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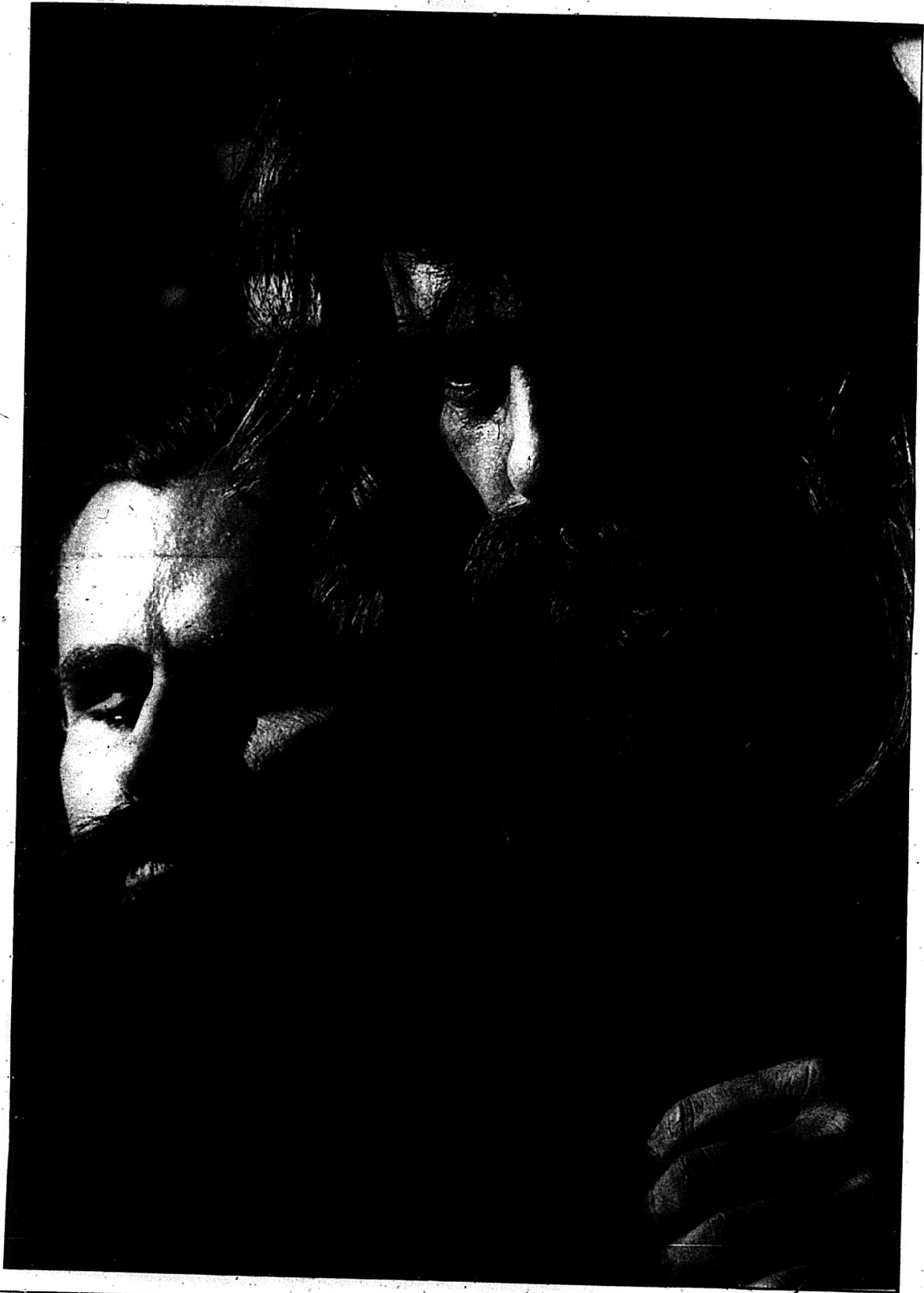


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*College
Heights
Herald*

Magazine



INSIDE



3 A sign on the outskirts of Bowling Green points to Santo Domingo de Los Colorados, Ecuador, Bowling Green's sister city. Kim Hadley writes about how Bowling Green helps its Ecuadorian sibling.



4 Darrel and Stévie Wood, familiar figures to many around Bowling Green, collect cans to help support themselves. Rick Loomis goes home with the brothers and documents their faith in God and in each other.



6 Greg Parker always wanted to be an athlete. And collegiate cheerleading gave him that chance. Kim Hadley profiles Parker, a squad member, dedicated to the sport that taught him to believe in himself.

THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS



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LONG DISTANCE



Motorists in Santo Domingo de Los Colorados may soon be asking where in the world is Bowling Green.

A sign, much like the one seen on the grassy area at the intersection on Broadway Avenue, between SuperAmerica and DB'S Music, will be placed at the limits of the Ecuadorian city. And like the Bowling Green sign, it will declare itself our sister city.

Santo Domingo de Los Colorados, which has a population of 500,000 (including urban and rural areas), is the fastest growing city in South America, said Spanish professor Norma Lowrey, Bowling Green project coordinator for the Sister Cities Program. "I make the connections between the two sides," she said.

A native of Ecuador, Lowrey said the local chapter of the Sister Cities program found its roots about 25 years ago when Warren Rural Electric donated a surplus power generator to the developing city, giving it its first source of electricity.

John Petersen, associate vice president for academic affairs and president of international programs, said the donation was made through Partners of the Alliance, a voluntary branch of the

Alliance for Progress, a group established by the United States to encourage progress in Latin America. Then in the late '70s, Bowling Green and Santo Domingo de Los Colorados became sister cities through Sister Cities International, based in Washington, D.C.

Five years ago, Petersen helped to secure a tuition scholarship to Western for a student from the city.

Angelo Rodriguez, a sophomore majoring in computer science and English, is the recipient of the scholarship.

Rodriguez plans to return to Ecuador after graduation to "give back some of the knowledge I've acquired."

Bowling Green students have travelled to Santo Domingo to work at the radio station, and teach at the local schools. Volunteers also serve as part of a medical team there.

A 450 level Spanish class of Lowrey's will travel to Santo Domingo for a week in January. During that time, Lowrey said she hoped the building of a medical clinic might have started.

"It can enrich both sides," Petersen said. "It's sort of a window to another part of the world."



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Stevie and Darrel collect aluminum cans from the trash cans of a neighborhood apartment complex.

Thy Brother's Keeper

Story and Photos by Rick Loomis

Maybe you've seen Darrel and Stevie Wood as they walk through the streets of Bowling Green.

Stevie is holding Darrel's arm as he leads him into the darkness across a busy street. Or Stevie is plucking an aluminum can from a dumpster as his brother stands near.

If only you could hear their conversations.

They talk about flowers in the spring, and the people walking by them. They talk about colors and shapes. They talk about all of the things Darrel remembers, but can't see.

Darrel, 37, lost his sight during a hunting accident when he was 20. His cousin's shotgun fell from its resting place against a rock and its pellets hit Darrel's face.



Over the years, Darrel's eyes have been operated on four times. None of the operations was successful.

Stevie, 35, enjoys the role of helping his brother.

"I don't know what I'd do without him," Darrel said. "I think everybody should have a brother to help out."

The two collect cans throughout Bowling Green four days a week to pay for part of their food and rent. Stevie also helps sell collectibles near their home on Old Morgantown Road and Darrel receives Social Security and disability pay.

Darrel works at LifeSkills on Russellville Road in a

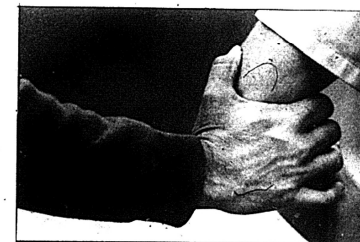
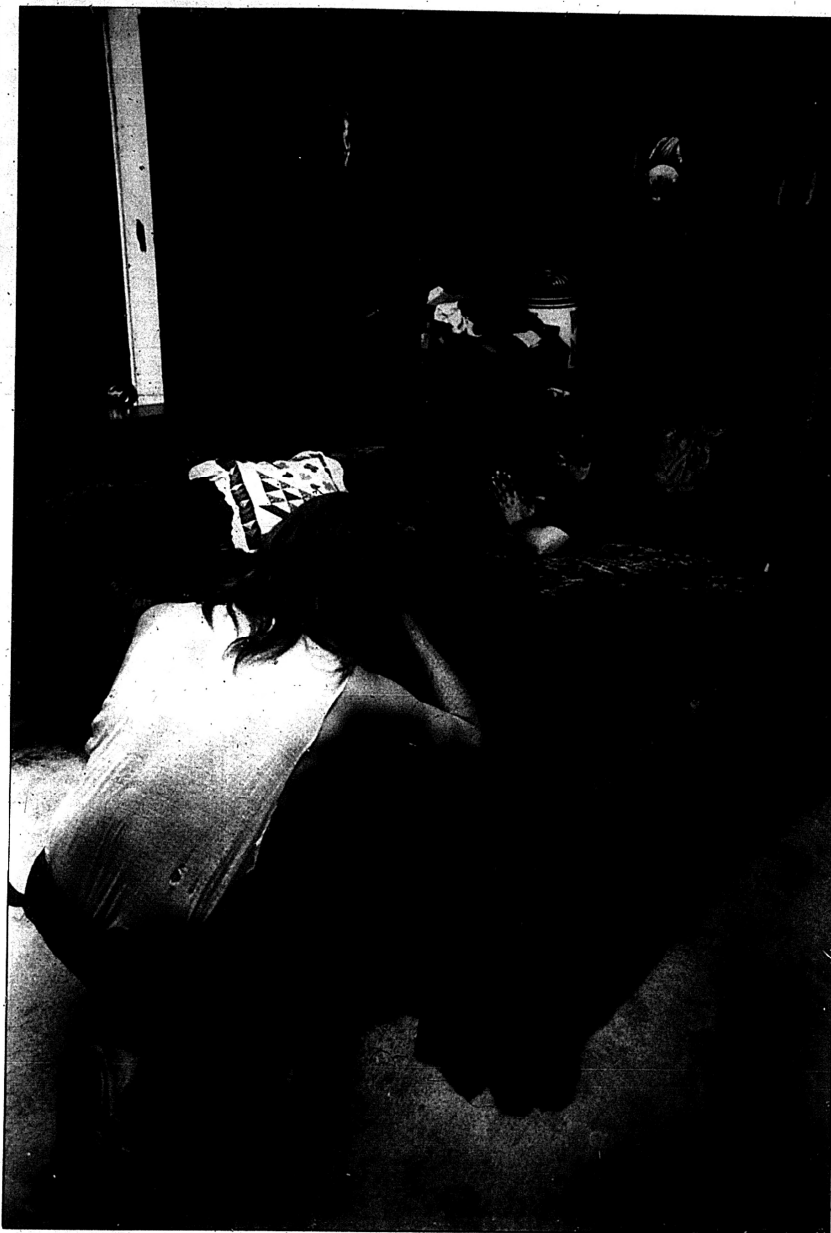
workshop for the handicapped.

The brothers' faith in God, and in each other, helps them get through life.

"The hardest part is getting across the road," Darrel said.



Sitting on their front porch on Old Morgantown Road, Stevie and Darrel rest after collecting cans.



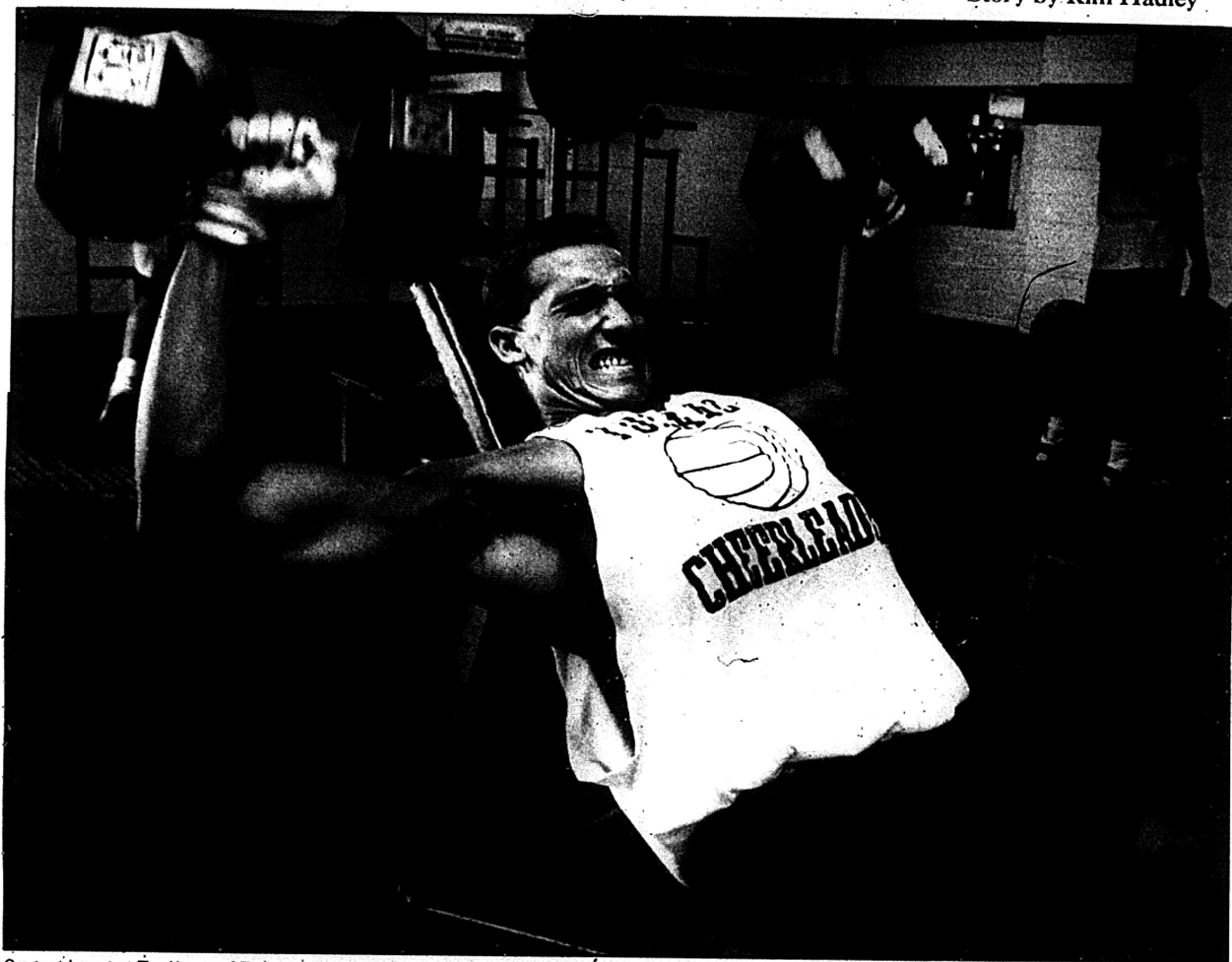
Left, the two brothers pray almost every night before they go to sleep.



More than a routine

Photos by Christina Paolucci

Story by Kim Hadley



Greg works out at The House of Fitness everyday to keep his build. Keeping fit is an important aspect in performing each routine.



Greg plays a game at a party the night before a game. He is surrounded by Robin Holbrook, Amy Gormley and Greg Tibbs.

A cannon blast. Big Red dancing along the sidelines. Popcorn. Peanuts. The band playing Western's fight song. Football in Smith Stadium on a Saturday night.

Greg Parker takes to the field, rushing into position.

Thirty minutes into the game, the score is 17-0 against Morehead State. The Toppers play with a vengeance, determined to snag another victory after last week's 14-0 win over Murray State.

With growing concentration, Parker crouches. His stare fixed. His hands anxiously clasped. And he counts.

One. Two. Three.

His partner steps into his cupped hands and he lifts her higher and higher, his arms pushing upward, until she stands to her full height above his head.

One. Two. Three.

She falls, and he catches her.

"I think there's more technique in cheerleading than in football," Parker says. "Balancing a ball in your hands is a lot easier than balancing a 115-pound girl above your head."

A second-year member of the men's basketball and football yell leader squad, Parker got involved after a friend, Steve McCoy, made the squad.

"I wanted to play some sport in college," the Bowling Green sophomore says. "I felt it was something I had really missed out on."

His mother, Edith, a secretary at Western for 21 years, says that when Parker was younger he tried soccer, then football, then basketball.

"He never really seemed to fit into a sport," she says. "When he was in grade school, he was skinny and self-conscious. The bigger guys would pick on him."

Then his uncle got him into body building, helping him to feel "better about himself," Edith says.

Parker points to two photographs, no bigger than two inches in diameter each, stuck in the corner of a framed print of Western sports memorabilia hanging in his bedroom.

"That's the before and that's the after," he says with a smile.

The "before" is him at 15, a thin-framed teen-ager. The "after" is him now, at 20, with rippling muscles across his chest and arms.

A graduate of Warren Central in Bowling Green, Parker says collegiate cheerleading has given him the opportunity to get involved in sports.

Watching is different than "gettin' down there and actually doin' it," Parker says.

The squad practices twice a week for two hours. Cheers and motions are reviewed the first hour with the second reserved for stunts.

Parker's afternoons usually include a trip to The House of Fitness for additional workouts.

"I want to do better than what we just get in practice," he says. "You can get the basics in practice, but as far as moving up, you need to practice some more on your own on the outside."

"I want to do the stunts I've seen the alumni cheerleaders doing."

Parker's girlfriend, Cindy Dutton, a junior from Hendersonville, Tenn., says she understands his busy schedule because she used to be on a squad in high school.

"Both of us being in college, we just have to find time to be together," she says.

And though Dutton says "some guys have a problem" with men being cheerleaders, she adds that the perception of cheerleading has changed over the past decade.

"People are starting to understand it is a sport," she says. "They're not really dedicated to standing out there and putting on a show. They're dedicated to supporting the team."

Parker says his role is to "get the players to get the crowd involved."

"We'll yell, 'Come on! Come on!' But a lot of times I don't think the players are behind each other to get the fans going."

"When they're down on the bench, we'll talk to them. And when we're away, we'll party with them," Parker says.

"It all starts with the players instead of the fans. 'I think Western is making some real effort to get fans involved,' Parker says, but many do not stand up and cheer because "they just feel like the other person will do it."

"If I felt that way, I wouldn't be cheerleading."

Parker says one of the most disappointing games he attended was Western's loss to Austin Peay two weeks ago.

"You're cheering your lungs out and the crowd just sits there, and there's nothing you can do at that point."

"That was really a downer—especially when all their crowd is yelling at you."

"But you just don't listen to them. You never say anything back to them, because we're not there to get back at people. We are ambassadors to Western."

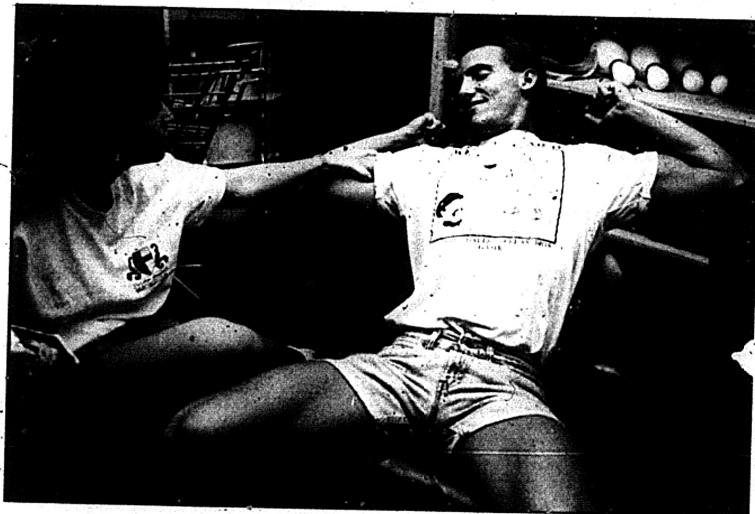
Parker has been a regular at Western football and basketball games since he was 5, his mom says, but when he said he was trying out for the squad his parents were "kinda shocked."

"You never think about your son becoming a cheerleader," Edith says. But "I see him accomplishing something he really loves."

"When he lifts a girl, it's the same feeling as if he scored a touchdown."



Above, the night before the first football game of the season, Greg relaxes at a party. Right, at the clinic for the Lady Hilltopper Cheerleading Squad tryouts, Greg assists a freshman with a move while freshman Missy Graviss spots for a fall. Below, stopping to see Greg at work, Cindy Dutton clowns around with him. He was in charge of checking out recreational equipment at Diddle Arena.



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