

Perspectives

"So enjoy life, and live it to the fullest."

Editors note: The following article was printed in memorial of Trista Standen, with permission of Trista's family. Trista originally wrote this article for her college English Class on February 8, 2005. Trista passed away less than a week later on February 14, as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident.

It seems as if it was only yesterday that Danielle, Billy, Kirk and I were two-tracking in Kirk's Mountaineer. While we were getting ready to leave, Kirk, Danielle and I were planning our trip to the casino in Traverse City for that coming Friday. We were psyched; it was our first trip out of town together. Dave, my boyfriend at the time, Danielle and Kirk and I were getting a room at the Grand Traverse Hotel.

Thursday night, Kirk called to tell us that he couldn't go because he

got called in to work on Friday evening. Danielle and I were bummed, so we started thinking of things we could do instead. Friday rolled around and Danielle, Dave, and I decided to go to the bar and shoot pool. We had another friend of ours, Dave, come too, so we could play on teams.

When Kirk got out of work he called and said that he was taking Rachel and Leafa two-tracking in the Mountaineer, so he would be home later.

Around 8:30 pm, my boyfriend received a phone call. He walked outside, which was unlike him because we usually pass the phone around and all of us take turns talking to whoever had called. Fifteen minutes passed by, and Dave walked back in with a horrifying look on his face. From the look and tone of

voice he had, I knew he had to be pissed at me.

We walked outside and

Dave took me off to the side and told me he needed to talk to me. "Oh, my god! What happened?" was all I could mumble.

"Kirk, Leafa, and Rachel were in a car accident tonight around 8 p.m.," was all he managed to say. He paused and looked at Dave and Danielle standing by the car waiting impatiently. "Leafa and Rachel are ok, but are in ICU right now. Leafa was thrown from the truck and has broken fingers, broken toes, and other various injuries, and Rachel has a broken pelvis," he said, in a shaky voice as his lips quavered.

"What happened to Kirk? Is he ok?" I demanded in a sharp voice. I could barely breathe and couldn't even move a muscle.

"Well," he started to say "Along with Leafa, Kirk was also thrown from the vehicle and he died at the scene." "Who told you this?" I demanded with a shuddering voice.

"Amanda is the one who called me and told me," he said hesitantly, because he knew I didn't like her.

"She's wrong! He didn't die. He just got hurt!" I argued, in denial. "A pain shot through my heart as I stood there, completely paralyzed from head to toe. I couldn't cry, I couldn't speak, and I couldn't do anything but stand there and stare into Dave's eyes. My stomach was tying itself into knots; it was making me feel like I was going to throw up. My heart sank as I felt the tears start to flood my eyes. I was in complete denial. He

couldn't be dead. He just got hurt. After I told Danielle, she staggered back and fell into the seat of the car. We sat there and held each other as the tears poured onto each other's shoulders. I went inside to call my mom to tell her that we all were going to Dave's house because no one wanted to be alone. I picked up the phone, barely able to dial because I was shaking so badly, and could barely see through my tears.

"Mo-om," was all I was able to get out as I started crying hysterically. I couldn't manage to get another word out.

"What's wrong? What happened? Are you ok? Damn it, Trista, tell me what happened!" Mom said it in a demanding voice, trying to find answers to why her daughter was hysterical.

"Kirk died, Mom! Kirk died!" I bellowed into the phone. That's all I managed to say for the first few minutes until I had calmed down some.

"I'm not coming home tonight. Dave is taking us to his house," I told her between sniffles. My head fell into my arms as I listened to her answer.

"Ok, that's fine. Just don't drive if you are crying because we don't need you to get in an accident, too," she complied in an understanding voice.

The entire ride home we sat in silence, everyone was awe-struck as we let it all sink in and actually realized what had happened that night. When we got to Dave's house, we all stood outside exchanging hugs.

Danielle was in complete shock because the man of her dreams, the guy that would do anything for her, had just

died. He also used to come and see her at whatever time she called if she was having a bad day and she needed to get out and talk to someone. We all went inside and Danielle and I lay down on the bed together with our heads buried in the pillows, sobbing.

"I'll be back in a few minutes," I

said as I lifted my head off the tear-soaked pillow. I went outside and sat on the porch while I gasped for air. I couldn't sit there but for a minute because I was shaking so badly, stumbling around in the dark as memories of Kirk flooded my head. My sniffles echoed in the complete silence. The door creaked open and closed. I knew it was Dave to come see if I was ok. As we stood there, I could tell he was frantically trying to think of something to talk about. He started making small talk, trying desperately to get my mind off of the death of one of my best friends.

"It is freezing out here, even if you can't tell. So please, come inside!" he pleaded as he shivered in his shorts and T-shirt. We walked in, arm-in-arm, with my head laying on his shoulder because my neck was too limp to hold it up. All of us lay down on the bed and held each other as we drifted off into our memory logged dreams of our great friend, Kirk.

The following week, we went to see Kirk at his funeral. I have never in my life felt so sad and heart-broken, until I saw him lying there, totally lifeless in his casket. In my mind, I kept telling myself that that wasn't him lying there. As I stood there starting at him, I could feel this ball in the back of my throat getting bigger and bigger, but then his mom came up to us and thanked Danielle and I for being such good friends to Kirk, and that she appreciated it. When I heard those words, I lost it; that ball in the back of my throat was no longer there. I had disap-



peared when the tears started to emerge from my already blood-shot eyes. I couldn't hold it in any longer and started bawling once again. Kirk's mother asked us to sign his cross that a few mutual friends had made for him at the site of the accident.

Afterwards, we did as she asked and went to the scene of the accident. It was horrible. There was glass and miscellaneous items, such as his chewing tobacco container, beer bottles, and cigarette packs that had fallen out of his truck when it rolled approximately 7 times. There was the 7-foot-tall cross that had burned in the cross, across the top, "Keebler," his nickname.

We took the black marker and stood there, not knowing what to write. Our minds were blank; we had so much to say but we didn't know what really meant the most. Finally, the perfect saying came to our mind, and we thanked him for all the good times we had.

When it is raining, I also take extra care and go slower than normal on dirt roads because that is how Kirk lost control of his vehicle, although he was going too extremely fast where the road had many sharp turns. I also make sure I let my friends know how much they mean to me all the time because you never know when their your life or theirs will end. I also make sure I enjoy life, because I don't want to miss out on the times I could be having fun and enjoying the time I have here.

Kirk was the same age as me, 19. So it just goes to prove that you never know when your time here is done. So enjoy life, and live it to the fullest.

ACC Events Calendar April / May 2005

- 27 The Rocky Horror Picture Show, ACC Drive**
In Theater in the main parking lot, 9 p.m. Admission is free, and the community is welcome.
- 29 An Evening with the Arts, 7-9 p.m., East Campus.** Exhibits by fine arts and photography students
- 30 14th Annual Staff Retirement/Recognition Dinner** at the Alpena Country Club. Tickets available from Kathy Momrik in Campus Services and Joan Misiak in the Bookstore. ACC employees, \$10; guests \$15.
- 2-4 Final Exams**
- 4 RN Pinning, 7 p.m., Granum Theatre**
- 5 Honors Breakfast, 9 a.m. Holiday Inn.** Tickets available in Campus Services for \$6.50.

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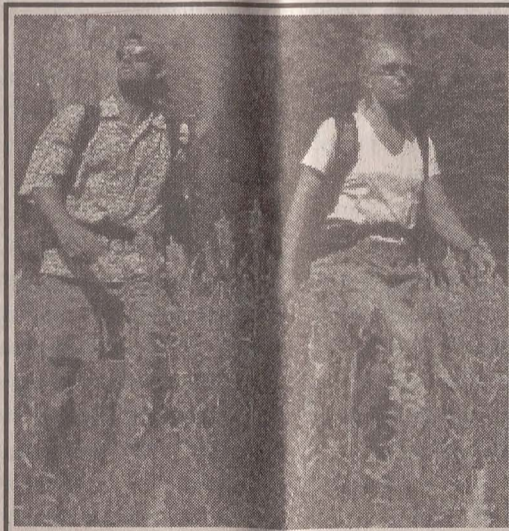
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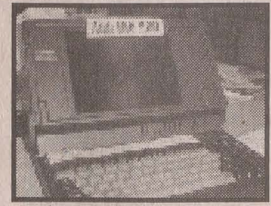
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