, they studied Portage County high school students as well. Though the original research was done in all-black schools, the data did not vary enough to be considered invalid when applied to other schools.

A person cannot act a certain race because there is no specific way to be black or white. Neal-Barnett said, even though many people feel as though they have the right to say how a black person should act; no one has that power.

Another observation Neal-Barnett’s group made was that most of the students accused of acting white lived in the suburbs. Although, there was not a designated area where African-American students were free from accusations by peers and community members.

Racial Identity

“(Students) have the right to define themselves for themselves,” Neal-Barnett said.

She explained there is no difference in acting white or acting black, and it comes down to how important being black is to you.

“If a person is black, then how they act is being black, which varies with each person,” she said. “People in this country may know that they are black; they just may not let you know they know.”

A person does not have to prove to others, for the lack of a better term, their own “blackness,” Neal-Barnett added.

If a person feels the need to prove their “blackness” to others, it proves how insecure they really are. Though many actions reflect color, it is not always the case.

Parks agreed with Neal-Barnett that college on its own is hard without trying to appeal to others’ ideas of how black a person should really be.

Neal-Barnett says there is a spectrum all black people are thrown into by society. The only issue is that it is not always accurate and may offend some.

“It’s like (a spectrum) where Snoop Dogg is on one end, and Tiger Woods is on the other end. But in the middle is Will Smith,” Neal-Barnett said. “But Smith does not act like Tiger and is not as ghetto as Snoop; he’s just in the middle.” Smith, along with many others, lie somewhere in the middle.

Being Black in College

For most, college is a learning experience about school and about life. Many students, especially freshmen, feel the need to find themselves. For students accused of acting white, it can be difficult to handle because not only do they need to figure out who they are, but also how black they are.

Neal-Barnett said these students should ask themselves, “What is being black and how important is being black to you?”

For some, the first and second years of college are the most difficult in trying to understand who they are. This is a time known as a developmental transition, says Neal-Barnett, a time to grow into a responsible adult.

For example, Parks grew up in Canton, a diverse area, but some black students claimed she was acting white when she attended a predominately white high school. She had attributes that many black people associated with white people, which gave people more reasons to taunt her. She is tall, thin and has long hair with a medium complexion. For many, this was enough to harass her.

“I got tired of it,” Parks said.

The Acceptance

The response a person gives is a way to get past the accusations of acting white. Do not respond in the defensive, Neal-Barnett says.

“The accusations won’t stop, but the response can,” Neal-Barnett said.

One way to get past the harassment is to just rise above it, as cliché as it sounds. Sometimes others’ minds will not change. A person cannot change who he or she is because someone doesn’t like it. If a person is born black, then he or she is black; there is no need to prove it to someone else who claims he or she isn’t black enough.
Senior Jermail Porter makes his mark on the mat and Kent State record books.

PHOTO BY TOM CAMMETT
KSU ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Jermail Porter isn’t one to do things the way they are usually done.

Not only did he take a non-traditional route to become nationally ranked, he chose a non-traditional sport for most black athletes.

The Kent State senior wrestler didn’t begin his career until his freshman year at Firestone High School.

“I had wanted to wrestle in eighth grade, but I was too late for sign ups,” explained Porter in an email. “In ninth grade, I didn’t want to come in mid-season for football, so I chose to wrestle instead with the intention to play football the next season.”

Porter added that he chose wrestling as his football backup because he had friends who had wrestled in youth organizations and he said he always wanted to try it.

Even though wrestling isn’t a common sport for most black athletes, he didn’t feel like an outsider because Firestone’s conference, the City Series, was very diverse. There were at least three other African-American athletes on Firestone’s team, alone.

While it isn’t a commonplace sport for African-American athletes yet, Porter says that continues to change.

“It’s starting to grow in popularity because you realize a lot of guys who are trained for football in high school wrestle to keep in shape,” Porter said. It helps you become a better athlete for your other sports.”
However, the idea of playing football never came to fruition for Porter.

"I became obsessed, so to speak, with getting a starting spot on the team. I focused on wrestling all summer," Porter said through email.

After four years at Firestone (only three as a starter), it quickly became apparent that football’s loss was wrestling’s gain. Wrestling for the Falcons, Porter compiled a 94-18 record and was a city, sectional and district champion his senior year. He also finished second in his 285-pound weight class at the 2004 Ohio High School Wrestling Championships.

"Here’s a kid, coming into college who had wrestled about 100 matches,” said Kent State head coach Jim Andrassy. “There are some wrestlers on our team that have around 80 matches a year or in the summer. Porter did not even do summer wrestling."

“He was really low on the learning curve coming in to college and now he is ranked. Porter is just starting to understand collegiate wrestling,” Andrassy added.

Fortunately for the Kent State wrestling squad, Porter decided that football wasn’t the sport for him. He said he enjoys wrestling because it pushes him to improve more than a conventional team-sport would.

"Wrestling is different from all other sports because it is not a team thing," Porter said. “You have guys who make up a team, but it’s more of an individual thing. I’ve seen a lot of wrestlers come and go because they just got tired of pushing themselves."

“I think that wrestling has made me a lot better person over the last 10 years than I could have ever imagined," Porter added.

In four years with Flashes, Porter has wrestled to an 88-39 record and looks to become only the seventh wrestler in Kent State history to record 100 wins.

Last season, Porter was seconds away from being the first KSU wrestler to earn All-American honors since Don Horning in 1986.

In his final year for the Golden Flashes, the Mid-American Conference and the rest of the country have served notice. Porter was named the preseason favorite to win the MAC Championship at 285 pounds. Porter is also nationally ranked sixth by Intermat Wrestling and seventh by Wrestling International News Magazine (W.I.N.).

"I’d be lying if I said there isn’t a little more pressure and a spotlight on my season, seeing as how close I was last year and where I am ranked now, said Porter through email. "It actually doesn’t mean much. I just have to remember to take it one match at a time and wrestle my matches to the best of my ability."

Deanna Stevens contributed to this story. Both Lofton and Stevens work for the Kent State Athletic communications department.

---

Welcome Students!
University Health Services is committed to providing the highest level of care for the university that you can achieve all academic and personal goals.

Our Services include:
- Comprehensive primary health care
- Women’s health care
- Psychological services
- Physical therapy and sports care
- On-site pharmacy and laboratory
- Direct billing to most insurance companies

kent.edu or call 330.672.2322 for more information.
We welcome Students!

University Health Services is committed to providing the highest level of care for the university community so that you can achieve all of your academic and personal goals.

Visit our Web Site at www.uhs.kent.edu or call 330.672.2322 for more information.

In his final year for the Golden Flashes, the Mid-American Conference and the rest of the country have served notice. Porter was named the preseason favorite to win the MAC Championship at 285 pounds. Porter is also nationally ranked sixth by Intermat Wrestling and seventh by Wrestling International Newsmagazine (W.I.N.).

“I’d be lying if I said there isn’t a little more pressure and a spotlight on my season, seeing as how close I was last year and where I am ranked now, said Porter through email. “It actually doesn’t mean much. I just have to remember to take it one match at a time and wrestle my matches to the best of my ability.”

Deann Stevens contributed to this story.
Both Lofton and Stevens work for the Kent State Athletic communications department.

“I became obsessed, so to speak, with getting a starting spot on the team. I focused on wrestling all summer.”

— Jermail Porter, senior wrestler
EXCELLENCE in Action

JOIN FORD’S FANATICS THIS SEASON!

Be a part of the Excitement!

TICKET INFO: 330-672-2244
WWW.KENTSTATESPORTS.COM