



[the yo* magazine]

*YOUNGSTOWN'S REGIONAL CULTURE MAGAZINE FOR LOVING LIFE AND LIVING



youngstown born,
playboy spread
[is her art porn?]

STARVING FOR
[art]

* XXXX

GET DIRTY WITH ONE REPORTER AS SHE INVESTIGATES YOUNGSTOWN'S FOSTER THEATER

* poisoned prospects

FROM THE NORTH SIDE TO THE SOUTH SIDE, SEE HOW THE BROWNFIELDS OF THE YO* ARE CHOKING REDEVELOPMENT

* fashion mogul nanette lepore

FROM YOUNGSTOWN NATIVE TO A-LIST DESIGNER

* man in tights

SEE IF A FIRST-TIME BALLERINO CAN MASTER FANCY FOOTWORK, OR IF HE FALLS ON HIS FACE



see how far the yo's actors will go to make it big

This spring 2008 issue of
[the yo* magazine]

is sponsored by the

Student Government Association
of Youngstown State University.



OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE
CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

Dear readers,

O

bjects in mirror are closer than they appear. It's when we take a good look that we find what's waiting to be noticed. Endless mediums of expression are simplified to a label — "the arts" — but in it we find beauty beyond the surface or layers

For this issue, we got to know Youngstown's artists, whose expression arrives in the piping of icing on your next birthday cake, the stitching in your hemline and the message of your favorite song. Telling those stories in this issue of the Yo' Magazine is also an art. Fifteen weeks ago, 36 blank pages were empty canvases ready to be filled. Our writers, editors, designers and photographers were starving for their own art, like the aspiring actors featured in the cover story on page 16.

Art is right in front of us, often in places we never think to look. The brownfields photo essay on page 23 shows the broken beauty that exists in the ruins of Youngstown's steel mills. It can be nestled in stories of Youngstown's fall from grace, like in the underground pornography subculture that has found a hiding place in the city's formerly family-friendly Foster Theater, investigated on page 7.

While art is a way to express individuality, sometimes trying a new art form and sharing in another's expression helps us understand each other. On page 12, dance alongside a Yo' Diary writer in his struggle to find the grace and agility to perform ballet for the first time.

Sometimes the struggle leads to extraordinary success. In our interview with Nanette Lepore on page 29, the Youngstown native shares how she made it as a fashion designer in New York. There are also the artists we take for granted each day, like the sketch artist struggling to keep his craft alive against changing technology on page 21.

And as some artists fight to get their work noticed, others struggle to have their work considered art. The cover feature on page 26 gets personal with a YSU student and Playboy model who has had to defend her appearance in Playboy Magazine to critics who dismiss her medium of expression. Beyond the beauty, it's the daily grind of artists that makes the arts possible. Their commitment and sacrifice are the constants that bring their craft to us. To the artist, the masterpiece is worth it.

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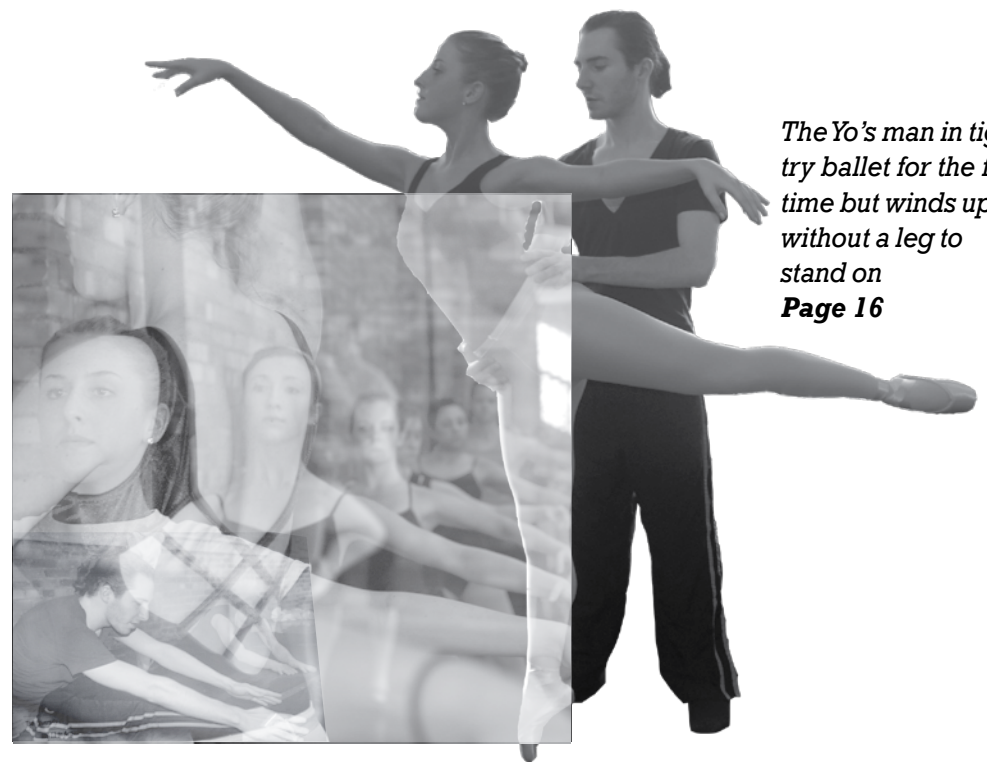
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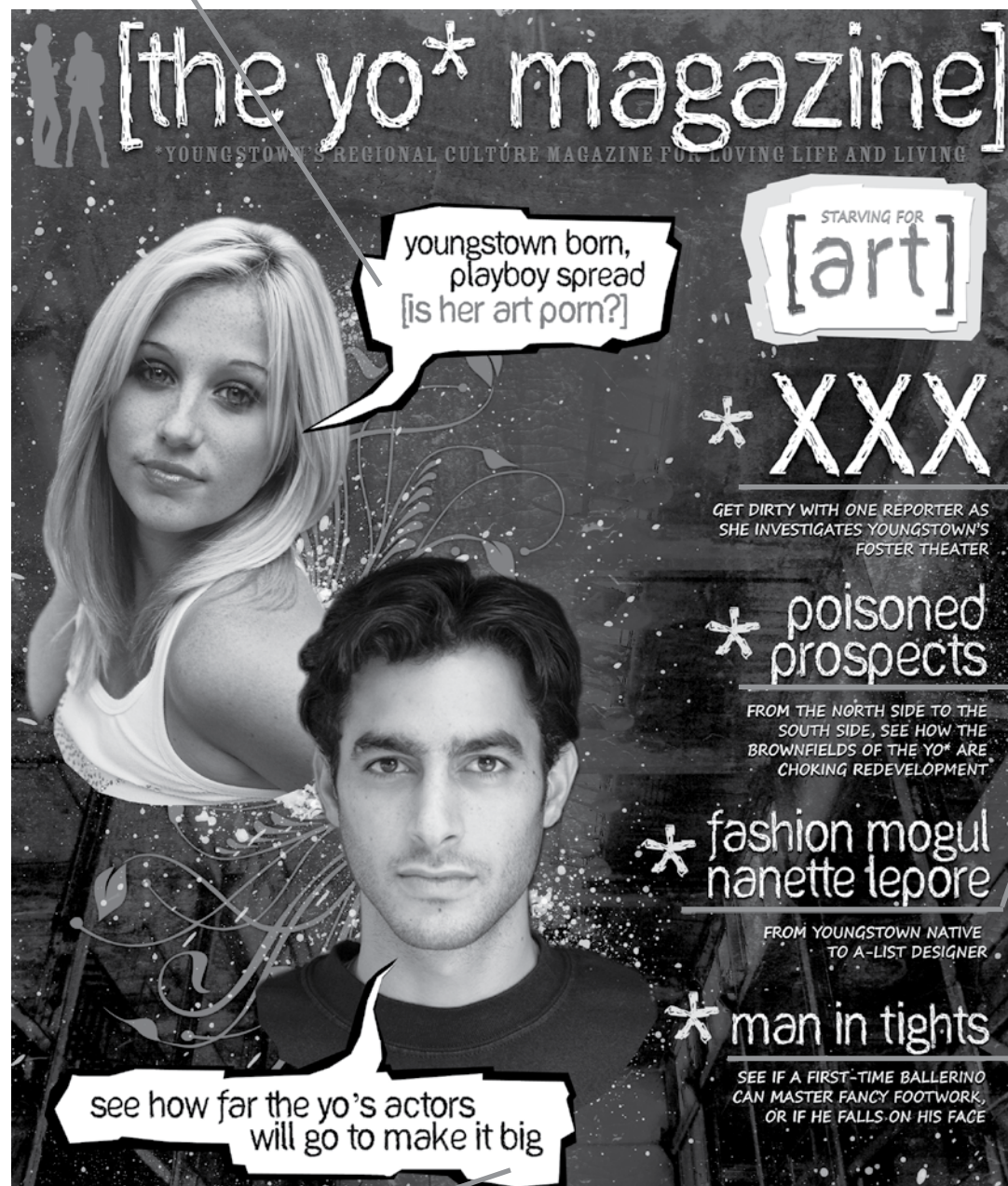
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The Yo's man in tights try ballet for the first time but winds up without a leg to stand on
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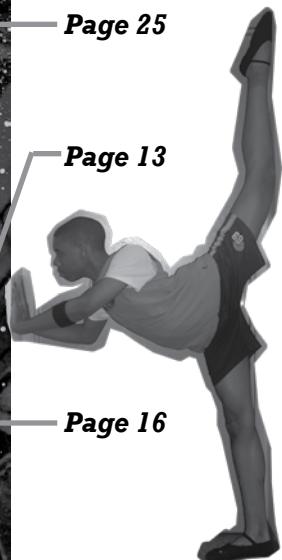
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[yo* entertainment]



FOOD

Authentic Takeout Tired of ethnic fakeout? This is what real tradition tastes like, right in your own backyard. **Page 6**

MUSIC

DaBoondox These musicians are returning rap to its roots. **Page 7**



[yo* diaries]

*See who was brave enough share their personal lives in print.

It's Unspeakable Follow our brave reporter inside the Yo's stained and sleazy porn theater. **Page 28**

Man in Tights Fall in step as another reporter trades in his notebook for a pair of ballerina slippers. Can he plié his way to success, or will his knees buckle under the pressure? **Page 16**



[yo* life]

High Fashion Extraordinaire

It took hard, hard work to get from the Yo' to the Big Apple, but it's easy for fashion designer Nannette Lepore to find inspiration in both cities. **Page 13**

DIGGING DEEPER

Starving for Art The stage looks glamorous, but it takes thick skin to deal with rejection. See what it takes for these actors to step into the footlights. **Page 8**

Choking Growth See how Youngstown's abandoned land is ruining the city's chances for redevelopment by making the Yo' into a dumping ground. **Page 25**

Drawing Outside the Lines Not all art is made for a museum. These artists find craft in surprising places. **Page 20**

Why You Hatin'? See why people hate and how it affects your own ability to be hated on. **Page 33**

A PORTRAIT

Youngstown Born, Playboy Spread: Is it art or porn? See how this aspiring veterinarian and Playboy model deals with the perceptions that come with the territory of dual roles. **Page 22**

A TRIBUTE

Penelope Every night we did the bar crawl, he was right with us. The Yo' pays tribute to our favorite dancing partner. **Page 35**

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[yo* food]

Tired of ethnic fakeout? Try Youngstown's authentic takeout

Review and photography by **Richard Boccia**

Real Latino: Saborico

Saborico Market and Cafe
1361 Shehy St.
Two miles off campus on the East Side

Taught by her grandmother in Puerto Rico, Saborico's owner Mayra Espada has perfected her recipes for three years in the Yo', serving hot food from a market stocked with Latino produce and dry goods.

The secret to her success in Youngstown is that her food entices customers across ethnic lines. "Everybody likes rice and beans," she said, but the cafe offers so much more:

Patelillos
(pronounced: pat-eh-lee-yos)
Forget about greasy fast food tacos.

Bite into this light flour pastry fried just right to airy flakiness to find savory ground beef flavored by Espada's rich, homemade sofrito sauce. Onion, red peppers and a Latino spice called Sazon create a full, complex taste miles away from fake Mexican.

Pinchos (far left)
Pork shish kebabs with the perfect texture — eat them right off the skewer.

Not too dry, not too fatty and still pink and tender inside, with a glaze of Mayra's honey mustard barbecue. Try them with the hearty rice and beans or plantain chips made from the vegetable version of bananas — this snack from Goya has a thicker, more satisfying crunch than potato chips.

GOT A TASTE FOR IT? Check out Saborico's Latin festival July 5 for food and live music or daily lunch specials.



\$3



\$1.75



\$7.99

Real Jewish: Kravitz

Kravitz Delicatessen
3135 Belmont Ave.
In the Colonial Plaza

Jack Kravitz and his mother, Rose, bring new and old Jewish foods together for a blend of Israeli and Eastern European tastes. Kravitz started as a bakery in 1939, so don't miss the rye bread, a Jewish staple. The bakery stays kosher by leaving out animal products like lard.

Corned beef sandwich (above)
Savory guilty pleasure makes for robust comfort food.

Boiled on the premises, the brisket isn't lean, but it is beautifully marbled. Piled high on thick, moist rye bread, the substantial textures balance out the subtle flavors of this authentic Jewish sandwich.

Jewish pastries
Take a trip to Eastern Europe for a sweet treat.

The cream cheese Hungarian kipefl pastries (one non-kosher exception) melt in your mouth, while layers of cherry filling, raisins and crisp sugared dough make for a crumbly yet moist Russian tea cake. For a more subdued treat, try the Jewish biscotti — mandel bread made with almond paste and walnuts, or the kichel, which have an eggy, vanilla taste like a baked elephant ear.

GOT A TASTE FOR IT? Try another Jewish specialty, the grilled reuben sandwich, or peruse what Kravitz calls the "area's premier selection of Israeli wines."

Real Italian: Jimmy's

Jimmy's Italian Food Specialties
3129 Belmont Ave.
Across from the Township Square

Jimmy Occhibove was 20 when he set up shop in the Yo' in 1973, just a year after arriving from Italy. After moving to a new building in 2007, the shop offers more Italian groceries than ever.

Margherita pizza
(pronounced like the tequila drink)
Authentic style, not fried in the pan like Italian imitators.

Occhibove said the pizza got its name from a woman named Margherita — but he's got the secret of the thick, crunchy crust. "That's he said. Enjoy the Sicilian grated Romano cheese sprinkled over diced tomatoes for a solid, un-googy slice of pizza.

Triple chocolate seduction mousse (far left)
Not your average puddle of pudding.

Chicago chocolate blends with secret flavors (amaretto, perhaps?) to form a layer of whipped mousse on a walnut brownie topped with fudge kisses of icing.

GOT A TASTE FOR IT? Jimmy's is a popular lunch spot for cavatelli, wedding soup and panini — or you can load up on Italian specialty groceries to take home, too.



\$4



\$2.49



LIMONE NOUGAT



CANDY ALMONDS

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED VANILLA FINGERS

ORANGE DAISY

APPLE CINNAMON BISCOTTO

PISTACIO GREEN LEAF

STRAWBERRY PINK LEAF

JEWISH RUSSIAN TEA CAKE

ALMOND DELIGHT

VANILLA WEDDING COOKIE

CHOCOLATE WEDDING COOKIES

ITALIAN WEDDING COOKIE

LATINO MERENGUE COOKIE

JEWISH KICHEL

JEWISH MANDEL BREAD

JEWISH HUNGARIAN CHERRY KIPPEL

Before the bling
Making hip-hop raw again
in DA ARMPIT OF DA
STATES

By Brian Cetina

DaBoondox



Ohio

PHOTO COURTESY OF DABOONDOX

positive and saving hip-hop. "We're old school with a positive message," said Killin.

They work as a diversified team, and their music is about unifying cultures. Jeff brings in the beats, and Troy puts the words down with it, or vice versa. Troy might throw down one of his rhymes and Jeff will feel the flow in his head and come up with a beat to match it.

Napier serves as vocalist and co-producer, while Killin, producer and vocalist, creates beats for the approximately 40 songs on DaBoondox's two albums, "Armpit of Da States" and "Wounded World."

The duo isn't just bringing music to people; they bring a stage performance with their shows, incorporating art and theater into each performance.

"It is hip-hop theater; our skits go with the message of the songs," said Killin. "It's a fun atmosphere."

"We even bring props, dancers and a light show sometimes," said Napier.

DaBoondox often makes its high-energy shows even more outrageous.

For Halloween, the guys had zombies. They did a show with Kelly Pavlik and made the stage look like a boxing ring. For their song "Headcase" they used a skit with doctors.

The guys' music has even reached Youngstown State University's campus.

The "Game Time" song played at football games was actually done by them. The YSU basketball team has even used samples of it.

Fans of music from an older generation, there isn't much good music out there now, the

guys both agreed on.

"It's not about the image of rappers with their chains, glasses and the rocks they wear," Napier said. It is about bringing back real hip-hop, saving it."

Only mentioning guys like Common and The Roots as influential now, Napier added that Soulja Boy is not hip-hop. "Don't even get me started on him," he said.

"People can hear our songs and say, 'Yeah, I've been there before,' or 'Yeah, I've been in that situation before,'" Killin said.

The guys agreed that their message could become mainstream. "There is more to rap than guns and cars," added Napier.

In the end, DaBoondox sees rap as making music, as doing what they love and bringing cultures together.

It's not a competition.*

"It's not about the image of rappers with their chains, glasses and the rocks they wear. It is about bringing back real hip hop, saving it!"

Hip-hop duo DaBoondox says Youngstown doesn't have a future, but it got them their name.

Influenced by a different generation of hip-hop, 30-year-old members Jeff Killin and Troy Napier were fans of groups like A Tribe Called Quest, Public Enemy and Farside.

"They were pioneers of hip-hop," said Napier, "Not flashy and all about the chains and cars."

The duo, whose stage names are "Mayhem Da Millennium Predator" and "DJ Killin," have completed their newest album

set to be released at a CD release show early May.

The album, the first the guys have actually created and produced, was put together over basically three years.

Understandably, the guys are pumped and pretty stoked about the idea of their first masterpiece coming out and finally being completed. "We are excited, but we will be promoting a lot for the album and the end of summer dance/bash party," said the guys.

The members of DaBoondox, together since 1989, are still coming up with new ideas.

The guys are all about being

WORKING THEIR WAY TO A STAGE NEAR YOU

LAST TIME ON STAGE AT YSU? YSU senior Randall Huffman contemplates the shows he's done in Ford Theater and what shows lie in his future outside Youngstown.

By Sarah Sole

Youngstown's actors aren't exactly starving artists, but they definitely have to work for their living.

jacket, stocking cap and a black shirt that reads, "I heart soccer moms," ("cause I figure, who doesn't, right?") Genovese describes himself as a gypsy.

"I got bit by the discontentment bug and never let go," said the 26-year-old.

Three semesters away from graduating with a theater degree, Genovese couldn't bring himself to stay at Youngstown State University. He has lived in seven or eight different places, worked 26 different jobs and gone through countless relationships. It's no surprise that the constant change of an acting career appeals to him.

"It's also very conducive to my personality," said the goateed and mustached Genovese, his gesturing hands casting a shadow on the dimly lit table.

During his one year in New York — true gypsy form — he found that of all the sacrifices actors must make, audition prep is one that's grueling but crucial. Rehearsing for an indie horror film audition, first there was the choosing of monologues. He settled on one from Dennis Leary's role in "Natural Born Killers" and another from Johnny Depp's part in "Libertines"

and then spent two weeks studying the lines.

"I was basically saying them in my sleep," he said.

On audition day, Genovese arrived at a dilapidated building in Brooklyn. The place was made of brick and rotting wood, and the windows were boarded up. Inside, the elevator's sign forbade its passengers to exceed a weight limit of 75 pounds.

Genovese climbed a staircase that was about two feet wide, and came to a room plastered with movie posters. A half-bearded man with a lazy eye and the last two buttons of his shirt undone to expose a hairy gut looked like he'd rather butcher actors to pieces than call who was next to audition.

After the imposing man called his name, Genovese walked into a mini-theater with a stage and camera. He read lines for a role, but Genovese never got a chance to perform his hard-practiced monologue. His venture into the building left him with no role, proving that lots of times an actor's work is thankless.

"They didn't even care," he said with a laugh. "That was a real bummer."

While any job has its highs and lows, actors like Genovese often need to steel themselves for uncertainty and instability. Letdowns are common, and they come with the territory. In this fabled profession, one must get used to hearing no. Famous actors live the life of luxury, but the road to high living is a long one, and the gates are open to few. U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that those who do get work make an estimated \$21.84 an hour.

Stereotypes associate the average actor with the life of the starving artist, but that doesn't stop hopeful performers from continually breaking into the profession with the desire to prove that thankless mold wrong.

Genovese got his acting experience early, starring as the little kid in his dad's advertising agency's commercials.

In October 2006, Genovese was considering a return to YSU. Instead he found himself packing up his things and heading to New York along with a couple of fellow actors.

The friends found a two-and-a-half bedroom apartment in Queens, a 40-minute subway ride away from Times Square.

"You get to New York and you



The dream has driven aspiring actor Tony Genovese from Youngstown to New York City — and back. Dressed in a leather

STARVING

FOR ART

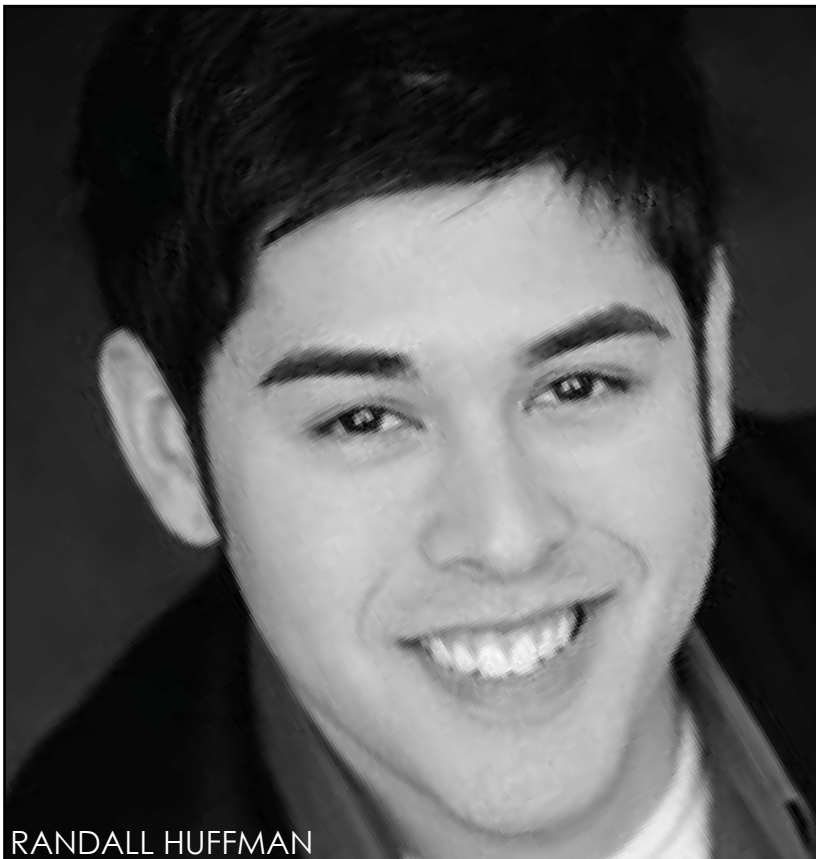
ACTORS SACRIFICE FOR THE SPOTLIGHT BEYOND YOUNGSTOWN



NICOLE DIONISIO



TONY GENOVESE



RANDALL HUFFMAN



KARI KLEEMOOK

find a job," he said, adding that waiting tables is "guaranteed money."

The tendency, unfortunately, is that upon getting to New York, many contending actors get the requisite day job and never pursue their acting careers.

"That's what I've seen time and time again," he said.

Genovese, however, wanted to break the mold.

"I didn't want to get sucked into doing some job that I didn't want to do for the rest of my life," he said.

While working at Cosi Restaurant, Genovese kept his eyes peeled on Craig's List online for auditions.

"I would grab my subway map, hail a cab and go," he said.

A meeting with a director and

writer from a college in North Manhattan led to an audition where the director told Genovese, "I don't think I have to hear anything else today," only to deny him the job. Though Genovese managed to play a minor character, another director in the room got Genovese the lead role in the indie film "Sid."

Despite scoring a role in the indie film "Men of Color," and working as an extra in "Rescue Me" and "Law and Order," work could be very discouraging.

"There's a lot of work to be had if you don't mind being an extra the rest of your life," he said.

The money, however, comes with union membership, which isn't easy to achieve.

As an extra in a Verizon Wireless commercial, Genovese made \$150.

Union members made about \$700.

While actors can buy their way into the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists – for \$1,600 – Genovese said most places don't consider this union. Actors who want to join Screen Actors Guild, for example, must earn waivers, which are given out when a SAG actor doesn't show. Since unions require so many of the auditioning actors to be union members, a place will give out a waiver to a non-union member to satisfy the union member quota. This has to happen three times for an actor to gain union membership, and he or she still has to pay \$2,100.

Genovese spent a little over a year in New York, and he didn't see one person get a waiver.

Though he's home, Geno-

vese doesn't see himself finishing school. The training helped him, but directors weren't giving degree-carrying graduates any more attention than they were giving him.

"They asked for your ID, but they never asked for your diploma," he explained.

"Do as much as you can," he advises theater students, adding that those who don't repeatedly audition will become stale. "Nobody outside of YSU will know anything about you."

As for Genovese, he's heading to St. Petersburg, Fla., still not able to stay in one place for long.

"I don't know when that will ever end," he said.

"I really believe you need to go where the work is," he said.

"This career is not going to be fair, ever."

YSU SENIOR NICOLE DIONISIO: FIRST PITTSBURGH AND CLEVELAND, THEN THE WORLD



It's the same world wisdom that YSU senior theater major Nicole Dionisio shows as she stirs an iced mocha and discusses her post-graduation career plans.

First she's going to try for regional work in Pittsburgh or Cleveland, so that she has credit before making the move to New York, she said, adjusting brown sunglasses that rest atop a short crop of brown hair.

New York is where the training places are within walking distance, which makes training while looking for work that much easier, says Dionisio, who plans to make it there within 10 years.

For Dionisio, college means more than the diploma she'll get this month.

Like Genovese, she doesn't dance around the fact that directors aren't just in search of degrees.

"If you're standing in front of them auditioning, it's what you can do then and there," she said.

Casting is not all about talent. Often, it's a matter of matching the face to the role.

"This career is not going to be fair, ever," she said.

Landing parts has a lot to do with being in the right place at the right time.

Though Dionisio admits she's scared of the future, her nervousness hasn't affected her ability to form a practical image of life in New York: early morning auditions, table waiting, sleep.

Repeat.

Besides work, Dionisio will need constant training to stay prepped for auditions. Dance class will be at least every day, and an acting coach and voice lessons are also must-haves.

"Training never stops," Dionisio said. "It's definitely not going to be luxurious."

While Dionisio's parents are OK with her career choice, other family members don't understand.

"I don't think they'll ever get it," she confessed.

In answering those that doubt her, Dionisio desires some credibility to show them that there's substance behind her dream.

It's the preparation in getting that credibility that's the hard part: It comes with a price tag.

Dionisio paid \$260 in Cleveland for a CD of headshots, which are a vital part of the auditioning process. It can cost her \$200 just to copy 70 pictures. In New York, headshots can easily range from \$500 to \$600.

Dionisio hopes to keep this set of headshots for five years. Her last set forced her to keep her long, blond hair after high school graduation. Headshots, however, may be worth the investment, since Dionisio said they can make or break you.

"No, No," she said, pantomiming judges throwing out headshots at auditions.

The performer in her is obvious. She drops out of character to say, matter-of-factly, "This is what I have to do in order to entertain you," confirming awareness in her role as an actor.

Dionisio has been working toward entertaining since agesix, when her mom put her in a dance class.

"She's been my biggest fan since forever," Dionisio said.

Though her dad told Dionisio he would be disappointed if she didn't follow through with her acting dreams, he worried about her financial stability and the emotional impact the acting business would have on his daughter.

"You're gonna hear one hundred nos before you're gonna hear a yes," Dionisio said, shaking her head at what she calls an unpredictable business.

Dionisio's entrance into theater was rather atypical, as her high school career was theater free. But at 18, after hearing that "Mame" needed dancers, she went for an audition. Her first chorus part turned out to be the reason entertainment became her business.

Walking pigeon-toed with a Velcro tail, Dionisio got a chance to do some character acting in a comedic lead role as the quirky Gertrude McFuzz in YSU's "Seussical the Musical" in 2006.

"She kind of, like, squawked when she talked," she said.

Dionisio calls the experience the highlight of her YSU career.

"For me being a stepsister is more fun than being Cinderella," she said.

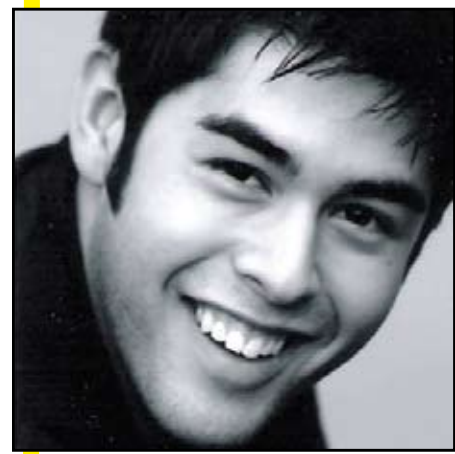
Getting different acting parts and taking risks is one way Dionisio makes sure she's versatile enough to get different acting jobs.

Playing Annie Sullivan in YSU's "The Miracle Worker" gave her another opportunity to widen her horizons.

"I felt like I really grew as an actress," she said.

While Dionisio has no idea where her future's going, she knows that theater will continue to be a large part of it.

"I can't picture myself doing anything else," she said.



Other graduating theater majors have similar mindsets, like YSU senior Randall Huffman.

He knew by 16 or 17 that he wanted to live in New York and get cast in shows.

Like Dionisio, Huffman is well aware of the challenges, expecting to have the requisite second job while theater jobs come and go.

"It's such a give and take," the dark-haired, brown-eyed actor said.

Huffman, however, is well on his way to making his entrance in the job flux.

Swinging his legs amicably while sitting on a cement rail outside YSU's Bliss Hall on a sunny afternoon between theater classes, Huffman described his experience getting a callback for "Spring Awakening," a popular Broadway show.

While at SCTC — a sizable Tennessee conference Huffman reports as attracting theater majors from about a dozen states — the soon-to-graduate theater major attended workshop classes and auditioned for countless companies. One of over 200 people who auditioned for "Spring Awakening," Huffman was a bit nervous, as his theater repertoire, heavily concentrated in musicals, did not include much of the show's folk or pop rock styles.

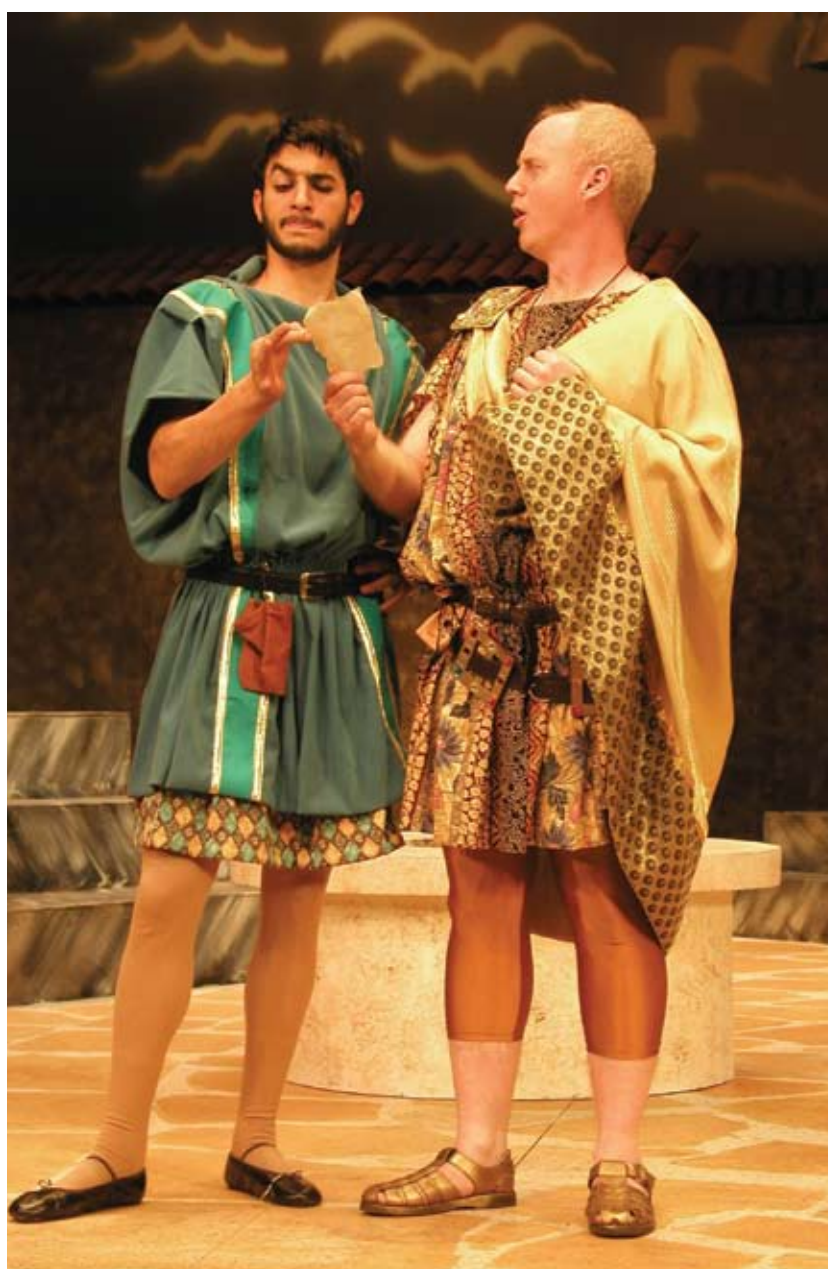
After calling his sister, who faxed over his song, "True," by Ryan Cabrera, Huffman got ready for his audition.

He found that 7:30 in the morning was only early enough to land spot No. 19 in the audition line.

"I was really early," he recalled, as the sound of student flute players wafted from the campus' performing arts building.

After singing in front of professionals, Huffman was given 20 minutes to rehearse a side, a piece or dialogue from the script. Asked to sing again, he got another callback for the next day. With a total of 21 callbacks at the conference, Huffman was on a performer's high.

In fact, he found the auditioning



CAUGHT IN THE ACT — Stavrou (top left) in Youngstown State University's production of "Comedy of Errors" in 2004, Kleemook (top right) performing and Dionisio (above) in the YSU's production of "Seussical: the Musical" in 2006.

experience surreal, since "Spring Awakening" was the first Broadway show Huffman had seen in New York.

For three minutes of auditioning, he tried to hold it together.

Yet another callback on a Monday had Huffman hurriedly cancelling his flight and booking a new one.

Armed with his CD, which contained a rehearsal sound clip with more dialogue, an intimidated Huffman worked with Kimberly Grigsby, the Tony Award-winning musical director for "Spring Awakening."

After the audition, it was time to hurry up and ... wait for a response. Two weeks later in Ohio, Huffman was getting ready for an Alpha Psi meeting with fellow theater students when he missed a call on his cell phone. Seeing that the number was area code 212, he instantly knew that the call was from New York.

"Your heart just sinks," he said.

Stomach in knots, Huffman called back to find that he was invited to New York for an April 6 audition at Ripley-Grier Studio. Sunday was a workshop — spent one on one with the show's director, Michael Mayer — followed by a dance call.

"I didn't really expect such a positive vibe from everyone," Huffman said.

Monday was another surreal day, as a moderately star-struck Huffman walked into the room to find Tony Award-winning composer Duncan Sheik and others he recognized sitting there.

"It's a waiting game now," Huffman said matter-of-factly.

Originally from what he describes as the small town of New Castle, Huffman is attracted to the hustle and bustle of New York and travels there at least once a year. While Huffman anticipates the city's atmosphere to be a lot more competitive, he figures that there are more open calls in the Big Apple than there are back home.

"Who doesn't want to make it on Broadway?" he asked.

Huffman, however, wasn't always so positive. At some points, he questioned his area of study, since he said a majority those in theater are not employed.

"Not everyone can move to New York and," he said, snapping his fingers, "make it."



Physical evidence against the starving artist stereotype, YSU alumna Kari Kleemook spends some time on a day off work to talk over the phone about her freshly acquired career in theater.

The Spring 2007 musical theater graduate did about 30 to 40 auditions before getting a full-time job at Saltworks Theatre, a traveling theater company that performs shows about life issues to kids and teens.

Kleemook has a 10-month contract with Saltworks, touring Pennsylvania and the surrounding five states with five other actors.

This theater-degree holder doesn't take her job for granted.

"I am so incredibly fortunate," Kleemook said, giggling.

Others weren't so lucky. Some of Kleemook's friends who graduated went on to pursue theater in New York.

"They're still waiting tables," she said.

Upon graduating, Kleemook had one goal: to get a job in the field. Knowing the difficulties, she expected the worst.

Instead, she does seven shows based on tough issues, playing three to four characters a show. In one act about drug and alcohol abuse, Kleemook portrays a girl who gets killed by her high older brother.

"You really have to be good at improvisation," she said.

Often, life off the stage for a traveling actor demands improvisation as well.

The troop travels in a huge van piled with costumes and equipment. At inner city schools where Kleemook and the traveling company tour, there are no stages and no sound equipment. The cafeteria, gymnasium and auditorium were often one room. Some schools didn't have tables, so Kleemook and her fellow players had to line up six or seven desks. Suburban schools, in contrast, had brand new equipment.

Besides the improv, traveling demands flexibility on Kleemook's part. Already she has been to New Jersey, multiple times, West Virginia, Virginia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Maine.

"You're kind of thrown into anything," she said.

Though Kleemook envisioned herself being part of a traveling actors group, she never thought she would be performing for kids. Still, she likes being a positive influence.

Being a role model pays off. Though she occasionally bartends on the side, Kleemook describes herself as financially comfortable.

"We're not talking a doctor's salary here," she said, laughing.

Kleemook's penchant for playing dates back to grade school in Pennsylvania's small Harmony Township.

"We have, like, one traffic light," Kleemook said with a laugh.

Her love for performing only grew stronger in high school, where she was involved in musicals, plays and the drama club, and the forthcoming degree was extremely important.

While she acknowledges the rarity of coming out of college with a full-time theater gig, Kleemook argues that finding any job after college is rare.



Rare or not, one YSU theater grad went overseas to find work. Trying everything except musicals, Alexi Stavrou, a black-haired, bilingual Greek whose hands start talking as soon as his mouth does, has so far lived solely off of theater. Sitting at Winslow's Café on YSU's campus in a neat black pea coat with a gray striped scarf, Stavrou has had an unexpected return home thanks to a foot injury in Russia while doing acrobatics.

"Three days before we were done, my foot just snapped," he said.

"You have to go where theater is," Stavrou said, and he certainly has, traveling Europe, Egypt, Israel, Poland, Greece, Russia and Canada.

To get ahead, actors need to go to the major theater spots, like Los Angeles, New York and London, he said. After graduating from YSU in 2005 with a bachelor's in theater, Stavrou took a year off to audition for national theater schools and went back to his hometown of Cypress, a small Greek island where he spent part of his childhood.

Visiting a café every day for a month to talk to a director who frequented the spot, Stavrou eventually landed a stint as the main character on a sitcom.

"I was like a star for a year in a tiny country," he said.

In "The Coffee Shop," Stavrou played the role of Fanos, a part he described as a stereotypical punk, and as comparable to a smarter version of the "Friends" character Joey.

"In Greek, we call it 'alites,'" he

said. "Hey 'alite, you little punk!" he demonstrated, pointing his finger at an imaginary young rebel.

"I was the face of youth for this show," he said.

There was also a stint as a Greek pimp from the 1950s, where Stavrou played a realistically violent villain.

"It wasn't one of those Hollywood plays; it was real," he said.

After the role was over, Stavrou left on a flight to London and started school there.

"It was like one right after another," he said, snapping his fingers three times.

Stavrou enrolled in a London drama center, a dirty, grungy place where students often cried in the hallways.

"I've seen people — their souls — broken by the training," he said.

Stavrou got slapped in the face with reality.

"I sold the fact that I was Greek a little more than I sold the fact that I was American," he admits with a laugh.

"I had never anticipated the level of difficulty," Stavrou said, imitating the responses he often got when auditioning. "You look a little too dark; you're a year too young."

During a three-month stay in Russia, Stavrou got a chance for training from the locals, who he describes as "the hardest people you'll ever meet in your life."

"I saw people just fall off like flies," he said of his classmates.

Alice, a roommate in an apartment in Moscow, lasted eight days, but spent three of them in the hospital.

"It just broke her," Stavrou said.

Getting into character is something Stavrou takes to heart — enough to drink for a week straight for a role as main character in the Anton Chekov play "Platonov."

In Cypress, Stavrou had 12-hour sessions with one water break that only lasted an hour and 45 minutes. To combat the thirst, Stavrou and other students would roll their tongues around the front of their mouths. In Russia, Stavrou was the only one out of the students who took the time to learn the language, and so he found himself absorbed in the culture. Stavrou spent five months attending the school in London, two months at Shakespeare's Globe Theater, two months in Russia, and then it was back to school again to prepare for short scene work.

"Art is hard as hell," Stavrou said.

No matter the sacrifice, the actor said the knowledge he's gained training, traveling and perfecting his art helps him stay competitive.

"The travel gives you that," he said, extending his arms up and outward.*

["Art is hard as hell."]
YSU GRADUATE AND CYPRESS TV STAR ALEXI STAVROU

[wanna make it out of youngstown?]*

Ask

Nanette Lepore

High-fashion extraordinaire

By Cristina Cala



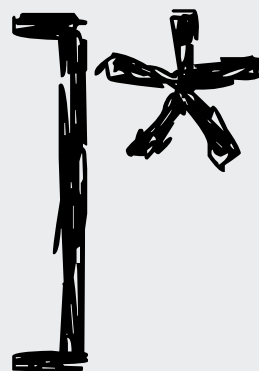
PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANETTE LEPORE

Before she was a high-fashion designer with international success and boutiques in New York, Las Vegas, Chicago, Boston, London, Tokyo and her newest (and second) in Los Angeles, she lived and went to school in Youngstown. Born and raised in the Yo' and living the dream in New York City, Nanette Lepore gets exclusive with The Yo' Magazine about her career, her art and her hometown.

So, first things first.
You made it big ...
REALLY BIG ...
out of Youngstown.
How did you do it?

Nanette

**A lot of hard, hard work,
and an incredibly encouraging family.**



ON YOUNGSTOWN

THE YO' MAGAZINE Despite coming from a supportive family full of art — painter dad, fashionable mom and dancer siblings — how did coming from Youngstown inspire or discourage you?

NANETTE LEPORE Youngstown is inspirational. I know so many people from this area who have done wonderfully creative and exciting work.

YM What about Youngstown sticks with you?

NL I think often about the summers: the green, the fireflies, the warm nights, a certain freedom that perhaps has to do with childhood but I associate it with Youngstown, that time of one's life when one is wildly inventive and daring and blissful. I think I stored all that up and it directed me toward what I do now.

YM Favorite place to eat or dance or drink in the Yo'?

NL Boulevard Tavern Friday Fish Fry, drinking and dancing on Leffingwell Road.

ON NEW YORK

YM What inspiration do you draw from the city?

NL Every day there is something that turns my head: people, architecture, art, what someone's wearing, what someone's saying, what someone's eating, even the ideas that bounce off one another. The city is kicking alive, and I couldn't imagine living anywhere else and getting this kind of daily rush.

YM You designed your first couture look at age nine. Your daughter Violet is ten, and ever-present at your fashion shows. Any signs that she'll find a niche in fashion like her mother?

NL She definitely has her own sense of style and has no interest in me calling any of the shots. Do I see her as a fashion designer? I don't know — she has so many interests. She loves to make things with her hands, is a great reader, enjoys writing stories, can really belt out a song, like her father. So who knows? I'm just enjoying watching her grow and discover; there's nothing better than that. This year she wore a pink feather boa to school for picture day.

YM So you hang out with film actor Steve Buscemi. Who's the most interesting celebrity you've met? Anyone you're dying to meet?

NL Steve is certainly one of the most interesting celebrities I've met. He's great. The thing is that when you meet people who

you've watched from afar, you saw them in films or listened to their music or read their books, they really are, when it comes down to it, folks. And you enjoy them as much or as little as you do anyone. That said, the glam factor is definitely fun, and seeing Mick Jagger over Easter was a trip because he is an icon — it's like seeing the pope or Marilyn Monroe.

YM When you're not crazy busy, what's your perfect Sunday?

NL New York Times, great coffee, favorite nut rolls and fresh fruit, snuggling with my daughter, hearing all she has to say, having the time to sit with my husband because the week is so hectic and we have barely seen each other, and then going to our favorite little Italian restaurant for Sunday pasta and a bottle of really good red wine.



1

From rendering



ON THE CRAFT

YM How do you conceptualize a collection? Is it art, architecture, prints, fabrics, colors?

NL Yes.

YM You've stayed true to your youthful, girlish appeal. How do you keep your fashion fresh each season?

NL Read *The New York Times* daily, travel, go to museums, work hard, play hard.

YM Any habits — listening to music, nibbling on something yummy, sipping champagne — while you're rendering a design?

NL Yes.

YM Your sister Michele Lepore-Hagan, who directs the Performing Arts Series at Youngstown State University, calls you a super-detailed micromanager down to every last button in your designs. From scratch to finish, what's the process of your art in one of your pieces?

NL Michele is a true inspiration to me and my entire family!

ON FASHION

YM What's the absolute fashion item everyone should have?

NL Sexy bra.

YM What trend, past or present, makes you cringe? What's the most fabulous?

NL Big hair ... cringe.

New Year's Eve vintage glamour dress. Fabulously sparkled!

YM What's your perfect outfit?

NL Fitted, sexy and feminine looks from my new spring line.

ON BEING YOUR OWN BOSS

YM Was adding shoes to your line in 2006 a big leap for you as an entrepreneur? How does designing shoes differ from designing clothes?

NL Yes. [They're] produced in Italy — a whole new dimension.

YM Describe the chaos and compensation of Fashion Week.

NL Three months of 10-hour days, seven days a week.

YM What's the best part about being a successful designer? (The swag, maybe?)

NL Creative freedom.

YM Do you ever give away your work as a gift? (What are the chances of a *Yo' Magazine* editor snagging something?)

NL Yes. ... Talk to Michele! *

To runway



**Nanette
Lepore
Fall 2008
Collection**

1 Sketch

Pantone Fall
Rendering for
Look 20

2 Runway shot

Fall 2008
Look 20

3 Runway shot

Fall 2008
Look 23

2



As a 22-year-old man who grew up in Niles, I can honestly say that no one ever told me to be a dancer. Though I dabbled with singing and acting in high school, I refused to audition for musicals and only ever bothered with the basic steps of swing dancing. So what happens when I push beyond that last male boundary: learning to dance like I mean it?

Day One: Private Lessons (almost)

My ballet instructor Jackie sits at her desk, framed by a large piece of banner paper with the word “ballet” drawn on it in crayon colors. Taking ballet lessons for the first time is intimidating, but despite the glass, brick and steel of the downtown studio, the place has the friendly reassurance of a preschool due to the little-people furniture and young ballerinas waiting with their mothers in the lobby of Youngstown’s Ballet Western Reserve. No matter

what, I probably have better balance than these girls.

As I’m changing before my first class, a dance beat pounds through the bathroom walls. The stomping sounds like a terrifying march until I recognize Britney Spears. As it turns out, I’d find it easier to groove to her than to mangle ballet steps to the manic classical piano I’m about to hear.

I meet Jackie in the empty classroom and awkwardly remove my shoes. Since I’m the only student (lucky me) Jackie takes her time showing me five basic foot positions, all of which require a disquieting amount of leg twisting. First position, heels together, toes out, high arches. My knees are winking at me, the muscles pulsing with a twinge that reminds me that leg joints don’t bend that way. Jackie’s knees don’t seem to object.

Second position. Put some space between the heels. Third and fourth blur together until I reach fifth, where my front heel is shaking hands with the big toe of my back foot. That’s a lot of body parts jumbled together. Suddenly just standing is a challenge, but Jackie takes it easy on a first-timer and says I don’t have to turn my legs out too far — yet.

Now we’re gracefully sweeping arms and legs through the air

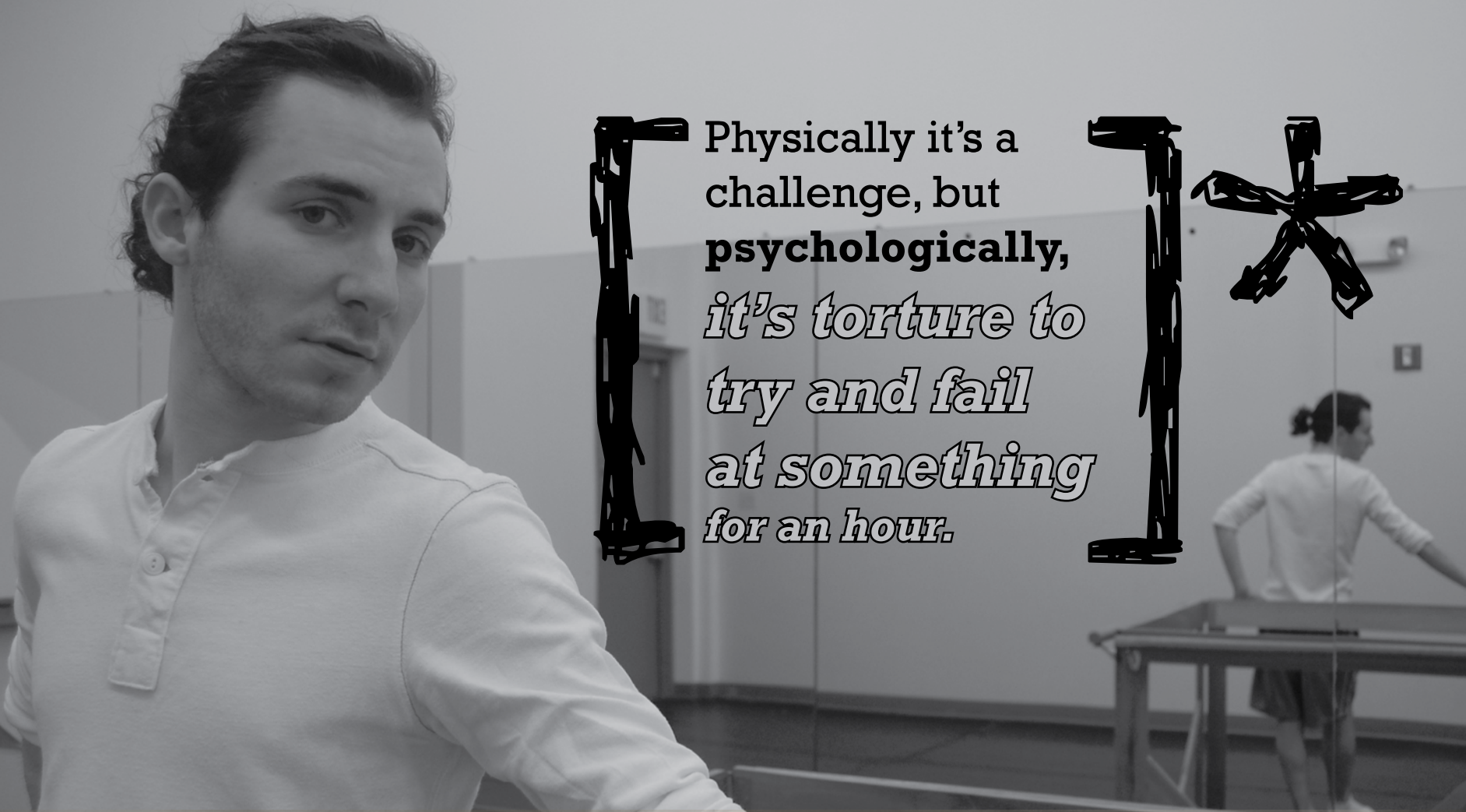
*man
in*

tightrope

The Yo’s amateur ballerino steps off on the wrong foot

[A Yo* Diary]

By **Richard Louis Boccia**
Photography by **Cristina Cala**



Physically it's a challenge, but **psychologically,** *it's torture to try and fail at something for an hour.*

while standing, like we're waving the most elegant airplane imaginable in for a landing.

I find myself standing at a waist-high railing, known to dancers as the barre, where one hand will rest while I bend at the knees in a plié and slowly wave my other arm. The fact that I need to hang on to something for this warm-up exercise does not bode well. Until now, downtown has meant drinks at the bar, not pliés at the barre.

I count mysterious French terms in my head as Jackie counts the beat. Tendu, changement — high school French did not prepare me for this, although I know faux pas means false step, and I've made a few of those already. Sensing my confusion, Jackie describes the movements in simple terms.

My arms should wrap around a beach ball in front of my chest and my eyes and chin should float above it. When my toe moves across the floor in a semicircle, it should follow the outline of a giant orange slice: curved outside,

straight inside. Jackie tells me to imagine I'm writing with a crayon between my toes. I quickly banish a very un-ballet childhood image of my father showing off his ability to pick things up with his feet. Maybe I'm only capable of drawing with a crayon like a gorilla, instead of moving like a civilized male danseur.

Jackie says to make my upper body a rectangle, perfectly aligned. Forgetting to hold my shoulders back and my hips forward, I look like a folded piece of paper. And that's with two legs on the ground — reaching one into the air is much harder.

A woman named Kimberly has just leapt off the professional stage into our class to make me look bad. She's a femme fatale, but the only thing she's killing is any confidence I'd built up as a dancer in the first few minutes of practice.

She's in time for stretches before the next part of the lesson. Her dance training is obvious, and to rub it in, she fully extends one long, graceful leg so high that her pointed toe nearly

grazes her ear. Her legs look like the hands of a clock at 10:30. Trying to pull my left leg above my shoulder, I feel like an overloaded plastic coat hanger about to snap. I might be about to kick myself, but it would likely only injure my self-image.

Jackie says I should feel very tall and graceful, held up by a string in perfect posture. She reaches over her head and pulls her invisible string with confident grace.

I'm held up by strings all right, bouncing around like a bad imitation of the marionettes from "Team America." I look like a poorly operated puppet compared to these real dancers. Where are those 10-year-old girls from the lobby now? Maybe I belong in their class.

Kimberly and Jackie's strings seem to be working better than mine, and since they're the only ones in class, there's no hiding in the back row, making comparisons to the perfect ballerina next to me all the easier. I check out my posture in the mirror but

look away in embarrassment, not because I'm doing ballet, but because I'm doing it so very badly. It's like a funhouse mirror, but instead of shrinking my face or body, it makes my self-esteem smaller. I worry how much it's distorting my self-view, or if it's just revealing a lack of poise that was always there.

For now, I need keep to keep my chin up, literally. I keep looking down, but in ballet, you must present your best face to the world. Jackie encourages me to imagine myself and feel the proper movement rather than looking to check it. Instead I jealously watch the other two in the mirror, or else check out my own legs, which move about as well as a statue's. Maybe if I glare at them long enough they'll perform better — my legs, not the other dancers. They don't need any help.

My knees are starting to worry me. Perhaps they'll pop off and shatter the wall-length mirror, which for me should read, "Objects in mirror are clumsier than they appear."

Choking down some embarrassment, I try to keep flexing and stretching to the music, but halfway through the lesson, this statue just wants to stand still. Physically it's a challenge, but psychologically, it's torture to try and fail at something for an hour. Still, every now and then I feel a flash of confidence when I do something right. I smile at a compliment from Jackie — until I realize she's talking to my classmate. Touché, Kimberly. We arabesque, backward, leaning toward the rear with one arm while bending at the waist until I think I might stop breathing, permanently. Now the torture is physical.

I struggle with a move that puts all my weight on my buzzing knee. Now we're trying the frappé, which means "to strike." More blows to the image that ballet is frivolous. Swinging one heel away from my standing leg, back and forth, faster and faster, I get pretty close to kicking myself in the ankle. In the mirror, my face puckers and wrinkles in anticipation of the blow. With confidence, Kimberly strikes with precision and speed, slicing the air with her foot — how can I make my body do this? I realize that if I'm going to make it in ballet, I need to stop feeling bad about looking like an amateur. But as we're doing sit ups at the end of class, it's hard to stop feeling self-conscious as my basketball shorts bunch. Risqué, but in all the wrong ways. So that's why they wear tights.

Day Two: The Adult Class

For my second class, I'm even more nervous, and I'm surprised to find that two of my six classmates are men. Counting our instructor Richard, the room is split for gender — and I expected all tutus. Now it's time for more running and leaping: the grande jeté, the worst part so far. We run across the floor and leap on every third step. I'm stopping and starting with the syncopated step, awkwardly kicking my way across the floor like a bad Russian Cossack dancer. My elbows are already up — all I need is to fold my arms in and yell, "Hey! Hey! Hey!"

Some of the dancers are twice my age, and during a break, they talk about dedication. A few of the women say they danced when they were younger and came back to it with their daughters. Ballet is in their blood. Richard the instructor is showing me how to move.

"You might want to be careful with this," he tells me, and then suddenly his leg pops up onto the barre. He says I don't want to stretch too far and "break my muscles." Slowly, carefully, I follow the stretches.

Actually, they turn out to be the easiest and most enjoyable ballet exercise I've tried. Facing

the brick wall also keeps me from the sight of my limbs flailing in the mirror. Later we're in the center of the floor, doing turns in place on one foot. I force myself to watch my reflection as I try my first pirouette. We spin quarter turns, then halves, then all the way around. I'm supposed to find my face in the mirror, but when it comes to the big spin, I find myself closing my eyes. Richard explains the next choreography with a flurry of French instructions that would make a UN interpreter's head spin. These translate into an even faster swirl of movement, and I decide to sit the last dance out. As the class practices for their spring performance, I see more of the work that goes into making ballet look effortless. Frustration peeks out from behind their poker faces when they make errors like my own. Sweat glistens on the skin that isn't hidden by perfectly smooth pink and black dance clothes. Faces flush with effort, and fingers ball into fists. Eyes roll as students criticize themselves. This is the struggle of ballet, and beating myself up for my poor start, I only scratched the surface. I watch as the female dancers lace up their pointe shoes for a later lesson, with Richard correcting their little mistakes and giving advice. Ballet seems to be about changing yourself in small ways until you're perfect. I wonder how many lessons that would take.

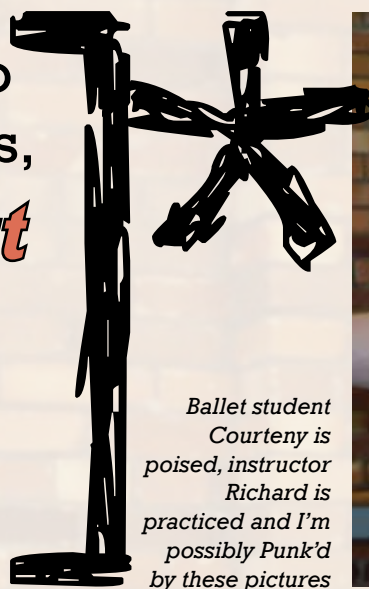
Day Three: It Takes Two

My final lesson is pas de deux, or partnering. Before I can face a partner on the floor, I need to get over being distracted by my own shortcomings in the studio. The first two lessons brought some nasty insecurities to the surface: I looked through the mirror in horror at my sapling-thin body, my chicken-bone legs, my grace-free movements and my crooked, bemused smile as I winced at it all. By now, I'm sure



My dance partner, Courteny, trusts me not to drop her during the pas de deux. Bad choice?

I've never been so aware of my pelvis, ***which I'd just as soon not think about skeletally.***



Ballet student Courteny is poised, instructor Richard is practiced and I'm possibly Punk'd by these pictures



those little girls I saw on day one in the studio lobby could dance circles around me. Ballet is harder than it looks, and it looks pretty hard.

In the spirit of giving it one last shot, I wear a ballet-appropriate V-neck shirt and hope I have the chest hair to pull it off like a man. This is the biggest class yet, and I'm smack in the middle. For each barre combination, we put our right hand on the barre, go through the exercise, then switch to the left to get equal practice on both sides of our body. Maybe that means only half the class can see me half the time, and given my form, I like those odds. I'm following a few moves behind, but that's OK, because I need to see the dancer in front of me to copycat. The nearest two are guys, Gary and Charles, both of whom must have fewer bones than me given their stretching abilities.

Richard is teaching again, and this time when my joints are screaming he gets my eternal gratitude for making frequent stops so that we can stretch out. I watch in jealous amazement as Charles does a vertical split in the studio door — the best I could do with that doorway was avoid tripping through it. My jaw may have dropped when I saw Gary fold not only his legs but his chest down onto the floor into what I like to call a triple split. I'll admit, I've tried it at home since, and I've never been so aware of my pelvis, which I'd just as soon not think about skeletally. I did get one leg to split in the lesson. Surprisingly, my man meat was still packaged when I

retrieved my outstretched leg. After 45 minutes at the barre, I'm not ready to let go for partnering. I hang back and watch in awe as ballerinas jump into dancers' arms to sit nimbly on one male shoulder.

But Richard is there to introduce me to a few experienced ballerinas who I'll partner with. Courteny stands en pointe, all her weight on one tip-toe so that I can hold her waist and keep her from falling on her face.

Keeping a firm hold on her waist, I anticipate her movement and push in the opposite direction to keep her floating on one toe. Turns out it's more like assisting than partnering.

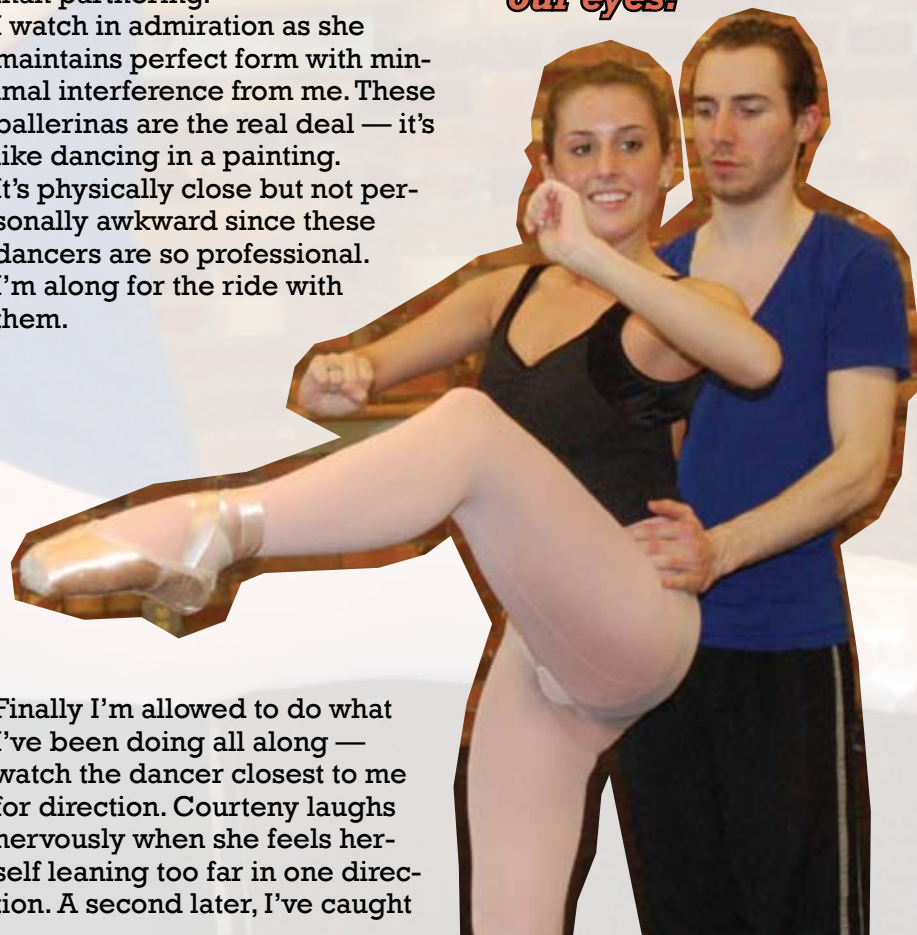
I watch in admiration as she maintains perfect form with minimal interference from me. These ballerinas are the real deal — it's like dancing in a painting. It's physically close but not personally awkward since these dancers are so professional. I'm along for the ride with them.

Finally I'm allowed to do what I've been doing all along — watch the dancer closest to me for direction. Courteny laughs nervously when she feels herself leaning too far in one direction. A second later, I've caught

on and pushed the other way to fight off gravity.

I'm the barre and she's the dancer, bending forward and back, pointing one leg forward and then behind in passé developpe, sweeping arms slowing through ballet positions as I hold her up, finally feeling solid. I catch a glimpse of our reflection, but this time it's less of a funhouse-mirror image. I actually look graceful with her. Now I'm doing vertical jumps with Elena. Standing behind her with my arms at her waist, it looks like I'm throwing her into

Look at the fear in our eyes.



the air, but actually, she's just getting a boost from me as she jumps. We bounce on our knees in sync, a little higher each time until she leaps straight up and I push her a bit farther with every muscle in my body. Legs push core, core pushes arms and, somehow, arms manage to pass along a little help to Elena.

To my horror, it's time to try a running leap. Actual movement across the floor has been my weakest point in all of this, and now someone else is literally in my hands. Will I stumble and crash us through the window at the end of the studio?

I don't think my health insurance covers ballet-related injuries. Again, it's the syncopation of the movement that flusters me. Step, step, quickstep, leap. Don't think, just watch and follow. Richard and Elena are waiting, and I can't put it off any longer. He counts down and we take a step, then another, faster — and then she leaps through the air and lands nimbly.

I look in the mirror and we both appear unharmed. The funhouse image is gone. Not a tour de force, but mission accomplished.

At the end of my lessons, I wonder if the embarrassment, like the physical pain, was just part of ballet, where the demand for self-improvement is absolute. I stumbled and bumbled but I didn't quit.

Au contraire — I became a ballerino for the few moments when I wasn't scared to fall, and ballet earned my respect as a challenging and rewarding form of art.*



VINCE VALERIO
POLICE SKETCH ARTIST

drawing outside the lines

sketching by eye(witness)

By Emmalee Torisk

You've admired painters in studios, actors on stage, dancers in the footlights, but what about hairstylists in funeral homes or stuntpeople on movie sets?

Artists come in many forms, and, at Youngstown State University, art major Vince Valerio is taking on a form of his own.

At the university, Valerio participates in what the senior calls a "pretty big project" that involves two academic departments contrary in procedure: art and computer science. The project aims to solve the battle of the left and right-brained: whether method or talent is superior.

The medium of choice: police sketching.

Valerio is a year deep in the

process, and likely to continue for quite a while longer due to its multiple stages. The cross-disciplinary research project on police sketches pits execution against imagination. However, the police sketch artist can only illustrate what the witness remembers.

Where Valerio, an artist since childhood, fills his palette with a mix of technique and artistic expression, this project separates the two aspects of artistry. Essentially, the project is a comparison between police sketches done the old-fashioned way by sketch artists and those done contemporarily through the use of a computer. The end result will be to see which of the two is more effective.

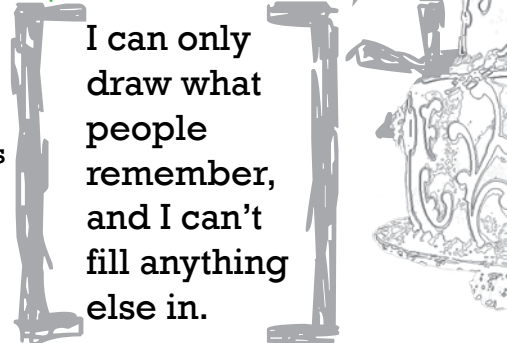
The first stage of the project's process consists of the six or so participating artists drawing sketches from photographs in order to develop accuracy in their drawings. The next step involves talking to an eyewitness account who studied a photograph, and then drawing the sketch using only details the eyewitness remembers. Vince said this step is the most time consuming and challenging.

The lengthy process between artist and eyewitness is involved.

Usually, he said, an artist sits down with the eyewitness and begins by asking him or her some basic questions about the photograph such as the

person's sex and age. Next, the artist progresses to the bigger picture and asks the eyewitness to describe what he or she remembers most or what stood out about the person. Patience is key at this point, since a lot depends on what the eyewitness account tells the artist, Vince said.

From there, the artist can then commence sketching, but



I can only draw what people remember, and I can't fill anything else in.

cannot take any liberties with the picture at all or “persuade” the eyewitness in any way.

“[Police sketching] is completely different than portrait sketching,” Vince said. “I can only draw what people remember, and I can’t fill anything else in. It actually looks kind of funny in the end. It’s not the most beautiful portrait.”

Finally, in the third phase of the project, the accuracy of the hand-drawn sketches will be compared to those produced by a computer. To Vince, there is no doubt the hand-drawn sketch is probably more precise, but he presents a solution: Instead of having police officers with no artistic background run the computers, hire artists to do the job instead. This, Vince said, would be the best of both worlds, and would provide work for many with art backgrounds, since most police stations no longer hire sketch artists.

Valerio said all he ever wanted to do with his life was make a living selling his art, but chuckled before he added, “But we all know that’s not so easy.” Even so, he’s doing pretty well for himself, considering he won Best in Show at the 2007 Student Art Show, as well as multiple other awards. For him, though, it all comes down to his passion for and dedication to his craft.

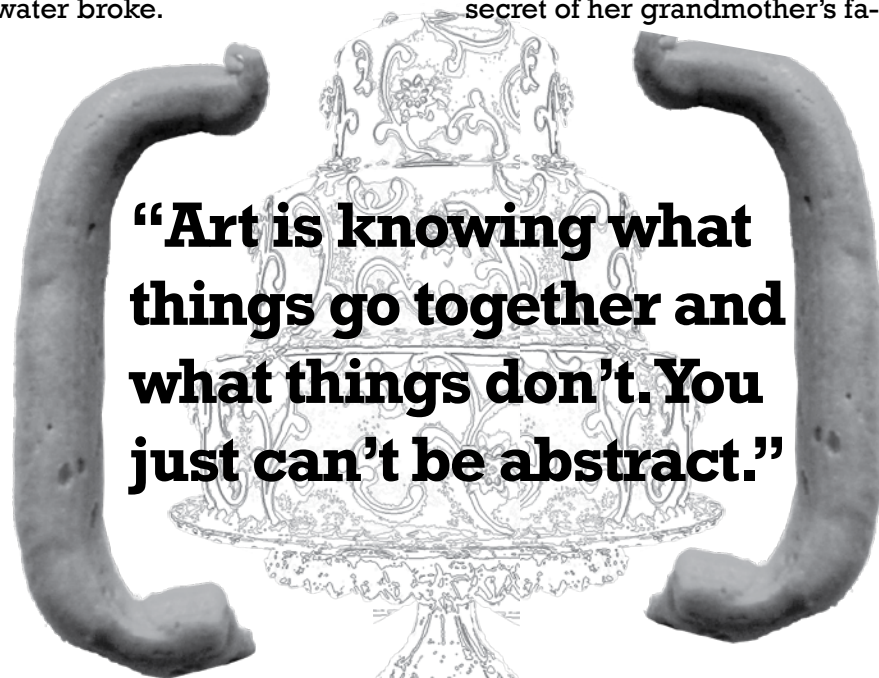
“It’s a very selfish career path where you have to put your art first,” Vince said. “As long as you know you are really passionate about it, go for it.

You have to be really dedicated if you

want to go anywhere with it.”

Accuracy and attention to detail mixed with creativity are the same major factors Raquel Bair identifies with as an artist.

Third-generation cake decorator Raquel Bair was born into the business. Literally. According to the oft-repeated story of the events preceding her birth, Raquel’s mother Cheryl Bair, a cake decorator of nearly 35 years, was working the day her water broke.



“Art is knowing what things go together and what things don’t. You just can’t be abstract.”

That was 25 years ago. Today, the younger Bair is still working and decorating cakes at the Austintown cake shop her grandmother founded out of her home about 43 years ago.

As a bridal consultant, Web site designer and cake decorator at Sugar Showcase, situated in a South Raccoon Road plaza since about 1972, Bair works at the shop six days a week, and says she owes all of her cake decorating skills to her mother. Just like her mom, Raquel has been around the craft of cake decorating since a very young age, when her mother would bring her to work with her in a playpen. But it was only a year ago that Raquel began deco-

rating cakes full time.

Raquel was a quick study in the cake business. As a painter and sketcher in high school and once a vocal performance major at Youngstown State University, Raquel had a strong artistic background. However, she wanted a way to express herself combined with a stable career, and decided to carry on the legacy of a generation of family cake decorators — and the secret of her grandmother’s fa-

mous buttercream icing recipe.

Boasting over 55 flavors of cakes, including peanut butter chocolate chip and pumpkin cheese — Raquel’s favorite — a plethora of fillings, frostings and designs, and a store full of baking supplies and wedding accoutrements, Sugar Showcase is a great source of pride for both mother and daughter. Neither can imagine doing anything other than crafting cakes for special occasions. Cheryl says there are endless variables in cake decorating, and she is constantly fascinated by the myriad ways in which to make beautiful and edible creations.

“To make [cakes] look great, it takes time and a certain amount of talent,” Cheryl said.

Like any art form, you have to want to do it.

“This is really something you have to want to do,” she said. “You can tell if someone puts a little effort or a lot into what they do.”

And you have to be willing

to sacrifice — even if it means your figure.

“It’s not always fun, there are long hours, it’s a lot of work, you’re going to gain some weight, and you have to be willing to learn as much as you possibly can.”

Raquel agrees that cake decorating is most definitely an art.

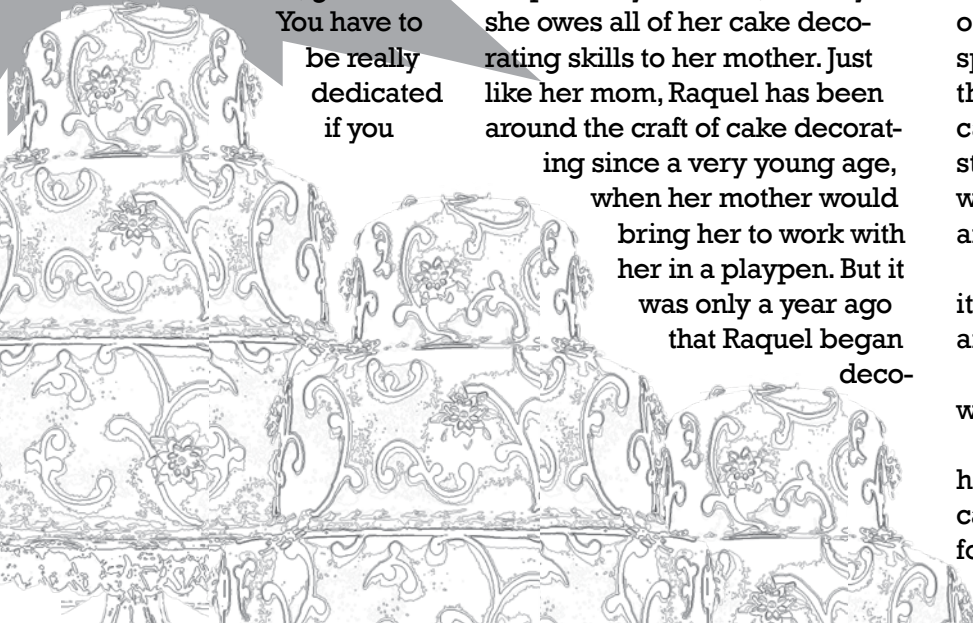
“If someone doesn’t have that artistic eye, or they can’t do art, they probably can’t do cakes,” Raquel said. “It’s more than throwing icing on a cake. You really have to know how all the parts fit together.”

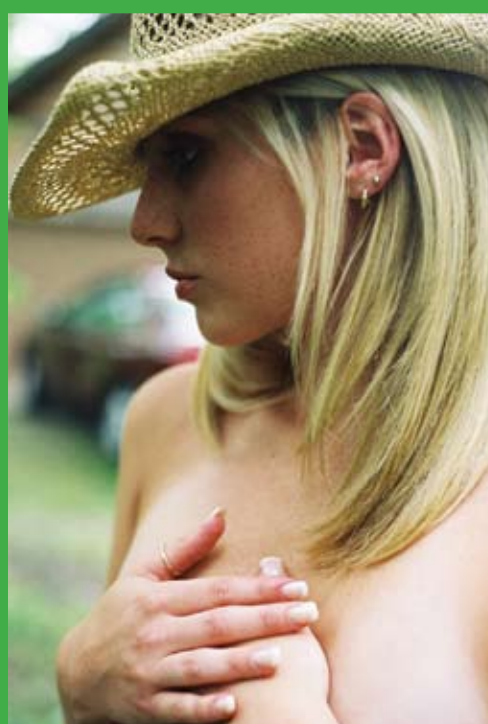
The two women also tout Sugar Showcase’s willingness “to do things differently,” mentioning slightly unusual cake orders for numerous functions. Among these are an 8-foot-long train cake, a sculpted 70-pound tiger and an edible replica of Kilcawley Center for its 20th anniversary. Though these wild and different ideas for cakes are welcome, there are a few exceptions. Like black wedding cakes.

“We’ll do what you request to an extent,” Cheryl began. “If what you’re asking us to do will taste bad, look horrible or isn’t structurally sound, we won’t do it.”

Raquel’s philosophy is to take a cake customer’s idea and tweak it.

“We like to make sure your cake looks sophisticated and not overdone, and we won’t do anything tacky. You really lose the effect of the cake if you overdo it. People come to us when they want something different. Art is knowing what things go together and what things don’t. You just can’t be abstract with





Youngstown Born, Playboy Spread

By **Chelsea Pflugh**
Photography by **Kara Kochalko**

Lyndsy Wolff stands naked in front of a crew of ten people, a camera and a director. She's encouraged to pose herself, even though the crew will fix her hair and makeup in between photos and scene changes. She laughs and acts naturally as the camera flashes over the photography director's voice. It's not just another day in the business; it's a golden opportunity to get there.

Lyndsy Wolff is not a porn star. She's a Playboy model.

Blond-haired, blue-eyed and delicately freckled, she is the poster child for the cliché, all-American, pretty girl next door. Her audience is a mixture of generations and demographics, each with a different reaction to one of her lifelong dreams.

Is what she does considered porn? Is it degrading to women?

Not to Wolff. Posing nude for Playboy is all about achieving a dream and being proud about feminine identity. It's an expression of how everyone should be comfortable in his or her own skin and body. Wolff's expression details two lifelong passions that, at the surface, rival each other. Since childhood, she's had aspirations for medicine and modeling. Medicine came in the form of a love of science that has brought her to Youngstown State University as a biology major; modeling has led her to the pages of Playboy. Wolff says both mediums allow her to portray the human body as a canvas.

"It's the farthest thing from flaunting what I have. I'm not saying, 'Hey, look at my boobs or my body!' This is a form of self-expression that I've dreamed of since I was 8 years old," she said.

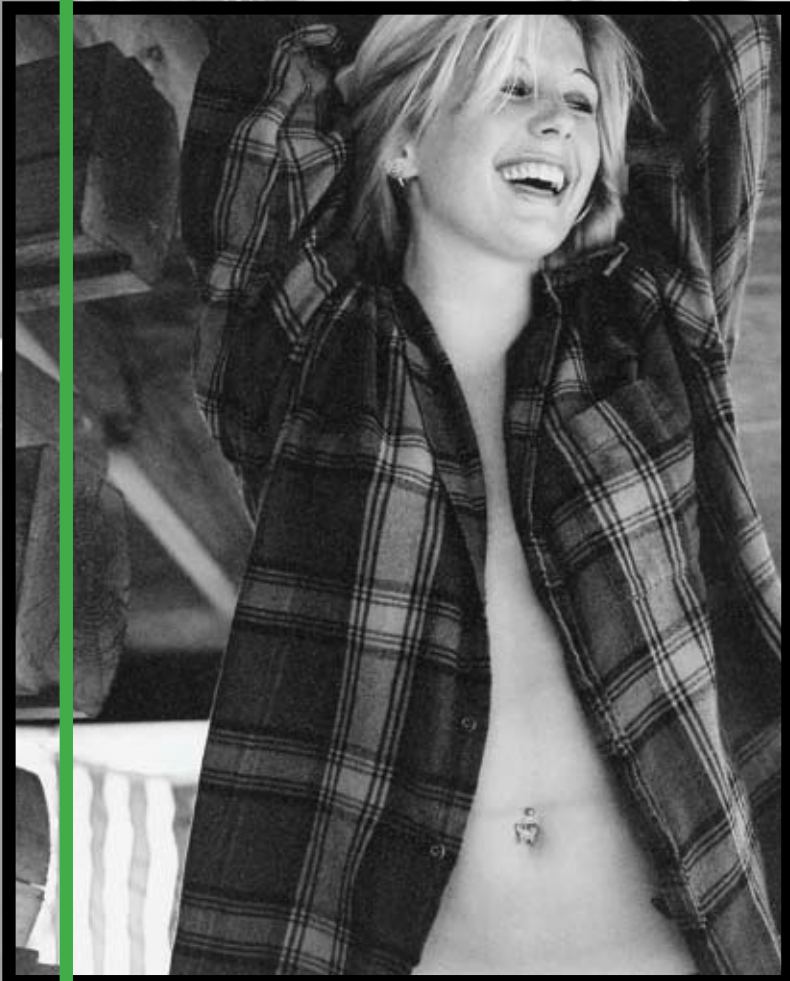
Wolff said her pictures are tasteful, and the appeal she tries to convey from her audience is not that of a sexual fantasy or innuendo. During her photo shoots, she considers herself her own director because she's not forced to pose to "entice any readers." Despite the fact that Playboy wants her to "come out in these pictures," she said she still feels in control of the photo shoot.

If Wolff is right when she says her art isn't porn, is the appeal the opposite, a form of empowerment? There have been

Playboy models who have argued that one person's subjectivity is another's empowerment. New to the game, Wolff isn't quite there yet. Maybe she never will be. To Wolff, who says it's not necessarily publicity that she craves — though she doesn't mind it — it's the feeling of achievement she has from reaching one of her personal goals to be published in Playboy.

YOUNGSTOWN CELEBRITY

After Wolff made her debut April 21 in Playboy Special Editions, a branch of Playboy Magazine, she's been in the



local spotlight every day, getting publicity from newspapers and radio. Though celebrity status wasn't what she said she was after, she's earned it in Youngstown, and — as contradictory as it may seem from her initial motives — she is enjoying it. In her interviews, she's come across the same questions and given the same answers. But there is one thing she can't get the public to understand: Her goal is not to be a sex object, though she's accepted that she may be treated like one.

"I'm not OK with the fact that guys are gawking at me. I didn't do it for male attention. Am I comfortable with some people using or seeing my pictures inappropriately? No. But it all comes with the package of modeling this way," she said. "I'm not going to change what I did because of someone else's reactions."

Through her Youngstown publicity she was met with an array of reactions. Her radio interviewers showed mixed feelings toward her choice to pose nude, but she said she brushed off the negativity. Wolff recalled one female disc jockey who kept asking her what, exactly, was the appeal of posing in Playboy, as if every answer she gave wasn't good enough. Yes, male DJs may have been eyeing her up, but she said she takes it all in stride.

"I take the good with the bad. It's just nearly impossible to convey or explain the appeal of what I do to someone that might not agree with it," she said. "I have personal reasons for doing this, but it doesn't entirely make me who I am."

ROLE PLAY (NOT THAT KIND)

Even though Wolff was brought to the radio studios to talk about her recent publicity,

the DJs also wanted to know about school and her aspirations.

"Modeling isn't the only thing I want to do with my life; it's not the be-all, end-all for me," she said. "I've always been interested in medicine since I was a little girl, and I want to be a veterinarian. School's my first priority; my family, friends and even Playboy know that and they respect it."

Wolff says that while modeling is one of her dreams, becoming a veterinarian is more important.

"If modeling starts to interfere, then I'll be done. No questions asked," she said.

For someone just getting her foot in the door of great commercial opportunity, she may seem bold to give it up so quickly. She said her priorities are in order so she can break the misconception of the "dumb, blond bimbos" that people automatically associate with Playboy models. Wolff said she's happy to be a student on the Dean's list as well as a Playboy model.

"My dreams are so diverse, and to know that I'm halfway to fulfilling both of them makes me really proud," she added.

Although the models may have a bad wrap or some colorful misconceptions, Wolff said the Playboy industry plays an important role in society, despite the fact that some people may see it as degrading or pornographic.

"Playboy is always changing, just like society. It's always been a major corporation. Playboy is tasteful and classy," she said. "The purpose of Playboy depends on who you ask, though. It's different from person to person — especially gender. Most guys see it and use it as porn, but women may see it as degrading or just turn a blind eye to it. But for me, it's a stepping stone."

Wolff went on to say that she is extremely proud of what she has done so far in the modeling



[“I’ve come to realize that we’re all born naked and we die naked. No one should feel embarrassed or awkward in their own skin.”]*

industry, but if she can, she’d like to go further in the business, doing more photo shoots and magazine features.

“Playboy is a magazine that’s world renowned, and it has brought a lot of positives in my life and to many other people. It’s something that can’t be replaced, whether people accept it for what it is or not,” she said.

Wolff is waiting for her next two publications to hit the shelves this year. She is one of the Playboy Coeds of the Week for May and will be in contention for Coed of the Month for May. She is asking that people vote for her to represent Youngstown and YSU.

“If I win the contest, I get another

photo shoot, and my career goes further. If not, I’ll still be extremely proud of where I am.”

STRIPPED BY CONTRADICTION

Regardless of public perception, art is always open to interpretation. Art takes talent, even if talent means having the looks, the personality or the determination to achieve a 13-year dream.

Wolff is both exposed and humbled by an industry that is full of oxymorons. While she says she doesn’t care about the public perception of her modeling

career, it will be the public vote that decides what happens next. On photo shoots, she calls herself her own director, but it’s a role encouraged by another director. She refutes that her art is porn, while the majority of the public uses it as such.

Maybe in a perfect world, nothing would ever be criticized.

But Wolff has no regrets. She says if she can convey the beauty of self-expression, then she’s done something right.

“I’ve come to realize that we’re all born naked and we die naked. No one should feel embarrassed or awkward in their own skin.” *

CHOKING GROWTH

See how The Yo's abandoned land is poisoning new prospects

Story and photography by
Cheryl Thompson

Located at Albert Street on Youngstown's East Side, the former rubber company is one of 5,000 brownfield sites in the Valley.

It's hard to imagine people working in the old Aeroquip complex. The empty rubber plant on Albert St. in Youngstown is a shell of its former self.

Staggered throughout the site are half-destroyed remnants of industry. Some structures suffer gaping holes in their roofs and others have chunks bitten from their outside walls. On a clear day, it's easy to see right through the crumbling façade of what once was a prominent building.

Clumps of weeds grow indiscriminately throughout the site, threatening to take over. Part of the area is protected by

a slouching chain link fence topped with barbed wire while the rest allows easy access to trespassers. A look inside reveals piles of discarded tires, shoes and furniture. The former factory has been repurposed as a junkyard. This is a brownfield.

As dire as it seems, brownfield remediation can help transform sites like Aeroquip from eyesores to sustainable properties. As of 2006, the Environmental Protection

Agency has granted \$289,830 to overhaul the site.

In the Mahoning Valley, these sites have become part of the urban landscape. Along the Mahoning River in the cities of Youngstown, Campbell, Struthers and Lowellville, there are acres of land left abandoned from the area's steel-producing heyday. The brownfields remain idle due to perceived contamination left over by the industries they once housed.





9 **WARNING**
 COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW
 WATER FLOWING FROM THIS PIPE
 MAY CONTAIN UNTREATED SEWAGE
 WHICH MAY CAUSE ILLNESS. TO
 REPORT DISCHARGES, OR FOR MORE
 INFORMATION ON CSOs, CALL THE
 YOUNGSTOWN DEPT. OF WASTE
 WATER AT 742-8820. PLEASE NOTE
 THE DATE, TIME, CSO NUMBER
 6028, DURATION AND MAKEUP OF
 DISCHARGES YOU OBSERVE.

The EPA estimates that there are more than 450,000 brownfield sites nationwide. Of those, there are an estimated 5,000 brownfield sites between Lowellville and Newton Falls.

Brownfields range from sprawling ghost factories to shuttered dry cleaners and corner gas stations that closed up shop, but the properties that are possibly contaminated by industry pose the greatest problem to redevelopment.

The Mahoning River Corridor of Opportunity is an initiative combining the efforts of Youngstown, Campbell, Struthers and Lowellville to cleanup Valley brownfields.

MRCO chairman Daniel Mamula said he learned about brownfield redevelopment during his 16-year stint as the mayor of Struthers.

Mamula said Boardman was the premier place to live in Mahoning County in the early '90s, but 15 years later, the township faces problems like traffic congestion as a result of urban sprawl.

"Boardman has all kinds of complicated problems because of sprawl. It's congested and the quality of life is deteriorating; people are moving out of Boardman to escape some of those things," Mamula said.

"Now, they're going toward Columbiana; who's going to maintain Boardman? You see they're running into problems," Mamula said.

Mamula said programs like MRCO that redevelop brownfield land along with land-use policy reformation could help curb some problems.

Scott Martin, a Civil/Environmental and Chemical Engineering professor at Youngstown State University, cited sprawl and land-use regulations as an obstacle to brownfield redevelopment.

"The only thing that's really going to make a big difference, in my opinion, to repopulate the brownfields and make it happen quickly, is to introduce laws that

discourage suburban sprawl," he said.

Martin said legislatures should tax companies who want to build on pristine sites or greenfields, but because of political pressure, such laws are tough sell.

Speaking of brownfields, Martin described how asbestos insulation found its way into the soil after building demolitions. This and other chemicals in the land can cause lung cancer, reproductive problems and immune system difficulties.

Not all sites are in such dire condition that they cannot be reclaimed, Martin said, and remediation of brownfield sites was sluggish because standards set by the EPA were too high.

"The tendency was to treat all sites as if small school children were going to have a playground there and be eating the soil," Martin said.

With new environmental benchmarks that match the use of the property and the contamination levels from previous use, sites are more appealing to businesses and developers.

"If you're going to build a parking lot over a lightly contaminated soil, and nobody's going to be exposed to it, then why do you need to clean it up? Just remove a couple of the worst spots," Martin said.*



1. Fluorescent lights dangling from wires threaten to crash to the floor below inside one of the buildings at the Republic Rubber brownfield.
- 2-4. In August 2006, a factory building on the site ignited from an unknown cause. As if the fire damage weren't enough, scruffy shoes, scores of tires, a busted television and moldy mattress dumped on the site pose additional cleanup problems. The abandoned site is used as a dumping ground for everything from old furniture to children's toys.
5. A ramshackle building sits exposed to the elements.
6. Houses on Republic Avenue, named for the plant, overlook the dilapidated site.
7. Built in 1901, the 15-acre facility produced 80 solid tires, 32,000 pneumatic tires and 85,000 inner tubes daily. In 1963, the plant was purchased by Aeroquip, who operated it until 1978.
8. Litter and debris are scattered among the skeletal remains.
9. A sign posted near a bridge crossing Crab Creek warns of the polluted water below.
10. Tire tracks can be seen in the snow throughout the compound.
11. In 2005, a handful of scenes for an independent movie, "The Horrors of War" were filmed on the site.
12. A furnace stands alone in the rubble.



[A Yo* Diary]

follow our reporter inside the yo's porn theater



you won't believe what she saw*



By Britta Snowberger
Photography by Brian Cetina

I've driven past southern Youngstown's porn palace, the Foster Theater, a hundred times — sometimes going miles out of my way to show visitors its glaring marquee — but I never imagined what I'd find when I became a Foster customer myself.

I've scoffed at patrons entering and exiting the building. I've made shallow jokes, surmising the décor and decorum — or lack thereof. Given the intriguing nature and comedic value of the Foster, a historic Glenwood Avenue theater that has shown adult entertainment since the mid-1960s, I finally decided to get a closer look.

Before venturing to the area's only triple-X film theater, I checked out men-seeking-men

message boards on Web sites like Craig's List to gain a better understanding of the theater's available "action."

I was enthralled to learn that a self-described "sissy boy" in his mid-20s planned to make an appearance as well. He was looking to get his "ass stuffed" and "be gangbanged." The most I hoped for was a great story, and I decided to take my boyfriend along to make sure that was all I'd get.

Another post, this time from an "out-of-town masculine male, well built, discreet," described his plans to attend the theater to "service a few hung men to 'cum'pletion."

Internet reviews of the Foster tell similar stories.

"I was there last Friday and it was pretty wild," wrote one customer on <http://www.flirtingpassion.com>. "Probably 12 to 15 guys, and then an older couple comes in, and in a flash, she is naked and lining guys up for b--- j--s."

Considering this level of action, I realized I needed to know more about the unspoken communication between Foster customers to avoid accidentally signaling that I wanted sex.

No stranger to such proceedings, Robin Bougie, pornography blogger and author of "Cinema Sewer" and "True Porn," laid out the ground rules as followed by adult movie theater patrons.

"If you're there to actually watch a movie (and not for the casual sex), you don't talk to anyone, and you don't make eye contact," he said. "The 'no speaking' rule

also appears to pertain to the gay men who have oral sex — once your d--- is sucked, you get up and leave."

Not only do implicit rules exist in porn theaters, an unspoken language governs the patrons' actions as well, explained Bougie. As I found out, where you sit makes all the difference between viewing a movie and inviting an encounter.

Showtime: Learning Triple-X Etiquette

My boyfriend and I arrived at the Foster around 5 p.m. Dressed in outfits we wouldn't mind burning at the end of the night, we walked swiftly, heads down, to the theater's locked entrance. Ringing the buzzer, we stepped into the front lobby, a small room reminiscent of an adult bookstore.

Rather than the buttered popcorn, fountain drinks and boxed candy offerings of mainstream movie theaters, Foster customers may purchase adult films, sex toys and other novelty items before proceeding to the big screen.

Suspicion alone could not convince me that these men had kneaded their knobs in public



Paying our admission fee — \$12 for college males, free for females — we grabbed our two free condoms upon entrance and made our way to the rear left of the theater, our steps muffled by the techno soundtrack to an '80s porn flick.

Having been used as a tube sock for nearly half its existence, the 70-year-old cinema was in decent physical condition, besides the overwhelming smell of mildew.

As we took our seats, the other attendees — six middle-aged men — repositioned themselves against the back wall in the left corner of the theater. Taking advantage of their peeping-Tom status, the men perched themselves like a group of voyeuristic vultures over us, a representation of hopeful indecency.

Bougie had informed me that sitting in the very back or front is "an invitation to get it on," so we sat motionless, eyes glued to the screen, for nearly a half-hour before the men resumed

their original places. As uneasy as I was, I expected far more than ogling out of these theatergoers. I decided to give the theater one more hour of my time to test the accuracy of the online accounts I'd read.

As the unnamed '80s porn ended, the evening's turning point, "Fresh Teen P---y No. 14," erupted onscreen. Its acting was pathetic, its dialogue laughable. (Take, for instance, this Oscar-worthy line: "When you ripped that tag off the mattress, you kind of turned me on.")

Throughout the evening, visitors came (no pun intended) and left as they pleased, sometimes meandering slowly from row to row, trying to spark interest in other patrons. Rotating like hockey players, these men glided to unoccupied rows to sit for several minutes before leaving just as hurriedly as they had arrived.

Suspicion alone could not convince me that these men had kneaded their knobs in public.

I needed something concrete.

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entered and sat halfway back. Seemingly interested in the film, they stared at the screen for a moment before the woman's head disappeared below the seat backs. As she "serviced" her companion, two men viewed her progress from the next row.

Then it happened. The couple everyone had been watching rose to their feet and sauntered toward us.

In a room filled with empty seats, they chose the two directly to the right of my boyfriend.

Bougie had explained that sitting a few seats away from someone is another signal, a way to feel out if they are into getting down. "If they move a seat closer to you," he said, "then it's the same as saying, 'Wanna f--?'"

As the young, curly-haired woman lowered herself into the seat, she made eye contact with

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basement," she noted, smiling in my direction.

She asked if we were swingers, and although we said no, she wrote down her name, phone number and address on a torn piece of paper and invited us to a swingers party the two were hosting that weekend.

"So, do you guys want to go upstairs?" she asked, propositioning us for an evening of foursome adventures in the theater's second-floor lounge and restrooms.

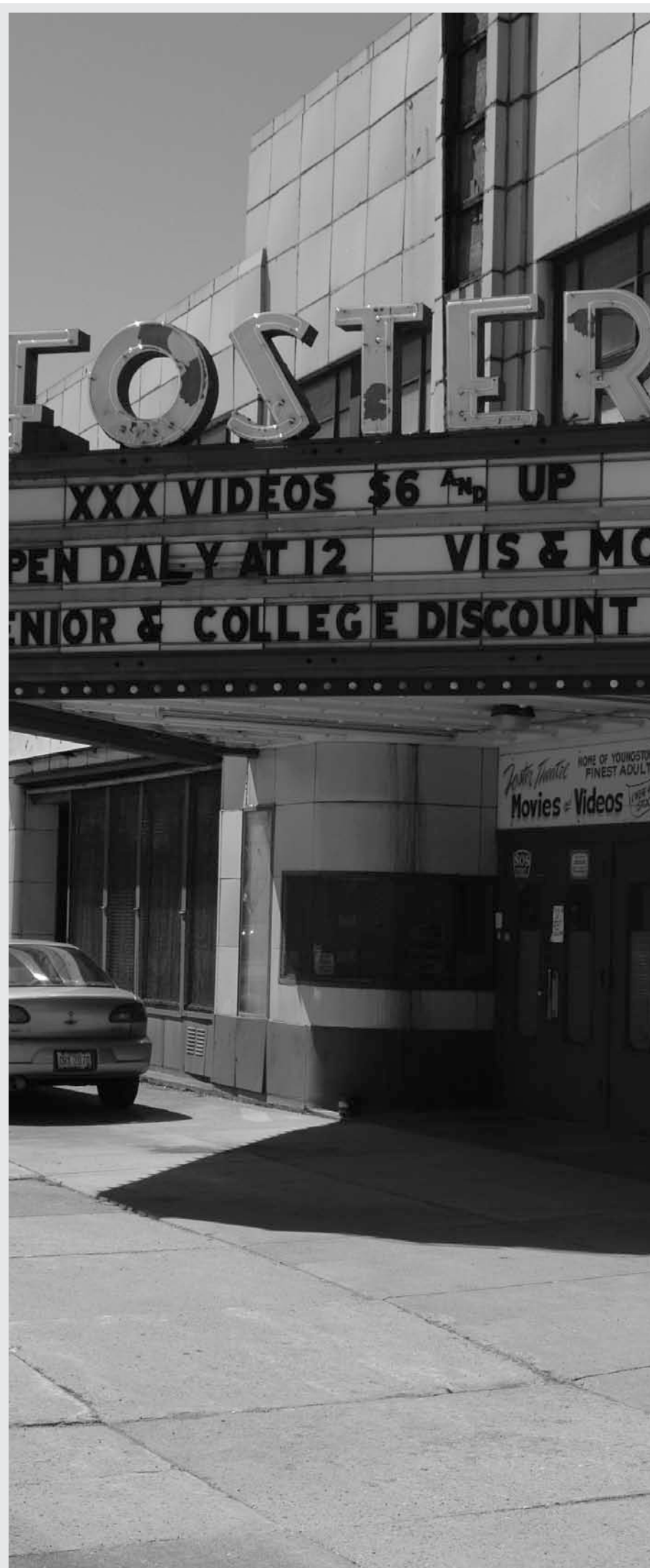
We respectfully declined, and she disappeared with one of the middle-aged vultures, leaving the guy she arrived with to return to the middle of the room alone.

Waiting long enough to avoid calling attention to ourselves, my boyfriend and I paced calmly out of the theater, stepping lightly across the stained floor, holding back our emotions only until we reached the car.

On my trip to the Foster Theater, I had expected to sacrifice some of my remaining innocence, and I did just that — diving headfirst into the world of anonymous group sex to witness semipublic indecency.

While the theater's customers may have broken a minor law or two, and their actions may have been taboo, they did welcome — with open arms (and legs) — two strangers into their underground culture that day.

For that reason, I feel guilty for having horribly misjudged these people so early.



For some, the Foster is an escape from daily life, and a moment of belonging



More than Porn

Apathetic about the possibility of a hookup, Bougie offers other selling points for porn theatergoers — selling points that appeal to him as an adult film enthusiast.

“I really love the atmosphere more than the movies,” he said. “I love the sleaze, the excitement and the danger, even though I’ve never seen anyone hurt or in danger in these theaters.”

Bougie appreciates how triple-X theaters show classic porn in its intended medium and what they signify to an underground culture shunned by the mainstream.

“[Porn theaters]

make me feel alive in a society that seems to be all about sanitization and the active and all-encompassing pursuit of clean, safe and all-ages values,” he said. “It’s suburbia. It’s white picket fences. We need places to escape that.”

Although they provide patrons with tiny vacations from reality, places like the Foster are slowly becoming extinct, said Bougie, who described triple-X theaters as dinosaurs, “like drive-ins, roller-rinks and bowling alleys.”

The Foster’s historical value may, in part, have a hand in keeping Youngstown’s only movie theater alive. Bougie said porn theaters aren’t the objects of the same nostalgia. While he

appreciates them as a tie to the past, he says the general public shuns them.

Additionally, Bougie said, porn film enthusiasts alone cannot keep adult film theaters in business.

“We only have gay men who go cruising to get their worm bumped to thank for these few palaces of sin still being open,” he said. “There sure aren’t enough of us Linda Lovelace and John Holmes fans left to support them.”

Furthermore, with the increasing availability of pornography at home — via the Internet, DVDs and pay-per-view services — Bougie believes that adult film theaters may not withstand the test of time.

With the Foster’s resilience in question, the future of a subculture may hang in the balance.

The unspoken rules and language, the unbiased atmosphere and social venue, the haven for somewhat taboo

self-expression, the few hours a day one can escape the loneliness and responsibilities of everyday life — could all vanish if the theater caves in the wake of technological advances.

And with this subculture, the era of movie theaters in Youngstown would (then, truly) come to a close.

Regardless of the awkwardness of my experience, I learned that the Foster provides patrons of all ages, races and sexual orientations an accepting haven for sexual desires. And for those lonely few, the Foster is an escape from the isolation of daily life, and a moment of belonging.

Far exceeding my expectations, the Foster provided me with an experience I won’t soon forget and sights I may never erase from my memory. No one in this city can say we don’t have a movie theater — The Yo’ has one; it just shows porn, with college ID discounts every day of the week. *

[The History] ‘Foster’ing Historical Significance

For 82-year-old Betty Harrison of Boardman, the Foster Theater was an integral part of childhood. The prim, petite, white-haired woman remembers living a block away from the mainstream, family-values cinema in its heyday, complete with clean, comfortable rows ushered by neighborhood kids.

“A local family ran a little ice cream store in the parking lot, and we always ended up there after the films,” Harrison said. “When we weren’t at the Foster, we were at the Uptown Theater or Idora Park. They were all within walking distance, and we were never afraid to walk to a show in the evening.”

According to Vindicator archives, the Foster construction came with a \$100,000 price tag during the Great Depression and was heralded as “Youngstown’s newest and most modernistic showhouse.” Boasting wide rows, free parking, four picture changes per week and a lobby fountain with “cooled well water,” the theater drew major Hollywood film executives and actors to its grand opening on Dec. 26, 1938.

Featuring “Hold that Co-ed” (a satirical college comedy, not a spring break porn) as its initial picture, the Foster Theater specialized in foreign, opera and classic films and was operated by Joseph Shagrin for nearly three decades.

During the final years of his direction, Shagrin, a former Warner Bros. employee, “made [the Foster Theater] one of the leading art theaters in the country for a city the size of Youngstown,” according to The Vindicator.

But in 1965 after Shagrin retired, a new owner shifted the Foster to pornography when art films and family content stopped earning money, Vindicator archives report.

Pastor Morris W. Lee, 72, of Glenwood Avenue’s Third Baptist Church vividly recalls the first year of the theater’s transformation.

“One hot summer, I decided I’d take my wife up to the Foster Theater so we could sit in the AC and enjoy a good movie,” he said. “Much to my embarrassment, the theater had changed to triple-X films, and I hadn’t noticed until we’d paid and the movie had started.”

An African-American pastor on the South Side for 47 years, Lee witnessed little community backlash to the big change in Foster content. He attributes it to the theater’s low profile: It flies far enough under the radar to attract minimal censure while continuing to draw an adventurous few in addition to a steady stream of regulars.

“They’re very quiet — there are no shootings, no fights, nothing,” he said. “They go in, sit down, go home, and they’re happy. Let them have their little old peep show place.”

G-rated to Triple-X: Sign of Bigger Changes

Still, around the time the Foster transformed into an adult theater, Lee and Harrison felt the neighborhood begin to change for the worse.

“At that time, the neighborhood was inundated by a lot of black folk who ... could not afford the houses they were moved into, and things started to deteriorate,” said Lee.

“When the first owner left, things started to go downhill for the theater,” Harrison added. “The neighborhood was changing — buildings were sitting empty for a longer time, and some of the businesses were leaving.”

“We’ve lost half of our population since I’ve been here,” said Lee.

Like Youngstown, the Fosterville neighborhood surrounding the theater continues to suffer from migration away from Youngstown, Lee said.

Harrison’s observations are supported by population records from the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, a regional planning agency.

During the theater’s most successful years, the population in Youngstown was on the rise, growing 0.4 percent from 1940 to 1950. But in the ‘60s and

’70s when Mahoning County’s population was steadily growing, Youngstown’s population was dropping and the Foster began peddling pornography.

Migration to the suburbs became more than mere speculation with 20,000 people leaving the city, according to a county development study.

What’s Next for the Foster

With the restoration plans of Youngstown 2010 and the assistance of proactive community members, Fosterville may see brighter days.

According to “A Citizen’s Guide to Youngstown,” the 2010 plan calls for a number of Fosterville-area green spaces and two commercial sections along Glenwood Avenue.

In addition to these restoration efforts, Fosterville community members’ hard work may help turn this historically significant neighborhood around, Lee said.

“The city has come through here with several plans for improvement, and a few of our neighborhood leaders have helped rehabilitate some of the houses,” he said. “That’s just what Youngstown needs — some added life to the community.”*



A DAZZLING COUPLE
STEPS INTO A ROOM ...

WHY YOU HATIN'?

Story by Ashley Tate
Photography by Brian Cetina

THE LOVEBIRDS

... MEANWHILE:

BLAST! THEY'VE BEEN
SPOTTED BY HATERS!

COLLEGE LIFE BRINGS ON THE HATERS

Although the term “hater” is relatively new, the concept has been alive for centuries. Hating goes far beyond gossip and way past naysaying.

The definition of hating is similar across the board: a hater has something bad to say about something good.

Youngstown State University senior Connie Cholensky said to determine why people hate, one must look at the person’s inner problems and what he or she will gain by hating.

People do it for various reasons, “whether it’s power, confidence or gratification for making them feel better if they are rejected,” Cholensky said.

YSU senior Tyrone Lockett II has a different standard for hating. He said he doesn’t hate on people but instead “encourages people to strive for excellence.”

“I can’t say I ever hated on anyone. If I was ever impressed by someone’s drive in life, I used it as a motivator to keep me to focus to reach my goals,” Lockett said.

Lockett said that as long as people find success, they’ll also find people who make it their business to hate on success.

“That’s just how the cookie crumbles and there isn’t no changing,” Lockett said.

Lockett said haters manipulate others because they are too lazy to get involved in this thing called life and make a living for themselves.

YSU sophomore Chauncey Harris also fell victim to the hater. He agreed with Lockett and said he doesn’t get upset when people are trying to better themselves, even though Harris’s hater went beyond naysaying to outright accusations.

“I won a singing competi-

tion, and the people were mad and said I couldn’t sing and that I won because I cheated and bribed the judge,” he said.

This is just one of many times Harris said he has been hated on, but it doesn’t bother him. Deep down, he said he knows it means he is doing something right, and haters can only stand around and watch him achieve his goals.

Harris pointed out that not everyone is lucky enough to be doing so well that they have haters.

YSU junior Shealla Myers said the intensity level is completely different between girls and guys.

“Girls hate for the wrong reasons, like somebody wants [her] man or the other female wants to look like her and so forth,” she said. “But for guys, it’s all about whose car looks better, whose crib looks better and whose shoes look better.”

Just like Harris and Lockett,

Myers said she couldn’t hate on people for trying to better themselves and recalled a moment when she was hated on.

“When I was with my son’s father, black dudes and girls would look at me funny because he was white, and they would make smart remarks behind it,” she said.

But Myers ignored the haters since they have it backward.

“Hating is not going to pay your bills, get you a nice car or get you a nice house. People should worry about how they can better themselves versus worrying about the next person,” she said.

WHY YOU HATIN'?

People hate for different reasons, whether to feel better for making someone else feel worse, or because hating is a reflection of a deeper problem that lies within the hater.

Women may hate on other

SOME TIME LATER ...

"DID YOU SEE HOW SHE LOOKED AT US?"

"THAT BITCH."



women for having name-brand clothes, a new 'do, a hot boyfriend, a fit body, or even for the motivation to get an education.

Men may hate on other men for having more money, more women, nicer cars, more "bling" or simply for not being caught up in the negative aspects of the street life.

Beverly Gartland, a sociology and anthropology professor at YSU, said it's tough to say whether women are more jealous than men.

People who are haters, Gartland said, usually have low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. They sometimes want what other people have that they don't have, including cars or money.

"People see these reality shows that show people living these glamorous lifestyles," Gartland said, citing TV as an unreal standard to judge life.

Online social network Facebook is a breeding ground for informal venting, and site members write wall posts and notes

about haters.

Shakeia Taylor, Loyola University Chicago graduate, wrote about hating directed at black women in her note, "Sistas: Stop Hatin'."

Taylor paints a picture of the petty action that women take against each other on a daily basis, sometimes without even being aware that they are doing it. She describes a common example of hating:

"So I walk in and you see me. You see that my hair is done, my outfit is fierce and I carry myself like a lady. I smile at you but you roll your eyes at me, then, turn your head and whisper something to your girl. Why you hatin'?"

She then declares hating pointless.

"As women, we battle daily. We battle keeping our families together, keeping our men happy and maintaining our presence in the workforce. With all that battling going on, why in the world should we have to battle each other?"

Taylor gives an underlying definition as to why women hate on each other.

"Inferiority complex. It makes us feel that in order to be someone special, we have to put everyone else beneath us. Are we so insecure in ourselves that we can't feel good until we pull someone else down?"

As Green pointed out in her note, if everyone in the world has a hater, then who are the haters?

In his article, "The Story of the Player and the Hater," Justin Hartfield, deputy editor of The Prometheus Institute, a Web site that debates liberal and conservative topics, gives his opinion on what a hater does.

"Haters hate because they can't do. A hater watches on the sidelines of life, too timid to try but too egotistical to watch others succeed. They are more apt to criticize than to try and fail."

Another of Hartfield's articles, "How to Cope With Negative Personalities," gives a list of tips to combat the pessimistic statements that stab them in the back.

When dealing with a hater, just remember:

1. Haters believe they are always right.
2. Haters will attempt to poison someone who has achieved [his or her] goals with words, so reply with appreciation.
3. Haters will try to subtly demean you by refusing to grant you their respect.
4. Life is something to be respected and cherished, except in the hands of the hater.

Tara Green, a student at Lincoln University in Pa. and another Facebook poster on hating, describes the circular pattern of hating that occurs when people are goaded into saying bad things about those that hate on them.

"Is there anyone that remembers the term, 'kill them with kindness?' If so, why can't we love our haters?"*

THE LOVEBIRDS ESCAPE UNHARMED

"WHEN I WAS WITH MY SON'S FATHER, BLACK DUDES AND GIRLS WOULD LOOK AT ME FUNNY BECAUSE HE WAS WHITE, AND THEY WOULD MAKE SMART REMARKS BEHIND IT."

YSU JUNIOR SHEALLA MYERS

"DAMN."

"DOUBLE DAMN!"

By Chelsea Pflugh

remembering penelope

youngstown's dance legend, william j. schraider (1955-2008)

If you're old enough to get into a bar, you've seen him, heard of him or talked about him. You can't have a fun night in this city without bumping into twenty people who have met him.

In the late '80s Penelope worked in maintenance for Fireline Inc. in Youngstown. An active community member, he was a member of St. Patrick and St. Matthias churches and ushered at Powers Auditorium for the Youngstown Symphony for many years.

Penelope had a great passion for music and dancing, which is how Youngstown ended up meeting him, alone in his little circle on the dance floor.

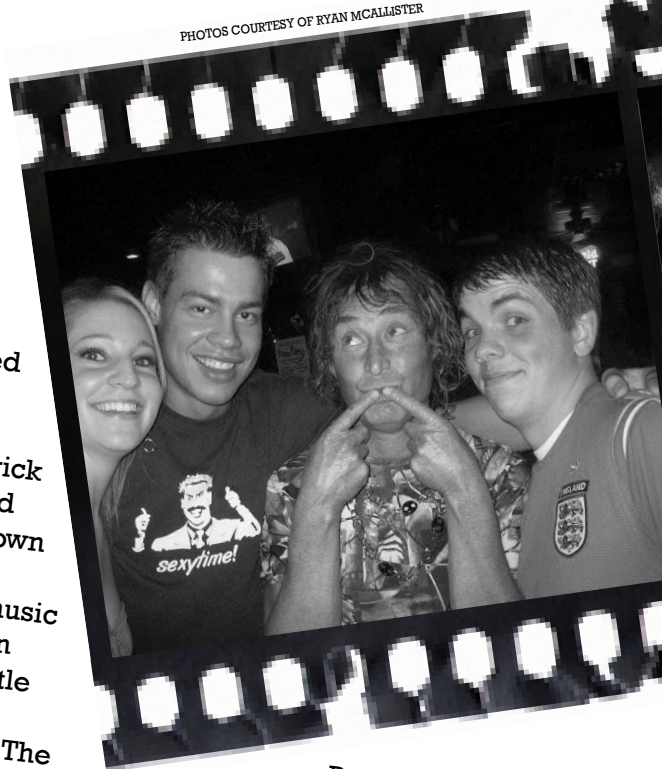
A Facebook group called "Penelope: The Man, The Myth, The Legend" testified to his fame. At the time of his death, the group had drawn over 1,000 members, and YSU students have mourned and shown support on the group's discussion board. They've posted memories, stories and famous Penelope quotes while trying to imagine what their nightlife will be without their star dancing partner.

YSU student Ryan McAllister started the Facebook group with no intentions of it growing as large as it has.

"At first I invited my friends that joined me at the bars and a few other people who I knew were regulars at Shenanigans," McAllister said, referencing Penelope's regular hangout in Youngstown.

McAllister's Facebook group was at about 50 to 60 people when he asked the Shenanigans group moderator to invite all members to join "Penelope: The Man, the Myth, the Legend."

"He said only on one condition: that any post that was negative toward Penelope had to be deleted. I agreed, saying that I'd do that even if he hadn't asked. To this day, I have not had to delete a single post off the group's board," McAllister said. In the summer of 2007,



Penelope learned about the group. On a night just like any other at Shenanigans, Penelope went up to McAllister and said, "I know about the group you made about me. I'm a star! You're a star! We're superstars!"

It was his great one-liners, pick-me-ups and that constant positive outlook on life, despite his health problems, that inspired his bar-going friends. The Facebook group's wall is plastered with posts like "RIP Penelope, (insert any Youngstown bar here) will never be the same without you!" and "I'll miss you!" Maybe Youngstown could learn a lesson or two from the man who never let his friends see him in his saddest hours.

Our dear friend Penelope danced like no one was watching, but knew that we all were. He smiled and laughed through his toughest times, even when he knew that his health conditions were grim. It didn't matter what song was playing; he danced through it all and with anyone he could spin around the floor. He taught us to take life one dance step at a time.

Cheers, Penelope. This one is for you.*

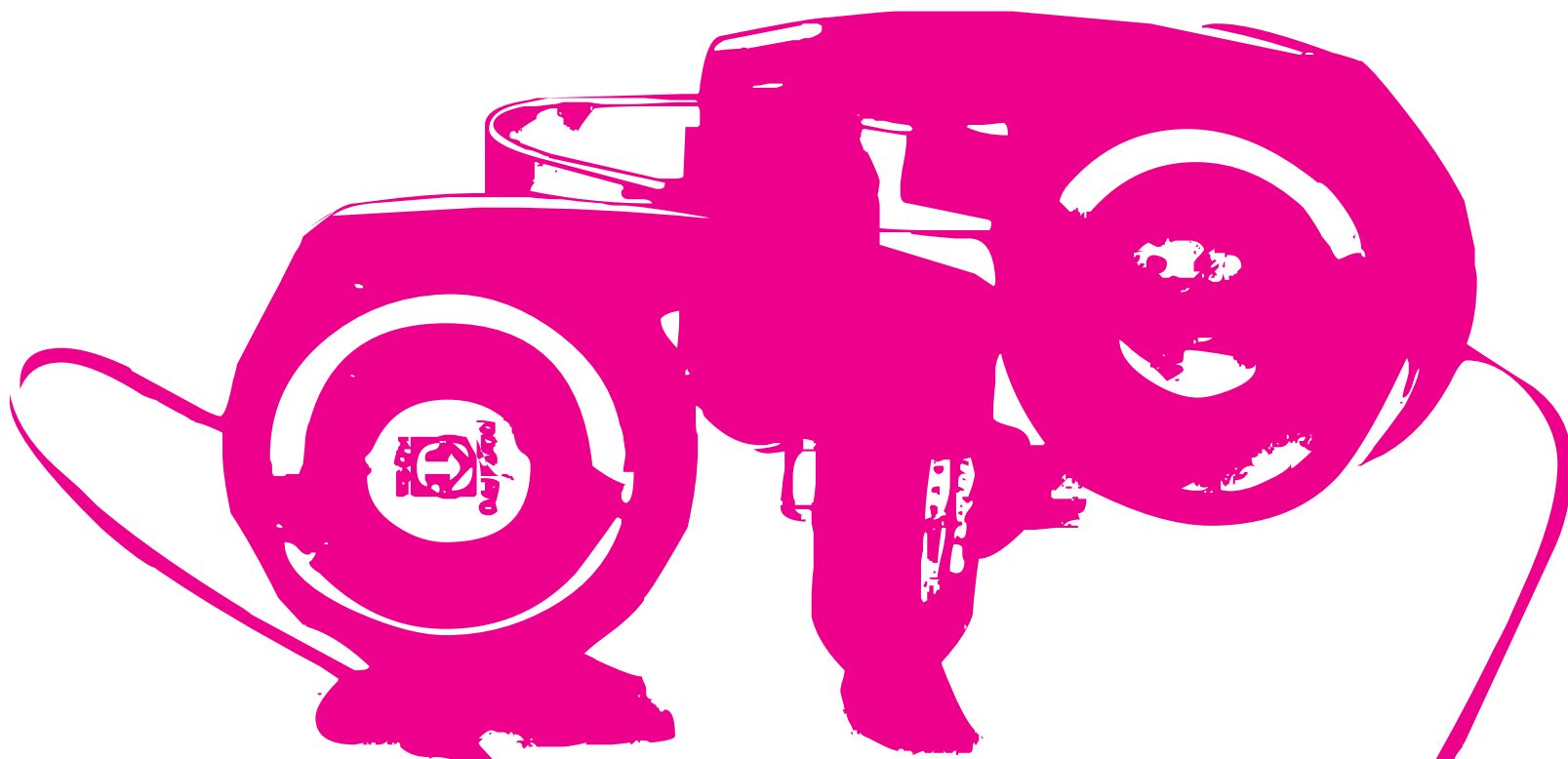
Youngstown knows him as the bar-crawler clad in black spandex pants, black spandex shirts and enough outrageously, impressively uninhibited dance moves to keep you laughing the entire night. On first impression he was a crazy fifty-something who seemed high on life, or something. Girls who didn't know what to make of him could at least appreciate when he pulled them from wallflower status to the center of the dance floor. You always left the bar with more stories and pictures than when you went in, and he was the center of all of them.

This was our Penelope, the nightlife icon of Youngstown. Those who knew him in the club might not have known that for seven years he battled the cancer that took his life on April 19. He died in his home.

Fifty-two-year-old William "Penelope" Schraider was a legend among us. While many know him because of his Facebook celebrity status, few know the man behind the moves.

His Vindicator obituary said that Penelope graduated from Cardinal Mooney High School in 1973, then continued his education at Youngstown State University. After graduating from Perkins School of Piano in Cleveland he pursued a career in tuning, rebuilding and selling pianos. He worked for amusement parks for several years in Florida and tuned pianos at Ponderosa Park in Salem for major





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