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Paws & Affection

Hannah Olson

Iowa State University

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WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE: BRENDAN DUNPHY
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ULTRA LOUNGE
Thursday - Saturday
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Reservations and VIP options available
You know what they say about people who assume: they suppose something to be the case, without proof. That's what they say, right?

Despite generally-accepted conventional wisdom to the contrary, making assumptions and "judging a book by its cover" isn't always a bad thing. Making and acting on assumptions is part of human nature that can save us time and keep us safe. Notice someone's never in class? You might not want to pick them as a project partner. See mold on your bread? You throw it out (well, you should). You may have even picked up this magazine because you "judged it by its cover"—or approached this page with hesitation after seeing my photo.

But when it comes to people, the overused "cover" aphorism holds true. We often get caught up in judging people based on a single aspect of their identity, printing our own homemade cover and shoddily slapping it on them, not bothering to find out what they're really about.

It's not hard to fix this. All it takes is getting to know people as individuals—not as the identity that you project on them. Doing this will broaden your worldview and allow you to meet a lot of interesting, cool people. You'll start to realize that certain groups of people aren't as scary or unapproachable as you thought.

Taking the time to get to know people as individuals will shatter any ill-informed stereotypes you have. Not all "stoners" are slackers. In fact, many are productive, hard-working students. Blindness doesn't prevent people from attending, and succeeding in, college. Wiccans are only another peaceful religious group—they just cast a few more spells than those we're more familiar with. For some women, a part-time job getting partially naked can be an empowering way to help pay for school.

I fear that saying this too much will somehow make me become Oprah, but it's true—everyone has a unique and personalized story. It may be interesting, boring, sad, inspiring or heart-warming, but the story is there, and it matters. We hope that after reading this issue, you'll see how this applies to our lives right here at Iowa State.

It's never a bad thing to break out of our comfort zones, to meet diverse people with different ideas, experiences and interests. We can learn more about them, and in turn, more about ourselves. I think that this issue of Ethos is a good start in that direction. We tried to give people a voice to explain who they are as individuals, and how they're more than the stereotypes that we seem to hear louder and more often.

If you're reading this page, you're already on your way to looking past the cover and finding things out for yourself. Remember what happens when you assume—you confine people to narrow, limiting boxes based on only a small facet of their identity.

Or something like that. 😊

Letter from the Editor

Trav Schon
Foreign Fiascos
The study abroad stories you don’t see on Facebook
BY BRITTA ROPPE

*Names have been changed or shortened so you don’t make fun of them in person (how dare you)*

Studying abroad can bring an onslaught of wonderful experiences, but it can also bring a few cross-cultural issues. Here are a few that made us laugh.

You Speaka My Language?
Aubrey Foulk went on a two-week-long research trip to Ingey, Norway with a few other Iowa State Students and professors.

“On our way to the research station, we ended up having a layover in one of the cities that we were at, and they were having a huge bike race [and show],” she says. “They were doing this BMX bike-racing thing, and the announcer guy ended up grabbing me out of the crowd and dragging me into the middle of their performance—but I don’t speak Norwegian. He kept telling me to do things, and I didn’t know what to do. So I’m just standing there and the [BMX] guy is jumping over me and doing all these fancy things, and he was trying to get me to put my arms out, but he had to keep motioning because that was the only way the language thing was working. I was just standing there and smiling at him like ‘I don’t know what I’m supposed to do.’ All of these people are standing around watching me and I don’t know what’s happening. I don’t know what’s going on!”

Out Of Bed Experience
Allie* studied abroad in Hochschule in Mannheim, Germany. One weekend, her and a group of friends hopped on an overnight bus to Amsterdam. “We got [to Amsterdam] at 8 in the morning, and there were a couple of people in our group who knew a little bit about the scene,” she explained. “They said ‘OK, we’re going to go visit a coffee shop.’ And I was like, ‘Perfect! We’re going to go to a coffee shop, we’re going to get some breakfast, and we’re going to get some coffee. I’m so excited!’ We go into a coffee shop, and there are six things on the menu—three of them are joints.”

Allies response? “This is not a coffee shop! What am I supposed to get here?” She got her first space bar, a breakfast bar with weed in it. “It was the first time I ever [tried weed]. So I didn’t know what to expect, and when you eat it, it takes a while for it to digest, I guess. I ate it when we were back at our hostel. I was like ‘Awe, this isn’t kicking in. I’m not feeling anything. What a waste of six euro.”

Allie took a nap (since the bar was having no affect) after they arrived at their hotel in late morning.

“I woke up from my nap, and it’s kind of a body high when you eat them, I remember waking up and feeling like ‘Oh my God, I can’t move my body!’ and so I was just lying there and my eyes were moving back and forth really fast, and I was like ‘I’m awake but no one knows because I can’t move my body.’ I felt like such an idiot because I was just lying there just listening to everything going on and I was like, ‘This is so cool!’ It didn’t last very long though, and after a while I got up and I was like, ‘Guys, I just had a blast by myself on my bed!’

River Of Shit
Jackie* went on a month long trip with the International Student Volunteers to Thailand.

“It was completely culturally different,” she says. “The markets would have raw squids out everywhere that had just been sitting there, and people would buy them and eat them.”

She got to spend her first two weeks helping care for elephants on an elephant reserve by washing them in the river Khwae. Side note: standing and swimming down stream from pooping elephants is not a good idea.

Speaking of using the bathroom, Jackie wasn’t feeling too well one night so she retired to bed early and soon discovered that she hadn’t recovered the next day.

“I thought I was better and we were building this wall to keep the elephants in and I got all ready to go out and to build the wall, and all of a sudden I was like, oh my god, I’m going to shit my pants. I ran as fast as I could to toward the bathroom, but there are steps before the bathroom and as I’m running down the steps, I just seriously pooped my pants [on the steps]. I couldn’t even believe it. It’s like 120 degrees out, I’m in this foreign country and I have to wash my clothes in the river.”

5 Things You Can Do With This Magazine
(other than read it)

1. Use it as a fan—a cool, culturally relevant fan
2. Make cryptic, ransom-style notes
3. Carve it out and use it to hide a (very small) secret item
4. Glue on eyes and use it as a puppet
5. Collect them all! (Please don’t actually try to do this)
What The Hell To Do In Iowa

How to have fun amidst all the corn

BY ANDREAS HAFFAR

You find yourself smack dab in the middle of the United States, feeling deprived of fun and exciting things to do or see. You may ask yourself, "What the hell is there to do and see in Iowa?" We’re here to answer that age-old question by presenting a handful of ideas to save you from your enervating boredom.

The World’s Largest Concrete Gnome

WHERE: Ames (Reiman Gardens)

In this garden, standing at an impressive 15 feet tall and weighing in at 3,500 pounds, hailing from Reiman Gardens, ladies and gentlemen, the World’s Largest Concrete Gnome, Elwood. This colossal lawn ornament was created by Andy and Connie Kautza in Wisconsin at the request of Reiman Gardens staff. In spring 2010, the bearded beast moved to Iowa State University to live life as a full-time outdoor model—the profession most gnomes tend to pursue. Coming up on Elwood’s five-year anniversary this spring, he’s still a sight to behold. Iowa State students are given free admission to Reiman Gardens with their student ID.

Zombie Burger (original)

WHERE: Des Moines and West Des Moines (45 min. south of Ames)

Few restaurants in the state, if any, can compete with the post-apocalyptic-themed Zombie Burger. The original, located in downtown Des Moines, features a number of cleverly-named and hunger-quenching burgers such as the Juan of the Dead, They’re Coming to Get You Barbara and the Undead Elvis in various sizes or “taps” such as single, double or—at the risk of limiting your mobility and making you groan, much like a zombie—a triple. A Zombie Burger experience isn’t complete without indulging in the restaurant’s “Drink Lab,” whether it be a Zombie Bride Wedding Cake Shake or the bacon-included Chuck Norris “headshot” drink. But before you embark on this, there are few things you should be aware of; you’ll want to bring a first-aid kit and the food has a diabetic level of calories. You can’t say we didn’t warn you.

Villisca Murder House

WHERE: Villisca (2.5 hours southwest of Ames)

Attention believers of the supernatural and the superstitious: we recommend taking a trip to Villisca, Iowa—at your own risk. For just over a hundred years, stories circulated around the isolated town of Villisca regarding the mysterious and eerie Ax Murder House where in 1912, six children and two adults were savagely murdered in their sleep. To this day, the case remains unsolved despite the number of possible suspects and theories about who committed this horrendous act and why. Since the house opened as an exhibit in the 1990s, paranormal investigation teams and ghost enthusiasts have flocked to examine the historic spot after multiple stories of bizarre and paranormal experiences surfaced. Visitors are able to take day or overnight tours of the house with prices depending on the number of people in a group. Braving a night alone in the “not-so abandoned” home will cost you around $80.

Maquoketa Caves State Park

WHERE: Maquoketa (3 hours east of Ames)

Iowa may be known for it’s abundance of farmland, but perhaps one of the more beautiful and visually-striking sites in the “corn state” is the Maquoketa Caves State Park. This is an intriguing destination for a weekend of activities including camping, fishing, picnicking and hiking the six-mile trails that feature the impressive 17-ton “Balanced Rock.” However, its 16 unique caves, the most of any park in Iowa, are what set it apart from the rest. You’ll need headlights and flashlights for some of these caves, while others require you to crawl through on your stomach—so be prepared to get down and dirty. It’s a solid getaway for lovers of the outdoors.

Don’t Be The Person Who...

- Walks too confidently in front of a bus
- Takes up two seats on the bus
- Skypes in the library
- Posts a screenshot of a “funny” text you sent
- Wears Hawkeye clothing around campus
- Drinks soda for breakfast
- Coughs in class without covering your mouth
- Has a 300-second snap story
- Relies on coffee to be their personality
- Complains that cell phones are ruining our generation
- Gives attention to radicalists in the free-speech zone
- Types an ellipses in every text...

Did You Know?

The SHOP (Students Helping Our Peers) is a student-run food pantry located in 2616 Food Sciences Building. It’s geared toward ISU students and faculty, but operates on an anonymous basis and anyone in need is welcome to check it out.
“These guys are great escape artists!” exclaims freshman Kayleigh Slater as she wrestles with an ornery grey cat. She and freshman Jylian Ramsey are tackling the less-than-glamorous job of cleaning feline cages. Across the room is a bulletin board with the phrase, “Unconditional love given here!” Ramsey and Slater are volunteering at the Jewell Animal Hospital, a small veterinary clinic in southern Hamilton County. They are involved in a club called Students Helping Rescue Animals (SHRA). The student organization helps local homeless animals through volunteerism, fundraising and education.

“Helping animals is important to me because I believe that they need a voice. Although there are many causes in the world, this one is closest to my heart due to the selfless love animals return even after they have been through abuse and neglect,” says club President Morgan Shaver. Students who are involved with SHRA have the opportunity to go to the Jewell Animal Hospital as well as other local shelters in Story County.

Students volunteer by cleaning and sweeping in the shelters, playing with animals, as well as walking and exercising dogs. This is a win-win for both critter and student. Shelter managers receive free help, animals get well-deserved attention and students can relieve college-induced stress by playing with pets. Students can sign up for times to volunteer that work for them, so the excuse “It doesn’t work for my schedule” is nonexistent.

“I love giving each dog special attention and cuddles,” SHRA vice president Kyla Rand says. “I really feel like I can make a difference in these animals’ lives, even if it’s just taking them for a walk for a few minutes.”

Jewell Animal Hospital, one of the two locations where SHRA members volunteer, is run by Iowa State graduate, Dr. Lisa Hindle Deppe, who is incredibly passionate about rescuing animals. On her blog, she states, “Someone once said to me, ‘There are veterinarians who help some animal rescues. You are not one of those vets. You are an animal rescuer who just happens to be a veterinarian.’ I believe every animal has a story. I am fortunate enough to be able to share some of them.”

She and Jewell Animal Hospital employee, Amy Bonin, share a love of animals of all shapes and sizes. Bonin introduced her own lively Yorkie puppy while explaining, “I love the Iowa State volunteers, they help me out by sweeping, mopping and playing
with the animals. We want it to be a clean environment for the animals here.”

It takes a lot of effort to run an animal shelter. Volunteers from Iowa State help by walking and exercising the animals; giving them the individual attention they deserve, but wouldn’t otherwise receive.

SHRA also strives to educate the students of Iowa State about important animal issues such as puppy mills, animal adoption myths, spaying and neutering, dog fighting and diseases associated with shelter animals. Displayed on the wall of Jewell Animal Hospital are a large number of collars from dogs rescued from puppy mills. Many are simply chains or zip ties that could have hurt the puppies wearing them.

“We like to keep them here as a tribute to all of the puppy mill dogs we’ve rescued here,” Dr. Hindle Deppe explains.

They hope spreading awareness around Iowa State will help to combat these issues. Money raised by SHRA fundraisers go toward helping the shelters function because operating a shelter isn’t cheap. In order to help meet their needs, SHRA hosts a variety of fun and informative events throughout the year such as:

- Walk for Wet Noses 5K: a 5K run/walk fundraiser in October
- Coins for Critters: a local campaign where SHRA members give businesses jars to set out and collect change from their customers to help animals
- Have A Heart Adoption Event: a lively springtime event where local shelters bring their adoptable animals to the ISU campus. There are also raffles, bake sales and doggy kissing booths—oh my!

“I love when these stories have a happy ending,” says Bonin, as she describes a stray dog that was brought in earlier in the week and was reunited with its owner that morning.

Displayed in the front of Jewell Animal Hospital, there is a binder labeled “Rescue Stories” thicker than most dictionaries, and bursting at the seams with happy endings.

“All animals deserve love and respect, and unfortunately, many animals don’t get what they deserve,” says Rand. “Whether they came from an abusive or neglectful past or from a family who can no longer care for them, they still deserve a happy future. I make it my goal to do whatever I can to help these shelter animals [get adopted].”

Thanks to Students Helping Rescue Animals, animals in Story County will continue to have more and more happily-ever-afters.
Do you think that having a Christmas gift can make a difference in a relationship? This is pretty much all up to the gift givers and receivers. Something that is fun and flirty but kind of quirky like the relationship you guys share. Maybe a funny mug or t-shirt—something that says, “This is fun, let’s not change it.”

1-4 Dates
You’ve now moved on and have been on a few dates with this person. What gifts would I give them? The suggested gifts here would be a card with maybe a gift card to their favorite restaurant. Don’t go out and spend a fortune on a fancy dinner, maybe cook dinner.

2-3 Months
At this point, you have been together for a while. The gifts can become more practical, like stuff they need—but they can also be something romantic and extravagant, like nice jewelry. If you live together, it could be something your partner thinks the apartment needs or maybe something they want. At this stage gifts can get more expensive—but you’re too in love to care...right?

4-6 Months
Reaching four to six months can be a game-changer in a relationship because not a lot of relationships last that long. Many couples have met the parents and said I love you by this mile mark. This is the stage where gifts don’t—or shouldn’t—matter as much because you are in love. Homecrafted gifts are the best—they can be something simple, like pictures of the two of you in a “memory book” or a love letter. A minimalist could do a sneaky love note in a new wallet for them. It will surprise them the first time and serve as a little reminder that you were thinking of them.

7+ Months
Is a card still appropriate for this occasion, or will it make them think you don’t care? You’re still having fun but not serious yet, so gifts should be more fun and flirty—but still thoughtful. But never go over 30 dollars plus dinner. Concert tickets for the two of you to go to together would be perfect.

End of the relationship
But what if the relationship is headed south? Can you break up with someone right before Christmas? If you’re not that person and you are waiting until after the holidays, not getting them a gift is just asking to be dumped. Get them something they will use—but that’s not romantic. A pair of headphones or a scarf is a perfect idea. They’re things they will use, but won’t remind them of you.

If you still can’t think of any ideas, just remember to keep the gift personalized and don’t be too worried about not spending enough on them. After all, it’s the thought that counts.
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WRAP IT UP

Avoid the panic of romantic presents with this guide

If you still can’t think of any ideas, just remember to keep the gift personalized and don’t be too worried about not spending enough on them. After all, it’s the thought that counts.

Christmas is coming around and you just starting dating your new bae. How do you say Merry Christmas and show that you love spending time with them without saying I love you? Simple: you follow the dating timeline.

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1-4 Dates

You’ve now moved on and have been on a few dates with this person. What gifts would I give them? The suggested gifts here would be a card with maybe a gift card to their favorite restaurant. Don’t go out and spend a fortune on a fancy dinner, maybe cook dinner.

Do f*ck buddies even share Christmas presents?

This is pretty much all up to the gift givers and receivers. Something that is fun and flirty but kind of quirky like the relationship you guys share. Maybe a funny mug or T-shirt—something that says, “This is fun, let’s not change it.”

College Hook-ups
“I’ve got just the thing!” A howling cackle of laughter erupts. “You just gotta dig around for the good stuff,” says Christy Radach, owner and operator of Grandma’s Attic in Campustown.

Radach may have an easy job, selling beads, but now in her eleventh year of owning Grandma’s Attic, she ultimately knows it’s a more than just that.

“Most people come in with an idea of what they want but sometimes, extracting that idea is the hardest part there is,” she cACKLES.

Beading is a majority of the business of Grandma’s Attic, located on Welch Avenue in Ames’ Campustown. The art consists of using beads, stones or gems to create unique pieces of jewelry. While her work doesn’t stop at just plain arts and crafts, Radach explains that’s always been a part of her life.

“I’ve been working with my hands for as long as I can remember, my whole life,” says Radach. “In particular, I’d say 30 years ago, somebody gave me a box of embroidery floss a nun had given them—and being young with no job at the time—I started making friendship bracelets and went to rock concerts and left with more money than I came in with. So I said, ‘hmmm....’”

Christy Radach later met her husband, Alan, who collected rocks.

“I’ve been collecting rocks since the time I could walk and even till this day, sometimes on my way from home,” says Alan Radach. “When I showed Christy the rocks I’ve been collecting, she began to get interested in the many kinds there are and it started to fuel her interest in what you can do with them.”

Alan collects a wide variety of rocks, precious stones and other things found in the ground (no, seriously.) Christy and Alan combined their passions and found out they can put their obsessions into practical use for others to enjoy by making jewelry.

“I started making jewelry from a purple Volkswagen van with daisies painted on it and we would go to craft shows, traveling around with our stuff,” Christy says. “I started to collect beads and when my daughter was born, I created my first business, Radical Rose, to design stuff!”

That was over 20 years ago.

The previous owner of Grandma’s Attic owned the shop for 18 years. The last nine of those years, Christy worked alongside her.

“The woman who owned [Grandma’s Attic] called me up one Thanksgiving break and explained she was getting swamped and needed help,” Christy says. “So it was the first job I had someone call and begged me to work for them,” she chuckles.

Previously, Christy had worked in historic downtown Ames before moving to Campustown to become a part of Grandma’s Attic. The move was a perfect decision, as the students in Campustown contribute to why Christy has been part of the community so long.

“I love being a part of Campustown now,” Christy grins. “You never know what’s going to happen. You’ll be sitting here and some girl will go by with a tall and kitty-cat ears and I’ll just be like...that was cool. Yet it’s strange to see how they keep getting younger and younger every year,” she cackles.

Grandma’s Attic offers, to say the least, custom jewelry work and repairs, tapestries and incentive. The items in the store are meticulously curated, with tapestries from a trader Christy knows in Africa or genuine gemstones she hand selects from dealers in India and Oregon.

“The best part about finding and buying some of these beads is that they don’t go bad...they’re a safe investment,” says Alan.

He helps manage the inventory, finances and general upkeep of the shop alongside Christy.

“Some of these stones we find are just such high quality, they’ll keep for years. So we naturally decided that there’s no such thing as buying too many beads.”

There are more than 210 trays of beads with between 18 to 24 varieties in each tray. Excluding the strands of jewelry hanging in the shop—and Christy’s “private collection,” (most of which she’s memorized)—the shop has around 4,000 beads to choose from. “Beads just...accumulate...” says Christy. “But the only thing in my life that is anal-retentively organized are my bead trays. I know where every bead is and where it should be. I can walk past a tray and see something that’s slightly not the right shape or size and know exactly where it should be.”

“I like the idea about our ‘Attic’ because you never know what you’re gonna find digging in the attic,” says Christy. “We’re not a ‘buy something and get out’ kind of shop, it’s a wander around, enjoy yourself and play with the toys kind of place. We like to hang out and have fantastic conversations about just weird stuff like Buddha or astrophysics. We have big, comfy chairs so people like to sit around.”

Alan describes Grandma’s Attic as a little confusing—in a good way. The shop’s large assortment of items may be disorienting, but that’s exactly what their store is all about—spending a good time looking around.

“I walk by [Grandma's Attic] every day and I've always had some interest, so I stopped by,” says Dillon Olson, senior in marketing. “It just has this home feel and as I was looking around, I was most impressed how Christy told me about where everything came from.”

Olson ended up creating a leather necklace with an Indian water buffalo tooth and Israeli wood pieces. “I had a vision, kind of, of what I wanted, but [Christy] really helped me well,” Olson says. “I think it turned out really nice.”

“I like to say that my goal is to make sure when you walk in here, you won’t find anything in here that you’ll find anywhere else,” said Christy. The main gem dealer she buys from visits Grandma’s Attic once a year from Oregon. “He drives a generic white van and comes in with cardboard orange crates filled with Ziploc bags with the most amazing rocks you’ll ever see in your life. These are things I pick out individually, so they’re not something you pick out from a book or a catalog online—and then they send me whatever they want—I pick this strand because I like this bead,” she says.

Christy takes on several commission pieces to do repair work on jewelry as well. Thanks to a handful of leftover pieces of stones she has collected from her grandmother, who helped inspire her to make jewelry, repairs get done quickly with second-hand materials from past works, or get recycled for future use.

“The most precious thing I got from my grandmother was a bag of all of her broken stuff,” Christy said. “It’s all just random things that used to be bracelets, used to be whatever, broken items that wouldn’t function as jewelry. It’s first, just a hug from my grandma because it holds all of my early memories of her, and second, her old stuff is a valuable resource of just all kinds of sizes, colors and shapes for things that I can fix in repairs.”

“It might look like a bag of broken junk, but it’s a hug, from my grandma to me.”

As Grandma’s Attic continues to expand its collection, the shop has no plans to stop looking for new items to add. The couple just hopes to be able to keep doing what they’re doing.
“I’m sure my husband would like me to make more money—we’re lucky to have kept our doors open for over twenty years,” said Christy. “Whatever you decide to do, find something you love and you’re really passionate about. Most businesses go out in three years, and we’re really lucky to be here because I’ve been doing this forever and I love what I do every single day.”

Alan currently works as a custodian at Iowa State. He focuses on working to contribute any way he can to keep the store running.

“When it rolls around to tax season, sometimes I roll my eyes and think, ‘Why am I doing this,’” Christy says. “I made earrings out of corn the other day, like, they were super cool. 😊

“How many people get to make earrings out of corn? That’s the kind of thing that keeps me going, it excites me. If I can keep doing it for more years to come, I’d be a happy girl.”

Christy Radach is in her 11th year of running Grandma’s Attic in Campustown.

GRANDMA’S FAVORITE BEADS so far

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEAD TYPE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHOCOLATE LAVA:</strong></td>
<td>“It had some long Hawaiian name for it, so I helped rename it. He says it’s actually from Indonesia, since Hawaiian lava is supposedly cursed. Pele (the Hawaiian Fire Goddess) does not want her lava stolen, so people return rocks back all the time if they find out it’s Hawaiian.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LAPIS LAZULI:</strong></td>
<td>“This stuff is so beautiful. I’ve been here for 11 years and we’ve never had big pieces of Lapis, just little pieces. He kept pulling out bag after bag that I never made it to the turquoise, which is really unusual for me because I buy a lot of turquoise.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BLACK-LIP SHELL:</strong></td>
<td>“Ordinarily, this stuff is just processed, laminated and stamped out by a machine. These are different because it takes the skill of an artist to make these kinds of cuts and colors. Someone took their mind, and their art to make it something more, and I like that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RHINO JASPER:</strong></td>
<td>“This stuff is just cool. It has such a neat texture to it! I mean yeah it’s dyed and processed—and I don’t prefer to buy a lot of that stuff—this stuff is way cool and you don’t see this everywhere.”</td>
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"I smoke more now than I ever have, and my grades are better in college than they have ever been," says Dan*, a sophomore in industrial design.

He feels using cannabis improves his creativity. It helps him to listen in class, especially if he would otherwise not be interested. Dan also claims it hasn't negatively affected his grades and says that he does much better work while high,"

“It makes the ideation process easier. I feel like I can come up with creative ideas quicker. It makes me less hesitant to put pen to paper.”

The stereotypical “stoner” is supposed to be unmotivated and absentminded. But we’ve come a long way from “Reefer Madness,” the 1936 cautionary tale with a fictionalized and highly exaggerated take on the use of marijuana. According to The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), a group advocating for the legalization of marijuana, 14 million Americans admit to being regular recreational cannabis users, many of them productive members of society.

Cannabis has been used since ancient times. Evidence of its use dates back to 8,000 BCE and is believed to be the first plant cultivated by humans. Today, it remains a prevalent part of many people’s lives, including students here at Iowa State.

The U.S. congress passed the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937 criminalizing the selling and use of the drug. Ever since, marijuana has gotten a bad rap and is considered to have the potential to ruin your life. Some ISU students that use marijuana regularly have a different opinion. Dan has been using cannabis for three years. He was first introduced to the substance in high school by some friends on the cross country team. He has no problem finding it, or others that smoke it, at Iowa State. He gets high an average of three times a day and considers it a hobby. It has also helped him to make new friends.
Dan says he could stop smoking at any time without a problem, but he doesn’t feel the need to stop. “TV, food, sex, homework, cleaning; it makes literally everything better,” he says. Dan says smoking weed helps him deal with his stress more effectively. He struggles with anxiety and depression and has found that the medical properties of cannabis help make him feel better.

Dan says that he could blame his habit of procrastination on his drug use, but he knows he would find another reason to procrastinate even if he wasn’t using marijuana. Beside the fact that it’s illegal, he is concerned about the amount of money he spends to smoke regularly—around $45 a week.

“I just don’t think it’s hard to get good grades and still smoke weed sometimes,” says Katie*, a senior in philosophy.

She tried cannabis for the first time her senior year of high school. She had never drank alcohol or smoked before that, and for the past three years, she has smoked an average of three or four joints a day. As this is her last year at ISU, she has cut back to only smoking at night.

Katie says it’s all about when you smoke and knowing what works for you.

“I don’t feel as confident to talk in class when I’m super stoned, so I’m smoking less in the day now,” she says. “If you are the kind of person that can’t do homework and study after you smoke, then you shouldn’t smoke during the day.”

Katie says she’s found what works for her and doesn’t have a problem balancing smoking and school.

“I study philosophy, so a lot of the time when writing papers, I have to analyze things, and I think weed kind of like guides it. It makes me curious, I guess.”

For Katie, getting high is also a way to bond with her friends. She says that smoking with friends is like an event or activity to do together. She estimates that 70% of people she’s met at ISU use cannabis.

“I’ve met a lot of cool people that have the same kind of mentality as me, it’s a social thing for me. It’s a way to connect with people.”

Katie is physically active and works hard at school and her job. As she is physically and mentally tired at the end of the day, she enjoys using cannabis to help her relax.

“I think it’s important to be mindless after being mindful all day.”

She aspires to one day be a philosophy professor, and will likely move to a state where it is legal—she plans to continue her cannabis use after college.

For a world that never skips a beat or turns off, could a victimless fulfillment be misunderstood?

“We all have our indulgences. Everyone needs a way to chill out.”

“We’ve come a long way from ‘Reefer Madness.’”

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**Weed Slang**

**Smoke you up/out:** letting a friend or someone smoke your weed with you for free

**Bowl:** part of the smoking device that the weed goes into

**Load/pack a bowl:** to pack marijuana (weed, mary jane) into the bowl piece of your pipe/bong/etc

**Cashing the bowl:** when you’ve finished smoking and you dump out the ashes

**Match:** A term referred to putting in an equal amount of weed to the rest of the people in your smoking group.

**Greens/spark:** the first person to light the new bowl of weed

Courtesy of UrbanDictionary.com
Inside the OCCULT

Local wiccans clear up their beliefs

BY NIK HEFTMAN  DESIGN NAILAH FITZGERALD  PHOTO ISAAC BIEHL

There were nine participants total. The group members were diverse in both age and experience. The room was large, and several small candles were placed in two corners of the room, providing light for the ceremony. Participants were immediately overwhelmed by sweet smells of cinnamon, pickled spices and pumpkins upon entrance of the room. Eleven chairs were set in a circle around an altar, on which pumpkins, herbs, a cornucopia and other relics of the passing fall were placed.

One by one, the members were greeted and purified of all negativity with the use of incense. A burning, sweet smelling incense candle was waved around the members. This process is also known as smudging. They were then anointed with oil. The oil was rubbed on their foreheads by another member. Once the cleansing was completed, it was time to cast circle and start the ritual.

The ritual lasted for about two hours, and it consisted of prayer to the respective deities, meditation, the honoring of their fallen ancestors or loved ones through offerings of herbs and a lot of chanting and dancing. The atmosphere was very much alive that night.

Wicca, commonly known as witchcraft, is a pagan religion with inspirations that can be traced back centuries before the onset of Christianity. It is a nature-based religion, for Wiccans see the earth and its elements as sacred. The religion strives to put their beliefs of the sacredness of nature out as an alternative to the destructive nature of the world. Wicca does not have a set doctrine, but Wiccans generally do not believe in punishment after death. Many wiccans share a belief in karma and reincarnation in a sense that the actions done by one in this life will affect one’s next life.

“The religion as it stands today is pretty much a modern blend of ancient inspiration, modern psychology and unverified personal gnosis,” says Liz, a practicing Wiccan and founder of a local pagan group named Persephone’s Children. Liz was introduced to Wicca in the mid ‘90s as a teenager. Despite resistance from a strictly religious family, Liz found her niche in Wicca. “The minute I latched onto [Wicca], it changed my life,” she says.

Persephone’s Children is based out of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames. The group was named after the Greek Goddess of the Underworld. According to Greek mythology, Persephone is also the Goddess of crops and summertime, and every six months she returns from the underworld. For the ancient Greeks, Persephone’s return explained the shift from winter to summer.

The group of around eight people meets on the third Friday of each month, and they provide a comfortable atmosphere for pagans to socialize and learn from each other, as well as practice their rituals. “We just welcome everyone,” says Liz, “If you’re willing to dance with us we will dance with you.” Not everyone in Persephone’s children is Wiccan. The group has members of several spiritual paths and backgrounds, for paganism itself is an umbrella term that encompasses practitioners with many different beliefs and practices.
different spiritual doctrines. “These paths that you will find at a gathering such as Persephone’s Children are about learning the lessons that come to you in life,” says Seth, a local pagan who has been a member of Persephone’s children for six months. “It’s about growth, personal growth, and also contributing to the community so that those around you can grow.”

Seth, 21, first interacted with the occult at age 9 when a friend of his brought a tarot deck of cards to school. Seth, like Liz, was also brought up in a strictly religious household. This sort of backstory was common amongst the members of Persephone’s Children. Most of them were raised in Christian households and did not feel a spiritual connection to the religion.

Rituals are also a defining trait of Persephone’s Children. October 16 marked the third Friday of October, which is the day that Persephone’s Children celebrated Samhain, one of the eight holidays observed by pagans throughout the year. “Samhain is a time to honor our ancestors and those who have gone before [us],” says Liz. Samhain means “summer’s end,” and it is often regarded as “Witch’s New Year.” It is celebrated around the final day of the fall equinox and start of the Winter solstice.

Magic also played a vital role in the execution of the ritual. “We do all the steps of a full ritual with a spell or magical working at the center,” says Liz, “we consider spells and ritual to be equivalent to prayers and church services; they are done for the same reasons, such as holidays, life passages [and] asking for something.”

Magic is not in the form of levitation or sparkling wands that many have become so accustomed to seeing in the media. “[Magic] can be an attitude,” says Clyde, a local and long time practicing Wiccan. “Like when you realize the magic and beauty around you, it’s a sort of acknowledgement.” The universally accepted definition of magic was written by famous mystic Dion Fortune— “[Magic is] the art of changing consciousness at will.” In simpler terms, magic can be defined as projecting your will toward an act.

Wicca may not be the number one religious practice in America in terms of numbers, but it is certainly one of the most misunderstood religions on planet. Several members of Persephone’s Children asked to keep their identities concealed, for many of their family members do not know that they are pagans, even after years of practice. Many Wiccans are not open about their religion at all, for the threat of losing their jobs, and even their children, is imminent. “Most people may think that [Wicca] is some sort of satanism,” says Clyde, “We’re the furthest thing from satanism that you could imagine because we don’t believe in Satan.”

Liz, along with other members of her group, feel that Wicca is viewed negatively due to its portrayal in the media. Millions of people are brought up into religions that denounce the practices of Wicca. Developing an understanding between themselves and the public has proven to be a real challenge for Wiccans, but members of Persephone’s Children believe that living positive lives will help debunk the negative image that has been cast upon the religion. “We’re perfectly ordinary people just like [everyone else],” says Liz, “What we want to give to you is our support in your own healing, and our support in whatever your spiritual path may be.”

“The minute I latched onto [Wicca], it changed my life.”
School of Hard Rock
Balancing passion and responsibility

BY KAYLI NARTATEZ  DESIGN PAYTON GILMORE  PHOTO MEREDITH KESTEL AND JON LACZNIAK

The lights dim down to almost nothing, and a name flashes up on the screen. A strum of a guitar greets the audience before the artist in the flesh, but there is a faint smile on his lips as he sheepishly approaches the stool in the middle of the stage. The performer’s name is Phillip Lombardo, a graduate student by day and a wickedly talented guitarist by night. In the mix of acoustic performers and indie vocalists on a Thursday night at Zeke’s, a local music venue that provides students and locals the opportunity to perform, Lombardo stands out in the best way possible.

“I haven’t performed in around a year and a half,” he says with that same shy grin on his face. His eyes are filled with excitement and a bit of nervousness. “And I haven’t changed these strings in about the same time, so hopefully I don’t break one on stage.”

To musicians, these statements sound like the usual pre-show talk. When surrounded by other musicians whose skill levels you’re unsure of and talents you’re unaware, people tend to make excuses for themselves and brace for the worst — it’s a curse. They’re over-critical and opinions of themselves are enough to make even Jimmy Page breakdown on stage.

Back in the moment, Phillip’s recording is fresh from being burned right before the show and is being played over the speakers. It’s a bit quiet at first, Phillip’s hesitance clear as he dictates a few alterations in the levels. Once the sound is figured out, he’s playing as if all previous doubt has vanished with the drop of a hat and his fingers move surely across the neck of a beautiful custom-modified 1999 Ibanez JEM7D.

The audience is silent, most staring in awe and others nodding along to the beat. Lombardo is lost in the music, his eyes shut tight and his face portraying the emotions written into the music as he shreds and frets away. Somehow, without any lyrics, Lombardo does what musicians do best and portrays a million emotions in one song. As a graduate student sure of his talents and experienced in the art of balancing passion and priorities, Lombardo has found a way to make a place for music in his life as many students try to do in their time at Iowa State.

One of the hardest parts of maintaining a musical environment in a college town like Ames has to do with the obvious focus on academics. Not as many people are focused on the artistry, but for those who are balancing academic excellence and musical expansion, not having the proper outlets of expression can cause difficulties. Luckily in Ames, there are a variety of ways to stay involved without overwhelming yourself.

Students with majors ranging from biology informatics to aerospace engineering to elementary education can be found performing at Zeke’s, The M-Shop or other locations at any given day of the week. For some, music can be their sanity. Difficult classes and limited breaks make for a lot of pent-up stress, frustration and emotion.

GENRE, or “Gathering Everyone Nearby to Raucously Entertain”, is one unique club on campus that allows students the opportunity to find other students that have similar “sounds” to form bands, create jam sessions
and gain experience performing around Ames and the Des Moines area. The club has weekly meetings where activities range from acoustic jam sessions to Rockband battles on the projector screens. The club provides a great environment to prosper as a musician without taking away from completing schoolwork.

"By joining GENRE, I was able to find a group of people who are in the same place as I am in life, and understand that I might not always be able to practice at 4am," one of the members explains, laughing.

Julia Studer, a member of GENRE says it helps her relax.

"Music lets me take a well earned break from constant labs and tough classes every week," she explains.

Studer isn’t the only student who feels the pressures of a difficult major and equally difficult classes. One of the performers at Zeke’s, a freshman in aerospace engineering, explains that Thursday nights are the only nights he has free to relax and take time to himself.

Beyond simply allowing for stress relief, the music scene in Ames is actually expanding.

“There’s a great amount of diversity and musically-interested people here. The talent is here, the crowd base is here and even professional studios are here,” Lombardo says. With a constantly developing music scene, Ames is the perfect outlet for students aiming to gain a degree and also spend time working on themselves as musicians.

Being a musician can be all-consuming. It’s extremely difficult to balance schoolwork and being involved in a band or performing solo. Between booking shows, practicing, and songwriting, it can be almost impossible to focus on academics. There’s a reason, after all, that so many musicians drop out of school entirely to follow a dream of becoming an international sensation. Luckily at Iowa State, students have the opportunity to focus on school and still explore their musical talents—and potentially even break into the greater Des Moines music scene.

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Get Involved

GENRE = Gathering Everyone Nearby to Raucously Entertain
Meetings | Thursdays in Lagomarcino Hall at 5PM

Zeke’s Live Music, Performing Arts, and Community Center
3329 Lincoln Way, Ames IA
Open Mic Night | Thursdays 8PM

Maintenance Shop
Located on the lower level of the MU
Open Mic Night | Tuesdays 8PM
TRAVELING ON A COLLEGE BUDGET

See the world without breaking the bank

Wanderlust: the strong, innate desire to rove or travel about. This yearning to travel—to experience different cultures, try unique foods, meet exciting new people, and see the breathtaking beauty the world has to offer—is a hunger many college students experience today. This past September, roughly 1,900 students showed interest in studying abroad by attending the Iowa State Study Abroad fair. The actual number of students who ventured out to see the world, however, is much lower.

In fall 2015, only about 200 students studied abroad, while almost an equal amount, 170 students, started the application process but dropped out before finishing it. The main reason people hesitate on following their dream of traveling? Money. Many students believe you have to be rich to travel, but by being resourceful and open to new opportunities, it’s possible to experience the wonderful joys of traveling without breaking the bank.
Hotels can be pricey; finding cheaper housing alternatives can save hundreds of dollars during your stay.

**Hostels.** “Hostels are cheap, and they are always good to meet new people from different countries and cultures,” said Liam Ballard, student from Wales who studied at Iowa State during the 2014/2015 academic year.

**Couchsurfing.org.** Peter Cruz, Program Coordinator in the ISU Study Abroad Office, has used couch surfing many times while traveling domestically and highly recommends the site to find free accommodations. Conducting research on hosts before staying with them and using common sense can help ensure safety and success.

**Airbnb and Home Exchange.** Airbnb allows travelers to rent out a room in someone’s home, or even their entire home on occasion, and Home Exchange facilitates the trading of houses between travelers.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Since teleportation is not an option yet, traveling to your desired destination can quickly rack up expenses if you’re not careful.

Choose travel agencies that offer discounts to students. STA Travel and StudentUniverse are two highly rated agencies that offer cheaper prices to travelers with student verification.

Search for tickets early and monitor prices to help ensure savings. Airline alerts and sites like airfarewatchdog.com can be helpful.

Compare prices between modes of transportation. Buses and trains usually offer low travel fares, but sometimes airlines like Ryanair in Europe offer flights for even less money and less travel time. For in-city travel, options like bike sharing systems can offer much cheaper transportation than taxis.

Volunteering or studying abroad offers the opportunity to explore a new culture, while giving you the chance to help others, learn and reduce travel costs at the same time.

**Teach English abroad.** One program for teaching abroad is the Peace Corps. Peter Cruz, ISU Study Abroad Program Coordinator, taught English at an after school youth center in Morocco for two years through the Peace Corps after finishing his undergrad. “Peace Corps volunteers are paid to cover their living expenses. If you are smart, you can actually save some money to do some traveling within the country [on your wages],” said Peter. “The Corps pays roughly equivalent to what a school teacher would make in that country.” They also provide all travel expenses getting you to and from your placement country.

**World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms.** This is a corporation that allows individuals to volunteer their time on organic farms all over the globe in exchange for housing accommodations and food.

**Study abroad.** Many scholarships are available to help students finance their study abroad experience. In some cases, studying abroad can be equal in price or cheaper than studying in a student’s home country.

**DO YOUR HOMEWORK**

Researching your travel destination can help you save and protect your money while traveling.

**Know the norms.** Avoid falling into tourist money traps by researching the norms of the area. For example, in Italy locals never tip wait staff, bartenders or taxi drivers.

**Research popular scams.** Scam artists love to prey on naive tourists. Checking your pocket after seeing a planted wallet on the ground shows pickpockets exactly where you keep your money. The small child that just bumped into you on the train could have easily taken something from your purse. And the cashier that was texting while checking you out? It’s possible she just took a picture of your credit card information.

**Travel off season.** By braving the less than ideal weather conditions, travelers can experience more intimate travel if they go during off season. Less tourists traveling at the same time means shorter lines at popular attractions, cheaper prices, and more opportunities to meet locals.

**VOLUNTEER OR STUDY ABROAD**

Learning how to manage and make money while abroad helps lessen the financial strain of traveling.

Choose your bank and credit cards wisely. Banks within the Global ATM Network waive ATM fees at participating locations, Charles Schwab Bank offers zero ATM fees no matter what ATM you use and has no account minimums, and credit card companies like Chase and Capital One offer card options with no foreign transaction fees and various travel rewards.

Work Abroad. Obtaining a working holiday visa (Australia and New Zealand), becoming a tour guide, and bartending are all great short-term options for meeting new people and obtaining some extra cash.
When you’re in high school and you find the special “one,” it most likely makes your high school experience even better. However, looming on the horizon is the approaching reality—college. It’s coming at you whether you like it or not, and if you go to different colleges, you wonder—are we going to stay together and do long-distance, or break up? It’s time to collect all the maturity you were supposed to be gaining over the years and make a decision.

Two couples who bravely took on the challenge of being in long-distance relationships at Iowa State, and survived them, share their journey.

The Nervous New Couple

Michaela Sir and Shaun Sperr began dating on July 11th, 2012, after graduating from Eden Prairie High School in Minnesota—“aka, the worst timing ever,” as Michaela calls it. Michaela thought the relationship would just be a “fun summer fling” before she went off to college at Taylor University in Indiana and Shaun went to Iowa State.

“I was convinced that I was supposed to meet someone in college, so I told Shaun right off the bat that we could say that we were dating, but that we were going to have to call it quits in August,” she says. “Towards the end of the summer, I felt so sick about it. Eventually, my dad told me to pray about it and that it wouldn’t be the end of the world if we kept dating and played it by ear.”

Sperr quickly agreed to try to make it work, and then they outlined their expectations for each other—how often they would talk on the phone and when they could see each other, among others.

“Even though it sounded easy enough at the time, many of those standards were hard to keep!” she says.

Making the decision to stay together was barely the beginning. When they moved away to different schools, Michaela describes that first time apart as “very surreal.”

“We were so new that I hadn’t had time to process what it was actually like to be in a relationship. I missed him,” she says, “the only thing that made it easier was when we saw each other, we got along so well that it would remind me why we did it in the first place.”

Michaela and Shaun eventually developed ways to make the distance a bit more bearable by using different methods of communication like Skype and even going old school by writing each other letters.

Although they had many ways of communicating, they explained that at times communication was not their strong point. They say they worked on it constantly, because a lot of spats happened when someone didn’t say that they were upset. To ease their frustrations, Michaela and Shaun took advantage of the conveniences of texting and talking on the phone, which strengthened their relationship.

The Confident Couple

Justin and Tracy started dating in July 2012, the summer before Tracy started her freshman year at Iowa State. Justin was already attending Northwest Missouri State University. When they left, staying together was a given. The two of them shared a strong belief in God and this supported the commitment they made to one another. They also planned ahead to handle the challenge of distance.
“We set up some dates where one of us would travel to see the other, and we exchanged schedules so we knew when each other would be free to talk on the phone,” Tracy says.

According to Justin and Tracy, that first time apart for them “wasn’t that difficult.” “The hardest part was not being able to see each other. It was easier because neither one of us was afraid to say we needed the other one to come. We both would go see each other whenever the other asked,” Tracy says. “It was difficult to say goodbye to each other, but we had an end goal (marriage) and it felt better being able to have a countdown to when it would be done.”

Similar to Michaela and Shaun, Tracy and Justin agree, “the biggest positive was that we could easily talk to each other. We were able to Skype which made not seeing each other a little easier.”

The Distance has been Dominated...

Michaela Sir (now Sperr) and Shaun Sperr got married on August 1st. The new Mrs. Sperr is glad it worked out.

“I think in general we did the best we could, and I am SO happy it is over!” she says.

Tracy and Justin Head tied the knot on August 15, 2015, after Tracy graduated from Iowa State.

“I look back at our relationship and I’m thankful what we went through. The distance made us appreciate our limited time together,” she says. “I feel that it made us stronger together because of the trust and communication we had to develop.”

The two couples, having successfully made it through a long-distance relationship offered their valuable advice for those who are in a long-distance relationship. They say there is no such thing as too much communication, and that you need to enjoy where you are at.

“Your time apart is nothing compared to how long you will stay together. You enjoy and embrace the experiences where you are at because it will be gone before you know it,” Tracy says.

Michaela and Shaun also have advice couples beginning a long-distance relationship.

“Only do distance if you are certain that you can see yourself with that person for the rest of your life, Michaela says.

“Distance, like marriage, will expose your underlying problems, not solve them—so get ready to become master communicators and work on a lot of selfish habits you didn’t even know you had!”

Whether you are nervous about entering a new relationship or you are completely confident, these couples show that making a long-distance relationship work is possible.

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5 tips on how to make your long-distance relationship easier

1. **Communication is Key.**
   Make each other feel that you are still a part of each other’s lives. You can skype, text or talk on the phone—whatever will keep the two of you communicating.

2. **Keep Busy**
   If you keep your schedule busy and give yourself a lot of things to do, you are less likely to get a chance to focus on how much you are missing your significant other.

3. **Visit Each Other**
   Because it is not often, the time you do get with one another is very precious. That is why it is important to put in the effort of visiting each other whenever you can/when it is convenient for each of you!

4. **Don’t sweat the small stuff…**
   The fact that you two go to two different schools sadly means that you are going to be making memories without each other. Do not freak out if you have not received a text back fast enough, odds are they are just busy doing school or social things, as are you.

5. **Focus on the Positives**
   Reassure each other why you are together and why you want it to work. Remember why you two are trying so hard in the first place.
OVERCOMING THE UNSEEN

Conquering college with a visual impairment

BY TRAER SCHON  DESIGN ALIXANDRIA COLLINS  PHOTO MCCLANE GILL
Outside of Friley on a fall afternoon, a student coasts down the hill on a longboard. Wearing a helmet and taking cautious strides, he sticks out as a beginner, but he’s quickly improving. He sets off on a trip around campus with a more experienced friend, and, lagging slightly, slowly approaches a group of students. He didn’t see them until the last minute and managed to squeeze in between them—barely. They look around, confused and a little annoyed.

“It’s OK,” his friend shouts. “He’s blind!” This daring longboarder is Leland Smith, a sophomore in Bioinformatics and Computational Biology who is determined to have a college experience just like anyone else’s.

In elementary school, he found out that he had Stargardt disease, the juvenile form of macular degeneration, which caused all of the rods and cones in his retinas to die off. His vision was relatively unaffected until fourth grade, when his eyesight started to decline. In fifth grade, over the course of just three months, his eyesight went from 20/60 to 20/246—where it is now. Put simply, this means that what someone with no vision loss sees 20 feet away, he sees with the detail as if it were 246 feet away.

“Basically, I can’t see that well,” he jokes.

Smith is one of 39 Iowa State students who have some type of vision issues and one of 15 who have serious vision issues or are blind. He is considered legally blind, as his central visual acuity, or straight-forward vision, is less than 20/200 in his better eye with correction. While this may be what people think of as “blind,” many students with vision issues on campus don’t all fall into this category.

“It’s quite a huge range,” says Wendy Stevenson, a Student Services Specialist for Student Disability Resources. “Visual impairments are anything from being color blind to being totally blind.”
Smith says that as a senior, he was nervous to go from the small and easy-to-navigate high school environment to a big university. In high school, he was trying to get by using the sight he still had, consistently spending five hours a night doing homework. His teachers just offered quick fixes, saying that things like learning braille and using a cane were a waste of time because he still had some sight left.

“Instead of fixing the problem of why I was struggling in school, they tried to find ways around it,” Smith says. “I knew that wasn’t going to work in college.”

Deciding to be proactive, he contacted the Iowa Department of the Blind about their blindness training program. He enrolled in the orientation program, thinking that he would just do it for the summer, but ended up taking off the fall semester to finish the training.

While he was in the training program, Smith lived at the Department in Des Moines. Over the course of the seven and a half months, every Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.–5 p.m., he learned how to do things independently like cook, use a cane, read and write braille, travel and do woodshop. He also learned how to use a computer with JAWS (Job Access With Speech), which reads everything on the screen and can be used for any type of computer work.

At training, he was thrown into things right away, being forced to walk a few blocks and cross three roads by himself in the first week he was there. By the end of the program, he was able to go all the way across town to the mall, walk around the area, and be back within two hours.

The department’s philosophy was that because they were learning non-visual techniques, they should be learned non-visually. So every day Smith was forced to wear sleep shades to block out all of his remaining sight.

“It was a huge confidence builder,” he says. “A lot of adjusting is having the confidence to be like, ‘Yes, I still can do this.’ I might not be able to do it the same way, but I can still do it.”

When he came into the program, he had never used a cane, braille or any special software, and Smith says learning these things has been an immense help in college. Although the program usually takes about a year, Smith was put on an accelerated version so that he could finish in time for Iowa State’s spring semester.
When he was looking at colleges, he wanted to find a school he liked that offered the major he wanted, just like anyone else, but he also wanted a place that gave accommodations and offered the student resources he needed to help him succeed.

“I wanted to actually meet up with [Student Disability Resources] and talk to them,” he says. “I knew I was going to be working with them throughout my whole college education, so I really wanted to make sure it was something I actually liked.”

Stevenson says that disabled students have more to consider when choosing colleges, but it’s still a similar process.

“They’re just like any other student in that they need to visit campus and they need to feel like this can be home for them,” she says. “They have to be comfortable and excited by their choice of coming here and feel like it’s a good fit.”

After a couple visits and meeting with the disability resources team, Smith was sold. Stevenson says that Student Disability resources works with disabled students in order to make getting around campus easier.

“We look at what their major is and what would be the closest to their classes,” she says. “We also can arrange it so that their classes are closer to each other, or that they get early registration so they can schedule enough time to get between classes.”
Smith has gotten used to getting around campus using his cane, but he says it was a big change.

“I went from not walking around with a cane, to walking around with a cane all the time,” he says. “When it comes to seeing door numbers, that’s a little more difficult for me. I’ll usually walk in a building, find the floor and ask someone if they know where the room is.”

Although most rooms have Braille signage, Smith finds that it’s a lot faster to just ask around. During his training, he learned a balance between asking people for help and figuring it out himself. If he’s looking for a building on campus, he’ll set out in the direction of it, and ask people for help if necessary.

“I’ll never ask people to lead me there—that’s just too much,” he says. “I just ask them where it’s at, and the great thing about Iowa State is that there are so many people, I’ll always run into another person who can help.”

After a while, he started to memorize where things were, and getting around campus is getting easier by the day.

Not only did the Department for the Blind provide Smith with the confidence and skills to get around campus, they also gave him the expensive physical tools that help him succeed in classes.

Although he can write, he tends not to, as he says it’s tough for him to read his own handwriting. Thanks to more than 400 hours of intensive practice, he knows braille, and uses it for almost all classes. To take notes, Smith uses a slate and a stylus. He puts a notecard in the slate, which is like a template with cells for each character, and writes in braille, making indents with the stylus. Since he’s punching dots through the other side card, he has to write backwards, so that he can read the mirror image. The notecard can fit about a half of page of writing.

“It’s nice for taking quick notes in class,” he says. “In high school I wasn’t the best at taking notes, but this has been going pretty well.”

Along with the slate, Smith uses a machine that scans pages and reads them aloud to him, a more high tech Braille computer, a laptop with JAWS software and a different version of a slate that is built for larger paper.

Since he’s started using this equipment, his homework doesn’t take nearly as long—excluding some occasional technological issues, what takes most people half an hour will only take him about an extra five minutes.

Stevenson says that with more technology now, there are more ways to be creative and find solutions to problems.

“A lot of times it’s brainstorming,” she says. “I had a color blind student who was required to do work distinguishing colors, and he had learned over the years that if he looked through his camera, he could see them.”

Smith has also gotten good at problem-solving.

“There’s always a way to do something,” he says. “If you want to be blind and successful you have to be creative.

A few months before classes start, Stevenson will send out emails to professors notifying them if a student in their class has a visual impairment. After that, the professor and the student usually work things out together. Smith says he always talks to his professors the first week of classes to answer any questions they have and figure out any accommodations he’ll need. He says it’s important to be proactive in finding solutions.

Stevenson makes it clear that for visually impaired students, there isn’t a difference in course work—just how they get the information.

“Some students think that people with disabilities get an unfair advantage, but the students we work with have to meet the exact same standards as any other students,” she explains.

Smith is also a part of the Alliance for Disability Awareness (ADA) at Iowa State, which he says has helped him ask questions and get advice from other students with disabilities.
I’m still a normal college student.

While he knows people who don’t tell anyone or talk about it, Smith is very open about his blindness.

“If someone stops and asks me, I’ll talk to them and explain what it’s like,” he says. “I’ll always introduce myself as blind, and a lot of people shy away from that. I always explain the difference between being blind and visually impaired to try to raise awareness.”

Stevenson remembers quite a few instances where students will try to forego special equipment to avoid people knowing that they’re blind—at their own risk.

“I hear from students that if they use their cane, people don’t approach them,” she says. “We have students who don’t use their cane sometimes because they want to be treated like everyone else. We especially see that with our high school students who come visit.”

Smith explains that a lot of people don’t know how to act when they meet a blind person, and while he understands why people wouldn’t want to use a cane, he doesn’t think it’s worth it.

“Before I used a cane, no one knew I was blind,” he says. “Now some people stare, but the benefits are so numerous that the little bit of social awkwardness really doesn’t matter.”

Using a cane is a pretty clear give-away of blindness, but Smith says that sometimes that’s a good thing.

“People know I’m blind, so if I stop and ask where Gilman is, and I’m standing outside of Gilman, they’re not going to think I’m stupid,” he says.

A common misconception people have is that being blind means not being able to see anything—according to the Iowa Department for the Blind, around 80% of all blind people have some remaining vision. While they frustrate him, Smith uses these misunderstandings as an opportunity to have a little fun.

“Honestly, one of my favorite pastimes is messing with sighted people,” he says. “I’ll turn and stare at people as I’m walking by, and they’ll look around like ‘Is he really looking at me?’”

Smith says doing things like this, or pretending his “heightened senses” (another misconception) allow him to hear heartbeats, help to break stereotypes of blind people. After he talks to people for a while, they completely forget he’s blind—which is his ultimate goal when he meets new people.

Stevenson advises students to be willing to help out and assist visually impaired people if they need it, but also to see them as more than just their disability.

“Don’t identify them as ‘that blind kid,’” she says. “Find out who they are as a person—that doesn’t identify who they are.”

Smith agrees—he’s a lot more than just “that blind kid,” and he wants people to get to know him.

“I’m still a normal college student,” he says. “I want people to not see the cane, and just see me.”

Smith doesn’t allow his disability to limit his hobbies—he recently started longboarding around campus.

When studying, Smith uses the zoom on his iPad’s camera to make his textbook easier to see.
After learning to live

November 29, 2005, is a date that will be forever ingrained in Claire Kruesel’s head—her soulmate, Rob, was taken from her. Claire had been taking a biochemistry lab final, where they had been tasked with identifying a compound when she last saw Rob. “I remember we were supposed to be silent and I was in my lab coat, but he came in and the last thing I said to him was something like ‘I think it’s a lipid,’ and we chatted covertly on what we thought our compounds were.”

During her lab final she was only a few hundred feet from where it happened but didn’t think much of it as she crossed the street on the way to dinner. It was then that she learned that Rob had been hit by a bus in front of Molecular Biology and was in the emergency room.

Claire hurried over to the hospital as quick as she could. It was determined that Rob needed to be airlifted to a hospital in St. Paul, and Claire was following below on I-35. It was 9:30 at night, dark and millions of situations were racing through her head. “When I left Ames, I was under the impression that he was in a serious accident, he was unconscious—but he would be all right ultimately,” Claire says. “The whole drive up I was on the phone with my mom; I was crying. I drove by myself—which was crazy.”

All the while, she estimates she was driving 95 miles per hour, thinking about theoretical situations with police officers—nothing would stop her from getting there.
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On the phone with her mom, she talked about what would happen next—Claire would have to take a semester off, he’d be in a wheelchair and she would have to help him with school.

“I felt completely prepared to undertake [the responsibilities of taking care of him], but when I got to the hospital, that wasn’t even an option.”

When she arrived at the hospital, she was told that the pressure in Rob’s brain was too severe and he would likely never wake up—her mind raced with thoughts of denial, anger and bargaining.

“I felt betrayal, by the universe and by medicine,” Claire says. The nurses told her that the surgery would be too dangerous to relieve the pressure in his brain.

“I just remember thinking, ‘He’s dying, so how is this dangerous—why don’t you do it anyway?’”

The morning of November 30, Rob died. Claire was tasked with calling his professors and advisors at Iowa State. It was the beginning of a long process of grieving.

It is popularly believed that there are five stages of grief—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. This model was proposed by Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a Swiss psychiatrist, and is outlined in her book On Death and Dying. The model tries to give people a better understanding of the emotions of people who are dying and those who are affected by people dying.

The model isn’t perfect and doesn’t apply to everybody, but it can give people a place to start understanding their emotions. Dr. Joyce Davidson, Interim Director of the Counseling Center here at Iowa State, says that grief is highly individualized.

“Some people go through very short periods of time with some of them or they don’t experience some of them at all,” Davidson says.

In shock, the few days after Rob’s death, Claire felt inanimate, just going through the motions. On her birthday, December 1, she went back to Rob’s place to find personal items for the wake. She found the two birthday presents he should have given to her that day—the practical gift of a USB hub and a specimen of Ocean Jasper—one of her favorite stones—that was to be on a necklace.

Davidson thinks that it is most important for people going through the grieving process to be patient with themselves and not to move away from things that are familiar to them. People can experience physical pain from grief, disrupting one’s everyday life.

Claire didn’t have a lot of time to grieve—after Rob’s funeral she had to jump back into finals and finished all but one on time. She threw herself into academics and returned to her normal schedule after winter break.

“I really wanted to get back into academics, push forward and tether my mind to concrete things,” Claire says “It would have been impossible for me to function not going to school the next semester.”

Looking back on it, Claire admits she may have rushed through external manifestations of grieving.

“This is a process of healing that takes much longer than we think it should or expect it to because there are no physical signs that it has healed—it’s going to take patience and understanding that you may not be able to function in the way you expect to,” Davidson said.

Davidson says people should do whatever feels comfortable for them. It’s very individual to what a person might benefit from. Sometimes it might be with making something and other times it can be from increasing physical activity.

“Usually it can be be helpful to give oneself permission to express feelings of grief in comfortable spaces,” Davidson says.

In the last decade, since Rob’s death, Claire has expressed herself through music, poetry and yoga. While her life will never be the same, it helps her live it.
music

Claire had been singing in choir since she was five-years-old. Choir was a place for her to be sane after Rob died. A song that resonated with her was Brahms’ “Warum ist das licht gegeben dem mühseligen” (Why is light given to those in misery). It asks why life is given to people who don’t use it and why life is taken from people who have such potential—mirroring Claire’s situation.

“Being able to hear your own voice resonate in a large hall or hearing people around you contributing to a minor chord that captures the essence of grief makes you feel less lonely,” she explains.

Claire was also in a couple of bands and wrote lyrics that would later become poems—they were a way to express emotions and process through them.

“Everything I write is about him some way, there’s always this hollowness, this sense of bitter irony. While lyrics may not have addressed that situation, they channeled that emotion.”

poetry

Claire knew she always loved writing and wrote poetry as a kid. Going back through the poems, she realized some were terrible, but others were good enough.

“Writing was a way to cope with my emotions, I heavily journaled after he died and ended up taking a graduate level poetry class,” she says.

Claire doesn’t consider her poems from that period the best, but they did make her want to do more. It took several more years to get into creating works through music and writing. A Masters of Fine Arts program in creative writing and environment that offered the ability to explore the intersection of expression and environment piqued her interest.

While she faded out of science after Rob died and then faded into expression, she still keeps ties to science. To Claire, science focuses on authenticity, truth, reproducibility and transferability. She uses that mindset to approach her art.

“I don’t do science traditionally but I exert the function of science onto the substrate of art”

In the beginning, she didn’t write poetry in the formal sense but the impressions she wrote embodied her emotions for herself as a way of expression and salvaging memories.

“I was worried I would forget some of the shared experiences that we had—I was the only mind left to remember them.” They studied abroad together in Prague, and while other people they met are still around, a lot of the experiences were just between themselves.

Music and writing would give her moments of clarity—she felt catharsis from singing a song or getting it on paper. Only after looking back on it did she realize it was a healing process. During that time she didn’t feel legitimate as an artist until she was in the MFA program and felt validated.

“Once I could justify [my art] through a degree program, then I could start looking back on the art that I had been making and put it into the context of healing.”
Yoga

Yoga was another way for Claire to cope. She had the stereotypical view of yoga as something you do to reach inner peace—which she found. After going to a couple classes through Recreation Services, it took her over a year to establish a regular habit.

Yoga is also where she discovered a love of teaching. After practicing both yoga and pilates three to five times a week, a friend recommended her to teach a pilates class because she had been attending his regularly.

“I just decided to go for it, I could tell it would be a healthy choice for me and a good challenge—it was terrifying,” she says.

Claire is a fan of making big commitments that will be ultimately good for her but maybe unpleasant along the way.

“In yoga, you focus on your breath in the present moment, practice observing and labeling thoughts and then letting them go, and that trains you to recognize that the present is what matters the most,” Claire says.

It is easy to get fixated on something that happens in the past, but Claire thinks yoga can give people perspective and focus on the present.
Music, writing and yoga helped Claire create a life that is as normal as it can be. They have slowly shuffled into place in her life over the last five years. Claire’s life is inextricably tied to grief and has thus shaped it.

“He was one of the kindest people I’ve ever met. He showed me how to be genuinely kind and genuinely interested in other people in a way I hadn’t seen modeled before,” she says.

She has tried to channel Rob’s values and interests into her life because she saw how it made him the best person she has ever known. She even sometimes trying to reason that if one of them had to live it should have been him because with him not around there would be no one to appreciate the world from his view.

“Having had that thought so many times, I can’t just not do the best that I can. I have to double my efforts to make up for it.”

There are times when carrying the grief around gets easier. It doesn’t show up as much when people are really busy—namely during graduate school. It also can weigh her down when there’s a moment to think and evaluate it. Claire’s universe was ripped apart when Rob died, but it also made her into the teacher, the artist and the person she is today.

“I’m living a life; I feel like my life was taken and living a life became the goal. I am happy with this life. It’s a good life. It doesn’t always feel like my own though.”
LEADING THE RACE

The challenges, successes and experiences of female athletes

BY JESSICA CRISTALLO    DESIGN MIKAYLA LARSEN
PHOTO KYLE KEPHART
In the midst of summer break, Brittany Gomez, one of ISU’s softball team members, played for the USA women’s baseball team. An accomplishment in itself, Brittany had worked hard to prove she was the best of the best among the women, and in turn, as good as the players of the male team—the expectations to get on the team don’t change.

“The rules are all the same, everything was exactly the same, the women pitched exactly how the men pitched, but still I got questioned about how far the fence is,” Brittany explains. The best female baseball players were looked at as less powerful, as if somehow they “can’t hit the fence at four hundred feet as opposed to men in baseball who do it all the time.” Reality check: they can.

Historically, sports has been a male-dominated activity, however the sports gender gap is progressively decreasing. Since the introduction of Title IX Laws in 1972, the participation of women in college-funded sports has been increasing.

As a rundown, the Title IX law states that: “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

Women can play any sports they want, represent their countries at the Olympics and are becoming role models for girls who are still discriminated against by their gender or society.

Globally, the progression of women in sports is evident in the 2012 Olympic Games participations. The Women’s Sports Foundation reported that women were represented in 131 events compared to the 163 male events. Now while there is still a difference, this is the closest disparity between men’s and women’s events so far.

But women still have a long haul ahead of them. They can compete in so many sports, but as Brittany experienced, they’re not always viewed as equals. The 2012 Olympics was the first time women’s boxing was included, but women were only able to compete in three weight classes compared to the ten male classes.

Here at ISU, female athletes are rising on par with their male counterparts, if not exceeding them. Women are excelling in the sports programs at Iowa State—this year there are 167 female student athletes who are competing in nine different sports. Female athletes represent Iowa State in basketball, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, volleyball, track and tennis.

Last year, our women’s teams kicked ass on the field, track, court and more. Iowa State’s cross country team won the Big 12 Championship for its fourth consecutive title and finished second in the NCAA Championship; volleyball made the second round of the NCAA Tournament and the basketball team made the first round. The gymnastics team placed third at the NCAA Regional Championships. The swimming and tennis had their best-ever Big 12 finishes since the league was formed in 1995-96—and that is only the tip of the athletic achievements by female athletes.

The high achievements of our female athletes are not limited to their sporting prowess. Last year, we saw basketball, golf and gymnastics all receive 100 percent “Graduation Success Rates.” Four sports also made it into the top 10 percent nationally for the NCAA academic progress rate: cross country, indoor track & field, outdoor track & field and golf.

Biologically, men and women do have different physical builds. This plays a large role in which sports women can excel in and what can be co-ed or what sports are single gendered. Still, ISU gymnast Haylee Young says there’s not much difference.

"Being a female athlete is just the same physically and mentally as being a male athlete,” she says. Both sides are great and everyone works extremely hard regardless of gender”.

**Colliding Ideals**

Marty Martinez, sports psychologist at Iowa State, says that through society, women are taught to be inherently feminine and society’s feminine ideals can quite often contrast with the ideals of the athletic industry.

As Martinez says, stress is the main issue that all athletes are faced with. This stress is important as it is a key part of the energy that helps an athlete perform at a high level. The way athletes deal with stress that comes from physical activity and the demands of the sport, coaches and competition determines if the stress will lead to anxiety. Martinez says that anxiety is very common among all athletes as a result.
Relationships

Where female athletes more commonly differ from male athletes is in their emotional approach to sports. Sports require a fierce and competitive nature—athletes need to be able to push through extreme conditions physically and mentally.

Martinez says that we live in a society where girls are raised to be caring and thoughtful—redeeming and positive qualities, but qualities that result in female athletes not just questioning their performance, but also the depths of their relationships with teammates, coaches and themselves.

“Female athletes [tend to] have a very genuine sensitivity to cooperation and collaboration and sometimes this can be a source of stress for them,” he says.

This is not to say men do not react the same way of course, but as Martinez has seen in his work, this is how women are expected to be and as a result, how most women are. This being said, caring isn’t a downfall. According to Martinez, the caring nature of women works well in team environments as a shared concern for wanting to please the coach and teammates can help a team work together. While this can create extra pressure, the desire to please each other and to collaborate well as a team translates into their performance.

Body Image

It’s hardly new information that body image and body concerns are prevalent in sports among men and women. When many people picture the ideal woman, they see hips that are proportionate to shoulders and a waist that comes in neatly—not slender arms with slight shoulder definition and legs that curve on the outside and part on the inside. There are two worlds, two expectations colliding for female athletes—one imposed by society to be desirable, and one by that asks for a specific body to fit each individual sport.

For Margaret Connelly, one of ISU’s cross country runners, a slender and light frame is ideal for long distance running. This is a body structure that requires strict maintenance; it needs high levels of cardio and a diet that strictly matches these physical needs. Margaret explains that “eating disorders are pretty prevalent in our sport.” Margaret isn’t the only one to notice this either. In a study of division 1 athletes by the National Eating Disorder Association, “over one-third of female athletes reported attitudes and symptoms placing them at risk for anorexia nervosa” and “most athletes with eating disorders are female”.

As a sports psychologist, Martinez explains that as an athlete, body conditioning, body health, body strength and body weight are always key focal points. These are issues across genders but for female athletes it is this additional focus on the body which is already has so much emphasis from society. It’s always healthy to
help women to steer away from all of this but athletes have to focus on it. Female athletes can be more vulnerable to a lot of stress being placed on the body—another issue that the athletes and those working with them have to consider.

**Stereotypes**

Beyond the realms of the body there are plenty of stereotypes associated with all sports. For Gomez, there is the fact that softball is viewed as a more “manly sport” for women, as in it is a sports that is often played by lesbians. She says trying to disprove the stereotype may even influence her performance.

“Maybe in a way I want to look more girly, I guess, when I’m playing... I really don’t care what other people think,” she says. “If someone on my team was like, ‘I like girls,’ I really don’t care, but I don’t want to look like I like girls just because I play softball.”

**The 24/7 Mentality**

Gomez, Connelly and Young, all stress that gender doesn’t reflect on how hard anyone works. They explain that female athletes are training equally as hard as male athletes irrespective of the type of sports or their rankings—doing it like a girl is just as hard as doing it like a boy.

“We have 5:30 a.m. workouts three times a week and then we have class and then we have practice and then tutors, and we’re still expected to do the same amount of work as the regular students and keep our grades up” she says. “I feel like it’s really hard to be who we are, but at the same time I’d never change it.”

Training isn’t just a time commitment—it’s a mentality too.

“Running is a team sport obviously, but it’s also very individual. Because when you’re out there on the racecourse you can’t rely on your teammate to run the race for you and so you need to make sure you’re fit, you’re healthy, you’re ready to go when it counts,” Connelly says. “Ultimately if you don’t do that, then you’re not holding up your end of the bargain and supporting your teammates.”

These women who run out onto fields and courts, our girls who race against opponents and lead the way to victory, may not realize it, but they are closing the gender gap in a field that historically has been predominantly male. They’re showing everyone that doing it like a girl is just as good, if not better, than doing it like a boy—knocking down the barriers left, right and center. 🏃‍♀️
While many college kids are scrounging for their last few dollars as they stumble into Jeff's Pizza on their way home from the bars, a few students are cashing in and heading home after a long night at the club.

Facing a church just a few steps past Main Street sits an unsuspecting venue in a row of brick buildings, but inside the solid black doors, just past the old school arcade game machine, lies a laid back hole-in-the-wall club with a fully stocked bar, rounds of tables and chairs and a stage complete with a shiny pole to tie the whole gentleman's club together.

On a mid-October Monday night around 5 p.m., low-key party music flowed throughout the club at a surprisingly comfortable volume, and three men sat in extra large, and very comfy black leather chairs at the dimly lit bar.

They were laughing and sharing stories with the bartender, Alex*, as if they were longtime friends.

Alex was introduced to Dangerous Curves nine years ago through friends who worked there at the time. "I was a student and I had to pay the bills, I tried dancing and made all the money I needed to make in that one night," she says.

Alex danced for a couple years until she was asked if she wanted to start bartending. She graduated from ISU with a degree in agricultural education and has spent the past seven years bartending and managing the club on and off.

"I still have that degree to fall back on, but I'm honestly making more now than I would teaching—for now this is just easy money," Alex says.

While it is located in a town dominated by college students, students are not the club's key demographic.

"Let's be real, college students don't have money to throw around, the older men do; and that's who we see coming into the club more often," Alex says. "We do get the occasional college guys come in on their birthday or the bachelor party, and those are fun and we cater to that, but the majority of guests we see are middle aged working men."

She says Dangerous Curves sees a rush of guests on weekends, especially game days, and then again in the summer around construction projects and various conferences.

Different from other gentleman's clubs, Dangerous Curves is a bikini bar, meaning the girls don't get naked—they always have on at least a bra and underwear, and if someone wears a see-through bra they have to wear nipple pasties or another bra underneath.

"It's so much more laid back here," Alex says. "The girls can go sit at a table and have a drink with the customers and talk with them before they get up and do a dance. It's low pressure compared to a lot of clubs where girls are expected to be on their feet giving dances all night."

About three-quarters of the girls who come in looking for work are students, and the rest are either girls from Des Moines or local areas that have danced at other clubs before.

"We get undergrads, grad students and doctoral students come in wanting a job—I've had 'em all," Alex says.

Students usually work when they can fit it in their schedules, staying on average about six months, Alex says, but she's had some girls stay four years.

When it comes to hiring, Alex isn't judging the girls on their looks. She evaluates the girls on how friendly they are, their personality, their ability to talk to strangers and if they seem to be low drama.

"I hire a broad spectrum of girls of all different backgrounds, sexual orientation, shapes and sizes," Alex says. "There's no denying it, some guys like curvy women and some guys like thin women, we have someone here to please everyone."
While many college kids are scrounging for their last few dollars as they stumble into Jeff’s Pizza on their way home from the bars, a few students are cashing in and heading home after a long night at the club.

Facing a church just a few steps past Main Street sits an unsuspecting venue in a row of brick buildings, but inside the solid black doors, just past the oldschool arcade game machine, lies a laid back hole-in-the-wall club with a fully stocked bar, rounds of tables and chairs and a stage complete with a shiny pole to tie the whole gentleman’s club together.

On a mid-October Monday night around 5 p.m., low-key party music flowed throughout the club at a surprisingly comfortable volume, and three men sat in extra large, and very comfy black leather chairs at the dimly lit bar. They were laughing and sharing stories with the bartender, Alex*, as if they were longtime friends.

Alex was introduced to Dangerous Curves nine years ago through friends who worked there at the time. “I was a student and I had to pay the bills, I tried dancing and made all the money I needed to make in that one night,” she says.

Alex danced for a couple years until she was asked if she wanted to start bartending. She graduated from ISU with a degree in agricultural education and has spent the past seven years bartending and managing the club on and off.

“I still have that degree to fall back on, but I’m honestly making more now than I would teaching—for now this is just easy money,” Alex says.

While it is located in a town dominated by college students, students are not the club’s key demographic.

“Let’s be real, college students don’t have money to throw around, the older men do; and that’s who we see coming into the club more often,” Alex says. “We do get the occasional college guys come in on their birthday or the bachelor party, and those are fun and we cater to that, but the majority of guests we see are middleaged working men.”

She says Dangerous Curves sees a rush of guests on weekends, especially gamedays, and then again in the summer around construction projects and various conferences.

“We get repeat customers from yearly firemen and agriculture conferences that come through in the summer, guys who would rather come hang out in the club and meet people here than sit in their hotel room,” Alex says.

Different from other gentleman’s clubs, Dangerous Curves is a bikini bar, meaning the girls don’t get naked—they always have on at least a bra and underwear, and if someone wears a see-through bra they have to wear nipple pasties or another bra underneath.

“It’s so much more laid back here,” Alex says. “The girls can go sit at a table and have a drink with the customers and talk with them before they get up and do a dance. It’s low pressure compared to a lot of clubs where girls are expected to be on their feet giving dances all night.”

About three-quarters of the girls who come in looking for work are students, and the rest are either girls from Des Moines or local areas that have danced at other clubs before.

“We get undergrads, grad students and doctoral students come in wanting a job—I’ve had ‘em all,” Alex says.

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AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY
TO THE STAGE

While some students start planning for their afternoon nap at the blaring noise of their alarm for an 8 a.m., Jade* gets up for the day knowing she probably won't get back until 2 or 3 in the morning.

Somewhere between classes in Gerdin, playing tennis, solving sudoku puzzles, cramming for fi

nance exams and going out with her friends, Jade fi

nds time to transition from her life as a college student into a temptress by night.

As if walking into her own apartment after a long day, Jade is the fi

rst dancer to roll into the club around 5:30 p.m., looking as any other ordinary college student and exèlamed "people need to learn how to fucking drive" to Alex, as she headed to the back to change.

Returning in a pink see-through babydoll top and white panties, Jade let out a sigh of exhaustion and greeted me at the bar in clear platform sandals.

Two years ago, as a sophomore at Iowa State, Jade nervously walked through those same doors she so comfortably flèw by today. A friend who worked there told her about a job at a bikini bar.

"I walked in thinking I was applying for a waitressing job where I would wear a bikini or something—then I saw the pole, " Jade says. "Oh my God, I was so nervous. I was like any other girl thinking dancing on a pole was ratchet. I never in a million years saw myself doing this. 

Instead of turning around and running out of the club, she went through with the application process. Now a senior in business, she's spent the last two years learning how to hustle men for their money.

"Once I walk in those doors, I am no longer who I am outside of this place, I am a fantasy, " she says.

FOR THE LOVE OF THE SPOTLIGHT

While Jade never imagined herself dancing on a stage, Roselie*, another dancer at the club, said she's thought about getting involved in the business before.

"I've deèfinitely considered it before. I've heard of the Lumberyard and those places but when I found out there's a bikini bar here in Ames I thought that was perfect, " Roselie said.

Roselie used to attend Iowa State, but transferred to PCI Academy to follow her passion for hair and makeup. Not only is she a student, but she also spends time with her one year-old son and fi

ancée.

During classes one day, a friend of Roselie's from PCI was talking about a job she had at Dangerous Curves and Roselie asked if she could check it out.

Her friend talked with one of the managers and was able to bring Roselie in one night. A little nervous, Roselie came into the club with her friend for the fi

rst time a few months ago and ended up working her fi

rst night as a dancer.

"I walked in and they told me to go on back and get ready, then my friend showed me a couple tricks before the club opened and I danced my fi

rst three songs, " Roselie said.

Roselie said her friend, who worked there at the time, has been the biggest help in teaching her how to succeed as a dancer.

"Her fi

rst night, my friend just got up on stage and shook her butt for all three songs—she made sure I didn't make a fool of myself like that, " she laughs.

Roselie said the rush of that "all eyes on me" moment was an exhilarating feeling, especially her fi

rst night.

"People kept asking me who I was and if I was new here, it was just such a confidence boost to be on stage and know everyone was interested in me, " she says.

A TYPICAL NIGHT

Jade typically comes into work a couple nights a week around 5 or 6 p.m. and heads to the back to get dressed for the night.

"I usually spend a lot more time getting ready on the weekends, the guys that come in during the week probably don't care what my face looks like, " laughs Jade.

She used to come in super early and stay until close, but the dancers aren't allowed to leave once they get here, and that can turn into an 11-hour shift.

"I've gotten more comfortable with the club and now I pretty much just come in whenever I want, " Jade says.

Since she is technically self-

employed at the club, she holds another job to pay taxes and make sure the government doesn't see her as unemployed.

Jade says she has a love-
hate relationship with the job. The hours are terrible, but the job itself isn't so bad and she laughed at the thought of even comparing the pay between her two jobs.

Robyn* performs her dance on stage at Dangerous Curves
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Somewhere between classes in Gerdin, playing tennis, solving sudoku puzzles, cramming for finance exams and going out with her friends, Jade finds time to transition from her life as a college student into a temptress by night.

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A little nervous, Roselie came into the club with her friend for the first time a few months ago and ended up working her first night as a dancer.

“I walked in and they told me to go on back and get ready, then my friend showed me a couple tricks before the club opened and I danced my first three songs,” Roselie said.

Roselie said her friend, who worked there at the time, has been the biggest help in teaching her how to succeed as a dancer.

“Her first night, my friend just got up on stage and shook her butt for all three songs—she made sure I didn’t make a fool of myself like that,” she laughs.

Roselie said the rush of that “all eyes on me” moment was an exhilarating feeling, especially her first night.

“People kept asking me who I was and if I was new here, it was just such a confidence boost to be on stage and know everyone was interested in me,” she says.

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“I usually spend a lot more time getting ready on the weekends, the guys that come in during the week probably don’t care what my face looks like,” laughs Jade.

She used to come in super early and stay until close, but the dancers aren’t allowed to leave once they get here, and that can turn into an 11-hour shift.

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Since she is technically self-employed at the club, she holds another job to pay taxes and make sure the government doesn’t see her as unemployed.

Jade says she has a love-hate relationship with the job. The hours are terrible, but the job itself isn’t so bad and she laughed at the thought of even comparing the pay between her two jobs.
Roselie is only working at Dangerous Curves for now, and she hopes to work at a salon in Iowa City after she graduates, but there will be some major differences in her work days to come.

“Here at the club, I’m able to deal with negative customers a little more directly,” she says. “If someone is rude to me, I can tell them I hope they get rid of their negativity and just walk away. But at a salon, if a customer is rude to me I have to smile and stay professional. You can’t just walk away from a salon chair.”

Jade starts the night sitting at the bar with a Corona and lime, making small talk with one of the guests, a middle-aged man, as a few more start to trickle in around 5:45.

Throughout the night, she’s scheduled to do three dances on the stage. Between those, she will mingle with guests at the bar and tables, and hustle by giving personal dances in the back.

“It’s not like a lot of other clubs where the guys can do whatever they want with you,” Jade says.

“If you don’t want a guy touching you, you can tell them to stop and the bartenders are always watching and they’ll back you up 100 percent.”

There are cameras in the back room for private dances so someone can always be keeping an eye on what’s going on and making sure the girls aren’t being forced to do anything they’re uncomfortable with.

That being said, the girls at the club still have their fair share of weird experiences.

“God,” Jade sighs. “One guy kept asking me to finger my butt hole for extra money.”

Another guest who regularly comes in has a jean fetish, she says.

“This guy always wants me to re-enact the slime scene from that old Nickelodeon show, so I’ll literally stand in the back for at least four songs, and that’s like $20 each, and just act like I just got slimed on Nickelodeon,” Jade says. “I’m literally getting paid to give lap dances in my jeans and pretend that I’m getting slimed.”

Jade says her nightly pay always fluctuates, one night she’ll bring home more on a weekend than a weekday, but she might bring home more on a Monday night than on the weekend.

“I don’t think I’ve ever left with less than $100 in a night, but I’ve definitely made up to about $900 in a single night,” she says.

Being a college town, the fear of running into someone you know from some unpleasant circumstance is nearly inevitable, whether it be a regret-filled hookup or that time you threw up on their couch at a house party.

For Jade, it’s a nightly worry to wonder if someone from one of her classes is going to walk into the club and see her half-naked on stage.

“One time this guy came in that I knew from my freshman year in Helser, and he kept saying he knew me and I kept insisting he didn’t. It was pretty awkward but I eventually gave in and begged him to keep it a secret that I worked here,” she says.

While a small group of her friends and family know about her job at Dangerous Curves, she is very selective about who she tells, in order to keep her work life private.

“My mom doesn’t know, but I told my sister and she was appalled,” Jade says. “She and the friends I told were shocked at first, but they knew me before I started dancing so they can’t judge me on just that. They’re OK with me doing it as long as I’m being smart, and I am.”

Roselie’s friends know about her job, but she says her family definitely does not know.

“Whenever they ask what I’m doing for work, I just tell them I’m bartending,” Roselie says.

Some days it gets hard to manage being a mom, going to school and working, but she’s staying positive. She says this job has actually given her a huge confidence boost—not to mention that her arms are in the best shape they’ve ever been since high school.

Since working at Dangerous Curves, Jade says she has learned a lot, especially about men and their intentions. The job has also caused her to become much more confident in herself.

“Before this, I would even try to cover up my body when I would go to the pool in a two-piece or something, I’ve really become more comfortable with myself and gotten rid of a lot of my self-consciousness,” Jade says.

She says she does feel like she is judged quickly by her job, and while some nights are worse than others, but she wants people to understand that it’s really not a bad job.

“We’re up here dancing in our underwear and having conversations with guys throughout the night, but I’ve gone out to bars and seen girls doing much sluttier things that we’re doing over here,” Jade says. “It’s more than just what people think.”

"But at a salon, if a customer is rude to me I have to smile and stay professional. You can’t just walk away from a salon chair."
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One student shares her experience as an “ace”

BY RACHEL VIPOND  DESIGN ALIXANDRIA COLLINS
Anna* is asexual. "Ha ha, like an amoeba!" is one of the common ones I hear," she says.
That is, Anna, a junior in English and technical communications, doesn’t experience sexual attraction. Asexuality is often written off as a joke or even a phase—but it’s a sexual orientation with which many identify. So what specifically does asexual mean, and what’s it like to be asexual on campus?
One thing that many fail to realize, Anna points out, is that there is a split between romantic and sexual orientation. One may be asexual and experience romantic attraction to another person and vice versa. The Asexual Visibility and Education Network (AVEN) website explains that asexual people may still enter romantic relationships, even marry. Their sexual orientation should not be confused for a lack of interest in personal relationships.
Before discovering her identity as asexual, Anna says that she would think to herself, "I’m still in that phase where I think love is gross and boys are gross and it’s just taking way longer to get out of it." It turns out that this wasn’t the case.
"Eventually you start to realize, ‘No, everyone else isn’t like this, it’s me that’s different.’”
Eventually, Anna says, she stumbled across the term and its definition on the internet and “it was like a lightning bolt.”
Coming out as asexual allowed Anna to stop seeing a problem with herself, she explains, "After you find the term you realize that you thought you were broken before and never quite realized.”
Some assume that telling others you simply don’t experience sexual attraction might be easier than coming out as gay or bisexual, but coming out as asexual is no easier than coming out as another orientation. Misconceptions make coming out to family difficult for Anna, who once tested the waters with a family member. She listed a few sexualities, and when she got to asexuality, Anna explains, things went sour.
"She was like, ‘What, like you want to have sex with yourself? That’s disgusting,’ and I was like, ‘I’m never talking about that again.’"
But what about the American Dream of a spouse, kids and a picket fence? The expectation that this is everyone’s goal can cause some tension for asexuals, especially if the expectation is coming from close family and friends.
“I’m from such a conservative Christian family, where it’s like, ‘You can’t have sex, you can’t have sex,’ and as soon as I don’t want to it’s like, ‘What?!’”
When her parents push the issue of finding a boyfriend, Anna mentions her plans to live with friends after college. Her future roommates are asexual—a fact unknown by her parents, who assume they’ll get married eventually, possibly leaving Anna with the desire to follow suit.
The pressure to get married, or just to find love, is everywhere: billboards, TV, movies, the plot of most teen novels.
“It’s so rare to find something that says you don’t have to do that, or that there can be a story without that,” says Anna.
Anna’s dream for the future doesn’t include romance, but it does include friends and script writing for comic books, cartoons or video games. Realistically, she notes, she’ll probably use her technical communications major to write reports for physicists, but she says she’ll be happy either way.
Asexuality is the “A” at the end of the LGBTIA acronym—though in some cases people consider “Allies” the “A.” This sets the tone for Anna’s experience with the LGBT community.
“Have you all these LGBT spaces, the gay clubs, the gay pride parades, and they’re all so inherently sexualized and 21+,” she says, “That’s almost less of a safe place for me than straight people, which is really weird because straight people are not that safe.”
Anna says one issue she runs into is a gatekeeping mentality in the LGBT community that might reject her for being “not quite queer enough.” Coincidentally, she says she feels she has much more of a place in the queer community, which AVEN defines as one for anyone who “differs from the norm.”
Asexuality makes its way into very little pop culture, and when it does, it is often ambiguous. “Most of what we do is quint at the characters and say ‘if you look really hard, they haven’t been in a romantic relationship yet, they could be!’” Uses of the actual word “asexual” are even more rare, and in some cases it is used incorrectly, as a way to say a character is “sexually lifeless,” says Anna.
There are a few notable occurrences of asexual, or “ace” characters in television, including a character in the comedy Sirens who uses the term “asexual” to describe herself. Game of Thrones’ Lord Varys remarks that he “desires neither” men nor women. Anna says she’s happy about the recognition, but Game of Thrones is hypersexual by nature, and she doesn’t plan to watch it just for this one mention.
Education may be a step toward stopping the invalidation of this orientation. Basically, Anna explains, asexuals aren’t broken and don’t need to be fixed.
“It’s kind of like trying to explain to a colorblind person ‘Maybe you just haven’t found the right color yet,’ and it doesn’t work like that.”

GLOSSARY

(COURTESY OF ASEXUALITY.ORG)

ASEXUAL
Someone who does not experience sexual attraction.

AROMANTIC
Someone who does not experience romantic attraction.

ATTRACTION
In this context, it refers to a mental or emotional force that draws people together. Asexuals do not experience sexual attraction, but some feel other types of attraction.

AESTHETIC ATTRACTION
Attraction to someone’s appearance, without it being romantic or sexual.

DEMISEXUAL
Someone who can only experience sexual attraction after an emotional bond has been formed. This bond does not have to be romantic in nature.

GRAY-ASEXUAL
Someone who identifies with the area between asexuality and sexuality, for example because they experience sexual attraction very rarely, only under specific circumstances, or of an intensity so low that it’s ignorable.

ROMANTIC ATTRACTION
Desire of being romantically involved with another person.

SENSUAL ATTRACTION
Desire to have physical non-sexual contact with someone else, like affectionate touching.

SEXUAL ATTRACTION:
Desire to have sexual contact with someone else, to share your sexuality with them.
Who Do You Think You Are:

Brendan Dunphy

BY WILL DODDS  DESIGN SHELBY STITES  PHOTO JON LACZNIAK

I wasn’t able to do as much in college as I do now. I would have followed the whimsical interests nor have thought as deeply as I do now. Thankfully for me that was what I wanted to do. Back in those days I was mostly your thing before? theater actor and theater producer, keeping growing and growing so that there was the scientist and the actor. But then in 2009 when I started producing theater, that was another hat thrown into the mix. I didn’t start writing songs until my fifth year in college. It came by happenstance of doing something that I really enjoyed. The reason I fell into entymology was because there’s a job that I can use to describe all the creative things that I do. Entertainer is also a good play on words with entertainer and entomologist. What dark things exist under the one picture that we have to work with? We had to...
Look up Brendan Dunphy on the Iowa State Department of Entomology website and you see a young man, shaved, with short hair. He’s showing his large collection of insects. Dunphy studies medical entomology and surveys the mosquito population. Click on the link to his own website and you’ll see someone with great facial hair and shoulder-length locks. A picture of him in front of a carousel pops up: Entertainer. It slides to the picture on the entomology website so you know it’s Dunphy: Entomologist. Another picture comes, with him in a sleeveless shirt holding a kitchen knife: Etcetera.

Read a bit into the site and you see that he’s also hosted shows for Discovery Channel and the BBC. Who is this guy? How can a person be entertainer and entomologist? What dark things exist under etcetera? We had to find out.

Ethos: Where did your love for acting come from?

Brendan Dunphy: It came from doing it and it came very late in life. I didn’t start until my fifth year in college. It came by happenstance of me taking an acting class, the encouragement of my dad, and having people say that I was good.

The job of an actor really at the heart of all is to communicate with people in an honest way. Auditioning, doing monologues, reading scripts—it’s hard to find stuff more fun than that.

Why did you only start acting late in college. Was science mostly your thing before?

BD: Throughout the majority of college. When I came to college I was there to buckle down and learn the world in which I lived. Coming to college, you have that practical advice running through your head—thankfully for me that was what I wanted to do. Back in those days I wouldn’t have followed the whimsical interests nor have thought as big as I do now.

So you aren’t shooting for a Nobel Prize in science?

BD: I might want to go to that in the future, but for now I feel that I have more to offer people as a communicator, as Brendan, than as a character. When I was a host, I felt I was moving toward a sense of self-honesty.

The heart of desire is music. Music is that art form that I think is the spice of life. to identify specific path I wanted to go down or knew to go down because I wanted to go down them all.

What does your work schedule look like?

BD: Interestingly, I’ve been able to keep a 9 to 5 schedule. It’s been a very mutualistic relationship between me and Iowa State. That comes from setting out those terms and say, ‘If you want me to work here, these are the things that are important to me and those things cannot be compromised. I have to do this and if I can’t then I simply have to leave.’

Sometimes I have treat things phasic. If there’s a phase where I have to shoot a film for 3 weeks I have to devote those 3 weeks to it, then when that’s done I then can go back to whatever. It has come through hard work, strategy and engineering the lives that I want.
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