HAWKS HEADED FOR ARIZONA?
Insight Bowl bid seems probable for Kansas. **FOOTBALL | 1B**

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KANSAS MEETS NEW MEXICO STATE
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THE STUDENT VOICE SINCE 1904

THE UNIVERSITY DAILY KANSAN

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ONE MORE DRINK

A SOBERING STRUGGLE

College students with alcoholism fight to overcome their addiction in an alcohol-infused atmosphere

BY MEGAN HIRT
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The gray glow of the TV screen is the only light in a room on the second floor of Lawrence's Holiday Inn Holidome. Katharine, Colorado junior, awakens with the hotel bed hard against her back, her body soaked in sweat beneath a single sheet.

She cannot focus her eyes. She cannot will her legs to stand. Her throat is raw from vomiting, the sting of two weeks' worth of vodka forcing its way back up. But all she wants is a drink.

One more drink.

Just one more shot of vodka chased with Gatorade, like she had so many times before, alone in her room at her sorority. Surrounded by photos of her family and friends, Katharine always made sure to turn the lights off before she drank. She hated seeing those photos. And herself.

Now, in the semi-darkness of the hotel room, Katharine's father perches at her bedside. He soaks the hotel's scratchy white washcloths in cold water and lays them across her forehead. He feeds her ice chips because she can't keep down solid food.

They do not speak, but the same fear hangs in their thoughts: Katharine could die from alcohol detoxification. Her body, grown so dependent on the substance, will simply forget how to be without it.

Katharine's drinking had increased throughout her time in college. Toward the end of her sophomore year, she began drinking to relax, drinking alone and planning her days around trips to the liquor store. Her grades tumbled and her relationship with her boyfriend fell apart. Still, even after the parties had ended, the bars had closed and all her friends were nursing hangovers, Katharine didn't want to stop drinking.

In January 2008, she called an ambulance to her sorority house when, after drinking every day for two weeks, her heart began to feel as though it were beating out of her chest. Shortly thereafter, she checked herself in for alcohol treatment at Johnson County Mental Health Center's Adult Detoxification Unit in Kansas City, Kan., where she shared a room with a 25-year-old woman addicted to OxyContin. There, for the first time, Katharine witnessed the awful, seedy underbelly of alcohol addiction. For so long a close companion to soothe her in social situations, a magic means to escape her loneliness, alcohol was now a hardened foe, its vile, irrevocable effects visible to her in the broken lives of the center's other residents.

She remembered one resident in particular, a woman whose excessive drinking had left her in need of a liver transplant.

Katharine swore to herself she would never be like that.

Two days after arriving at the center, Katharine pulled together a shaky sobriety and left of her own choosing.

But then came a Mardi Gras trip to St. Louis with friends and a hotel room full of alcohol, and she couldn't resist the urge to drink again.

It wasn't a big deal, she told herself. She'd stop tomorrow.

It was never supposed to be like this: going to work drunk, taking a test drunk, lying to her family and friends, being constantly trailed by a perfume of hard liquor — the aching stench of something unsaid.

By the end of February, the cracks showed once again when, wasted, alone and afraid, Katharine called Cirque Lodge in Sundance, Utah, the rehab destination of addiction-addled celebrities such as Lindsay Lohan and Kirsten Dunst. After receiving Katharine's desperate phone call, Cirque Lodge staff tracked down her father in Colorado, and he immediately caught a plane to Kansas.

SEE ALCOHOL ON PAGE 6A

Photo Illustration by Jon Goering/KANSAN

HEALTH

Caffeine offers finals-week energy boost, reflects national trend of increased intake

With finals week fast approaching, extra caffeine will be working its way into many students' diets. Caffeine gives students the extra kick they need to navigate the end of the semester, but it could have some negative side effects.

FULL STORY PAGE 3A

INTERNATIONAL

Students from India left reeling by recent attacks in their home country

KU students from India were shocked by terrorist attacks in Mumbai last week. At least 172 people were killed across the city and hundreds more are injured.

FULL STORY PAGE 8A

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Sports. 1B
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AUTO GIANTS ASK FOR HELP AGAIN
GM has asked for $18 billion to avoid financial ruin this year. **ECONOMY | 3A**

weather

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
36 20	38 23	42 31
Rain/Snow Showers	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy

weather.com

ALCOHOL (CONTINUED FROM 1A)

Katharine is among the one in three Americans who battle alcohol abuse or alcohol dependence at some point in their lives, according to a 2007 study by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The same study reported that most alcoholics first received treatment at about age 30, despite their dependence on or abuse of alcohol beginning, on average, at age 22.

Drug and alcohol counselor Rick Ostrander, director of Alpha Recovery Center, 1611 St. Andrew's Drive, said this eight-year gap between the onset of the problem and receiving treatment for the problem likely existed because alcoholism was a progressive disease. In its early stages, it can lie undetected without any obvious toll on the mind or body.

"Young people don't understand or know that they're developing a serious disease until it progresses to a point that it causes significant pain in their lives," Ostrander said. "And it takes a period of time for that to happen."

According to a September 2008 report by the NIAAA, 83 percent of college students drink alcohol, and 41 percent of students surveyed reported they drank five or more drinks on at least one occasion within a two-week period.

Ostrander said about half the clients at his Lawrence center are college students, and he said young people with alcoholism often do not seek help because they see their drinking habits — no matter how excessive — as hardly unusual compared with those of other people in their age group.

Alcohol is a sedative-hypnotic drug, so it targets the pleasure center of the brain, inducing calmness and reducing anxiety, Ostrander said. For college students, many of whom are away from home for the first time and struggling to make new friends and establish an identity, Ostrander said the desire to have this alcohol-induced high has an even greater appeal.

> "I realized that a lot of the people I was around, I didn't like that much. I just hung out with them because we drank together."
>
> JENNY O'MALLEY
> Lawrence resident

David Ambler, emeritus vice chancellor of student affairs, said college students are also drawn to alcohol because of the role it plays in university culture. With slogans such as "Win or lose, we still booze" and a social scene saturated with kegs, jungle juice and beer pong, Ambler said college students can perceive having a social life free of alcohol as difficult or uncool.

The experiences of Katharine and other students like her show the unique difficulties young people face in trying to get sober and remain sober while in college.

"It's definitely harder for young people to get sober," said Beth Bernasek, a drug and alcohol counselor at Valley Hope Treatment Center in Atchison. "They tend not to have lost as much in their lives as someone who has been drinking for 30 years."

■ ■ ■

When he was a KU student, Joshua, a 2005 graduate, would go to The Wheel after his morning class to unwind with a couple of beers before heading back up the hill for his afternoon classes. Many of his college memories are tied to drinking in the dorms, drinking at Coyote's Night Club on Thursday nights and drinking at KU sporting events.

> "There's no off switch, and that's tough to come to grips with, because I don't want to feel like I'm different from other people."
>
> JOSHUA
> 2005 graduate

But for Joshua, it was never enough to have just one beer at the football game or a glass of wine with dinner. Every time he started drinking, he kept drinking, often waking up back at his apartment the next morning with no knowledge of how he had made it home.

"I enjoyed that out-of-control feeling," Joshua said. "Most people don't like that, but that's what I would always go for. I used to drink whether I was happy or sad, if I was bored or if there was a celebration, in a room full of people or alone. Any reason was a good enough reason to drink."

Joshua's reckless behavior led to two DUI convictions. In Kansas, a third DUI charge is a felony.

Although he never received another DUI conviction, Joshua's record threw a wrench into his plans. After receiving his law degree from KU, he applied to take the bar examination in Kansas. The application required that he disclose his run-ins with the law. At seeing his record, the Board of Law Examiners refused to let Joshua take the exam.

"Kids in college don't realize that the decisions they make now — the trouble they get in now — will affect them for a while afterward," Joshua said. "It can prevent you from excelling in your career."

Joshua remembers drinking for the first time in junior high school, passing a bottle of alcohol back and forth on the playground with friends. He describes himself as always being a driven person, and though his drive propelled him to shine in academics, it also never let him be satisfied with having just one drink.

"There's no off switch, and that's tough to come to grips with, because I don't want to feel like I'm different from other people," Joshua said.

Joshua has been sober for 19 months and was allowed to take the bar examination a year after he first applied. He completed an intensive outpatient treatment program through a substance-abuse treatment center in Lawrence, and he began attending alcoholism support meetings, which he still does.

For Joshua, a significant part of learning to live his life sober meant learning to no longer rely on what he and his friends called "liquid courage," the fearlessness and lack of inhibition they experienced after having a few drinks.

"A large part of it was I had to get over myself," Joshua said. "Inhibitions are good to a certain degree, and if I'm a bad dancer, then I'm a bad dancer. Am I really that self-centered?"

When he reflects on his time at the University, Joshua said he feels sadness and emptiness. He doesn't keep in touch with a single friend he had during his days at the University, as he said no common bond existed that would bring them back together, other than drinking. Joshua said he also wished he had taken advantage of his college years by getting involved in organizations on campus and in activities such as study abroad.

"I really limited myself. I didn't try as hard as I could have," Joshua said. "I don't regret any of the good times, any of the parties. But to some degree, it's like I drank all the fun out of it. I feel like I missed the opportunity to really enjoy the experience."

■ ■ ■

For years, Jenny O'Malley relied on a sanctuary of excuses to close herself off from the reality of her alcohol problem.

"My justification was always that I'm young. People my age drink and party and that's just what we do," said O'Malley, 24, who lives in Lawrence and is a nursing student at Neosho County Community College in Ottawa. "But then I started seeing that not everyone drank like I did."

A native of Port Washington, Wis., O'Malley remembers having her first drink at age 14 — gin that she and friends stole from a boat docked on nearby Lake Michigan. From then on, O'Malley's life was a blur of shot glasses, cheap liquor and driving home with double vision.

"I didn't realize why it was fun for me — why I wasn't comfortable in my own skin," O'Malley said of her early years of drinking. "I realize now that I had really low self-esteem. You can't feel bad about yourself and be happy."

O'Malley moved to Lawrence in 2004, gave birth to a daughter and was accepted to nursing school — a goal she had long had for herself. But, drunk or hungover all the time, O'Malley found it difficult to focus on classes or to even attend classes at all.

Even when she made a commitment to herself to make it through a day without a drink, O'Malley always found herself coming back to alcohol for comfort or recreation. She described her craving for alcohol during that time as all-encompassing. It prevented her from thinking logically, as her only concern was how to get her next drink.

According to Ostrander, it often takes an extreme event like a scrape with the law, such as a DUI, for many young people to address or be forced to address their drinking problems. For O'Malley, the change arose from far less dramatic circumstances.

"For me it was how I felt about myself. In my heart, I knew I was better than that," O'Malley said. "I never went to jail. I never lost my kid. I was never evicted. There's no external thing that I can point to as the reason I got sober. You don't have to lose everything to get help."

O'Malley began attending alcoholism support meetings every day, and she still attends five sessions a week, 17 months after her last drink. In the early stages of sobriety, O'Malley steered clear of anything that would remind her of her old habits. She wouldn't go downtown, where she had spent so many nights of drunken revelry, and she even avoided driving by her former favorite haunts, such as the Gaslight Tavern.

"Sometimes I miss that level of excitement," O'Malley said of her days on the bar circuit. "It was fun, but it was always a nervous, manic happy. My life now has a much calmer joy."

These days, dressed in royal blue scrub pants and a red polo shirt with her wavy brown hair tied back in a ponytail, O'Malley heads to work as a medication aide at a Lawrence retirement home. She now takes great joy in things others take for granted: making it to her nursing classes on time, having

SEE ALCOHOL ON PAGE 7A

where to go for help

Alcoholics Anonymous
(on-campus meetings)
Watkins Memorial
Health Center
Second floor conference room
Tuesdays, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Wednesdays, noon to 1 p.m.

Alpha Recovery Center
1611 St. Andrew's Drive
(785) 842-6300
www.alpharecoverycenter.com

DCCCA, Inc.
3312 Clinton Parkway
(785) 841-4138
www.dccca.org

KU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Watkins Memorial
Health Center
(785) 864-2277
www.caps.ku.edu

Ryan McGeeney/KANSAN

Paul Sneed, assistant professor of Portuguese, began drinking at age 13 and got sober at 18. After a series of arrests and 28 days in an alcoholism treatment facility, Sneed completed his GED and began attending college. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin and spent five years in Brazil, where he founded the Two Brothers Foundation, a nonprofit organization that promotes education and community service in the shantytown of Rocinha, Brazil.

A professor's story

Paul Sneed spends Thursday afternoons in his office on the first floor of Wescoe Hall. Students pop in and out, and each time, Sneed, an assistant professor of Portuguese language and Brazilian literature and culture, greets them in energetic, fluid Portuguese.

His students often respond timidly in broken phrases, tentative snips of this and that. Sneed always responds with warmth and patience.

Patience has a different meaning for Sneed than it does for many people. After nearly 22 years of sobriety, Sneed has learned that, to stay vigilant against alcoholism, he must focus on and trust only the moment he is in.

"You really just can't count on anything," Sneed said. "So I try to never count on being sober."

Sneed, who had his first drink at age 13 and his last at 18, admits the living-in-the-moment approach can be a daunting way to look at life, especially for a young person struggling to be sober who faces years of temptation ahead.

"But it doesn't have to be such a bummer," Sneed said. "It helps me stay in the present. I want to be aware of what's happening right now. It helps me be spontaneous."

Sneed grew up in Arlington, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C. He remembers being drawn to alcohol because it helped him relax, stop feeling empty and connect with others.

At age 16, Sneed ran away from home and lived in the woods near a railroad in Burke, Va. At 18, he was arrested for a series of crimes, including felony offenses, and was facing jail time. Before his trial, however, he was remanded to the youth wing of the Alcohol Treatment Unit of Arlington Hospital.

"At the time, it was hard for me to imagine my life without drinking or drugs," Sneed said of his first days in treatment. "It's really a miracle that someone as down-and-out as me was able to get sober."

Sneed never served time in jail. Instead, he spent 28 days in treatment. He remembers being prescribed Antabuse, a drug that interferes with the body's ability to metabolize alcohol, in order to keep him from drinking. And he remembers the eclectic group of people on the unit with him — people from all walks of life who, if alcoholism discriminated, would likely never be found in a room together.

"I was afraid of dying, but I just didn't like living," Sneed said of his mindset at the beginning of treatment. "I may have been depressed, but I didn't know because I was drinking and doing drugs all the time."

After leaving treatment, Sneed earned his GED and soon after began taking classes at Northern Virginia Community College. It was there that he discovered his passion for music, philosophy, foreign languages and learning itself.

"It turns out I was a pretty good student," Sneed said.

Sneed said he considers himself to have an addictive personality, so despite his strong resolve to remain sober after leaving treatment in early 1986, he has since struggled with other addictions, such as cigarettes, coffee and codependence in relationships.

"When you get sober at 18, you find other ways to mess up," Sneed said. "But I knew if I ever started drinking again, I'd want to drink all the time."

Through it all, Sneed continued to focus on academics. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and earned both his master's degree and his Ph.D. in Portuguese from the University of Wisconsin. He spent five years in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he founded a nonprofit organization known as the Two Brothers Foundation, which promotes education, community service and international exchange in Rocinha, a shantytown south of Rio de Janeiro that has been torn by gang violence.

Sneed is in his second year teaching at the University of Kansas, and previously taught at the University of Oklahoma and San Diego State University. He and his wife, Jeyla, welcomed their first child, a son named Cael, in July.

Sneed said people who struggle with alcoholism are not bad people, but rather just people stuck in a bad cycle. Sneed remains involved in local alcoholism support groups, and said he learned during his own college years that alcohol isn't necessary to have a social life in college and to feel like a part of the college community.

"Drinking can never give you a deep-down happiness," Sneed said. "Whether it's through a church or a social justice organization, in a town like Lawrence, there should be a lot of other things you can get involved in. You don't have to go through college unthinking."

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ALCOHOL (CONTINUED FROM 6A)

hands that do not shake from alcohol withdrawal and being able to cope with the everyday ups and downs of life without reaching for a drink. O'Malley plans to finish nursing school in December 2011.

O'Malley said that, since giving up alcohol, she has received more positive, respectful responses from peers than she expected, though not everyone in her life was comfortable with the decision. Some people responded defensively, saying her decision to never drink again was severe and self-righteous.

"I definitely learned who my real friends were when I got sober," O'Malley said. "I realized that a lot of the people I was around, I didn't like that much. I just hung out with them because we drank together. When you actually try to hang out with people without alcohol, you find out who you have a true connection with and who you just have a superficial connection with because you drink together."

■ ■ ■

After four agonizing days shut away inside the hotel room with her father last March, Katharine emerged sober.

Alive.

In the months that followed, she battled fear, insecurity and countless temptations, yet she ultimately found strength and joy in a new life without alcohol.

"The longer I'm sober, the harder it gets," said Katharine, who celebrated nine months of sobriety Tuesday and attends alcoholism support meetings four to six times a week. "It's hard because I don't have an excuse for my actions anymore. I can't say, 'Oh, that was the alcohol talking.' But now I value my actions a lot more. I value friendships and people a lot more. Staying at KU couldn't have been a better decision for me."

She partied with the masses on Massachusetts Street when the men's basketball team won the national championship in April. Yet unlike many Jayhawk fans downtown that night, Katharine drank only cranberry soda from a Sonic cup she held in her hand. She has found that, as long as she's holding a drink, everyone always assumes it's alcohol and she's not pressured to have a drink.

Katharine said one of her biggest fears about owning up to her struggles with alcohol and living life sober was how friends would react, especially her friends within the greek community. Although some members of her sorority seemed bothered by her problem at first and didn't want to acknowledge it, Katharine said the community has grown supportive of her new lifestyle.

Katharine, now 21 and a KU senior, still goes to parties and bars with friends. Though she said most recovering alcoholics avoid such alcohol-infused settings, Katharine finds it better to be engaged in a social scene rather than being alone, when the possibility of drinking is actually greater for her.

"When I'm with my friends, they know I'm not drinking," Katharine said. "I'm the type of person who needs to be held accountable."

The day-to-day grind of being a student makes it difficult for Katharine to stay vigilant against her addiction. She remains grounded, however, by the memory of those four days in the dark hotel room — the memory of watching her father crying at her bedside — and the knowledge that going through another round of detoxification would be harder than the one before and, next time, could take her life.

"There really is nothing to describe it," Katharine said of detoxification. "It's complete hell."

— Edited by Kelsey Hayes

signs of alcoholism

James C. Garbutt, professor of psychiatry at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said about half of what determines whether a person can become an alcoholic is based on his or her genetic makeup, while the other half is the environment the person is in. If a person comes from an environment or a culture that doesn't value alcohol, Garbutt said the person — even if he or she has a genetic makeup compatible with being an alcoholic — is much less likely to succumb to the disease.

Garbutt, a research scientist at the University of North Carolina's Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies, said the terms "alcoholism" and "alcohol abuse" referred to different problems. Not everyone who abuses alcohol — not everyone who binge drinks, for example — is an alcoholic. Alcoholism, Garbutt said, is when a person is dependent on alcohol, experiences a loss of control when drinking alcohol and exhibits compulsive use of the substance.

Rick Ostrander, drug and alcohol counselor and director of Lawrence's Alpha Recovery Center, said many students who are alcoholics are still high functioning, meaning they continue to do well in school or at work despite their addiction, making it difficult to identify.

Ostrander said signs of early stages of alcoholism in young people include blacking out, which means not remembering events despite being fully conscious, and sweating and having tremors when waking up after a night of drinking. In later stages of alcoholism, Ostrander said a person could have seizures as well as visual, tactile or auditory hallucinations.

NATIONAL

Gay rights column scandal ends in controversial firing

Newspaper column costs University of Toledo administrator her job

BY JOHN SEEWER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOLEDO, Ohio — The firing of a college administrator over her criticism of gay rights has sparked a debate about free speech and whether universities have the right to regulate what employees say outside of their jobs.

Crystal Dixon filed a lawsuit Monday in federal court seeking to be reinstated to her University of Toledo job, which she lost after writing in a newspaper column that gay rights can't be compared to civil rights because homosexuality is a choice.

"I take great umbrage at the notion that those choosing the homosexual lifestyle are 'civil rights victims,'" Dixon wrote in an online edition of the Toledo Free Press on April 18. "Here's why. I cannot wake up tomorrow and not be a black woman."

She also wrote: "There are consequences for each of our choices, including those who violate God's divine order."

> "Where is the so-called free expression of ideas and tolerance that universities so adamantly defend?"
>
> RICHARD THOMPSON
> University of Toledo

Two weeks later, Dixon was fired as the school's associate vice president for human resources. School officials said her views contradicted university policies, according to the lawsuit.

Though Dixon's attorneys say other school administrators were not punished for expressing their opinions, the public university defends its actions.

"We have asserted from the beginning that Ms. Dixon was in a position of special sensitivity as associate vice president for human resources and this issue is not about freedom of speech, but about her ability to perform that job given her statements," university spokesman Larry Burns said in a statement.

Dixon did not mention in the column that she worked at the university, but she did defend the school's benefits plans and how they apply to gay employees.

In response to the column, hundreds of people wrote letters calling her views disturbing while others were outraged Dixon was punished for speaking her mind. Conservative talk show hosts and members of her church rallied around Dixon after she was fired.

"It comes down to whether you're speaking as an employee of the university or as a private citizen," said Brian Rooney, a spokesman for Thomas More Law Center in Ann Arbor, Mich., which is representing Dixon. "If you're speaking as a private citizen, your speech is protected."

The university would have been within its rights to discipline her if she had stated she was a school administrator, Rooney said.

The nonprofit Christian law firm says its mission includes "defending the traditional family and challenging special rights for homosexuals."

"Where is the so-called free expression of ideas and tolerance that universities so adamantly defend?" said Richard Thompson, president of the law center.

Named as defendants in the lawsuit are University of Toledo President Lloyd Jacobs and William Logie, vice president for human resources.

Jacobs responded to the column by writing his own piece in the weekly newspaper, saying that "her comments do not accord with the values of the University of Toledo."

Let's make a deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Giant puppets representing French President Nicolas Sarkozy, left, and U.S. President-elect Barack Obama shake hands next to a ball representing the HIV virus, as their operators pose for photos at a parade to draw attention to the continued need for HIV and AIDS funding, in Dakar, Senegal, Tuesday. On the eve of an international AIDS conference in Dakar, hundreds of women and children, carrying signs saying "African children are watching you," gathered to call on France and the U.S. to make good on pledges for funding to fight the spread of AIDS in Africa.