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In the spirit... of humanity
Spirit of sharing

HOLIDAY GIVING SHOULD LAST ALL YEAR

By Scarlet Blandford

Holiday music, colorful lights, nearly wrapped gifts, long cold nights. Giving, receiving, sharing, believing. The warmth of the fire when one gets near it, it's all about the Christmas spirit.

But amidst the family, presents and treats, some tend to forget those who live on the streets. In fact, it's a problem from day to day because the problem of homelessness does not go away.

Capt. Joyce Lance, one of the commanding officers of the Salvation Army in Bowling Green, said the number of people staying at the Red Shield Lodge increases around the holiday season because of the colder weather, but the problem does not disappear when the weather gets warmer.

People have no place to live until they have a source of income, so they seek shelter with the Salvation Army.

Shelter Manager Herman French said there needs to be a bigger shelter to accommodate more people, especially during the winter months.

"It don't hardly ever get really full until it starts to get real cold," he said.

Lance said the 19-bed shelter was filled to capacity and beyond last night. They had to place a husband, wife and their three children in a motel to spend the evening.

Among the people who stay at the shelter, there are several whole families, single men and women with kids. The selection varies, she said.

People who turn to the shelter for assistance are given five days to find a job and 30 days to stay while making enough money to get back on their feet, French said.

Lance said it is a misconception that homeless folks are unwilling to work.

“We all pin them as lazy and not willing to work. They are just folks who are down on their luck,” she said.

French said people should not be judgmental.

“Everyone has at least one thing wrong with them no matter what color or handicap they may have,” he said.

French said the people at the shelter become one family sharing the good and bad times.

“Everyone’s got problems, but you still have to overlook that sometimes,” he said. “Everyone just blends in together.”

College student can help by volunteering at the shelter, Lance said. They need volunteers at night to answer the phone, cook and clean, among other things.

Those who cannot volunteer time at the shelter may donate clothing, personal care items, blankets, towels and wash cloths, cleaning items, cash and anything else that it takes to operate a home, Lance said.

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On the cover

With only $5 in her pocket and no place to live, Ursula Trom and her 8-year-old son, Benjamin Williamson came to Bowling Green two days before Thanksgiving. "Right now I'm stuck. Where would I go? Wherever I go, that's going to be home," Ursula said. "I need to get our life back." See pages 8-9 for story and photos.

photo by Chad Stevens

Students make children’s Christmas brighter

By Rochelle Davis

eather Crawford, a junior from Jeffersonville, Ind., missed adopting a child for Christmas with her family when she came to Western.

"It is something that I feel like I need to do because a lot of these kids don't have a family to have Christmas with," she said. "Anything I can do to make a child's Christmas a little special, I will be more than happy to do."

Crawford can now adopt a child for Christmas through President Thomas Meredith's service learning component of "Moving to a New Level." Adopt-a-Child is adopted from a program that Ingrid Villar, director of West Hall, started five years ago.

Villar and a group of other graduate students interning with Meredith signed up 500 students to participate in the program. They put individual students, who signed up, into groups and gave them a picture of a child, a wish list and a need list.

"Students can choose to get what they can afford," Villar said.

The children will receive gifts on Christmas. Paddock sopho-

more Nikki Bates said she planned to participate in the project before her community made the decision.

"I think it would be nice to help a child that was less fortunate than I was because everyone is not fortunate to have a good Christmas," she said.

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College Heights Herald
Take time to remember, treasure loved ones

VISIT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

T

he other day I knelt on the top of a small rock facing my family’s farm. From there, I can see the field where my brothers, cousins and I used to play. In that small field we would play just about every game imaginable from tackle football to “play war” with our imaginary guns. And it was in that same field that I went to cry the day I heard one of my lifelong friends was killed after he fell asleep driving home.

The pain I felt was beyond description. It wasn’t the first time I had gone to a funeral for a friend that had left this world too soon. But this was just too close to home. Like most people that lose someone close, I asked God, myself, anyone... Why? Why did he have to die? The truth is I don’t know, but the one thing I now realize is how precious and short life is.

Most of us have a place we go when the world seems too big, and I guess that little rock is my place. The other day while I looked off of its edge, I could see the sun going down over the tree line in front of my house. I swear it was the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. I could almost hear the voices of children running through the tall grass chasing a football again. Or maybe it was the wind. Either way, I found some peace that day.

The closer it gets to the Christmas is Creeping up on You...

Commentary by Ryan Craig — a senior public relations and history major from Allegre holidays, I think about the ones who, will never spend another Christmas with their families and the families that will never get to open gifts on Christmas morning. Or a family that stopped meeting all together because they see no need now that mom and dad are gone.

I often talk to students who don’t really want to go home because they don’t feel comfortable going back now that they have left. When I hear that, I tell them the following story about some real good friends who won’t ever go home again for Christmas.

I tell them about Cory, who lost his life in an accident. He taught me how being someone’s friend is very precious. Then there is Mertte, a foreign exchange student from Denmark who taught me to appreciate the things I had. She died in a terrible accident on the Autobahn. There was Michael, who loved to make me laugh. He was shot one night on a road. He left behind a wife and twin boys. And finally, there is Richard, who wanted everybody to like him. He took his life one night, when it didn’t seem like enough.

Each person left behind, people who loved them. They will get through this Christmas without the ones they love by gathering around the ones that are there. Then they move on.

You may not see another Christmas with someone in your family may not be around the next holiday season, so take advantage of this holiday and go back home to relive the memories. Because as time passes, it would be sad if you spend the rest of your life wishing you had went back one last time...
Cultures offer diversity in celebration

COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT HOLIDAY PRACTICES

By Travis Mayo

own anger, Christmas celebration includes a trip to the beach. At least that's the way Alex Lykos, a senior from Sydney, Australia, described the events of the day.

"We wait until 12 o'clock that night and then open presents, and then we go church in the morning, have a big lunch and then everybody goes to the beach," he said.

Australia is just a place around the globe that offers a taste of Christmas celebration diversity. Different nations and cultures have other ways to celebrate the birth of Christ.

In Russia, there is no opening of presents on Christmas Day. The celebration comes on New Year's Day, as Mark Gershkovitch explained. On the first day of the year, those in Russia open presents from under a tree, much like Americans on Dec. 25. Gershkovitch, a freshman from Ivanovo, Russia, said Christmas comes on a separate day.

"In Russia, Christmas is on Jan. 7," he said.

Gershkovitch said Christmas is primarily a religious holiday for the Russian Orthodox Church. The holiday is also fairly new to Russia.

"While we have always had New Year's, we didn't use to have Christmas because communists were against religion," he said.

While the communist state of Russia prevented the celebration of Christmas from happening, Gershkovitch said he was aware of the American festivities.

"We watched television and the parades on Dec. 25 and were aware of how the United States celebrated Christmas," he said.

America has also had a listing effect on how the people of Hong Kong celebrate Christmas.

"The way we celebrate Christmas is American," said Allison Cheung, a senior from Hong Kong.

Cheung said the food eaten in Hong Kong on Christmas day is westernized and mostly American, such as turkey.

"That is the only time we eat turkey, unlike here in America where turkey is a common food," she said.

Cheung's holiday usually includes a Christmas tree in her house. She said about half of the houses have trees.

Just north of the border in Canada, the celebration is no different than here in the states.

"We celebrate Christmas just about the same in Canada as here in the U.S.," said Laura Wesseling, a freshman from Ontario.

Besides the difference in celebration in other nations, various American cultures use diversity during the holidays. The Jewish celebrate Hanukkah, or Chanukah as some prefer to spell it. The holiday begins on Dec. 25 and lasts eight days.

Each day feelings of gratitude are expressed through special prayers and the lights of Menorah are lit each evening. It is also customary during the holiday for members of the family to play dreidel, give presents and eat oily delicacies such as doughnuts and pancakes.

The black community holds a festival called Kwanzaa. The celebration was started Dec. 26, 1966, and is on the verge of its 30th anniversary. It is a black spiritual holiday that claims no tie with any religion.

The concept of Kwanzaa is to help black Americans relate to the past and understand the present and deal with the future. The holiday ends Dec. 31.

With the diversity in the celebration of Christmas comes the importance of learning. For Lykos, it is the understanding of difference that makes the holiday special.

"It is important to understand that a certain way of thinking is not universal and to respect others' ways of celebrating Christmas," he said.

And through Christmas, the learning of other ways of life is also crucial in Cheung's mind.

"At Christmas, we learn another culture," she said.

Myths of Hanukkah dissolved

Sa...
Sharing Christmas memories

CAMPUS PERSONALITIES VISIT WITH RYAN CRAIG

Paul Sanderford, Lady Topper basketball coach

Q: What does Christmas mean to you?

Sanderford: Christmas means family. We were always a family that got together on Christmas Eve for a big dinner and would exchange gifts. But the main thing for me is for the family to be together.

Q: What is your favorite Christmas memory?

Sanderford: I guess my favorite Christmas memory is when my wife was extremely ill and in the hospital for about 11 months. And that Christmas, she got out. My son was about 2 years old and that was probably the Christmas I remember the most.

We spent the past Christmas in the hospital so the next Christmas was the one I remember the most because Yvette was home, and Aaron was at the age where he was really excited about Santa Claus. I even dressed up like Santa and brought the gifts in. That was in 1979, and it was really special because we were able to be a family.

Q: What do you want most under the tree this year?

Sanderford: I want my health and my family's health and happiness. But I would like to have an NCAA Tournament bid and a Sun Belt Championship under the tree.

Howard Bailey, dean of Student Life

Q: What does Christmas mean to you?

Bailey: Christmas is a time to renew a commitment to my faith. There are also a lot negatives to it.

Q: Like what?

Bailey: Shopping. Shopping is the ultimate negative.

Q: What is your favorite Christmas memory?

Bailey: My favorite Christmas memory is the year it snowed Christmas day, and I didn't go to my mother-in-law's house.

Q: What do you want most under the tree this year?

Barbara Burch, vice president for Academic Affairs

Q: What does Christmas mean to you?

Burch: Christmas means a lot of family and remembrance. A time to reflect on the season and the things that are special in our lives.

Q: What is your favorite Christmas memory?

Burch: I have a lot of them. But, I guess the favorite thing I remember is how my parents went to a lot of trouble to make sure we had a good time. My mother used to go to a lot of trouble to prepare food for us, and my parents both did everything they could to get us things for the holidays.

Q: What do you most want under the tree this season?

Burch: I want a gift that makes all the things good in my life, and for my children and grandchildren. And something to get all the things that I need to get done finished for me.

Chervak: When I was living in Michigan, I loved to share time with my father. He was my hero. I remember one Christmas when he bought me this shiny silver gun. It's embarrassing to talk about now, but it's a special memory to me.

Q: What do you want most under the tree?

Chervak: I want peace and happiness for myself and my family. I want my son and I to be able to travel to Florida and spend time with our family, and I pray that I reach there safely.

Debbie Chervak, intramural and recreation sports director

Q: What does Christmas mean to you?

Chervak: Christmas is the birth of Christ. It is a religious holiday for me. It's a joyous time of peace and happiness, and I enjoy it almost as much as anything.

Q: What is your favorite Christmas memory?
Sometimes jail is ‘dignified’

HOMELESS WESTERN GRADUATE SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE

By Kristina Gots

ark Gordon Hopper stood cold and hungry at the front door of the campus police Nov. 12 and asked to be arrested.

"Here I am," he said to the woman at the front desk. "I'm trespassing. Arrest me."

The Salvation Army agreed to give the man housing for the night.

The next night he was again found trespassing by security officers in Helm-Crawens Library.

Hopper told Lt. Tony Blandon of campus police that he was trespassing and needed to be arrested. This time all attempts to find the homeless man a place to stay were unsuccessful. Hopper told the officer that he would commit a more serious crime if he did not arrest him. Officer Blandon had no choice. Hopper is now serving 30 days in jail on that trespassing charge.

But this wasn't the first time Hopper was arrested on campus. He was also arrested for trespassing Nov. 4.

"It occurred when it was 18 degrees outside," said Sgt. Jim Schaeffer of campus police, who was acting as a training officer on the night of the arrest. "He really had no place to go."

The 45-year-old has no home or job although he graduated from Western in 1987 with an accounting degree.

Both of his parents are dead, but he said he has a 13-year-old daughter that he thinks about every day.

Several years ago, Hopper was involved in a custody battle with his girlfriend over his daughter. The mother of the child accused him of sexual abuse. Although he was never convicted of the charge, Hopper said a judge denied him visitation rights. The custody records were sealed May 3, 1995.

"What bothers me everyday is that I can't see my daughter," he said.

"We had a bond of five years. To me it's one of the most precious relationships you can have in this world."

Many attempts to contact the mother for comment were unsuccessful.

After the hearing, Hopper quit his job as tremendous amounts of anxiety and depression set in. He moved from job to job trying temporary services — aimlessly hoping he might see his daughter again. It hasn't happened yet.

Hopper said he has been homeless off and on since November 1995.

"When you're in this situation, it's kind of a drain on your integrity," he said. "And your self-esteem."

Hopper said he remembers the first night he didn't have a place to sleep.

"It's real scary at first," he said.

"At first I went down to the bridge where a lot of other homeless people are and said, 'Well, if worse comes to worse, I can sleep down here.'"

Hopper checked into the Salvation Army shelter. He stayed for a couple of days but didn't find a job within the five-day limit, so he had to leave.

Hopper said he has been wandering from place to place since then. Sometimes he sleeps in the woods or in a field.

"You're on the edge, you're pushing the envelopes," he said. "It gets old real quick. You spend a lot of time worrying about simple things — how to keep clean and how to stay warm."

Keeping clean is especially a challenge, he said.

"You have to wash in sections — your feet in one public bathroom and other sections in other public bathrooms," he said. "You just have to hope there's a lock on the door."

Jail is different, but not necessarily a bad place to be, Hopper said.

"Believe it or not, it's more dignified to go to jail than to ask for help," he said. "Anytime you ask for something there is an integrity drain, so if you don't ask, you don't have to deal with the drain."

Hopper said he is not looking for handouts or pity. But he does want the public to understand that not all homeless people are unintelligent or criminals.

"I could see where people could have a high yearly income and become homeless," he said.

There is a tendency for the public, especially around the holiday season, to reach out to help those less fortunate, Hopper said.

However, he said he wants people to remember that there is not just one type of homeless person — the kind in dirty clothes.

"Be as open minded as you can," he said. "There are probably some good people and some bad people who are homeless: They are going to tend to look bad because of their situation."

Sometimes the public equates the way a person looks with his or her worth, Hopper said.

"Sometimes the people with more material possessions are the ones who are more manipulative," he said.

Hopper will be released Dec. 13.

"That first day is going to be the determining factor of what happens to me," he said.

Hopper will concentrate on trying to keep warm and getting enough to eat. He said he will think about searching for a job after those needs are met.

"I just want to live my life again, I guess."

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I need to get our life back  
MOTHER AND SON HAVE HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Story and photos by Chad Stevens

While most neighborhoods become overgrown with garland, wreaths and lights, the city streets become a home for more and more of society's homeless. Instead of searching for the best deal on Christmas decorations, these people are searching for food, warmth and peace of mind.

Ursula Troun and her 8-year-old son, Benjamin, have found themselves amid this search with no home and little hope.

"I grew up in poverty," Ursula said. "I told myself I'd never be like that again. And look at me now — I'm worse off than I ever was."

Ursula said it wasn't one specific event that left her and her son on the street, but an extensive series of events that led to this situation.

In 1980, Ursula, newly arrived to an American citizen, came to the United States from Germany with no understanding of English, little education and no idea of what to expect.

After two divorces, four children and innumerable minimum-wage jobs, Ursula found herself in upstate New York struggling to survive.

She remained, and, with no hope of leaving that situation, Ursula worked as a day laborer, a construction worker and a janitor.

But in 2000, Ursula's life began to change.

"It's like a dream," Ursula said. "I can't believe it's happening to me."

On their way to the J Food Store, where they often walk for the shelter to open, Ursula plays with her son. She says she tries to find something positive in everything.

Benjamin, moved to Scottsdale for another try at being content. After this marriage failed and with nothing but $5 and each other for support, Ursula and Benjamin came to Bowling Green.

On her way into town, Ursula collected almost 20 job applications, and she and her son headed straight to the Salvation Army for food and shelter.

The Salvation Army's Red Shield Lodge offers transient and those in need an opportunity for nourishment and rest. Once enrolled at the shelter, tenants have five days to find a job and, after that point, they have 30 days to find a place to live.

"My priorities are different," Ursula said. "They are telling me I have to have a job first. No, I need a home for my son."

"Since anything in Bowling Green one week ago, Ursula's main goal has been to find a home. After visiting the Department of Human Services several times, she has slowly found leads to subsidized housing.

She hopes to be out of the shelter within a week.

Ursula said their lives are improved right now, leaving her with a lot of frustration and anxiety.

"I don't like my life being this. I hate this," she said. "People say, 'Why did you have children if you can't feed them?' I say, 'Why has society come down to this?'"

Ursula finds relief from her frustrations out of the relationship with Benjamin. "We may be homeless, but at least we have each other," she said.

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Nights at the Salvation Army with some free time. When Benjamin tires of playing with his toy car given to him by the Salvation Army, Ursula often reads to him. She places a lot of importance on Benjamin's education. She said she hopes that with an education he won't find himself in this situation again.

"It doesn't bother me staying in the shelter anymore," Benjamin said. "It'd be nice to be a kid again."

Like most others in their situation, Ursula took it for granted that she would never be homeless. She said because of this experience she has become more compassionate.

"People need to talk — to sit down and talk — to the homeless before they close the door," she said. "People don't want to get involved. It's too much. It's overwhelming. It's easier to close the door than it is to help," she added.

Ursula and her son have many obstacles to overcome. She hopes that by the next holiday season their only worries will be where to place the Christmas tree in their home.

"I have faith that we'll get through this."

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"I have faith that we'll get through this."
"I made some wrong decisions in the past, and, yes, I'll make some wrong decisions in the future," Ursula said. "Nobody is perfect. I'm tired of crying about it."

Benjamin races through the shelter as Ursula discusses problems with one of the staff at the shelter. She says they need routine in their lives. "Being in a place like this, I feel uprooted," she said about the shelter in which they live.

While Ursula fills out job applications, Benjamin copies a page from a dictionary. She requires her son to write three pages out of the dictionary every day. "I have high expectations for my son, but I'm training him to meet these expectations," she said.

Much of Ursula and Benjamin's time is spent on the streets. Ursula tries to make their son's educational for her son. They stopped along Louisville Road recently to examine some tobacco leaves.
Campus Christmas tree creates feeling of home

PRESEN'T MEREDITH LIGHTS WESTERN'S FIRST TREE

Left of the tree, the University Choir, led by Cecilia senior Tim Sexton, sang the Christmas carols "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Away in a Manger" and "Silent Night." The gathered students and faculty joined in to unify the holiday spirit. After an introduction by Meredith and follow-up comments by Kristen Miller, Student Government Association president, and Peggy Loofman, chairman of the Board of Regents, three members of the Forensics Society put on a festive dialogue. Bowling Green junior Amy Sparks narrated a conversation between a fir, played by forensics director Judy Woogring, and an old Christmas tree, played by Crestwood graduate student Christopher Fleming. The moral of the dialogue was "the most beautiful thing is that which has given all.

The choir sang "Silent Night," and Meredith led the crowd in a count-down in which they yelled "Merry Christmas," the tree was lighted, and the choir sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Following the ceremony was a reception inside DUC where students were offered hot chocolate and cookies.

LaGrange freshman Leigh-Anne Downing said she enjoyed the carols. "It's a good idea to get people into the Christmas spirit with finals coming up, especially for freshmen since we're used to being at home. Plus it's really nice to see a Christmas tree when you live in a dorm."

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Don't forget meaning of Christmas

Almost everyone knows the story behind the season we celebrate every December. It is the story of a baby born long ago, in lonely circumstances, but surrounded by love. He would grow up to be admired. He was destined for greatness. It was not because he had a nice white beard or big round belly. And it was not because he brought gifts through the chimney—he brought, a gift to the world.

Religious differences aside, we can all appreciate the story of Jesus, and whether we celebrate Christmas as a religious or secular holiday, it is a good time to reflect on the gift of Jesus. I do not say this because I am an overzealous religious person. In fact, I feel awkward discussing my personal religious beliefs.

But when I read the Bible, I am intrigued by Jesus’ attitude and his ability to change lives over the centuries. In his life, he brought a message of love and peace. He reminded us to care for those who could not care for themselves. And Jesus paid the ultimate price to share that message: he gave his life for what he believed in.

This year, we should all family to be with during Christmas.

The Christmas that Jesus would have wanted would be about giving from our hearts, not from our pocketbooks. By giving to those who are in need, we exemplify his compassion. Many of us dream of making our “mark” on the world. Jesus’ simple kindness and powerful words left more than just a mark on the world. Through his teachings, he has inspired me and others to find peace in themselves and others.

I am reminded of a story I once heard about soldiers in World War I. It was Christmas Eve, and the soldiers were gathered on the field fighting. Then, amidst the turmoil of war, rose the sounds of “Silent Night.” Soon, all soldiers lowered their weapons and joined in singing. Men from different countries with different beliefs found within their hearts a moment of peace, even in the circumstances of war. Jesus’ message of love and peace stopped bullets that night.

The Christmas season, it seems to me, should be a symbol of the rebirth in our lives of the gift Jesus brought to the world. Therein is the true Christmas spirit.

Commentary by Michelle Browning—a senior biochemistry major from Tompkinsville.

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Lemox will be paying finals week prices starting Dec. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lemox Regular Store Hours</th>
<th>Lemox extended Store Hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday - Thursday</td>
<td>Dec. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 5:30 pm</td>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Dec. 9 - 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 4:30 pm</td>
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