Football Walk-ons
LSU's Unsung Heroes
STORE HOURS
M-F 8-5:30
SAT 11-5

Look for the LSU Dairy Store sign phone 388-4392

BUY ONE
FROZEN YOGURT
GET ONE FREE
EXPIRES DEC 1991

Family Thrift Center
Baton Rouge's Newest Thrift Store
Check our daily half-price sales
Student and Senior Citizen Discounts
$5.00 off with $10.00 purchase

Clothes for the whole family
New and used furniture for the student
209 Little John

Family Thrift Center
209 Little John
Shepherd Forest Blvd.
Florida Blvd.

Supporting...
YOUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE
Delta Women's Clinic
LOUISIANA'S FIRST HEALTH CARE CENTER DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE NEEDS OF WOMEN...WE PROVIDE PERSONALIZED QUALITY SERVICES...CARING STAFF

- Abortions To 20 Weeks
- Counseling Available
- Pregnancy Testing & Counseling (Urine & Blood Test Available 10 Days After Conception)
- Reasonable Fees... Low Cost

- Abortion Assistance
- Birth Control & Routine GYN Services
- Social Service Referrals
- Confidentiality Assured
- Ultrasound Available
Publisher
Office of Student Media

Editor
Sheri Blackwood

Managing Editor
Martin Johnson

Design Editor
Dave Curley

Design Assistant
Virginia Hearin

Copy Editors
Ronlyn A. Domingue, Tina Thompson, Robert Wolf

Illustrators
Keith Douglas, Virginia Hearin

Photographers
Dave Curley, Douglas McConnell

Advertising Representatives
Jennifer Beyt, John Paul Funes

Adviser
Pat Parish

Contributors
Jennifer Brabetz, John K. Carpenter, Andre Maillho,
Jody Miller, Garlyn Ourso, Mike Ritter,
Larry Sumerford, Robert Wolf, Steve Zaffuto

The Gumbo Magazine is written, edited and designed by students of Louisiana State University. The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the views of the editor, Gumbo Magazine, the Office of Student Media or the University. No articles, photographs or illustrations in this publication may be reproduced without the consent of the Office of Student Media.

Volume 3, Issue 1 August 1991
Copyright Gumbo Magazine
Martin Johnson, SWM 21, likes media, politics and frogs. If Martin had an extra hour to work each day, he still wouldn’t get anything done.

John K. Carpenter is a news-editorial journalism major. A native of Baton Rouge, he thinks Louisiana’s progressive politics, clean environment and honest government can serve as examples of how states should be.

Andre Maillho is the sports editor for the Daily Reveille. His heart belongs to a girl named Michele (but she doesn’t know it yet). His primary goals are to be world famous and to be gored during the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona. His last wish is for a winning football season before he graduates.

Jody Miller is a senior in news-editorial journalism. She enjoys writing about ethical issues, and doesn’t want to tell people what to think, but what to think about.

Jennifer Brabetz is a journalism major and a member of Pi Beta Phi sorority. She has a great tan, and loves to sip drinks while gazing at the moonlight from the side of a cruise ship.

Mike Ritter is a 22-year-old English major. He wanted to be a sportswriter in the vain of Curry Kirkpatrick and Frank Deford. But his research in Tigerland’s drinking district for a short story called proved to be a numbing experience.

Garilyn Ourso is very hard to get in touch with. She has written for the Gumbo a number of times, but this is by far the hardest thing she’s done. She has discovered a new love for personality writing and jazz music.

Larry Sumerford is a non-traditional journalism student. He tutors math for fun and would someday like to write a thorough history of Baton Rouge and the Great University he now attends.

Steve Zaffuto finally graduated this summer. Many people didn’t think it would ever happen. He has been in the basement of Hodges Hall and at the Sigma Pi house so long it’s had strange effects on his behavior.

Robert Wolf is a senior from Covington, La. majoring in journalism with a minor in history. He spends most of his time hunched over a computer in Hodges hall and can’t remember what it was like to have friends. Robert secretly aspires to be a writer for Harlequin Romances under a woman’s pen name.

Douglas McConnell is a morbid, quiet loner who recently inherited several long-range, high-powered rifles. He likes to hang out in cemeteries and at the top of tall buildings.
Features

Tabby Thomas: A man and his blues.
The story of a blues artist. His past, his music and his family have made him the man and the legend he is today.
By Garilyn Ourso page 4

The politics of being young.
What it takes for a college student to become involved in Louisiana's political agenda from the viewpoints of various members of the local and state governments, professors and political experts.
By Martin Johnson page 8

There goes the neighborhood.
Living near campus may be convenient and inexpensive, but there are drawbacks for both the renters and the owners.
By Robert Wolf page 10

Cover story

LSU's unsung heroes.
All-guts, no-glory is the lifestyle of a football walk-on, but Mike Blanchard wouldn't trade it for anything.
By Andre Mailho page 14

Losing my religion.
A woman recounts her tale of growing up in a religion that represses, fears knowledge and promotes ignorance.
By Jody Miller page 34

LSU: Yesterday and today.
While the campus has undergone many changes since its move in 1925, the actions and attitudes of those around campus have remained much the same.
By Larry Sumerford page 38

Fiction

Saturday night's all right.
The story of two guys and their quest for booze and babes in a world of school and sports.
By Mike Ritter page 42

Radio days.
A humorous history of radio and study of the Baton Rouge market give some insight into recent radio trends as well as the author's opinion of stations in this area.
By Steve Zaffuto page 26

Photo essay

Gardens of stone.
An artistic look at the history and mystery of several nearby cemeteries in downtown Baton Rouge, colletown and St. Francisville.
By Douglas McConnell page 30
The veteran musician pours back into his seat, crosses his legs and mops a hankiechief across his face, trying to erase the effects of Louisiana’s evening heat. He is casual but enthusiastic. His eyes are shadowed with age and experience but still sparkle.

Local blues legend Tabby Thomas started singing the blues decades ago. His career has taken him all over the world. Thomas has met and performed with big-name musicians all over the world – Fats Domino, Johnny Mathis, James Brown, Otis Redding, B. B. King. He has recorded six albums and has his own recording label, Blue Beat Records. The artist has been in movies and documentaries about blues shown all over the United States and Europe.

And for the past 11 years, Thomas has owned Tabby’s Blues Box in Baton Rouge, where he regularly performs with his band, The Mighty House Rockers.

Thomas has many memories waiting behind those twinkling eyes.

story by garilyn ourso
photos by dave curley
He nods his head and starts to tell those stories, waving his arms, "conducting" his speech, like anyone with his natural rhythm would.

Thomas says that, as a black child in the South, he saw, heard and felt a great deal of the racism of the day.

"Back then it was 'nigger this' and 'nigger that.' That was the way people talked. They not only talked like that, they thought like that."

From his high school days, Thomas remembers one story about a young black man from Illinois visiting the South.

"They had a boy who just whistled at a white girl. He was from Chicago and he'd come here for summer vacation. He went into this store and saw this beautiful white girl."

The young man whistled at the girl and later that night, some of her relatives attacked him.

"They hung him and killed him. I'll never forget that. And when they fished him out of the river, he had chains around his neck. He wasn't but fourteen years old," Thomas says.

"At night they come to your house and burn a cross, grab you and hang you in a tree," Thomas says. "Ain't no love in the world worth that. But it happened."

The bluesman remembers a time when the music typically labeled as black was scorned by white society. Discrimination against blacks was the socially accepted standard and young blacks were alienated from their heritage.

"The blues used to be thought of as devil music, and musicians had to live with that label," Thomas says. "After integration, the young blacks wanted disco, rock and roll, anything to get away from preconceived labels. But they didn't realize that the blues was their culture, their heritage."

He says the educational system helped distance black people from their roots.

"In history class, the books all talked about all the champs being white, George Washington, Ponce de Leon. I really didn't care about no Ponce de Leon," Thomas says. "I wanted to hear about somebody black. The history books brainwashed black people."

He says today, young black people have better idols like Michael Jordan.

Thomas left the South after high school for a tour in the military. When he returned to the South years later, his musical career was well under way.

When asked about his musical beginnings, Thomas' face lights up.

Fresh out of the Air Force at 21, he decided to stay with his godfather in San Francisco rather than immediately return to his family in Baton Rouge.

One day while he was hanging out at a bowling alley with some of his friends, Thomas heard of a talent show and decided to audition. When they asked him what key he wanted to sing in, he admitted that he knew nothing about keys, he just wanted to sing a song he was familiar with.

Thomas was scheduled to perform last in that talent contest, following some pretty tough acts, he says.

He tells the story in measured tones, milking it for all he ca while building to a climax, just as any great story-teller would.

"Me and another guy tied for first place. Back then they used applause meters and we done already broke that, sent it over the mark. So they went up to the other guy and put their hands over his head and the theater was shaking. Then they came and put their hand over my head." Thomas pauses.

"And the house came down!"

Some time later, he heard through another musician that a band, already in a recording studio and ready to make a record, was looking for singers.

Thomas forfeited one of his lunch breaks to attend a session with the hopes of getting lucky or at least learning a little about making a record.

An agent who had been at the talent show happened to be at the studio that day and pointed Thomas out to a Hollywood record producer. The producer stopped the session to meet Thomas.

They handed him a piece of paper with just the words on it and asked him to sing.

"Midnight is calling," he croons, reliving that afternoon. Thomas' gravelly speaking voice smooths to silk under the weight of the blues. For a moment he is a poet.

The recording agents must have been inspired. By the time he had finished the lyrics, they were pushing him into the sound studio.

And so Thomas cut his first record on his lunch hour.

For the longest time, he made use only of his vocal talents. Thomas never saw a need to expand his show, until he got married and had seven children.

He decided that if he wanted to work,
feed his children 21 meals a day and do music on the side, he had better learn to play an instrument.

Thomas didn't have enough money for an actual piano, so he bought a cardboard piano keyboard and taught himself the notes. Eventually he got a piano, which he later traded for an organ.

Just a few years ago, Thomas invested in his first guitar, because he didn't think any blues club would be complete without one. Now he enjoys playing the guitar most of all because of the many different effects the instrument can create.

Throughout the years he's written about ninety songs. "I write about my things," Thomas says. "Things I know about that go on in everyday life; people in love who aren't loved back; guys out there trying to make it, not to give up; someone having fun, enjoying himself with the good old boys again. People's real life blues because the blues is really the truth."

These many years since his modest beginning, Thomas says his favorite aspect of the business is traveling and meeting people all over the world.

He sees foreign promoters as the salvation of the blues business. A European tour takes a fraction of the time it would take to cover the American circuit, allowing him to visit cities while his music is still peaking in popularity.

Thomas' reputation quadrupled when he goes overseas. He hears that he is especially popular in Germany.

"They had this thing that came up called "The Blues of New Orleans," and it was a German television company producing it. They called me," Thomas says. "After they sent the tests to Germany. They called back and said they wanted me to play the part. One reason the director said he wanted me was because I had a lot of fans in Germany who had heard and bought my records."

Thomas also talks about a trip he took to the United Kingdom. Before one show in Wales, Thomas says the auditorium was shaking because of the noise his fans were making. No blues singer had played in the country in twenty years.

"There's no feeling in the world like that," he chimes. "When one man can make thousands feel good, it's magic."

Having enjoyed warm receptions in foreign countries, he notes, "the hometown is the hardest place for an artist to survive." He thinks of local musicians as a good old pair of shoes that people appreciate but never really show off.

"I've been all over the world and I've never had an agent or a big record company, but everywhere I've played, I can always go back and play," Thomas says. "I had opportunities to leave Baton Rouge, some of my friends made it big, got to be stars — they wanted me to go out there but I didn't want to go depending on somebody else's prosperity. I figured I'd just sail my little boat along, take care of my family and myself," Thomas says. "Like I told my wife, I always figured what's for me, I'm gonna get it."

He is obviously satisfied with his musical career and where it has taken him. And while he has enjoyed this level of success in music, some aspects of the industry still give him the blues.

"I would love the opportunity to get with a record company who'll let me get into a studio and not rush to try to cut an album in eight hours, to have an access to a studio for a month and have the liberty to go in and record or if I didn't feel like it that day, not to worry, just come back the next."

Thomas has been flexible over the years, changing his style to keep in touch with his audiences.

He attributes his musical success to simple honesty. "It's a spiritual thing that's involved in singing and entertaining. Some have it, some don't. Some need false additives like smoking or drinking for it to come out...If I'm up on stage and I don't feel it, the people don't feel it."

He knows many musicians who are great with the mechanics and techniques but waste their ability to really put something of themselves into the music. To him, one note soulfully performed carries more weight than twenty well-orchestrated ones.

This past summer Thomas appeared in an LSU theater production, "The Death of Bessie Smith," about the legendary blues singer who died after a private "whites only" hospital refused to treat her.

With all his previous stage experience, Thomas says he easily adapted to acting. Although his only thespian experience dated back to a high school production, he never felt apprehensive about his debut.

"I've been singing and playing and have been on stage before thousands of people, I've been doing that all my life so it's no problem getting in front of people, you know. I was reading the paper one day and saw where they were interested in somebody in the community who wanted to try out for the Bessie Smith play. Well, that struck a chord right there because she was a fantastic blues singer and I've been into blues all my musical life."

There are big differences, however, between acting and musical performing.

"Sometimes if I'm singing a lyric, I can go always ad lib a lyric, sing a chorus, come back and play the guitar when I choose. But if I'm on stage acting, I've always got to cue another actor and another actor's got to cue me. It's a partnership thing."

Some problems did befall him on the way to opening night. In order to get Thomas to remember his lines, director Tom Kelso had him "record" his lines as lyrics, basically learning his monologues as songs. Thomas comments in that trademark gravel voice, "I've got six albums out and I've studied more on these lines than I've ever studied on anything in my life. If I put that much energy and time in my music, I know I'll have a million selling records."

Although he is devoted to his musical passion, Thomas' family always comes first. He speaks highly of his relationship with his children and praises his wife who helped raise their seven children.

Also of great importance to him is keeping the Blues Box going for young musicians to learn the craft. It makes him proud to know that the young musicians he's nurturing can hold their own whenever they play. He feels as the young guys involve themselves and expand, so do the blues.

His hobbies include fishing, watching TV westerns or just kicking back with a gin and tonic, listening to his vast album collection — simple things. He's an observer and enjoys soaking in all the life he sees around him, storing it for future use, perhaps in his music.

Thomas' blues have made him a worldly man — he has a lot of stories to tell. The bluesman ponders what he's learned from a long career doing what he loves best. His brow wrinkles and his eyes cloud over with seriousness as he comes to two conclusions.

"You only live one time so do what satisfies you. If riding on a garbage truck is your thing, do it." He says people must satisfy themselves, regardless of what others think.

"Secondly, your human. Live til you gotta die and try to have a good life."
Most students will talk about politics if they are asked for an opinion. They will cheer, or curse, the governor and love, or hate, David Duke and Cleo Fields. More often than not, however, students don’t vote and really don’t care.

Less than 30 percent of all eligible voters in the 18-25 age bracket went to the polls during the last statewide election. And on the national level, only 16.6 percent of Americans aged 18-29 participate in the process at all.

That’s the bad news about young voter apathy.

It is, however, incredibly easy for college students to become politically active. Candidates are constantly in need of help and their political organizations are more than willing to teach anyone who’s willing to learn.

Contrary to popular opinion, politics is not always about who you know. More often, it’s about who you get to know. Students can find plenty of jobs in politics, government and community organizations. And for many, this is a stepping stone toward an eventual career in politics.

The problem people often have is that they just don’t know how to get in the game.

ON the STREET and in the HOUSE

LSU political science professor William Arp III says political activity starts at home for most people. Students with active parents tend to be the ones who get involved.

One of Arp’s earliest memories is sitting on the floor of a local campaign headquarters.

“They were surrounded by all of this campaign paraphernalia and there was this old gas stove in the corner,” he recalls.

Many elected officials agree that the best place to start in politics, no matter what age, is on the street level as a campaign volunteer.

“You should start at that local level, the grass-roots level,” Arp says. “Don’t shy away from that drudgery of the campaign - making the telephone calls, making campaign signs, serving coffee, the door-to-door work, the car washes to raise money.”

At this level, he suggests volunteers work for specific candidates. “We support someone because we think they are the best person we’ve ever met and they are going to actually be the answer to all of the problems that face the world.”

State Rep. Sean Reilly, D-Baton Rouge, has worked in several campaigns over the years, supporting candidates he believed in.

The work, however, also helped him in pursuing public office.

Reilly worked in the “Bubba Henry for Governor” campaign when he was still in college, silk-screening yard signs and putting them up all over the state.

“I learned an awful lot about organizing the workers in a campaign,” Reilly says.

State Commissioner of Elections Jerry Fowler says that while young people can still find a way into politics by working in campaigns, much of modern politics is way beyond the professor’s gas stove and Reilly’s yard signs.

“Campaigning has turned from a flesh-to-flesh operation to a computer-to-computer system,” Fowler says. “Candidates spend more time with media, polls and images. It’s more impersonal.”

Fowler says, however, that in spite of advanced campaign technology, 1991 is still a good year for students to get involved in politics. Louisiana will elect its governor, state legislators, sheriffs, police jurors, clerks of courts, tax assessor, and the treasurer along with all other state offices.
He says young people need to get involved more often because politics are so important in American society. "Politics, whether you like it or not, makes this country go," Fowler says. "And the government itself has more of an effect than anything else in this country."

Not all politicians agree that someone with an interest in the political process should start working in campaigns. State Sen. Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge, says he thinks political involvement should start with community service.

"Campaigns are good, but even before that, young people ought to get involved in their schools and take leadership in clubs on school campuses," says Fields.

Fields says he has never been interested in political groups. "I've never been a member of one, and I do not have one," he says.

Reilly says that regardless of where a person starts, every citizen should be involved to make government work better. "It's important for citizens, whether they are going to run for office or not, to be involved and see how the process works because a democracy is only as good as the people who participate."

Actually working in government in an unelected position is another way to become politically involved, Professor Arp says this helps mature young political minds. "They lose that naivete," he says. "They're really becoming politically wise, learning the lesson that politics is the art of compromise."

Guidry started as a House page, then became a legislative assistant to Rep. Joe Delpit, D-Baton Rouge, then a committee clerk and eventually the assistant clerk of the House.

"A person who is interested in politics ought to be willing to start at the bottom and work their way up," Guidry says. "That's the American way: You pay your dues. You learn."

MONEY, VOTES and the ORGANIZATION

Every successful political campaign must start with three elements: a candidate, money and an organization. "It's easy to say you're going to run, but you've got to have money and people to help you," Elections Commissioner Fowler says. "That's what it's all about."

Young people who want to get involved need funds and friends. The first step is getting on the ballot. That requires either money, for election fees, or several hundred names on a nominating petition.

Guidry has paid about $300 in qualifying fees, so far. The other option, the petition, requires more than 1,000 names for a nomination.

Next a candidate needs cash for a campaign and votes for a victory. The only way to get those is to inspire the public's confidence and look like a winner. Sometimes, young candidates find this difficult because of their age.

Fields, who ran for his Senate seat at 22, says that his youth was a liability when he ran for the State Senate seat he now holds. "It was an obstacle. I had to convince people that it wasn't age, but attitude that is important."

He says he was able to bridge the generation gap because he succeeded in getting his message to the people of his community: "Leadership has no age. Dedication has no age. Commitment has no age."

State Rep. Quentin Dastugue, R-Metairie, was elected to his seat in the House when he was 23. The representative says he was able to overcome age-oriented prejudices easily. "You overcome that by your grasp of the issues and your enthusiasm," Dastugue says. "People are looking for creative innovators in their elected officials. They're getting turned off by those same old political organizations."

Controversial State Rep. Louis "Woody" Jenkins, D-Baton Rouge, who was elected while he was still a junior in law school, says he found his age an asset when he ran. "I find people very open and appreciative of young people getting involved in politics."

The attitudes of voters are always changing, however, and Arp says young candidates may have less and less success in the next few election cycles. "The electorate is getting older; they may feel it is difficult, if not impossible, for a younger candidate to relate. Plus younger people tend to be more liberally-minded, and in that sense, they may not fare well with older, more conservative voters."

Still, Arp says younger candidates like Guidry will do well because of their familiarity with the issues and experience in the community.

Jenkins also emphasized this level of experience: "The main thing for people who want to get involved in politics is to first have their head screwed on straight and have read broadly, have experience."

FLIP of the SWITCH

People who don't want to run for office, work in governments, give money to campaigns or volunteer time can, and should, at least register and vote. Students and young people can express themselves politically by just flipping a few switches.

"I don't see that there is any significant trend toward greater voter registration by young college students or greater participation," Arp says. "I don't want to say there is apathy, but all I see is a continuing disenchantment with government."

Fowler says only 29 percent of registered voters 18-25 actually went to the polls on the last election day in Louisiana. In contrast, 80 percent of people aged 55-70 voted. "Young people have other things to do, evidently. The people who vote in this state evidently are old people."

"The newspapers are so negative toward politicians. The tendency is to turn people off. We've got to start saying what good things are going on."

While the media is partially to blame, most education scholars focus on the role of America's public schools in encouraging, or discouraging, the young vote.

Curtis Gans, a person who has studied the problems of young voters, points out that young people are the first group of Americans to be given the right to vote who didn't immediately begin voting in large numbers.

Gans, the director for the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate in Washington, D.C., calls voting a sort of religious action. "Participation occurs despite the fact that we know most elections are not decided by our one vote," Gans writes. "The critical problem is that the religion is gone; the will is gone."

Fowler urges all Louisiannans, particularly young people, to develop an interest in politics, and at least take the time to register and go out and vote. "Please get involved. Get involved in the governor's race, or a legislative race. Look at the candidates and vote because this affects you more than anything else."
A drive down East State Street, at the north gates of LSU, reveals a bleak sight. Dilapidated buildings shrouded in weeds and vines line the street. The neighborhood crowded with LSU students is littered with old furniture, broken mirrors and discarded vehicles. Stray cats scamper everywhere. Patches of weeds, some as high as four feet, landscape the neighborhood. And overturned dumpsters still attract boxes and bags of trash.

The Azalea Street area on the north side of LSU along Nicholson Drive is also a haven for college students. Here a large concentration of apartments and old houses are offered for low rent, which is all many students can afford. The conditions in this neighborhood are no better.

For years, students have lived in the apartments and houses around campus for the cheap rent and the great location. The grocery store, laundromat and fast food restaurants are within walking distance. A campus bus runs through the neighborhood, and most classes are only minutes away.

Many of the buildings, built in the 1920s and ’30s, have a charm not found in most modern apartment complexes. They have hardwood floors, large plate glass windows and old fashioned fixtures, but the years of neglect have taken their toll.

Some of these buildings need only slight cosmetic work, such as a paint job. But many are in great disrepair, damaged also by the constant flow of sometimes careless tenants in and out.
Most of these properties are inexpensive compared to apartments on the other side of campus. A one-bedroom apartment on State Street usually rents for between $150 and $175 a month. The same-sized apartment on the south side of campus or in Tigerland rents for between $225 and $250 a month.

The older buildings require an ever-increasing amount of maintenance and repair. Boards rot, plaster peels, roofs leak, and wiring becomes outdated.

Some students blame landlords for the dilapidated conditions. They say landlords have taken advantage of them by ignoring their needs and neglecting the properties to save a dollar.

Landlords and management companies say some students have no regard for their property and cause many of the problems. They say tenants throw trash, break windows, and deface the property.

A survey of more than 50 current and past tenants in those areas, taken by knocking on doors, reflects the attitudes towards their rental property and management.

A phone survey of landlords who rented to these tenants offers the other side of the story.

Tenants in the Azalea Street area, some of whom rent from Doug Garland, had no complaints about the management or the maintenance on their apartments.

Many of Garland's apartments have kitchens with rusty appliances and rotted floors. In one of the apartments, dead roaches, flies and beetles were in most of the cracks and crevices of the kitchen floor. And the plaster walls in several apartments are buckling from the humidity.

Doug Beriden, who rents from Garland, had no complaints, however. He said the management is good about repairing and replacing broken fixtures.

"My bathroom sink fell off of the wall about 2 o'clock one morning and water was shooting all over the bathroom," said Beriden. "I called them and they told me how to turn off the water. They were out here the next morning at 7 o'clock to make sure everything was fixed."

The tenants of J.T. Doiron, who rents to students on State Street and Carlotta Street, also had only good things to say about their manager.

The stucco-covered apartments are the cleanest and neatest in the area.

Carsten Hansen, one of his residents, said he is pleased. "They have worked well with me," said Hansen, an art history major. "I have been late with the rent a few times and they did not give me any trouble."

But problems for Kevin Rizzo and Jay Drovis started last June as soon as they moved into their new apartment, which they rented from Wallace Eversberg. When they moved in, Rizzo and Drovis discovered old food, dirty floors, broken windows and fleas from the previous tenants.

"We had to clean the place up ourselves when we moved in," said Rizzo. "They told us that the place would be cleaned up before we moved in but they never did. Eversberg showed us the apartment and that was the last we have seen of him."

Phaedra Leach, who rents an apartment from Eversberg on Chimes Street, said one night while she was asleep her air conditioner caught on fire. She said she turned off the air conditioner and tried to unplug it, but the plug and the wall socket were too hot to touch. She said she put out the fire, but it flared up twice during the night. While Leach was upset with the fire, Eversberg's handling of the situation angered her more.

"First Eversberg tried to blame it on me," said Leach. "Then when they did come to fix the problem, they just cut out the burned parts and taped the wires back together."

Leach said the rug on her floor caught on fire. She has been plagued with other problems such as water running down the inside wall when it rains, the burners on her stove not working, and her toilet often breaks.

"I've asked many times to have these things fixed but nothing has ever been done," said Leach.

Eversberg replied, "This young lady was afraid to flip the circuit breaker. If it was so terrible, why does she still live there?"

Landlords have plenty of their own complaints and allegations to make.

Garland, who rents 63 properties on Azalea Street, said the cost of repairs is often astronomical. Even though he does his own repairs, Garland said replacement equipment can cost thousands of dollars.

"Maintenance costs can vary greatly," said Garland. "A window unit can cost $500, a door can cost $300 and a roof can cost thousands of dollars."

Garland said it is hard to keep an eye on everything that could require repair. "We try to keep an apartment up when a tenant leaves," said Garland. "But the buildings that I rent are about 40 years old and much of the original equipment needs to be replaced."

Eversberg said his maintenance crews spend much of their time picking up trash.

"It's amazing how many college students delight in throwing trash," said Eversberg. "It's a nuisance because the recycling bins become trash bins. The recycling trucks leave the trash in the bins and before you know it, the trash finds its way onto the streets."

Collecting rent is one of the hardest parts of managing property, according to the landlords.

"People just don't understand that the landlord has to pay bills and property notes as well," said Garland. "The people who don't pay are asked to leave but they usually skip out in the middle of the night." Garland said 10 percent of his tenants are exceptional, 10 percent do not care, and the other 80 percent fall somewhere in the middle.

Eversberg said he usually does not have trouble with his tenants but there are exceptions. And after years of dealing with students Eversberg uses a business-like approach in his dealings.

"We try to rent to people we would have in our house," said Eversberg. "We
Estate said fleas are his main problem. Doiron
by hungry fleas.”

“About once a year, usually in July, we
‘clean house’ of all the bad apples,” said
Eversberg. “People who cause trouble or
don’t pay rent are asked to leave.”

Eversberg, who rents about 90 units,
does not use the standard lease. Instead, he
uses a rental agreement to protect himself
from troublesome tenants.

“The beauty of a rental agreement is
that only thirty days’ notice is required to
vacate the premise,” said Eversberg. “That
way either I or the student can part ways if
things are not working out.”

Other problems can be just as taxing for
the property owner. Through neglect and
apathy tenants can cost property owners
a lot of money. Eversberg said that because of
the risk of fire, he will not let the utility
company turn on the power to an apartment
unless the tenant is home.

“I had an apartment burn down once
because the people moving in set a box of
shoes on a stove. The burner was on and
when the power was connected, the box of
shoes caught on fire. The whole place burned
down.”

Pets are one of the biggest headaches
for landlords. They dirty carpets, shred drapes
and scratch doors. But apartment managers
cite fleas as the main argument against ani­
mals.

Garland said the problem with fleas is
they get vicious when there is nothing in the
apartment to eat.

“When the tenants move out of an apart­
ment, and the eggs hatch, the fleas are left
with nothing to eat,” said Garland. “The next
person to go into the apartment is swarmed
by hungry fleas.”

“Many of our places have ‘apartment
animals’ that live in the neighborhood,” said
Doiron. “Tenants feed the stray animals and
the animals hang around the property. The
fleas from the animals find their way into the
apartments.”

Phil Harris, an apartment manager on
State Street for eight years, said some ten­
ants do not care about the property.

“The ones that complain the place isn’t
clean are the same ones that do the most
littering,” said Harris. “The kids barbecue,
they leave the chicken bones and trash around
the barbecue pit, and then they complain
about all of the cats and roaches.”

Chani McCall, an appliance design stu­
dent who rents a one-bedroom apartment
just off of East State Street from J. C. Doiron,
Realtor (not to be confused with J. T. Doiron),
said she stays out of her kitchen because of
the mess.

“I’ve got these huge brown roaches that
are all over my kitchen,” said McCall. “I
called and asked them to spray for roaches
but they told me they don’t do that. They said
it was a personal hygiene problem.”

McCall said, “I’ve cleaned the counter
and walls with everything I could think of,
but the dirt won’t come off. There is old
grease baked onto the top of the stove that
won’t come off either.”

McCall complained about two broken
window panes that she asked to have re­
paired a long time ago. Also, the hot water
knob in her kitchen sink has been broken for
several weeks and she has been unable to get
it repaired.

Outside of McCall’s front door is a fuse
box without a cover. The fuses and wires are
exposed. In front of McCall’s apartment are
old tires, a broken exercise bike, old bricks
and other assorted household trash.

The dumpsters in the parking lot, over­
turned because they are no longer slated for
pickup, continue to collect trash anyway.
Even an old mattress sits there waiting for a
pickup that will not come.

McCall also said her rent has been
raised $60 in less than a year. The rent,
originally $125 per month, is now $185. The
rent has been raised twice—one to $165 a
month because the apartment was painted
and again to $185 because of an increase in
gas prices.

John C. Doiron said his secretary, who
was out of town, handled all rental manage­
ment and would answer any questions. Later
the secretary said Doiron told her not to
answer any questions.

Despite the complaints, Doiron said they
have no apartments for rent in the campus
area for the beginning of the fall semester.

Steve Hudson, an LSU student who
lives at another of Eversberg’s properties on
East State Street, said he is moving out
because water leaks from an upstairs apart­
mant and the unit floods. Mold and mildew
are growing on the walls of his apartment.

“The plaster in my apartment is peeling
off of the walls,” said Hudson. “Water from
outside and the second floor leaks through
the walls and the ceiling. It’s caused the
walls to mildew and crumble.”

Tiffany Carr, Hudson’s neighbor, is also
moving. She said she is tired of the flooding
and has been trying to get her stove fixed for
months.

“When we moved in, one of the burners
was pushed into the stove,” Carr said. “Now
that we are moving out, they say it’s our
fault.”

Paula Triebes rented a one-bedroom
apartment from Eversberg in the only one of
his buildings on State Street not raised off
the ground. She returned from her parents’
house after a torrential rain storm to find her
apartment flooded.

“When we pulled up to my apartment
we saw there was two feet of water in the
house,” said Triebes. “When my father got
into the house he saw a wall clock that was
plugged in underwater, and it was still keep­
ing time.”

Triebes said the circuit breaker had not
tripped yet. The house still had electric cur­
rent running through the wires. Her father
(continued on page 46)
Saturday nights are what LSU football dreams are made of.

Finally all of the practices and meetings will bind the team together as the players work on the field and the sidelines toward a Tiger victory.

The cheerleaders chant, the band strikes up a Tiger tune and the crowd creates a low rumble in the stadium waiting impatiently for the team to take the field.

When the team finally breaks out of the chute, the fans jump to their feet, frantically waving their pom-poms and cheering cultishly for the Tigers to bring home another victory.

"It's an incredible feeling," says one player of running out into a stadium full of people. "The whole atmosphere is incredible."

That player runs out of the chute, down the field and takes his seat on the bench. He will probably occupy that spot for the entire game. His dream to play Tiger football will probably remain only a dream. But this LSU walk-on would like to think he does his part anyway.

story by andre maillho
photos by dave curley
I used to imagine that I was one of the guys coming out of the chute onto the field. It has always been a dream of mine to play here.

It's another Saturday night in Baton Rouge. Nothing special about this particular Saturday—nothing out of the ordinary is going on. Except in a large soup bowl situated a mile east of the Mississippi River.

Close to 80,000 people are jammed into that bowl, whooping and hollering for 22 men on the grassy field below to rip each other apart.

In the stands, men show off their chests, bare save for painted purple and gold letters. Other spectators are a fashion nightmare, adorned in purple and gold from their hats to their shoes.

Tonight's football soup consists of a roux, cleverly disguised as the LSU faithful. Added to that is a flavorful spice emanating from the parties strewn across the parking lots outside the stadium. The meat comes courtesy of the visiting team, and the ladle that stirs the mixture is the LSU Tiger football team, the pride and joy of Baton Rouge and the great state of Louisiana.

Those same Tigers lie in wait beneath the stands at the south end of the stadium in a passageway too small for seventy battle-clad behemoths. Occasionally, when the door opens for some official to slip out, the bone-chilling, spine-tingling roars can be heard loud and clear:

"L-S-U-TIGERS!!!"

The opponents, both awed and intimidated by the spectacle of this event, take the field to the chants of "Tiger-Bait! Tiger-Bait!" And when everything has fallen into place, the Golden Band from Tigerland marches onto the field, their instruments poised in anticipation.

Finally, everything climaxes in an unequalled madness, an expression of loyalty and pride that surrounds the players as they take the field to add yet another night to LSU football lore.

For some of the players, all of their dreams will come true tonight. They will show the courage and they will get the glory.

But for others, the most cherished dream of all—to play football—will have to wait.

No repeat of Billy Cannon's Halloween run, no game-winning touchdowns, no game-
saving tackles and no cheers.

Tonight these players won’t even get to run, except to and from the locker room. They won’t feel the grass beneath their feet, or lose their breath after being on the field for seven minutes straight or relish the grunts and groans as their enemies are pounded repeatedly into the Tiger Stadium turf.

For them, this game is more guts than glory. It’s more work than play.

They are not the next class of LSU legends. They are just another group of LSU walk-ons.

A

walk-on is someone who is willing to practice for hours upon hours in sweltering temperatures in full pads against men weighing 275 pounds with no guarantee of playing time, the sweetest reward for a football player’s efforts.

Some people wonder why anyone in their right mind would want to do this.

Michael Blanchard, a red-shirted LSU freshman, has a simple answer.

“When I was younger, my family used to go to at least two or three games a year,” says Blanchard. “I used to imagine I was one of the guys coming out of the chute onto the field. It’s always been a dream of mine to play there.”

Besides a love for LSU, walk-ons must have a willingness to work hard and make sacrifices. “Work” is one word Blanchard is familiar with.

“I know what my position is right now. I’ve just got to keep working hard until I get my chance. All I can do is work hard and do my best.”

But loving LSU and working hard won’t help without a stellar attitude. Again, Blanchard fits the bill.

“I know the odds are against me playing right now,” he says. “I’ve got to do my best and let everything happen as it does.”

The demands associated with playing major college football are enormous. It all begins with a three-week training period in May. Spring football fulfills two purposes at LSU: allowing the coach to see what kind of shape his team is in, and whetting the appetite of the fans for the real thing in September.

The fifteen days of drills serve as a prelude to August, setting the depth charts at each position for fall practice and psyching the players up for what’s to come.

Players take part in a variety of maneuvers, ranging from simple scrimmages in shorts to full-body contact in pads and uniforms as well as anything else the coaches want them to do.

In the summer off-season, a daily workout regimen is necessary in order to maintain the gains made in the spring. In between pourings of strawberry and bubble gum syrup at his grandparent’s sno-ball stand, Blanchard runs and lifts weights on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays in preparation for fall practice.

During football season, the physical and mental demands are even more frequent, and rest is hard to come by.

Last season, as a member of the scout team, Blanchard’s main role was to practice with starters as the center on that week’s opposing team. A 270-pound defensive lineman beat him silly for no visible reason. But Blanchard didn’t mind.

“It was the same thing every day,” Blanchard says. “From Monday to Thursday I would get up and go to class, have lunch afterwards and then I would have a little time to myself.”

“Then I would head over to the stadium and get dressed for practice. From there I would attend meetings with my coach and then we would head over to the field by the Vet School and start practice.”

With temperatures reaching upwards of 95 degrees during late summer and into fall, practice can be a misnomer for what a football player goes through. Ten extra pounds of equipment turn an already difficult session into “oven therapy” under the penetrating rays of the sun.

“After practice, I would go back and shower, then head straight to Broussard Hall for dinner.”

On Fridays, his schedule changes. “If it was a home game,” Blanchard says, “we had just a light practice in shorts. If it was a road game, we didn’t practice at all because we had to leave Friday afternoon.”

On Saturday nights, all the practices and all the meetings come together to form a football team, a cohesive unit on the field and on the sidelines working for a victory.

“It’s an incredible feeling,” Blanchard says of running out into Tiger Stadium. “The band and the whole atmosphere is incredible.

“While we’re in the chute waiting to come out, people get real quiet. Then the band kicks up and people start getting restless and they’re all ready to go.”

But while Blanchard occupied his spot on the sidelines, the Tigers ran up wins in three of those four games. Blanchard would like to think he did his part.

“There was no pressure on me to get in the game, so I tried to relax and enjoy the game,” he says. “It was just fun being out there, seeing all the people in the stands enjoying what was going on.

But most of the weekends weren’t that pleasant for LSU in 1990. For Blanchard, it was back to the grind, giving his all for his goal.

S

haron Patton, the principal’s secretary at Catholic High School, didn’t hesitate with her answer. “Mike is a fine young man,” Patton says. “He is kind, caring - he’s just a wonderful young man.”

“You could talk to anyone from the janitor to the principal and they would all say nothing but good things about Michael Blanchard.”

Catholic High head football coach Dale Weiner says he agrees completely.

“He is a standout football player. You wouldn’t leave the game saying he’s the best player out there. He doesn’t stand out because of what he does in the game.

“However, he epitomizes what you look
for in a player as a football coach. He’s the kind of guy that works a lot harder than most. He’s very goal-oriented and always keeps those goals in mind.”

His ability to stay focused and achieve his goals leaves an impression on everyone who knows him. “He is a very determined young man,” Buddy King, LSU’s offensive-line coach says. “He takes a lot of pride in what he does and he wants to be the best at everything.”

Blanchard’s work ethic and attitude come in large part from his parents, Gordon and Laura Blanchard of Baton Rouge. “My parents have never put a lot of pressure on me to excel at athletics,” Blanchard says. “They have always told me to just do my best. That’s all they’ve asked of me.”

“The men in my family have all played football, but none have ever played college ball, so they know that football isn’t the most important thing there is.”

“My mom and dad and my little brother (eight-year old Drew) have always been there for me, supporting me all the way. Even when I had some injuries they stood behind me.”

Blanchard’s road to the LSU football field was hard. Injuries during his senior season limited his playing time, making him work that much harder.

“I hurt my ankle in the pre-season,” Blanchard says, “and I didn’t come back until the fifth game of the season.”

“Then the very next week I hurt my other leg and missed some playing time. All total, I only played in about four or five games during my senior season.”

On the football field, Mike Blanchard did not stand out as an imposing football player. Blanchard, at 6’1” and 250 pounds, was outweighed by some of his teammates and opponents, but he might have been one of the biggest men in the classroom.

At Catholic High, Blanchard graduated as class valedictorian and received an academic scholarship to LSU. “Mike is the epitome of the student-athlete,” Weiner says. “He’s the kind of guy that could have gone to a lot of other places academically, but he decided to stay at home because he loves LSU so much.”

“He grew up as a Tiger fan and wanted the chance to play football for LSU. He turned down other academic offers from schools like Columbia University to attend school here in Baton Rouge.”

His main goal is to get his degree in pre-med and then go on to medical school. And if a 4.0 GPA in his first year at LSU is any indication, he’ll accomplish that goal. “Pretty much since my junior year in high school, I’ve thought I would want to go to medical school,” Blanchard says. “The first thing I thought of was sports medicine, because I was into sports as well.”

“Now I’m thinking about orthopedics as well. I’ve always excelled in science so whatever I finally decide will probably involve science.”

“Hell, I’ve been coaching for 17 or 18 years,” King says, “and I can’t remember having a guy as academically gifted as Mike.”

Blanchard’s academic record is typical among the LSU football walk-ons. His track record with the team is also similar to that of many of his colleagues. Blanchard was not among the 95 players awarded football scholarships from LSU, but head coach Mike Archer like most coaches, encouraged walk-ons. Blanchard took his chances, but thus far has failed to break into the regular rotation.

Sam Nader, LSU’s recruiting coordinator, is entering his 16th year and has been a part of six different coaching staffs. Blanchard was not the durable Miller over the football. So Blanchard took his chances, but thus far has failed to break into the regular rotation.

“Mike is a great kid and a great student,” says Nader. “He’s also a very good football player. He’s the type of guy you want on your football team.”

“He wasn’t highly recruited (to play football) because of his size limitations,” Nader adds. “But he has that desire to compete and play and he gives it everything he’s got. We’re glad he’s here with us—he’s made some great contributions.”

“On the average, we have about 20-25 walk-ons each year,” Nader says. “We have a responsibility as a state university to give the young men of this state the opportunity to play football as long as they can compete physically and are academically eligible.”

“There’s no such thing as a tryout for these guys,” Nader adds. “They must be full-time students and they must pass the preliminary physical tests.”

“But most of all,” Nader says, “these young men have a desire to play football at LSU, and they work very hard to fulfill that goal.”

“Some just love being around football,” says King. “They just love competing on an everyday basis, just like in the real world.”

“It’s a lot like a fraternity for some of them. They just can’t seem to get it out of their blood.”

“We’ve had some players stay four years as a walk-on,” Nader says, “just because they want to be a part of the LSU football team.”

Things started out slowly for Blanchard. In his freshman year of college, he found himself behind centers Blake Miller, Frank Godfrey and Steve Reading. That’s a tough mountain to climb.

Miller was an All-SEC selection by some football publications and proved himself in his senior year as one of the best centers at LSU in recent years. The New England Patriots selected Miller in the NFL draft, reuniting him with ex-LSU quarterback Tommy Hodson.

Godfrey was injured much of the time, but neither he nor the number-three center Reading could find much playing time with the durable Miller over the football. So Blanchard was forced to bide his time.

Many of the walk-ons never get to spend those few moments on the field, though. Rarely does an LSU walk-on get to play during a football game.

Despite Blanchard’s lack of playing opportunities, Blanchard did find himself dressing out for several games, including one road contest. He suited up for home.
games against Miami of Ohio, Texas A&M, Alabama and Tulane.

"I just tried to be optimistic and I tried to encourage the guys that were in the game at the time. I wanted to tell them to just do their best."

For 1991, centers Miller and Reading departed after using up their eligibility, but Blanchard still faces an uphill climb with Godfrey, a junior, and sophomore Craig Johnston in his way.

"A lot depends on his improvement over the summer and fall," King says. "If Mike keeps progressing -- and I really hope he gets to play -- he'll be playing real soon.

"Mike takes a lot of pride in what he does in the classroom, and that carries over onto the football field. If he applies himself in the same manner, he'll be playing football real soon."

"I improved in the spring and finished at number three center," Blanchard says. "There's a good chance I could get into some games. It's very possible. I've just got to keep working hard until I get my chance and then I can prove that I can play."

In addition to being optimistic about his chances to play this year, Blanchard is also hopeful about the Tigers' chances of being competitive in the SEC this year.

"I like Coach Hallman a lot," Blanchard says. "He's a real good coach and he can do a lot for the team. He knows how to get you to do your best.

"Coach King is a good coach as well. I like his philosophy. The attitude of the whole team is great and the coaches prepare you for the game, where you shouldn't let up.

"This year working is even more important for the whole football team," Blanchard adds. "We have a new coaching staff and we're all starting from scratch.

"There's a lot of us working hard and it becomes contagious. We have the opportunity to start over and make something out of ourselves -- and to make something out of this football team."
Every teacher has an image, a reputation. And students talk—especially about which teachers to avoid. Gumbo Magazine decided to tap into the grapevine to find some of LSU's best and worst teachers.

Our methods weren't very scientific. We didn't use a sophisticated Cray computer system filled with public opinion data. But who can trust science anyway?

Instead, we talked with students informally and got the scoop on six teachers whose reputations precede them....

Harry Robson, chemistry

Many freshmen find Harry Robson's chemistry classes difficult. But after 29 years as a chemical engineer at Exxon, Robson says he thinks he is doing his students a favor by being hard on them.

"I don't think it's any favor to grant students easy marks on an easy class," Robson says.

He says students should mature into higher levels of work as they get older. "I think we could be accused of academic dishonesty if we continued the same standards they had in high school."

Robson teaches the Chemistry 1212 lab and the Chemistry 1001 survey course for non-science majors.

Maria McGuire, a recent general studies graduate, says she has had bad experiences with the chemistry professor.

"I went to Robson to get a faculty reference for medical school. He was so mean to me when I asked for the reference that he made me cry," McGuire says. "I know so many people who have horror stories to tell about him."

Robson says he likes to see students grow in their ability to understand higher-level work and admits his class is difficult.

"It's no disgrace to fail chemistry," Robson says.

Wayne Parent, political science

Wayne Parent has a reputation on campus as a funny guy and a laid back teacher.

He says he likes to keep his classes humorous because that was the teaching style he liked when he was a student at LSU.

"I really loved college," Parent says. "Since I'm back here (at LSU) it reminds me of when I was a student, so I enjoy the hell out of teaching."

Parent teaches Louisiana politics, public opinion and a graduate seminar. He says he enjoys teaching about state government because of Louisiana's particular flavor.

"My Louisiana history class is easy to teach, easy to have fun with," Parent says.
"I'd be a fool not to enjoy that class. It's not like teaching Nebraska politics."

David Fawley, a recent political science graduate, says Parent was one of his favorite teachers and that his sense of humor made the difference.

"He mixed knowledge of the subject with a good dose of humor," Fawley says. "He doesn't take himself too seriously, unlike some teachers."

**Jeff Moore, economics**

Jeff Moore seems comfortable with the dread students have about his classes. "I don't mind a reputation as being a tough teacher," Moore says. "I'm trying to prepare people for the real world, not maximize their GPA."

Moore says LSU is the first place he has taught where students have found him extremely difficult.

"LSU students are not as well prepared and don't try as hard," he says.

Moore says students at LSU have two problems because of other teachers—grade inflation and the "publish or perish" philosophy.

"There are rewards for publishing, for researching, so you make your classes easy and your students leave you alone," he says.

He considers himself a difficult teacher compared to his colleagues.

"The more students learn here, the better," he says. "If they choose not to study, they'll have problems, not me."

**Nicholas Apostolou, accounting**

Accounting major Cherie Hidalgo says the most outstanding element of Nicholas Apostolou's teaching is his thoroughness.

"He didn't just talk to you, but got students involved in what he was discussing," Hidalgo said. "He taught me the things I needed most to become a better accountant."

Apostolou admits he works hard to make accounting more interesting.

"I realize accounting is a very dry subject matter, but I continually try to make it more interesting," Apostolou says. "I try to relate it to the real world."

He is a former stockbroker who decided to teach after spending seven years in the business world. He says he really likes LSU.

"We are fortunate to have a beautiful campus," Apostolou says. "Louisiana has such a distinctive character."

He says accounting is the basic tool for a businessperson. "If you want to go into business, accounting is the best single subject you can learn."

Apostolou's wife, Barbara Apostolou, is also an accounting teacher with a good reputation. She recently won the outstanding teacher award from the College of Business.

**Louis Day, journalism**

Louis Day knows many students avoid his classes and he enjoys his reputation as a challenging professor.

"It doesn't matter if they think I'm tough as long as they think I'm effective," Day says. "Every semester, students tell me they've learned more in my class than in any course at LSU."

Journalism major Dawn Gottschalk says, "My friend and I discussed printing T-shirts that said 'I survived Lou Day's media law class.' It was tough."

Day says that teachers shouldn't strive to be liked or feared because education is more important than personality.

Day came to LSU in 1981 and now teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in media law, as well as a course called "Problems in Contemporary Journalism."

**Karl Roeder, history**

Many of his students say Karl Roeder has an infectious laugh and a real love of teaching.

Political science major Earl Peavy says Roeder was one of the best teachers he ever had. "Dr. Roeder was an outstanding teacher because of his love of the subject."

Peavy took Roeder's Balkan history class and says Roeder is attentive to his student's interests. "He was so concerned that his students understand."

Roeder is the chair of the history department. His special area of study is Eastern Europe.

He has visited the area several times and is concerned about the higher cancer rates, shorter life expectancies and lower nutrition standards common in Eastern Europe.

Roeder also says many of the cities there are probably beyond repair because of environmental damage and poor architecture in many of the buildings.

"People there are scared," Roeder says. "They have a real fear of what is going to happen to them."

Roeder teaches classes in western civilization, Balkan history and an 18th century readings course. ■
Women Helping Women Fight Illiteracy

story by john k. carpenter

LSU instructor Mary Duchein says some of the finest people she knows are convicted murderers, robbers and drug pushers. These friends are inmates at Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women and Duchein says they have changed her life.

LCIW, located about 20 miles from Baton Rouge in St. Gabriel, is surrounded by rolling lawns, not barbed wire. There are no guard towers or ominous gates, but instead there are flower beds and meticulously maintained shrubbery.

The prisoners move freely within their environment mowing the grass and watering the plants.

Duchein began making regular visits to the prison more than a year ago with two of her colleagues. The purpose of these visits was to determine the availability of educational programs in Louisiana prisons as well as to organize literacy programs that involved inmates teaching inmates.

What she found inside the prison was in stark contrast to the original appearance. While the women weren't physically bound by chains and cuffs, they were bound by their lack of education.

At the time of Duchein's first visit, LCIW had no classes to teach the prisoners how to read or write. Though there were many vocational education classes, the prison offered only one to prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) test. And that class, which had a waiting list of almost 200 inmates, was difficult to get into for those who could not read or write.

"Our timing was perfect," Duchein said. "The prison had just come under fire for not providing education to the women when we showed up with all of these ideas for a literacy program."

And so the program "Each One Reach One: Women Helping Women" was born.

The literacy program at LCIW consists of about ten inmate tutors who have high school diplomas, GED certificates or some college experience. Each tutor works with a group of about ten inmate students who, on the average, read at or below the fifth-grade level.

The women tackle their illiteracy with unbridled enthusiasm. They gather in small groups inside a cavernous gymnasium on the premises scouring through old workbooks and textbooks and occasionally breaking to ask each other questions.
Participation in the program is voluntary, and those who choose to attend the classes are serious about their work. Duchein said the women are examples of how resilient the human spirit can be. "The stories of many of these women are tragic. Many have been abused all their lives and many committed their crimes in desperation," Duchein said.

Some had to sell drugs because that was the only way they could afford to feed their children. Some committed murder because that was their only escape from a life of constant emotional, verbal and physical abuse.

"But within this scary, horrible place there is love, joy and nurturing," Duchein said. "It's amazing."

The special relationship she has with some of the women at LCIW goes far beyond the boundaries of teacher and student. "Quite simply, the women have become my friends," she said.

But Duchein also gives plenty to the program. She thinks that by helping these women become literate she will help them better understand themselves.

Duchein is a firm believer in what she called the "transformative power of autobiography," meaning that by writing about the important events and people in their lives the women will better understand who they are and how they ended up in prison.

Laura Higgins, one of the students in the literacy class, wrote a poem discouraging children from using drugs. The poem, entitled "Children, Don't Do Drugs!" was simple in form and in message. She urged children to avoid the temptation of drugs, to resist peer pressure and to "just be themselves."

As she read the poem to Duchein on her last visit, her voice cracked. She then confided that expressing her feelings on paper is a great challenge. Higgins said she had so much to say, but that it is a struggle to transfer those thoughts onto paper.

Like many of the others, Higgins has made great strides since the program began. "It's one step at a time," Duchein told Higgins. "Just a few months ago, you couldn't write anything so personal."

"I know. It's just so hard it hurts," Higgins replied.

In the beginning, the literacy classes were scheduled during the women's only free time, but they kept coming. Now that's dedication," Duchein said.

She faced other problems from the onset of the project, but she and the prisoners have managed to overcome them.

The prison environment breeds a mistrust for outsiders, Duchein said, often making it difficult for the inmates to interact with outside groups.

Early on, Duchein found out how difficult it could be for an outsider to find her niche in prison society.

She said the administration at LCIW was originally more than a little wary about the literacy program.

"I think they saw me as a rabble rouser, someone who was going around demanding educational rights for women," Duchein said.

She often found herself literally locked out of the prison gates when she showed up for scheduled classes.

Facing the prison bureaucracy that seemed both hostile and apathetic, Duchein returned to LCIW for the sake of those students who had a genuine desire to learn.

Another problem for the program was a lack of instructional materials. While some textbooks and workbooks have been donated, many of them are old and already have the answers written inside.

"We just erase the answers and start working," said tutor Ruby Barnes, who graduated from Southern University.

Duchein is constantly looking for alternative materials in good condition to bring to the prison. And she never walks through the gates without an armful of reading materials.

"My neighbors give me books and magazines to bring to the prison," Duchein said.

Barnes, who is a self-proclaimed "voracious reader," loves the western tales of Louis L'Amour, but most of the other inmates like those of Stephen King.

"Those give me the creeps," Barnes said.

Just when the tutor has curled up with a good book before dosing off, one of her students will have her paged so they can ask a question or get a new assignment.

Barnes claims that she enjoys helping other people, but a great motivating factor in her work is self-improvement.

"I learn a lot every day. I do this because I love helping people," she said.

She and the rest of the tutors are the highest paid workers at LCIW, earning 40 cents per hour. And that money is extremely important in prison society because the women must buy for themselves many of the items civilians take for granted. Chewing gum, toilet paper, tampons and other toiletries are among the items the women depend on their salaries to purchase.

But getting some sort of education so that they don't make the same mistakes again is another important aspect of these women's lives, Duchein said.

Some of the inmates expressed their desire to make something out of themselves when they are released from prison. They said the literacy program will give them that opportunity.
Celain Mercadel said the classes have helped her feel good about herself—good enough that she can "go places in life (she) never dreamed of."

Jo Anne Rue, another student in the program, said the instruction has given her hope that she will have a new life after she gets out of prison.

"In many ways, going to prison is the best thing that ever happened to me," said Lana Cantrell, an inmate and participant in the program. "I now have my GED and I have discovered how much I love to learn. I just can't get enough. My whole life has changed," she said.

Cantrell smiled as she said of her future: "I want to go to college, maybe Tulane."

Duchein said many of the women join the literacy program in an effort to be better examples for their children. Separation from their families is, for most of them, the most difficult part of prison life.

"They regret that they will miss seeing their children grow up," she said.

"I took the class so that I could read to my grandchildren," said student Leeaudrey Holt.

Duchein said she is encouraged by the amount of headway that has been made toward providing basic education for the women who want it. "The literacy class used to meet once a week. Now it meets three times a week," she said.

So far, over 100 women have participated in the program since its creation, and many have found themselves flowing back into the mainstream of society.

Duchein and her colleagues presented the results of the program at the National Conference last December, ending their official work.

But Duchein kept returning.

Now "Each One Reach One" has expanded and taken on a life of its own.

"The literacy program now has its own momentum. That's the way I always wanted it to be," Duchein said.

Today, the program is run entirely by the students.

Duchein said she can't return as often as she would like to because her family, work and education take up a great deal of time. But she still returns.

As her last visit drew to an end, the women asked when she would be back. Probably not for a couple more months, she said.

"I have to come back," she said, though. "These women have become a part of my life."

---

**IN HER OWN WORDS...**

The inmates participating in "Each One Reach One" have helped each other as well as helping themselves. The working relationships they have are tinged with love and concern.

Billie Wright, a 53-year-old inmate, has spent the last nine years at LCIW. During that time, she had no educational opportunities — until the literacy program came along.

Since she started working with her tutor, she has mastered the language and the art of communication. And she has developed a strong desire to learn.

These are her words:

*Once not too long ago, I could barely write my own name or spell the simplest words. I felt too old to learn and too embarrassed and ashamed to ask someone to help me because I didn't want them to know the truth.*

Then I learned that others like me were willing to learn and more than that, there were other ladies willing to help teach me. Through swallowing my pride, I reached out. I found that every step I took, my tutor, Ms. Shiela Ernest, took two to help me. She opened the door to knowledge for me. With her help and others, I have learned a lot. I can read, spell and do math problems. More than this, she has taught me not to fear not knowing something and has placed the thirst for knowledge in me to learn more. I plan to continue my education because of special people like her that have made me realize, I can do it."
Almost every century of human development has been characterized by some sort of intellectual or mechanical innovation. The ancient years were usually presaged by some sort of destructive weapon, such as the catapult. The later middle ages saw the manifestation of the logic of the reformation in the advent of the printing press. Our own era, ironically enough, was privileged enough to witness the amalgamation of both of these concepts in the arrival of our voyeuristic friend, the television.

Despite its absolute influence on modern human behavior, there are still those few precious moments in our lives where we find ourselves free from the boob tube's spastic gaze. Ripping down the interstate at 80-plus miles per hour, recreational exercise and groping lustily at an equally stoked member of the opposite sex are among those activities that are best enjoyed without the presence of a 24-inch remote and a handy cable feed.

That brings us to its predecessor and sometime companion – the radio.

story by steve zaffuto
Even with television’s insistent and pervasive intrusion into the daily life of humans, most Americans still really dig listening to the radio. It’s more subtle. It doesn’t require the absolute attention of the consumer but yet can often have as much influence as its visual cousin. Just as it was used as a minor character in films such as *American Graffiti* and *Do the Right Thing*, radio often turns out acting as a soundtrack for society, playing unnoticed in the background until a major climactic interlude sends it leaping to the forefront, becoming an integral part of the action.

With the enduring social and cultural importance of radio now firmly established by my rampant rhetoric, it is interesting to note how the entire radio broadcasting scenario is structured and just how rapidly it is changing to accommodate our increasingly quirky, politically-correct, pasta-eating, light-beer-guzzling society.

Before the radio days, communication was simple. Radio hadn’t been invented yet and people had to engage in all sorts of strange behavior like reading and actually talking to one another in order to obtain information. Later, when clever Italians contrived with other equally cheeky types like Marconi and Tesla and eventually developed the process of transmitting sound through the atmosphere, radio stations sprang up across the nation and introduced the public to the magic of airborne noise. These venerable times are often considered the Golden Age of Radio, when many newsmen, actors and other opportunistic types took advantage of the medium and made it the foremost channel of mass communication in the world. *Amos ’n’ Andy, The Shadow*, fireside chats and the like dominated the airwaves. It was great...just ask your grandpa.

Later with the almost simultaneous advents of television and rock ‘n roll, radio became mostly a musical medium, rockin’ around the clock and making stars out of wild white boys. That trend lasted until, along with the new decade in 1970, came an era of hi-fi FM radio that gave dope-smokin’ teenagers something to listen to in their huge, globelike Koss headphones. This soon gave rise to terms like ratings, areas of dominant influence, formats and other keen stuff. In other words, things soon stabilized and radio became an industry.

In Baton Rouge, what we now think of as radio has always had a pretty solid citizenship. There has always been at least one country station, “rock” station, weenie-vegetable-elevator music station, and of course, the one huge pop-variety, adult contemporary station that is usually several jillion watts strong, part of a citywide media conglomerate and the cultural exchange of many teenage girls. Those were the simple years indeed. The pubescent nubiles had their station, the local dopeheads had their station and your parents, God bless their middle-o’-the-road hearts, had their station.

However, both the listening habits of the public and the broadcasting habits of the radio world seem to have changed drastically in the past half a decade or so. Most of this is due, sickeningly enough, to those wily baby boomers. Staying true to their tendency to coerce, and some may even say force, the rest of the nation into reminiscing—a la *The Wonder Years*—right along with them, the 35 to 55 demographic segment has rearranged radio formats and appeal as we formerly knew them.
Out of the once sedate and regimented radio dial have suddenly sprung scores of classic rock and oldies stations. Where once a Chuck Berry song would elicit glazed, vaguely pleased looks from older folks, his offerings are now heard almost as often as Tom Bodett’s Motel 6 ads. Early ’70s washouts like Bachman Turner Overdrive have in recent years seemed to achieve more airplay than even perennial FM elder Phil Collins. What, asks the casual evening time cruiser, is the deal? Has Lionel Richie met with an untimely death? Are we all, every time we switch on the FM receiver, entering an eerie, insistent print of “Night of the Living Dead Rock Stars?”

The answer, at least according to local deejay and program director Jack Flash, actually does seem to have more to do with mortality than you might think. Flash, whose station somewhat inexplicably metamorphosed from competing teenybopper powerhouse Z-98 into the new Oldies 98, said the reason for the switch had more to do with the lack of teenyboppers than anything else.

“The younger age segments have been declining rapidly in recent years,” Flash said. “There are simply fewer 18 to 34-year-olds this year than last year. The demographic we sought was the 25 to 54-year-olds, which has been the fastest growing demographic segment in the nation.”

Apparently Oldies 98’s strategy has been successful, posting them third in Baton Rouge among 25 to 54-year-olds.

With “nicho” stations like this one, mass entertainment and not cultural awareness is usually the goal, especially since changing formats is about as easy as calling up some company in Tennessee and telling them your station is going all-Lambada next week. The new compact disc library usually arrives within a few days.

One characteristic that Oldies 98 does retain from its previous format is an exclusively all-hits play list. Unlike the weird little AM stations that started the oldies trend some years back, a request for The Chocolate Watch Band at a newer oldies station is likely to be met with an enthusiastic “huh?” and a polite suggestion having something to do with Elvis or Bobby Darin.

Despite the apparent viability of a station such as Oldies 98, nostalgia isn’t always the path to high broadcast ratings. E.L. “Rusty” Galle, senior account executive with the advertisingfirm Backer Spielvogel Bates Inc., which handles several local radio station such as WTGE 100.7, and WCKW 92.3, watches the radio ratings.

He said that, in spite of their initial success, “novelty” formats such as oldies radio tend to have a high burnout ratio. “You would think that with all of the music in the past 30 years you would never run out of stuff to play. That simply isn’t true,” Galle said. I guess there is only so much Herman’s Hermits one can tolerate in a single lifetime.

The slightly more progressive “classic rock” stations also have their problems, mostly concerning station income and advertising dollars. “The biggest targets for radio advertising are women,” Galle said. The classic rock format, however, appeals to about a 90-percent male audience.”

Without a nod to the scores of well-meaning teenage hippie chicks who smoke pot with their boyfriends and fantasize about Jim Morrison, Galle said that “aside from beer and cars there isn’t a whole lot you can sell guys that age over the radio.” Because of recent lackluster ratings for WTGE, Galle hinted that “classic rock” could be one format that is proving to be a big disappointment to radio programmers.
Another significant change in the layout of the radio dial is the death of the traditional pop-rock “adult contemporary” station. With the mutation of musical styles that has occurred during this MTV decade, it has become evident that the club-hopping, Exstacy-popping Pet Shop kid and the local Camaro god aren’t going to tolerate listening to the same radio station anymore. “Top-40 basically came upon a product problem and began programming more and more black and dance-oriented music,” said Galle, explaining the state of most so-called top-40 stations.

With the demise of hit radio also comes the reemergence of country as a viable radio format. Once the sole domain of rifle-toting pickup drivers, the immense popularity of relatively progressive country artists such as Garth Brooks and Dwight Yokum has borne the strains of Nashville through many a Blaupunkt automotive speaker as well. Not surprisingly, country has always been a hot ticket in the Baton Rouge market. Even several years ago when country wasn’t much of a hit elsewhere, local station WYNK 101, as Galle put it, was able to “fry eggs in Baton Rouge.”

There is still a lot of unresolved static in the turbulent radio markets across the nation. AM radio, once known solely as the haunt of semi-literate radio preachers and countless minority groups, now seems to be on the cutting edge of broadcasting thought and reasoning. Rejuvenated by the talk radio format popularized by the antics of Rush Limbaugh and Larry King, AM seems set to become the “cable of radio” offering a field of news, ethnic and spiritual broadcasting opportunities to anyone with enough cash to buy their own transmitter and lucky enough to get a frequency. This sort of specialization has already carried over into the FM arena, spawning many stations that cater to only certain audiences, like the black-oriented FM 106.5, and Z-ROCK 106.5, the wondrously loud station in New Orleans that caters to teenagers rarin’ to cause some trouble.

And, last but not least, what about KLSU 91.1, our own little unpredictable FM thing theoretically owned and realistically operated by LSU students? Often simultaneously accused of being “boring” and “real weird”, KLSU is still the most user-friendly station around. If the deejay happens to be playing a song you don’t like by one of those “college” bands with a whiny female lead singer, which they do seem to have an odd predilection for lately, simply call the deejay up and ask for something you do like. Even if you don’t have a phone, you go down to Hodges Hall and tell him in person.

Even with the “weird stuff,” listening to KLSU is not always be a pleasant experience, but it’s bound to do you some good.

Now that this incredibly interesting information has been organized in a reasonably legible fashion, one can only ponder as to its ultimate consequence. In other words, what difference does it make?

To the average college listener, it all basically means three things:

1) money is, above all, the bottom line
2) any present or future artists who aren’t either dead or old and don’t really fit into any gimmicky category can pretty much forget about getting play time; and, of course
3) the baby boomers, damn ’em, have once again bamboozled us into thinking that the Greatful Dead is a decent band.

Although the last point is debatable and history may hopefully prove the second wrong, the first assumption is probably a safe bet. Such is capitalism and so is the way of the world—love it or listen to KLSU.
Eerie lighting, bold tones and sharp contrasts drew Douglas McConnell and his camera to South Louisiana cemeteries for the first time about two years ago.

Some of the pictures he shot on his first Sunday afternoon at the Grace Church in St. Francisville, along with others taken more recently, are printed on the following pages.

Since that Sunday in 1989, McConnell has taken hundreds of pictures in dozens of cemeteries across the state.
McConnell recently visited several graveyards in Baton Rouge:

- Highland Cemetery, near campus but tucked away from campus traffic in College Town, became a burial site for many of the founders of the city in 1815. Dozen of Kleinpeters are buried there, along with Pierre Joseph Favrot (1749-1824) who served under Galvez and went on to be the commandant of the garrison at Baton Rouge during War of 1812.

- National Cemetery, also called Memorial Cemetery, is at the corner of 19th Street and Florida Boulevard. It was the site of the Civil War Battle of Baton Rouge in 1862 and became a federal cemetery in 1867. The rows of white headstones honor thousands of soldiers who gave their lives for America.

- Baton Rouge bought the land for Magnolia Cemetery, also at 19th Street and Florida Boulevard, in 1852. The cemetery is now on the Department of Interior's National Register of Historic Places.

- Mount Olive Cemetery, at the corner of North Boulevard and 22nd Street, is a depressing place known as a traditionally black cemetery for many years. Many of the graves are in disrepair, victims of knotted and crawling tree roots. Cracked cement mausoleums reveal the partial remains of the departed.
LOSING MY RELIGION

My mother was a Jehovah's Witness. My father had a Catholic background, but he worshipped the boob tube. My brother Dirk and I would have preferred to worship with our dad, but we weren't given that choice.

"Please, Mama, let's not go tonight," we would beg our mother. But she religiously attended all the meetings. And so did we.

The church services dragged on for hours, or so it seemed to a child's judgment of time. Dirk and I would fight over who got to put their elbow on the armrest we shared—pushing and knocking each other's arms off the chair. Mother would give us that cold, threatening stare. Instead of seeing God in her eyes, I saw something that looked more like the devil. Before the service ended, she was sitting between us and we were promised the whipping of our lives. But God returned to her eyes after church, and she conveniently forgot that promise.

story by jody miller
photos by dave curley
Being a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses meant I would be seen as different in school. I felt like I had a disease my mother had to explain to the teacher.

"We're Jehovah's Witnesses," Mama would tell my teacher on the first day of school. "My daughter is not allowed to participate in the holiday celebrations or saluting of the flag."

The teacher was aware of people like us, and she just nodded. I found out later that another Jehovah's Witness child was in my class – Johnny Souza. What a relief! I wouldn't be the only child sitting when the class stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance. During those times, Johnny and I looked to each other for support. But that support only lasted in class.

Johnny tattled to his mother that I was standing for the Pledge of Allegiance one day. I was standing to sharpen my pencil. What a rat! I never liked him after that.

I did feel sorry for Johnny, though. Both his parents were Jehovah's Witnesses, so he didn't get to celebrate Christmas at all. At least I had my father's family to make up for the world of which I thought I was deprived.

"You mean you don't get any Christmas presents?" my friends at school would ask.

"Yes, I do," I quickly responded in fear of being different. "My Daddy's side celebrates Christmas. They give me lots."

But Johnny didn't have any presents to talk about after Christmas break.

My mother said we weren't going to church. Was she sick? We always went to church – three days a week. However, being seven years old, I wasn't going to demand an explanation. I decided to take advantage of this rare occasion. I switched the channels on the television looking for something to watch.

It was Tuesday night – that meant Happy Days, Laverne and Shirley and Three's Company. It was going to be a great night, I thought. I went over to where my mother was sitting and gave her an appreciative hug. She gave me a quizzical look in return and went back to her paperwork.

Now it was Thursday night and my mother still wasn't getting dressed for church.

"What should I wear tonight?" I asked her, hoping that she would be proud I had remembered.

"Wear for what?" she asked.

"To go to the Kingdom Hall." Kingdom Hall was the name given to the building of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Oh, we're not going," she said. "You can keep those clothes on and go play."

We weren't going again. I wondered if my mother was sick.

"Are you feeling okay?" I asked.

"Yes, I'm okay," she said, walking into the utility room to put the wet clothes in the dryer.

Our church attendance did not resume during the next few months. At first it was fun, but then it became strange. My cousins continued to go. My grandmother, aunts, and uncles all went. My mother never said anything about it. She just stopped going. Our late-night Bible stories ended. Did my mother no longer believe in God?

Months turned into years. My mother still did not dress for church. I would hear my grandmother ask her for an explanation, but I never heard a reply. It had to be my fault. She was tired of my brother and me fighting not to go.

"Oh, Jehovah," I prayed, "please forgive me. Please let my mother go back to church again."

My prayers were unanswered. She never went back. I think my grandmother blamed me, too.

"You need to be good and not fight with your brother anymore," she would tell me. "If you start going to church regularly and you see a change, then maybe she will go back. Your mother and father are good, but they will never make it to the new world without the Truth."

The Truth. That was the alias followers gave to the religion.

So at nine years old, I took on the task of saving my mother and father. In the beginning I had my brother's help. For the first time, we united to bring our parents to the Truth. Dirk and I started attending the meetings on our own. Mama never tried to stop us, but she never seemed interested in returning either.

Dirk was five years older than me, so he became more active in the religion – attending personal Bible studies, giving talks and going door-to-door in the ministry. My brother learned everything he possibly could about the Truth. He learned more than the Jehovah's Witnesses wanted him to know, including the history of the organization.

Dirk moved out of the house to go to college against the advice of the Witnesses. He would be corrupted there with drugs and sex, they said. But it wasn't these things they feared most about Dirk going to college.

Knowledge was the root of all evil to them. And knowledge is what led Dirk away from the
Witnesses and into Catholicism.

"Dirk is thinking about becoming a priest," my mother said one night at supper.

"He is getting baptized next Sunday and he wants us to be there."

"I'm not going," I hollered in protest. "How can he do this? He knows the Truth."

"Well, he doesn't believe it's the truth anymore, I guess," she said. "I don't understand your brother. I thought he wanted to be a doctor."

"Well, I'm not going to support this decision," I said in protest as I slammed the chair against the under side of the table and ran crying from the room.

Dirk was baptized and confirmed at the Catholic church on LSU's campus. I was there, but I wasn't supportive. As I wiped my teary eyes, my elbow accidentally knocked my mother's arm. She looked at me with that stare again. But this time, instead of separating my brother and me, she just sat there watching my brother destroy his hope for eternal life, I thought.

Dirk introduced my parents to the priest after the service. He attempted to shake my hand, but I just walked away. I hope he doesn't expect me to call him "Father," I thought. I could only feel resentment for this man who had stolen the Truth from my brother.

As we walked out of the church, I had only spiteful words to say to my brother.

"If you believe in Hell so much, I hope you burn there," I screamed at him in tears. Hell was some place that Jehovah's Witnesses believed didn't exist.

Dirk just gave me a cocky grin. I could have punched him right there, but my mother told me to go sit in the car.

Elders of the Jehovah's Witnesses heard about my brother's baptism and questioned my mother about her attendance. She was still considered a baptized Witness and could be held accountable for her actions. I listened in on the conversation behind a wall, and for the first time I heard my mother explain why she had stopped going to the meetings.

"I don't need you to tell me what I can and cannot do," she told them. "I haven't been to the Kingdom Hall in about eight years and you come to my house now wondering why I went to my son's baptism. I give my children choices. They have to live their own lives. I have been Catholic, but if my son chooses to be, then I will be there to support him. And neither you nor your religion can dictate my life any more."

It was at that moment, as I slid my back along the wall and fell to the floor, that I had my first spark of doubt.

My first semester in college I had a philosophy class. I learned about Plato's cave and it was then that my spark began to grow. I learned the answer to my long-standing childhood question: Why was I lucky enough to be born into the Truth? I realized that I had been tied to a chair and the religious leaders of my church had cast shadows and images for me all of my life. My brother had tried to wake me on several occasions with his nudges of reality, but I was too stubborn to listen to him. I thought I was the only one who had the Truth. I carried the cross to save my family all of those years. And now came the difficult part — putting it down. Where do I go from here, I thought. The light is blinding and I have no where to go.

Many years have passed since that first semester. At first I just became like my mother. I stopped getting dressed for church. But that was just another method of following someone else's lead. I knew that wasn't enough. I had to find my own Truth. And that brings me to the present. I am still searching for those answers to my questions.

Some say that it is really sad I had to be subjected to such abuse. I say that I have become a better person because of it. Knowing the harm of being closed-minded has only made me realize the importance of being open-minded. I now know that I wasn't born into the Truth. The real truth is something that we all have to search for. I don't even know if having a Truth is that important. I believe God will judge us by our genuine yearning to know the truth. God is the truth in religion, not doctrine.

I have come a long way since that time I wished Hell on my brother. I can learn from his experiences. I am thankful for those unanswered prayers for my mother's return to the Kingdom Hall. And I would like to tell Johnny Souza that I know all of the words to the Pledge of Allegiance and I stand every time.
In 1925, when LSU moved from downtown Baton Rouge to its new campus, times were different. Or were they? Students, staff and faculty confronted many of the same issues then that they face today. Even in the midst of a major transition, the cadets and co-eds of yesteryear carried out their roles amidst a background of violence, feminism, and racism just as they do today.

story by larry sumerford

Full page photo: View looking north through the south gates of the University’s downtown campus, 1925. Photo from 1925 Gumbo yearbook. Photo inset: This 1991 photo of the same location was taken from a spot just north of the Riverside Mall-North Street intersection
By 1925 Baton Rouge had a lot to be proud of. The town boasted 25,000 people, 17 miles of paved streets, 28 miles of sewer lines and it was growing. Smokestacks at the Standard Oil Refinery were belching forth plumes of poison. The port and chemical town was working its way toward modernity.

Louisiana State University’s campus, which had been at the north end of Third Street for 37 years, was surrounded by the Mississippi River on the west, the University Lake on the north, and the city on the south and east. Decades before, at the turn of the century, school officials had realized the existing campus was too small -there was no room to grow.

In 1920, LSU officials began to consider the Gartness Plantation as a site for a larger campus. The Legislature had bought the land two years earlier, planning to build an agricultural college. Its 2,150 acres located three miles south of Baton Rouge seemed to be the perfect place for the “Greater University” they wanted to build.

Construction on the new site started in 1922. By then, it seemed clear the new campus would be much more than just an agricultural college.

By 1925, crews had finished building Hill Memorial Library as well as Coates, Atkinson, Dodson and Boyd Halls. Classes were scheduled to start on the new campus that fall.

Laborers worked that summer to finish new campus buildings in time for the coming semester while University officials wrestled with two major problems. It was obvious that the pentagon-shaped dormitory complex and the cafeteria would not be completed on time, and the construction delay meant the University could not house all its students on the new campus. The other problem was what to do with the old campus. A provision in the congressional act under which the original campus had been donated to the University stipulated that the land could only be used for educational purposes. If the University at any time ceased to use the site, the land would revert to the federal government.

To solve the problems, LSU President Thomas D. Boyd proposed to the University board that the military students, all men, should stay on the old campus and that the female co-eds should be moved to the new LSU. Later, he went on, the men would move to the new campus and the women would be returned to the original campus.

The proposal startled many people, who knew Boyd’s history of strong support for co-education. Boyd had appeared before the legislative budget committees many times pleading for money to improve the women’s facilities in order to attract more female students to the university.

But now Boyd was changing his tune. “I have not lost faith in co-education, but I have grown skeptical,” Boyd told the board. While many people thought Boyd’s proposal was a practical solution for the problem of what to do with the old campus, some observers said Boyd’s real concern was the number of pregnancies that had occurred among the student body.

The University board modified Boyd’s proposal. The board said all the male students and the junior and senior women students would attend classes at the new campus, and freshman and sophomore women students would stay on the old campus. It was a compromise, but many of the women students still were not pleased.

Another controversy involved Tiger Stadium, which was built in 14 separate sections—seven sections on each side, each section seating about 900 fans. Construction bids were let separately for each of the 14 sections. When the contracts were awarded, a black-owned construction firm, Bryant, Connor and Bell, received contracts for three sections and some of the sidewalk.

White contractors were infuriated and refused to bid on any more campus contracts. When the University tried to let contracts on the stadium dormitories and the Greek theatre, it received an insufficient number of bids and the projects had to be postponed.

Eventually, however, the contractors were persuaded that the University was legally required to award contracts to the lowest bidder, regardless of the bidder’s race. The white con-
tractors agreed to submit bids, and construction continued.

Peabody dormitories, Peabody Hall and the Greek Theatre were among the other buildings that would eventually make up the frame of the "new campus."

THE STORIES

On a humid Saturday afternoon in May 1925, agronomy professor Oscar B. Turner sat in his cluttered office on the old campus preparing what was to be the last examination he would give.

Some people at the University thought Turner was almost a recluse. One person called him "the quietest, most inoffensive man on campus."

Turner hadn't quite finished making out the test when he decided to take a supper break. He walked across the dusty street to Foster Cafeteria, located on what is now the southwest corner of the parking lot in front of the State Capitol. After eating, he returned to his office to discover his test papers missing.

Distressed, Turner returned to his sparsely furnished room at Mrs. Lee's Boarding House on College Street, now called Boyd Avenue. Early the next morning the professor went back to his office, perhaps to reexamine his office for clues.

Someone else had also gone to Turner's office that morning. The intruder grabbed a blunt kindling ax lying from the agronomy building's fireplace and with one vicious strike almost decapitated Turner. The first stroke of the blade sliced through his throat, shearing his windpipe and sinking a quarter-inch into his backbone.

Turner's violent death cast suspicion on the entire Agronomy 33 class. Some people thought Turner had surprised a student returning the stolen exam and that the student, fearing expulsion, killed him.

Each member of the class was fingerprinted and interrogated. None could be implicated in the crime. The killer was never found. A make-up exam was administered and all of the students passed.

Summer came and went as preparations were made for that great change from the Old War Skule to the Greater University. The students and faculty had also made their preparations for a new era.

Education senior Ray Sommer, like 393 of the 418 co-eds that year, had changed her hairstyle to the new "bob." Most of them thought it was rebellious. The cut started in chic hair salons in France, but had moved to America in time for the Roaring '20s. Early in the morning on the first day of classes, Sommer scurried around her parents house, located at 1225 Main Street. Sommer tried on the new dresses she had purchased from her father's clothing store and admired her stylish hairdo.

A few blocks away, Roland Kizer's feet hit the wooden floor of the Lambda Chi house on College Street. Kizer was a three-sport letterman, second-year law student and member of the debate team. He was also quite a success with the ladies who attended parties at his fraternity's house.

President Boyd had risen early that morning and walked to the elevated platform just north of the pentagon barracks. From time to time, he checked his watch and gazed southward down the tracks in search of the shuttle train that would carry him for the first official day of school to the new campus.

That fall, as almost every fall, problems surfaced. At campus election time, campaign posters were everywhere, but there were no female candidates.

Sommer, who was the president of the co-eds, was particularly upset. She drafted a petition complaining about the lack of cooperation between male and female students and requested representation for women in student government. The university's women students rallied behind Sommer and unanimously approved the petition.

Sommer then marched into Boyd's office, presented the document and asked him to appoint three women to the student council. Her reasoning was that 25 percent of the 1,600 students were women and, therefore, women were entitled to a fourth of the 12 seats on the council — in other words, a quota system.

The council, however, ruled that since the right to vote was not restricted, the elections were open elections without discrimination. If the women wanted women on the council, they would have to nominate and elect them through normal channels.

Race became an issue in student affairs even though no blacks attended the University.

During that school year, Roland Kizer was LSU's delegate to the Princeton World Court Council at Princeton University in New Jersey. The event was designed to gather the brightest minds from 250 colleges and universities together to work toward improving higher education.

When the World Court Council met to elect committees, Kizer was surprised to see that a black woman from Howard University in Washington, D.C., had been elected to represent the Southern delegation.

Kizer jumped to his feet and protested. Washington was not in the South, he said, and therefore the woman was not representative of her constituency. Other Southern universities joined Kizer's protest.

The executive committee, however, ruled that Washington was in the South and let the selection stand.

Kizer and the University of Georgia delegate then walked out defiantly, throwing the conference into an uproar. Delegates yelled and threw their paper programs in the air as the chairman futilely beat his gavel. Kizer went directly to the train station and headed back to Baton Rouge.

He arrived in Baton Rouge a hero. President Boyd commended his conduct in representing the university and the Chamber of Commerce applauded his actions. The Gumbo yearbook dedicated a section to the story, and the student body elected Kizer president of the student council.

THE FINALE

Roland Kizer became a successful attorney. In 1935, he and seven other prominent Baton Rougians were involved in a plot to assassinate Huey Long. Kizer died in 1971.

Ray Sommer, now 85, still lives in Baton Rouge. She worked at LSU for 45 years and recalled seeing many changes.

Most of the faces from that time are remembered only from faded photographs. Most of the buildings from the old campus have been torn down or the brick has been replaced with cement and steel. But the situations people face haven't changed all that much.
An hour before the start of the first September football game, the most un-august caste of LSU’s business school sat in the back of a red pickup truck with a perhaps lesser caste of uncontracted dates.

“Would you do her?” asked Russ Smith, a 5-11, 180-pound senior from Metairie, holding his Coors in a way that reflected the light and long shadows of a late afternoon along with a backlog of cars on River Road.

“Would I stop doing her,” answered Brett “Roon” Bordelon, another senior from Metairie, glancing toward her ripped cutoffs and bronzed thighs that stood above him in the bed of the truck. She was busy yelling “Bama,
on their usual quest in the local bars.

by mike ritter

August 1991 43

Bama, won't you bite my ass?” at passersby, even though that game wasn't until November.

From the top of the levee, the line of cars along River Road appeared small and unimportant like a strand of Mardi Gras beads tossed on a median and and forgotten for days after the parades had passed. The line, with all of its horn-honking and pom poms attached to antennas, was soundless and hidden once past the vistas of land that stretched from the river across barbed-wire fences to the Vet School and all the way beyond the Kleinpeter’s cows. The yellow grass blazed beneath the white oaks, dense with clusters of leafy branches that hid trunks unlit by the gold of everything else.

Everything was the color of straw and faded green like the plains of Africa and everyone half expected Marlon Perkins to be out filming a pride of lions pouncing on wildebeasts. But there were only the cows and Brahmin bulls resting near discarded wood and tin shacks. They hardly mooed or ate. An occasional trip to the salt lick was their life, or possibly a stare back at the red truck where Roon recounted the story of Smith’s Thursday night fumble.

Smith, acutely aware of the optional nature of Friday classes at the university, had invested some drinks and his best creativity in pursuing a sophomore who manned the Candy Shoppe at the student union on Tuesdays and Thursdays at his favorite
bar, appropriately known as the Swiss Colony. Such a large perponderance of the student body considered the bar "cheesy" that Roon and Smith had given it that name. He bought Screwdrivers and Tom Collinses for a contingent of her friends when the afternoon festivities were just to extinguish the heat. The pace had not slackened, but the circle of influence whose insobriety he was now in charge of had grown to include her roommate's brother and a revolving gaggle of his fraternity pledges.

He had needed a change of scenery, so he whisked her to the bar next door where his other Visa was phoned in. They perched themselves on the porch with a view of the oil derrick. He felt more at ease there to beg the bartender for more vodka in his orange juice. Through much of the conversation with this Queen of Confection he had amazingly told the truth, but this was not intentional as the subject had been current events.

He vowed his dislike for that other bar, the "cheesier" of the two. Saying that you didn't like it was the one lie that every guy could remember to tell because the chicks were likely to agree.

They had not stopped talking and floating in a wave of drinks until their eyes became wet and buzz-heavy. Then they huddled with their faces close and he had offered his obligatory whispered innuendo. She said, "You're so bad," in a mock reproachful way that meant she agreed. Someone noticed him, approached and asked him what was the spread of the Air Force-BYU game. Because he was drunk, he took entirely too long to think of it and suddenly she was gone, hurried away by a group of blonded and tanned friends that headed out in a white Honda Accord. The Tri-Delt insignia, centered so perfectly in the rear window that it was perfect example of Euclid's geometry, meant, in this case, Fabulous Babes on Board Headed for Closing Time at McDonald's or Taco Hell.

They bolted for Domino's next door, and less than a half an hour later, they ascended the stairs in the apartment Roon and Smith rented mainly because of its prime location smack in the middle of Tigerland. Upon their arrival, Roon turned down the volume on ESPN's Sportcenter and waited in anticipation.

"So I hear this shriek from the bedroom," Roon told the pickup truck audience. "She comes running down the stairs with pizza sauce on her shirt and a Seagram's in her hand, yelling, 'You asshole!'" Roon prepared himself for the punchline: "I guess he tried to wine her, dine her and sixty-nine her."

Roon, who had scammed drinks all night, laughed longer than Rob or Matt or Russ or the three tawny girls who did not laugh at all. It was an eerie, self-righteous laugh. The Roonster was 0-17 on that night and would have averaged 0-for-Baton Rouge had it not been for the charity of the girl who worked at the golf course driving range every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Russ, on the other hand, was a respectable 1-2 on that night and a gaudy 317 on the season so far. But he also knew that it had been mostly luck. He didn't laugh in hopes that one of the tawny girls might be interested later.

They had moved toward game time fervently anticipating the battle, and come away from it with an even greater momentum and a confident swagger. The noise in the stadium and the excitement in the final moments of the game shook them from what might normally be a mild alcohol-induced coma. They both could feel the sticky adhesive places on their thighs where they had taped little plastic bags of Jack Daniels to mix with the Coke once they were in the stadium. At the time it seemed like fun pretending they were Crockett and Tubbs being wired for an undercover job. But now the recording equipment had left a gooey feeling that would haunt them every time it was necessary to rub up against someone at a bar later that night.

The room moved in a rhythm beneath a cloud of smoke as lights danced off the bottles behind the bar. Everything shined and glistened with the colors of Abercrombie shirts in a sea of endless perspiring, yet smiling, faces.

At times like this, Roon was especially happy. It reminded him of the weekend they had gone to the Kentucky Derby. The connection was obvious, and they made their appraisal that night much like they had at the horse race. An unblemished prospect who sported a dress revealing an altogether healthy appearance got the call, "That's Tits 'n Ass in front by nine," and at the other end of the spectrum they warned each
It was not long before Roon called, "Out of the gate, Candy Shoppe Fatale is the early leader." Smith looked and was had in the gag. But the self-proclaimed man of a thousand do-me-faces had already scoped out another possibility, a thick-lipped, brown-eyed, long-legged filly in a UT sweatshirt sipping a long Island Iced Tea. He quit his panting and then noticed something—she had a friend whose sexual value was about equal to Roon's. To be a scorer was one thing. But to play in the league with the superstars, he would have to be a team player, make those around him better. Could he pull it off?

In less time than it takes the 49er's to march downfield in the final minutes to beat the Saints, he had sequestered both of them in his end zone and had them lined up to shoot Penetrators. He introduced himself as the captain of the LSU regatta team and Roon as the owner of the team's yacht.

"I've been on a catamaran but never a yacht," said Roon's evolutionary equal in a smiling warm way, as if to dismiss his unmanagable hair and everything else repellent about him as only the aristocratic penalty of loving the sea. It was going so well that Smith seemed destined to join the ranks of Joe Montana and Michael Jordan. When Roon started mugging with Melissa Effron from Conrow, Texas, in the middle of something by 2-Live Crew, it was like a triple double. The girls agreed to go back to their apartment to play quarters. Smith had the urge, in the fashion of the great quarterbacks, to raise his arms and quiet the crowd as they do when they are at the edge of greatness. As they were leaving he called timeout to use the can.

It was almost as if the surge of the crowd magically carried him into the restroom. But when he looked behind him it had actually been four guys in burnt orange UT baseball caps shoving him toward the Men's sign. An Aryan-looking, steer-checkboned, squinty-eyed young man introduced Smith to his fist, sending both his face and his beer bottle reeling into the wall. The bottle broke and splintered near his face, the end result being a bloody cut that ran from his cheek to his ear.

"That's a Texas-leaguer," the guy said.

Another burnt orange blur jumped in and slammed him against the piss wall, where no one had stopped going about their business. An unpleasant mixture of urine and disinfectant dampened his cheek. Roon was able to slip in and drag Smith to the lone stall opposite the trough. He sat him up on the commode and began to bandage his head with toilet paper.

Bouncers came in to quell the fight. When they tried to remove the Austin faction some of them pointed and yelled at the stall in protest. Roon stuck his head out and said, "Hey, I was just in here taking a piss." He was an overweight oaf with no future, but Roon was born in Metry' of good Y'at ancestry and he knew how to tell a lie when called upon. They left satisfied.

"Man, we're screwed now. What kind of chicks can we get when you're sitting there looking like King Tut?" Roon said. They licked their wounds and went across the street to the teenybopper's bar where they picked up two high school girls from Brusly. From there they drove them to the levee behind Catfish Town, took their clothes off and made love or something to them on the hood of Roon's battered 1985 Toyota.

It was almost daylight when Roon lifted himself off his date, stood upright and let out a Tarzan yell toward the river. The downward slope of the levee, combined with both his weight and drunken state, sent Roon tumbling end over end about 20 times before he finally landed in the soft mud near the edge. The girls crawled into the car and went to sleep.

Roon and Smith stopped laughing in time to have one last beer. Smith could hardly believe this was happening to him again, and that it had happened in some form or fashion nearly every weekend of his college career and then some. He had to go see his Chinese QBA professor Monday to beg for forgiveness. He would have to study his ass off Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday just to be within grovelling distance of a passing grade. But then Thursday night everything would start over again.

He looked out at the river and the Yugoslavian ship coming in with an arrow of purple martins gliding over it. He thought of John Law and the first goslavian ship coming in with an aristocracy of loving the sea. It was going so well that Smith seemed destined to join the ranks of Joe Montana and Michael Jordan. When Roon started mugging with Melissa Effron from Conrow, Texas, in the middle of something by 2-Live Crew, it was like a triple double. The girls agreed to go back to their apartment to play quarters. Smith had the urge, in the fashion of the great quarterbacks, to raise his arms and quiet the crowd as they do when they are at the edge of greatness. As they were leaving he called timeout to use the can.

It was almost as if the surge of the crowd magically carried him into the restroom. But when he looked behind him it had actually been four guys in burnt orange UT baseball caps shoving him toward the Men's sign.
waded through knee-deep water and used a plastic comb to flip the circuits off. 

"Somebody could have been shocked to death," she said.

A photograph of her flooded apartment appeared in the June 27, 1989 edition of the Daily Reveille and in a story on weather conditions in the 1989 fall issue of Gumbo Magazine. In the picture, all of Triebes' belongings are stacked on top of beds and chairs to keep them out of the water.

Michelle Files, who currently lives in that apartment, said she was not told about the flood. While she did say that water came in the apartment once from under the door, she said it was not much.

Files said she was pleased with Eversberg's management. 

"I called him at home late one night and he was very understanding," said Files. "The first thing the next morning he sent over the maintenance man and took care of everything."

Many of the older houses in the State Street area have the two-pronged wall sockets which are useless with electrical equipment that has three-pronged plugs.

Jeff Bordelon, another one of Eversberg's tenants on State Street, said the wiring in his apartment was bad enough to prompt him and his father to write Eversberg a letter.

"We wrote a letter explaining that we suspected the place had faulty wiring," said Bordelon.

The only source of power in Bordelon's kitchen is a three-outlet extension cord spliced to a wall socket. All electrical appliances, including the lights, draw power from that cord. There are several similar wiring jobs in the apartment. The bathroom does not have an electrical outlet.

Another tenant, who asked that his name be withheld, said last winter he was without water for two days after the pipes froze.

"The pipes burst right before Christmas and it took several days to get fixed," he said. "Enough water poured out of our building to fill the ditch in front of my place for several days."

In his first interview Eversberg said that happens every winter because the students are away for Christmas vacation when the weather is the coldest. Pipes on the older buildings are exposed and will freeze quickly if the tenants do not run the water.

"What I spend on repairs in a year can run into six-digit figures," Eversberg said. "Last winter when we had the big freeze, I spent over $10,000 on plumbing alone."

David Ray and Jason Sanders rent another apartment from Eversberg on State Street. While the inside of the apartment is in good condition, the outside and the stairs leading to the apartment are not.

Wooden stairs lead up to the second-floor apartment. Three wobbly cement cinder blocks lying side by side replace the originally wooden first step. The rest of the steps are weak.

"The stairs are so bad that Eversberg almost tripped on the cinder blocks when he showed us the place," said Ray.

Eversberg said there were plans to fix the step.

"Someone ripped off the bottom step," said Eversberg. "We were planning to pour concrete this summer for the bottom step."

The landing at the top of the stairs is also in bad shape. The wood is rotten and spongy. One of the pillars holding up the canopy on the platform is not nailed in and the canopy itself, which hangs over the landing, is rotten and leaky. The light socket under the canopy, which works, is missing some insulation and the wires are exposed. The support posts on the handrail are rotted at the base.

Ray and Sander's apartment has several other problems that they said Eversberg promised to fix: three broken window panes, peeling exterior paint, several torn screens, and low water pressure.

Eversberg, who said he has been renting to students for 22 years, refused to comment on any of these allegations.

Although the first interview was cordial, when Eversberg was asked in a second interview to respond to students' allegations, he refused to discuss the matter further.

"I refuse to allow you to print anything I have told," said Eversberg. "I rescind all information you have gotten from me—I don't plan to get into a kangaroo court with you."

The low rent is one of the main attractions of these apartments. In a way students are getting only what they pay for. The landlords, however, have a responsibility to provide at least decent living conditions to their tenants.

There are two sides to every story. There are both good and bad tenants and good and bad landlords.
Being away at school doesn't mean you lose your power to vote. Call the Louisiana Secretary of State at (504) 342-7319. Find out how easy it is to vote by absentee ballot.

FEEL THE POWER

VOTE AMERICA

AMERICA'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON AMERICA'S VOTERS

A non-partisan project of the Vote America Foundation.
DIPPING IS FOR DIPS.
DON'T USE SNUFF OR CHEWING TOBACCO.

HOW TO SPOT A DIP.

LUMP BETWEEN LOWER LIP AND GUM.
BAD BREATH.
STAINED FINGERS.
TOBACCO-STAINED TEETH.
WHITE PATCHES AND SORES.
Leukoplakia.
In time, could lead to oral cancer.
RECEDING GUMS.

TIN BULGES AND RING.
DRIBBLE CUP.
NO FRIENDS.

TWITCHY, WIRED LOOK CAUSED BY NICOTINE.
A high nicotine content makes smokeless tobacco just as addicting as cigarettes.
STUBBORN ATTITUDE. WON'T LISTEN TO SOUND MEDICAL ADVICE.

48 Gumbo Magazine
BUILD BRIDGES

Join the more than 98 million volunteers across the country who understand that building bridges means more than cement and steel. Find out how you can reach out to our youth, senior citizens and people in need.

Help construct the strongest and most enduring bridge known — people helping people.

- Teach ■ Cook ■ Swim ■ Talk ■ Clown
- Dig ■ Paint ■ Counsel ■ Visit ■ Share
- Build ■ Help ■ Play ■ Serve

We can offer more ways to spend your spare time than you can imagine. Find out how valuable your contribution can be to someone in need.

To volunteer, contact:

VOLUNTEER

767-1698