



Lindsey Borgna/Index

Freshman Rachel Graves, left, proudly displays her one dreadlock. She said she grew one just to see how it looked and plans to have more done when her hair grows out. Junior Rob Jones, right, shows off his full head of dreadlocks, which he braids.

Dreads become part of identity

BY MIKEY KARTJE
Staff Reporter

The sounds of reggae music and crackling hair fill freshman Rachel Graves' Centennial Hall room. Inside, Graves combats hairstyle norms with a comb and a crochet needle.

Dreadlocks have become more than a method of expression for some students and now are an important part of their identity.

Graves, a dreadlock first-timer, is using dreadlocks as an opportunity to stand out from other students on campus, she said.

"I just wanted to do something different," Graves said.

Freshman Pete White is far from being a dreadlock novice. He got them nearly 10 years ago, he said.

"When I got them, not a lot of people had them," he said. "They've grown in popularity [since then]."

White said that because of the small number of students on campus with dreadlocks, he has the advantage of being more identifiable.

"People just identify me as the guy with the dreads," he said.

Such advantages do not come without hard work and tedious maintenance.

Graves works on just one patch of hair at a time, combing it backwards into a knot, and then rolling it between her palms to create a matted coil — techniques known as backcombing and palming. It will not become a full dreadlock until nearly the end of the semester. She said she is optimistic for the journey and is excited for the end result.

White opted for the same technique

when he had his dreadlocks done years ago, and after 10 years of dreads, White said he considers their maintenance an extremely time-consuming activity and a trivial part of his life.

▮ If people are going to judge me for them, then I don't really want to know them anyway. ▮

— Rachel Graves
freshman

asionally will joke with him about them. White said it wouldn't make a difference if there were more disapproving individuals because his dreads have become an inseparable part of his life.

"It's just who I am," White said.

Graves agreed that dreads play an important role in identifying herself.

"If people are going to judge me for them, then I don't really want to know them anyway," she said.

Graves said she is more concerned about keeping hers healthy and looking good. She said she washes her dread at least twice a week. Once her hair becomes fully dreaded, she will have to squeeze the water out of her hair like a sponge, Graves said.

Sophomore Katie Beaton attempted to give herself dreadlocks, but decided not to keep them.

"I had them for about a month, but they kept falling out," she said.

Beaton used a different technique than Graves and White. She applied a specialized dreading wax to her hair and then wrapped her dreads in rubber bands, she said. Her life has been easier without dreads, but she wants to try again sometime, Beaton said.



Distance makes heart grow weary

BY ANDREA HEWITT
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I regularly find myself locked into long-distance relationships.

Sometimes these relation-

ships are fairly serious, but more commonly, they are people I had fun dating and just wasn't ready to let go of before going back to school. As young adults, it is important to distinguish between the serious and the fun— especially

for freshmen in long-distance relationships with people they started dating in high school.

Thanksgiving Break is only seven weeks away, which means one important thing: During those nine days, if anyone mentions statistics and calculus to me, or how dumb it was to wait until my senior year to take them and schedule them back-to-back, I'm going to end my friendship with them on the spot.

It also means the turkey drop is underway. The turkey drop is the common college ritual where freshmen come to school dating someone and break up with, or drop, their significant other by Thanksgiving.

Awkward moments are inevitable with any breakup, regardless of timing. When you run into your ex's mom while sipping a frappuccino at Starbucks and she mentions that your ex immediately parked himself or herself on the couch, crying and scarfing down Ben & Jerry's, it's going to be awkward. But don't worry — you made the right decision for both of you.

One of the biggest stressors of being involved in a long-distance relationship is the uncertainty of not knowing when you'll be living in the same city, according to a study by Kathryn Maguire published in the November 2007 "Communication Quarterly."

Assuming you don't fail too many classes, you're in Kirksville for the next four years. That means four years of uncertainty about when you'll see him or her next and trying to align post-college futures. That's a lot of stress for a relationship starting at such a young age.

I'll be honest. During my first couple of years of college

I didn't live by the advice I'm doling out to you, and I regret all the hours I stressed about relationships I realistically knew weren't going anywhere.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you should set the Index down and immediately change your relationship status on Facebook to 'single,' but do some soul searching. Weigh the pros and cons of your long distance relationships and decide if it's worth the stress uncertainty causes.

Breaking hearts and having your heart broken are part of growing up. You'll get past it. Don't be afraid to drop unsatisfying relationships — it can only lead to you feeling less bogged down.

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