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This issue looks different than previous ones, doesn’t it? As a student media publication, *A Magazine* does not produce a spring print edition, but my headstrong self and passionate staff weren’t going to accept that. Seeing our magazine fly off the stands in the past made us think our vision of a spring sub-pub could come to life. On behalf of everyone at *A Magazine*, we thank you for picking up a copy of The Power Issue.

When conceptualizing what this issue’s focus would be, it seemed most natural to consider empowerment. Fashion journalism has come a long way from writing about stilettos and nail polish shades. Now more than ever, we have the voice to shape minds and shift culture, and we won’t be boxed in by societal stereotypes of vanity and shallow thinking.

At *A Magazine*, we encourage you to realize the power within you. We don’t want you to be angry with the current state of society; we want you to be optimistic. We want to move on from adversity and instead celebrate the strength of working together toward a common goal. Get inspired by being unapologetically you, finding power in physical wellness, having the confidence to say no and breaking stereotypes in the workplace.

As you skim through the pages of The Power Issue, let your mind wander and dream—dream big.

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A special thanks to all who lent a hand and shared a talent in the making of A Magazine's The Power Issue.
Remember those days when you would play dress up, smear on some Crayola-colored eyeshadow and add any sparkly item of jewelry you could find? At A Magazine, we want to go back to those carefree days. There’s a certain confidence that is synonymous with pushing the boundaries. Being powerful isn’t just an aware intellectual; it’s about embracing your femininity and turning the volume up as loud as it can go. So go ahead, put on those chandelier earrings and pink eyeshadow, and own it.
Neck Scarf

“Scarves are an easy way to make an everyday look more fun and stylish. Being a fashion major, you feel the pressure to be different in a good way that is inspiring to others and that makes me feel powerful.”

Bri DiLucia

Secret Weapons

words Hallie Saculla
art Gracie Harms
We've all been there—you wake up to the sound of Marimba from your iPhone, only to see that you set your alarm for the wrong time. You’re now 15 minutes late with no time to get ready. So, what do you do? For us at A Magazine, we believe in the power of a statement item to pull yourself together. Whether it's minimal or eye-catching, there's something special about putting on an accessory to make you feel empowered.

**Sunglasses**

“Sunglasses have always been my go to accessory because I feel they can pull together an entire outfit. When I complete a look with the perfect sunglasses, my self confidence rises and I feel as though I can conquer the world.”

Taylor Jones
Wrist Watch
"This bad boy is simple, functional (though I've never set the time) and versatile, and it reminds me of the mosh pit I found it on the ground of."

Peter Kratcoski
The re-emergence of bright colors and neon hues in fashion is just one way to reflect your confidence and self-expression. Fashion can have a negative connotation, from the emphasis on appearances to judging others on their hair, makeup and clothing choices—we’ve heard it all before. But you have the power to change that. Make a bold statement with your style and show the world that you’re not afraid of who you are.
The power suit. When this trend comes to mind, you may think of former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s style during her campaign or of the padded shoulder varieties that became a staple of the 1980s, which may not be the most enticing associations.

Many publications proclaim that the power suit is a dead thing of the past; however, as designers unveil fresh takes of this trend on the runways, it appears to be anything but. Constance Marsh, a Kent State fashion forecasting professor, sees the power suit taking a versatile turn. “There is a huge evolution in the workplace,” Marsh says. “I am old enough to have seen women wearing a suit with a skirt and hosiery...now [the power suit] can be dressed down.”

Marsh visualizes the power suit being dressed down with platform sneakers and a T-shirt. “I can also see it matching head to toe, in unexpected colors such as blush pink and bright red or subtle patterns like houndstooth and plaid,” Marsh says. “We’ve seen a return to traditional—a single or double-breasted blazer with a pair of pants.”

Case in point: Beyoncé during a 2016 NBA Finals game, rocking a traditional power suit in cobalt blue.

The recent #MeToo and Time’s Up movements against sexual harassment may have something to do with the power suit’s re-emergence. Marsh says she’s noticed fashion reverting back to modest-looking styles as the movements march forward. “Padded shoulders in the '80s empowered women as they were competing with men for jobs,” Marsh says.

“[The power suit] is an option for dressing to make a woman feel more empowered. Wear what makes you feel confident.”

So, forget about the negative perceptions of the power suit you may have. The future is female, and we’re here to take it on in blazers and trousers.

THE REVISTED

words Haliee Carlin
art Lisa Olszewski
ELEGANCE IN MOTION
Elegance in Motion

We can all learn a thing or two from dancers.

Their tireless commitment to their art form and dedication to bettering themselves can be applied to everyday life. At A, we’re inspired by our peers in the Kent State Dance Ensemble, who personify what it means to be a physically and mentally strong woman. These individuals prove that being athletic doesn’t just apply to those who play football; it’s those who have the power to captivate and inspire an audience with one eight-count.

words Hallie Saculla photos Alicia Falorio
Adaptive Aesthetics

Tracy Vollbrecht is a senior honors student in the Bachelor of Fine Art (B.F.A.) fashion design program at Kent State. Her collection entitled, Adaptive Aesthetics, contains 11 pieces that seamlessly merge fashion and adaptive clothing. Using magnets instead of buttons and utilizing seaming solely on the outside of the garment, not only is this collection ideal for those with varying disabilities but everyone.

A Magazine: What inspired you to design a collection for people of varying disabilities?

Tracy Vollbrecht: My dad had multiple sclerosis, so I was kind of thinking about that and fashion, and I saw his difficulty with clothing and obviously knew he wasn’t the only one in that situation. Basically, there is no clothing for anyone with any type of disability. There are a couple brands, but they are very limited and more targeted towards the elderly segment as opposed to any age range. The honors part of my [degree] is the research heavy part of it. So, it was me conducting my surveys and researching. It kind of just came together.
**A:** What moves do you think the fashion industry can take to be more inclusive?

**TV:** I would just say the kind of recognition or acknowledgment that there is a lack of clothing for people with disabilities is the first step... Right now, anywhere from architecture to fashion, there is this push for this thing called universal design. So, basically it is the principle for designing things that everyone can use as opposed to designing things for people with disabilities to use and a whole separate thing for able-bodied people. I would say my collection does edge on universal design because I am having three of my looks worn by people without disabilities. Anyone can wear anything I designed. It isn't just for people with disabilities, but it does help people with disabilities.

**A:** Do you think the fashion industry is progressing towards being more inclusive?

**TV:** There is definitely some forward movement. Just recently at the Business of Fashion Conference they had a speaker on inclusive design, acknowledging and including more inclusive design. There are some real companies, for example Tommy Hilfiger has an adaptive line that they just released in October. And then there are a couple couture designers that have done stuff like that, and [they] have the freedom to specifically make it fit someone... There is forward movement, but it is more of a walk than a run.

**A:** What has been your favorite part of designing your collection so far?

**TV:** It was awesome to start getting the final fabrics and start seeing it all come together and working with my models. Especially working with the one model who is wearing a magnet-front flair dress. I met her through her professor. I emailed her and she said, “Maya is very interested.” And, the next time I met with her, her mom was there and she expressed to me all these sentiments that I had found in my survey. Telling me, “It’s difficult to do buttons. They are small and they take so long.” Her mom was telling me that on her jacket she added magnets and that it wasn’t a great job, but it makes it easier to have them. I guess knowing that what I was doing were solutions that were actually in use and that people were trying to execute them without having the design background.
Thoughts

Proactivist

Activist
Let's face it: as a generation, we're young and unstoppable.

There's this special movement we're seeing where even high schoolers are making noteworthy changes within politics. This was even seen at the 2018 Grammy Awards Janelle Monae delivered an impactful speech that captures the essence of social change today. She says, “We come in peace, but we mean business… Just as we have the power to shake culture, we also have the power to undo the culture that does not serve us well.”

Let's face it, as a generation, we're young, and we're unstoppable. We're more confident, diverse, liberal, and open to change than any other generation before, according to the Pew Research Center. The culture is in our hands, and we have more power than we even know.

words Faith Riggs art Gracie Harms
Right now we see that it’s actually really easy to undo years and years of progress, but we just have to keep going; we can’t be discouraged.”

—Hana Barkowitz

Just scrolling through recent articles for Teen Vogue, you may become enamored by a few politically aware young adults. Young actresses such as Yara Shahidi and Rowan Blanchard laying the foundation of what it means to be young, proactive, motivated and socially conscious. The two women have highlighted issues such as representation, activism and other relevant political issues.

Much like these two women, Hana Barkowitz, a senior public relations student at Kent State, has a mission to fight for change. At 16 years old, she became the youngest fellow on President Barack Obama’s re-election campaign in Pennsylvania. She says her progressive upbringing instilled in her the power of privilege and how important it is to use towards the greater good.

“I like giving back to the community; I like feeling like I make a change, even if it’s not obvious,” Barkowitz says. “There is this whole community of people that feel very similarly, too.”

Barkowitz proves that it’s all about finding a community of people who have like-minded views and banding together to get things done.

The recent Parkland school shooting inspired many young adults to actively
change and protest the ongoing issue of gun control in our country. The brave determination of just a couple high schoolers sparked a nationwide protest involving almost a half a million people. “They are making change, and they are able to do it,” Barkowitz says. “And so, we’re able to do it, companies have started pulling out of the NRA agreement because of the pushback. That’s because of them, and they’re in high school. If they can do it, we can do it.”

Brenna Parker, a recent public relations graduate of Kent State says she’s still getting used to our current climate, but she’s ever so inspired by the courage of so many young adults. She’s currently the deputy director of outreach for Washington D.C.’s Montgomery county executive David Blair. As apart of her work, she met with students who walked out of Montgomery schools to march to the capital in efforts to demand gun control. “Students across the country are organizing and coming together to say ‘NO, you guys can’t do this,’” Parker says.

“It’s all about asking for help or going up to someone, and asking them and saying ‘I want to get involved, how can I get involved?’” Barkowitz says. “If it means like going to take a quiz and seeing what your political alignment is, and it’s gonna be different for everyone.”

It’s activism such as organizing, protesting, writing letter or knocking on doors that ignite real change. It’s even turning to social media and using our personal platforms to start the conversation. “You can start a conversation on social media like #MeToo,” Parker says. “#MeToo started online, but the real action and the real change is coming off of social media. People are coming together and saying NO, enough is enough.”

The work we’ve done thus far has not gone unrewarded. It’s still a long journey, but movements such as the women’s march have sparked empowering progress. Just a year after the very first march, twice as many women ran for office in 2018 as compared to 2016. It’s about being strong, staying electrified, and having the passion to prove people wrong. “Right now we see that it’s actually really easy to undo years and years of progress, but we just have to keep going, and we can’t be discouraged,” Barkowitz says. “It’s 2018—we can do anything. We can try to do anything and see if it works, and if it doesn't, we'll just try again.” —FR

“Young people have a voice, and I think young people are smart, millennials are empowered to make change.”

Leading a movement can feel intimidating or valueless, but it’s all about finding the right individuals and resources to help steer you in the right direction.
Harness Your Power
Women have come a long way from keeping their heads down. For years, they had limited options for their future, but now is the time for women to raise their heads and exude confidence in their lives. This empowerment comes from knowing self-worth and being prepared to do what it takes to achieve a desired outcome.
The history of women’s equality is long.

Less than 100 years ago, the 19 Amendment to the U.S. Constitution passed, granting American women the right to vote after half a century of protests. Initial protests began in 1848 at the Seneca Falls Convention, which launched a national women's rights movement, according to History.com. In recent years, many social movements have women's issues on the front lines. From politicians using women's right as a bargaining chip for votes to the Women's March in D.C. to “Equal Work. Equal Pay” in Hollywood, women refuse to be silenced. Beyonce has it right when she asks, “Who run the world?” Whether it's suffragists, protesters, mothers, daughters, sexual harassment victims or teachers, women come together to make history and invoke change for the future. Nowadays, women are more likely to have earned a bachelor's degree by age 29 than men and outnumber men in graduate school, according to the American Enterprise Institute. Women also make up 47 percent of the working class; however, according to Forbes.com, the wage gap between men and women is at 18.5 percent as of March 2018.

So, why do people still question a woman's capability in 2018?

Entrepreneur Michelle Richardson is a single mother; she too has experienced self-doubt and low self-esteem at points throughout her life. Richardson sits up-straight, head up, with her shoulders back. It's clear she takes care of herself, with a tint of berry colored lipstick and a hint of blue eyeshadow. From looking at her, lack
Harness Your Power

of confidence wouldn't be a stranger's guess of Richardson's struggles; Her presence is warm and inviting. “Confidence has been a struggle for me my entire life, but outsiders would not think that," Richardson says. “Like, people think that I'm extremely confident, and it's something I've struggled with since I was a child." She's driven, focused and determined, all attributing to her successes in life but it's a journey, she says. Like most people, Richardson wondered what her purpose was in life and would routinely put herself down.

In 2006, Weight Watchers International Inc., conducted a study on 2,000 U.K. women, who admitted to berating themselves first thing in the morning. Thirteen out of 20 say the criticisms were on physical appearance and weight. Two-fifths of the respondents said they never complimented themselves, and wouldn't criticize another person the way they did themselves, the study says. Richardson says she looked at other people and thought their achievements surpassed hers. Richardson felt pressure to be a perfect employee, mother, and wife. At work, her colleagues knew her open door policy. Often, others would come to her for both professional and personal advice. Richardson heard them out and then would finish her work. She helped start team building exercises and encouraged others to work together, something not previously emphasized.

At home, things were challenging. Personal issues took a toll on her marriage and slowly, the two were going separate ways. A few months before she filed for divorce, Richardson asked her then-husband to go to counseling with her. When that didn't work, she continued to go solo, something not supported by her ex. He said to her, “I don't want you to go to therapy because you'll get confident and leave me.” She says that's when she knew it was time to move on. “The minute I decided to get a divorce I started to become to person who I am,” Richardson says. This isn't uncommon; many people grow accustomed to their partners and get set in a routine. Ending an unhealthy relationship provides perspective and opens up a world of possibilities.
**Dr. Maria Papich**, owner of Maria Papich-Forsyth DDS & Associates in Cuyahoga Falls and Stow, Ohio, says she allows her children, Max, 21, and Tia, 18, to be themselves and that helps their confidence to grow in life and personal relationships. “Get out of a relationship if it's not making you happy,” Papich says.

Born to Serbian immigrants, Papich learned about having a hard work ethic. She grew up with her mother at home, and her father, working at the family's restaurant “Belgrade Gardens,” located in Uniontown, Ohio. She always knew she'd be a dentist. And that decisiveness followed her through life. Papich has always gone after what she wants, and has never apologized for being a working mother, nor will she. “When I got divorced, I needed to work to generate income,” she says. That income came in the form of two dental practices. “I always knew I was going to work,” Papich says of her childhood, “I never expected anything to be given to me.”

The Atlantic published an article on the confidence gap between men and women and explored why women tend to apologize more and question their roles at work, where men don’t. Society pressures women in a different way than the opposite sex. She credits her father for tenacity at work; watching him provide for the family gave Papich a sense of work ethic she aspired to have. She credits her mother for teaching her how to be a mother and about compassion.

For **E’Tiana Larkin**, confidence came through work and motherhood, “I had my first child at 16 and my second at 21. Although my mother was a wonderful mother and did a great job raising my siblings and I, there were somethings I vowed to do different,” Larkin says. Being a young mother had its hardships for Larkin, but she was
determined not to be another statistic. She “put her all into motherhood” and says her children's love helped support her through graduating high school and go to college, earning two degrees.

Larkin says she didn't grow up with confident women around her and found strength from within. She credits her leadership position at her then-job at Wegmans grocery store for giving her the tools she needed to gain confidence at work. “In the beginning of my management career, I was not confident at all in my abilities. I was surrounded by a bunch of people who didn't look like me, sound like me, or even think like me," Larkin says that's when she met a mentor who took her under his wing to help with her development. “He saw my strengths and put me in positions that played upon those strengths," Larkin says.

After taking time to build her strength in management, Larkin decided to follow her passion for helping disadvantaged youth. Larkin worked at Chrysalis House, a group home for pregnant or parenting adolescents. Through her own experiences, she connected with the kids there. At the same time, Larkin worked in the Rochester City School District in upstate New York, as a substitute teacher with no background in teaching. Despite this, she was a natural. She “knew children wanted to be loved and respected" and offered that while in classrooms with them. Because of this mentality, Larkin formed a bond with the students, and when she worked in rooms called “Help Zones,” where students went when they were asked to leave their classrooms; eventually, students would go to Help Zone purposely to get extra time with Larkin.

◊

Each woman says that boundaries are important to maintain healthy relationships in work and at home.

“Our building boundaries stems from open, honest and direct communication,” Larkin says.

A sentiment that each woman has agreed with. For Papich, it involves not wasting time on relationships there's no future to, and making time for all of Tia's school activities since it's her last year before she's off to college. Richardson says she's able to say no more in relationships but still struggles at work because she wants her open door policy to stay intact. Larkin says that while in her management position,
she was encouraged rather than say no, to find ways to say yes. Like many employees will agree, it's impossible and overwhelming to say yes to everything.

“That didn't allow for healthy work-life balance,” she says. With other positions, she used her confidence to establish healthy boundaries respectfully. Men do not worry about perception when it comes to saying no, or being liked in the workplace. Larkin informed them that while she worked for them, she would work hard “on the clock” to not have work come home with her all the time. Women need to put themselves first because no one else is going to.

Taking personal time to follow various passions has also been connected to stress relief. Self care has lowered chances of depression, anxiety and stress, the American Psychological Association says. Richardson encourages anyone to take time to find what he or she likes to do, and then make time for it. Papich agrees, “I work out. If I don't, I get irritable. It just makes me feel clear-headed,” she says.

“I think that women supporting women and self-love has contributed to the confidence in women,” Richardson says.

Self-acceptance and love all serve as healthy food for the soul. When women believe in themselves and encourage one another, anything is possible. It's clear in 2018 progress has been made, but there's room for improvement. —AT
THE POWER ISSUE

In a world where society is changing rapidly and people of all ages and backgrounds are standing up for what they believe in, we need role models in every aspect of our lives. Inspiration can be found in anyone: in those working for the law, transforming faces, bettering communities and even teaching people to express themselves through words. There is an array of individuals embarking on these aspirational endeavors within reach. These four men and women are doing incredible things, blazing the trail for anyone with a dream and a little ambition.

words Amanda Ellis photos Moriah Meek
Sarah Merhaut
Detective

“Be nice to everybody but always have a plan to kill them.”

Sarah Merhaut is a detective for the city of Brunswick, Ohio. Robbed at gunpoint when she was 15 years old, Merhaut felt unheard by the police officers, as if they did not believe what happened to her. She subconsciously knew then she wanted to go into a career in law enforcement so all future victims could have a voice and be understood, unlike her experience when she was young.

“Be nice to everybody but always have a plan to kill them.”

Merhaut says that her biggest inspirations are her parents and her fellow officers who taught her “not to take shit from anyone.” Every day in this field is different, and she knows that she must be prepared for anything.

Merhaut is providing justice for the community, and paving the way for anyone who has ever been a victim.

Jason Kelly
Makeup Artist

“You have to be okay with the face you wake up with.”

Jason Kelly, a freelance makeup artist based in Cleveland, spent the past 18 years painting faces of all walks of life. From the Cavalier Girls to representatives at the 2016 Republican National Convention, Kelly has been transforming faces since he was a child.

“It chose me,” Kelly says of his field of work. As a child, he used his younger sister as a “living Barbie doll” to test looks on, while his mother paid her way through nursing school by doing makeup.

Kelly started as a hairstylist, but had to go through chemotherapy at the age of 22. After that, he decided to go full throttle with makeup artistry instead of hair styling.

Kelly wants women to change the way they think about themselves, and use makeup to “be out of the box” and express their...
personality rather than to cover up their features. By helping people gain confidence in who they are and how they look, Kelly truly shows the importance of non-traditional careers in creative fields like cosmetology that many are discouraged from pursuing.

Saira Blair
Politician/Student

“Hearing how the work I’ve done has positively impacted others inspires me to keep going.”

When you think of politicians, typically someone male and above the age of 40 comes to mind. Saira Blair is changing that stereotype. Blair is the youngest female legislator in the United States, being elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates when she was only 18. She canv in the Capitol 60 days out of the year, and the rest she spends in Charleston, W.Va in committee meetings and voting on bills on the House floor. After participating in a program in high school called Youth In Government where she traveled to the Capitol and engaged in mock government activities, Blair fell in love with politics and the processes of government. She does everything for the people she represents and hopes to “bring growth and prosperity to my home state, so that other young people are encouraged to live here.”

The most rewarding part of the job? Blair says that “nothing beats being at the grocery

photo Jacqueline Wammes
store or at the DMV and overhearing people talk about a piece of legislation you worked on and how it positively impacted their lives.”

Many older adults look down upon young people who want to get involved in politics because they believe they don’t have the power or integrity to handle it. Saira Blair is living proof that no matter your age, you can make an impactful change in your community if you choose to work hard.

Sony Ton-Aime
Poet

“Life is the best inspiration.”

A student at A Magazine’s very own home base of Kent State, Sony Ton-Aime is changing people’s lives through his writing. He is a current graduate fellow at the Wick Poetry Center on campus, leads a weekly poetry at Urban Vision in Akron, Ohio, and even teaches a College Writing II class as a graduate assistant.

Ton-Aime always knew that he enjoyed writing and teaching. His favorite part of what he does is reading the inventive work of his students, of whom he says he doesn’t know if he can call them students for he feels as if he “is learning as much from them as he is teaching them.”

The inspiration behind his work? “Life. Really, life is the best inspiration, with everything in it. Its highs and lows, its deceptions and heartbreaks, its restraints and freedom, everything that we love and hate.”

Ton-Aime says that he lives by the Haitian motto, “L’union fait la force!”, which translates as “unity makes strength.” He strives to change the world and create a positive impact through his poetry. With students from all backgrounds in the Kent and Akron areas being inspired by his creativity and determination, it is clear his work is making a considerable effect on people’s lives. —AE

art Emily Prusak →
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