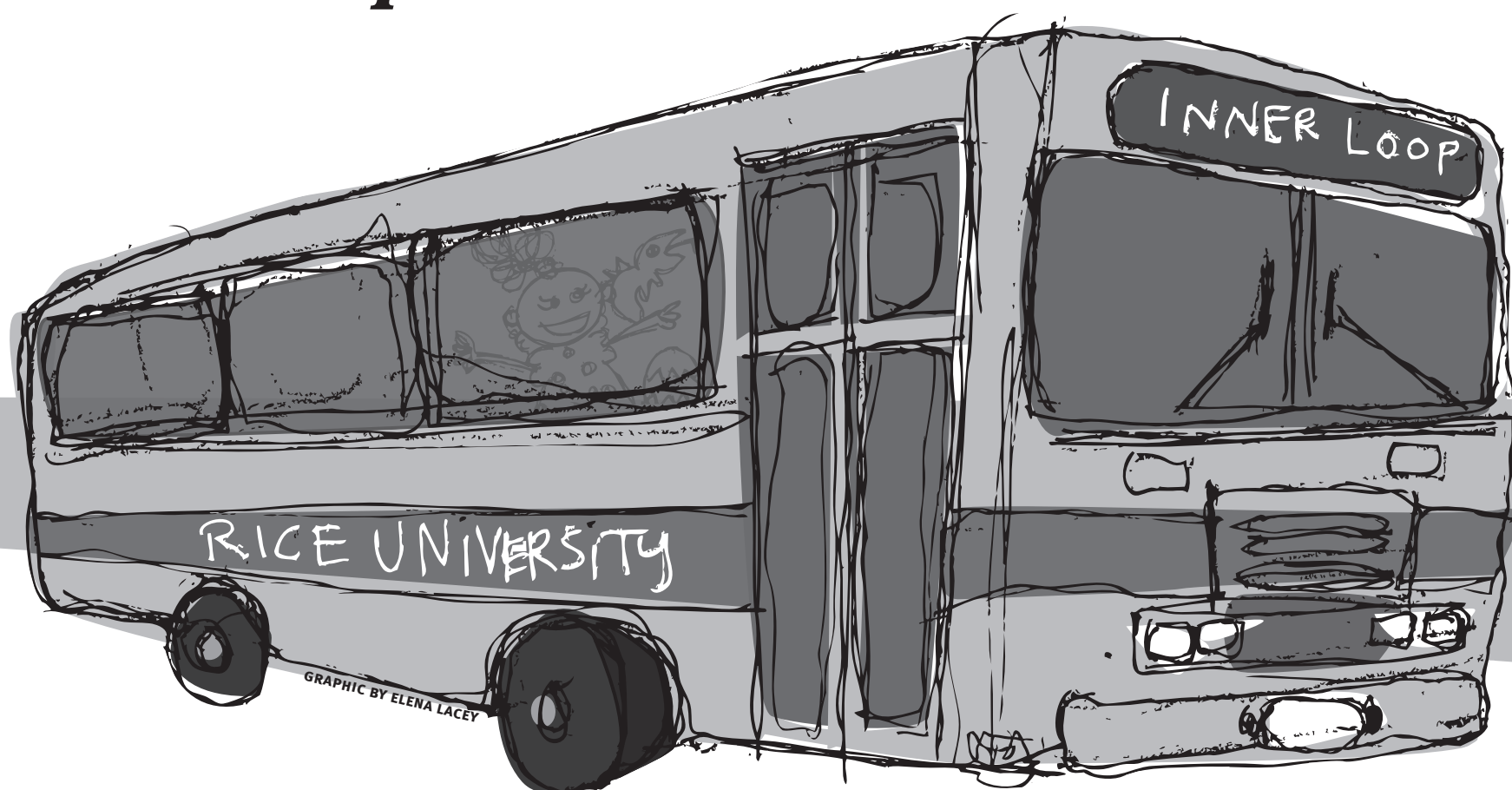


IN

THE LOOP

The story of Rice's inner loop Bus drivers



GRAPHIC BY ELENA LACEY

BY ALEX BISBERG AND KIRA CLINGEN
FOR THE THRESHER

Inside the hedges, there are four means of transport: foot, skateboard, bike and bus. If you're anything like the rest of the undergraduate population, struggling out the door of the servery, paper cup stuffed with bacon in one hand and overflowing mug of coffee in the other, chances are the bus is your most convenient and efficient option. Luckily, there is a team of often-overlooked individuals ready to save you – and your latte – and get you to class on time. These are the Rice University bus drivers, a diverse group of workers from all walks of life dedicated to transporting students across campus. In interviews with the Thresher, they shared their experiences from the Inner Loop and beyond.

Kenneth L. Tezeno

Kenneth Tezeno has called Rice University his employer for the past five years, but he has only worked as a bus driver for the past eight months. Tezeno originally worked in the university mailroom until a series of layoffs left him without a job, but with a choice.

"Actually, it wasn't my decision; they had budget cuts in the mailroom," Tezeno said. "It just so happened that I still had my Commercial Driver's License from when I drove trucks a few years back. They had a position, so they went ahead and switched me over. It's been good ever since."

Tezeno now enjoys engaging with students as they board and depart the bus. He said one of the most rewarding aspects of the job is the contact with young individuals from around campus. Typical conversations consist of a variety of topics, ranging anywhere from home life to classes to sports,

especially his favorite hometown teams, the Texans and the Astros, which he catches up on while at home with his three children.

"I prefer [the daytime] shift; it's hard to get any sleep during the day. I was trying to go to school and take care of my family," Tezeno said. "I just finished my associate's [degree]; I'm finally trying to take a break for the fall, but hopefully in the spring I can start back up on my bachelor's degree."

However, Tezeno hasn't been held back by the lack of his degree. He's already started his own business and looks forward to maintaining it.

"It's a corporation that I've started called K&J Entertainment," Tezeno said. "I've gotten into videos and music because I want to encourage the younger generation not to get into adult situations and show them how to get out of them if they do happen to."

Tezeno described an incident that occurred while he was a driver on the night shift that reveals the perspective adults on campus might have toward Rice's traditions. While the drivers are an integral part of the Rice University staff, they are not initiated to the university's traditions the way new students are during O-Week.

"The first few nights I was an escort driver from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., and between Baker [College] and the library stops, there were all these kids with whipped cream all over them, and that was weird" Tezeno said.

While Baker 13 may feel like second nature to runners and observers alike, to someone unfamiliar with the event, it can seem a bizarre ritual. Other strange occurrences Tezeno has witnessed happened at an unusu-

al time, when most students were enjoying their summer vacations.

"Rice is actually very busy during the summer time; you might not know that," Tezeno said. "We have different classes going on, different seminars going on. The summer is busy throughout the whole, whereas during the regular semester, it's just in spurts."

Various groups come and stay on campus throughout the harsh Houston summer. Tezeno said that Teach for America was an especially rowdy bunch.

"Friday nights were their night," Tezeno said. "They partied."

As a whole, though, Tezeno said he appreciates the student body here.

"Sometimes they need a pep talk, and sometimes they need to pep me up; it goes both ways," Tezeno said.

Yolanda Wright

Yolanda Wright's excitement is contagious. Her spirit flows through her laugh and her hearty welcomes as students step onto her bus. She calls herself a bus driver by trade, and 10 months ago, she traded in her seat after 10 years on a yellow school bus filled with screaming elementary children to drive the Inner Loop shuttle at Rice.

This transition was partially by chance, but Wright seems fully satisfied with her decision in choosing Rice University as the home of her new job.

"My husband was surfing the Internet; I was working at METRO at the time," Wright said. "He said, 'Maybe you'll like this.' I liked the pay, so I filled out the application, and here I am."

Wright's experience has been extremely positive so far.

"I love driving buses," Wright said. "I love the people. Being right here with you now, I'm having fun."

She went on to speak about the great mutual respect she felt she and the students had for each other.

"Rice is Rice," Wright said. "Like I said, everyone here is well-disciplined – the adults and the undergraduates. The students are never rude, they know that I can handle myself, and they respect me fully."

Undergraduates make up the bulk of her bus riders, and while she sees around 500 riders a day, she still recognizes a few as regulars. One of her favorite spots, Duncan Hall, is also the most crowded.

"I call it the famous Duncan Hall," Wright chuckled.

After Duncan Hall, the endeavors of Rice students are clear based on the other most popular stops. She emphasized that as a whole, Rice students seem to be a studious and responsible bunch.

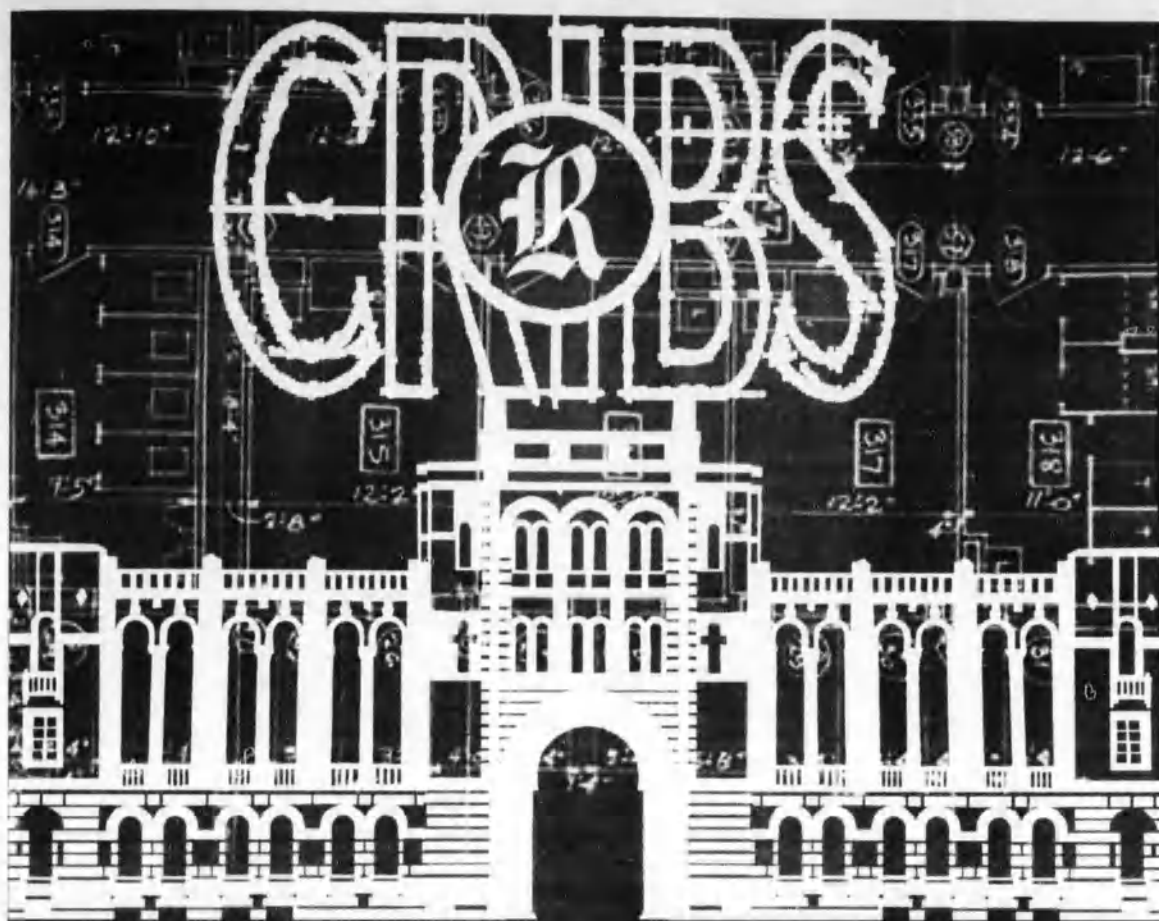
"I have never seen so much studying in my life," Wright said. "The library is definitely used, and the Rice Memorial Center is where students congregate."

With kind and caring bus drivers like these, transportation around Rice's campus is as enjoyable as it is easy.

"Bus driving is what I do, and I enjoy the youth," Wright said.

If the traffic is light and you need a friendly person to talk to, your Rice bus driver will be there.

Rice Cribs: McMurtry's tea-filled oasis



Burt's Tea Room

- 1 central common room
- 1 large green couch
- 1 full sink
- 1 table
- 1 oven and stove top
- A plethora of tea

BY ALEX BISBERG
THRESHER STAFF

A warm breeze swept through the air as I strolled into McMurtry College's central quad. Casually seated on the picnic table, I spied McMurtry sophomore Joseph Vento. We introduced ourselves and proceeded up the stairs to the fifth-floor kitchen.

On our way up, Vento recounted the story of how Burt's Tea Room came into existence. The room pays homage to Burt McMurtry, one of the founders of McMurtry College. Two seniors who graduated last year came up with the idea to have a location where students can come relax and escape the stresses of homework and exams. These Murts figured that a hot cup of tea can soothe many an ailed student.

McMurtry sophomore Christopher Liu and Vento strive to keep the tradition alive today.

"It's a sanctuary away from the stresses of Rice," Vento said.

A shelf, donated by the resident associates, has all types of tea, ranging from a Chinese black tea to a Celestial Seasonings Country Peach Passion herbal infusion. A thermos of hot water stands guard over the spread of teas, ever vigilant to the passing tea drinker.

A comfortable green couch is in the corner, along with a table and a full refrigerator. Other features of this tea-filled paradise include countless quotations and phrases posted on the wall. One day, Vento asked for everyone



DANTE ZAKHIDOV / THRESHER

to come up and write his or her favorite quotes and sayings on paper and post them on the wall. On the wall hangs a large array of strange and varying photos. Known as a "photo solarium," according to Vento, it is meant to inspire conversation.

The tea room is host to organized social events as well. Every Wednesday night, "Burt Talks," inspired by the motivational "TED Talks," are hosted in the welcoming tea room. People discuss a broad array of topics, ranging from education to dream dismantling, as they sip their cups of brewed bliss. Before winter recess, Liu

and Vento also threw a Christmas party; they will continue to try hosting more as the years go on.

With funds from the Bill Wilson Grant from Wiess College, which will be matched by McMurtry, the tea room plans to continue expanding its selections and facilities and have a full mural painted on its walls and ceilings. While the tea room is most popular among fifth-floor residents, Vento hopes that it will continue to grow. The tea room is a great addition to McMurtry's culture and will be even better as it continues to grow.

"Rice Cribs" explores various dorm designs around campus. If you would like to suggest a room to be featured, email Alex Bisberg at ajb7@rice.edu.

Ask the Thresher

Dear Thresher,

I read in "Cosmo" that 62 percent of men would be willing to have period sex. I'm interested but skeptical, especially about how my boyfriend would feel Should I try it?

From,

Living on the Edge

When I first read this question, I was immensely disgusted. Naturally, I turned to the Bible for help. While it is true that Moses parted the Red Sea, this is in no way a thumbs up from the Holy Book. In fact, those celebrating Passover next week will remember that turning the rivers into blood was a horrible plague designed to punish the Egyptians. From what I can tell, none of the Pharaoh's people used the opportunity to get it on in the churning river of red blood cells. A quick search through Leviticus further reveals that while the Bible has many bloodbaths, you shouldn't have one in bed. In fact, the Bible states: "You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity" (Leviticus 18:19). Now, that does come from Leviticus, generally known by Biblical scholars to be the least fun part of the Bible, filled with many archaic rules, such as those concerning stoning and slaves that have long since been abandoned. However, I think this passage is meaningful for those who don't believe in the literal word of God (obviously you do not, unless you and your partner are married) for the theological reason that period sex is really, really gross.

You may respond to that with the fact that "Cosmo" says 62 percent of men say it's okay to wade in during "shark week". I want to remind you that 100 percent of men asked in this "Cosmo" survey are okay taking surveys by Cosmo about menstrual sex. You don't need to have taken Stat 280 to realize that might not be a representative sample of the entire male population. In fact, I am highly doubtful that almost two-thirds of men will want to recreate Daniel Day Lewis' Oscar winning performance in "There Will Be Blood". It is my prediction that 90 percent of men's stomachs will react to the idea of period sex like they were going through horrible turbulence after eating airplane food. My recommendation is to ask your boyfriend what he feels. If he is up for the idea, tell that pervert to go jump in a lake, preferably one filled with blood.

-Ares

I'm again going to return to my now very repetitive mantra: Communication is key. It really doesn't matter whether 62 percent of men polled by Cosmo are willing to try period sex or not - what matters is whether you and your partner both feel comfortable with the concept. If you have discussed the issues that may arise, then it is totally within your right to have period sex and to enjoy it. However, there are also some things you should be aware of before you engage in this admittedly somewhat controversial experience.

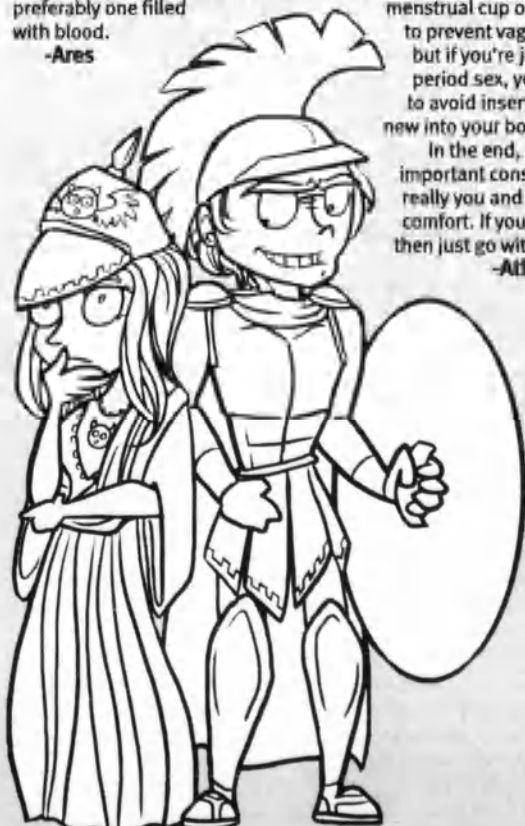
First of all, despite many common misconceptions, you can get pregnant while on your period. It is generally easiest to get pregnant around the time you're ovulating, which in the middle of your menstrual cycle, but you can actually get pregnant at any time while having unprotected sex. So, if by chance you are choosing to have period sex rather than more conventional sex in an attempt to avoid pregnancy, you definitely should not count period sex as a form of birth control. Furthermore, as your cervix is more open during your period, you can be at higher risk for cervical infections or HIV, so safety should always be your first concern, and protection is a must.

Second of all, there is a problem concerning the mess that could result from having period sex. Some women have reported elevated feelings and enjoying sex more while on their periods, but period sex can also result in some sticky situations. A decent consideration is also where you are in your cycle. If you have a really heavy flow and a wide-set vagina, then you should probably wait until you're a few days into your period to give period sex a try. That way, you can avoid at least some of the mess that can result from having period sex. However, there are also other ways to minimize the mess during period sex. Shower sex is always an option - the clean up is essentially built into the situation (unless, of course, you're in the floor-flooding showers in McMurtry). However, another consideration is the position you choose; if the girl is on the bottom and the guy on the top, old-fashioned gravity will minimize messy situations. Putting down towels is another option, but it definitely detracts from romance. To avoid

the mess, you can also insert a menstrual cup or a cervical cap to prevent vaginal secretions, but if you're just trying out period sex, you might want to avoid inserting something new into your body.

In the end, the most important consideration is really you and your partner's comfort. If you're up for it, then just go with the flow.

-Athena



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Rice Cribs gets cozy inside Duncan's most comfortable suite



Duncan 4D

- 1 central common room
- 6 singles
- 2 bathrooms
- 2 couches
- Assorted chairs
- Board games
- 2 refrigerators
- Various organizational drawers

BY ALEX BISBERG
THRESHER STAFF

The lovely ladies of Duncan's 4D suite pleasantly invited me into their common room to have a look around. Junior Mecklin Ragan walked me in, where we found seniors Christina Coravos and Amber Makhani. I was immediately immersed in a homey, comforting atmosphere. The room is filled with comfortable couches crammed with pillows, assorted types of chairs and multiple ottomans.

The windows are occupied by empty bottles of wine, and countless shelves and boxes compartmentalized the nooks of the common room. A large patterned rug is spread over the concrete floor and topped by some useful sitting pillows. Three glass tables stand around the room; the main table is used as a centerpiece of the common room. Usually, fresh flowers occupy the table, Coravos said.

Large lamps stand totem on the surrounding glass tables. All surrounded a large CRT TV, its bulbous backside protruding onto the table. It is not used much, apparently; in this suite, board games including Jenga and Disney's "Scene It" are much more common than video games.

A cabinet filled with wine glasses and other assorted cups stands to the side of the room. Last semester, Elizabeth Casey, another suit-



ALEX BISBERG / THRESHER

emate, hosted "Wine Wednesdays," a classy social gathering that provided a mid-week break. The 4D suite also hosts other, less-regular social events, such as wine and cheese parties and game nights.

In addition to the main common room, many little things make this room special. One of the bathrooms is completely adorned with zebra-print mats and organizers. These women pride themselves on their coordination.

I walked into Ragan's single and saw a gigantic set of shelves and drawers occupying the entire right wall. Everything from books to clothes to trinkets of all shapes and sizes fill every section of this colossal conglomeration of drawers. It was as if The Container Store had

moved into her room and created a model room for advertising. Even a specially modified file cabinet flipped out and stored shoes.

Overall, this room was a contrast to the past few seen in this column. "We like to keep organized," Makhani said. The comfortable and welcoming atmosphere is unmatched. It seems very easy to just huddle up and take a luxurious nap on one of these couches or sit down to a nice glass of wine. Even though this room isn't flashy, it has a wonderful atmosphere and is filled with friendly suitemates.

Rice Cribs explores various dorm designs around campus. If you would like to suggest a room to be featured, email Alex Bisberg at ajb7@rice.edu.

Campus Folk: Look at Rice's own master chef Baker Chef Clark takes pride in serving simple and delicious food

BY FARRAH MADANAY
THRESHER EDITORIAL STAFF

Baker Kitchen Executive Chef Cari Clark has tasted cuisines from around the world, so it may come as a surprise to learn that her favorite food is something even the less traveled may well be familiar with: Rice Krispies treats. For Clark, her love of Rice Krispies treats makes sense in the context of her approach to cooking: minimal ingredients, simple dishes.

Though Baker College servery's central location on campus is convenient for students to drop in for lunch between classes, location cannot solely account for the flocks of students from all of the residential colleges that opt to get breakfast, lunch and dinner from the Baker Kitchen.

"I would like to think they like our style of cooking: fresh and simple with everything produced in our kitchen, including dressing, soups and sauces," Clark said. "Fresh with healthy options is our goal."

Clark, who said she loves cooking all food, did not always dream of farm-to-fork dinners and managing a university kitchen with a staff of five. Rather, the West Texas native graduated from Texas A&M University as a geologist. After working in the realm of Earth science for five years, she decided to swap her chisel for a chef's knife and attend the California Culinary Academy.

After graduating in 1987, Clark began to turn her passion into her vocation by starting out with the Jackson and Company catering service. Clark also worked as a line cook at Cafe Annie under Chef Robert Del Grande, who she said inspired her with his creativity and culinary innovation of Southwestern cuisine.

Clark first shared her culinary expertise with the Rice University community as the executive chef of the Cohen House in the '90s. After living a stint in the U.K., Clark returned to the U.S. and jumped on the opportunity to open the new Baker Kitchen.

"To me, food is not just something you need to keep you alive, but a celebration meant to be enjoyed."

Cari Clark
Executive Chef

"I admire my colleagues at the large serveries for the job they do seven days a week, but I love my home here at Baker," Clark said.

Clark said the reason Baker servery is not open on the weekends is because of the small kitchen staff. Though Clark said no one ever has to work a double shift, the reputation of the Baker servery certainly keeps the staff on its toes. However, one of the benefits Clark said she enjoys from a smaller kitchen is the ability to collaborate with a farm 10 miles away from campus.

"At Baker, we have the opportunity to practice farm-to-fork on a weekly basis," Clark said. "We get seasonal produce from Atkinson Farms every week, and in return, we save our compostable scraps, which they distribute amongst the farmers at the Rice Farmers Market on Tuesdays."

Clark's menus are reflective of her love of local cuisine. In addition to integrating food from Atkinson

Farms, she has incorporated freshly picked produce from the community garden classes at Rice. Clark said her dishes are also inspired by her travels abroad. Her adventurous palate has led her to taste the tripe of Brittany, the kabobs of Istanbul and the paella of Valencia.

"To me, food is not just something you need to keep you alive but a celebration meant to be enjoyed," Clark said. "I celebrate food."

From Poland to Egypt, Switzerland to Italy, Clark has celebrated local food and drink from many regions. She said her travels are not solely about experiencing local cuisines, but also about exploring the history of food in each region.

Clark does outsource some of her menu items to the certified pastry chef at East Servery, who makes some of Baker's desserts, breads and breakfast muffins. As for her own cooking, Clark said she appreciates the intimate setting of the Baker Kitchen because she is able to have a hand in all the dishes.

"If someone asks what's in the soup, I know exactly what's in it," she said.

Though Clark said she would never feed students anything she does not herself find delicious, she welcomes suggestions and comments. Students and colleagues may reach her by phone or by email, both available on the Rice Dining website.

"I am passionate about food and love the instant gratification it gives me when I make someone happy," Clark said.

Campus Folk tells the often-unknown stories of some of Rice's most intriguing people. To suggest a person email Farrah at ffm1@rice.edu.

Ask the Thresher

Dear Thresher,

A guy just asked me out to a dinner date at the servery. We've hooked up before, and I like him, but somehow the servery does not seem like the most romantic setting. I wonder if I shouldn't suggest another place. A little part of me thinks the servery is a good idea in case the date is uncomfortable, but the idea still seems like a cup-nut. How should I react?

From,

A Hopelessly Cheap Date

In this situation, it is most definitely best to just talk to the person who has asked you out. They might have also decided they like you after hooking up (especially if it was casual) and are just trying to find a comfortable way in which both of you can talk and figure out where each of you stands in this potential relationship. In this case, while it might not be particularly romantic, the servery could accomplish the goal; it could help you both to better define the potential of your future relationship.

On the other hand, this idea for a date really could be a rip-out. There might be a chance this person is just asking you out on a "date" because they know you have been wanting more and, while they want to keep hooking up with you, they really don't want anything too serious; in this case, they probably aren't worth your time. If this is a courtesy date so that they can keep hooking up with you, they're clearly uninterested in who you are and you should end things with them.

However, you will never know which option is the truth until you talk. Communication is the key.

-Athena

Perhaps you are really a hideous person with a terrible personality who is not worth the cost of a night's dinner. If so, then you should accept his invitation and probably have a serious self-reflection about how you have reached this point. However, if this is not true, you should insist on something better. If you think your date will go that poorly, you should not embark on the adventure at all. Go to the servery and look at the food options available. Are you really worth the curious-looking roast beef or the days-old Caesar salad?

You may think that the next course of action would be to suggest that he take you somewhere nicer, but this would be too kind. You know how little you and all your shared history mean to him. Think back to the last person you liked. Chances are that your attraction seems ridiculous now; what was appealing in the past is now laughable in the present. Like Oedipus you have blinded yourself, and the only way out of your predicament is to act as objectively as possible. Think about what you would do if you were giving advice to a friend instead of to yourself.

Chances are you would tell your friends to avoid this boy and move on to find people who think you are at least worth the time to leave campus for dinner.

-Ares



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Rice Cribs goes dark and lights up in Baker's only freshman suite



Baker 142 "Lower Fourth"

- 2 common rooms
- 4 doubles
- 1 bathroom
- 1 couch, 2 bean bags, 1 futon
- 36-inch TV
- 1 Playstation 2
- 1 refrigerator
- 2 speaker systems

BY ALEX BISBERG
THRESHER STAFF

The men of the only freshman suite in Baker, dubbed "lower fourth," were thrown right into the fray of the social scene on campus, and they've done more than keep their composure.

Suitemate Rico Marquez came and met me right outside of Baker's quad and led me up to his room. This rustic residence seems homely, stocked with three shelves of food. Assorted chairs and bean bags surround a large blue corduroy couch occupied by two more members of the suite, Andrew Stout and Hope Atina. On the far side of the room is a futon, positioned for the nights when one man needs the room more than the other.

Colorful public party posters are plastered all over the ceiling. In front of the room stands a modestly sized television hooked up to a Sony speaker system. The Playstation 2 was out of sight, but it is uncovered on occasion to play SSX, a classic snowboarding game, Stout said.

The physical aspects of this room are accompanied by an overarching social standard that has been associated with the room since the college was founded. Stout, Marquez and Atina explained that there is a near-constant flow of people in and out of the room. "Whether we're in here or not, people will just come in and hang out," Marquez said.

The room's reputation goes back far, Stout said. Once, during an alumni event in the quad, an inebriated alum tried to open their



This seemingly plain room transforms into a surreal party space as neon illustrations adorn almost every vertical and horizontal surface.

door, expecting it to be open for use of the bathroom.

Stout informed me that he and his suitemates quickly found their niche in the Baker community and began to love it. By opening both bathroom doors, the room opens up, linking two suites together. The opposite suite has fewer windows, so it is traditionally known as the "cave," while the suite with more windows is named the "wave," simply because it rhymes with "cave."

Closer to a customized bachelor pad than a cave, the other side of the suite is equipped with surround-sound speakers; hand-crafted, hand-painted beer pong and drinking game tables; and, strangely, a coffin. The most important feature, however, is its capacity to be converted into a fully black-lit dance floor with neon

walls. Crazy images occupy the walls, grinning casually at the typical Saturday-night partygoer.

The fact that the suite is so multifaceted is another impressive factor. While the "cave," or "dirty side," usually involves loud music and dancing, the "wave," or "clean side," is less rowdy and keeps the action low-key.

Stout and Marquez said that some people just come down to use the microwave.

"There are always people in the room; I'm never bored," Atina said.

These men might as well be surfing on the ocean, because they do a swell job of riding the wave.

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Severy Creation: Everyday Fish Tacos



BY REED THORNBURG
THRESHER EDITORIAL STAFF

Just a few more days. In a few days, the Rice Diaspora will occur and the serveries will all close down. Students will search idly for food in far reaches of the country, and one week will remind us all of the food we left back at school. That sentiment inspires this week's servery creation. It's a cosmopolitan favorite that I fully intend to bring to the Rice palette. This multicultural import dish is the fish taco.

While the serveries occasionally offer authentic and delicious fish tacos, this creation can be crafted almost every day. Using the flaky white fish that commonly appears in various incarnations in servery entree lines, we will craft a tangy variation on this classic. Once again, we venture back to the salad bar and incorporate a few com-

mon condiments to create a spicy and piquant sauce. Although the standard topping of cabbage is not readily available, the peppers provide a comparable element of crispness to the overall creation. Also, heating the tortillas on the panini press adds a little more texture and authenticity to the dish. Ultimately, this dish can join the ranks of the panini and the cold-cut sandwich as a readily available dish always on delicious reserve.

El Rey de la Playa

- Ingredients:
- 3 corn tortillas
 - 3 filets of white fish (ideally tilapia)
 - 10 thin slices of bell pepper
 - 1 tablespoon sriracha
 - 1 tablespoon sour cream
 - 1 tablespoon zesty Italian

Process:

The taco begins with procuring the corn tortillas. If not immediately available, the kitchen staff are typically very accommodating. Next, toast the tortillas slightly using the panini press and working in intervals of 10 - 15 seconds until the tortilla is malleable. Carefully remove the tortillas using tongs and return them to your plate.

Now select your three pieces of the white fish. Since most servery fish comes with some form of sauce or an accompanying vegetable, you may wish to experiment with these in your tacos. Otherwise, be sure to remove most of the sauce and carefully place the filets on the tortillas. Then, turn your attention to the sauce. In a small bowl, combine the sriracha, sour cream and Italian dressing. Stir until a uniform consistency is achieved. Using a spoon, portion the sauce over the tacos. Finally, distribute the sliced peppers over the top of each taco.

This complete meal offers a satisfying balance between the spicier notes of the sriracha and the tangier qualities of the dressing. Also, the delicate white fish contrasts sharply with the grilled tortillas and the raw peppers that provide an important textural counterpoint. Ultimately, these delicious fish tacos make a suitable dinner or an even better lunch. So pretend the beach is near and enjoy!

If you have any suggestions, comments or favorite servery recipes, please email Reed Thornburg at rst4@rice.edu.

Ask the Thresher

Dear Thresher,

"My friends are angry at me because I am going on a trip with my boyfriend for all of spring break. They have since planned a trip, too, and honestly I would rather go on a trip with them since it is our senior year. After sharing this sentiment with my friends, it somehow made its way back to my boyfriend, and now he is bitter. What should I do?"

You obviously care about both your boyfriend and your close friends and face a tough decision. Since it is your senior year, you should spend it with your close friends, as you may never have the opportunity again. However, with some creativity, you can solve your problem without alienating your boyfriend.

Ancient French legend tells of the infamously speedy monster, the gargoille, who terrorized boats on the Seine with his incredible agility and ability to breathe fire. Instead of going into direct battle, Saint Romain used the sign of the cross to tame the monster and lure him into town so he could burn the dragon until it turned into a harmless stone gargoyle. Likewise, you can tame your boyfriend by making sure to use signs of affection. He wants to go on spring break with you to spend quality alone time with you.

Make plans to do things he likes to do throughout the year and tell him how important he is to you. He may be disappointed, but make sure that he understands what he means to you. Just like Saint Romain, you face a monster, except instead of a fire-breathing water serpent, you must conquer your boyfriend's sense of dejection and hurt feelings. With some subtlety and a little bit of luck, you too will be successful.

-Ares

Finding a balance between your friends and your romantic partners is a very important part of the college experience. Open communication is the best way to achieve this balance. You are friends with your friends because you like them, and you should be with your significant other for the same reason, so you would be surprised what both parties will understand and how they will work with you to find a balance between the two parts of your life.

In this situation, you probably should have talked to your boyfriend instead of talking about your boyfriend to your friends. Still, now that the damage is done, your best option really is just to talk to your boyfriend. Make it clear to him that, while he is extremely important to you, you would like to spend some time with your friends over Spring Break. Perhaps offer spending other time with him — maybe suggest a weekend trip with just the two of you.

You also need to make it clear to your friends that your boyfriend is important. Just because you would rather go on their trip in this particular case does not mean that he is not important to you, and they should be aware of this. Ultimately, talking to both parties and being open and honest about your feelings will help you to reach a balance between romance and friendship.

-Athena

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