

MILITARY WIVES

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than being in a foreign country."
Sanderlin said despite pejorative nicknames like "Fay-ram" and "Fay-raq," she found a strong sense of community in Fayetteville.

"I had heard about it being a rough military town," she said. "I was pleasantly surprised moving here. I expected so much worse."

Fayetteville sprang up around Fort Bragg, one of North Carolina's seven major military installations, and is home to about 120,000 military personnel and civilians whose lives are inextricably wound up in the U.S. military.

As the war in Iraq rages into its sixth year, wives, husbands, children and friends across North Carolina are making daily sacrifices.

"It's lonely, and you're scared," said Sanderlin of her husband's multiple deployments.

"But you just take it day by day. There's not really a magic secret."

Sanderlin has been a military wife for five years, and she writes a blog titled "Operation Marriage" for The Fayetteville Observer. In it she discusses the daily challenges wives in Fayetteville face.

"I often say that I feel like the military is a big, though not always happy, family, and I mean it," she wrote in a March 14 post.

Sanderlin said people are finding one another through the growing online community, on social networking sites like Facebook and

through blogs created by military wives.

Patti Katter, founder of Fayetteville-based Christian Military Wives, an online tool for women across the country, said she believes it's easier to come together in a place where not all of the women's husbands are in the same unit.

"They're pretty afraid of talking to other wives for fear of hurting their husband's job down the road," she said, adding that she prefers to bring people together through the church or through her Web site, where rank and unit doesn't color the conversation.

Katter's husband suffered a head injury during his 15-month stint in Iraq, something the couple didn't realize until he returned home. His unit lost 28 men.

Now, between taking her husband to his treatments and home-schooling her three children, Katter said she relies on her faith and the support of the church.

"You never think your husband is going to be the one who is hurt or that your friends are going to be the ones who are killed," she said.

Annette Maykovich, who married a soldier 12 years ago, said deployment is the hardest part of having a loved one in the military.

During one three-year period, her husband was at home for only three months.

"It's difficult when dad's not there," she said. "You have to be mom and dad, and that's difficult to do."

Maykovich has two children,

ages 8 and 10. She said that as her children have grown up, moving around and having to make new friends has become harder but that the family has grown resilient.

"When he was gone and they were babies, it was hard for me."

Sanderlin is expecting her second child to arrive after her husband leaves in a few months for Afghanistan.

Her husband was stateside during the birth of her first child, but he was deployed overseas for most of the next year.

"The last trip, my son was 2 and that was harder," she said. "The first few months, every day he would cry and say, 'Where did Daddy go?'"

"My usual answer is, 'Daddy had to go far away to work.'"

Fortunately, military families don't have to look far for support in a town like Fayetteville.

"When I first got here, support groups were hard to find," Sanderlin said. "Now you have to go out of your way to avoid them. You have to opt out or they'll include you, which I think is great."

Sanderlin said the Army itself has ramped up efforts in recent years to reach out to families left behind, work that she said is disproving the old adage: "If the army wanted you to have a wife, they would have issued you one."

Fort Bragg offers support through its Family Readiness Group, which brings together families of soldiers from the same unit. Amy Williams, media relations

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REBEKAH SANDERLIN, MILITARY WIFE

coordinator for Morale, Welfare and Recreation at Fort Bragg, said the Army Community Service, a division of FRG, is available to assist families on and off base.

Army Community Service offers programs focusing on relocation services, deployment mobilizations, financial readiness and family advocacy. It also provides child care facilities and a lending closet.

"ACS is very far-reaching at this installation," Williams said, explaining that the service hosts six satellite offices off base.

Fayetteville's military wives also draw strength from one another.

Sanderlin said she once offered a stranger a ride home to Fayetteville after learning in the airport that the woman was a fellow military wife.

"The military community as a whole is very tight-knit," she said. "You get instant membership in a huge family that would do anything in the world for you."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

GAMBLING

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poker and even friendly wagers.

"When you gamble, you don't think about anything else but that moment, almost like you're an action junkie," Jay said. "I don't have that anymore, which is peaceful. It allows me to care about the things going on today, because I don't have to worry about tomorrow."

Bob said several UNC students have attended the Chapel Hill group in recent years after gambling away their tuition.

Their visit to the group exposes the heightened gambling being found on college campuses.

College students run almost double the risk for both lifetime subclinical and clinical gambling disorders, according to an article published by the Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport.

Students' close proximity to habits like binge drinking and drug and tobacco use contributes to the high prevalence of gambling on college campuses, the article said.

Although gambling is far from

being widespread, these studies note that the National Collegiate Athletic Association has concerns that the disorder will affect the integrity of college athletics.

With all No. 1 seeds making it to the Final Four this year, many students could be losing untold sums of money through failed bracket predictions of the unlikely four-some.

Understanding the possibility for new members after the tournament, Bob said he hopes that members of the community who are struggling with compulsive gambling will seek out his circle of friends.

"If we get one person to a G.A. meeting that would be wonderful," he said. "Being a member has given me an awareness of what I have to do today, and having the power to talk to other members is something I have come to cherish."

For information, call the Gamblers Anonymous hot line at (213) 386-8789.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

SPRINGFEST

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This is the second year for SpringFest, which used to occur regularly under the name Jubilee until the early '90s when it was canceled because of excessive alcohol use and unmanageable crowds. Marshall said she hopes her

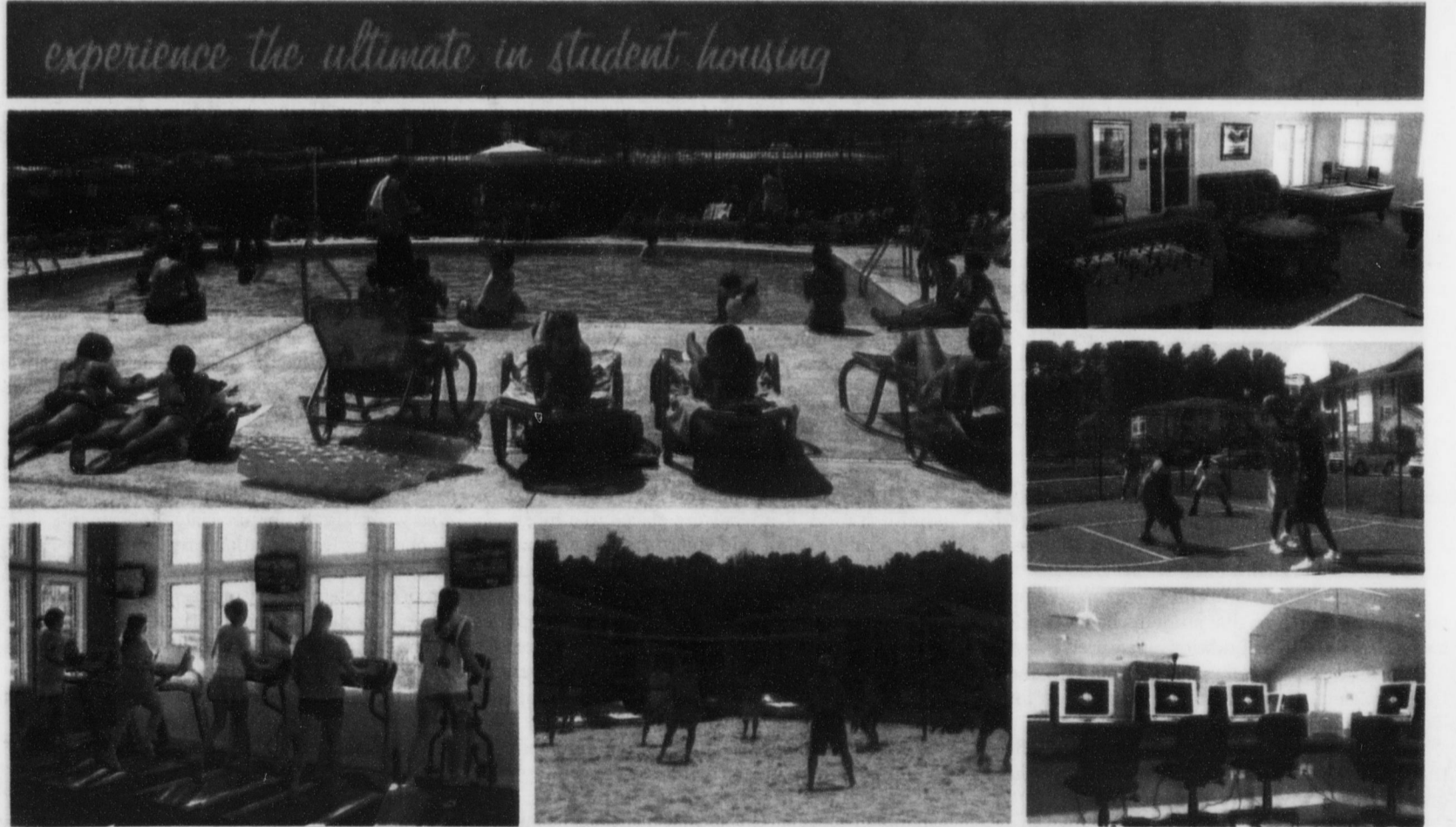
committee's work on the festival will set the bar high and encourage further growth.

"We want to set a really great precedent to say that this event may not have worked in the past, but we can bring it back positively."

Contact the Arts Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

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Former migrant farmworker and future UNC-CH graduate student



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