

Rave 'till dawn

Students
leave town
for raves

By PATRICK LOPE
Collegian Arts Writer

Imagine yourself, dancing among hundreds of people. Nothing on the outside matters. Energy exists in its most primal state. Your mind is fixed to a magical beat and your body can't stop moving.

This is how the peak of a rave experience is commonly described. Raves can be characterized as musical experiments. Dancers attempt to synchronize their body and soul via intense, trance-inducing music.

The absence of a local rave scene forces many students to make trips to New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore, where raves are commonplace. Most are held in clubs or empty warehouses, beginning after midnight and usually lasting until morning.

"I leave town for raves every chance I get," said Tara Dennis (sophomore-premedicine).

Disk jockeys pilot the dancers' voyage with the manipulation of beats and mixing of sounds. A DJ is largely responsible for the "vibe" of a rave, which becomes evident in the mood of the dancers.

"A good DJ can make everyone dance and controls the energy level," said Emanuel Pangilinan (senior-fine arts), who spins in his free time. "They feed from the crowd, bring them up, take them to another place, and then ease them back down."

While efforts have been made to increase the quality of live music in State College, raves have received little attention. "We just prefer to focus on live music," said Dave Wells, director of operations at Dantes, Inc.

The illegal drug culture surrounding the rave community may be one reason why raves aren't popping up in every small town across America.

Although many rave-goers agree drugs are not a necessary ingredient in the "rave experience," users agree the combination of lights, people and music provides a perfect environment for drug experimentation.

The illegal hallucinogen Ecstasy is popular at raves. Some dancers say it is used to heighten spiritual awareness, but it can also cause dehydration and other negative side effects.

A new legal mixture of herbs, called Herbal Ecstasy, is being sold at nightclubs as an alternative to illegal drugs. It is promoted as a safe, natural high that lifts your spirits, heightens your senses and gives you enough zip to dance until dawn.

"It's hard to understand the rave scene until you've gone and experienced it for yourself, everything from the music, to the funky clothes, to the dancing," said Senta Korb (sophomore-recreational park management).

Although rave artists such as Deee-Lite and the Orb have had relative mainstream success in the United States, the majority of their fans are overseas. In England, many people argue dance music has replaced rock as the major creative force in popular music.

Until last year, outdoor raves drew crowds of more than 20,000 people in England. On Nov. 3, 1994, Parliament passed the Criminal Justice Act, which effectively outlawed raves in Britain. The Act prohibits gatherings that feature music with "sounds wholly or predominantly characterized by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats." Raves still exist in England, but they've been pushed back to the underground.

With the exception of a few attempts in the basement of Uncle Chen's Restaurant, 111 Sowers St., and random house parties, raves aren't part of mainstream culture at the University. Rave news travels by word-of-mouth, or on small fliers. The only way to understand the scene is to be part of it.

While State College may not be on the cutting edge of the rave explosion, raves are making their mark across the country as powerful, moving experiences.

"Everyone there can express themselves in their own way," said Andrea Wulwick (sophomore-religious studies).

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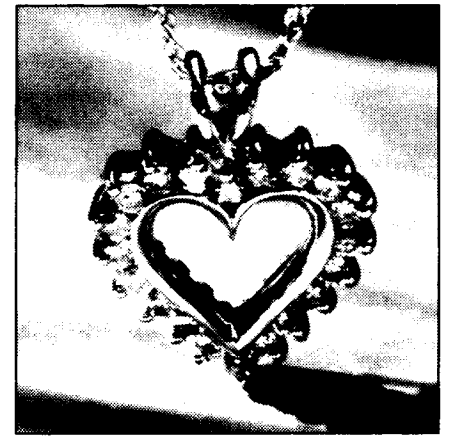
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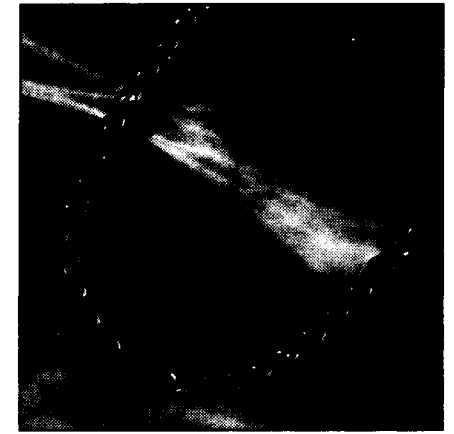


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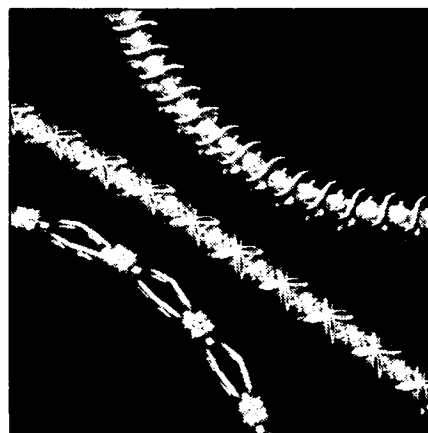


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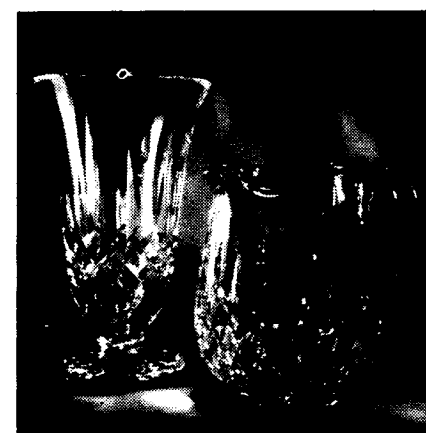
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