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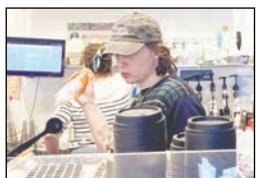
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## Welcome!

Here it is, the 2022 “Best of Kent,” a special edition of The Kent Stater. After a year’s hiatus due to the pandemic—our last BOK edition printed the week before the campus shutdown in 2020—we’re happy to be back on newstands in Kent and on the Kent State campus.

The features you’ll find inside represent the results of public voting on 29 different categories, from “Best Restaurant” to “Best Coffee Shop” to “Favorite Alcoholic Beverage.” Our goal is to recognize everything that contributes to the friendly, fun and collegial atmosphere of the greater Kent community.

We hope you enjoy this special Stater and find an opportunity to get out and experience the many wonderful things our beloved college town has to offer.

Thank you for reading!

**-The Kent Stater / KentWired Staff**

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## BEST OF KENT

### Best Burger

2022 • 2020 • 2019 • 2018 • 2017 • 2016



### Best Restaurant

2022 • 2020 • 2019 • 2018 • 2017 • 2016



### Best Bar

2022 • 2020 • 2019 • 2018 • 2017 • 2016



### Best Drink

2022 • 2020 • 2019 • 2018 • 2017 • 2016



### Best Place to Take Your Family

2022 • 2020 • 2019 • 2018 • 2017 • 2016



# Best Bar



Savannah Ramsey fills a cup with beer at the Zephyr Pub on West Main Street in downtown Kent.

Kelly Krabill / The Kent Stater

## Zephyr Pub **FIRST**

If someone in Kent wanted to watch a drag show, play ping pong and sing karaoke all in one place, there's only one answer: Zephyr Pub. This staple of the downtown nightlife takes the idea of variety and cranks it up to eleven.

"Well, we're just kind of a place for everybody," general manager Josh Sed said. "When we first started off, everybody thought we were the gay bar, even though we weren't like, strictly a gay bar, because it's kind of hard to be strictly anything in this town, being so small."

"We just kind of cater to everybody," Sed said. "We don't have one certain thing we're into. We just want everybody to feel included and want to have a good time when they're here."

Sed said Zephyr is probably the only bar to be crowded and bumping on a Monday, due to their weekly

karaoke nights, which have only increased in popularity as in-person activities slowly return to downtown.

Another fan favorite is their pitchers of cocktails.

"We started doing it during the pandemic when [Kent] had their weird restrictions where we could serve until 10 and close at 11," Sed said. "We started doing pitchers of booze so people could have something to drink in front of them after they couldn't buy any more. They've really stayed on as something people love, so you can get whatever cocktail you want in a pitcher."

A particular point of pride for Sed is the fundraising efforts Zephyr has put on over the years. They've raised money for One of a Kind Pet Rescue, the Kent State LGBTQ Emergency Fund, Kent Social Services and many other organizations assisting people in the area.



Liverpool Lads, a Beatles cover band, plays at Zephyr Pub during BeatleFest on Feb. 18, 2022 **Sophia Lucente / KentWired files**



Bartender Scotty Ward makes a drink during his shift at The Venice Café. Venice shares space with Erie Street Kitchen, which is located at 163 W. Erie St. in Kent.  
**Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**



Ray's Place restaurant on 135 Franklin Ave. in Kent is packed with the rich history of the city.

**Sydney Pike / The Kent Stater**

## SECOND Ray's Place

Ray's Place owner Charlie Thomas likens the bar and restaurant to an old shoe.

"It feels good. It fits. And everybody feels comfortable here, you know?" Thomas said. "When you come in here, you're walking into a place that's got a long history."

With two floors packed full of the rich history of Kent, people go to Ray's Place not just for the dozens of draft beers on tap or the best burger (Page 27) in town, but also for the community and knowledge that thousands of

students have visited in years prior.

On Homecoming weekend or Halloween night, you'll find the bar packed to the gills with people having a good time. Those looking for something to do with a long island in hand can catch a Cavaliers game on the TV or play a game of pool upstairs. Thomas said he prides himself on this breadth of offerings, with something that can bring anyone off of Franklin Avenue and through the front door.

## THIRD Venice Café

Venice Café sits at "the intersection of good food, good drinks and good music," said Jeff Crowe, manager of Venice Café and owner of Erie Street Kitchen. That atmosphere of an establishment that has served residents since 1941, mixed with great refreshments, is what sets Venice apart from the rest of the bars in Kent.

At the bar, one finds beautiful murals that depict a journey of Italian immigrants to the U.S.

"It really resonates with some folks looking for that connection," Crowe said. "Between that, a funky vibe,

the combination with Erie Street with their good foods and live music and friendly staff, I think it's a win-win combination."

Among all the beers on tap, wine by the glass and cocktails made to order, Crowe said the best thing to get is a Mason Jar cocktail. There's Electric Lemonade, the Dark and Stormy and the Green Tea, which is Bushmills Irish Whiskey, peach schnapps and sour mix. They're served in a titularly large Mason Jar, and Crowe said it's a unique offering in Kent that sets them apart from all the rest.

—Wyatt Loy

## Best Drunk Food



A customer sits at the bar of EuroGyro, a bar and restaurant in downtown Kent.  
**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

### FIRST EuroGyro

After a long night of drinking, there's nothing like eating some incredible local food. EuroGyro, located at 107 S. Depeyster St., welcomes hungry customers until 3:30 a.m. on Thursdays and Fridays, the prime time to devour some "drunk food."

"People love pizza, but a lot of pizza places usually close around 10 [or] 11 o'clock," manager Ryan Singleton said. "We're open until 3 in the morning, so we stand out there, with our time."

He said the wing sauces for sandwiches are another reason why the restaurant stands out, because when people are "drunk, they eat it all up."

Singleton said that there are several items on the menu that people love including their pepperoni roll and their Guys on the Couch sub, which is filled with sirloin steak, grilled onions, mushrooms and green pepper sautéed in BBQ and hot sauce.

### SECOND Taco Bell

Taco Bell offers classics like the Crunchwrap Supreme, Cheesy Gordita Crunch and Baja Blast. This location is open until 4 a.m., giving late-night partiers the chance to grab a meal at the end of a long weekend.

"For some reason, our food just hits right in the late hours of the night," closing manger Trey Watson said.

### THIRD Guy's Pizza

Guy's Pizza is placed in the heart of downtown Kent and open until 3:00 a.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

It has everything from the classic pepperoni pizza to a variety of specialty slices.

"We do the \$2 pizza by the slice, if we're talking about drunk it's gotta be those as our top," manager Evan Lundberg said.



Taco Bell on 805 E. Main St. is one of the many chain restaurants along this stretch across from Kent State's front campus.

**Sydney Pike / The Kent Stater**

— Morgan McGrath

## Best Place to Cure a Hangover



Mike's Place, located at 1700 S. Water Street, is known for its extravagant decor.  
**Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater files**

### FIRST Mike's Place

Located just off of Interstate 76, the Kent-famous Mike's Place served up smiles since it first opened in 1987. Mike's Place is known for its funky decor and extremely extensive menu.

"Ruebens are probably one of our top sellers," said Tobin Rogers, a manager of 30 years.

This top-tier menu item starts with three slices of grilled rye bread, stuffed with corned beef, sauerkraut, swiss cheese and thousand island dressing.

Other menu items -- typically named in a rather comedic fashion -- include the "I am so confused, but I like it!" sandwich, "Spongebob's Krabby Patties" seafood cakes and the "I stole this from a chain restaurant" combination of popcorn chicken, mashed potatoes and corn.

The iconic local restaurant also boasts long hours, open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

## Wild Goats Fresh and Funky Fine Dining

Looking for another local spot to rid yourself of that hangover? Wild Goats Fresh & Funky Fine Dining might be just the place to go.

Open every day from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wild Goats offers a delectable variety of breakfast and lunch options such as burritos and loaded hashbrowns.

"I've only been here six months, but from the moment I walked in, it's just a warm, inviting atmosphere," Wild Goats manager Tom Holman said.

### THIRD Taco Tontos

This Mexican-style restaurant has been around since 1972, and what was originally a tiny taco cart, is now a flourishing lunch and dinner location.

"We've been around for 50 years and are best known for our baked burritos," said owners Emily and Kevin Yohn via email.

Per their website, the restaurant serves a wide variety of burritos, including the bacon cheeseburgerito, the sweet potato burrito and the chorizo burrito. They also serve up tacos, tostadas, enchiladas and taco salads.



Taco Tontos double layer shell chicken taco.  
**Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**

— Morgan McGrath

# Best Bartender



Zephyr Pub is located at 106 W. Main St. in downtown Kent. **Kelly Krabill / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## Matt Yunk

Matt Yunk has worked at Zephyr Pub on 106 W. Main St. for about three years.

Yunk spends most of his evenings pouring green tea shots, vodka sodas and vodka cranberry cocktails, but the job can be quite demanding.

"It's just dealing with a lot of volume," he said. "It's a job where you have to balance a lot of things at the same time and kind of keep a positive attitude in the face of stress, but overall, it's very gratifying and rewarding."

Still, Yunk's favorite part of the job is interacting with the customers.

"It's hard to know everybody when you have 300 people in the bar on a Saturday night," Yunk said. "But the more and more people come back, the more they become like a great set of family and community."



Matt Yunk is a bartender at Zephyr Pub on 106 W. Main St. He has worked there for about three years. **Courtesy of Matt Yunk**

SECOND

## Adam Poluga

Adam Poluga has been a bartender for 27 years and now owns Dominick's on 147 Franklin Ave. Despite having the responsibilities of owning a bar, he still bartends.

"My typical shifts aren't like everybody else's," he said. "I'm in and out throughout the day. I'm here in the mornings and the evenings, so my shifts are a little longer than most people's."

The most popular drink Poluga sells is the Dom Bomb, a vodka-based Red Bull shot.

Even with his busy schedule, he doesn't face many challenges.

"Everybody is very nice and very respectful, so I really don't have any challenges," he said.



Adam Poluga is the current owner and bartender of Dominicks on 147 Franklin Ave. **Courtesy of Adam Poluga**

THIRD

## Mike Haney

Mike Haney has been a bartender for over 10 years and works at Water Street Tavern on 132 S. Water St.

The most popular drink he sells is the Golden Flash. It has Tito's Handmade Vodka, Blue Curacao, ginger ale and lemonade.

"Water Street is the college bar," he said. "It's like a nod-off to our Kent State roots."

Haney loves the atmosphere of his work environment.

"I love the people who come in that we get to see every week," Haney said. "Sometimes, there are groups of people that we see a couple times a week."



Mike Haney of Water Street Tavern makes a drink. **Angelo Angel / Kent Stater files**

## Favorite Alcoholic Beverage

FIRST

### Barrio's Margarita

Start the night off strong with one of Barrio's classic party drinks, and pair it with some of their specialty tacos.

For the adventurous, try the Sweet Gingerita with ginger liqueur, lychee purée and a ginger sugar rim. For a more familiar taste, go with the Margarita Perfecto, a citrus blend of Avion Silver tequila, orange Curaçao, fresh lime juice and Grand Marnier orange cognac floated on top.

"My personal favorite is the margarita perfecto. It's what the name is, it's a perfect margarita," said manager Carmen Bonamico. "We use the highest shelf of tequila for them. And people seem to respond well, you know, they love their booze."

While the margaritas bring the people through the door, it's everything else about Barrio that keeps them coming back.

"[Barrio] has a little combination of it all. I think that it has an atmosphere that's inviting for everybody, all groups of people, young and old," Bonamico said. "There's usually an upbeat atmosphere. A lot of people respond well to the music that's playing, everyone seems to be vibing with it. ... It's a good fun place, a good college town bar."



This is Barrio's Margarita which was voted the favorite drink in Kent during 2022.

**Morgan McGrath / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

### The Loft Tavern's Hulk

The owner of The Loft Tavern, Brad Patterson, insists the ingredients of their monstrous green drink are a trade secret, but anyone is allowed to come in and watch the bartenders make this famous drop shot. What's really important, he stressed, is the presentation.

"They taste really good, and they look very nice. So the presentation, that's what it's really all about," Patterson said. "When people, you know, see eight of them going by, a guy walks by and he's got four in each hand, they go 'What's that? I want that!'"

With its dark green hue, The Hulk is an eye catcher in a bar full of beer and ordinary cocktails. That color also makes it the perfect drink for Fake Paddy's Day. Another recommendation from Patterson, and their second most popular drink, is the red, white and blue Rocket Pop.

"We've been doing The Hulk and the Rocket Pop for over 10 years, and people just love them," Patterson said. "We rotate the other drinks in and out occasionally,



This is Loft's Hulk which was voted the second favorite drink in Kent during 2022.

**Morgan McGrath / The Kent Stater**

just for different things, but they can't post the numbers for us like The Hulk and Rocket Pop do."

THIRD

### Ray's Place Long Island

Eight decades in a college town is enough time to figure out what college kids like to drink, and even after all that time, students still come back to Ray's for the long island.

"A lot of kids go here today, their parents went here, maybe their grandparents even went here. So, Ray's has been around, and the long island iced tea has been very popular now for quite a few years," owner Charlie Thomas said. "And we make it from scratch. In other words, we don't use a mix or anything like that. We do it ourselves."

Thomas said the composition of the drink is simple: rum, vodka, gin, Coke, sour mix, Triple Sec and lemon—but the secret ingredient to what makes this cocktail so special is the comfortable, homey atmosphere Ray's has served up for generations of Kent State students.



This is Ray's Place Long Island which was voted the third favorite drink in Kent during 2022.

**Morgan McGrath / The Kent Stater**





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# Best Restaurant



A waitress clears a table on a busy day at Ray's. **Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## Ray's Place

Whether it's for the MOFO burger or a Long Island, Ray's has their customers covered. Voted best restaurant for Best of Kent for the past three years, it's clear that Ray's is a longtime Kent favorite.

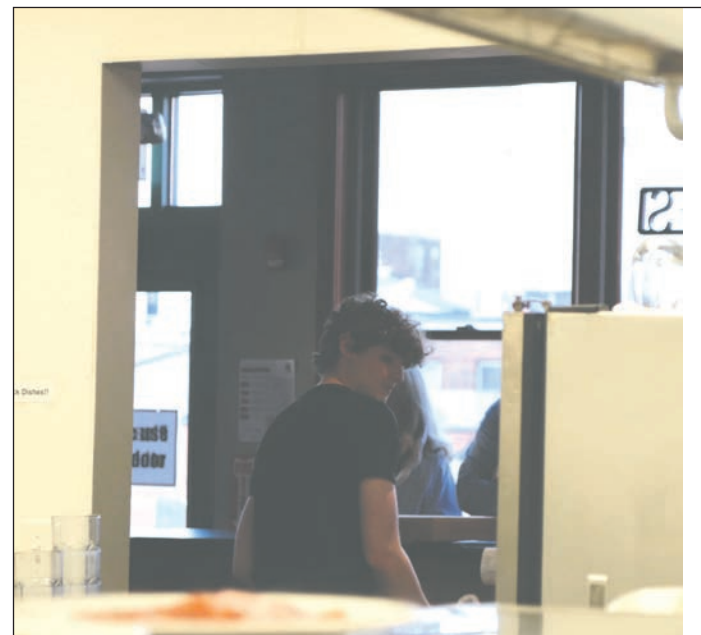
Featuring 64 beers on tap, meats smoked in house and daily specials, Ray's has been a favorite choice even before the owner Charlie Thomas took over the business.

"We love being someone's first date place," manager Kayla Allen said. "We love being someone's place they bring their parents. It's just cool, because then generally you come back."

Having a high-profile restaurant in Kent means the business flow is neverending. Allen said there isn't much of a difference in profit between the school year and summer.

"Certainly, when the kids are gone more of the community likes to come down and hang out and not have to be around as many college kids, so it does fluctuate but in a different way," Allen said.

"[Our] most popular [drink] by far is the Long Island," Allen said "Fother Muckers is actually our signature drink, which is a little lesser known. It's like the fruity version of a Long Island. And then it just kind of fluctuates with whatever the cool trendy drink is."



The host at Belleria takes customers' names to seat them during a dinner rush. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Belleria

Just a quick walk down Erie Street, pizza lovers and Italian food connoisseurs alike can have the perfect night out. Belleria has been a fan-favorite for 14 years, ever since owner Tom Gavozzi made the shift from Youngstown to Kent.

"In the summer... there's a lot more foot traffic so it's a different type of business. It's more spread out during the day," Gavozzi said. "Acorn Alley has become a destination. So, it doesn't slow down in the summer, which is good. It actually kind of picks up a little bit. Then in the fall when students come back, then there's a nice influx of [around] 30,000 new pizza eaters overnight, which really helps."

Gavozzi adapted his menu to the college town by using olive oil rather than lard in the pizza dough to make it vegan friendly. They also value higher quality ingredients when looking at options.

"I've adapted to fresh chicken, higher quality pastas and tomatoes and stuff like that just to kind of keep it more of an almost scratch kitchen," Gavozzi said.

Their most popular menu items are chicken parmesan, pizza and spaghetti. If that isn't enough for the night, patrons can walk down to the river by Franklin Avenue to have a scenic end to their night.

THIRD

## Bricco

Whether it's "a burger or a duck breast, our menu is known to satisfy" according to Bricco's website banner. Bricco has been serving Kent since 2014, and general manager Stephanie Pullella said their most popular menu items are "pretzel chicken and cajun pasta."

Their customer crowd is "pretty diverse" and Pullella said she loves the "family atmosphere" with the employees.

Bricco Kent is open six days a week for dinner with additional hours for lunch on Sunday. According to their website, the Kent menu has features from the "flagship Akron location with unique appetizers and entrees."

They also have a seasonal drink menu rotation throughout the year including beer, ale and martinis.

—Kaitlyn Finchler

# Best Breakfast



Patrons dine near the bar inside Over Easy At The Depot located at 152 Franklin Ave. Over Easy was previously located on East Erie Street, but relocated to the train depot in December 2021.

**Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater**

## SECOND

### Wild Goats Fresh & Funky Fine Dining

Located on West Main Street, Wild Goats is a "fun and funky dining experience," general manager Tom Holman said.

Breakfast options range from the traditional pancakes and omelettes to its famous morning clucker, a "hand-breaded buttermilk chicken breast served over cheddar crusted fried bread, topped with sausage gravy, over medium eggs, and cheddar cheese," according to its website.

Making customers the priority is why Wild Goats stands out, Holman said.

"We are very customer driven," he said. "The staff is trained extremely well in the hospitality industry."



Zach, an employee at Wild Goats, grabs a check for a table on March 20. Wild Goats is located at 319 W. Main St. **Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater**

## FIRST

### Over Easy At The Depot

Located in the historic train depot on Franklin Avenue is Over Easy At The Depot. This woman-owned and operated business is a favorite for Kent students, especially those looking for a healthy breakfast.

"We serve the freshest ingredients," owner Shannon Zemba said. "College kids come in and they get a good meal and enough to take home."

For Zemba, it is all about leaving her guests happy and full.

"We want college kids that are far away from home, as well as our local college kids, to come in and feel like they're at home getting the comfort food that they would get," she said.

Since moving to the depot in 2021, Over Easy has continued to grow. The owner is looking to expand to dinner in the future and is currently in the process of receiving a liquor license.

"We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the community and Kent State," Zemba said.



Apple cinnamon pancakes, offered at Mike's Place, located at 1700 S. Water Street. Mike's Place won four awards.

**Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater Files**

## THIRD

### Mike's Place

This family-owned establishment on South Water Street was founded in 1987 by Mike Kostensky. With its funky decorations that are hard to miss, in-house band and family atmosphere, it is an experience unlike any other in Kent.

"We prepare all our food ourselves, and it doesn't come precooked from some franchise distribution center," the Mike's Place website stated. "Yes, it might not look exactly the same as it was the time before on the plate but that is what happens with homemade food."

It is the homey food that is the secret to the success of Mike's Place. With over 200 items on the menu there is something for everyone.

— Alton Northup

## Best Pizza

FIRST

### Lucci's Place

Walking into Lucci's Place, you're hit by the sight of flipping pizza dough flying around in the air and the smell of fresh baked dough filling the Main Street located shop.

Annie King, a Lucci's Place opener and self-proclaimed maker of pizza, said it's not just what's in the sauce that attributes to Lucci's popularity, but also the dough.

"We make the dough and our sauce every day by hand so it's very fresh," King said. "Especially compared to a lot of the chains that are around here."

Lucci's place has over thirty years of experience serving Kent, Cuyahoga Falls and the surrounding areas. King said their hottest menu item goes back to the basics: pepperoni pizza. Though, it's really up to you as everything can be "build your own."

"I used to get Lucci's a lot before I worked here," she said. "It really is the best in Kent."



A pepperoni pizza from Lucci's Place located at 405 E. Main St., Kent Ohio. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

### Belleria

Belleria is a staple for Italian food in the Kent area.

Haley Scarberry, a manager and server at Belleria, said with the combination of a good price and fresh dough, students and locals keep coming back.

"We homemade our dough, we make it fresh everyday," Scarberry said. "It's cheap, a good price."

When asked what the signature and most popular pizza choices are, Scarberry explained that the "Bella," their deluxe pizza and the margherita pizza, are the hit items that keep customers coming back.



A chef at Belleria takes orders during a dinner rush. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

THIRD

### EuroGyro

EuroGyro has been serving Northeast Ohio campuses since its first location opened in 1984 near the University of Akron. It now serves the Kent area and the Kent State campus.

In terms of customer base, general manager Ryan Singleton said EuroGyro is popular among Kent State students.

"It's a good college bar," Singleton said. "They come down here to get a pizza, especially on Wednesdays [the] \$5.99 one large item pizza, that one's very popular. Very big gravitation for all the students."



A sign shows the reflection of the bar at EuroGyro in downtown Kent. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

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# Best Coffee Shop

## Scribbles Coffee Co.

The family-owned coffee shop in Kent won first place this year for best coffee shop.

The business relocated to Kent from Cincinnati in 2007. Beth Budzar bought Scribbles Coffee Co., which is located at 237 N. Water St., in 2013 after being one of the first employees.

"It just seemed like it was right," Beth said. "I was always like, if I owned it I would do that, and then it was my opportunity to be like I can do that now."

Beth is the sole owner and operator, but her family helps with the business. Scott Budzar, her husband, does all the coffee roasting on top of his full-time construction job. The shop started doing its own roasting six and a half or seven years ago, Scott said.

The couple working together is comparable to different types of coffee machines, Scott explained. Each has their own purpose.

"This is the reason why there's three different grinders over here," Scott said. "They all handle different kinds of coffee, whether it's just the drip brew or a pour-over or espresso, they all have a different result depending on the grind itself."

Although they work together, the roasting side and the shop side are two different entities.

"There really [are] two different businesses arising out of the one that's between roasting and artisanal work here at the shop," Scott said.

After learning all of the behind-the-scenes aspects of it, such as the espresso machine, they tried roasting themselves.

"It really just became a question of, 'why don't we just learn to do it ourselves?'" Scott said. "We literally started roasting coffee on our front porch with a popcorn maker."

The couple then moved to roasting in the coffee shop until they outgrew it, Scott said. The roaster in the shop only roasts two pounds of coffee beans every 15 minutes and is now used to show people how coffee is roasted, he said.

They now roast in a new location and have over a dozen flavors that change periodically.

"We take great pride and a lot of joy in it, so a lot of these coffees are fairtrade organic, some are women farm," Scott said. "So we really try to focus on those and make that a really part of our core being [of] who we are."

The favorite drink of the shop changes with the seasons but right now it is anything shaken, Beth said. Last month for Valentine's Day, they had a raspberry cheesecake shaken espresso. The drink currently featured is a 16 ounce brown sugar cinnamon shaken espresso.

"You're gonna do the brown sugar, cinnamon syrup, then we sprinkle a little bit of cinnamon with the espresso and shake it all up, take some oat milk and pour the oat milk on top," Beth said.

Scott is a man who loves his black coffee. He never puts cream or sugar in it, he said. But when Beth started making the shaken espressos, he began drinking those as well.

Beth usually picks the specialty drinks, but sometimes she gets staff input as well. Before a drink goes on the menu, she has all her staff try it and leave a thumbs up or

FIRST



Scribbles Coffee Co. is located at 237 N. Water St. in Kent. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**

down on a piece of paper, she said.

The drinks on the chalkboard menu are Scribbles' regular drinks, and the ones on the corkboards get changed every month.

The Budzars have six kids, ages nine to 22, who have helped with the business. Some of them worked in the shop over the years and some now help with the roasting process, Scott said. The family side of the business is what gave them the motivation to keep the coffee shop alive during the pandemic.

"It was like the motivation of can't quit. We'll have nothing if this place goes under," Beth said. "Feeding our children was our motivation, taking care of our family, which I think really helped because under any other

circumstances, a lot of people ... would have just been like 'forget it, close it down, onto something else.'"

There are many different aspects to the shop beside the coffee, including Scribbles-branded stickers, mugs and pins. They also sell pastries from a local bakery to pair with any drink on the menu.

The shop also displays local artists starting the 15th of every month. Scribbles featured three artists for the month of February, with a table jewelry, gnome-related items and looms, Beth said.

"We do it as just a service," Beth said. "We don't charge a commission or anything like that."

Scribbles is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.



Barista Isabelle Roeder gives a Scribbles coworker a task on Sunday, March 20, 2022. Scribbles won first place for best coffee. **Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater**

## Tree City Coffee & Pastry

Rebekah Gillespie, an Army veteran and emergency room and critical care nurse of 20 years, became the owner of Tree City Coffee & Pastry May 1, 2020. Gillespie had her eye on the little coffee shop located at 135 E. Erie St. since December 2019.

"I've always had a dream to have my own place where people can kind of come and gather and have either a good dessert or a nice drink, whether that was coffee [or] wine."

Since Gillespie took over as owner, she made it her mission to get staff more involved. Instead of the seasonal menu method, Gillespie now offers a monthly menu with the help of her staff. Their baristas also create specialty drinks each week.

This business would not be what it is without the staff that works there, Gillespie said.

"My staff ... is everything to me," Gillespie said. "I really feel like treating your staff like they're part of your own family is more important now than ever."

Besides coffee, Gillespie features baked goods from women-owned businesses she pairs along with the drink menu. Tree City also carries wine from local businesses.

"I'm hoping to give Kent and the Kent State students and the community ... something that Kent doesn't have," she said. "That's always been my goal: to kind of stand out and be able to bring on things that you can't get anywhere else."

Tree City is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

SECOND



Tree City Coffee barista Zach adds caramel syrup to a drink on Sunday, March 20, 2022. Tree City won second place for best coffee in Kent. **Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater**

## Bent Tree Coffee Roasters

Bent Tree Coffee Roasters opened 10 years ago at 313 N. Water St., co-owner Mike Mistur said. The owners expanded their brand by selling their coffee in grocery stores such as ACME, Giant Eagle and Whole Foods.

"As the wholesale [business] expanded, we had to make changes," Mistur said. "We turned the very limited offering café into more of like a full-scale café."

Bent Tree roasts some of its coffee in-house, which differentiates it from other coffee shops, Minstur said. Due to the demand, they now have a second shop for the wholesale side of the business.

"We do all the roasting for everything there in the café itself," Mistur said. "So, a lot of customers come in and they like to connect. ... They've never seen the process."

The customers seeing the process happen is one of the elements Mistur likes about the business.

"It's kind of ... a nice moment for them to make the connection between how the coffee starts as, like, a crop to how it ends up in their cup as a brewed cup of coffee," he said.

The shop roasts almost every day, so customers are welcome to come in and watch the process happen while enjoying their own cup.

Bent Tree is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

THIRD



The interior of Bent Tree Coffee Roasters is warm and inviting. The shop roasts almost every other day, so customers can watch the roasting process. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**

# Best Sweet Stuff



Amil Barlow, an employee at Insomnia Cookies. **Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## Insomnia Cookies

Have you ever been up until 2 a.m. just wishing you had a warm, fresh baked cookie? Well, thankfully for all the insomniacs out there, Insomnia Cookies in downtown Kent is able to provide just that.

With Kent State so close to the downtown area, Insomnia Cookies is a popular sweet treat spot for students like Sophia Ball, a sophomore education major.

"I come here pretty often," Ball said. "The cookies are really good."

Ball said her favorite cookie at Insomnia is the snickerdoodle. She also said students are always around the downtown area looking to stop at Insomnia.

For those who would like to enjoy a warm dessert from the comfort of their dorm, house or apartment, Insomnia Cookies offers late-night delivery.

"We specialize in delivering warm, delicious cookies right to the doors of individuals and companies alike," the Insomnia website stated. "What's not to love?"



Outside of Popped!, which is located 138 E Main St., in Acorn Alley. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Popped!

Popped! began bringing sweet and salty treats to Kent in 2012. These days they sell everything sweet from ice cream to candy, but their specialty lies in their namesake: popcorn.

Gwen Rosenberg, owner of Popped!, shared why she believed her store placed in the Best of Kent.

"We make delicious handmade candies using the very best ingredients," Rosenberg said. "We have a lot of fun doing it."

Being located in downtown Kent gives many new, incoming Kent State students and their families a place to stop and pick up a quick treat, Rosenberg said.

"We get a lot of students that come in," Rosenberg said. "It's just a fun place to stop and bring the family, or if you're just walking downtown to grab something a little sweet."

THIRD

## The Fruit Stand

Walking into The Fruit Stand you are immediately hit with an array of colorful decor and the smell of fresh fruit. As a place with smoothie bowls, oatmeal and toast options, this sweet place is a bit on the healthier side.

"A lot of people think that our smoothie bowls are like yogurt or ice cream, but it's not, it's fruit puree and coconut cream mixed together," said Kristony Norman, the morning shift supervisor. "It is sweet just because there is sugar in it."

Norman also said the stand is a popular spot for Kent State students since many Fruit Stand employees are students as well. And the trendiest item on the menu: the strawberry açai bowl.

"The whole point is to have the freshest fruit," Norman said. "We get our fruit every single day so it's as fresh as it possibly can be. ... It's like fast food but for fresh fruit."

—*Mariah Alanskas*

Left: The Fruit Stand offers smoothie bowls, oatmeal and toast options. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**



# Best Brew

FIRST

## 101 Bottles of Beer on the Wall

The rarest draft beers are found at 101 Bottles of Beer on the Wall. Customers can choose from over 700 different beers and a selection of 500 different wines. Kent State students, as well as many professors, come in for a drink, meet up with friends and enjoy the ambiance downtown Kent has to offer.

“At the end of the day, we’re a craft beer bar,” said Chris Laughton, the manager of two years. “And we have good mixed drinks deals.”

Three local best friends founded the bar in 1996, according to its website. It started off as a video store in the ‘90s and then transitioned to a beer store. Around 2011, the bar was added. Laughton said the business has expanded multiple times.

“The most recent expansion was for COVID,” he said. “We added additional seating and beautiful booths.”

People travel from far away places to enjoy a drink at 101 Bottles of Beer on the Wall. Laughton said they work hard to offer unique beer for the Kent community and Kent State affiliates.

“It would be nice just for more people to know about us,” he said.



Employee Kyle Lambert wipes down the glass on the beer display case at 101 Bottles of Beer on the Wall. Lambert has worked at the bar since November and said he’s learned a lot about beer and wine since taking the position.

**Zaria Johnson / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Bell Tower Brewing Co.

Neighbors can hear the bell tower ring from this redesigned church-to-brewery watering hole nestled among residents. Located just outside of downtown Kent on Park Avenue, Bell Tower Brewing Co. is a neighborhood place. Locals can walk a few houses down to eat seasonal cuisine and drink hand-crafted brewed beer in a high-ceiling historical brick building.

On the weekend, Kent State students typically arrive after 8 p.m. for a drink with friends, and those breaking bread are typically from the community.

“I think it’s a very wide mix,” said Ryan Tipton, co-founder of the brewery. “It’s not any kind of specific age group or that kind of population. You can see tonight by the crowd that’s here. There’s people in their 50s, 60s [and] 70s enjoying a meal and some beer.”

Customers, dressed in green for St. Patrick’s Day, sat around the bar, while others relaxed on the warm patio.



Bell Tower Brewing Co. opened October 2021 as a neighborhood brewing company.

**Kelly Krabill / The Kent Stater**

THIRD

## North Water Brewing Company

North Water Brewing Co., located at the northwest corner of Kent’s Mill District, is committed to the environment and sustainability.

This business sources clean local ingredients, when available, and offers delicious and traditional drinks such as watermelon seltzer and Irish Red Ale, according to the brewery’s website.

The brewery opened amid the pandemic in November 2020 in what was an auto collision repair shop. Its industrialized structure, which is located on a hike and bike trail, caught the founders’ attention.

Now, the brewery has its own running club that meets every Thursday to drink craft beer and run at all paces. It’s “pledged to connecting to the outdoors through biking, hiking, running and, of course, the river,” according to the website.

North Water Brewing Co. is minutes away from the Cuyahoga River but sits in downtown Kent where students and nearby residents can join friends over a drink.



North Water Brewing Company is located at 101 Crain Ave. in Kent, Ohio. The brewery opened in 2020 during the pandemic.

**Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**

# Best Place to Study



The Kent State Library was not only voted the number one place to study, but it's also the tallest building in Portage County. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater Files**

FIRST

## University Library

For the ninth year in a row, University Library remains the favorite spot in Kent for students to study. With the long list of things included inside, such as the Starbucks and 12 floors for studying, this comes as no surprise to chemistry tutor Carolyn Carlson.

"It truly has so much to offer: multiple different floors for multiple different needs, quiet study floors if you need to focus and group study floors if you want to work with friends," Carlson said. "It has places to get a snack, and it has resources like tutoring, so if you're struggling with something there is a place you can go to help."

Every floor of the library has a different study environment, with places such as the fourth and seventh floors being designated group study floors, and floors such as the third and sixth that remain quiet. This appeals to all kinds of students, no matter what conditions they prefer to study in.

University Library also houses offices for many different student resources on campus, such as OneStop, Student Accessibility Services, tutoring through the Academic Success Center and the Writing Commons, among others. No matter the need, the library has students covered.



Scribbles Coffee Co. is located at 237 N. Water St, Kent Ohio. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**



Students sit and do homework and drink coffee at Last Exit Books in downtown Kent. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Scribbles Coffee Co.

The perfect blend of caffeine and a smooth studying environment, coffee shops seem to be a favorite among college students, and Scribbles Coffee Co. checks all the boxes.

Downtown Kent's women-owned and run coffee shop specializes in ethically sourced gourmet and organic coffee.

Although people love their coffee as well (see page 14), the dining room environment has become a student favorite when it comes to studying.

Scribbles' website described the coffee shop as a "comfortable, welcoming place to sit and enjoy a hand-crafted drink."

The warm, welcoming environment provides the perfect setting to allow students to successfully get their work done.

THIRD

## Last Exit Books & Coffeehouse

Although Last Exit is typically associated with its calming interior filled with records, CDs, used books and more, Kent State students appreciate more than just the shopping.

The attached cafe and tables scattered around the rest of the store provide a calming study environment that students crave. The seating areas are typically full, which just goes to show how many students utilize Last Exit.

Last Exit is also conveniently located right off of Acorn Alley, making it just a quick walk or PARTA ride away.



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## Best New Businesses

# The Fruit Stand

### Kent's best new business in Acorn Alley serves up fresh smoothie bowls

Isabella Schreck  
Reporter

**A**cai bowls, a Brazilian frozen smoothie dessert, have become more and more popular as people post pretty pictures of these colorful, tasty and healthy meals all over social media.

And for the last year, The Fruit Stand brought the trending treat to the Kent community. With topping options ranging from fresh strawberries and pineapple to sweet chocolate chips and oreos, customers can build their own acai bowl for breakfast, lunch and dinner at the shop located in Acorn Alley.

Owner Jason Carpinelli opened the store in the midst of the COVID pandemic in Jan. 2021. While other businesses were closing up shop or cutting hours, he was able to take advantage of a more desolate downtown Kent.

"We opened basically at the height of the pandemic, and that's how I got the space because there were a lot of open spaces downtown," Carpinelli said. "I don't really know what business is like with it not being COVID. If anything, it didn't affect us in any way. We did social distance, and we wore masks."

Despite the fact that "everything seemed so bleak" during the pandemic, Carpinelli said that the risk of opening his business as others were shutting down gave him the confidence to continue his venture.

"If anything, [COVID] played to my benefit," Carpinelli said. "In my mind, I was like 'This is a great time to start a business because if I can make it work during the worst possible time, I can probably make it work when this is over.'"

Since its opening, The Fruit Stand has grown to serve around 250 to 500 customers a day. Carpinelli attributed his business' reach to customers' Instagram and Snapchat stories.

"The power of social media, with people taking photos of the bowls is definitely how we grew so quickly," Carpinelli said. "That was probably the



A customer decides which fruit bowl they want at The Fruit Stand in downtown Kent.

**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

biggest factor."

The shop has its own presence on Facebook and Instagram, where The Fruit Stand features its flavor of the week, which is the second base option, along with the regular acai flavor for the smoothie bowls, different aesthetic topping combinations and general company updates. It was also announced on Facebook that the brand opened a second location in Cleveland Feb. 5.

When describing his first year of owning The Fruit Stand, Carpinelli said his experience has been fantastic.

"It's been really rewarding," Carpinelli said. "It's a lot of long hours and a lot of hard work, but it's something that I enjoy a lot."

During the triumphs and failures of building his business, Carpinelli said the moments where things didn't go quite right stand out the most to him



A student eats their fruit bowl under the neon sign at Fruit Stand in downtown Kent.

because it proved that he can work through even the most difficult problems and still be successful.

"I remember the most struggling parts when things don't work and I had to figure it out," Carpinelli said. "That to me is the most rewarding, when I figured it out. Like when our soft serve machine, which makes our smoothie base, breaks, it's like an adrenaline rush that I don't enjoy but it's super rewarding when I do get it fixed."

While there are many different restaurant options downtown, Carpinelli said his business stands out from similar shops in the community because of its "build-your-own" feature and superior products.

"Our main focus is on the fresh-cut fruit bowl," Carpinelli said. "We're using fresh fruit, and you can see everything [when we're making it], so we can't throw mushy strawberries or bad blueberries in there. We only use the best stuff that we can find. You can match us on quality, but I wouldn't say you'd be able to beat us because a lot of places aren't using fresh fruit."

Customers, like senior middle childhood education major Shannon Carr, agree. Carr said she thinks The Fruit Stand has "amazing and healthy food options."

"I like to go there really weekly smoothie bowl because my favorite would probably be the one with the banana and blueberries."

Carr also said she visits the store once a week. From her time at Kent, she believed that it's one of the great customer service.

"They have a wonderful atmosphere to make customers feel welcome. The atmosphere is very warm and inviting. Employees are always willing to take suggestions, which makes it enjoyable what they're doing. It's a place in Kent that has enabled me to enjoy working with the staff and the good food."

The Fruit Stand also offers options like oatmeal, avocado toast, coffee, and more. It is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Carr said she is new to smoothie bowls, but she loves the options The Fruit Stand offers.

"You can't get a better price," Carpinelli said. "Just come in, try it, and be able to build your own bowl. We'll check us out."

## FIRST

## The Fruit Stand

With toppings ranging from bananas and strawberries to chocolate chips and nutella, customers can build their own acai bowl for breakfast, lunch and dinner at The Fruit Stand in Acorn Alley.

The shop opened in Jan. 2021 and features a new smoothie bowl flavor every week along with its signature acai flavor.

Owner Jason Carpinelli said the quality of his shop's products and its prices make it stand out from similar competition.

"We only use the best stuff that we can find," Carpinelli said. "And you can't get a better acai bowl for a better price. Just the experience of being able to build your own bowl is worth it to check us out."

If you're looking for a more healthy option to go along with your "eat better" New Years Resolution, you can also choose from pineapples, coconut, blueberries or almonds to put together a colorful meal.

## SECOND

## Bell Tower Brewing Company

In Oct. 2021, Bell Tower Brewing Co. moved into a historic church off Park Avenue in Kent, trading in the pews for booths and tables and adding in beer barrels while still keeping its cozy charm.

Bell Tower Brewing brings seasonal food and handcrafted beer together to appeal to every kind of palette with spins on classic sandwiches like a salmon BLT on its dinner menu or more sophisticated takes on pizza with a chicken caesar flatbread on its lunch menu.

"As much as we are a restaurant, we are a brewery too," co-founder and general manager Ryan Tipton said. "So while we make incredibly fresh, [from]scratch food in our kitchen, we are doing the same thing in our brewery with beer and kombucha. This in itself helps us stand apart from our competitors as well as having a uniquely historic space for our guests to enjoy."

Bell Tower has unique beers on tap like Midnight Tryst, a "bitter chocolate delight." With their different brews, the company describes itself as being part of the "Craft Beer Revolution." It updates its online beer menu often so customers can stay up to date on what's offered.



Ryan Tipton is a co-owner of Bell Tower Brewing Co., which is outside of downtown Kent.  
**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

## THIRD

## North Water Brewing Company

North Water Brewing Company, which opened in November 2020, is not your average taproom. It features charity events and community oriented activities along with "really good beer," manager Derek Christian said.

"It's not just about selling beer to us," Christian said. "We do bingo nights every other Wednesday that are donation based, and we set up three month blocks [for donations]. These last three months have been for Kent Social Services. We also do stuff like run club, and we're going to start a kayak club."

Located on Crain Avenue in Kent right off the Portage Hike and Bike Trail, North Water Brewing serves artisanal beers in its dog-friendly and family-friendly taproom and patio. On its website, the company said its drinks "meet a spectrum of tastes, from those new to craft beer, to sophisticated craft beer followers."

Customers are welcome to bring food from home to eat or get food delivered. The company also brings in various local food trucks every week. Along with standard restaurant games like trivia and bingo, North Water holds more stand-out events like "Yoga and Brew," where patrons can start off their morning with a yoga session followed by beer or coffee tasters. Artists also come in to play live music.



ent. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

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The outside of The Fruit Stand in downtown Kent.  
**Chloe Zofchak / The Kent Stater files**

# Best Tattoo and Piercing Parlor

FIRST

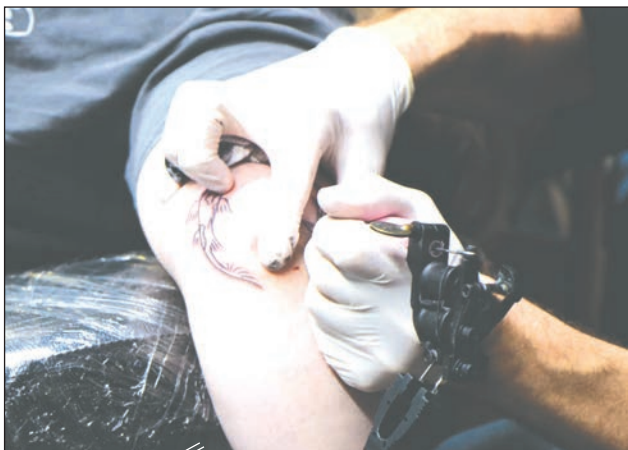
## War Horse Ink

War Horse Ink, a veteran owned and operated shop on East Day Street, with additional locations in Ravenna and Streetsboro, was established by Clint Marsh in 2016. With 25 artists specializing in an array of tattoos and piercings, it is the premier choice for Kent students.

"We can cover just about any kind of style, any kind of artwork," Marsh said.

Every year, the shop looks forward to giving back to the community that has helped its success. Drives for food banks, women's shelters, veterans overseas and gloves donated to hospitals during the pandemic are just a few examples of the charitable work done by War Horse Ink.

"We're constantly trying to give back to the community," Marsh said. "I think that's what really sets us apart from everybody else."



A client gets a tattoo of two Koi fish on their arm at Defiance Tattoos in downtown Kent. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Defiance Tattoos

There is never a dull moment at Defiance Tattoos said owner Rob Bohn, who founded the shop in 2006.

Located on East Main Street in downtown Kent, Defiance is among the top choices for hundreds of Kent students looking to get their first tattoo or add more ink to their collection. A big part of that is the welcoming atmosphere, especially in a business that tends to have a sharper edge to it.

"We try to treat customers like we want to be treated," Bohn said.

Having worked in Kent for more than 20 years, Bohn is proud to call the city home for his business.

"It's always a great time to be here," Bohn said. "Everyone is very cool."



A tattoo artist works on a customer's tattoo at War Horse Ink. **Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater**

THIRD

## Black Sheep Tattoo Studios



Artist Nick Osborne inks Kenzie Faust at Black Sheep Tattoo Studios in downtown Ravenna. **Kelly Krabill / The Kent Stater**

At Black Sheep Tattoo Studios, located on East Main Street in Ravenna, owner Alex Barba sees a diverse set of clients coming in thanks to Kent State.

"I've met so many cool people that went to Kent State that aren't from anywhere close to here, and they get tattooed," Barba said.

Students from around the world have been tattooed at Black Sheep, and it is that cross-culture connection of tattooing that makes it all worth it for Barba.

"You get to meet all kinds of people in this industry," Barba said.

With seven artists skilled in a range of tattoo styles, one can always trust that they will find what they are looking for when they walk into the shop.

—Alton Northup

# Best Place for the Under-21 Crowd

FIRST

## Kent Lanes

Kent Lanes is a family-owned and operated bowling alley on the east side of Kent. In addition to bowling, Kent Lanes offers beach volleyball courts, a dining room, bar and event hosting.

Nighttime manager Ed Miner credited the success of Kent Lanes to the Kent Community.

"We wouldn't be here, and we wouldn't thrive like we do if we weren't in Kent," Miner said.

While people of all ages enjoy bowling at Kent Lanes, the late-night specials appeal specifically to college students. They offer deals such as \$10 unlimited bowling during the week from 9:30 p.m. until midnight.

"We like to try to give back as much as we can to the people, they try to support us," Miner said. "You come in trying to have a good time, and that's what we try to give you."

SECOND

## Kent Plaza Theaters

Located in the Plaza Shopping Center, Kent Plaza Theaters is well known to the Kent community.

Because of its unique location, this theater is unlike most chains in setup as well as its overall atmosphere. Including luxury seating and delicious movie theater popcorn, the standards set by this independent theater are hard to beat.

When looking for a great place to go on a date, take your parents while they are in town or have a fun girls night out, this might be the place.

Playing most recent releases, their showing times are always available on the website for planning in advance.

TIE

THIRD

## Spins Bowl and Beverly J. Warren Student Recreation and Wellness Center

Spins Bowl is a bowling alley on the west side of Kent, although more locations can be found in surrounding areas. Most patrons go to Spins to bowl, but it also offers other attractions, including an arcade, kitchen and bar.

Newly renovated, this bowling alley aims to attract bowlers of all ages and skill levels, said assistant manager Mark Miller.

"We're just trying to create a good atmosphere for everybody to be in," Miller said, "We have good prices, good staff and we're just an overall really nice place to be."

Tying for third, Kent State's Beverly J. Warren Student Recreation and Wellness Center offers a variety of extracurricular classes and programs for students under 21 and families with younger children.

Try a hand at rock climbing or glow-in-the-dark cycling for a high-energy exercise session. Or take a minute for self care with a relaxing yoga or pilates session.

"We see a lot of people," said supervisor Tyra Marrs.

The Recreation Center is a great place for students who want to stay active or even those looking to make new connections.

"Literally all of our staff is so friendly," Marrs said. "Even if you don't know anybody here, like if it's your first time on campus, just keep ... an open mind because ... we met our friends here."



Bowling balls sit on the shelf at Kent Lanes while bowlers sit and eat appetizers waiting for their turn to bowl.  
**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**



The Kent Plaza Theaters is a local movie theater located at 140 Cherry St. in Kent. **Eman Abu-Khalas / The Kent Stater**

— Hannah Keil

— Zaria Johnson

# Best Food Delivery App or Service

FIRST

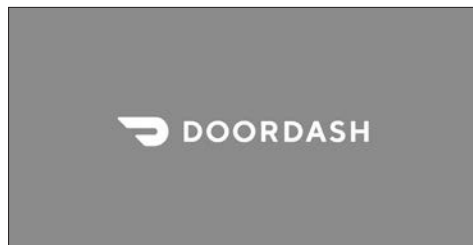
## DoorDash

DoorDash is the largest online food delivery company in the United States – and in Kent.

“You can pretty much order whatever you want, and there’s going to be a delivery driver,” said Isabella Mollick.

Mollick has worked as a DoorDasher for about two years, driving for the company and delivering food across Kent.

“Some days are really great. You make a lot of money and you have decent orders,” she said.



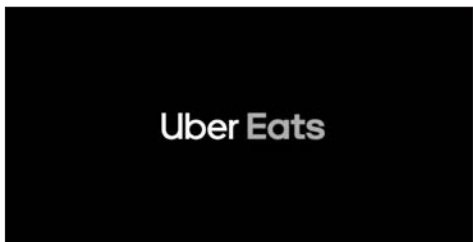
SECOND

## Uber Eats

Eats might be in the name, but this app isn’t just for food.

Ride sharing platform Uber created Uber Eats in 2014, and the app has been providing delivery services since. It includes sections to choose from: restaurants, convenience, pharmacy and baby.

Options on the app cater to diners of every kind, with allergy friendly, healthy eating and family favorite categories.



THIRD

## gopuff

Whatever you need – snacks for a movie, medicine for a headache, cleaning supplies for a bathroom – gopuff can get it to you.

The third place delivery service isn’t just a food delivery service. gopuff is open late and delivers whatever you order in 15 to 20 minutes.

“I use gopuff, it’s pretty nice and they have a lot of stuff,” said Kylee Johnson, student and on-campus resident at Kent State. “I definitely recommend the app.”



—Sophie Young

# Best ‘Go-to’ for Food Delivery



The outside of Euro Gyro, a popular bar and restaurant in downtown Kent. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## EuroGyro

EuroGyro wasn’t always EuroGyro, but the quality of food has stayed consistent.

George Istocki’s family is from Macedonia, a small country on the Mediterranean. George’s father established Europe Restaurant and Lounge, which would soon become Europe Gyro Pizza.

Nicknames and slang led to EuroGyro, the recognizable restaurant we know today. The Kent location is located to campus, on South Depeyster Street.

“I’ve been eating here since I was a kid,” said bartender Allie Bielinski. “Our food is just really, really good. It always holds up.”

Bielinski said EuroGyro’s homemade dough is what makes their pizza a delivery staple.

SECOND

## Insomnia Cookies

Insomnia Cookies started in a college dorm, and now it’s a college town staple.

That’s true for Kent, where the late-night bakery is sandwiched between restaurants on busy Water Street. The location sells their famous cookies, ice cream, cookie cakes and more.

Insomnia Cookies is open for delivery until 1 a.m. Sunday to Wednesday and 3 a.m. Thursday to Saturday. Place orders from anywhere and send a gift to someone in Kent, or order from Kent and have it delivered to your door.

THIRD

## Belleria

Rounding out the list is another popular Italian spot, known for pizza topped with sauce they make in-house.

Tom Gavozzi opened Belleria in 2008, setting up shop in Acorn Alley off of Depeyster and Erie Street. The restaurant delivers to anywhere within three miles.

“We always make sure orders are correct and hot,” said Brooke Crocker, manager.

Their most popular delivery food is pizza, although their classic Italian entrees – everything from eggplant parmesan to ravioli – are a close runner up.

—Sophie Young



# Best Vegan/ Vegetarian Dining



Co-owners Stacey Lasher and Carl Bauer share a meal at GRAZERS Restaurant located at 123 N. Water St. **Courtesy of Stacey Lasher**

## GRAZERS FIRST

GRAZERS is the local go-to spot for vegan and vegetarian patrons, and it stands out as a place where people can pop in for a flavorful, filling meal regardless of their dietary needs.

More than 90 percent of the GRAZERS menu features vegetarian meals, appetizers and desserts, and 75 percent of the menu can be made vegan and dairy free. But the restaurant still offers cage-free chicken and grass-fed steak for those looking for a meat alternative.

"We wanted a place where everyone can eat together at the same place," co-owner Carl Bauer said.

"And where no one would have to sacrifice," added co-owner Stacey Lasher.

Try their vegan falafel feast with brown rice, falafel, peppers, etc. or grab a side of macaroni and cheese with their dairy-free cheese sauce for a vegan alternative.

Stop by Eastway Market & Metropolitan Deli or Rosie's Diner each Tuesday and grab an order of GRAZER's vegan chili, hummus or energy bites right on the Kent campus.

## SECOND Taco Tontos

Taco Tontos serves up fresh, homemade Mexican cuisine with vegetarian and vegan options across the board.

"I love being able to provide people with that happy experience and fill their tummies so they're satisfied when they walk out," co-owner Emily Yohn said.

The vibrant restaurant offers vegetarian burritos, tostadas, tacos and more with tofu and seitan served up as meat substitutes or vegan cheeses and their homemade vegan sour cream for dairy-free customers.

But they don't stop there. The restaurant diverges from traditional, Mexican staples with unique, cultural specials like Korean Barbeque Wednesdays featuring tofu or seitan with rice, kimchi and Taco Tonto's Korean chili sauce.

Most of the specials "are super popular with vegans and vegetarians" because they feature unique, homemade ingredients, Yohn said, like their Indian inspired yogurt sauce or the Banh Mi burrito with vegan Banh mayo.

## THIRD Troy Grille

Troy Grille's Turkish street food menu is loaded with meat substitutes to satisfy any craving.

From the falafel hummus veggie burger to their fried eggplant with grilled Cyprus cheese, Troy Grille manages to balance authentic ingredients with a care for vegan and vegetarian customers.

Immerse in a Mediterranean experience right on East Main Street for lunch or dinner, but be sure to save room for dessert, like their walnut or pistachio baklava or the turkish coffee brownies.

— Zaria Johnson

# Best Gluten-Free Dining

## GRAZERS FIRST

GRAZERS delivers on their mission to provide a safe and enjoyable dining experience to the Kent community with staff screened for and trained on the importance of dietary restrictions and allergies.

"We take it very seriously because we have food allergies and sensitivities ourselves and in our family," co-owner Stacey Lasher said.

"So, we understand what it's like to have to choose carefully about where you're going to eat," co-owner Carl Bauer echoed.

Once patrons specify a need for a gluten-free meal either at the register or online, GRAZERS employees pull out fresh gloves, utensils and ingredients to provide customers with meals that taste and feel good all around.

Most menu items can be made into gluten-free meals at no additional charge. Try the gluten-free pita filled with a choice of fresh veggies, hummus and sauces.

## SECOND Taco Tontos

When it comes to gluten-free dining, Taco Tontos offers more than corn shell tacos. From nachos to enchiladas to tostadas, the restaurant prides itself on versatility and customization.

"We have a very wide and varied menu and it's all made fresh, and we make it all here in house," co-owner Emily Yohn said. "So there's tons of options."

Emily Yohn and her husband Kevin Yohn purchased Taco Tontos 10 years ago, and have since made it a Kent staple that packs a punch with its vast menu.

For gluten-free patrons, Emily recommends they start with the nachos, which can be loaded up with any topping they like. Try the street corn nachos topped with cheese, corn salsa, cilantro and cotija cheese, drizzled with smoked chipotle mayo and a bit of fresh lime.

"You can get many of our specials and just adapt them," Emily said. "I'm happy to keep making people happy and filling them up."



Fresco's Mexican Grill and Salsa Bar in downtown Kent on 100 E. Erie St. features an outdoor seating area. **Sydney Pike / The Kent Stater**

## THIRD Fresco Mexican Grill and Salsa Bar

Fresco Mexican Grill and Salsa Bar stands out with its Mexican cuisine, which uses fresh ingredients to bring tasty, gluten-free dishes to the Kent community.

"Everything's made-to-order, so I like that we can make things to preferences," manager Trevor Brown said. "It's pretty easy to work with the customers on what they want to change around if they need to."

Most of the menu is gluten free, Brown said, plus Fresco offers a gluten-free salsa bar to sweeten the deal. Add a soft or crispy corn shell to make any Fresco burrito or taco gluten-free, or order a taco or burrito bowl to cut the shell all together.

"If it's not gluten free, we can pretty much make it that way if we need to," Brown said.

— Zaria Johnson

# Best Sandwich Shop



Carl Picelle, his wife and staff work hard making their sandwiches for customers during a lunch rush at their downtown Kent business, Franklin Square Deli.  
**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## Franklin Square Deli

When your partner asks to go to a restaurant where you watch the chef make the food in front of you – take them to Franklin Square Deli.

For almost 40 years, the deli has been serving its specialty sandwiches as customers look on, choosing their custom combinations. Located on the corner of South Water Street and West Main Street, the popular spot has about forty options to

choose from on its menu.

“After 39 years, we’ve got the pinnacle of all our best sellers on the menu right now,” said Carl Picelle, the owner of Kent’s favorite sandwich shop. If you’re looking to try a sandwich, Picelle suggests his favorite – the Cuban.

“It’s pressed on a panini and the ciabatta bread gets nice and crispy,” Picelle said. “It’s a wonderful sandwich.”



People sit inside Twisted Meltz located in Acorn Alley in downtown Kent.

**Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Twisted Meltz

Every Kent State student can look up at the menu at Twisted Meltz and see the names of Kent State graduates throughout the years.

Owner Steve Tannous names every melt after a famous Kent State alumni, honoring the community where the business began. Located in Acorn Alley, Twisted Meltz opened its doors in 2013. Student and local

cliente gravitated toward the cheesy menu items ever since.

“It’s pretty much the best melted cheese spot around,” general manager Jessica Elmore-Riggins said.

The menu includes more than just cheese. Twisted Meltz serves vegan and gluten free options as well.

THIRD

## Penn Station East Coast Subs

A sub shop with the popular Philly cheesesteak, Penn Station East Coast Subs is busy serving Kent State students. It’s more than a fast food shop, said Melinda Gaiter, the general manager of three years. Customers can enjoy a meal with friends.

“You can order, you can dine in with us,” Gaiter said. “We actually bring your food to you, and we actually can take your trays and stuff where you can kind of come in

and relax and just enjoy the environment.” Gaiter said staff does everything to serve customers.

Both students and Kent locals order subs from the shop. Gaiter said the classic Italian and chicken teriyaki subs are also popular.

Located near campus at 115 N. Willow St., students and Kent residents can dine-in, order takeout or have food delivered.

— Sophie Young

— Kelly Krabill

# Best Burger

FIRST

## Ray's Place

Take seventy years of history, two beef patties and what do you get? A MOFO, or what Kent students like to call, the best burger in town for the fifth year in a row.

The MOFO consists of two beef patties with bacon, cheese and mushrooms smashed between them. It is topped off with mayo, relish, mustard, lettuce, tomato, onion and pickle.

Nestled on Franklin Avenue in downtown Kent, the historic Ray's Place has been a must have over the years for thousands of students.

Founded in 1937 as "the place where the hustlers meet to hustle the hustlers," according to its website, Ray's Place maintained its popularity in Kent throughout the years.

With an array of exciting choices, one is sure to have a burger they'll never forget.



Bartender Chris Allen refills a drink for customers at the bar at Ray's Place on March 20, 2022. Ray's is located at 135 Franklin Ave. **Kaitlyn Finchler / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Five Guys

The Five Guys on East Main Street may look unique on the outside, but on the inside it is just like any other of the 1,700 locations around the world. Jamie Moore, the general manager, said that is exactly why Kent students keep coming back.

"When you walk in the doors at Five Guys, your burgers are gonna be juicy, they're gonna be delicious, they're gonna be pretty fast," he said.

Because of this, students can always depend on Five Guys for a quick burger fix.

"What we strive for every day is to deliver the best burgers, fries and rock'n'roll," Moore said.



Employees and customers stand inside Five Guys located at 626 E Main St. **Sydney Pike / The Kent Stater**

THIRD

## Mike's Place

Mike's Place is not a gimmick or a schtick, it is the real deal. Founded in 1987 by Mike Kostensky, this hard-to-miss restaurant on South Water Street holds a place in many Kent students' hearts.

"We love Kent State," said Cody Kostensky, the owner's son. "It's sort of what's made us where we're at today,"

What sets Mike's Place apart from other restaurants in the area are the employees, Kostensky said.

"It's a big family here, and we all work really hard together to make it as successful as possible," he said.

All this together, Kostensky said, ensures anyone who heads on over to Mike's Place is bound to have a great time.

—Alexandra Golden

—Alton Northup

—Owen MacMillan

# Best Off-Campus Housing



University Edge is an off-campus housing complex located at 1150 Rhodes Road in Kent, Ohio. **Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**

## FIRST

### University Edge

When searching for ideal off-campus living, why not try the No. 1 option voted on this list?

University Edge, named appropriately for its accessible location, can be found on Rhodes Road, within walking distance from campus.

According to the website, the apartment complex is the "Student Housing Sponsor of Kent State Athletics," and the list of amenities is rather lengthy.

Among the features of the apartment complex are a "state-of-the-art fitness center, outdoor firepit and hot tub that is open year round," said manager Weslee Smith in email.

University Edge stands out compared to other apartment complexes in the Kent area partly because of their partnership with the "Hi, How are You Project that provides training for our team on peer-to-peer support and resident programs for mental

health and wellness," Smith said.

For those who are unsure of who they want to live with, University Edge can also match individuals with roommates through a service known as RoomSync.

Apartments also come with fully furnished living spaces, so there's no need to worry about renting a truck and hauling couches, beds, etc. to the area.

University Edge is also constantly offering new specials, including recent options like the chance to win a \$500 Uber gift card for those who choose to tour the apartments before April 15 of this spring.

"Our residents love where they live at University Edge because it's a community that feels like home," Smith added, via email.

Stop in to University Edge today to see luxurious off-campus living at an honest, affordable price.

## SECOND

### The Province

Located just off campus on South Lincoln Street sits The Province apartment complex.

"I would say the location, for sure, is something that helps us to stand out, [because] we're right across from campus," said Mackenzie Gillis, the leasing and marketing manager.

The personalized service is yet another reason why people choose Province, according to Gillis.

"We like to go above and beyond for our residents, as well as all applicants and

prospects here," she said.

The Province boasts a unique list of amenities including a movie theater and swimming pool.

"I mean, I don't think any of our competitors have a movie theater around here," Gillis said. "We definitely have a really big resort-style pool as well."

Other amenities at Province include a business center, study rooms, a fitness area and clubhouse, according to the website. It offers studio apartments along with two, three and four bedroom living spaces.

## THIRD

### 345 Flats

Ranking in third place for best off-campus housing is 345 Flats on South Depeyster Street.

This local living spot is located right across from downtown Kent, allowing for walkability to both the campus and the city itself.

345 Flats offers amenities like a

roommate matching service, a 24/7 fitness center and free bike storage.

"We also offer all of our amenities indoors," said Deanna Iannone, a desk experience associate and leasing consultant at 345 Flats. "Our gym is indoors, our mailing is indoors, so you never have to leave."

Google

★★★★★ Reviews

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2	345 Flats	4.0	★★★★	\$695-720
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4	The Province	3.9	★★★★	\$645-775
5	University Edge	3.8	★★★★	\$729-744
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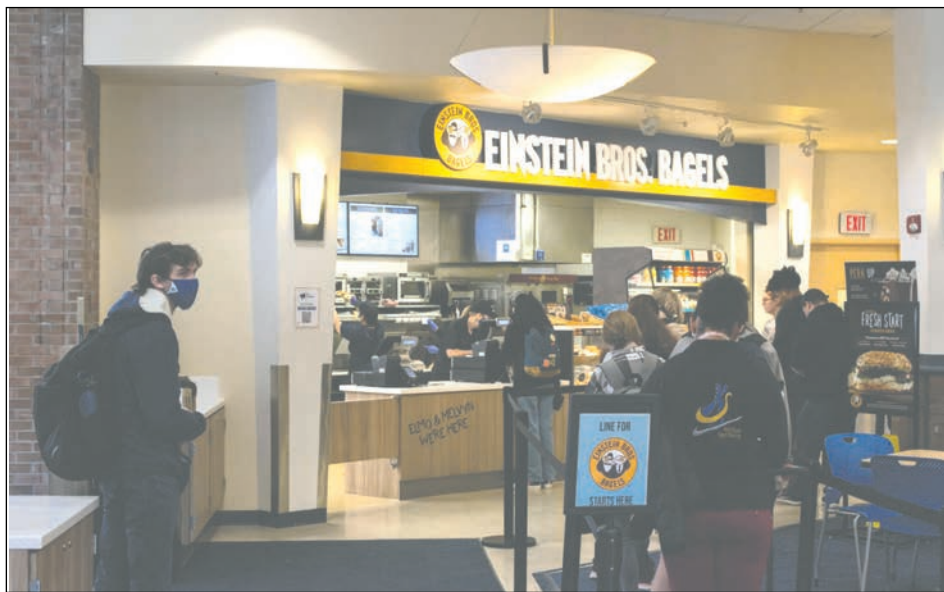
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## Best On-Campus Food



Kent State students wait in line at Einstein Bros. Bagels. **Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

### Einstein Bros. Bagels

When walking past the Hub in the morning, students can expect to see a long line of people waiting to get their breakfast sandwiches from Einstein Bros. Bagels. Einstein's became a breakfast staple at Kent State 18 years ago.

"I'm so proud of the staff. We pride ourselves on our cleanliness and we want our staff to be proud of what they do," Senior Manager Diane Johnson said. "When they work in a good environment, I think they take more pride in their work, creating a better experience for everyone."

Johnson teared up with joy when she heard the news of the restaurant making the "Best of Kent" list.

"I love working for the university. I work for the students, and I am here for them," "I'm proud to work for Kent State and just love the students. That's why I care so much about this."

SECOND

### Rosie's Market & Diner

Rosie's Diner, a meal exchange dining center, offers a little bit of everything. With burgers, pizza, breakfast and much more, with a market located right next to it, it is no surprise it became a popular spot for students.

"This means a lot to the staff here," Senior Manager Kristin Burney said. "They're fantastic. Most of the staff here are students so they take a lot of pride in being able to create an experience that other people enjoy."

She credited Rosie's late hours and diverse menu to why it is so popular among the students.

THIRD

### Wild Blue Sushi

Wild Blue Sushi offers a unique meal to students with its selection of sushi rolls and ramen bowls, a meal you cannot find anywhere else on campus.

The restaurant in the Hub prides itself on its freshness, as well as the high quality of the ingredients. Every meal is made daily.

Wild Blue is also on a mission to create a more sustainable future with its seafood. The restaurant uses eco-friendly packaging and works with Fishery Improvement Projects and the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program to determine environmentally friendly ways to catch fish.

## Best Residence Hall

FIRST

### Centennial Courts

Centennial Courts has been housing students for 20 years now, so it is only fitting that the dorm won first place during its anniversary year.

There are six dorms in the Centennial Courts, courts A-F.

The halls are a short walk from the Student Center, library and Rosie's, making it a prime spot for easy access to some of the more popular locations on campus.

Centennial Court C is also one of the few housing halls that allow students over the age of 21 to have alcohol. The dorms come with plenty of space, and the main attraction is a private bathroom.

The dorms have lounge areas for students to hang out, as well as a kitchen for students to make their own food.

"The dorms are the nicest on campus in my experience," said Nathaniel Kaduk, a junior computer science major. "The people have been nice and the building feels secure. I would definitely recommend living here if you have the chance."



Centennial Court B. **Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

### Tri-Towers

With a diner, fitness center, laundry and many other benefits just a stairwell away, it is easy to see why Tri Towers is a favorite residence hall.

"I love the fact that it has so many things in one area," said Amanda Bogus, a freshman exploratory major. "I can go do my laundry, eat and work out all without having to leave. It is especially useful in the winter; you can stay in comfy clothes the whole time."

Tri Towers is made up of four halls: Korb, Leebrick, Koonce and Wright. It is one of the largest housing complexes on campus, with roughly 1,535 students. The halls also contain four Living-Learning Communities: the LGBTQ+, aeronautics and engineering, College of Arts and Sciences and computer science.

Each dorm has up to 12 floors and the top floor of some have a large lounge complete with a kitchen.

THIRD

### Olson Hall

Located next to the MAC Center, Olson Hall has been at the center of the campus since 1961. Easy walking distance to the student center, library, DI Hub and many other places helps solidify Olson as the third best hall, voted by students.

The hall is part of the Quad, along with Lake, Stopher and Johnson, and it is home to roughly 235 students, most of whom are part of the College of Communication and Information Living-Learning Community.

"Honestly it just feels like we got a little community," said Oscar Zvomuya, a freshman exploratory major. "We got a group chat that people can say when they need something and we try and help each other out. We look out for each other."



Olson Hall is located between the MAC Center and the Design Innovation Hub. **Lillie Leasure / The Kent Stater**



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# Best Event/Festival



Kaitlyn Goldinger poses for a photo with two clowns downtown during Kent Halloween Oct. 27, 2019. **Isabel Brinegar / The Kent Stater files**

FIRST

## Fake Paddy's Day

The streets are flooded by students wearing green on the day Kent students know and love, Fake Paddy's Day. Students wake up early to start off the day by drinking, attending parties and bar hopping.

Like most of the fraternities around campus, Tau Kappa Epsilon held an annual Fake Paddy's Darty or day party. Sophomore architecture major and member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, Xy Payne-Greeno, said that the best part of Fake Paddy's Day is the culture around it.

"Everyone coming together, having a good time and that sense of community," Payne-Greeno said. "It's just something you have to experience and be a part of!"

SECOND

## Heritage Fest

What is the Heritage Festival without plenty of live entertainment, a car show, and a children's area? The event is organized by the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, and this year marks the 23rd annual festival.

Attendees can enjoy local music, food and craft booths, then enjoy fireworks at the end of the night.



Kent State student Derek Kleinhenz and his friend out on Fraternity Row on Fake Paddy's Day March 12.

**Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater files**

THIRD

## Halloween

Halloween is the one night of the year where you can be whatever you want, and this remains true for Kent students. Party goers dress up and hop between bars and house parties.

For junior human development and family studies major, Alyssa Steffey, Halloween is worth more than just a day of celebration. "I feel like Halloween is a great time for people to be themselves but in an alter ego," Steffey said. "We normally go out and dance. We do it for two weekends leading up to Halloween and maybe a week after."

—Briana Phillips



# Best Place to Take Your Family to Eat

FIRST

## Mike's Place

Walking into Mike's Place can be slightly overwhelming, but that's part of the charm of the place. The restaurant's elaborate decor, wacky nature and extensive menu is what made Mike's Place a Kent signature.

Matt Morgan, a Mike's Place supervisor, explained these three things contribute to the "family-like" feeling Mike's provides.

"Our reasonable prices with the amount of food we give out is very fair," Morgan said. "All our stuff is country-style, homemade kind of country kitchen feel, and there are also a lot of unique things here, including the atmosphere."

Mike's Place promotes themselves as a family-started and family-based restaurant where both staff members and customers are treated like family.

"You can always pick out a fresh Kent State student because they come in and they have this sense of awe because it's just so different and unique here," Morgan said.

SECOND

## Ray's Place

Ray's Place isn't exactly a surprise on this list, as it has been a beloved local Kent bar and restaurant since 1937.

"Ray's has been around so long and has a lot of tradition over the years," said Charlie Thomas, the owner of Ray's Place. "A lot of families have come here, and their kids are going here, and their kids are going here."

Tradition isn't the only thing that keeps the community of Kent coming back to Ray's through the generations.

"We have great food, obviously great drink and great people working with us," Thomas said. "A lot of that goes together."

THIRD

## Belleria

Belleria has deep historical roots. Originally opened in 1953 in Youngstown, Belleria has expanded all over Northeast Ohio, including Kent.

"We're very family oriented, it's run by a family," said Haley Scarberry, a manager and server. "It's quiet, smaller, it's not loud and crazy. There's not a full bar here. It's kind of hidden."

Belleria's customer base consists largely of families in addition to the Kent campus crowd, Scarberry said. She also mentioned many families take advantage of their larger party deals.

"We sell a lot of the pasta tubs, it serves four to six people," Scarberry said. "We have a special for that on Wednesday."

Belleria has remained in the Bella family since the 1950s and now offers franchising opportunities.

—Mariah Alanskas



The owner of Belleria, Tom Gavozzi, makes a pizza in the kitchen of his restaurant. **Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater**

# Best Family Recreational Places

FIRST

## Beckwith's Orchards

Family-owned and operated Beckwith's Orchards opened in 1878, and its popularity has only increased over the years.

Although they are only open from July until late fall, the Kent community makes the most of the time it is available.

Whether it's shopping at the gift shop, enjoying a pastry or taking a walk through the orchard, there is something to do for everyone.

According to the website, the produce selection is seasonal, so make sure you plan your trip accordingly to get the most out of your visit.



Beckwith's Orchard is located at 1617 Lake Rockwell Road in Kent, Ohio. **Eman Abu-Khalas / The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## Nelson-Kennedy Ledges State Park

Nelson-Kennedy Ledges State Park might be a favorite for Kent State students, but there is something for people of all ages to explore.

According to the Ohio State Department of Natural Resources, this state park includes "rugged cliffs, waterfalls, and natural landscape" and contains formations such as "Devil's Icebox, Indian Pass and Old Maid's Kitchen."

There are four different hiking trails of varying difficulties to choose from, and tables and grills are provided for picnics.

Originally an area important to Native American tribes, the park gained state protection in 1940 and has been a popular vacation spot ever since.



A family explores an area around a small waterfall in Nelson Ledge Quarry Park. **Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**

THIRD

## Towner's Woods

Opened to the public in 1975, Towner's Woods comprises over 234 acres of recreational areas for the Kent community.

According to the Portage County website, Towner's Woods offers "cross-country skiing, hiking, nature & historic appreciation, picnicking, sledding" and more to visitors.

The park features nine walking trails, including an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible trail.

Visitors can stop by the information kiosk before enjoying a day under a gazebo or out in a field.



Towner's Woods is a local park located at 2264 Ravenna Road in Kent, Ohio. It has hiking trails that surround Lake Pippen. **Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**

—Hannah Keil



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# Best Shopping in Kent

## Off the Wagon

Off the Wagon, located in downtown Kent's Acorn Alley, appeals to the young at heart with its "weird, funny, gag gifts," as described on its website.

Donut-flavored jelly beans, candy cigarettes, Pop Rocks and sour boogers offer college kids fun and tasty late-night snacks, while bacon and cheese flavored crickets threaten to test even the most adventurous eaters.

Under its "funny gifts" category online, Off the Wagon has creative items that are guaranteed to bring a laugh to their recipients.

FIRST

Themes under the category include "stupid stuff," "cheap stuff" and "bigfoots and sloths," so if a friend's birthday is coming up, Off the Wagon should be at the top of your list of stores to check out.

Favorite childhood games like "Spot It" and newer games like "Kazoo That Tune" and "Burger Bear Bonanza" are also sold on shelves, along with different versions of classic games like invisible playing cards to liven up a Friday night hangout.

"We really do have something for everyone," manager Annie Carver said. "I love getting gifts here for my friends and family. It's a great place to come look around and get some laughs. You'll definitely leave in a better mood than when you walked in."



Off the Wagon, located in downtown Kent's Acorn Alley, offers "weird, funny, gag gifts" for the young at heart.

Matthew Brown / The Kent Stater

SECOND

## Last Exit Books

With jazz music playing softly and the smell of fresh roasted coffee in the air, you can spend hours browsing through all of the books, CDs, DVDs and records that Last Exit Books has on its shelves.

The shop resells used products so there are plenty of unique finds that will not be at one of your chain bookstores. Connected to the book section is a coffee house with locally-sourced coffee and treats named after books and songs like "Lavenders for Algernon," a lavender-infused steamer on the menu last week.

"Last Exit Books is a hidden gem," owner Jason Merlene said. "There are not too many places that have books, coffee and music all in one place. It is great to support small businesses, and we have books, coffee, records and more all in one place and for great prices."

A few stairs up, Last Exit sells DVDs,



The barista at Last Exit makes an espresso shot for a customer's coffee drink.

Sophia Lucente / The Kent Stater

CDs, records, T-shirts and other decor and items are sold. Open mic nights for poetry and scheduled readings are also held in this section of the store.

Last Exit is right off Main St., so relaxing while reading a book and sipping coffee is only a few minutes walk away from campus.

TIE

THIRD

## Red Letter Days

Red Letter Days is connected to Off the Wagon on Main Street in Acorn Alley.

Featuring aesthetic stationary, cute stuffed animals, socks and oven mitts with funny- and sometimes explicit- sayings on them, Red Letter Days has every kind of gift option for a friend or family member, or even for yourself.

It has items to appeal to nature lovers, with succulent note cards and posters labeling different kinds of trees and flowers. For artists, they have dozens of colorful pen packs and journals.

There are loads of stickers to decorate your computer with, and unique wrapping papers and greeting cards to wrap up those gifts.

TIE

THIRD

## Blue and Gold Fan Store

To show off school pride at Dix Stadium for football games or buy a cute sweatshirt to represent Kent State when you are at home for spring break, Blue and Gold Fanstore, formerly called Universitees, is the place to find unique Kent State shirts, sweatpants and accessories.

Aside from Blue and Gold's great products, floor manager Damien Hampton said the store's customer service makes it stand out from other school-pride shops.

"Our customer service is number one," Hampton said. "I'd rather talk to a customer than sell something. When customers come in, I make conversation with every person."

—Isabella Schreck

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# Best Place to Hear Local Music and Bands



The Kent Stage, located at 175 E. Main St. downtown, features a classical theater sign above its entrance. **Sydney Pike / The Kent Stater**

FIRST

## The Kent Stage

Locally owned and operated on East Main Street is the Kent Stage, home to live music and theater.

The owner, Tom Simpson, said he enjoys having an irregular job where he gets to work with artists and young people.

"We are the only nationally known venue in Portage County," Simpson said. "We have tremendous acoustics and famous acts."

The Plain Dealer deamed The Kent Stage the best acoustic venue in Northeast Ohio and the Stage is home to the full-service bar All Folked Up. This venue hosts about 100 concerts a year as well as film festivals, plays and music festivals.

THIRD

## The Venice Cafe

One of the original bars and most popular locations in Kent, Venice Cafe, is also known for its live music. The cafe is a more laid-back music scene with about three to four bands a month.

The Venice Cafe has been around since 1941, which is why manager Jeff Crowe said the historic value adds to the venue.

Crowe is looking to increase the number of musicians playing in his establishment and gain more traffic.



Erie Street Kitchen and Venice Café, located at 163 W Erie St in Kent, serves south-style food to community members of Kent. **Savannah Monks/ The Kent Stater**

SECOND

## The Outpost Concert Club

Off the beaten path, away from most of the Kent scene is popular event and live music venue, The Outpost Concert Club. The Outpost prides itself on being a popular venue that works with younger artists as well as hosting unique events regularly.

Promoter Fran Bishop works with newer bands to help them grow in popularity.

"All the Kent students that see us and come out to The Outpost are always happy to find that its other college student or people around their age making music," Bishop said.

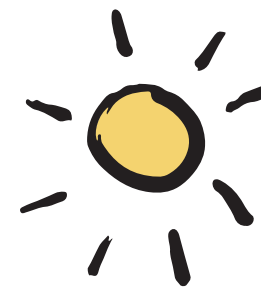
Certain events such as Emo Night stand out to students because they are "one big house party," Bishop said.

This 18 and up venue is looking to shake things up with the addition of Club Nights every Thursday by housing some of the biggest DJs in Ohio.



The Outpost is a local music venue located at 4962 SR-43 in Kent. **Savannah Monks / The Kent Stater**

# Take a Study Break



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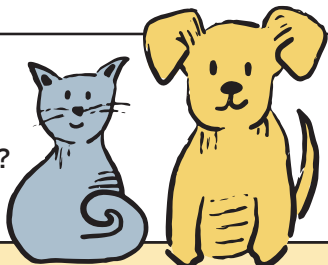


Why do cats hate laptops?

They don't have a mouse.

What do you call a magic dog?

A Labracadabrador.



## Sudoku

	5	1	8		3		7	
9		7	5		2	8		4
	8						5	2
8		6					4	5
			2		6	9		
	9				7	3	2	6
6	1	2	3			4		7
		9		2			6	3
		8		6	4			

Sudoku generated by sudokuweb.org

## Today's Theme: Coffee

L I U N E I O S S E R P S E  
 O N I C C U P P A R F S A L  
 A C H C A P P U C C I N O W  
 M A C C H I A T O M F A W M  
 O F A O E T T A L T R A C E  
 C F R N E S N A A I E O O A  
 R E A C R M N E M E N N L C  
 E I G C E F E F F E C A D E  
 A N U B T F O P U U H C B C  
 M E S C F O N M F M P I R R  
 I P M O E T I N W O R R E N  
 L U C E T L T O R C E E W O  
 K E E R R A R O R H S M L M  
 N F A I G O O P E A S A M P

## Win a Prize!

Share your completed *A Dragon Named Marvin* story with us on social media by **Friday, April 22** for a chance to win a **movie night gift basket** from University Libraries!

Follow and tag us both on Instagram or Twitter

Instagram: @KentState\_LIB and @ksu\_studentmedia

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## A Dragon Named Marvin

Marvin is a dragon; a \_\_\_\_\_ breathing  
(noun)

dragon to be precise. He lives in a cave

near (the) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(place)

enjoys eating \_\_\_\_\_ which he finds  
(plural noun)

outside his \_\_\_\_\_ cave. One day  
(adjective)

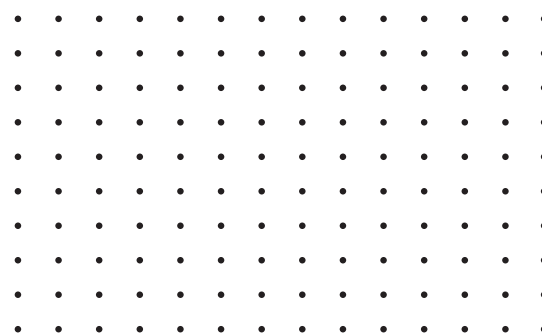
a group of \_\_\_\_\_ went to his  
(plural noun)

cave to try to get him to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(verb)

He spread his wings and \_\_\_\_\_!  
(verb: past tense)

They never bothered him again.

## Grab A Friend: Play Dots



COLD BREW	LATTE	FRAPPUCCINO
FRENCH PRESS	NITRO	ESPRESSO
COFFEE	MILK	MACCHIATO
CAPPUCCINO	SUGAR	AMERICANO
CREAM	MOCHA	CAFFEINE

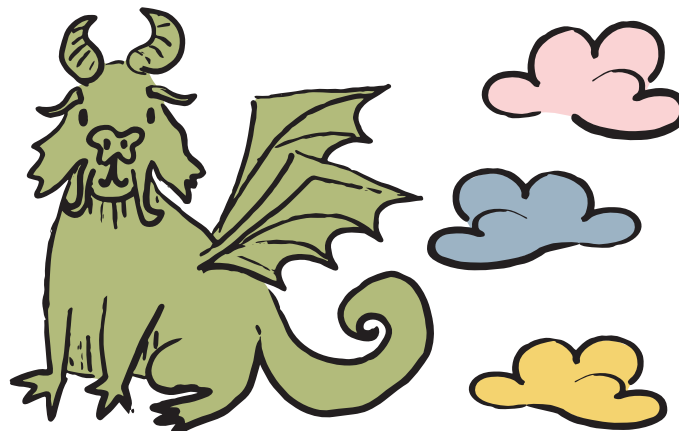
## Grab A Friend: Play Tic Tac Toe

Best 2 out of 3!






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