

PARK THE WHINING

The solution is finally here: new parking structure opens

ANNA FUQUA-SMITH
Staff Writer

No more trolling for spaces. No more ugly confrontations when someone beats you to a spot. No more screaming at someone who just goes out to the car for a smoke – and doesn't leave. No more being late for class because you couldn't find a place to park.

No more excuses.

After a \$12.7 million investment, the controversial parking structure is open for business this week, creating an estimated 544 more parking spaces.

Traffic patterns, however, may prove to be a challenge to some because of road construction not yet completed.

According to Associate Vice President of Facilities Development and Operations Damon Flowers, the road built to connect Lot 7 at the Liberal Arts building to Lot 1 at the Morris Lawrence building will eventually be finished, but the Washtenaw County Road Commission will not permit opening it until some additional construction on Huron River Drive is completed.

PARKING STRUCTURE
CONTINUED A3



BOB CONRADI THE WASHTENAW VOICE

A 'gerbil tunnel' leads from WCC's new parking structure to the LA Building.

GRABBING SOME GRUB

Restaurant week returns and gives students the chance to dine at a discounted price. Also check out the 'Wurst' bar in Ypsilanti. B4

ONLINE CLASSES

Exploring both the upside and occasional downside of taking classes off-campus and online. A5

FUELING THE FUTURE

A look at some of the ways that Washtenaw County is changing the way it uses and produces energy. B1

THE ROAD TO A PARKING SOLUTION

NOVEMBER 2009:

After years of debate and against strong opposition, the WCC Board of Trustees approved the 600-spot parking structure. It is now estimated that the new structure will supply an estimated 544 spaces.

AUGUST 2010:

Plans for the new structure fall behind. The college blames the Ann Arbor Township Planning Commission.

JANUARY 2011:

Construction begins behind the LA building. Administrators confirm that trees uprooted for construction will be replanted around the college.

MAY 2011:

St. Joseph Hospital resists splitting the cost to widen Huron River Drive, which the county road commission says is necessary for the structure's construction.

DECEMBER 2011:

The structure remains on schedule, but new traffic problems await. The widening of the road at Huron River Drive was never completed, forcing the Washtenaw County Road Commission to prohibit the college from opening the road leading out to the Morris Lawrence building. The road from the Clark Road entrance to the structure will be the only point of access. All trees have been replanted in and around the college.

MAY 2010:

Students and faculty oppose WCC's plan to build a parking structure by gathering more than 300 signatures, citing that the college will be destroying a fragile ecosystem by building on the proposed site.

SEPTEMBER 2010:

The Ann Arbor Township Planning Commission finally approves a preliminary site plan for the new parking structure.

APRIL 2011:

Weather has delayed some construction, but officials confirm that the structure is right on target for Winter 2012.

AUGUST 2011:

Construction workers are ahead of schedule, despite rain delays, often working 12-hour days to ensure completion by December. All 81 of the caisson foundations – the large shafts of concrete used to support the building and 65 percent of the underground storm-runoff system is in place, including main water lines that will feed the structure's fire-suppression system.

Politics as usual

At Iowa caucuses, voters select candidates in time-honored tradition



Words and Photos by
JARED ANGLE
Photo Editor

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa – If youngsters here at Valley High School had their way, U.S. Rep. Ron Paul would face Barack Obama in November's presidential election.

Paul, the conservative congressman from Texas, was received by exuberant cheering and applause at a rally sponsored by the non-profit "Rock the Vote," just hours ahead of the state's presidential caucuses last Tuesday. By contrast, U.S. Rep. Michelle Bachmann, former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum and several members of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's family garnered a fairly tepid response from the crowd.

Welcome to democracy in action in middle America, where candidates for the highest office in the land come seeking endorsements from average voters.

"Students are future taxpayers and homeowners," said Valley High Associate Principal David Maxwell, 41, of West Des Moines. He spoke to the purpose of the rally: to get students interested in the political process.

POLITICS AS USUAL
CONTINUED A8

The senior class of Valley High School in West Des Moines, Iowa attended the Rock the Vote event in the school gym to hear several GOP presidential candidates speak.

WCC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT & ACTIVITIES

complete YOUR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE!
with Student Development and Activities

THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AT A GLANCE:
The best of the area's events.

JAN 9 & JAN 16
Blind Pig Karaoke. The Blind Pig. 9:30 p.m. 208 South First St., Ann Arbor. Weekly karaoke brought to you Pig-style. No cover; 21 and up. For more information: (734) 996-8555 or visit <http://blindpigmusic.com>.

JAN 10
So You Want to Be a Beekeeper! Part I. Matthaei Botanical Gardens. 7 p.m. 1800 North Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Children and adults interested in learning about the world of bees and beekeeping can get a full frontal view of the profession in this inclusive program. Event is free. For more information: (734) 647-7600.

JAN 12-FEB 19
God of Carnage. Performance Network Theater. Times vary. 120 E. Huron St., Ann Arbor. This Tony Award-winning play about two sets of parents converging fix their children's altercations will offer a night filled with "comedy of (bad) manners." \$25-\$41. For show times and more information: (734) 663-0681 or visit <http://tickets.performancenetwork.org>.

JAN 14
Neil Young Tribute Night. Woodruff's Bar. 10 p.m. 36 E. Cross Street, Ypsilanti. A host of local solo artists, poets and group acts will feature the songs of Neil Young. \$5. For more information: <http://woodruffsbar.com>.

JAN 20-22
University Musical Society Presents: Einstein on the Beach. Power Center. 7 p.m. (Fri-Sat); 2 p.m. (Sun). 121 Fletcher St., Ann Arbor. An opera of provocative orchestral music and dance presented by visionary director Robert Wilson and celebrated composer Phillip Glass. \$24-\$54 for main floor; \$18-\$48 for balcony. For more information: (734) 764-8538; <http://ums.org>.

JAN 21
Saline Area Historical Society's 25th Annual Antique Show. Liberty School. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. 7265 Ann Arbor-Saline Road. Antique hunters will have the opportunity to peruse vintage items in this fundraiser supporting the Historical Society and Museum's future events. \$3 per person, prices of antiques vary. For more information: (734) 429-3164; <http://salinehistory.org>.

JAN 21
Foreigner Acoustique: The Classics Unplugged. The Michigan Theater. 7:30 p.m. 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. The seminal '70s classic rock group Foreigner will visit the Ann Arbor hotspot to showcase its newest release "Feels Like The First Time." \$30-\$43; \$75 for Limited Gold Circle seating. For more information: (734) 668-8397; <http://michtheater.org>.

JAN 21
The Verve Pipe Family Show. The Ark. 10:30 a.m. 316 S. Main St., Ann Arbor. '90s alternative rock darlings The Verve Pipe will return to their native Michigan to feature family friendly tracks off of their new disc, "A Family Album." \$10. For more information: (734) 761-1800; <http://theark.org>.

JAN 21
Turquoise Jeep. The Blind Pig. 9 p.m. 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. The hit YouTube comedians will feature their parody songs and routines live. \$15 cover; 18 and up. For more information: (734) 996-8555 or visit <http://blindpigmusic.com>.

JAN 21
January Field Exploration. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation. 2 p.m. 2230 Platt Road, Ann Arbor. Patrons of this event will have the chance to look for winter animals, tracks and identify wild berries. Event is free. For more information: (734) 971-6337 (x.334); <http://ewashtenaw.org>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Welcome Day
Wednesday, January 18, 2012
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Student Center Cafeteria
Learn about clubs, grab food and freebies, and meet new friends!
FREE!

Phillip Glass & Robert Wilson's Einstein on the Beach
Thursday, January 20, 2012
7:00 p.m.
Power Center
Price: Only \$20.00!

If you are a department, club, or agency interested in reserving a table at Welcome Day, visit:
<http://goo.gl/InHRD>

We need YOU!
Join the WCC Service Corps
And give back to your community.
<http://tinyurl.com/wccgives>

Much Ado About Nothing
Thursday, January 26, 2012
8:00 p.m.
Arthur Miller Theatre, Ann Arbor, MI
\$5 for students
\$7 for faculty/staff

Club News:
Remember to **register your club** for the Winter 2012 semester. Registration reserves meeting rooms and allows access to club funding!
<http://tinyurl.com/w12club>

Tickets are on sale at the Cashier's Office, 2nd floor of the Student Center Building, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

UPCOMING SPORTS

Intramural Dodgeball
Registration: January 9 - 13, 2012
Games: Every Sunday from January 22 - February 12, 2012
Time: Games are one hour each and start at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Division: Co-Ed
FREE!

Intramural Bowling
Registration: January 16 – 20, 2012
Games: Every Friday, February 3 – 24, 2012
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Division: Co-Ed
Colonial Lanes
FREE for students!
Staff may participate at regular league prices.

Coed Running Club
Tuesdays and Thursdays
Starting January 17, 2012
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
North Athletic Fields
Bring your WCC Student ID card and warm running clothes.
FREE!

Intramural Ping Pong
Registration: January 16 – 25, 2012
Men's on Wednesday January 18
Women's on Wednesday January 25
5:30pm on the first floor of the Student Center Building.
FREE!

DROP-IN FUN!

Drop by the WCC Sports Office to learn about upcoming sports and have a little fun!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW:

- Foosball Table
- Basketball Free Throw
- Ping Pong Table

Student Activities: SC 112
WCC Sports: SC 118



STAY CONNECTED!

[HTTP://TINYW.CC/SDA](http://tinyurl.com/SDA)

Be the first to find out about new tickets and activities!

Check us out online!
washtenawvoice.com



Recruiting Healthy Participants



We are looking for healthy women ages 18 to 40 to participate in a study about how life studies (including sexual ones) affect immunity.

For more information, contact sexresearch@umich.edu or (734) 763 7121



van Anders Lab

HUM00025973

PARKING STRUCTURE FROM FRONT PAGE

Former Trustee David Rutledge, now a state representative, was one of the strongest proponents of the structure. He warns that no one should think all the parking problems are solved. He still encourages everyone at the college to evaluate the need for carpooling and to consider the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority bus routes.

"Students have complained for years about spending more time looking for parking on campus than they spend in class," Rutledge said. "While the structure will provide welcomed relief, this structure is not the answer. Students and the college should still look for alternatives to get to campus."

While the structure will be embraced by many, liberal arts transfer Janelle Eschler, 25, of Ann Arbor said she has no intention of using it. She opposed its construction.

"I won't drive to avoid using the structure due to the ecosystem that was disturbed during construction," Eschler said. "Enrollment dropped like 30 percent just due to the economic situation and financial aid being revised."

Rutledge said the area used for the structure included more brush than mature trees.

"From everything I understand, it was an area that wasn't environmentally big, but most trees were replaced around

campus and we tried to treat that area as sensitively as possible throughout construction," Rutledge said.

Former President Larry Whitworth said that the structure has been long overdue.

"Yes. Enrollment had a big dip this past semester but the problem goes back 13 years ago when we only had 10,000 students. Still then, we had a parking problem," Whitworth said.

While enrollment dipped in Fall 2011 from record highs a year earlier, Whitworth confirmed that it's projected that community college enrollment will continue to grow.

"People need to return to school throughout life," he said. "Many people need to return to remain economically viable."

The structure will not only provide more parking, but three of the four floors will be covered. While it will not be heated, the facility features two elevators and light sensors throughout.

Flowers confirmed that students will not be able to access the Liberal Arts building after hours through the new glass-covered bridge. Security will also be housed on the first floor of the structure, and there will be 24-hour security throughout the building – as there is across campus.

"There are also 30 cameras that were installed in the structure and on the road to ensure no dead spots throughout," Flowers said. "Call boxes have



JARED ANGLE THE WASHTENAW VOICE

The entrance of the new parking structure offers respite from the snow.

also been added on each floor if an emergency occurs."

While the parking structure comes as welcomed relief, Rutledge hopes that the college is now rethinking its plan for the future – if it needs

more parking.

"For too long, the college held a concept to building surface parking," he said. "I hope that philosophy is evolving when expanding up instead of out."

Darkness deterred?

College prepared to combat lurking concerns in its new parking structure

ADRIAN HEDDEN
Features Editor

After countless dissenting voices, after months of tire-some labor and frustrated leaps through bureaucratic hoops, Washtenaw Community College's newfangled, four-level parking structure is finally open for service.

But despite cutting down hundreds of trees to make room for the garage, the school and its patrons are not out of the woods yet. Safety concerns have already begun to surface about imminent danger in the dark of the new facility.

20-year-old nursing student, Nicole Gross, from Towas, Michigan, worries about vandalism in the structure and is nervous that cars in the structure may become more vulnerable to malicious damage.

"People being jackasses would be a major concern in the building," Gross said. "It would be an easy target to get tires slashed."

Business major Kisha Richardson fears that the parking structure may provide the cover that criminals need to avoid being seen. The 28-year-old from Ypsilanti only intends to use the structure during the

light of day.

"I think it will be safe during the day," Richardson said. "During the night, I'm afraid of people that aren't part of the school posting up in there and trying to rob people. I wouldn't park there at night. You don't know who's in there."

Campus Safety and Security isn't afraid to be. From behind the two, brand-new, jumpo-screen monitors installed in his new command center within the parking structure, Director of Safety and Security Jacques Desrosiers will be there watching.

Desrosiers is confident that his presence in the new building will be adequate enough to deter crime. The command post will be situated in the structure, with a bridge leading to the LA building.

"The bridge will make accessing the college easier and quicker," Desrosiers said. "We're also more centrally located, so our response time will be better."

While the security office's new command center continues as a work-in-progress, according to Desrosiers, dispatchers for his department will remain in the Facilities Management building on the west side of campus.

"We should have everything up and running by the time students start coming back," Desrosiers said. "Then it will be business as usual."

To strengthen security's ability to handle concerns in a

timely manner, two emergency call boxes have been installed on every floor of the structure, at the elevators. Cameras situated throughout the building will capture movement to be monitored, on-screen, at the office. Each screen can display up to 32 camera images.

Vice President of Administration and Finance Steven Hardy sees a stronger presence for security as imperative to maintaining the peace in the new structure.

"Our main focus is to increase visibility as a preventative measure," Hardy said. "People need to know we're out there. With the office positioned more openly, there is more visibility in that structure."

Extensive lighting in the structure, on motion sensors, is a feature that Hardy believes sets WCC's structure apart from similar buildings.

"People often feel unsafe in parking structures because it is too dark," Hardy said. "When you walk into our structure, you'll see that it is very well-lit all the time."

The new lighting does not quell Richardson's fear of the dark. Richardson's apprehension also results from creepy past experiences. She still refuses to use the structure after dark.

"I've been to other structures that are well-lit," she said. "At night it's still scary. I definitely won't use it at night."

The college has been in

league with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's department to strengthen ties with local law enforcement, according to Hardy.

"We're really looking for a holistic approach to campus safety," Hardy said. "We've also been passing out the booklets and have just finished our crisis management plan. The structure going up should not cause many problems."

Desrosiers hopes that the structure may reduce confrontations over parking spots, which are the major cause of altercations on campus.

"I'm just hoping it will reduce the congestion in the lot that causes the tension," Desrosiers said. "People won't have to fight for spaces."

Although she continues to dread danger late after dusk, Richardson agrees that something had to be done about the parking situation at WCC. She also is grateful and excited for a covered walk to her classes during periods of extreme weather.

"The parking here is ridiculous," Richardson said. "The walk-way makes it very convenient. It'll be great in the rain and snow. This could be the best thing to happen to WCC."

Gross is encouraged by plans for strong lighting in the structure and expects to see the heightened visibility promised by her school's administration.

"Cameras and lights would make it a lot safer," Gross said. "I guess I don't think it's too dangerous."

IN BRIEF

PHOTO STUDENTS HEADING TO ITALY

Digital arts instructor Jennifer Baker will be taking a group of Washtenaw Community College students far away to Sorrento, Italy this year for her annual course: Digital Photography Abroad (PHO 105).

Beginning May 2, the three-week course offers students the opportunity to hone their skills with digital single lens reflex (or DSLR) cameras, and to digitally develop and manage photography portfolios on laptop computers. Equipment will be provided, but students are permitted to bring their own cameras and computers.

The cost of the three-credit class is \$2,850. Interested students with some basic understanding of digital photography can reach Baker at jbaker@wccnet.edu or attend the trip information session on Tuesday, Jan. 10, from 7-9 p.m. in GM 303.

DEADLINE NEARS FOR NEW PROGRAM FUNDING

Faculty and staff at Washtenaw Community College are running out of time to submit applications before the WCC Foundation Grant's Sunday, Jan. 15 deadline. The grant is meant for employees at the school to acquire the financial means to start up new and innovative programs to enrich the experience of WCC's students.

Applications must be professional and detailed as there is much competition. It is also asked that applications explain why the school cannot provide the necessary funding for the proposed program.

To apply for the grant or for assistance on application, Krissa Rumsey can be reached at (734) 973-3492. A digital version of the application can be obtained by email to krumsey@wccnet.edu. Applications will continue to be accepted on Monday, Jan. 16.

Last year the foundation provided \$25,000 to worthy

causes. If approved, this year's funding will be obtained July, 1.

WCC TO FEATURE TRIBUTE TO ICONIC ACTRESS

On Saturday, Jan 14, the Towsley Auditorium will play host to a live performance of musical "Bernhardt on Broadway." Written by composer, playwright and resident of Ann Arbor, Carol Dunitz, the show is a tribute to Sarah Bernhardt's famed life and career.

It commemorates Bernhardt's final performance in Ann Arbor on Feb. 13, 1917 at former concert hall, The Whitney, which was once located downtown at the corner of Main and Ann streets. The show will run from 2 to 4 p.m.

Tickets are available for \$25 from one of the production's sponsoring non-profit organizations. The show's sponsors are: Omni Solutions (734) 323-3822; Girls Group (734) 994-6627; Growing Hope (734) 786-8401; Neutral Zone (734) 214-9995 ext.223; Steps for Kids (734) 663-6835; Ypsilanti Area Dancers (734) 477-9350' and Ypsilanti Community Choir, through Haab's Restaurant (734) 483-8200.

DENTAL CLINIC OPENS

A dental clinic for currently registered or employed Washtenaw Community College students, faculty and staff will open on Tuesday, Jan 24, and will continue through April 12.

Dental treatment will be provided by University of Michigan dental students, supervised by community dentists.

Services, by appointment only, will include cleanings, exams, x-rays, silver and tooth colored restorations. The clinic will be open during the Winter semester on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

To make an appointment, phone (734) 973-3332 or visit the clinic at OE 106.

CAMPUS EVENTS

JAN. 9

Winter semester begins today

Monday Night Joe, 5-6 p.m.

Join Student Development and Activities for a free cup of coffee to help you through those evening classes. Available on the second floor of the LA building near the bridge to the Student Center.

JAN. 10

Tuesday Night Joe, 5-6 p.m.

Join Student Development and Activities for a free cup of coffee to help you through those evening classes. Available on the first floor of the LA building near the entrance under the SC bridge.

JAN. 11

Spring Arbor and Concordia Universities will be on campus to meet with students interested in attending either school. SA will be on campus from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. on the first floor of the SC. Concordia will be available from 1-5 p.m. on the second floor of the SC.

JAN. 16

The college is closed in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. day.

JAN. 17

TUESDAY NIGHT JOE, 5-6 P.M.

Join Student Development and Activities for a free cup of coffee to help you through those evening classes. Available on the first floor of the LA building near the entrance under the SC bridge.

JAN. 18

Concordia University will be on campus to meet with students interested in attending the college. Representatives will be available from 1-5 p.m. on the second floor of the SC.

JAN. 19

Toastmasters: Speak and Present with Confidence. Learn how to alleviate fear of public speaking, deliver electrifying presentations and interview impressively. Free. 8-9 p.m., Room 150 of the Morris Lawrence Building.

JAN. 19

Representatives from Eastern Michigan University will be on campus to meet with students interested in attending the college from noon-4 p.m. on the second floor of the SC.

SECURITY NOTES

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

An ambulance was called to the ML building on Dec. 4 at 10:45 a.m. The call was in response to a personal health crisis and the victim was rushed to a nearby hospital.

THE BIG MOVE

Campus Safety and Security will be relocating their base of operations and dispatch to the second floor of the new

parking structure. The new command center will be on the North side of the structure and will be open no later than Jan. 9, according to the Director of Security Jacques Desrosiers.

To contact Campus Safety & Security, dial 3411 from any school phone, press the red button on red security phones, or use your cell phone to call (734) 973-3411.

Visit washtenawvoice.com for security updates.



JARED ANGLE THE WASHTENAW VOICE

The new security office houses the department's dispatchers, camera monitor station and an interview room to sort out conflicts.

EDITORIAL

Welcome home, finally, veterans Iraq war

The dawning of a new year is typically a time when events of the past could be at long last let go, if not completely forgotten.

As we fade into 2012, we cannot offer our hopes and wishes for a new year without reflecting, both somberly and thankfully, on the end of the eight disconsolate years that defined our generation.

Finally, the war in Iraq has come to an end.

Most of us remember where we were on that fateful day, Sept 11, 2001, and we're quick to share our stories with bated breath.

In the grip of anger and fear, riding full steam into Afghanistan shortly after seemed logical, and almost warranted. But when the first wave of bombs blasted the city of Baghdad in 2003, the logic behind it all was lost on many of us.

It was a broken kiss on an empty promise.

We had been misled by our own leaders, like a cheap date, in fear of future attacks and the use of Iraq's supposed "weapons of mass destruction." It plagued us daily, like some harrowing raven or cloud that we couldn't quite shake off. It was under these pretenses that we all jumped aboard, not thinking of the lives, money and political prosperity that it could cost.

Was it worth it all, looking back, for the beautiful men and women of our generation to be subjected to eight years of psychological damage, bombings and gratuitous horror? For a cache of weapons and overarching threat that didn't exist?

Many of us will never know what it felt like to be in their boots and gear, waiting for that day's mission to be over without somehow losing what makes you human in the process. Even worse, many of us who had the option of sitting back and staying home pontificated in safety, adding even more to the politics that divide us so starkly today.

It would be easy for us to recount all the reasons why we were wrong to enter this war in the first place, but none of that discourse would change the fact that so many men and women gave their lives for our ability to do so, freely, without persecution or scrutiny.

We challenge you, the torch-bearers of our generation, to not be duped ever again by the politics of fear.

And most importantly, if you know a veteran, hug them – and tell them how much you appreciate what they have done.

We may let go, but we will never forget. Only history will prove whether it was worth it, but at long last, and with certitude, we can say welcome home and thank you for your service.

VOICE BOX

After eight years of warfare in Iraq, The United States military has finally begun withdrawing troops the Middle Eastern country.

Many have debated America's presence in the country from the beginning of the occupation, and now only a few questions remain: Should they be coming back? Is the fight really over? And was it worth it?

Troops come home from Iraq. Mission Accomplished?

ADRIAN HEDDEN FEATURES EDITOR



FAY WELLS
22, Ann Arbor, Nursing

It's a good thing, them coming back. I mean, it's not really over. With the whole oil thing, they're probably gonna end up going back.



TRE MCALISTER
19, Detroit, Business

I'm glad they're coming back safely. There's probably conflict with the families of the troops. All of them want them (the troops) back. There's a lot of controversy.



TOM BROWN
65, Ypsilanti, Retired

The withdrawal is a good thing. But we should probably leave some troops over there to train the others. They're still having trouble like in Vietnam, it is a different animal, but they pulled out fine then. Maybe they'll be alright.



GABRIEL COUCH
23, Ann Arbor, Computer Networking

The conflict was over a while ago. I was an E-4 in the 82nd Airborne and we were dealing with a civil war. I saw a huge game of profiteering. We're leaving because there is only so long that this sort of thing can be dragged out. You should look up KBR. They were the company that profited the most, owned by Haliburton.



CHRIS DANIEL
26, Ypsilanti, Motor Cycle Technology

I think it's great. Anything that brings the troops back is good. Nobody needs to be over there in the first place. I personally think it's all about the oil. Hopefully, they won't have to go back.



SAM HOLSTEN
42, Ypsilanti, Computer Networking

They should withdraw. It's time to come home. They claim to have everything under control, let the people over there deal with it. Some of the guys have been over there for 2-3 years. They've been away from their families for too long.



DEYANCO HARDWICK
19, Detroit, Communications

I feel like it's good. They're coming home to their families. Nobody wants to go to war. It seems like it should be over, but with oil, you never know.



MONICA WILSON
20, South Haven, Nursing

I honestly don't know why we're there in the first place. They keep changing the reason. First we were going after one guy, to fight terrorism, then we were stopping some dictator, and now they're claiming to be bringing democracy. There's no consistency. I don't think there is a real reason.

Yeah, I'm *that* guy at the gym

MATT DURR
Editor

Every year millions of Americans say they're going to lose weight as their New Year's Resolution. They go to the gym for the first two weeks of the year and then disappear like LeBron James in the fourth quarter.

Well, I'm not one of them. My reasons for physical fitness have nothing to do with

keeping a promise to myself. No, dear readers, my motivation is strictly personal.

You see, recently my wife challenged me, or better yet, questioned my manliness (what's left of it anyway) and said that I could not lose more weight than her in the first 90 days of the New Year. At first, I ignored her taunts (as I usually ignore everything she says), but when she upped the ante, I was in. The prize: winner chooses where we vacation this year.

So I got a gym membership, started counting calories and have given up my favorite frosty beverages in order to prove to my wife who is "king of the road."

And now I'm that guy at the

gym who clearly has not seen the inside of weight room since high school. I had to be shown how to properly use the elliptical machine and had no idea that people sprayed down their machines after using them.

I feel like an idiot as I run in place, on the lowest settings possible and try to figure out how in the hell I'm supposed to use half the machines in the gym.

I stick out like a sore thumb and the regulars despise me. I can see it in their healthy little eyes. They're disgusted as this fat, sweaty blob runs on the machine they're waiting to use. Their dirty looks mean nothing to me; I am motivated by greed. You see my choice for

vacation is my favorite place in the world, a place built on excess and overindulgence: Las Vegas.

While getting in shape and lowering my chance for a heart attack is all well and good, it will be poker tables and neon lights that keep me pushing just a little bit longer on the treadmill.

That's why I'll keep going back and getting the dirty looks and snickers as the fat guy struggles with the leg press. It's cool. I can handle it.

But for those of you who hate the "new guy" at the gym, cut us some slack. We're trying. And instead of laughing at our shortcomings, help us out next time. And maybe I won't "forget" to wipe down my machine.

Dear society: stop bringing me down during the holidays



NATHAN CLARK
Staff Writer

As I regained consciousness late into New Year's Day, I felt exceptionally happy despite having a raging headache mixed with a bad case of cottonmouth. The source of my well-being became clear when I stared at my calendar and happily proclaimed the holiday season over.

Every year seems to get progressively worse. Perhaps it's

just me getting older, but maybe it's the world around me sucking more and more joy out of the holidays.

It starts with Thanksgiving, a day you're supposed to spend with family being thankful for everything you have. Instead, Thanksgiving has become an excuse to overeat before going out to over shop, or to overeat and pass out – blaming the tryptophan in the Turkey instead of the real culprits: lots of fatty food, booze and watching the Lions lose.

After Thanksgiving, there is a manic rush of people going to shopping centers trying to buy as much stuff as humanly possible to show their loved ones just how much they care about them. This year, we saw the ascension

of the aggressive shopper willing to pepper spray anybody to get an Xbox at a discounted price.

As if aggressive shoppers aren't enough, every year we are bombarded with the same mind-numbing debate over whether we're supposed to say "happy holidays" or "Merry Christmas." People seem to forget that saying happy holidays covers all the holidays in the season and not just one. So forgive me for not saying Merry Christmas until Christmas Day. I'm not trying to make a statement or anything. I just don't say Merry Christmas until Christmas for the same reasons I don't say happy birthday to people until it's their actual birthday.

And finally, the holiday

season draws to a close on New Year's. What was supposed to be a night of reflection on everything that has happened in the past year is more commonly identified as a drunken celebration with strangers while making empty promises to better ourselves. My New Year's resolution is the same every year: to try really hard not to screw up the date on any important documents. I'll probably fail, but then again, so will you.

The winter months are already damn depressing and the holidays should be able cheer us up when it's cold and grey outside. Unless you can talk the sun into showing up a little more during the winter, stop devaluing my holiday season!

TO THE EDITOR:

'Just say thank you'

Since its inception, Washtenaw Community College has carved a niche in providing innovative educational programs, at a convenient hour to working students, with excellent instruction in state-of-the-art equipped classrooms.

Many a successful entrepreneur attributes WCC as a significant contributor of hands-on

knowledge and relevant, practical application that allow them to hit-the-road running when entering the business world.

The dichotomy that mystifies me is the WCC scholarship student recipients who do not typically say "thank you" to the donor of their financial stipend.

In more than 10 years of awarding the Richard D. and Grace P. Leslie \$1000 scholarship to a deserving WCC student, not once has a recipient sent an acknowledgement of

appreciation or said in a telephone call "thank you."

I've discovered from talking to other WCC scholarship supporters of their similar experience that all of us receive a self-fulfilling warm feeling of furthering a student's education with financial support. But, as with any gift received, good manners should apply.

The theories abound as to "why" no appreciation is expressed and I remember when I received a financial gift from

my grandparents as a child, I felt like I was fulfilling their mission in life to give me money. It was no sacrifice; they have (I thought) lots of money. Boy, was I wrong!

In short, any gift should be expressly appreciated by the recipient. Remember hearing that as a child?

Dale R. Leslie
63, Ann Arbor

The Washtenaw Voice

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The Voice is committed to correct all errors that appear in the newspaper and on its website, just as we are committed to the kind of careful journalism that will minimize the number of errors printed. To report an error of fact that should be corrected, please phone (734) 677-5405 or e-mail thewashtenawvoice@gmail.com.

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Online classes offer convenience, but can sometimes be frustrating

BEAU KEYES
Contributor

Any tool that brings the college experience to more folks is a plus, according to Washtenaw Community College English instructor Sarah Pinkelman.

"However, like all superpowers, it can be used for good and evil," Pinkelman said.

Traditional on-campus classes are not in danger of becoming a thing of the past any time soon, but with students busier these days, online classes are growing in both popularity and offerings.

Although a form of online class was available previously, the beginnings of the modern version began at WCC in the Fall of 2004.

"We started by offering an original four online courses," said James Egan, dean of distance learning at WCC. "By the Fall of 2011 we had a combination of 61 completely online and blended courses on the schedule."

Between Fall 2007 and Fall 2011, the percentage of online class sections offered nearly doubled from 2.7 percent to 5.6 percent. Forty class sections were available fully online in 2007 and increased to 93 sections fully online in 2011.

"Online classes work very well for me, and I think WCC's dedication to them has improved my online education," said Bob Palmer, a 45-year old Liberal Arts Transfer major from Greenville.

Popularity and convenience is one thing, but it is unwise to assume that an online class is going to be inherently easier than a traditional physical class.

"Online classes require a lot of responsibility on the part of the student to get a good grade," said Leah Kaisler, 17, of Tipton, a student at Washtenaw Technical Middle College.

Instructors also find value in online classes as an alternative to face-to-face classes.

"As with everything, what a person puts into an endeavor is reflected in what they get from

it – this applies to students and instructors," said Stephanie Wichmann, a WCC English instructor.

She has experience teaching both standard online classes and blended classes that merge both online and classroom segments in the same course.

"I think that the key to successful online courses is to keep students and instructors engaged, foster open communication, and inspire performance," Wichmann said. "It is possible for students to do well in an online course, but students need to realize that it is still a lot of work to complete the course successfully."

Online classes are well-suited to many students because of the ability to schedule their own time, view recorded lectures and materials more than once, and take breaks as necessary.

"I was living an hour away from WCC when I started taking online classes," Palmer said. "I found that not having to make that drive that far and deal with the weather and traffic – not to mention the parking lot – I was able to get more into the classes. I can pick up the computer any time I want to work on some homework."

Again, the same things that matter to students are just as important to their WCC instructors.

"I chose to teach online classes to see how the online educational world functioned," Pinkelman said. An instructor since 2009, he has experience in five online and one blended class.

"I also have two kids, and like all kids, they get sick occasionally and stay home from school or daycare. That is a bit more stressful when you need to show up for a face-to-face class."

Not everything about online classes is seen as positive by students and instructors, however.

"I wish that there were a more diverse course offering, but overall, online courses are a wonderful way for a student to be able to take classes at their own speed and on their own timeline," Palmer said.

Online classes are sometimes a frustrating thing for Wichmann, who prefers to be more actively involved in the methodology of teaching the subject.

"I prefer traditional classes because I've seen that the outcomes are much more positive for students in face-to-face classes. In most cases, online instructors are not allowed to alter course content, assignment instructions, grading rubrics or any other course components. Many instructors who I've talked to feel that their role is as a facilitator rather than as a teacher in an online course."

To aid students in going online for the first time, WCC offers training in Blackboard, the software architecture used by the campus to host and facilitate the online learning process.

Although it was her first time using Blackboard, Debra Cross, 56, a Photographic Technology major from Dundee caught on quickly and found blackboard

to be user-friendly.

"Even though at first I didn't know how the assignments were entered and how tests were given, I absolutely think Blackboard is a good product for the online classes," Cross said.

For Palmer, it was what Blackboard didn't provide that mattered.

"What I have found, is that instructors who don't use Blackboard much have a real problem getting all the needed info in the right places. Like this semester, I have a class and the instructor can't seem to put everything on Blackboard," Palmer said. "Because of this, I missed three assignments, and he refused to open them up so I could complete them."

Instructors of online classes often hear complaints because they are the front-line contact for the students in their classes.

"For the most part I've had an easy time logging on and accessing everything," Pinkelman said. "I have gotten a student every now and then that's written something like 'I hate Blackboard!', but I'm never clear about what is frustrating them, though."

Wichmann has heard a lot of complaints from instructors and students from time to time, but realizes that most of the issues are eventually resolved.

"WCC has a team of staff members who act as Blackboard support people for faculty and students. They run free training sessions year round, and provide phone and email support until late at night."

Institutions work together to make transferring easier

BEAU KEYES
Contributor

Chad Doxey wants to go to the University of Michigan, but is attending Washtenaw Community College for two years first.

"I hope to start at the U-M in the fall of 2013, pending admission, of course," said the 36-year old Liberal Arts Transfer major from Ann Arbor.

With the high cost of tuition today, many students like Doxey look to WCC as a springboard to other colleges and universities. But how it is best done, specifically, isn't always clear to them.

To help students transfer, the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers created a transfer agreement that uses the acronym of their title, MACRAO.

"I actually was just going to finish up my associate's degree at WCC and start my bachelor's degree at Eastern Michigan University without transferring my credits," said Amanda Blackburn, 25, and a Criminal Justice major from Ypsilanti Township.

"I met with a counselor to discuss graduation and such when she introduced me to the MACRAO program. I thought to myself, why haven't I done this already? This way I am not taking duplicate classes through both places."

The agreement makes it possible for interested WCC students to complete up to 30 credit hours and then transfer those to another college or university. MACRAO students are required to complete at least eight of their 30 credit hours at WCC and have a minimum 2.0 grade point average to be eligible.

"I anticipate making the transfer from WCC to EMU this spring, and completing my term at EMU by the spring of 2013," Blackburn said. "After that, I hope to start at Cooley Law School in the fall of 2013."

According to Doug Potter, manager of Specialized

Recruiting for EMU, the best course of action for any WCC student wanting to transfer is to meet with a counselor or advisor sooner, rather than later.

"Even if it's a few years down the road, start by meeting with a counselor from WCC and an EMU Transfer Admissions Representative as early as possible," Potter said.

Because of a strong partnership with WCC, walk-in advising is available to students with representatives from the EMU Advising Office located in WCC's Counseling Office. They are available year-round on Wednesdays from 1-5 p.m. and Thursdays from noon-4 p.m.

Potter also believes that many students use the agreement because it is an efficient way to transfer.

"We had approximately 2,100 new transfer students enroll this past Fall," he said. "I would guess that nearly half of them from Michigan community colleges came with a completed MACRAO agreement."

To fulfill the MACRAO agreement, WCC students need six credit hours in English Composition, eight-to-nine hours in the social sciences like sociology, history or psychology, eight-to-nine credits in math and science, and eight-to-nine hours in the humanities like art, drama, music, journalism or foreign language.

In addition, some colleges and universities have special limitations, exceptions and additions that an advisor will explain as part of the intended school's requirement and help ensure a successful transfer.

"Even though U-M has stricter requirements over Eastern, Michigan has more programs that interest me," Doxey said. "I keep in regular contact with people at both places to make sure things are still going OK."

In addition to speaking to college and university advisors, additional information and a list of supported educational institutions are available by visiting the student services section of <http://wccnet.edu> and at <http://MACRAO.org>.

ONLINE CLASS ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to take online and blended classes at Washtenaw Community College, students must meet a few requirements.

- Class withdrawal rate must be less than 50 percent of previous earned credit classes.
- If you have 15 credits and a 2.7 or greater GPA you are free to take classes online.
- If you have fewer than 15 credits and a GPA between 2.3 and 2.6 you must first pass the Introduction to Online Learning class. This class is available each semester, requires an academic reading and writing level of 6, and costs \$25.
- Students with a GPA lower than 2.3 are encouraged to meet with an adviser or counselor to enroll in suitable classes to raise the GPA above the necessary level.
- Returning students with a GPA of 2.3 or greater can take online classes.

Not all online classes are equal

BEAU KEYES
Contributor

Most people have heard the old adage of "buyer beware," but probably never thought about that in regard to their choice of college classes.

When Washtenaw Community College students sign up for an online class and pay their tuition for the course, they believe it will be a safe investment when dealing with a busy schedule while still providing the same curriculum and quality to that of a face-to-face class.

With Geology 104-section DL2, a weather class taught online since 2008, the reality, according to several students enrolled in the class, is that the online offering is not as good as it should be.

The three-credit class costs \$282, including tuition and tech fees. Add the \$160 textbook, and the cost of the class totals \$442. Considering the cost of an education, students expect to get what they pay for from a class whether online or in-person.

"I've had eight online classes so far at WCC, and the worst experience in taking online classes would have to be the weather class," said Bob Palmer, 45, a Liberal Arts Transfer major from Greenville.

Another student in the class, who asked that his name not be used, has strong feelings about the value of the class.

"They provide a lecture video as the only online learning material," he said. "The faculty did little beyond give us the syllabus and schedule, and has done no teaching in our course as far as I've seen."

As a student with multiple online classes completed at the University of Phoenix, he expected a similarly rich experience at WCC.

"University of Phoenix has a wide assortment of learning materials, discussion groups, and faculty involvement to support online learning. The instructor's feedback here is sparse and uninformative, and the 'discussion board' assignments are all separate responses to the instructor that don't lead to any discussion by the class at all."

The instructor, the geology department head, Kathleen Butcher, and Dean of Math, Science and Health Martha Showalter all declined to be interviewed for this story.

According to James Egan, Dean of Distance Learning, base class materials are determined in the course master syllabus.

"Courses start with a uniform template, but individual departments make decisions to modify at their level, and materials can be changed slightly to allow for variety in teaching based on instructor preference," he said.

A review of the Blackboard page for Geology 104-section DL2 shows that the discussion board is set aside for only three assignments and does not encourage comments from other students to foster a classroom-like interaction. Instructor feedback comes, in most cases, in the form of a one or two sentence comment that appears on the grade page for a particular assignment.

"I know I found it frustrating when I asked the instructor a question about how to do something and his comment was 'read the instructions again.'"

said Debra Cross, a 56-year-old Photographic Technology major from Dundee.

Grading accuracy is a concern to Cross as well.

"I found several answers wrong on the master keys supplied after assignments that show the correct answer once it is completed. I called the instructor out on two wrong answers recently that should actually have been right. He corrected it when shown, but it has also happened before."

The former University of Phoenix student says he's disappointed by what he feels the class represents for the greater WCC campus distance-learning system, and he made his feelings known when he filled out his student-opinion questionnaire (SOQ).

"Having experienced many good online classes, and holding a master's degree in education technology, I see WCC treating online learning like a mail-order correspondence course instead of the media and feedback-rich environment it should be. It's sad really," he said.

For Palmer, who also submitted an SOQ for the class, the lack of instruction is a major flaw. For this reason, he feels the course has taught him nothing about weather.

"The only thing I have gained out of the Geology 104 experience is to never take a class with this instructor again. He is unyielding in his attitude that he is perfect, the syllabus is perfect and that it isn't his responsibility if there are technical issues or the dates change to the schedule without notice."

A gift of warmth

BOB CONRADI
Staff Writer

Now that the weather finally matches the season, staying warm is in the forefront of people's minds, especially those with limited means.

Locally, there are numerous programs that provide warm clothing at low cost or for free. These programs provide needed help to some and opportunities to share for those who wish to donate or volunteer.

One program focused exclusively on clothing is Warm the Children (WTC). This program is administered by news organizations. Locally, WTC was started 15 years ago by the Ann Arbor News, which continued their sponsorship after morphing into AnnArbor.com.

Mack Stewart, a newspaperman who was looking for a way to make a difference in his community, started WTC in Connecticut in 1988. When he found himself without a job at age 60, he decided to spend the rest of his life promoting the program nationally. WTC now operates in 38 cities and 15 states.

The local director is Jill Tewsley, 45, of Milan, events and promotions manager at annarbor.com. WTC-Ann Arbor receives referrals from local schools and matches needy families with volunteer shoppers.

The volunteer shoppers go to Target with the parents or with the whole family, Tewsley explained. They are given \$90 per child to be spent on clothes, shoes, boots, and jackets. Target processes purchase orders from WTC and provides an additional five percent discount. Previously Meijer was the retail partner.

As many as 40-50 local groups participate in the program, including businesses, churches, civic organizations and women's groups. Each of these groups agrees to be responsible for five-50 families.

There are also individuals who volunteer to be shoppers. This year there were 100-150 new volunteers, Tewsley said. Altogether about 500 volunteers participated in 2011.

The program continues to grow. This year 3,200 children were served, up from 2,700 the previous year.

Margot Schreer, 69, of

WTC had enough shoppers at that time, she volunteered to do office work.

For several years she helped with fundraising, mainly envelope-stuffing and data entry. Some of the work could be completed from home, while most jobs were done at the newspaper office. Two years ago she became a shopper.



Ypsilanti became involved in the local program at its inception in 1997. She had been in an automobile accident in 1991, limiting her mobility so that she was unable to shop. Instead, she started answering calls on the program's hotline and after a few weeks asked if she could do even more. She became the volunteer coordinator, matching up shoppers with referred families.

"I try to be very personal with my shoppers," Schreer said. She considers family size and ages of the children in matching shoppers with recipients.

Just this year, Schreer acquired a helper. Interestingly, her fellow coordinator is the daughter of WTC's founder, Mack Stewart.

Mary Stewart, 50, of Ypsilanti Township has lived in Washtenaw County for most of her adult life. She was proud of her dad's mission and wanted to be involved locally. Starting out as a shopper, she is now helping Schreer with the volunteers.

One of these volunteers is Elaine Portice, 66, of Manchester. Portice started as a donor then decided she would like to do more. Finding that

Each year Portice shops with four families, having one to several children. Sometimes the parents do not speak English, but the children do, she said. The recipients are grateful.

"Sometimes they want to hug me; they're really happy to get the help," Portice said.

In their 15 years of service to Washtenaw and parts of Livingston counties, WTC has purchased new clothing for nearly 30,000 children. In addition to AnnArbor.com, the Ann Arbor Community Foundation and United Bank and Trust also cooperate in the effort.

WTC does not accept donations of new or used clothes, only monetary gifts, which are welcome at all times. Shoppers are needed September through December, though some shopping continues into January, Tewsley said.

To donate, stop by any United Bank and Trust branch or mail checks to "Warm the Children," in care of United Bank and Trust, P.O. Box 1127, Ann Arbor, Mich., 48106-1127. To volunteer, visit <http://annarbor.com/warmthechildren> and fill out the registration form at the bottom of the page.

For an extensive list of low cost or free clothing available in Washtenaw County visit <http://washtenawvoice.com>

Bellanca begins plan for the future

MATT DURR
Editor

With her first semester as president of Washtenaw Community College in the books, Rose Bellanca has begun the process of looking for ways the college can improve its educational options for students.

A "Strategic Planning Process" is now under way, and is aiming to keep WCC on the forefront of the industries in Michigan that are growing.

"We're not looking for problems, we're looking for opportunities," Bellanca said.

By focusing on agriculture, health care, manufacturing, energy and informational technologies, the college is working with experts in those fields to find out where those industries are going and what WCC needs to do better to prepare students for their selected career paths.

Recently, Bellanca, and others involved in the process, met with the CEOs of many hospitals and the deans that oversee health care at the University of Michigan and

Eastern Michigan University. Aside from where the industry is going, they also discussed ways for WCC to be ahead of the curve.

Bellanca said she was shocked to learn that nurses are required to have a certificate to move patients from their beds to chairs, or vice versa. However, no college offers a class or program to certify a nurse to move the patients. WCC could be the first in the state to offer the program if their research shows it's necessary.

"You need to keep looking towards the future, while implementing today," Bellanca said.

To help with this process, there have been numerous meetings with staff and faculty to help decide where the college should look to improve, either by adding and subtracting programs or reworking the current curriculum. There is no better source than the people teaching the students, Bellanca said, when looking for guidance about where students need help.

In order to ensure that the

critiques of the school remain as honest as possible, staff and faculty meet with an outside consulting firm to give their opinions.

After the data has been collected for each of the five fields, Bellanca plans on presenting the findings to the WCC Board of Trustees. If changes to programs need to be made, she wants them to be implemented as soon as possible.

Another way the college is looking to improve itself is by making better inroads with the local K-12 schools, to see if there is any way it can help younger students.

Bellanca said she knows many students think of WCC as an option, but would like to know how the college can help those students attend WCC. While she didn't provide details, Bellanca said the superintendents of the schools were very receptive to WCC's ideas.

The planning process is something of a five-year plan, but will be worked on each year. As the fields change their needs, WCC will have to adapt too, she said.



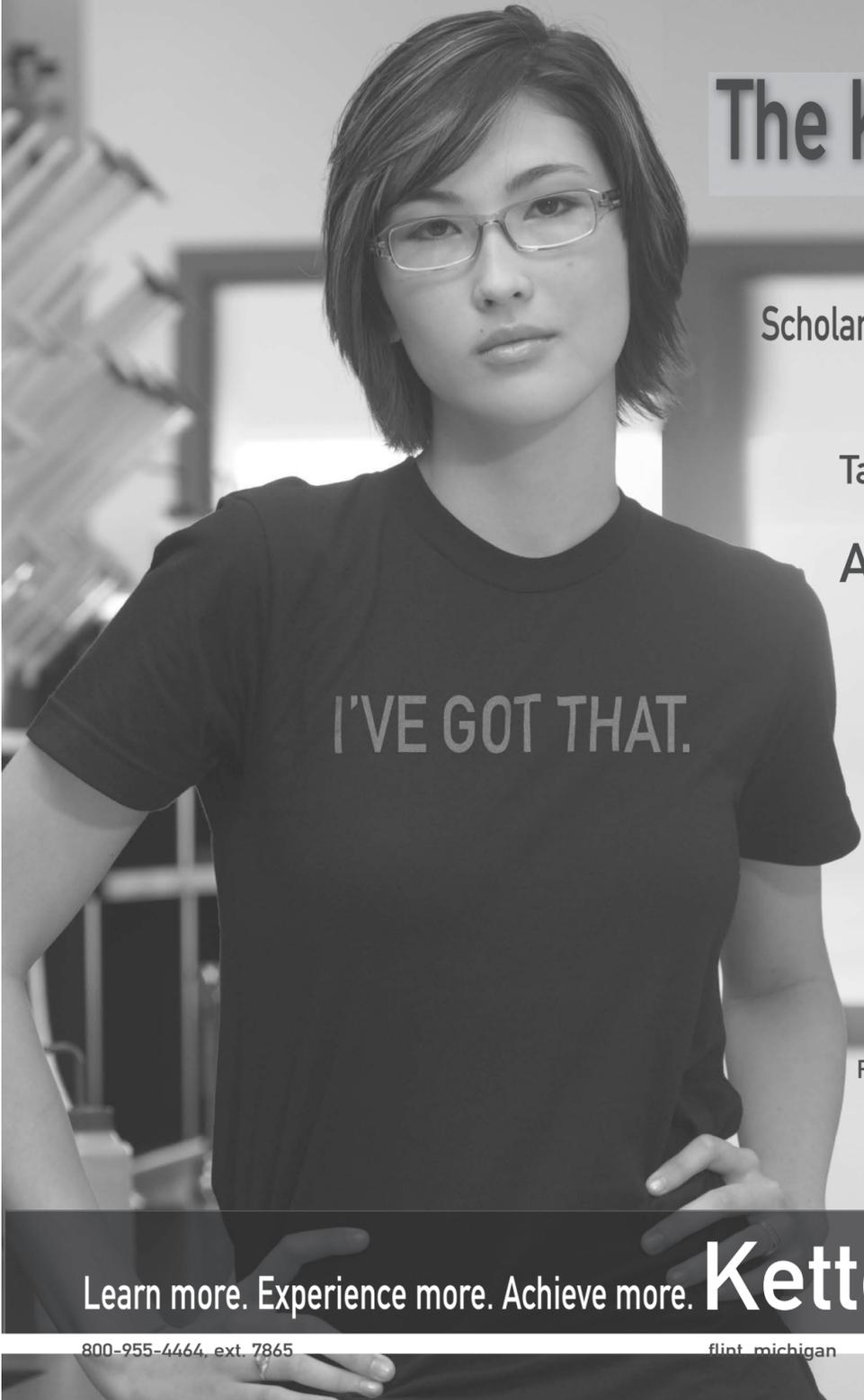
JARED ANGLE THE WASHTENAW VOICE
President Rose Bellanca addresses the Washtenaw Economic Club, introducing William Clay Ford Jr. in October.



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A campaign volunteer representing Newt Gingrich speaks to the audience while residents from Precinct 24 watch.

POLITICS AS USUAL
FROM FRONT PAGE

Which fairly well sums up Iowa's role in presidential politics.

"We're a small state, but we actually get time with these candidates," said Joel Jollymore, 37, of Des Moines. "I've probably had Rick Santorum's ear for 20 minutes to a half-hour."

"When you campaign in Iowa, it's like Iowans are buying a car. They kick the tires, and they kick them hard."

Hours after the rally, Iowans cast their votes, giving Romney an eight-vote victory over Santorum, with Paul finishing a healthy third. The next morning, Bachmann bowed out of the race after finishing last among the six viable candidates on the ballot with just five percent of the votes.

At one of those polling places, voters from five different precincts in Polk County gathered

at Cattell Elementary, a small school located north of downtown Des Moines. As the voters looked for their designated areas, out-of-state campaign volunteers attempted to sway the undecided voters toward selecting their candidate. While some open-minded voters accepted flyers from the volunteers, other voters shunned them and made their way straight to the school's gymnasium and cafeteria.

As some 150 voters took their seats, the members of each precinct recited the Pledge of Allegiance as a preface to the debates that were to follow. People of every age were present, including small children who were oblivious to the long-established process that was about to happen.

Among those present were Grand View University students and first-time voters Kyana Fox, 23, of Des Moines, and Katie Carruthers, 21, of Springfield,

Minn.

"We walked into it not knowing what to expect," Fox said, adding that the caucus system "shows democracy," because it enabled her to listen to others from her precinct as they debated the qualities of each candidate.

Some voters were resistant to the views of their peers, however, leading to a few tense moments as supporters of different candidates began shouting at each other.

Jollymore was one of the voters who used the opportunity to speak for his candidate (Santorum) with the hope of convincing the audience.

"I think it gives people an opportunity to open minds," he said, "and I actually had several people walk up to me and tell me they had walked into that room undecided and had decided to vote for my candidate after listening to me speak."



Iowan Joel Jollymore, 37, attempts to convince fellow voters to choose Rick Santorum.



A Ron Paul supporter debates with a Rick Perry supporter at Cattell Elementary in Des Moines.



A campaign official reads the Iowa caucus results to voters from Precinct 25. Four precincts at Cattell Elementary selected Ron Paul, while the remaining precinct selected Rick Santorum.



Anna Sluka, 27, of Muskegon, defies police orders to leave the lobby of Hotel Fort Des Moines, where former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney was delivering a speech.



POWER-FUEL ALTERNATIVES

BOB CONRADI THE WASHTENAW VOICE

Solar Ypsi co-founder Dave Strenski stands behind his impressive first array of solar panels. This array is placed on top of the Ypsilanti Food Co-op, the first site to receive Solar Ypsi panels.

From solar power to hybrid vehicles, locals are changing how Washtenaw County energizes — B3



ANN ARBOR TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY COURTESY PHOTO

One of the newest additions to the AATA hybrid bus fleet.



BOB CONRADI THE WASHTENAW VOICE

A digital meter displays energy gathered by Solar Ypsi's Co-op panel array.

Welcome to my 'parlour'

Local artist embraces a different kind of space for exhibition in Ypsilanti

ANNA FUQUA-SMITH
Staff Writer

When Mary Ayling moved to Ypsilanti from Chicago, she wanted to bring an important part of her life with her – an apartment gallery.

"When I talk to people in the community about The Parlour Room, I may get floods of interesting questions to blank stares," Ayling said. "But The Parlour Room gives artists a chance to exhibit in a space that's free and cost-effective."

Ayling, 29, of Ypsilanti is a graduate of Columbus College of Art and Design and a former gallery owner in Chicago. She said she wanted to use The Parlour Room project as a way to learn about her environment.

"I thought that one of the ways I wanted to get to know my community was to open the

gallery to strike up conversation," Ayling said.

Ayling isn't uneducated about how to run a quality art show either. She got her feet wet at the "Caro d'Offay Gallery" in the Wicker Park neighborhood in Chicago before opening her own gallery with four colleagues named "Fill in the Blank."

For Ayling, this gave her a chance to explore other mediums of art from graphic design to glass blowing. While a very common concept in Chicago, it's a foreign concept to Ypsilanti.

"In Chicago, they were a viable solution and were profitable," Ayling said. "They were taken seriously, and there was a whole gamut of them."



JARED ANGLE THE WASHTENAW VOICE
Kristen Althoff's installation 'End of Life' at the Parlour Room.

with a fireplace and the infamous double doors leading to nowhere.

Even better, Ayling supplies the grown-up snacks

PARLOUR ROOM CONTINUED B4

Ypsi's 'Wurst' bar: Owner hopes to liven up Cross Street

ANNA FUQUA-SMITH
Staff Writer

Even before its Jan. 8 opening, The Wurst Bar was already being targeted as a place with an unseemly reputation around town.

Reaction to the bar's opening at the site of the former Theo's Bar and Grill, a Cross Street staple for 37 years, has ranged widely. Some embrace it. Others joke about the name. Still others threaten vandalism.

"One of the bartenders at Crossroads said that every time we closed, she was going to change the 'U' in our name to an 'O' and then change it back every time we fixed it," managing partner, Jesse Kranyak said.

Kranyak, 34, of Ypsilanti has been working day and night to make the grand opening of the Wurst, and he's not concerned about a little intimidation from down the street.

"I just think that kind of mentality is crazy to me," he said. "The only thing that's going to make this block of Cross Street busy is if more businesses come in and offer something different."

And something different is what he's good at.

In a humble, yet bittersweet closing on Dec. 16, Theo's was sold for an undisclosed amount to Kranyak. The Jan. 8 opening was a tight turnaround, but he's optimistic.

"We have a chef-run kitchen now with the former chef from Café Felix, Dan Klenotic, coming in," Kranyak said in an interview days before the opening. "We're putting together a gourmet sausage menu with traditional styles of cooking. We'll be preparing the

bratwurst with veal and several different spices with our own twist. Not one sausage will taste the same."

Meantime, owner of Crossroads, Jesse Thomason, 26, of Ypsilanti said he is open-minded about business coming back on the block. Theo's was the local college hang out and keeping that spirit alive around the campus is essential, he said.

"After the closing of Pub 13, Sevoy, Best Damn (Sports Bar), Goodnite Gracies and LIVE at PJ's, we need businesses in the Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor area. I welcome them down the street," Thomason said. "If one of my bartenders said that, I'm sure it was just in humor."

Kranyak and his team also have come up with other exotic adaptations, including rabbit, venison, lamb, bison, gator

WURST BAR CONTINUED B4

Freeze it, please



ANDREW BRODIE THE WASHTENAW VOICE

Thousands to gather at Whitmore Lake's annual pond hockey charity event—if weather permits

ANNE DUFFY
Staff Writer

The largest pond hockey tournament in Lower Michigan had to take a back seat to Mother Nature this month.

The fifth annual Michigan Pond Hockey Classic Tournament at Mac's Marina on Whitmore Lake has been postponed from Jan. 13-15 until Jan. 27-29 due to unseasonably warm weather. The event needs at least eight inches or more of solid ice on the lake so that players on 120 teams can safely skate. The ice also needs to be thick enough for various equipment and light towers during night games.

"We cut holes in the ice and take samples to track the progress as it's developing. We submit that to the township and the DNR," said Ed Gentile, director of operations for the MPHSC. "Once the lake has 1/2 inch ice on the surface of it, that's great because you have a skin coat that will keep the cool in and the inches will be able to be created faster.

Once the ice is safely formed, Gentile assures that the competition is guaranteed to go off without a hitch because many additional teams are waiting on the stand-by cancellation list in the event that other teams have to drop off because of the new tournament date.

"We can't wait. We've been talking about it since the summer," said Ryan Schumacher, 35, of Royal Oak, captain of the Big Beaver Tavern team that won the top division, the Open-Elite, at last year's tournament. "We were down by five goals with five minutes to go and we came back by winning it by three goals and then winning the championship," he added.

More than 800 players from all over Michigan and Canada are set to compete this year on 20 manicured rinks. Rinks are 75 feet by 150 feet. Teams play four players against four, with no goaltenders – and they are doing it all for charity.

On Friday night, the event will include an opening ceremony and fireworks, once the DNR grants the permit.

A Chilly Dip for brave souls willing to jump into the bone-chilling lake for charity will be on Saturday. That night, the event brings more well-lit games. Then on Sunday, the Fox Sports Detroit Girls will be doing a puck drop for the first championship game. The beauties, Allison and Lauren, will be signing autographs as well and reporting live blog and video updates of the competitions.

Thousands of spectators will enjoy the festivities. Tons of food and entertainment, including live bands will be on hand in the beer/warming tent, as well as kid's hockey games and prizes planned for Saturday on the public skating rink.

This is the first year the event has corporate sponsors with more money and more help than ever before, according to Gentile. All the players will receive corporate gifts this year for playing and the champions will receive Labatt Blue hockey bags, Red Bull jerseys and several other items from sponsors.

The MPHSC Tournament is a fund-raising event for the Michigan Pond Hockey Sports Charities, a non-profit corporation. All the proceeds from the tournament go directly to a fund that is dispersed to local school districts and hockey associations, providing families in need of assistance help so their children can participate in all types of youth athletic programs.

"It's amazing how people get together and support charity to help out a family or an individual that they don't know or may never meet who is in need, not to mention have a good time, then go play some hockey," said Adam Jakubowski, 28, of Livonia, a defenseman for Team Villanova, which won last year's Open-Master Division. "And it all started on a pond."

In addition, this year Perani's Hockey World has joined as a partner with the MPHSC and according to Olivia Gentile, director of communications and public relations for the hockey event, Perani's own charity, The Kris Perani Hockey

Foundation, has even offered to outfit children with free equipment and skates for those who play hockey or figure skate.

Families facing a financial hardship can apply for a MPHSC scholarship, which will pay that child's participation fee at their school or any needed equipment for any sport.

The MPHSC runs because of the many volunteers who make it happen. People can volunteer to be a door-greeter, scorer, ice-groomer and much more.

"Last year I volunteered and helped with player check-in and my husband helped build the rinks, and he plans on doing it again this year," said Jen Davies, 38, an epidemiology research associate from Whitmore Lake, whose brother-in-law plays in the competition.

The tournament is family friendly, and the Davies family looks forward to it every year when all of their relatives from the west side of the state gather for the event.

"On Sunday, when my brother-in-law's team was in the

semi-finals, we all ate lunch along the side of the rink and my two kids and nieces were sliding around on the ice looking for fish under the ice," Davies said. "It's really a unique opportunity to get everyone together and have something fun to do."

The excitement and fun of ice hockey on a pond is something Schumacher said he has enjoyed since he was 4 years old, and he never imagined winning the tournament.

"It was unbelievable to say we were the best of 80-plus (96 actual) teams that competed last year," Schumacher said. "There was some stiff competition out there, and we got to get the trophy for a whole year. It was really fun, and it's a feeling like no other to be on a frozen lake doing this."

For those who don't skate, there's plenty of opportunity to get involved in this event. The next volunteer meetings are Jan. 10 and 17 at the Top Shelf Restaurant at the Kensington Valley Ice House in Brighton, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information, visit: <http://michiganpondhockey.com>



ANDREW BRODIE THE WASHTENAW VOICE

Left, players from opposing teams race toward a loose puck in last year's tournament. Above, during the breaks between games young children have their own chance to give spectators a peek at future hockey stars.

Birth control hormones: friend or foe?

ANNE DUFFY
Staff Writer

Jen Delarosa was in the emergency room, barely able to speak.

"All I could whisper was 'pain' and they put me on a stretcher to wait in the hallway because they thought I was mentally challenged," said the 37-year-old Washtenaw Community College accounting student. In 2006, Delarosa, couldn't even speak to emergency personal at the hospital. Her chest pain was that bad.

She motioned over to a security guard and gave him her phone, in which she had typed in, "please help me; the pain is in my chest. I'm not slow or challenged." Finally, they put her in a room and began to run tests on her.

Just an hour beforehand, Delarosa had been quietly cooking dinner and started to feel extreme chest pains, as if she was being stabbed. Little did she know, she had two large blood clots in her right lung, one the size of a golf ball.

Eventually, three different doctors agreed the blood clots had resulted from the birth-control hormones she had been on for four years, which happened to be in the form of the NuvaRing, a flexible vaginal

ring that releases hormones approved for the prevention of pregnancy in women. Delarosa had felt fine on the NuvaRing up until the chest pains that day.

Delarosa was under 35 years old, worked out often, ate very healthy and was a non-smoker – negating all the common risk factors usually looked at for women interested in birth control hormones.

"I was very surprised that it happened to me because I was living the healthy lifestyle," Delarosa said.

Birth control warnings are often stated on the packaging. Many women read the warnings and proceed with caution.

Erin McConnell knew the side effects, but didn't think it would be that bad. In 2009, she was put on the Depo-Provera, a shot in which a woman is supposed to menstruate once every three months.

"It didn't work, and it messed my cycle up," said McConnell, 21, a photography major from Brighton.

Her period lasted an entire year, with maybe two or three weeks off.

"It was every single day, and it was a nightmare, and it was absolutely disastrous. It made me feel like crap," McConnell said. "I was exhausted, but there are some people who say the Depo

is great and it did exactly what it was supposed to for them."

McConnell began to fear for her life.

"It terrified me and I was like, 'oh my God, I'm going to die. I'm just going to bleed to death,'" said McConnell, who is now off it and doing well. After her experience she would not recommend the shot to anyone.

Sometimes birth control can simply fail, resulting in pregnancy.

Shawntel Williams, 39, a photography student from Ann Arbor, was on Lo Ovral birth control pills because the higher doses of estrogen birth control pills would make her nauseous. She took Lo Ovral for two years, every night, and had no negative side effects.

"I had a watch that would go off at 10:45 p.m., and I would take my pills. I even took the pink sugar pills so there would be no mistakes," Williams said. "I was anal about my pills."

In 1998, Williams conceived her son as "the main side effect of the pill not doing its job," she laughed. "I told the nurse, 'I guess I'm having a baby.'"

Williams still recommends the pill form of birth control even with all of its side effects over other kinds of hormone therapy.

"I think every birth control

hormone has risk, and everything we do in life has risks – including pregnancy itself. If you get pregnant in a given year, your chance of having a serious complication or dying is about twelve times as high as it is if you use contraception," said Dr. Charles Leland, a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor.

Many women do great on birth control.

"People's bodies are individual, and not just one thing is going to work for everyone. That is why there are so many different kinds to choose from," said 20-year-old Alexis Willis, a math and science major from Brighton.

She has been taking Beyaz birth control pills for about three years with no complications.

A pediatrician, Dr. Kathryn Bondy Fessler specializes in adolescent medicine at The Corner Health Center in Ypsilanti, a full service medical clinic for young women up to 21 years of age.

"Birth control is 100 percent patient specific as to what is going to be effective and if the patient is able to use it," Fessler said.

She adds that hormonal contraceptives help adolescents



HAFAH MIJINYAWA THE WASHTENAW VOICE

with painful and heavy bleeding many times lessening anemia in certain cases.

"It has to do with a combination of knowing what your own needs are, your medical history and researching and trying brands out to see what works for you," Willis said.

Beyaz has actually given her positive side effects by regulating her period, reducing anemia and helping with her mood. "I wasn't a happy person before, and that's big. I'm just peachy now," Willis said.

After the blood clot episode

for Delarosa, who had no way of knowing there was a problem with her birth control because she hadn't had any negative side effects, she had to be on pain medicine for five months, two blood thinners for six months and sleep upright – on a special pillow because of pain.

Delarosa is much better now, but is still recovering physically and emotionally from her ordeal. She will never be able to take birth control pills again. Her doctor said she is lucky to be alive.

POWER SURGE

Local company is turning Ypsi into a solar destination

BEN SOLIS
Managing Editor

Dave Strenski will casually walk by the utility meter during the day and watch the dial spin backwards thanks to the energy generated by the solar panels atop the Ypsilanti Food Co-op. In the evening, well after the sun has set, Corrine Sikorski, manager of the Co-op, will turn on her lights— and power the small market for free.

“If you overproduce enough, you’re putting energy back into the city grid. You’re basically selling it back to the city,” said Strenski, the founder the Solar Ypsi, a local company that monitors the energy output and savings created by various solar installations set up around Ypsilanti. “I get full credit for everything I put out and I can take it back into my house for free. That power can even go to my neighbor’s house, and that means one less shovel of coal in a power plant.”

Although the state of Michigan has been on the hunt for cleaner, renewable energy technologies for only a short time, since 2005 Strenski has been helping local businesses create their own projects and find government funding as well as the various ways to monitor output. His solar installations aren’t just collecting energy, they’re creating it.

Six years ago, Strenski, with a healthy push from the owners of the Ypsilanti Food Co-op, filed for a federal grant to create a seemingly average array of solar panels on the roof of the store. He received \$6,000 to complete the project.

With a background in surveying, civil engineering and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering, the construction wasn’t hard, he said.

But simply building it wasn’t good enough.

“We wanted to find a way to measure the output of the panels,” Strenski said. “We worked with some engineers from DTE, and eventually we found the right guy.”

All utility meters give automatic digital readouts to the parent energy provider, according to Strenski. The meters have attachments that allow utility workers, and even homeowners, to add a pluggable card into the meter that will feed the information to any data collecting program.

As an engineer for the high-performance computing company, Cray Inc., the software production wasn’t that hard either.

“The power is going through the meter like normal electricity, but we’ve got a pair of wires now that we can play with,” Strenski said. “I figured out how to hook those wires to a parallel port in a laptop and I wrote a program that basically pulls the information continuously.”

Monitoring systems in place, Strenski needed a way to showcase his findings. Enter Nick Estep, a recent graduate from Eastern Michigan University and current Ohio State University graduate student of computer science and engineering.

While working on a research fellowship with a professor at EMU, Strenski approached Estep’s professor, and found his man shortly afterward.

“I just thought it was cool so I said I’d do it,” Estep said. “Dave already had a way to read the panels, but he needed someone to do the website and database stuff.”

Together they built Solar Ypsi’s website, ripe with all the information they collected and how to do it with minimal cost.

“He did all the programming on the website,” Strenski said. “I’ll do all the laptop stuff and post the information through a URL. He’ll go ahead and stuff that information into a database on the website.”

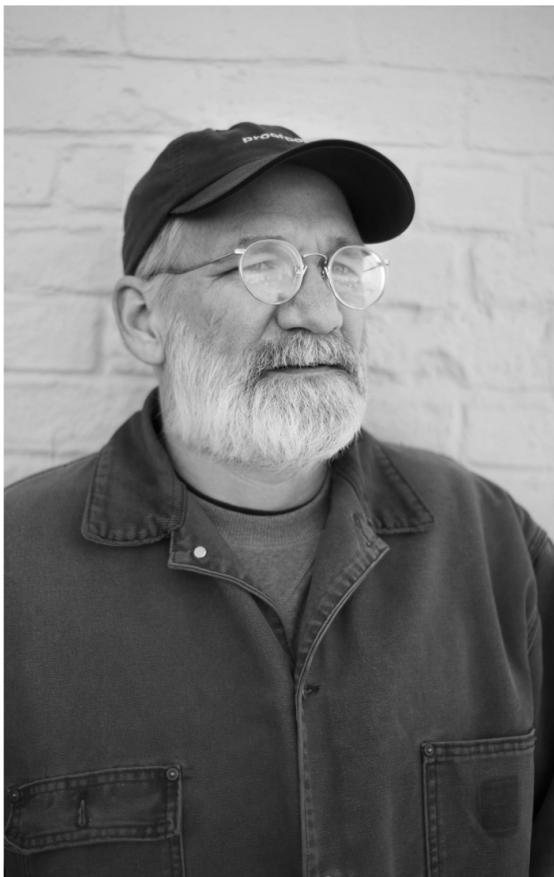
The data, prominently featured by three widgets on the Solar Ypsi website, is instantaneous and available for anyone looking into how much money solar energy can really save.

The co-op was the first to take advantage of those savings, and they are pleased.

“It’s really great to be a part of,” Sikorski said. “We’ve been marketing out into the larger community. Other people are doing it now on their own without the kind of grants we received even. They’re seeing how easy and cool it is to do.”

Inside the Co-op, which has been in business in Ypsilanti since 1975, small, flat screen monitors display the same information that is available on the website. According to Sikorski, anyone who walks in will be able to immediately see the savings potential.

Aside from their Co-op installation, Estep and Strenski



Dave Strenski, co-founder of Solar Ypsi.

have helped build and establish real-time systems for Adams Elementary School, the River Street Bakery, Ypsilanti City Hall and the 403 Huron Street rental house. Other businesses that have built or are building their own installations who have turned on to the potential savings highlighted by Strenski’s and Estep’s website include an Ann Arbor Transit Authority bus stop, Bredernitz Professional Services building and the Corner Brewery, located at 720 Norris St. The bus stop installation is not currently monitored by Strenski’s systems.

But local businesses aren’t the only ones taking notice.

Last summer, Google called the Co-op looking for Strenski, offering to showcase the company in one of Google’s Search Stories videos.

Strenski was floored.

“I couldn’t believe they were calling the store,” he said. “They came out and filmed the installations for a couple of days. Now the video is running in front of football games and at halftime

shows.”

Since the video aired in September, Strenski has been receiving phone calls from all over the country inquiring how they can jump on the solar express.

“We’re putting Ypsilanti on the map,” he said. “I’m trying to coin the phrase of a solar destination. We’re just trying to get people to go out and do it.”

Estep agreed, and he is surprised it all worked so well in the first place.

“It’s interesting to see it come out of a place like Michigan, which has a lot of cloudiness,” Estep said. “You think solar, and you think of somewhere else like the desert. It works here — and that has some value.”

Spreading the word about energy-efficient, environmentally friendly technologies wasn’t one of Strenski’s foreseen goals at first. It wasn’t then, and it isn’t now, he said.

“I look at it from a business and technical point of view more than an environmental one,” Strenski said. “There’s always the environmental plight,

but it’s so political and contested. I’m just looking at the pure economics of it.”

For Dale Petty, an industrial technologies instructor and Washtenaw Community College’s resident green guru, those savings do add up quick. He would know — he has a solar array on his own house.

“We have a small array on our house that produced 2 kilowatts a day,” Petty said. “Through a system (like Strenski’s laptop program) called net metering, the utilities will pay you if you send energy back in. It was something like \$5 per kilowatt and now it’s about \$8.”

So why don’t more people know about these savings?

“America has lost its mojo,” Petty said. “We’re not leaders industrially like we once were.”

Aside from a lack of general innovation, some of the high-savings green programs have been abruptly cut off, as if delinquent households, late on their energy bills. Take DTE, for example. Recently, the company ended the Solar Currents Program, which gave incentives to utility customers willing to switch over to solar. Coupled with the 30 percent federal solar tax credit, Strenski said using and procuring solar energy then was just a smarter plan financially.

“It was a no brainer, there’s no reason why you shouldn’t do it,” he said. “People will complain and say ‘Oh yeah, well it’s people’s tax dollars and you’re just getting stuff for free.’”

Strenski just referred all of those complaints back to the simple economics of supply and demand.

“I’ve worked with microprocessors for 20-30 years now. The same silicon in your iPhone is the same silicon in solar cells,” he said. “If the demand or volume is high enough, then price will get cheaper. Then it will be cheaper than the utility power.”

For Estep, the outlook was similar, but more about taking part in an interesting side gig.

“To me it’s cool from a computer-science perspective,” Estep said. “It’s more of a novelty for me. It doesn’t make solar energy any more desirable. But we can point to it and say ‘look, we are saving money.’ To have it in real time means something.”

Showing it off for his portfolio hasn’t been bad either, Estep said.

While his motivations do

rest on ensuring that all of Ypsilanti’s utility dials spin backwards, helping the Earth is another added bonus of good business.

“When volumes go up, prices go down, we save the world,” Strenski said.

For more information on Solar Ypsi’s process, real-time data, and to see its Google Search Stories video, visit <http://solar.ypsi.com>.

EXTENDED CONVERSATION

Dave Strenski, in his own words, on energy savings:

“One thing I like to tell people, and it’s actually what people don’t want to hear, but if you have an extra dollar in your pocket, and you want to do something about it, the most economical thing is to buy a chunk of pink insulation and stick it in your attic.

“It’s not sexy; it won’t look good on your house. You pay all winter long for gas. You pay all summer long for air conditioning. Our houses are just crappy because energy isn’t cheap. We dump so much energy out of our houses, it’s incredible. If you have an extra buck, buy some caulk and start sealing up your house, or buy some insulation before you start going solar.

“There is something that is called solar hot water. It’s copper pipes in a panel that heats up water. It preheats the water for your showers or even for heating your house. That has a higher return on investment because you’ll capture at least 50 percent of the energy from the sun hitting the panel, and you’ll convert it to hot water.

“If you go to the thin film it’s in the 8-10 percent efficiency, mono-crystallites are 15-17 percent more efficient. That means 17 percent of that energy from the sun is going to be converted into electricity. Both of those are sexy, I think they just look cool, and they are fairly easy to install. They use wires as opposed to pipes.”

Funding a sustainable future

VP’s office to finance popular energy efficient projects

BEN SOLIS
Managing Editor

Students, faculty and staff at Washtenaw Community College looking to help their school save money on its energy costs will soon have to gaze no further than their own imaginations.

This month, the WCC Environmental Committee, in association with the college’s office of Administration and Finance, will announce the emergence of a new college general “green fund” that will help cost-saving projects become an actuality, according to Dale Petty, an industrial technology instructor and chair of the Environmental Committee.

“What this fund will do is invite students, faculty or staff members with good ideas for a sustainable project, or how to implement green technologies into our campus fabric, to do so and see it become a reality,” Petty said. “It will act as a way to get behaviors and attitudes about energy conservation changing around campus.”

The \$10,000 fund was created by the committee with the help of Steven Hardy, vice president of Administration and Finance, who lobbied the college and former-President Larry Whitworth to continue their commitment to the environment.

“The idea came up some time ago,” Hardy said. “It came up so often that I eventually sat down with Larry Whitworth about it. We found some money for projects and set it aside.”

The concept of a “green fund”, however clever, is not revolutionary, according to Petty.

“Harvard University had implemented a similar \$50,000 fund eight years ago,” Petty said. “If it can work there, it can also work here.”

Petty has been impressed by the success of Harvard’s fund, as he sees it becoming self-sufficient.

“It has grown so much in size (at Harvard) that the fund now pays for itself, and gets replenished by the money that the college saves at the end of the year,” he said.

While the mechanics of how the fund will work are still in their planning stages, the pool of monies will focus on ideas from within the WCC community. Aiding in this effort is Peter Leshkevich, director of Student Development and Activities and an Environmental Committee member. Leshkevich will be putting together an application process that will collect the student, faculty or staff input.

There are currently no projects being funded by the committee, but once a formal plea is made later this month, Petty expects that the ideas will come pouring in.

“These kinds of projects would be the kinds that aren’t already in someone’s budget,” Petty said. “Facilities management is always working on big-scale projects, but these would be considerably smaller in measure. These are the kind of projects that crave student involvement and crave a student to champion them.”

Last semester, students in business classes taught

by former WCC Human Resources Management administrator Mary Gmeiner had the opportunity to fund their own project, independent of the “green” fund. This project looked at the possible paper waste reduction when using hand dryers as opposed paper towels, according to Petty. Gmeiner, who no longer works at the college, could not be reached for comment.

“Right now it’s a pilot program that can grow and develop in a big way,” Petty said. “But projects like these show that it can be successful. It could have been one of our projects if we started earlier.”

No matter how one fits into to WCC’s campus, Petty hopes that everyone will consider the environment and endeavor to reduce their impact on it.

“We want sustainability to be in the forefront of everyone on campus’ thinking, whether you’re a housekeeper, facilities person, an English or Business major,” he said. “These kinds of projects will help sustainability gain the awareness it needs to be successful.”

Hybrid movement: AATA adds 10 new hybrid fuel buses to fleet

BEN SOLIS
Managing Editor

The Ann Arbor Transit Authority (AATA) is adding 10 new hybrid fuel buses to its fleet starting early this month.

The new buses cost the AATA \$6.4 million, which was paid for through a combination of federal transportation, formula fuel and state matching grants and funds. These grants also helped trim \$1.7 million off of the total cost, according to a press release issued by the company.

The new vehicles, which were built by the California-based manufacturer Gillig, LLC, will help curve total carbon emissions put out by its fleet and will allow the AATA to begin retiring its existing fleet of less fuel efficient buses, dating back to 1996.

In addition, the new buses raise the total number of hybrid vehicles in the fleet to 41, making the fleet more than 50 percent more fuel efficient, according to Michael Ford, CEO of the AATA.

“With 41 buses, 51 percent of our fleet, now using hybrid technology, The Ride now stands out as one of the greenest transit agencies in the nation,” Ford said in the release. “Not only will they help us save on fuel, operating and maintenance costs, but our community will be able to enjoy the

benefits of reduced emissions and quieter buses.”

While helping to protect the local and global environment is a part of the transportation authority’s mission, the extra money saved on fuel cost is substantial. Last year, the hybrid buses saved the company 95,000 gallons of bio-diesel, its primary source of combustible fuel, totaling \$283,000 in savings.

The overall benefit will be seen later this month when the AATA will begin implementing new bus routes and schedules in alliance with the Re-Imagine Washtenaw Avenue Project. The Washtenaw Avenue project has been working closely with the transportation authority to make public transportation more accessible throughout the county, and specifically along the Washtenaw corridor. Two of the new hybrid buses will be a part of that project starting Jan. 29, according to Mary Stasiak, a representative for AATA.

“With the Re-Imagine Project, we will be able to introduce these changes, which doubles the frequency of our new services,” said Stasiak, adding that without these new additions to its hybrid fleet, the AATA wouldn’t have had the ability to add the routes necessitated by the Washtenaw project.

Restaurant Week returns

to the delight of the palate—and the wallet

MATT DURR
Editor

Ann Arbor Restaurant Week will run from Jan. 15-20 and once again, numerous restaurants will be offering a delectable array of dining options for customers at bargain prices.

With lunches priced no higher than \$12 and dinners at \$25, students can afford to dine at restaurants that they normally could not afford. Many restaurants offer two-for-\$12 during lunch hours giving patrons an even bigger break to their wallets.

In all, 46 restaurants will be participating in the extravaganza ranging from fondue to seafood to burgers. Here are some highlights:

Seva

The vegetarian eatery offers four separate options for the two-for-\$12 lunch special and

a three-course meal for dinner, which includes a glass of wine (for those 21 and older). Dinner pricing starts at 4 p.m.

Mani Osteria and Bar

Recently named one of Metro Detroit's 10 best new restaurants by the *Detroit Free Press*, Mani will be offering a limited lunch menu, while providing plenty of options for dinner. Lunches are \$12 and dinner is \$25. Mani is usually crowded, so reservations are encouraged.

The Arena

For those looking to dine on more traditional bar foods and cheaper pricing, The Arena is a perfect fit. With two-for-\$12 lunches and two-for-\$25 dinners, patrons can eat well and not break the bank. With eight options for lunch and a combination of foods available at dinner that includes a New York Strip, those enjoying the



bar scene won't be left out in the cold.

Sabor Latino

Add a little spice to your plate with two-for \$12 lunches and two-for \$25 dinners. Sabor has a limited menu, but fills your plate with plenty of side dishes accompanying the entrees.

The Earle

Offering only dinner selections, The Earle's selections include duck, whitefish chicken and vegetarian pasta, to name a few. At \$25 per person, it may be a little too steep for some students, but those who cough up the cash will be treated to something a little different, and just as tasty.



JARED ANGLE THE WASHTENAW VOICE

The Wurst Bar at 705 West Cross St., awaiting a new storefront sign.

WURST BAR FROM B1

and crawfish. There will also be an array of vegetarian options, too, he said.

No stranger to the restaurant business, Kranyak also owns and operates Kelley's Island House on Kelley's Island in Ohio, which operates over the summer.

Bar manager Jeff Sanchez, 29, of Ypsilanti will be controlling the beer and liquor menu. At opening, he intends to feature five Michigan breweries. He will also adapt to the theme of rotating out the beer menu monthly.

"Within those breweries, there will be one interesting bottle you don't see at the other local places that carry Michigan products around here, and if the demand calls for it, we'll change them out more than once a month," Sanchez said.

Along with keeping the drink menu local, Sanchez is partnering with Hard Luck Vodka out of Detroit.

President of Hard Luck Vodka, Mike Mouyianis, 44, of Ferndale, is excited to bring a new and different product to Ypsilanti.

"It helps when you know someone. With Jeff, he knows the product will sell in an area surrounded by a college," Mouyianis said.

Thousands of students poured through the infamous wooden double doors of Theo's in the nearly four decades it had been open, leaving with friends and more memories than most people can count.

As far as the old memorabilia from Theo's, Kranyak planned to take the Greek paddles and hang them in the back room of the bar to preserve a little piece of history.

So far, reaction to Theo's closing and the Wurst Bar opening has been generally positive. However, some have voiced concerns that a big part of Ypsi's history and tradition has died with the loss of Theo's. Kranyak is encouraging the community to give it a try. And as for any apprehension to occupy the space on a quiet Cross Street, he's not nervous.

"If you look at Tower Inn's business alone, they're doing fairly well next door and that's the only place to go," Kranyak said. "When you add another form of variety, it makes the block busier. There are 22,000 students across the street. We're going to do great."

As for those famous wooden double doors?

"I don't know," Kranyak said. "We could go sledding with them."

For more information on The Wurst Bar, visit: <http://wurstbarypsi.com>.

PARLOUR ROOM FROM B1

like assorted crackers, exotic cheeses and fresh fruit.

While Ayling has artists lined up until June and they are all Chicago-based, she's hoping that The Parlour Room will connect Chicago and Ypsilanti-based artists.

"I thought of this as a way to introduce my old community with my new community," Ayling said. "I'm hoping to start conversations with Chicago and Ypsilanti artists in hopes of a collaboration."

Right now, Ayling's long-time friend and graphic designer, Kristen Althoff's piece, "End of Life" is wrapping up in the space right now.

Marty Burns, 29, of Chicago will be starting her exhibit, "Beer Budget Supernova" on Jan. 13 and believes that apartment galleries offer artists a way to network with communities.

"That history of having alternative artist-run spaces in private residences or in weird, abandoned spaces has been happening in Chicago for decades and decades," Burns said. "You can tell a lot about a person by what they're currently reading," Ayling said. "No one should be shy to eat the snacks either."

Burns has had several experiences with in-home galleries. And while they haven't turned into sales, they did provide her with other opportunities for professional networking.

"Because of my exhibits in free spaces like The Parlour Room, I've been asked to install for the Art Loop Open and the Allegra Hotel," Burns said. Ayling also provides a video of the exhibit and a full-text interview on the site to strike up comments and conversation throughout the community.

"The website goes along with getting people to engage with the artist," she said. "It's all about community and getting to know each other."

While the discomfort of viewing art in a stranger's home can be intimidating, Ayling hopes to dispel any myths about coming to The Parlour Room.

"I'm a nice person and want to show others what I'm passionate about and vice versa," Ayling said.

Meantime, Ayling is accepting proposals. On the website, she requires up to five images of the project via email, a written proposal for the project, the title of the artist's favorite book, the title of the book the artist is currently reading and the artist's favorite snack.

"You can tell a lot about a person by what they're currently reading," Ayling said. "No one should be shy to eat the snacks either."

To schedule an appointment to view the gallery or to email a proposal, visit <http://tumblr.com/tagged/the-parlour-room>.

CLUB SPORTS CALENDAR

Co-ed Running Club meeting
WHEN: Jan. 17, 4-5:30 p.m.
WHERE: SC, first floor
PRACTICES: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-5:30 p.m.

INTRAMURAL

Dodgeball: Co-rec
REGISTRATION: Jan. 9-13
LEAGUE PERIOD: Jan. 22-Feb. 12
WHEN: Sundays, 6:30-7:30
WHERE: Health and Fitness Center

Bowling: Co-rec
REGISTRATION: Jan. 16-20
LEAGUE PERIOD: Feb. 3-24
WHEN: Fridays, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Colonial Lanes, 1950 S. Industrial Highway

DROP-IN

Ping Pong one-day tournament
REGISTRATION: Jan. 16-25, SC 118
MEN'S: Jan. 18, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
WOMEN'S: Jan. 25, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
WHERE: SC, first floor

Brothers of destruction?

Both MSU and U-M finish as national powerhouses



MATT DURR
Editor

After taking 11 victories each in the 2011 college football season, both Michigan State University and the University of Michigan football teams have positioned themselves among the elite programs in college football.

For the Wolverines, 2011 will be remembered as the season that revived the program and returned them to national relevance in coach Brady Hoke's first year on the job. After defeating Virginia Tech 23-20 in the Sugar Bowl, the maize and blue finished with 11 wins for the first time since 1997 - when they won a national championship.

Michigan also won its first Bowl Championship Series game since 2000.

In East Lansing, the Spartans put together back-to-back 11-win seasons for the

first time in their history after beating Georgia 33-30 at the Outback Bowl and finally winning a bowl game under head coach Mark Dantonio. MSU also competed in the first Big Ten Championship game and for the fourth straight year defeated Michigan.

Now the question for both programs becomes: Can they keep it up?

With Urban Meyer taking over at Ohio State University, recruiting is only going to get tougher in an already brutal conference. MSU in particular will see even more recruits leaving the state despite the improvements made since Dantonio took over.

Spartan will also have to deal with many of their leaders either graduating or heading to the National Football League. Quarterback Kirk Cousins will leave after leading the program both on and off the field. His favorite target, wide receiver B.J. Cunningham, will also be leaving East Lansing; the pair exits as the most productive passing combination in MSU history. Defensive lineman Jerel Worthy has declared for the NFL draft, forgoing his senior season.

On the other hand, Michigan will be returning a majority of its squad, including senior quarterback Denard Robinson. While defensive linemen Mike Martin and Ryan Van Bergen will join offensive lineman David Molk as key losses, the Wolverines will be in good shape entering 2012.

With running back Fitz Toussaint and wide receiver Roy Roundtree returning, Robinson will have plenty of help offensively. Jordan Kovacs, J. T. Floyd, Kenny Demens and Craig Roh will all be back to anchor a defense that improved greatly this season.

Hoke will once again rely on coordinators Greg Mattison and Al Borges to help the program grow as the Wolverines will compete for a Big Ten title - a title that MSU will be in position to win once again - if they can remember to not run into the punter.

While the Big Ten features Ohio State, Wisconsin, Nebraska and Penn State, MSU and U-M put together quality seasons that may have vaulted them to the top of the pre-season conference rankings next year.

Student lives life as a role model to younger brother

ANNA FUQUA-SMITH
Staff Writer

To even the most casual observer, Colby Griffin is hard to miss on the basketball court despite her size. She's barely 5-foot tall, but she plays the game so fast - and with such passion and intensity as a point guard on Washtenaw Community College's women's basketball team.

What is less apparent, to even the sharpest observer, is why she plays so furiously. She does it for her little brother.

"It's a family sport, and we're real competitive," said Griffin, 20, of Ypsilanti. "I was the youngest until James came along."

And a wonderful sibling rivalry was born.

A graduate of Huron High School, Colby Griffin has played basketball since seventh grade. When she came to WCC, she thought her playing career was over until she discovered the new intramural program.

But when sports coordinator Erica Lemm was helping to assemble a women's club sports team, she had to track Griffin down to get her to try out.

"She's definitely one of the most dedicated members of the team," Lemm said. "You can definitely tell she loves the game. She'll show up in frigid temperatures to play a 3-on-3

game ready to play."

And Lemm admires the way Griffin plays.

"She's short but she's fast. She will get to any ball and will hustle the entire game," Lemm said. Griffin's love for the game and her brother go hand-in-hand, and she admits that it is what drives her passion.

"I keep playing because he's my homie," she said, "and I don't want him to think that if I quit playing, he can do the same thing."

But by continuing her own playing career, she's starting to think that moving on to a four-year college to play basketball is a reasonable option when she's finished at WCC.

For now, though, she wants to stay focused on school so she can help her brother stick with the game by giving him a place to play. Disorganization at other Amateur Athletic Union tournaments she's traveled to with her brother has inspired her to go to school to study business management in hopes of one day opening her own gym. Griffin wants to be able to host such AAU tournaments, making them affordable to families and the community.

"I want to deliver A-1 facilities to not only my brother but also offer opportunities for AAU tournaments to be hosted here, giving the community another outlet for competition,"

Griffin said. "Plus, I want to show my brother that he can do anything he puts his mind to by being a role model to him."

Her brother, James Davis, has played for AAU and has traveled several places for tournaments.

"From day one, we put a ball in his hand and he's already done so many amazing things with just that - a ball," she said. "Although I use to teach him moves, my little brother is now teaching me. And he's only 12."

Over the summer, Griffin realized that once she wasn't in school trying to achieve her dream, James became restless.

"When I wasn't going to school, he would say 'oh, basketball isn't this and basketball isn't that or I don't want to play basketball anymore,'" Griffin said. "And I thought, 'Oh no, I have to go school and keep playing to show him that he needs to keep playing.'"

While Griffin admires her brother and only strives more so he'll be inspired to do great things, her brother admires her just as much.

"She keeps me motivated instead of always picking out the positives, she picks out the negatives so I can get better at playing," said Davis. "Just with life, if something's going wrong, I go to her. She always knows what to do, what not to do."

Michael Nightingale, coach



Colby Griffin

of the women's team, has noticed the hard-core bond between Griffin and her brother in just three games.

"He's been here at every game that we've had and sometimes shows up to practice," Nightingale said. "I think they rub off of each other in the positive sense of sibling rivalry, and they are each other's mentors."

On the court, Nightingale uses Griffin for her speed and accuracy.

"She knows how to press the ball fast," he said. "She has very good leadership skills and can make a decision on a whim."

But it is her aggression and work ethic that sets her apart from other athletes.

"She's feisty," Nightingale said. "It doesn't matter who's at the basket, she's got unstoppable aggression getting there."

Art on tap

UPCOMING PARLOUR ROOM EXHIBITIONS

My Parlour Room gallery, 105 N. Adams #5, Ypsilanti

Beer Budget Supernova

Artist Marty Burns
Opening reception: Jan. 13 from 6-9 p.m.; exhibit to be displayed from Jan. 13-Feb. 17
<http://parlourroomprojects.com>

The Collected

Chelsea Cossu
March 2-31 2012
<http://thecollected.net>

The Cosby Sweater Project

Kelly Tucker
April 6-May 5 2012
<http://thecosbysweaterproject.com/>

Stephanie Dawn Burke

Stephanie Burke
May 11-June 9 2012
<http://stephaniedawnburke.com/home.html>

The Adventures of Tintin



ALLMOVIEPHOTO.COM COURTESY PHOTO



'The Adventures of Tintin' deserves your time

NATHAN CLARK
Staff Writer

Making a movie based on a 1930s comic book series from Europe without throwing in a few Nazis is no small task. But if anybody could do it and stick to the original story, it's Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson.

The Adventures of Tintin, directed by Spielberg and produced by Jackson, quietly hit theaters this Christmas when it was released the same day as "Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol," a movie that can easily overshadow anything with its name alone.

The film follows Tintin, voiced by Jamie Bell, a young adventurous reporter who seems to find himself personally involved in every story he writes.

After purchasing a model ship at the local market, he discovers that the model holds a clue to the location of sunken treasure, a clue that

swashbuckling villain, Red Rackham, voiced by Daniel Craig, is willing to kill for. Tintin's life often becomes threatened as he is pursued by the pirate.

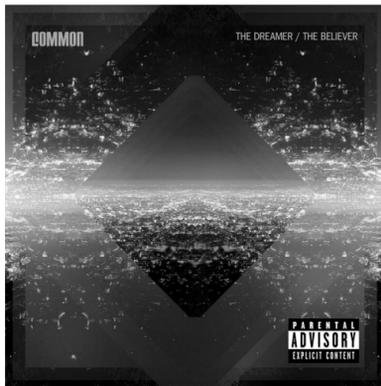
The movie contains digital computer animation of such high quality that it makes "Toy Story" look like a hand-drawn flipbook. The superb detail put into every scene generated a realism that could easily leave moviegoers forgetful that they are watching a cartoon.

Spielberg takes full advantage of the freedom offered through CGI by directing thrilling action and suspenseful chase scenes that would be impossible to shoot in real life with any semblance of belief.

The "Adventures of Tintin" may have gone unnoticed in the box office, but with the movie's stunning visuals and intriguing story, it is far more fun to watch than anything else in theaters. So nice they named it twice.

GENRE **FANTASY**
RUN TIME **107 MINUTES**
RATING **PG**
RAVE **\$7.50**
QUALITY **16 \$7**

Common – The Dreamer/The Believer



ALBUMARTEXCHANGE.COM COURTESY PHOTO



'The Dreamer/The Believer' dares to do less

BEN SOLIS
Managing Editor

No one ever expected a rapper like Common to stay spiritual and smart for too long. However, that was the precedence that the Chicago emcee set up early on in his career. With so much riding on the burgeoning, socially responsible hip-hop scene, Common had the pressure weighing down on him to never give in to the temptations of anesthetized-minded rap music.

Sadly, the last time we heard that Common was on his 2007 release "Finding Forever," which epitomized Common's hip-hop self-actualization. Two albums later, coming off the heels of the mainstream failure, "Universal Mind Control," Common is trying to rebuild his credibility as hip-hop's Marcus Garvey with his newest release, "The Dreamer/The Believer."

Yet again, the rapper has come up short.

It is clear that Common has become less of a messianic prophet preaching rags-to-riches fame and conscious reflection on the state of black men and women in America. The beats are well-produced and uplifting, with tinges of gospel soul and turntable trickery to give it the quintessential hip-hop sound, but the rhymes don't

even begin to reach the high bar set by the instrumentals. This imbalance leaves sour tastes in Common's own mouth, as he spits about expensive cars, shoes and a ghetto that has not changed even post-Obama.

One rhyme states that most of his fans have lost their grip on who Common really is, and that anyone who doesn't understand his struggle can butt out. In the same breath, however, Common begins another onslaught of no-brainer one-liners and reveries about getting his drink on.

While there are many jabs that fans can take at "The Dreamer/The Believer," the saving grace on the disc is Common's unwavering morality and his ability to tell the truth. Very little has changed in the world in terms of the plight of minorities living in lower socio-economic conditions. Rhymes about shoes and money may be part of his gag reel, but they are used as ironic parallels to what the rapper sees within the black community.

It becomes apparent by the end of the disc that Common has not gone mainstream at all. Rather, he has become a parody of it, mocking and shaking its core. "The Dreamer/The Believer" becomes more of a case study into the decadent world of new hip-hop instead of a sad tragedy of a man brought down by the system he gave everything for.

GENRE **HIP HOP**
LENGTH **51 MINUTES**
ITUNES **\$11.99**
AMAZON **\$13.99**



HAFSAH MIJINYAWA THE WASHTENAW VOICE

Friends with Benefits



ALLMOVIEPHOTO.COM COURTESY PHOTO



'Friends with Benefits' goes to the next level

MATT DURR
Editor

We've all seen the romantic comedy where two people who have struggled keeping relationships swear off dating. Then they meet and decide to have a relationship based solely on sex without any relationship drama.

Thankfully, "Friends with Benefits" breaks away from the dumbed-down storytelling that ignores the primal nature of such relationships.

Released on DVD last month, "Friends with Benefits," starring Justin Timberlake and Mila Kunis, is the latest in a long line of romantic comedies that try to show the hardships of having a relationship revolving around nothing but sex. Yet unlike its contemporaries, this film holds nothing back when it comes to exploring the relationship of its stars.

For two actors as popular as Kunis and Timberlake to push the boundaries of typical Hollywood sex scenes was shocking. At some points the downright frank nature of the scenes were borderline pornographic, and might make some

viewers uncomfortable.

The movie does not just focus on sex, however. Predictably, Kunis and Timberlake become more entwined in each other's lives. Both have issues with their parents and are have a hard time breaking away from the heartbreak that comes from their family lives.

The duo has a natural repartee and come across as an actual couple at times during the film. While the supporting cast plays a big role in the story, the main focus on Kunis and Timberlake's relationship created a sense of realism.

My biggest complaint with the movie is that it seemed to drag as the story was reaching the climax (no pun intended) of the relationship between its stars. I knew where the story was headed, and after 20 minutes of stretching it out, I was ready for the plot to finally wind down.

A romantic comedy with plenty of laughs to keep the guys entertained, and enough heart to keep the women happy, "Friends with Benefits" is a perfect R-rated movie for a night in with your significant other.

GENRE **ROMANTIC COMEDY**
RATING **R**
RUN TIME **109 MINUTES**
AVAILABLE ON DVD
AMAZON **\$17.99**

War Horse



ALLMOVIEPHOTO.COM COURTESY PHOTO



Emotionally charged 'War Horse' gallops into hearts

ADRIAN HEDDEN
Features Editor

The tragedy of war has reared itself for centuries. The human race has always dealt with the sadness created by going to battle, rising from the ashes stronger in spirit and determination. Charging through the trials of warfare, people always manage to leap over obstacles in the way of freedom and love.

Steven Spielberg used beautiful cinematography and gracefully heavy emotions to encapsulate the wartime trials of man and the joy that follows war's end. The metaphorically moving "War Horse" was aptly released on Christmas Day.

Set to the backdrop of turn-of-the-century Europe during World War I, the film follows the travels of Joey, a young horse separated from its owner to pull German artillery. Heartbroken to lose his beloved colt into captivity, Albert, played by Jeremy Irvine, goes off to fight for his own country with starry-eyed ambition to be reunited with the steed.

Gloriously lush backgrounds

were constructed for this epic with immense detail, sending viewers across the British countryside and deep into the mustard-gas-ridden trenches on the front lines of the conflict. The sights and sounds of the battles bring jaw-clenching realism to the screen as shots are fired and explosions continuously threatened the lives of the two protagonists on opposite sides, a boy and his horse.

With a largely low-profile cast creating a convincing portrayal of the ranks of soldiers and frightened townspeople that populate the film, "War Horse" shines with historical accuracy amidst a level of drama and emotion that may leave some nauseous, but surely will bring a tear to the eye of any patriot or animal lover in the theater.

Sprawling well past the two-hour mark, "War Horse" expresses the struggles created by combat and how the human spirit prevails. One more in a long line of modern-war epics from Steven Spielberg, "War Horse" is the most breathtaking, if not emotionally overbearing historical drama yet to come from a blockbuster guru.

GENRE **WARTIME DRAMA**
RUN TIME **146 MINUTES**
RATING **PG-13**
RAVE **\$7.50**
QUALITY **16 \$7**

Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows



ALLMOVIEPHOTO.COM COURTESY PHOTO



Director Guy Ritchie hones his original adaptation

JOSH CHAMBERLAIN
Design Editor

The follow-up to the 2009 "Sherlock Holmes" is fast-paced, well-directed and purely entertaining. The direction, cast, and length make it well worth a trip (or two) to the theater.

"Game of Shadows" picks up where its predecessor left off -- which is to say, nowhere in particular, but with the same cast of characters. Robert Downey, Jr., Jude Law and Rachel McAdams return in the first few minutes of the movie, but are shortly joined by a fascinating new villain: Professor James Moriarty. Jared Harris portrays the unfeeling psychopath excellently, giving Holmes a compelling opponent.

Across the board, the acting is impressive and human despite the scripted dialogue. Downey Jr. brings humanity to Holmes' eccentric ramblings and observations, and British comedian Stephen Fry shows off his dry humor as his brother. Noomi Rapace is far from memorable as Madam Simza, functioning primarily as the female addition to the party.

The dialogue is perhaps the only downfall of the movie, but this is more a characteristic of

the action/adventure genre than the film itself; overly subtle or witty dialogue occasionally make the finer points of the plot difficult to follow, but the story certainly holds itself together. The fact that a blockbuster -- a sequel, no less -- could support such an intricate plot, and pull it off, is admirable.

The most important key to its success, however, is the film's director, Guy Ritchie. The slow-motion scenes Ritchie often employs were incredibly successful in the 2009 movie, and return spectacularly. They transform chase and fight scenes from blurry confusions of light and camera changes every few frames to crisp, flowing representations of events that the viewer can actually follow. The contrast, gritty treatment and engaging framing keeps viewers' eyes glued to the screen.

Viewers are shown clues to the way things will play out early in the movie, but even after watching a second time, I was caught up in the mystery and was still surprised by a forgotten or newly discovered detail.

"A Game of Shadows" is a film that keeps giving, and is well worth seeing in theaters, perhaps for multiple viewings, thanks to its outstanding visuals and gripping plot.

GENRE **ACTION/ADVENTURE**
RUN TIME **129 MINUTES**
RATING **PG-13**
RAVE **\$7.50**
QUALITY **16 \$7**

Writer's Block



Journal Workshop teaches students how to be human

RACHEL TUTHILL
Contributor

Sabrina Gross has been keeping a journal since middle school, and she still journals about five times a week. Like several journal workshop students, taking the class once just wasn't enough.

"For me, the benefits are endless," she said.

Gross, a Washtenaw Community College student from Westland who has taken the class twice explains how the writing helps in "unclogging my brain," and how she "loved the classroom's atmosphere."

Gross and other journal workshop students consider the class a safe haven. For them it is a place to be yourself and perhaps share your story.

"I enjoy that it was relaxed, and always felt safe. I'd recommend it to those that have been through trauma and those that simply want to look within," Gross said. "The prompts were quite helpful to me. The articles, the resources, the discussions, the truths, the trust...all are so valuable, in my life, in that realm."

Writing can be fun, emotional, and it can bring out a side of you that you weren't aware of before. Many students are stuck with the impression

that writing means toiling over essays or being judged and graded on their use of proper grammar – or lack thereof. What these students may not realize is that there are classes that focus on the more pleasurable and enjoyable side of writing.

One such program is ENG 260/261, Journal Workshop I and II, taught by Maryam Barrie. Before teaching this class, Barrie took it multiple times when it was taught by Deborah Bayer. Journal Workshop was started by Hal Weidner, who developed the course in the 1980s and taught for several years before Bayer picked it up.

"I was thrilled when I was offered the chance," Barrie said. "I ended up taking the class four or five times when I was a student."

She has been the instructor for about two years, but Barrie feels that it is a privilege to read the work students create, even if their writing isn't always comfortable.

Students who take journal workshop are exposed to different ideas and techniques for writing, such as lists, unsent letters and diary entries. There is some choice in what students write; it's easy to run into surprises.

"I think writing is something

people have been taught, or learned to fear. Teachers have used it to tell them that they're stupid," Barrie said.

She believes that personal writing gives students the permission to write for themselves, which can be really helpful.

"It's a reminder to play," she said.

Even those who aren't students can benefit from keeping a journal. Jean Miller, an English instructor, has kept a journal in the past for recovery purposes.

"I think it's a great idea," Miller said. Although she hasn't taken the course herself, she believes that keeping a journal can help students and non-students alike with their writing techniques, as well as emotional needs.

There are only a certain number of classes that most students can take, whether it's because of financial aid, the amount of time before transferring or personal schedules. However, it's important to take a look at each class that is available, and discover gems such as journal workshop. For Gross, journaling has become a part of her life.

"I fill up endless notebooks still," she said. "I love to look back and know that in that moment, I was authentic. The words are real."

Technical Writing program can give career a headstart

RACHEL TUTHILL
Contributor

For Robin Demarest, enrolling in a Technical Writing course was not an option.

"I'm one of the lucky people who worked my way up," said Demarest, 48, of Flat Rock. "I have to write technical manuals for products that we build – and I wasn't that good! My boss said, 'You should find a technical writing class and take it.'"

So she did, signing up for ENG 107. And the results were immediate.

"Some of the things I learned in the first class, I actually applied it to my work," Demarest said. "My boss sent an email responding, 'Great job! I was applying it right away in real life.'"

And it did change her life. After completing the first technical writing course, Demarest decided to continue on with her degree in Technical Communication, offering skills that are widely transportable to a variety of careers.

As technology grows and education becomes more important than ever, workers and students alike strive to be the best in their field. Businesses everywhere require their employees to be skilled in communicating essential facts in a concise, understandable manner.

The technical writing program tends to attract students who want careers as technical writers and others whose jobs require advanced writing skills, like those employed in engineering, marketing, grant writing or Web design.

According to Washtenaw Community College's website, technical writers combine a love for technology and writing with a desire to help others learn.

Those who can benefit from technical writing include students going into business, law school, sciences, pharmaceuticals or teaching. So how important is technical writing? "The basis is clear and

effective communication," said Lisa Veasey, adviser to the Technical Writing Associate Degree Programs and the Technical Writing Certificate. "Skills in English and communication are something that workers and businesses value."

In ENG 107, students learn how to write memos, reports, technical definitions and descriptions, instructions, presentations and other effective technical and workplace documents. At the end of each course's semester, students compile their technical writing assignments into a portfolio.

But technical writing doesn't stop at written communication. If students continue past the first technical writing class, they will learn how to use various computer programs, including Adobe RoboHelp, FrameMaker, and Microsoft Word.

"Technology has changed, and technical writing helps humans connect with that technology," Veasey said.

"I've been a graphic designer for 15-16 years now," said Joan Arnold, 56, of Ann Arbor, who is pursuing a Technical Writing Certificate. "But the industry is changing, so a lot of the people want you to be both Web and print (capable). I've always been interested in writing; I read what Technical Writing is, and it really seemed to apply."

Since taking technical writing, Arnold feels she's already profiting on the job.

"At work I use Word, which I used to be really hostile toward. At least I can make it do what I want now," she said. "The approach about getting user feedback before you start a project, I liked that. Otherwise, you go on your own experience, which is pertinent to some people, but not others. It changes your perspective."

Students interested in the technical writing program can either enter the Technical Communications Associate in Arts Degree Program or continue on for a

bachelor's degree in programs at Madonna University and Eastern Michigan University. Each has a formal articulation agreement with WCC, giving students a seamless transition from one program to another. Other universities that offer technical communication classes include University of Michigan, Central Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, Michigan State University and Concordia University.

The job market for technical writers is steadily growing, and the salary is nothing to frown at. The average salary for technical writers is \$66,240, according to Career Focus magazine.

Median annual wages for salaried technical writers were \$61,620 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$47,100 and \$78,910, according to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition, on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website. It also states that the lowest 10 percent earned less than \$36,500, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$97,460.

"There are currently about 3,000 technical writing positions listed on the job search aggregator I use," said John Hewitt in his 2010 online article Examining the Current Writing Job Market (Part One) on PoeWar. "Now, some of those listings are duplicates, so any number should be taken with a grain of salt, but this is a good projection when compared with other job titles. Three thousand listings are by far the most you will find for any specific job title in the writing field."

Even if you don't go the full distance with technical writing, just taking one technical writing course is beneficial. The atmosphere is friendly, and the material is practical, and the experience is unforgettable.

There's only one catch. "The downside is that you start to critique every piece of writing that you see," Demarest said with a laugh.



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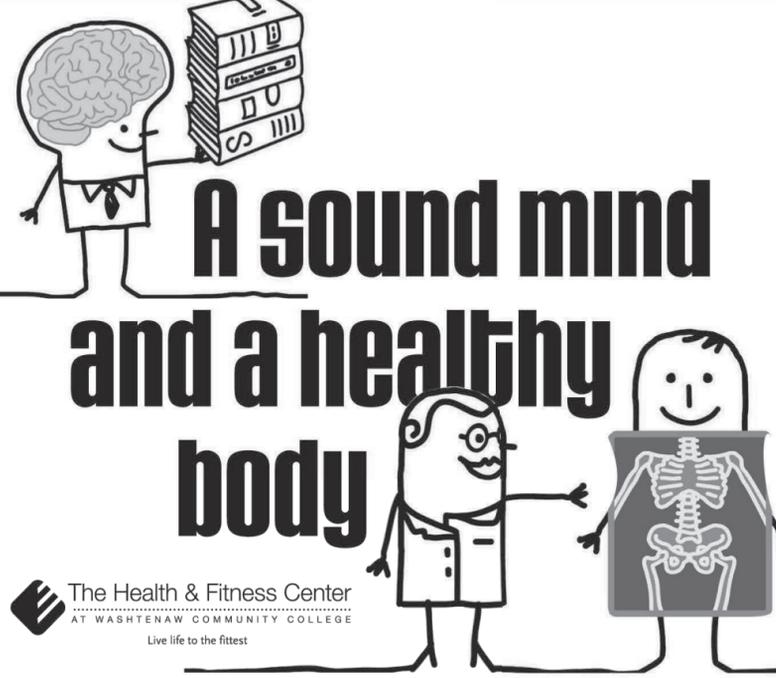
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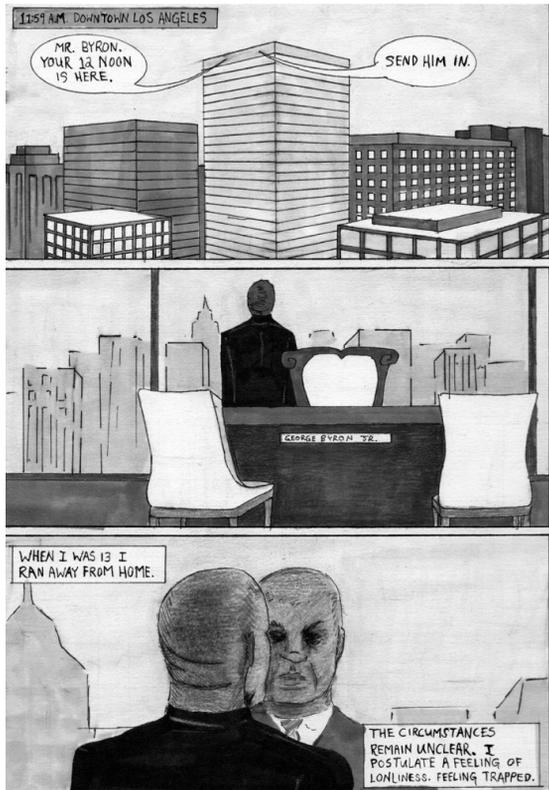
Annika Kramer, WCC student.

TH&FC has all the latest exercise equipment, group exercise rooms, two pools, luxurious locker rooms and is right across the street.

Register now. For more information call the Student Connection at (734) 973-3543. Don't pass up this opportunity for a healthier you!

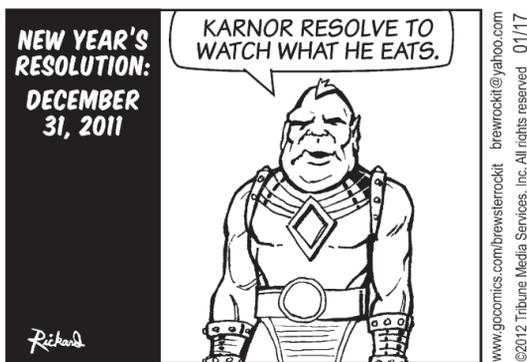
*must also be enrolled in at least 3 WCC credits for winter semester

Washtenaw Community College



RZ When dope has been replaced by a new wonder-pill, the consequences can be deadly — and un-dead. A brand-new comic from Voice Managing Editor Ben Solis and graphic artist Frances Ross. Installments throughout the year. Read them all at washtenawvoice.com.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **FRANCES ROSS** THE WASHTENAW VOICE
WRITTEN BY **BEN SOLIS** THE WASHTENAW VOICE



Use your smart phone and this QR code to check out web exclusive content and solutions to puzzles.

washtenawvoice.com

Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
14				15				16						
17				18				19						
20				21				22						
23				24				25			26	27		
28				29				30	31	32		33		
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52				53				54	55					56
				57				58	59					60
61	62							63						64
65								66						67
68								69						70

Across

- 1 Actress Anderson
- 5 Like one who limps
- 9 Exhausted, with "out"
- 14 Sportscaster Hershey
- 15 Director Kazan
- 16 Biscotti flavoring
- 17 Sagacious
- 18 Computer storage medium
- 19 Aquarium fish
- 20 Dairy food with loose curds
- 23 Pub pint
- 24 Buddhist sect
- 25 Many shoppers buy on it
- 28 Bare minimum
- 30 Jibs and spinnakers
- 33 Often-flowery verse
- 34 "Is it soup...?"
- 36 Letters before an alias
- 37 Bed with a mate
- 38 Dip for veggies
- 42 "I've Gotta ___": Sammy Davis Jr. hit
- 43 Fair-hiring inits.
- 44 "Casablanca" pianist
- 45 Honest prez
- 46 Idyllic places
- 48 Lukewarm
- 52 Internal Revenue Code expert
- 54 Stable diet?
- 56 Brian with the album "Music for Airports"
- 57 Tenderloin often served with Béarnaise sauce
- 61 Pandemonium
- 63 Jackson 5 member
- 64 Glitch
- 65 Songstress Lena
- 66 Gunk
- 67 Remote button
- 68 Broke off, as talks
- 69 Ballyhoo
- 70 Suffix with road or hip

Down

- 1 Like diet beverages
- 2 Baltimore bird
- 3 Lipton rival
- 4 Abba's "___ the Music Speak"
- 5 Rocky projection
- 6 Martians and such
- 7 Catchall abbr.
- 8 For one
- 9 Track transactions
- 10 Occupied, as a lavatory
- 11 "Put a lid on it!"
- 12 Sixth sense, for short
- 13 Susan of "L.A. Law"
- 21 Ancient Mexican
- 22 Mercedes-Benz model series
- 26 Beatnik's "Gotcha"
- 27 Finger count
- 29 "Zip your lip!"
- 31 Hank with 755 career homers
- 32 Tina Turner's ex
- 35 Precisely, after "on"
- 37 Game-stopping call
- 38 Country singer McEntire
- 39 "Don't leave home without it" convenience
- 40 Poor grade
- 41 Mythical man-goat
- 42 Halloween decoration
- 46 Rubbed off the board
- 47 "Zip your lip!"
- 49 Bar snack item
- 50 Present from birth
- 51 Los Angeles ballplayer
- 53 "E.T. ___ home"
- 55 Place to live, one of which starts the three longest puzzle answers
- 58 Cut with acid
- 59 Breezy
- 60 Doctrines
- 61 Revolutionary Guevara
- 62 Darlin'

Classifieds

Students and WCC employees: Classified ads in *The Voice* are free.
Local business owners: Looking for help? Post your free help wanted ads in *The Voice*.

Send ads to thewashtenawvoice@gmail.com.

Deadline for the Jan. 23 issue is 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 17.

HELP WANTED

Tutor Wanted for an 11-year-old boy interested in game designing. One or two days per week, up to \$15 per hour. For more information, phone Lori at (734) 686-9295

SERVICES

Radiography tutoring available. Having difficulty in the Radiography Program? As a recent WCC radiography graduate, I can help you learn exactly what you need to know to pass the quizzes, exams, and also prepare you for the A.R.R.T Exam. For more information, call Joe at (734) 657-4596.

FOR RENT

1, 2 or 3 Bdrm apartments across from EMU campus on AATA bus lines 3 & 7 to WCC. Visit www.aymanagement.com, or phone (734) 482-4442 or (734) 483-1711.

FOR SALE

Bike, 2005 Model: Suzuki Gsx-r 750. \$2,000. For more information martinbill03@gmail.com

Below is a sample of recent employment want ads that have been posted with WCC's Employment Services Center. For more information about these ads, contact Employment Services at (734) 677-5155, or visit SC287 to review the complete posting.

Sales Associate (2463875). Day-to-day job will be on the sales floor learning different sales tactics. You will be making commission sales for cell phones and U verse sales along with hourly wages.

Help Desk PulseCare (230 4223). PulseCare Representatives troubleshoot Pulse systems for our retail employees and ensure technology is working behind the scenes without issue to support our business operations. You will diagnose and resolve routine problems via phone. This includes our proprietary software, hardware and peripheral equipment. With smart hustle and positive energy, you will follow up with customers to ensure calls are resolved and closed promptly.

Rehabilitation Associate (2463877). Seeking dependable motivated individuals for full-time, part-time or on-call employment in medical/direct care setting. Must have a positive, 'Disney-like' attitude and enjoy helping others. Employees will be assisting patients with daily living activities.

Caregiver/HHA/CNA (2454450). Seeking reliable caregivers who take pride in giving the best quality of life care. Caregivers are responsible for providing companion care, meal preparation, light housekeeping, transportation, bathing and more based on past experience and skill level.

Marketing Assistant (2423519). Successful candidate will be responsible for developing leads for targeted marketing campaigns. Develop call lists based on input from Field Marketing as well as individual research efforts such as web and patent searches. Call prospects and log opportunities for follow-up by MSC sales reps in the sales force automation system (and call sales rep to brief on the opportunity). Log all important discussions with customers and convey feedback to appropriate parties. Management may change this description at any time, according to business needs.

Easy Resident Tech (2454609). Ability to diagnose and fix computers, to work a flexible schedule, to sell technology products and services, to prioritize work, to work as part of a team. Good at multi-tasking skills, ability to juggle multiple priorities effectively. One year previous experience working in customer service environment.

Caregivers (2454458). In this rewarding position you will be providing one-on-one care to an elderly, chronically ill or disabled individual in home setting. This includes assisting with bathing, grooming, toileting, meal preparation, homemaking and transportation.

Armed Service Technician (2448608). Armed Service Technicians work as a team on a designated route. You will be responsible for the safe and timely delivery of cash and coin to Loomis customers, as well as the loading and balancing of ATM machines along your route.

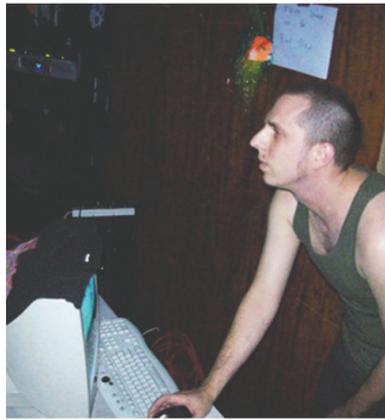
Customer Support Engineer (2446389). Troubleshoot client network and application issues via phone and remote access, work with field engineers installing network equipment at client sites, perform warranty and maintenance equipment replacement at client sites.

IMPORTANT CAREER TIP:

When you are seeking employment always conduct yourself in a professional manner. Change any email addresses and voice mail recordings that might startle or offend a potential employer. Always use both your first and last names in your voice mail, being polite, brief, and clear. For assistance with your job search please contact Employment Services at (734) 677-5155.

Music commune to feature live festival

Fundraiser by Ann Arbor's 'Far House' to unify music scene



FAR HOUSE COURTESY PHOTOS

Clockwise from left: the Far House at 2606 Packard St. in Ann Arbor; Josh Hedges performs as Little Mack using one of his retro PCs in the Far House's basement; Raveyard's Magics Marker tape will be sold at Toothapalooza for \$4.

ADRIAN HEDDEN
Features Editor

Creators of electronic artists from across Michigan will meet on Dec 14 at 8 p.m. for Toothapalooza, a music festival to be held at local musical commune, the Far House.

Josh Hedges, 30, of Ann Arbor, will be performing as Little Mack and will serve as a representative of his record label, Raveyard. Boasting 13 acts from across the U.S. and even Chile, Hedges will be distributing the latest offering from Raveyard, titled "Magics Marker." The 90-minute cassette will be available to concert-goers for \$4.

Hedges is excited to perform at the Far House, a venue he appreciates for its open door policy and donation-only functions. Even K. Krusty, a chiptunes act from Chicago, is set to take the stage without pay – or even gas money.

"It's always free at the Far House," Hedges said. "Shows like these bring together young, budding artists that are trying to create a musical utopia. I think it's great for all these people to meet and share their common interests."

The goal of the event is to raise money for emergency dental work for a resident at the Far House, Eric Stephenson. He needs \$412. "The dental school wouldn't help me," Stephenson said. "They just told me it was getting worse. I put a message on Facebook, and people were supportive of a fundraiser show. Everyone has seen my jacked-up tooth."

After a nearly fatal bike accident in 2007, a cap was dislodged from one of Stephenson's teeth. When the broken tooth developed an infection, Stephenson saw an interesting way to raise funds for treatment.

The primary organizer of Toothapalooza, Stephenson looks forward to providing visitors to the Far House with more than just performances. "There will be several themes and gimmicks throughout the night," Stephenson said. "There will for sure be more stuff than music to look forward to."

Donations will be collected at the show, or can be sent to the Far House at 2606 Packard Street, Ann Arbor, 48104.

Toothapalooza Events

Toothapalooza will have eight acts from a wide range of experimental, electronic acts.

K. Krusty, Chicago, Chiptunes/8-bit

Dental Work, Traverse, Noise/Avant Garde

Ghoulie, Lansing, Grimy Soul/Noise Funk

Little Animal-solo performance from Rachele Baker, former member of Detroit-Electro band, Sippy Cups

RedSk vs. The Soup Rebellion; two-man, harsh noise, Detroit

Watabou, Ann Arbor, Electronica

Troubajabamos, Ann Arbor, Rock

Little Mack, Ann Arbor, Psychedelic Break-core

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Resolution: Transfer to Madonna University to complete my bachelor's degree.

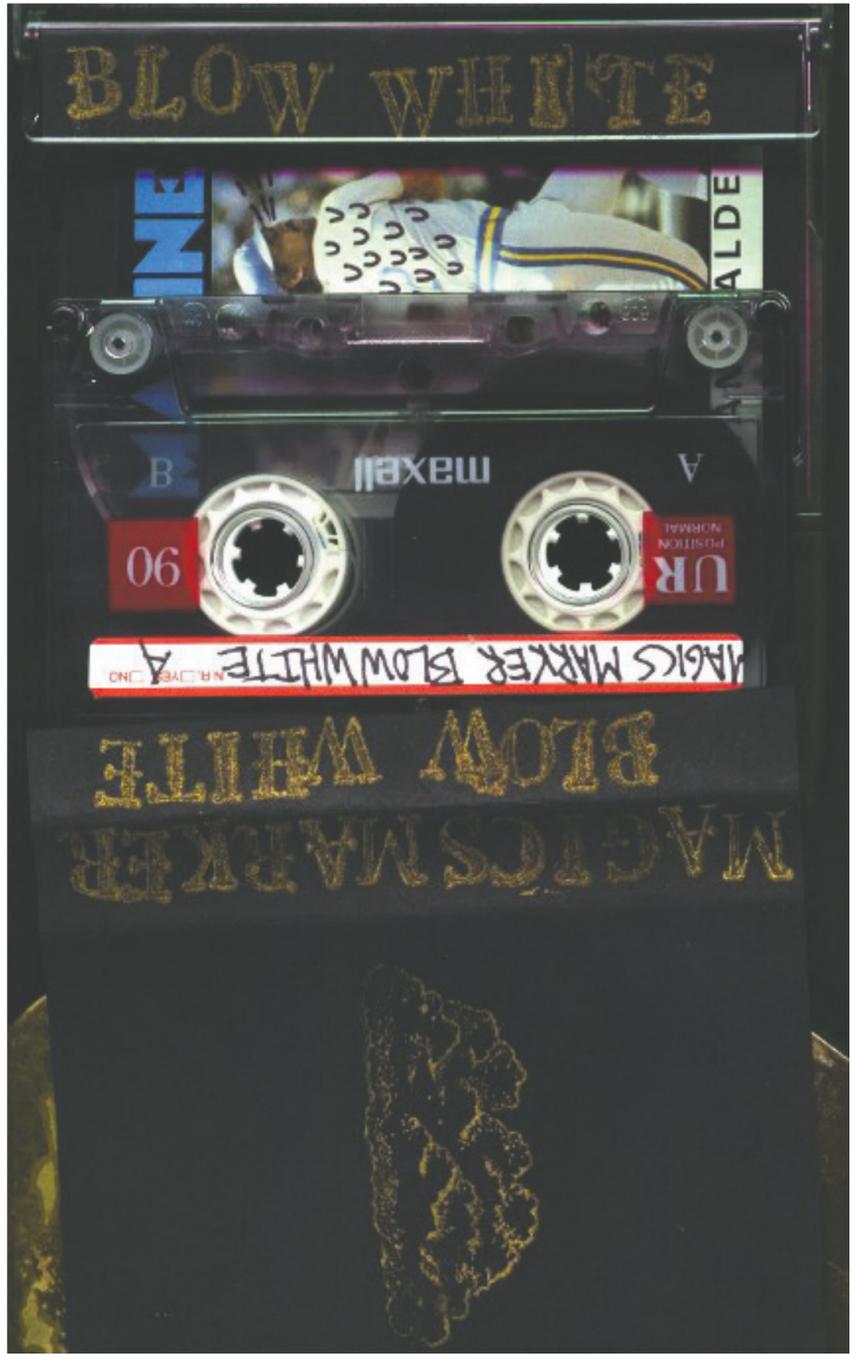
Learn more at one of these upcoming events, or visit the campus at your convenience

SCIENCE & HEALTH PROFESSIONS PREVIEW NIGHT
Wednesday, February 1, 2012 • 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Learn about our 35+ science and health-related programs and careers.

COLLEGE GOAL SUNDAY
Sunday, February 12, 2012 • 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Get free, professional assistance completing the FAFSA. Find out about financial aid resources and how to apply.

BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION & MEDIA PREVIEW NIGHT
Wednesday, February 22, 2012 • 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Explore opportunities in our business, communication and media-related programs.

MADONNA UNIVERSITY
36680 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia MI 48150
Undergraduate Admissions
734-432-5339
madonna.edu



Washenaw Community College

PARKING STRUCTURE

OPENS JAN. 2012

Women's Health and Fitness Day 2012

Women's Health and Fitness Day is a **FREE** community event sponsored by the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) at the University of Michigan Medical School. Our goal is to raise awareness about health and fitness issues important to women and men of all ages.



Attend educational and fun workshops*!
Win tickets to a UM basketball game among other prizes!
Enjoy a **FREE** breakfast, lunch, and complimentary tote bag.
Hear reflections on women's health from **Bethany Sallinen, PhD, Assistant Professor in the UM Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Associate Director for Psychological Services in the Division of Child Behavioral Health.**

Register today by visiting:
<http://www.umich.edu/~amwa/whfd/>
Walk-ins welcome!

Questions or concerns? Email us at:
whfd.directors@gmail.com

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2012
8:45 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
Ypsilanti High School
2095 Packard Rd
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

*Workshop topics include Menopause: surviving or thriving?, Healthy skin through the ages, Healthy Chinese Cooking on a Budget: A Cooking Demo, Zumba fitness and strength training, and many more!

You've asked for more parking and now you've got it!

Beginning Winter semester 2012, the new WCC Parking Structure will be open to the public.

The four-level parking structure will offer:

- 473 inside spots and 56 outside surrounding spots
- Heat and lights on motion sensors
- Covered walkway into the second floor of the Crane Liberal Arts and Science Building
- Security offices located in the structure
- Security monitors 24/7
- Signs to tell you when the structure is full

Questions? Please visit <http://www.wccnet.edu/about-us/visiting>

Smoking is prohibited anywhere on WCC's campus