

# Student hopes to break 'Thriller' record

By Caitlin Burnham  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Brian Cronauer won't stop till he gets enough — enough people to break the Guinness World Record for the most people doing the Michael Jackson "Thriller" dance, that is.

Cronauer (sophomore-political science) hopes to break the world record for the most people dancing to "Thriller" by gathering 14 to 15,000 people together on Oct. 16 and dancing to one of the late singer's most famous songs.

The current record is held by 13,597 people who danced in Mexico City on Aug. 29 — Michael Jackson's birthday. Cronauer said he considers Penn State to be "Zombie Nation," so it is only fitting that the world record would be set here.

"I'm a big Michael Jackson fan and I guess I want other people to have as much fun as I do doing it," he said.

Cronauer had planned to set the record with about 400 people last fall

at the Altoona campus. However, once the high record was set in Mexico, Cronauer decided to wait until he transferred to University Park where he could draw on a larger pool of students — although non-students or students who don't attend Penn State are welcome to participate.

Cronauer has been a "Thriller" and Michael Jackson fan for years.

After teaching it to himself in high school he taught the cheerleading squad the dance so they could perform it during halftime.

"It's just a huge part of our culture," Cronauer said. "Michael Jackson is a good workout too. I would practice for three hours at a time just over and over again."

Jacey Hallock (sophomore-secondary education) was one of the cheerleaders Cronauer taught in high school, and as a Penn State student she plans to help set a new world record next fall.

"It's important because it was so monumental when [Michael Jackson]

made that video. So for us to get a bunch of people together to do this — to grow there and show everybody — it just keeps Michael Jackson alive," Hallock said.

Amanda Hess (sophomore-labor and employment relations) said she had planned on participating last fall and plans to participate in October.

"It's something [Brian is] intensely passionate about and I think it would be really neat to see everybody doing it and obviously being a part of a world record would be cool," she said.

Cronauer has not yet contacted anyone about a space to hold the dance, but he said he would like to hold it in either Beaver Stadium or in a parking lot near East Halls.

He also said he hopes to hold a practice session Labor Day weekend on the HUB-Robeson Center's lawn so people have a chance to learn and practice the "Thriller" dance.



Brian Cronauer, left, dresses like Michael Jackson. He hopes to break the world record for the "Thriller" dance.

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# Survivors assess storm damage

By Emily Wagster Pettus  
and Shelia Byrd  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

YAZOO CITY, Miss. — Some Mississippi residents cracked jokes Monday to keep from crying while they looked for salvageable items among the rubble left by severe storms that killed 12 people over the weekend.

State officials were tallying the cost of the damage so they could ask for an emergency declaration from President Barack Obama, along with federal funds to help clean up the mess. The latest figures Monday were grim: In Mississippi alone, nearly 700 homes were damaged, 49 people injured and 10 killed. Two others died in storms in Alabama.

Nancy Luke stepped carefully through fallen cinderblocks, cracked mirrors and a broken disco ball in what used to be the Yazoo City bar she managed, Wendy's On the Hill. The bar was in the center of the mile-wide swath of destruction.

Luke said she and the owner, Wendy Douglas, have been joking with each other to fend off tears.

"She's a neat freak. This is usually

the cleanest bar in town. I tell you," Luke said.

Most of the bar was obliterated, but the office and the restrooms still stood. Luke said she found three rolls of toilet paper still stacked in a pyramid on a tray in the women's room.

The tornado flung a blue metal trash container from outside the bar three miles away while dumping most of its contents next to the slab of the building. Dozens of brown Bud Light and Miller Lite beer bottles, most of which were unbroken.

Miss. Gov. Haley Barbour was spending part of the day in neighborhoods of his native Yazoo City talking privately with residents.

"When you know everybody, it's harder," said Barbour, whose home was undamaged in Saturday's tornado. On Monday, the dead in Mississippi were also identified. Choctaw County Coroner Keith Coleman identified the victims in his area as: Andra Patterson, 3 months; Tyanna Jobe, 9; Brittany Jobe, 14; Mary Yates, 58, and Bobby Yates, 57.

Wayne Allen Jr., a funeral director at Stricklin-King Funeral Home, identified the Yazoo County victims as: James E. Harrison, 64; Elizabeth



Miss. resident Morgan Hayden sits outside what remains of her home.

Nicole "Nikki" Bradshaw Carpenter, Carlton Gould and Stella Martin, whose ages he didn't have.

Carpenter, 31, left her job as a postal carrier to stay at home with her three children, ages 6 to 2, and planned to start nursing school next year, said her friend Elizabeth Tamar King of Yazoo City.

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