



Spotlight:  
Texting and new  
trends bring faith  
into the future

B1



Former  
body piercer  
makes math  
painless

A3

# Honoring Excellence



**Honors Convocation:** Recent graduate of WCC’s nursing program Kimberley Wilkerson (right) excitedly waits with her 6-month-old daughter Aubree for her cue to walk on stage and accept her certificate at the Honors Convocation in the Morris Lawrence building.

## Washtenaw passes on four-year degrees

Other community colleges anticipate greater access for rural students

**By ADRIAN HEDDN**  
*Managing Editor*

Although Washtenaw remains firm in its mission to work with, not compete against nearby four-year universities, many community colleges across Michigan applaud the recent passage of a law allowing them to offer four-year programs in designated

fields.

“The proximity of several highly regarded baccalaureate-granting universities within our community to which WCC students transfer is a major factor in why the college is not interested in granting bachelor’s degrees,” said Associate Director of Public Affairs Janet Hawkins.

Aimed at offering greater access to baccalaureate degrees in various applied sciences, Public Act 495 was put on the books during the State

**BACHELOR**  
CONTINUED A6

## Trustee Williams ascends to board chair

**By BEN SOLIS**  
*Editor*

When Anne Williams was elected nearly seven years ago to Washtenaw Community College’s Board of Trustees, she approached her new position without the pretense of political animus.

She committed herself, rather, to championing the fundamental ideal of higher education — the pursuit of excellence.

“Every day I am just thankful to serve, and I say serve because it wasn’t really a personal agenda, but was about doing the most good



for the college, students and faculty,” Williams said.

She now wades in unfamiliar yet fulfilling waters again as the newly elected chair of the board. As a training guru and avid volunteer worker for board rooms of all types of different organizations and industries, the new seat at the head

**WILLIAMS**  
CONTINUED A6

## College’s ad campaign moves forward

**By ADRIAN HEDDEN**  
*Managing Editor*

Washtenaw Community College’s marketing campaign has evolved into phase two, accelerating efforts with an adjusted slogan and move to cable television.

Executive Director of Marketing Annessa Carlisle hopes that as the campaign expands its approach, it will better reach key demographics and locations identified by her department.



In Winter 2013, applications to WCC have increased by about 10 percent. Carlisle attributes this to the campaign’s focused tactics and aggressive expansion. She plans to move up marketing for the Fall semester, which would normally begin over the summer, to April.

“Our goal was to take a strategic approach,” Carlisle said. “We have been seeing results. There will be more emphasis on recruitment.”

A new slogan, “From here to career,”

was coined in November at the start of the campaign’s second stage and is meant to embody its agenda.

“It’s the idea that it (WCC) is the starting point,” Carlisle said. “You can start there and go wherever you want. Ultimately the payoff is a job. It’s a career, longevity. This is the theme in everything we do in marketing.”

“It’s about the role of WCC.”

Hoping to reach traditional students and their parents coming straight out of high school, the campaign also targets non-traditional, older students looking to be retrained and reenter the workforce.

And with the TV ad and a prominent Web banner on Ann Arbor Public Schools’ homepage, Carlisle believes her message is finding its mark.

“We’ve been collecting data of parents and high school students to more aggressively market,” she said. “We’re trying different techniques, but everything has been very targeted.”

A \$30,000 cable buy provided the college with broadcast of about 360 commercials per month, a contract that will run through May.

At approximately \$14 per commercial, the ad will be shown on seven popular channels. The television broadcast will cover 66,000 homes in

Ann Arbor and 36,000 in Livingston County.

Carlisle estimated that there will be 2,100 commercials shown.

“It’ll be basically every home in Livingston County,” she said. “It’s going very well.”

Associate Producer of the commercial Eleanor Shelton organized shoots and planned events surrounding the commercial’s production. She hired outside actors and was granted access to the video department’s green screen room.

All production and shooting, she said, was done in house — with only four weeks to complete the commercial.

“We had a tight timeline,” Shelton said. “It was a very frenetic couple of days.”

Addressing a new medium in television, the commercial was to run for just 30 seconds, less than half the time of past videos produced for the college’s website.

“(In TV) you have to be hard hitting, get right to the point,” Shelton said. “It was very, very focused. The difficulty is creating an ad that is to the point and shows what you want.”

“Shooting came down to just a couple of days, so we needed people who

were very comfortable in front of a camera.”

Observing traffic to the college’s website grow since the campaign’s inception, Carlisle has also added several poster boards in Livingston County aware of direct competition from Lansing Community College and Cleary University.

“We’re trying to have more of a presence there,” Carlisle said of the campaigns target area. “It’s a growing population.”

And officials at WCC hope the student population will continue to grow as well, in more ways than before. Dean of Enrollment Larry Aeilts has seen the college’s visibility strengthen when the campaign was introduced.

Before the recent promotions, Aeilts said, advertising at WCC was largely nonexistent.

“Prior to this, we did very little advertising,” Aeilts said. “It increases exposure for the college and helps remind people in the community of all the different services and opportunities offered here.”

“The increased marketing has assisted in the number apps going up. It’s a step in the right direction.”

## How safe is WCC?

**By ANNA ELIAS**  
*Staff Writer*

For third-floor Washtenaw Community College testing employees, the thought of a shooter in the workplace is terrifying.

Staffers say they have virtually nowhere to go, being stuck on the top floor of the Student Center.

“We have nothing as to what it (emergency procedure) is,” said lead proctor Mary Gibson.

**WCC SAFETY**  
CONTINUED A3

## Enrollment decline stalling

**By BEN SOLIS**  
*Editor*

After sustaining years of declining enrollment figures, Washtenaw Community College’s population headcount for Winter 2013 might be showing signs of recovery.

Headcounts totals for this semester show 11,946 students registered in classes at the start of the term, with an early credit-hour count of 103,267, according to the college’s registration report. These numbers are projected to increase to 12,142 and 104,267, respectively, by the college’s end of schedule adjustment date on Feb. 1.

The early numbers display a slight increase from the beginning of Fall 2012, which started with 11,470 students enrolled. Fall semester figures later grew to 12,476 — an 8.7 percent increase. The final Fall numbers reflected a slight dip in enrollment between 2012 and 2013.

The start of semester figures for Winter 2013 are also lower than last year, which began with 12,364 students. These numbers are projected to increase after the adjustments tentatively made on Feb. 1.

According to Linda Blakey, associate vice president of Student and Academic Services, changes in the final numbers are expected because of new rules regarding late registration. In the past, Blakey said, students trying to slip into classes during the first week of a semester needed the permission of the instructor. New rules for this year, instituted to keep up with other colleges in the area, gave students a 24-hour grace period to jump into a class meeting the next day.



Potentially, Blakey explained, a student could enroll in a class during the first week of the Winter semester as long as the course hadn’t met yet, and as long as the student registered for the course by 8 p.m. the night before its meeting time.

Reeling from the registration nosedive that started in 2009 after Washtenaw hit a record high of 14,202 students, the new enrollment numbers reflect the budding success of the college’s strategic planning initiatives.

Applications for prospective students have gone up from last year as well, from 3,843 to 4,211 — an increase of 9.6 percent as of Jan. 15.

However, applications are down from last semester. The Fall 2012 applications totaled 7,635, which, compared to the Winter 2013 totals, represents a decrease of 45 percent.





Courtney Keller, WCC '11, SHU '14

*“Coming to Siena Heights was the best decision I’ve ever made. My advisor and I worked together to set up a plan so that I graduate on time and I even received scholarships for my artwork. I thought the process of transferring might be difficult but Siena made it easy and headache free.”*

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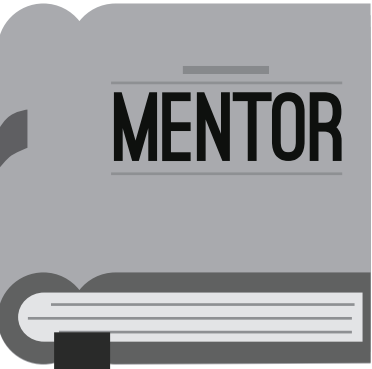
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A math teacher who defies the odds



By MICHAEL J. HLYWA  
Staff Writer

For many students who have a troubled history with mathematics, walking into the first math class of their college career can be dreadful. Realizing, shortly thereafter, that the bald, goateed, tattooed young man standing in the room is their instructor momentarily confounds them.

This gives Jason Davis, a mathematics professor at Washtenaw Community College, the opportunity he needs to tear down students’ phobias of math – and replace them with confidence. Davis, a husband, step-father and 35-year-old Ann Arborite, has a hard-core appearance that belies a down-to-earth, approachable and humble guy.

“You go in and there’s this guy whose head is shaved, and he’s got all these tattoos and you think, ‘Oh Lord, what have I gotten myself into?’” said Karla Davis (no relation), a 44-year-old radiology student from Ypsilanti. “You just look at him and think he might be harsh or mean, but he’s so the opposite.”

Jason Davis has learned to expect these reactions: “It can be intimidating to certain students that have a preconceived notion of what a tall bald guy that’s covered in tattoos is. It can also have students go, ‘This is going to



100 Percent Math: Professor Jason Davis has made a career dispelling students’ phobias of math.

be the cool guy,’ and I really am a total dork. I may be covered in tattoos, but I’m a math nerd; so, that can be a little bit of a shock.”

As a youth, Davis wanted to turn his love of poetry into a career as an English teacher. Not long after he enrolled at WCC, he discovered that he would need to pass a statistics class to attain his teaching degree. Having had his own dismal experience with math in high school, Davis dropped out and pursued a body-piercing career. A few years later, he returned to WCC with an interest in computer hardware, which required he take a Foundations of Algebra class with Mohammed Abella.

“The second time around I was a little bit more determined, and it started to click,” Davis said. “I was like, ‘I could teach this,’ so I just kind of ran with that and got my teaching

degree. I never thought I’d be a math teacher, though.”

Davis progressed from a math student to tutor to part-time instructor and eventually accepted a full-time position within the mathematics department in 2008. Now he’s an award-winning teacher of foundation-level mathematics known by both faculty and students for his relationship-centered approach to teaching.

“He is 100 percent student-focused,” said Kris Good, chair of the Math Department. “His level of dedication to both high quality instruction and compassion really sets the standard.”

Davis believes that building a trust with his students is key. He wants them to be comfortable enough with him that they come to him with

TEACHER  
CONTINUED A5

Children ‘locked’ into education

Ann Arbor schools lock doors following Sandy Hook Massacre

By ANNA ELIAS  
Staff Writer

When the time came for Ann Arbor Public School’s budget reduction for the 2012-13 school year, the liaison officers in the high schools were cut from payroll. Shortly thereafter, the second-deadliest school shooting in United States history in Newtown, Conn., renewed fears of both students and school officials across the country.

Not having a police officer patrolling the hallways is a problem, said Pioneer High School junior Halley Bass, 16.

“At the moment, it’s just teachers, supervisors and administration (who are taking over the officer’s duties),” Bass said.

Students now find themselves locked in classrooms after the bell rings in addition to only one set of doors to the school being open after the school day begins.

Following the Sandy Hook Massacre, AAPS revisited the lockdown issue within K-12 schools, which was supposed to be in effect since 2008.

That’s when discussions began within the school system to find “how they could handle it without having some kind of buzzer system or other security,” said Director of Communications for AAPS Liz Margolis.

“In 2004 we started redesigning some of the schools so they could have offices near the front entrances,” Margolis said. “We started using bond money to make sure that the office staff could have some visibility to the front doors as well.”

For schools with a less formal design, such as Community High School, this has changed the atmosphere around the school. Students normally are found having a “free for all,” according to a CHS secretary, jumping, running and playing throughout the halls at all times. Now, classroom doors remain locked, and entrance is only available in “the tower.”

The idea is to create as many barriers as possible for a possible intruder, according to Margolis.

“It doesn’t mean that kids are locked in classrooms all day,” she said.

At CHS, many classes are still held outside during the warmer months, which has been a part of the “open minds approach” of the alternative high school.

AAPS has been cutting millions

of dollars each year from its budget, but has been careful to protect the education of its students, according to Margolis.

When the Board of Education made the decision to cut the liaison officers from the schools, AAPS worked on building and maintaining its ties to local law enforcement.

“We have a great working relationship with the Ann Arbor Police Department. They have their officers in our buildings and through our buildings,” Margolis said. “The week after the Sandy Hook, they (AAPD) made a point of having day officers parked in our parking lots in our schools and having a presence.”

In addition to having the city police patrolling the hallways, buildings also have lockdown drills a few times each school year, according to Bass.

“Honestly, I feel that the lockdown procedure is really the most feasible thing that we can do,” Bass said.

During the drills, the classrooms are locked, lights are turned off and students, faculty and staff get out of visibility, going along with the out-of-sight-out-of-mind theory.

Until the world can be free of potential harm, or at least for the foreseeable future, AAPS will remain locked inside the educational institutions.

SNIPS

Art contest

The Art Club is holding an all-student art contest where the winning selections will be displayed in GalleryOne, located in the Student Center. Deadline for submissions is Feb. 1.

Students can submit artwork to any art teacher or by contacting Antonia Poole at [anmpoole@wccnet.edu](mailto:anmpoole@wccnet.edu). The contest runs from Feb. 5–8, with the voting ending on Feb. 7. The winners will be announced on Feb. 8.

Prizes will be awarded to first, second and third place, which are \$150, \$100 and \$50 gift cards, respectively.

Computer tips & tricks workshops

Four one-hour hands-on workshops focusing on basic computer tips will be held in GM 230A on Jan. 29–30.

Printing in the Computer Commons will be from 10–11 a.m., followed by Anti-Virus/Anti-Malware from 11 a.m.–noon on Jan. 29.

Learn how to save and find files on a computer from 10–11 a.m. followed by Computer Survival from 2–3 p.m. on Jan. 30.

No registration is necessary and all students are welcome. For more information, call (734) 677-5387 or email [lee@wccnet.edu](mailto:lee@wccnet.edu).

Library media collection relocated

The entire collection of DVDs and VHS tapes in the Bailey Library has been moved to open access in the Reference Collection area.

Here’s how it works: When you have found an item, bring the display case to the User Services desk with your student ID. Library staff will retrieve the item and check it out for library use only.

Dialogues with the president

All faculty and staff are invited to attend upcoming discussions with President Rose Bellanca to see how all employees can contribute to student success and satisfaction.

Employees can attend a discussion on either Feb. 5 or March 14 from 3–4:30 p.m. in ML 150. Each event is limited to 20 people, RSVP early to reserve preferred date.

Light refreshments will be provided. Contact Julie Morrison at (734) 677-5010 or [jmorriso@wccnet.edu](mailto:jmorriso@wccnet.edu) for more information.

Got news?

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SECURITY NOTES

From redacted incident reports provided by Campus Safety and Security, and interviews with Director Jacques Desrosiers.

Hit and Run Crash

A female parked her vehicle in lot 3G from 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on Jan. 14. When she returned, she noticed damage to the right rear quarter panel and bumper. She was advised to make a report with the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Department.

Power Outage

There was a campus-wide power outage that lasted about one hour starting about 10:45 a.m. on Jan. 21. The computer servers went down during this time, but came back up shortly after the power was restored.



ALEX PARIS THE WASHTENAW VOICE

‘Open’ campus, closed: The doors of Community High School are locked, forcing visitors to sign in at the main office.

WCC SAFETY FROM A1

Following the Sandy Hook Massacre in Newtown, Conn., many school employees and students alike are asking the question: What is the plan if a shooter comes to school?

Following the advice of Homeland Security, run, hide and fight back is the mantra for many workplaces, including WCC. Additionally, the college has an outline for crisis procedures on the Campus Safety and Security website. The general message is to call 911, remain calm and barricade yourself and others into a safe area while waiting for a college official or law enforcement to give the all-clear signal.

But others feel that these efforts are minimal and that there should be a more precise emergency plan for each specific area of the college. Gibson said that hopefully in the monthly work meetings that she and coworkers will devise their own emergency

procedure plan for the testing center.

“Every area of the college has its own unique properties,” said Campus Safety and Security Director Jacques Desrosiers. “People who work in those areas know about those possibly more than us.”

While some think that the college should be responsible for all individual evacuation plans, Desrosiers stressed the importance of always having your own evacuation plan no matter where you are.

“You need to make those plans wherever you go. If you go to the mall, these things happen, so you need to know how to get out,” Desrosiers said. “Same with your church, same with any other workplace. You should make these plans continually and on your own.”

Some even say that the unarmed officers aren’t enough of a security presence on campus.

“Personally, I think every school should have some kind of protection like police or military,” said 25-year veteran custodian Ron Miller. “I wish there would be more protection as far as someone being armed. The streets are right there.”

Washtenaw has a working relationship with the Washtenaw County Sheriff’s Department and pays a fee to have constant access to a Washtenaw County Sheriff, according to Desrosiers.

“The sheriff is always available and comes on a regular basis,” Desrosiers said. “Last spring we gave tours to individual officers and gave them maps of campus so that if they ever did have to come here quickly they would know where to go.”

Imminent concern is held by many employees, but some feel that the safety of Ann Arbor surrounds the college; the same type of logic many of

the Sandy Hook staff and parents of 20 first-graders had before the shooting.

“It’s Ann Arbor; there should be a little more saner people around here. I feel relatively safe,” said bookstore employee and political science student Steve Kwasny.

Across the country, many schools didn’t have plans prior to the Columbine shooting in Colorado in 1999, which intensified the intruder drills. After each shooting, schools implement more and more safety procedures.

The procedures Washtenaw provides are largely unknown to staff members, which tends to provide a high-stress environment around talks of active shooters and related situations.

At the staff in-service on Jan. 8, a video was shown portraying an active shooter situation. Staff and faculty were so concerned and posed so many

questions that many other events on the agenda had to be cancelled. The discussion and question-and-answer session finally ended when college President Rose Bellanca tabled the discussion for another time.

While many employees were upset that college officials didn’t have many answers as to what to do in the situation, others feel that those who are supposed to handle the situation will.

“I feel Campus Security does a great job. If you go in the parking lots, there’s at least (two cars) rotating around the parking lots at all times, which makes me feel a bit safer,” Kwasny said.

Even though Kwasny said he feels that the appropriate procedures will be taken, Miller feels otherwise.

“It’s been a concern for years. Anybody could come in off the streets and start shooting,” Miller said. “In 25 years, I’m surprised nothing has happened.”



# EDITORIAL

## Obama channels Lincoln on guns

For the first time in our country’s history, the mounting rhetoric surrounding national gun violence and the prevention of the horrendous tragedy associated with it has become as ferocious as the attacks we are trying to avoid.

And while it is not in the least bit surprising that such spasms of human evil have broken down almost all the remaining, ruinous barriers of national political correctness, like a plane of glass shattered by a barrage of bullets, it is shameful that the natural comity existing between citizens has degraded into mistrust, fear, hatred and ideological anger.

As far back as many of us can remember, from our high school days in particular, writing papers or creating presentations on topics such as abortion, gay marriage, marijuana legalization and gun control were prohibited because they were deemed too big to tackle and often led to shouting matches. Many were never prepared to engage in these types of discussions, with logic or restraint when they became relevant last year.

In many ways, the forceful zeal that guides both sides of this newly reinvigorated gun argument defies the expressions of acceptance and tolerance defined in America’s founding document, which calls for an omnipresent politeness when dealing with those who hold opposing world views. Politeness and understanding, it seems, has been fractured among America’s political right and left in such a dramatic way that our hard-fought National Union is quickly becoming imperiled.

Drawing battle lines can be commonplace when unimaginable terror transforms into daily affirmations, but observing those with long-held beliefs on gun rights, and control, changing allegiances overnight can be mystifying.

A quick look at social media and the national press will display ordinary citizens building philosophical bastions for arguments that they had been reticent, if not hesitant, to engage in prior to the myriad mass shootings of 2012.

Politicians are taking the same measures, jumping back and forth over a line of fire that could potentially sink life-long careers. Like their constituents, they are willing to take the risk in order to defend beliefs with the same fervor as the Abolitionist movement of the late-1800s.

Most Americans do not believe that the Gun Problem and its subsequent solutions will have the embroiling dynamism needed to start a new Civil War, yet President Barack Obama and his coalition are tackling the issue with the same backbone of Abraham Lincoln and his consorts.

Prohibiting the use of guns carries the same weight and frustration today, unfortunately, as the issues that surrounded slavery. Whereas some presidents would back away from taking on an issue with no foreseeable high-ground or victory other than the eventual, however-pained transformation of an entire people, Obama is standing firm in his stance that access to machines made for murder should not exist for average Americans.

The president realizes, as so many have in the last decade, that our future is too uncertain and chaotic for Americans suffering great financial loss. That such incredible hardship could lead the good in people to become greater, and could turn the bad to worse, even evil. That our mental health system is in such shambles that keeping track of mechanical, non-human objects has become easier than tracking human beings with real issues.

And until he and his opponents in Washington can reach an agreement on overhauling mental health – which would solve more than banning guns – certain safeguards must be put in place. Obama may be the most embattled president since Jimmy Carter, or Lincoln himself, and with gun control now a point of focus for his second term, the pressure on his agenda will get denser.

Whether or not we agree with Obama’s rhetoric, political positions or agenda, we can at the very least respect his resolve, which reminds us how hard his job is. No matter what side you are on, keep in mind that men will come and go, as will American presidents.

Being truly patriotic requires us to disagree, but never to the point that forces our national unity to dissolve into further violence and confusion.

THE WASHTENAW VOICE

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# Paranoia must not follow tragedy



ADRIAN HEDDEN

Here in sleepy Washtenaw County, we have had our fair share of local disaster this year. Our smaller tragedies have created a fearfully dangerous reaction, similar to that of larger, national catastrophes.

Just over a month ago, and only a few miles off WCC’s campus, a student from Eastern Michigan University was found mysteriously dead in her apartment. A few weeks ago, a ravenous inferno consumed multiple Washtenaw students’ Ypsilanti apartments.

Following these devastating occurrences, this school has been embroiled in agitated conversation and a wave of distress.

# The groundhog effect — and the key to keeping resolutions



ANNA ELIAS

We are all familiar with the classic New Year’s resolutions of losing weight by working out more and eating less, quitting smoking, drinking less, stop procrastinating, get a new job ... the list goes on forever.

Losing weight is one that most people could benefit from. However, on Jan. 1, the holiday season is almost over where sweets were abundant and large family meals were a regular event for the past month. The ham bone is in the crock pot making a huge stew, the ball just dropped and the second champagne bottle for the evening is opened.

Admittedly, most have already ended the attempt to finish the resolutions before they began. The closer it gets to Groundhog’s Day, the feeling of Bill Murray in the infamous movie comes

Teachers have begun to demand a plan for how the college might combat what once was unimaginable — a shooter right here on campus. A quick tour of WCC’s Student Center reveals banter steeped in panic and painful gossip over situations where little is known.

Instead of waiting for all the facts to surface, readers gobble up what little information they can and become vindictive as conclusions drawn are inherently negative and gross.

The average reader is left to wonder amid the rubble: “Does it really get any better?”

Is calamity on the rise? Or have mass-shootings always been a fault of our society? We can only sit on the sidelines, asking ourselves if there was so much gloom, doom and destruction before our time.

A measurable incline in sadness is impossible to calculate, but it is clear that people are more aware of the pain and suffering that befalls their neighbors at home and abroad. Their foolish knowledge has swollen to a scale that leaves tragedies weighted in perilous

exaggeration.

To some this may reveal the sadism of an American people, eager to embellish before indulging as if applying condiments to a greasy cheeseburger.

A continued push for news to be harder, better and faster does not inherently make it stronger or truer. This explosion of more stories — more quickly — reveals the power of public information.

But it also reveals that Americans have some soul-searching to do, to doubt what is initially thrust before us.

As we view images on the Web or watch coverage of tragedies on TV, we must do so with the optimism that will allow us to move forward.

The image of an America torn by natural disaster and the evil potential of human endeavor is stagnant but not accurate. This is still a glorious place to live in and the only planet we have to populate.

It is important to learn about the happenings around the world, but to enjoy life and actually get a good night’s sleep, we cannot become consumed by them.

over people — waking up day after day doing the same exact thing and nothing ever changes.

Last year, the plan was to lose 15 pounds, but instead, it was gained. Quitting smoking was definitely going to happen, but instead we found e-cigarettes — the adult pacifier. Learning to stop procrastinating was enticing, but that thing came up and it never happened.

This year was going to be different. However, it’s almost Feb. 2 and the difference is yet to be seen. The groundhog sees his shadow, and it’s much plumper than what he was hoping to see.

How does this endless cycle stop? I wish I could give the Holy Grail answer, but I can’t.

I still need to lose weight, and I still need to learn how to do things in a timely manner.

But something that I did do last year was quit smoking. I didn’t plan on it; it wasn’t a resolution that I even pretended to make.

I quit making resolutions after I found I was completing the “groundhog effect” of making the same resolution each year, and realizing a month later in February that I didn’t even attempt to keep it.

The one thing that made 2012 different than any other year with smoking — something I’ve been battling since 2000 — is that I quit to prove a friend wrong.

I was at a New Year’s party hanging out with old friends. After the ball dropped, I turned to my friend Ashley and asked if I could bum a cigarette. Between the drags, I told her the story about how I quit smoking and that’s why I didn’t have my own pack.

“Um, but you’re smoking right now,” Ashley said.

She had a point. Well, I’m an all-or-nothing type of girl, so I decided that was my last cigarette for good. I had been trying to quit all year for myself, but to prove a friend wrong is the only way it stuck.

I haven’t had a cigarette since a few strokes after midnight on Jan. 1, 2012. Not for my health, but rather to say “I’m right” to a friend.

So maybe that’s the secret to beating the Groundhog Effect. Maybe our friends need to challenge us more often to be the people we talk about wanting to be.

Hopefully a friend this year will tell me I can’t lose 15 pounds so that next year I’ll be wearing a few pant sizes smaller than I am now.

# We needs mo’ grammar!



NATHAN CLARK

Nothing enrages the heart of a full-time student more than an email stating a class has been cancelled due to low enrollment.

When a required course is cancelled, it’s a sucker punch right into the gut of a student’s academic progress. But when it’s an elective course being cancelled, it’s only an irritating inconvenience that forces students to scramble desperately to find a new elective with open seats.

Classes get cancelled when not enough students enroll. That’s understandable. But what really disturbs

me, is the types of classes that get cancelled due to lack of interest.

I was signed up to take a class on English grammar and usage this semester. It’s not a requirement for my degree, but I thought it sounded useful. After all, grammar and usage is an important building block of English or any language.

When I received the email telling me the class was cancelled, I didn’t think too much of it. It wasn’t the first class I’ve signed up for that has been cancelled. So I said to myself, “it’s OK,” and I looked for another elective to take that sounded interesting and useful.

But you know what? It’s not OK. It’s not OK that people have little to no interest in knowing correct grammar.

I know students hate English classes, but there is a reason why we all have to take them. Being able to effectively communicate something through writing is an important part of our growth as a society. It’s how we

leave information for others to analyze and use.

Knowing the difference between “your” and “you’re” may sound trivial, but it’s not for someone who’s reading your writing.

Even writing something simple as “your welcome” can confuse future readers. “Oh, is that my welcome? Thanks. I was wondering where that thing went.”

Perhaps I’m taking all of this a little too seriously. Maybe proper grammar and usage of the English language isn’t that important.

I mean, evy l nos wat I sayn when I right like this, becuz this is how we have chosen to communicate with each other sence texting became popular. Y wood we want to go back to do’n things the ol fashion way? Thats what old people do. lol :)

*Editor’s note: Just in case you don’t get the joke, the last graph is meant to be wrong as hell.*

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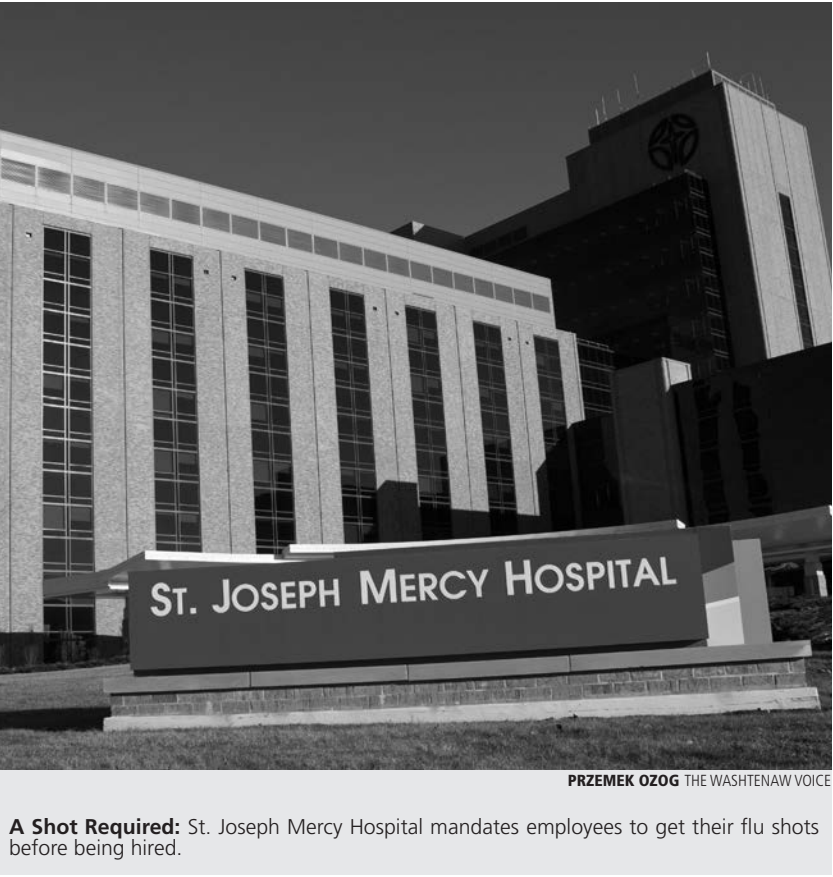


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To get or not to get?



A Shot Required: St. Joseph Mercy Hospital mandates employees to get their flu shots before being hired.

Local hospital makes flu shots for all new employees mandatory

By ANNA ELIAS  
Staff Writer

When most people are offered a job, they anticipate adhering to dress, attendance and other conduct expectations. For St. Joseph Mercy Hospital employees, terms of employment include pertussis and flu vaccinations — and refusal results in termination of employment.

Flu vaccinations are meant to protect employees from the flu and patients from the employees. At 62 percent efficacy, this year’s flu vaccination was 10 percent higher than the 2011-12 flu vaccine, according to reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Even though many have said that the percentage seems low, this is a higher rate of efficacy than in recent years.

At a competing hospital, University of Michigan employees have the choice of receiving the free vaccine provided by U-M. Unvaccinated employees are required to wear a mask during patient interactions for the duration of the flu season, according to U-M employee policy.

“I’m very much a proactive of immunizations, but I also believe that people should be able to make the choice,” said Washtenaw Community College teacher and nurse Melissa Dotz. “Where it really became a problem is when they instituted it in the first place.”

Some St. Joe employees thought that staff prior to the mandatory-vaccination era should be grandfathered in to the policy since it was not made as a term of their employment when offered the position. For new employees,

this policy is well-known to them before they accept job offers at the hospital.

The flu vaccine is provided at no charge to the employees, and most hospitals have many different ways employees can receive the vaccine, including vaccination stations at employee entrances.

For WCC nursing student Maraea Tutson, the requirement does pose some concern. Every October, she and her fellow nursing classmates get vaccinated against the flu.

“The hospitals require it,” Tutson said.

Nursing students go to local hospitals for clinical, where they are able to put to test what they have been learning in class on real patients under the supervision of nurses at the hospital.

“I tried to do a little research on how it originated and what’s in it,” Tutson said. “It’s a catch-22.”

Although the college does not require students to get the vaccination, some of the hospitals they visit for clinicals do.

“We follow the agencies requirements,” said nurse educator Theresa Dubiel. “We do what’s best for the public.”

All students, to Dubiel’s knowledge, have received the flu shot since the mandatory requirement at hospitals has been implemented. She is unaware of any disciplinary action taken if a student does not receive the shot.

Even though staff is not allowed to refuse to get a flu shot at St. Joe’s hospital, patients are allowed to refuse medication at any time and are not thrown on to the streets, according to Dotz.

“The right to refuse is not to take employment,” Dotz said.

But coaching them toward that first success is the tricky part.

“If it’s too easy then they expect success,” Davis continued, “and if they have a failure then it’s a real blow to their self esteem. If you give them the right challenge and they meet it, they can almost surprise themselves.”

After that, students start to forget about what happened in the past and develop confidence.

“It’s all about the present,” he said.

Once they’ve looked past their preconceptions and overcome self-doubt, Davis’s students discover that they can appreciate math.

“His teaching style is awesome,” said graphic design student Petrea Stinson, 37, of Ypsilanti. “I came in hating math, but now it’s not a big deal, and I don’t dread going to class.”

Many students enthusiastically credit Davis with their successes, and he is widely regarded as an inspirational professor. Indeed, the Michigan Jaycees named him “Outstanding Young Educator” in Aug. 2011.

“I do spend a lot of time with my students,” Davis said, “but I don’t think that I do anything particularly unique.”

But Stinson, Kodjo-Gnedji-Abotchi, Davis and many students who, like them, found the confidence to master mathematics would wholeheartedly disagree.

Social Contagion

U-M researchers find that use of cell phones can be kind of catchy

By MARIA RIGOU  
Staff Writer

Have you ever seen a person yawn, whether it was a friend or a stranger, and immediately you started yawning? Just like the yawn, cellphone use is contagious.

According to a study conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan, people are more likely to pull out their cellphone when someone around them does the same.

“I use my phone more when someone else is using their phone around me,” said Bailey Vanderweel, an 18-year-old psychology major from Brighton. “It makes it less awkward (than just sitting there).”

In the study, researchers watched groups of students in and around the University of Michigan campus, documenting their cellphone use every 10 seconds.

Researcher Daniel Kruger explained that, overall, students were on their phones 24 percent of the time they spent with a friend, and they were also 39.5 percent more likely to use their phone when the person they were sitting with had done so in the previous 10-second interval.

Kruger believes this pattern may be attributed to the effects of social inclusion and exclusion. If one person in a pair engages in an external



MARIA RIGOU THE WASHTENAW VOICE

Communication Breakdown: Two WCC students sit at a table in the Student Center playing with their cell phones instead of engaging each other in conversation.

conversation through their cellphone, his or her companion may feel excluded. That companion then might be compelled to connect with others externally so as not to feel left out.

“Both men and women show contagious behavior, but women use their cellphones more often because they are verbally oriented,” Kruger explained.

“We are social creatures and that’s how we react,” said John Drumm, a 25-year-old 3-D animation student from Milan. “(When someone else reaches for their phone) I wonder where my phone is, maybe check the time.”

There is a gender difference in communication. Maybe men do not feel the need to be included at all times.

“Technology is reflecting gender behavior in general patterns,” Kruger said, adding, “30 to 40 years

ago, teenage daughters would hog the phone at night to gossip with their friends.”

“I feel like girls are more prone to do what other people do,” said Hannah Floto, 18, a health-care foundations student from Howell. “I can see why it could be contagious.”

The effect is intensified in younger adults who might consistently check their cellphones. When those who are addicted to their cellphones use the devices while spending time with others, cellphone usage increases even more.

Kruger said that they might not observe the same results in a study with different demographics – for example, in older adults who may not use cellphones as often as younger adults.

However, it seems like no one wants to feel like an outcast, even for a moment.

Comforting the afflicted

Grieving students have somewhere to turn

By ANNA ELIAS  
Staff Writer

Death is not a subject college students want to think about, let alone experience. Dr. Audrey Hering, clinical psychologist and part-time therapist at Washtenaw Community College, says that feelings of hopelessness and loneliness are shared by students experiencing grief.

“What I was surprised with, but in retrospect not so much, is the amount of college students grieving,” Hering said.

While other students are excited about the new video game that just came out or album released to iTunes, 4.5 million students are grieving, according to the Census Bureau. Some are debating whether or not they should get out of bed to go to class let alone thinking about the latest Justin Bieber album.

Kelly, 25, an Ann Arbor nursing major who is going by a pseudonym, suffered the death of her child’s father from suicide in January.

“Sometimes I feel like people don’t know what’s going on with me, and it’s hard to talk to just anybody about it,” she said.

Kelly said she attends one-on-one therapy, and went to a grief support group for a short period of time.

Not only did she have to grieve herself, but also had to explain to her 4-year-old son why Daddy isn’t coming back.

“I went to see a child psychiatrist for advice,” she said.

Armed with the advice from the child psychiatrist, Kelly was able to have the discussion with her son. She told him that Daddy’s body isn’t working anymore, but that his heart is in heaven.

“I couldn’t tell him how his dad died. I told him he was sick,” Kelly said. “And he was; he was a drug addict.”

Some students have a harder time with death than others. Sandy Boudreau, 19, of Belleville, feels her mother’s pain more than her own after her uncle died suddenly a few weeks ago.

“It depends on how close they are to you, if it catches you off guard,” said Boudreau, a biology major. “We made the decision to take him off of the ventilator. I’m happy my husband met him at least once.”

Boudreau said that she had missed class due to her uncle’s illness and death. With the sudden course of events, thoughts and feelings surrounding the death often occupy her time spent at school.

Other students said they have lost siblings, parents and ex-boyfriends. While some have used it as a drive to do better in school, others have used it as a time to separate themselves from

the general population.

Rachel Kramer, 19-year-old psychology major from Dexter, suffered the death of her aunt over the summer.

“It made me want to study it (psychology) more,” Kramer said.

Kramer is now interested educationally with dealing with death and how it affects other people.

Only about 10 percent of students in college seek counseling, according to Hering. Of the students that do seek help and are grieving, most don’t realize feelings of helplessness and loneliness because of a death.

Many students have suffered a death of some sort either in college or before they started. More often than not, students have not dealt with the death appropriately, and therefore are continuing to have problems socially and academically, Hering said.

Washtenaw offers guidance free of charge in the Counseling Department on the second floor of the Student Center. Some students may be seen on a walk-in basis and appointments are also welcome.

“It helps to do service in honor of the person,” Hering said

There are also online resources, including studentsofamf.org. This organization has multiple campus chapters, although limited, nationwide to “connect and empower grieving college students to support one another and empower the campus community to take action through service.”

College clinic battles kids’ cavities

By AMANDA JACOBS  
Staff Writer

Washtenaw Community College’s Dental Assisting department is kicking off February’s National Children’s Dental Health month with a free mouth guard clinic and presentations to children of the school’s community about the importance of taking care of their teeth.

The Mouth Guard clinic will be held on Feb. 6 from 9 a.m.-noon. The first 40 people will receive a free mouth guard. The clinic is open to everyone.

This is the second year that the dental program has held such a clinic. Last year it helped roughly 20 people obtain mouth guards.

“The Mouth Guard clinic provides free mouth guards to people who play sports and need them,” said Jodi Neuman, a clinical instructor in WCC’s Dental Assisting program. “We’ll take impressions and fabricate them at the clinic, and give them a date

to come by and pick it up.”

Mouth guards are important for students who play sports such as basketball, hockey, football, soccer or martial arts.

“The shock of a hit can be broken by a mouth guard,” said WCC dental instructor Tina Spague. “A hit to the mouth can cause a tooth to die or to fall out.”

Every year, Washtenaw’s Dental Assisting program invites youngsters from the Children’s Center to its clinic to illustrate the importance of having healthy mouths and to introduce them to the services.

This year the program will present to the children on Feb. 18 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

“We usually provide our dental health clinic students to do presentations on nutrition, oral hygiene and dental visits to the children in the Children’s Center,” Neuman said. “Our students also go out to other schools of their choosing to give their presentation to students under third grade.”

Dental staff and students believe that children and their parents should know the facts about dental health to prevent children from dental cavities or tooth decay, known as “caries.”

“Early childhood caries or baby bottle tooth decay is very rampant,” Spague said. “It’s very important from pregnancy through childhood that moms and their children have dental health.”

WCC’s dental clinic, located in the Occupational Education building in Room 106, will be open to students, staff and faculty from Feb. 6 to April 18. The clinic started accepting appointments at the start of winter semester.

**DENTAL EVENTS:**  
**Clinic Open to WCC:**  
Feb. 6-April 18  
**Mouth Guard Clinic:**  
Feb. 6, 9 a.m.-noon  
**Dental Student Children’s Presentation:**  
Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-noon

TEACHER FROM A3



Jason Davis

questions. He sets aside part of his Friday afternoons to lead a study workshop within which he can offer guidance through homework problems. He is even available to students via phone, email, text and Skype.

“He makes himself like an open book almost,” said 23-year-old Korrie Kodjo-Gnedji-Abotchi, a criminal justice student from Ann Arbor. “If you need help, he will be there to help you 100 percent, and that’s what I really like. This is the first A that I’ve ever gotten in a math course in my entire life, and it was because I felt comfortable enough to be able to ask questions, ask for help, go to extra tutoring and stuff like that.”

While encouraging their trust with him, Davis also works to build up students’ faith in themselves. Their biggest challenge is in overcoming past defeats. Most of his students, he explained, had 13 years of experience with math, “and they haven’t been particularly positive experiences.”

“Sometimes it’s difficult to get those students to let go of the past,” Davis added.

Experiencing an initial success and then repeating it is how Davis wants his students to overcome old defeats.



**KAITLYN SUTTON**  
*22, Westland, Culinary Arts*

“I’d stay here; it’s a lot cheaper here. A four-year degree (from WCC) would also secure a spot more in my field. It would show employers that I’ve got more of an education, more experience and a degree. (Plus) it’s a lot more expensive at (places) like the Art Institutes. There’s (also) a waiting list at Schoolcraft, and their program hasn’t changed in six or seven years. If (WCC) were to offer it within the next few semesters, I’d take it up. It’s a chance to learn more about our industry, so why not?”

**KAYLYN CALVERT**  
*25, Albion, Early Childhood Education*

“That depends on a number of things, the value of the education – whether or not the professors were up to the same par as, let’s say, Eastern. I also think that the price would obviously be beneficial, because I’m assuming that it would be a little bit cheaper. I’m afraid that if WCC did (offer a four-year degree) then it might be not very accredited. They would have to do a lot of putting themselves out there and getting WCC known for something. And obviously sports, I feel like a lot of people go to bigger universities for the sporting events and the different activities.”

**CODY FOJTIK**  
*18, Grass Lake, Welding and Fabrication*

“I’d complete it here. (It’s) local, close by and cheaper, probably. I won’t have to get a dorm, won’t have to spend money on food and I could live at home. I think they offer a good program here; they teach you what you need to learn.”

**SHERIA HENDERSON**  
*35, Ypsilanti, Nursing*

“I’d stay here because I’m familiar with the school and teachers and because of the cost.”

**CLAY ERNSBERGER**  
*23, Brighton, Welding/Motorcycle Service and Technology*

“I’d transfer to a university. It’s more established. Washtenaw is not a university; they don’t have the same establishment. If I go to a university, sports are there and it’s a different atmosphere.”

**MIMI OLSSON**  
*16, Ann Arbor, Liberal Arts Transfer*

“Here. It’s more accessible. (Plus) there’s no point in switching just after two years. That’s what you’re used to in high school is a whole four-year period.”

**MARAEA TUTSON**  
*28, Ypsilanti, Nursing*

“Here. I like the teachers here. I’m familiar and comfortable with them. Everywhere I go they speak highly of WCC nursing students. A lot of hospitals prefer WCC students because they’re well-trained and have more hands-on experience versus (students from) Eastern.”

**AMARIAH CARTER**  
*16, Ypsilanti, Digital Video Production*

“I would definitely pursue it here because it’s easier on my pocket. As a community college it would come cheaper than it would at U of M or EMU.”

**ALEX COLEMAN**  
*18, Toledo, Music Production and Engineering*

“It’s been my dream since I was little to go to a different university, but it’s nothing against this school. I have connections in Chicago – family, friends, a lot of sentimental value – so I’ve always planned to move back and go to Columbia.”

**BRANDON BRADY**  
*21, East Lansing, Business*

“I would still transfer onto a university. I think that workplaces respect more a degree that is coming from a university rather than a community college.”

**CHRIS BALL**  
*21, Ann Arbor, Finance*

“Yes and no. The reason I would say yes is because WCC’s affordability is second to none. From year one to four, the amount of money that you spend is very economical, and I do love the class size here. I love how compact it is; you can have relationships with the teachers. It’s not really big classrooms, and the teachers actually can learn your names – you’re not just a spot on the wall. Part of the reason I would not is because the four-year program isn’t as established. In terms of acquiring a job after graduation, I’m not comfortable yet with WCC’s job placement – the help I’d be able to get in terms of an internship. The networking opportunities aren’t as available.”

**CARLA FRANKLIN**  
*38, Ann Arbor, Business*

“Yeah, I would stay. They manage a really friendly place here, as opposed to EMU – that’s where I’m transferring to. I hear a lot of people say you’re on your own (at Eastern).”

**NICOLE MAGILL**  
*19, Pinckney, Biology*

“I would probably go ahead and take the program here. It would be a lot easier because you don’t have to go through all the transfer stuff, and it’s a lot cheaper than going to a university.”

BACHELOR FROM A1

Legislature’s latest session, becoming effective on Dec. 28.

But school officials continue to maintain that four-year programs have no place at WCC.

“My personal opinion is that there is probably not a need for us to do that here,” said history professor and chief negotiator to WCC’s teacher union, David Fitzpatrick. “To offer a four-year degree will require a significant investment in money, space and hiring new faculty.

“We’d be investing blindly to develop programs with little evidence that there is a demand.”

But many students feel there is – or would be – a demand if community colleges were allowed to offer nursing students a four-year program for the highly sought Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

Nursing was dropped from the bill just days before it became a law.

“Our waitlist is so long. It’s already proven that there’s an interest,” said Allie Russell, a 19-year old nursing student from Brighton. “It’d be cool if I could get my bachelor’s without worrying about transferring.”

Russell has been studying nursing for about a year but is wary of her recent decision to transfer into a more expensive program at Eastern Michigan University.

“I’d like to see it happen,” she said. The universities are so competitive and costly.

“And just one step up in the job field can’t be a bad thing.”

Supporters of the law hope that it will allow college students in Michigan to find work sooner and meet employment demands of the various industries not currently being met by four-year schools.

Allowing community colleges to offer four-year programs in energy production, culinary arts, maritime and cement technology, the bill was sponsored by State Rep. John Walsh R-Livonia.

“This measure will provide students with greater opportunities to earn an education in Michigan in an effective and efficient manner, accentuating the use of existing facilities and building upon existing faculty or curriculum,” Walsh said in a press release. “Each one of these areas is proposed in response to specific industry demands not currently being met by the state’s four-year universities.

“This is a step forward in curbing work force shortages, reducing unemployment rates and increasing access to affordable education.”

President of the Michigan Community College Association Mike Hansen hopes to expand the reach of community colleges, providing programs to students who would otherwise suffer from various obstacles in their access to higher education.

“People have to remember that this is about affordability and access,” Hansen said. “It’s to offer baccalaureate degrees to people who might be geographically or financially place-bound, broadening the base of opportunity where people would have otherwise been denied access.

“Let’s bring those people into the net.”

Hansen looks to community colleges located in rural parts of Michigan, hours from any four-year schools. The bill, he said, will favor schools that specialize in the few fields contained in the law.

“Only a few schools will be pursuing this,” Hansen said. “Four-year schools will be fine.”

Alpena Community College, located in the Northeastern tip of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, specializes in concrete technology. Hansen said that Alpena trains concrete workers from all over the world and that industry leaders contacted the MCCA requesting a four-year program there.

Hansen also points to Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City. This community college boasts the only maritime technology program on a body of freshwater in

the state of Michigan.

But not all schools are content with the changes. When lawmakers dropped nursing from their list of fields available to offer baccalaureate degrees at community colleges, officials began to look past the present changes, optimistic that the conversation will continue.

“It was just seen as too problematic to have nursing,” Hansen said. “But it was a very, very bitter pill to swallow. We’re not giving up on nursing. The industry will be pushing for it.”

According to Hansen, it is only a matter of time before hospital workforce needs outweigh the output of nursing students from four-year programs at universities.

And as hospitals begin requiring a BSN for students to be given access to conduct clinical exams, the need for a wider offering of the four-year program is imminent, Hansen said.

“The industry is going to notice that they need to meet workforce demands,” he said. “It’s not a matter of if, but when.”

All 29 community colleges in Michigan offer nursing programs, as do the state’s 15 public universities. According to Hansen, community colleges can present the same training at a third of the cost.

“We were disappointed when they pulled nursing,” said James Lorenson, president of Gogebic Community College in Ironwood, east of the Upper Peninsula’s western border to Wisconsin. “We have a very good nursing program here. Our needs are not being met.

“The schools with the right programs will do great with this. I’m glad the ice was broken.”

Laura Coleman, president of Bay College in Escabana, on the Southern border of the UP, believes that the bill never would have made it through the legislature if nursing was included, due to competitive programs at other schools.

“Sometimes,” she said, “you have to eat an elephant in small pieces.”



Head of the Table: Anne Williams strikes her gavel, commencing her first meeting as chair of the Board of Trustees on Jan. 22.

WILLIAMS FROM A1

of table is an obvious honor.

“It has most certainly been an honor to be a trustee at Washtenaw” she said. “I do have a passion for higher education, and given my background and expertise, I’ve always wanted to be able to give back to Washtenaw County and higher education. That’s very important to me.”

Williams began her tenure as a Washtenaw trustee when she elected to fill a partial term left open by the late Jerry Jernigan in 2006. Initially, Williams held the position of board secretary until she was elected to the top position on Jan. 8.

Prior to her election in 2006, Williams founded ExcellenceQuest, Inc., a “performance excellence implementation” group that helps train and build the effectiveness of businesses in the education and non-profit sectors.

With a bachelor’s degree in biochemistry and a master’s degree in industrial technology from Eastern Michigan University, Williams understands the importance of occupational education at Washtenaw.

It was this experience, as well as her dedication to the college that impressed fellow board member Stephen Gill, who nominated Williams this year to replace former Chair Pamela Horiznsny, who succeeded Trustee Patrick McLean as treasurer.

According to Gill, Williams “has demonstrated her commitment to students by attending relevant community college conferences,”

and “creating a scholarship fund in the WCC foundation.

“I think she will do well in this role,” Gill said. “Chair of the board has traditionally been a rotating position. Anne has been trustee for six years and deserves to be the next chair.”

Trustee Richard Landau seconded Gill’s enthusiasm.

“Anne has been a hard-working and diligent member of the board,” Landau said. “I have valued her contributions as a colleague and look forward to her leadership as board chair.”

And for Horiznsny, the changing of the guard from position to position is a necessary function of the board.

“In my opinion, the board chair plays an important role in terms of the effectiveness of the board as a whole and in representing the Washtenaw County community,” Horiznsny said. “Anne’s many years of experience on the board and her professional experience will serve her well in her new position.”

Horiznsny added that she enjoyed her time as chair, which included the retirement of one visionary president – Larry Whitworth – and the hiring of the strategy-driven Rose Bellanca. Yet she was insistent that “the worst thing a former chair can do is to try set the new chair’s agenda for her tenure.”

Williams expressed great joy in working with Horiznsny and looks forward to championing her own priorities. These include larger occupational education efforts and stronger plans for external funding.

Nevertheless, her leadership mantra remains as pragmatic as ever with an emphasis on excellence over personal gain.



Nursing some hope: Allie Russell, 19, a nursing major from Brighton, hopes a four-year nursing program will be instituted at community colleges to allow greater access and convenience for students.





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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Forget the Truck—We’re Bringing the Ice Cream to you!**  
FREE ice cream sundaes!  
Tuesday, February 5  
Noon-1 p.m.  
While supplies last  
SC Community Room

**Ticket: Wynton Marsalis**  
Hill Auditorium  
Thursday, January 31  
7:30 p.m.  
Only \$15!

**Ticket: Bowling with Student Activities**  
Meet new friends while enjoying this popular activity  
Thursday, February 7  
7-9 p.m. Colonial Lanes  
\$4.50 includes: 2-hours of bowling, shoe rental and pizza/pop

**Ticket: Museum of African-American History Tour and Lunch at Mongolian BBQ**  
Friday, February 22  
10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Only \$12 and includes college-van transportation, museum entry and lunch!

**Free Soft-Pretzels! Grab this Tasty Treat**  
Thursday, January 17  
Noon- 1 p.m.  
While supplies last  
SC Community Room

**Ticket: Kodo Drummers**  
Friday, February 15  
8 p.m.  
Power Center  
\$15

**Talent Show Auditions**  
If you can dance, sing or wow a crowd with a talent, we need you!  
Thursday, February 14, 5-9 p.m.  
Towsley Auditorium, Morris Lawrence Building  
Sign-up here:  
<http://tinyurl.com/wccwintertalentshow>

Purchase tickets at the Cashier’s Office, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor SCB, M-F, 8:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

### UPCOMING SPORTS

**Intramural Bowling**  
Registration: January 28<sup>th</sup>-February 6<sup>th</sup> (SC116)  
League Period: February 8<sup>th</sup>-March 1<sup>st</sup> (Fridays)  
Time: 5:30pm at Colonial Lanes.  
League will be coed and be held on Fridays. Free for students.

**Men’s Soccer Tryouts**  
Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> 3:30-5:30pm and Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 4:30-6:30pm  
High Velocity Sports Complex (Canton, MI)  
Bring your WCC ID  
Practices will be primarily on Mondays and Thursdays with games on Sunday evenings

**Vote on a name for WCC’s Mascot!**  
Vote at WCC Sports (SC 116)  
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Pick one of five choices or choose your own!

**Women’s Soccer Tryouts**  
Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7:30pm and Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> 5:30-7:30pm  
High Velocity Sports Complex (Canton, MI)  
Bring your WCC ID  
Practices will be on Mondays and Thursdays with games on Wednesdays (7pm or later)

**Coed Running /Walking**  
Begins Monday, January 28 at 4 p.m.  
Practices held on Mondays and Thursdays at 4 p.m.  
Teams should meet at the Sports Club Office (SC 116)  
Races will be held on the weekends for those who are interested

**Community Room Tournaments: Table Tennis, Air Hockey, Foosball, Pool**  
January 28-31  
6:00-7:30 p.m.



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ILLUSTRATION BY GEORGE O'DONOVAN THE WASHTENAW VOICE

## God talk — bad manners or good sense?

By MICHAEL J HLYWA  
Staff Writer

Sex, politics and religion are the three most taboo topics shunned in polite conversation. Yet Paul E. Sago, in his book “Holy Hodgepodge,” defies propriety when he urges readers to examine their religious beliefs and question what they’ve been taught. Sago, a retired university president and pastor living in Tulsa, Okla., finds that most people don’t choose their religion. “They either inherit it or borrow it,” Sago said, “and they never think much about it. Someone says, ‘Believe this,’ and we believe it. Most people do not really know why they believe what

they believe.” Sago is deeply spiritual and describes himself as a Deist: someone who believes that God created the universe, but maintains an indirect role in its existence and imparts no revelation to its inhabitants. “Practically all religions of the world believe in a god,” Sago explained, “and if we just believed in God and stopped paying so much attention to the messenger, we would probably all get along much better.” Washtenaw Community College students also disregard proper manners and commonly explore religion during conversations with their peers. When they do, many of

their statements parallel Sago’s sentiments. For 20-year-old Leeandra Hardesty, a San Diego resident studying culinary arts at WCC, chatting with friends allows her to explore religious ideas. “It is definitely table talk,” Hardesty said. “All of us pretty much agree on everything having a connection.” It’s also common for many, like culinary arts student Isis Williams, 20, of Detroit, to maintain a loose interpretation of the religion within which they were raised. Although Williams grew up Baptist, she doesn’t entirely identify as such and has

considered teachings of other faiths. She figures that a broad acceptance of some form of religion is fine “as long as we all believe that there is a God.” But thinking that the world’s religions generally embrace the concept of a singular creator is a common bias, according to Charles Johnson, a WCC humanities professor and instructor of a comparative religions class. “When we think about the notion of religion,” Johnson said, “we have to be able to think about it in a general way that doesn’t exclude certain groups and practices. When we look across the spectrum, we see institutions that don’t believe in the notion of a creator god.”

Johnson reminds us that there are many faiths that don’t subscribe to an entity that is aware of humanity, but is rather more abstract and inert. “It can be a gross oversimplification when you’re thinking of religion in a kind of Abrahamic sense, like Jewish, Christian and Islamic views, and not looking at it in a broader spectrum,” Johnson added. Those who do think of religion in an “Abrahamic sense,” however, still want to identify with something. Many feel that parts of religious doctrine conflict with contemporary society. Students like Harrison Hammons, a

RELIGIOUS TRENDS  
CONTINUED B2

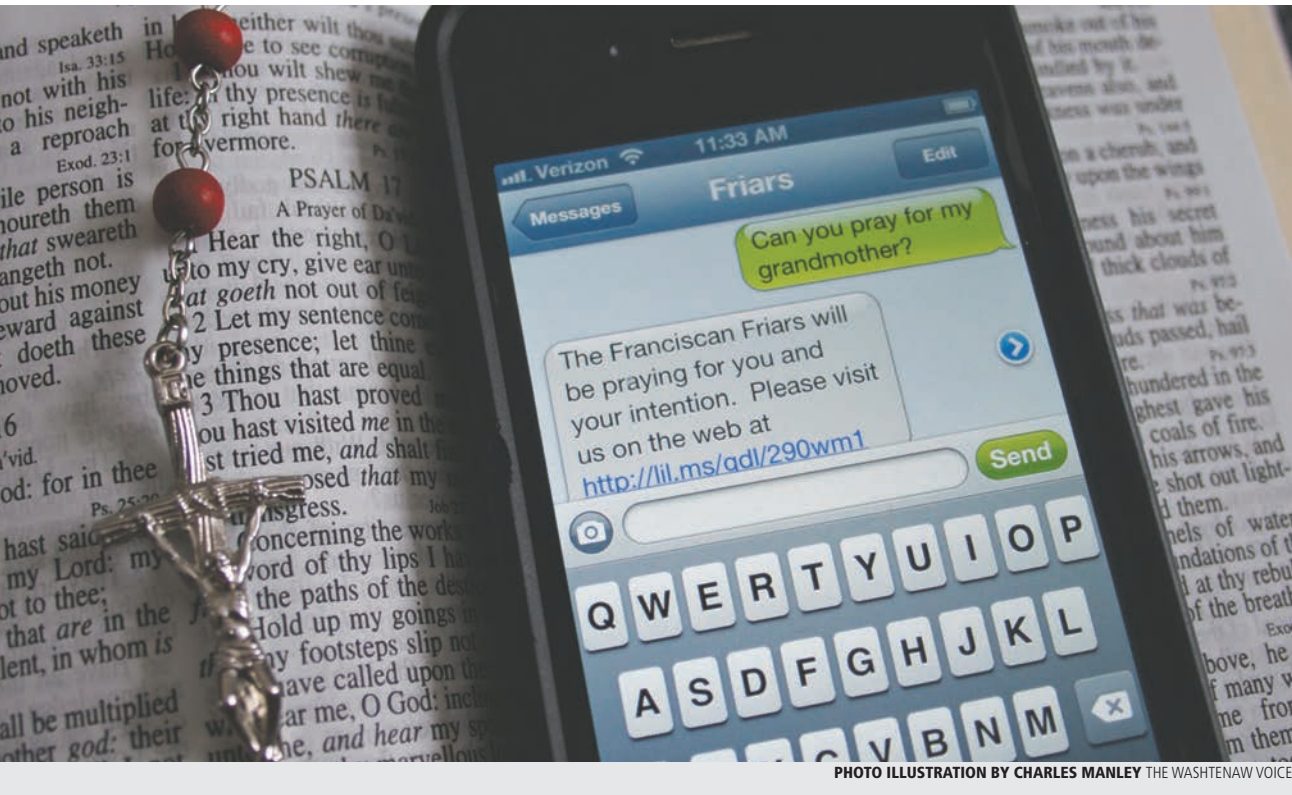


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES MANLEY THE WASHTENAW VOICE

## Prayers at your fingertips

Friars go digital to accept prayer intentions through text messages

By MARIA RIGOU  
Staff Writer

You can send a text message to your friends, your doctor, your local bus service and even to Google. Did you ever think that you could send a text message to God? The largest groups of Franciscan friars in the United States is now offering the faithful a new way to pray by accepting prayer requests via text messages. Friars of the Holy Name Province, who are mainly located in the East

Coast of the United States, are among some of the religious groups that offer this type of service to their congregation. The “Text a Prayer Intention to a Franciscan Friar” initiative, also described as “faith at your fingertips,” is a different way for Catholics to connect. The program encourages participants to text the word “PRAYER” to 306-44. They will then get a welcome message and will be prompted to send their intention. Once the friars have acknowledged the text message, the sender receives a reply. Intentions are stored on a website and will be included collectively in the friars’ prayers twice a day and at Mass. “A lot of people text everything now, so why not have people have the ability to ask us to pray for them, by texting,”

said Father David Convertino, executive director of development for the Franciscan Friars of the Holy Name Province. This is one of several ways the friars hope to reach a younger audience, increase the number of faithful and spread the Catholic faith. They have recently renovated their website and the next step is moving into Facebook and tweeting. The group already has a presence on LinkedIn and it has been streaming some of its services. The friars are following the example of Pope Benedict XVI, the leader of the 1.2 billion Roman Catholics in the world. Within just eight days of

FRIARS  
CONTINUED B2

## New club explores secular universe

By LELAND DAWSON  
Staff Writer

Washtenaw Community College’s Department of Student Development and Activities has seen a number of religious groups come and go in the past few years. But a specifically non-religious group is a first. The Secular Student Alliance, which has made waves in the past years as being one of the quickest growing student organizations and most vocal, has landed on WCC’s campus. It is important to note that while secularism is often paired with atheism and agnosticism, this is not always the case. The SSA at WCC is an eclectic mix of students, all with different beliefs and motivations. “We want to inform people who are interested in the ideas behind atheism, agnosticism, secularism and other ‘isms,’” said club President Brittany Landers, 23, an Ann Arbor resident and psychology student. Although Landers is admittedly undecided on where she stands on the “ism” spectrum (when asked she refused to give an answer), the vice president, Layne Machuca, 25, from Jackson and studying Human Services, had no such qualms. She identified herself as an “Agnostic atheist,” which means she doesn’t believe in a higher power, but is open to the possibility of one, provided enough evidence is demonstrated. Both members say the club is open to debate with any of the religious groups at WCC, but “we’re not going to be in their face about it,” Machuca said. Wednesday may be the first opportunity for such a debate, as the

group plans to celebrate the “Flying Spaghetti Monster,” a parody deity developed in response to Intelligent Design, and Pastafarianism in the Community Room. A pagan holiday celebration is on the horizon, and the club also leaves open the opportunity for other clubs to do these events jointly, so all voices may be heard. “We want to make sure everyone is represented in the group, not just the atheists and agnostics,” Machuca said, explaining why the events are so far-reaching and out of the normal for what most would think is a purely secular group. The club also has Christian, Pagan and Jedi members, and is welcome to others. The SSA isn’t the only secular group in the area. The Center for Inquiry, which operates out of Ypsilanti, holds monthly bar nights, pot-lucks, book clubs and other events. “We’re trying to fill the hole that not having a church (community) leaves in people,” said Nick Bell, a volunteer for the group. At a recent gathering at The Corner Brewery in Ypsilanti, a handful of members came together to talk about such issues as fiction, card games, gun control, the military, hometowns and technology. Most of the night was spent away from the discussion of the divine (it did come up in spurts), though since most members did have a science background, most topics reflected this mindset. When asked why secularism was so important, why have these meetings, CFI member Peter Furda responded,



# Paradise found?

For WCC Spanish students, it may be Costa Rica



By MARIA RIGOU  
*Staff Writer*

Disney’s Magic Kingdom, which likes to refer to itself as “the happiest place on earth,” has nothing on the Latin American nation of Costa Rica. And now Washtenaw Community College students can find out for themselves with a month of intensive Spanish language study this summer in what the Happy Planet Index calls “the happiest country in the world.” The program, which runs from June 27 to July 28 of this year offers a unique opportunity for students at WCC to live with a Costa Rican family, take credit courses at the University of Costa Rica and experience the beauty and richness of the country and its people. Costa Rica is a country known for its natural beauty, including the fifth-highest mountain peak in Central America, its large lakes and rain forest, its amazing beaches and its rich and varied animal and plant life. In 2009, Costa Rica was named the

“greenest country in the world,” and in recent years it has been named the “happiest country in the world,” according to the yearly survey conducted by the New Economics Foundation, a British think tank. The country has achieved high human development and equality and its citizens have a literacy rate of 94.9 percent, as reported by The World Factbook, the CIA’s compilation of data of every country in the world. The basic price of \$1985 includes tuition for six undergraduate credit hours, housing with host families with two meals per day plus laundry, grade and credit report, transcript, pre-departure orientation and services, airport pick-up for students, and a number of on-site services such as orientation and an office on campus. Not included are the airfare (about \$500 or less during the summer months), the application fee (\$100), and lunches during the stay. And it’s well worth the money, said

Adrian Miller, who went to Costa Rica on the same program in 2007 and now is a part-time Spanish instructor at Washtenaw. “(The trip) forces you to practice conversation skills. You actually learn Spanish,” he said. “In high school-level classes and at WCC, there is more attention in grammar instruction. In Costa Rica, the moment you get off the plane you have to start speaking Spanish. “It can be overwhelming, but within a couple of weeks you grow past the early frustration. Proficiency comes with time.” The courses range from beginning Spanish, to conversational Spanish, to Spanish American literature and other literature courses. “The program is designed so that the transfer to WCC is seamless,” said Nancy Ferrario, professor of foreign languages. “It is aligned to what we teach here.” WCC worked with Modern

Language Studies Abroad (MLSA), the company that designs the programs, in 2007, when about 10 students in the Spanish program or who were taking Spanish courses embarked on the trip. “It’s not only studying,” Ferrario said. “On weekends students got together and went to the beach, and to the forest. It’s much more than just taking classes.” Ferrario encourages all students who are interested to participate in the program. “The program is open to all students, even if you are the most beginner of beginners,” she said. “It is a good start.” “This is a great opportunity for students to think outside their boxes, get a full experience of what it means to live abroad,” Ferrario continued. “It expands your world in a way that is not physical, it is an enhanced version of you.” Miller recalls his time in Costa

Rica fondly, saying everything on the enticing travel brochures is true. “If I remember correctly, I was in class at Universidad de Costa Rica from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday,” he said. “I had a three day weekend. We took excursions. Some were included, and others you could do your own thing. I went to the volcano, the rain forest and Pacific and Atlantic Ocean beaches. “I would love to go back to Costa Rica, especially since my Spanish has gotten better.”

To learn more about study opportunities in Costa Rica this summer, there are two informational sessions coming up:

Jan 29 : 3-4 p.m. in SC 310

Jan. 30: 5:30-6:30 p.m. in SC 312

# Gained in translation

Speaking another language can have far-reaching benefits

By MARIA RIGOU  
*Staff Writer*

Christine Gafencu, a 16-year-old Washtenaw Technical Middle College student from Belleville, was born into a bilingual household. Both her parents were born in Romania and came to the United States to have a better life. “Until the age of 4, I only spoke Romanian,” Gafencu said. “My parents wanted us to know our heritage and to be able to communicate to other Romanians.” Studies show that being bilingual benefits your brain functions for life. Some researchers even believe that bilingualism can help prevent Alzheimer’s disease, increase memory and reduce the chance of having cognitive problems in the long run. Studies also show that the ability to speak two languages can give bilingual speakers greater attention spans than those who can only speak one language.

Javier Sastre, 19, a liberal arts transfer from Ypsilanti, is bilingual by choice. His father, a Venezuelan, felt that forcing the heritage into his children would make them hate the culture. “Our dad took us to Venezuela every summer,” Sastre said. “And when I was in freshman year of high school, I decided to spend a semester studying in Venezuela, in Spanish.” It was his choice to learn how to speak Spanish. “I know that this will benefit me in the future,” Sastre said. “It will help me academically and to get a better job (than a non-Spanish speaker).” In a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers at Northwestern University documented how the bilingual brain works. Compared to those who speak only one language, the bilingual brain processes the sounds of speech better, in ways that pick out spoken syllables more effectively. “Because you have two languages going on in your head, you become very good at determining what is and is not relevant,” said Dr. Nina Kraus, a neurobiology and physiology professor at Northwestern, and also a researcher that formed part of the study team. “You are a mental juggler.”

Miranda Traverzo was born into a bilingual family. Her mother, a native of Puerto Rico, encouraged her children to speak Spanish, taking them to her native country every year. “I grew up speaking more Spanish than English,” said Traverzo, an 18-year-old bio-med student from Brighton. “(Speaking) Spanish has helped me academically, especially with mathematics.” Being bilingual can also help in the long run. A study conducted by the Center for Health Studies in Luxembourg reported that the ability to speak more than one language also might help protect memory. After studying older people who spoke multiple languages, researchers concluded that the more languages someone could speak, the better off they were. People who spoke three languages were three times less likely to have cognitive problems compared to bilingual people. Those who spoke four or more languages were five times less likely to develop cognitive problems. Hassan Mohamed, a 30-year-old media services employee from Somali, speaks four languages. “I do it for fun,” he said. “If you speak more than one language, everything is easier.”

## RELIGIOUS TRENDS FROM B1

health administration major from Inkster, modernize the teachings on which they were raised. “Sexuality is a big one for me,” Hammons said. “A lot of what my parents taught me to believe doesn’t really apply now or is not necessarily something that I think a lot of people are worried about.” Yet Hammons maintained, “I still have a very strong belief in God and a very strong belief in what is right and wrong.” Sago feels that this is becoming more typical for young people. He sees a growing trend of people abandoning doctrine and developing a customized concept of God. “To some extent,” Sago said, “we each take the information we have and then create our own god. You do not necessarily need to agree with how other people feel – nor they with you. We can agree to disagree that God is individual to each of us.” Sago surmises that, because of this trend, organized religion is dying. Churches, he points out, are now filled with old people. But Johnson disagrees and emphasizes the benefits of religious organizations. “I’m not necessarily sure that’s a good trend,” Johnson said. “One of the potential benefits of religion is providing a sense of community and bringing people together



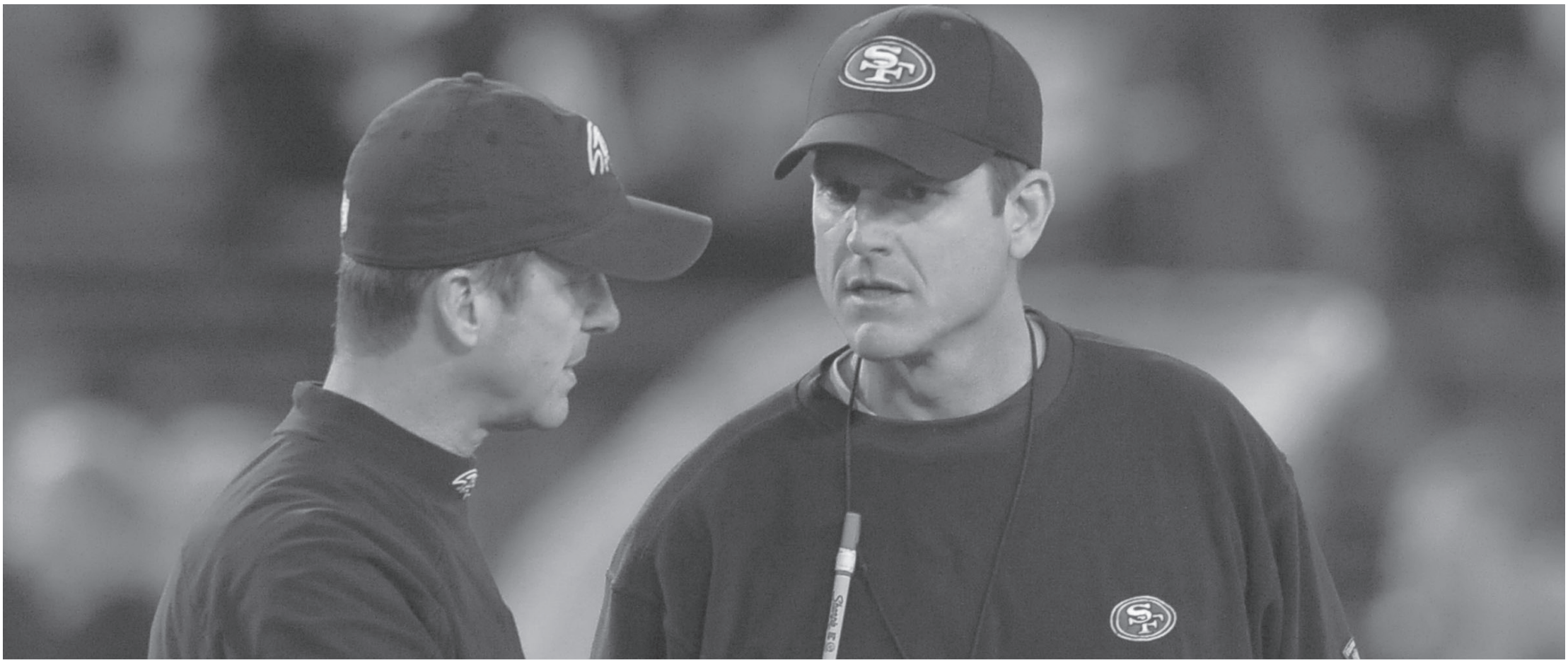
under the umbrella of shared beliefs and practices. They help us transcend the individual differences we have. They bring people together from very diverse perspectives.” Johnson also points out that religion provides a means of sharing the findings of its scholars to people who don’t have the time for protracted contemplation. “When you look at religion,” Johnson said, “something you find is individuals who have had the ability to really think about and research these (philosophical) questions throughout the entirety of their lives.” In the end, about the only thing that people of all walks of life can agree on is that religion is a complicated issue. The best way to really reach a consensus, then, is to ignore the dictates of proper etiquette and talk about it.

## FRIARS FROM B1

sending his first tweet, the Pope had reached 2.1 million followers, as reported by the Vatican. “If the Pope can tweet, friars can text,” Convertino said. “With technology changing the way we communicate, we need to offer people an updated way to ask for prayers for special intentions and needs either for themselves or others.” In Michigan, the Province of St.

Joseph of the Capuchin Order, headquartered in Detroit, has a similar service. By going online, you can light a candle and send your prayer request using the interactive prayer request. The prayer requests are then stored online and passed on to the friars, who pray twice daily for their congregation. It seems like the Catholic faith is adapting to new times and giving the word “religious text” a new meaning. For more information on this service, visit <http://thecapuchins.org>.





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**Super Har-Bowl:** Baltimore Ravens head coach, John Harbaugh (left) and San Francisco 49ers head coach Jim Harbaugh chat at mid-field prior to their game on Nov. 24, 2011, in Baltimore, Md, the first time in NFL history that two brothers have opposed each other as coaches.

# The Brothers Harbaugh make history

Pioneer graduates to clash in Super Bowl XLVII

By JOSEPH TWIST  
Staff Writer

The Super Bowl this year will feature a bit more local flavor than before. Brothers, Jim and John Harbaugh, former students of Ann Arbor Pioneer High School, will be coaching versus each other for the first time in Super Bowl history.

It will mark the first time that a sibling rivalry will take place in any professional sports championship game. The brothers faced each other once before, last season on Thanksgiving night. Older brother John, 50, and his Baltimore Ravens beat younger

brother Jim, 49, and his San Francisco 49ers, 16-6.

Jim attended the University of Michigan from 1983-1986 and played quarterback. John attended Miami University in Ohio and played defensive back. Their father, Jack, coached at the University of Michigan under Bo Schembechler from 1973-1979.

Another significant angle to this title game: Future NFL Hall of Fame linebacker Ray Lewis will be playing his final game in Super Bowl XLVII. Lewis was the MVP for the Ravens in the franchise's first championship in Super Bowl XXXV.

Lewis has had an amazing career, earning NFL Defensive Player of the Year honors twice, while being named to the Pro Bowl 13 times.

The Ravens came into the playoffs

with not much fanfare. They lost four of their last five games entering the postseason. But a 33-14 victory against the defending champion New York Giants in Week 16 showed that they could still beat anyone. The Ravens are led on offense by quarterback Joe Flacco, who just set the record for most playoff wins on the road with six. Veterans Ed Reed and Lewis are two elite defenders who make defense key to the team's success.

But the San Francisco 49ers have been a very good team the entire season. Many questioned Coach Jim Harbaugh when he benched starting quarterback Alex Smith midseason in favor of inexperienced Colin Kaepernick. The move paid off, though, as Kaepernick rushed for an NFL quarterback record 181 yards versus

## SUPER BOWL XLVII

Baltimore Ravens vs. San Francisco 49ers  
Mercedes-Benz Superdome, New Orleans, LA.  
Sunday, Feb. 3, 6:30 p.m.

## Baltimore Ravens (10-6)

**Offense:** WR Anquan Boldin leads all players in postseason receiving yards with 276 and has three touchdowns

**Defense:** LB Ray Lewis leads all players in the postseason with 44 tackles

## San Francisco 49ers (11-4-1)

**Offense:** QB Colin Kaepernick is starting Super Bowl XLVII in only his 10th career NFL start, and has accounted for 698 total yards and five touchdowns in the postseason

**Defense:** LB Aldon Smith was second in the NFL during the regular season with 19.5 sacks

## Prediction:

San Francisco: 23 Baltimore: 20

## Whitmore Lake's 'Pond Hockey Classic' rescheduled

By LELAND DAWSON  
Staff Writer

Unfavorable weather be damned, pond hockey at Whitmore Lake will continue — just a few weeks later than originally schedule.

Unseasonably warm temperatures made for unsafe ice, so the Michigan Pond Hockey Classic at Mac's Marina was postponed until the weekend of February 8-10.

"(Rescheduling) was not our choice," said Anne Duffy, the tournament's public relations and communications

director. "It was delayed because the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources deemed the ice unsafe."

But thanks to recent sub-freezing temperatures and predicted snow storms, Duffy is confident the tournament will commence as newly scheduled.

Even with the postponement, the team that wins the Open Ice Division on tournament Sunday will travel to Finland, where it will battle in the Red Bull Open Ice Tournament.

## Fitness is personal — with a trainer

By LELAND DAWSON  
Staff Writer

Staying healthy is hard.

That statement contains nothing revolutionary. Shows like "The Biggest Loser" reveal that it is possible to quickly lose weight with the right diet and exercise plan. But some maybe shocked when past winners are interviewed and many of them are back where they started or, sometimes, even worse than before.

Confounding the issue, out-of-shape celebrities who employ similar trainers — with rare and highly publicized exceptions — are almost always able to slim down or bounce back from pregnancies in only a handful of months. Notable examples are actor Drew Carey, singer Jennifer Hudson and model Miranda Kerr.

If every-day people taking advantage of multimillion dollar trainers and resources fail so often and so

spectacularly, what chance do the rest of us have? What is the dividing line between them and us?

The answer is deceptively simple: they stick with their trainers. Thankfully, members of Washtenaw Community College's Health and Fitness Center have similar trainers and resources at their disposal.

Students of PEA 115 can even have a personalized workout developed for them at no extra charge.

"When they join the center they can set up an appointment ... for a fitness assessment," said Linda Perry, Center Director for the HFC. "The fitness assessment takes about 30-40 minutes."

During that time, "they will do a resting blood pressure (measurement), they will do a body mass index, and a cardio strength, flexibility and a strength test," Perry said. "After six months they can review their fitness assessment, and that is free to all of our members."

This can create a milestone system for members to better help track progress with their goals other than just what the scale reads.

Jen Wilds, HFC's Medical Integration Coordinator and personal trainer, has no lack of qualifications, with six different nationally recognized certificates and a Bachelor of Science in Health Fitness Promotion and Rehabilitation from Central Michigan University.

"I love my job," Wilds said. "The part of my job I love the most is working with my transitional care participants and helping them improve on their conditions."

Her passion and level of qualifications aren't the exception at the HFC. For those already having trouble keeping our New Year's Resolution to get healthier a month into the year, this level of personal touch and milestone system is credited by experts as the best method for achieving goals.



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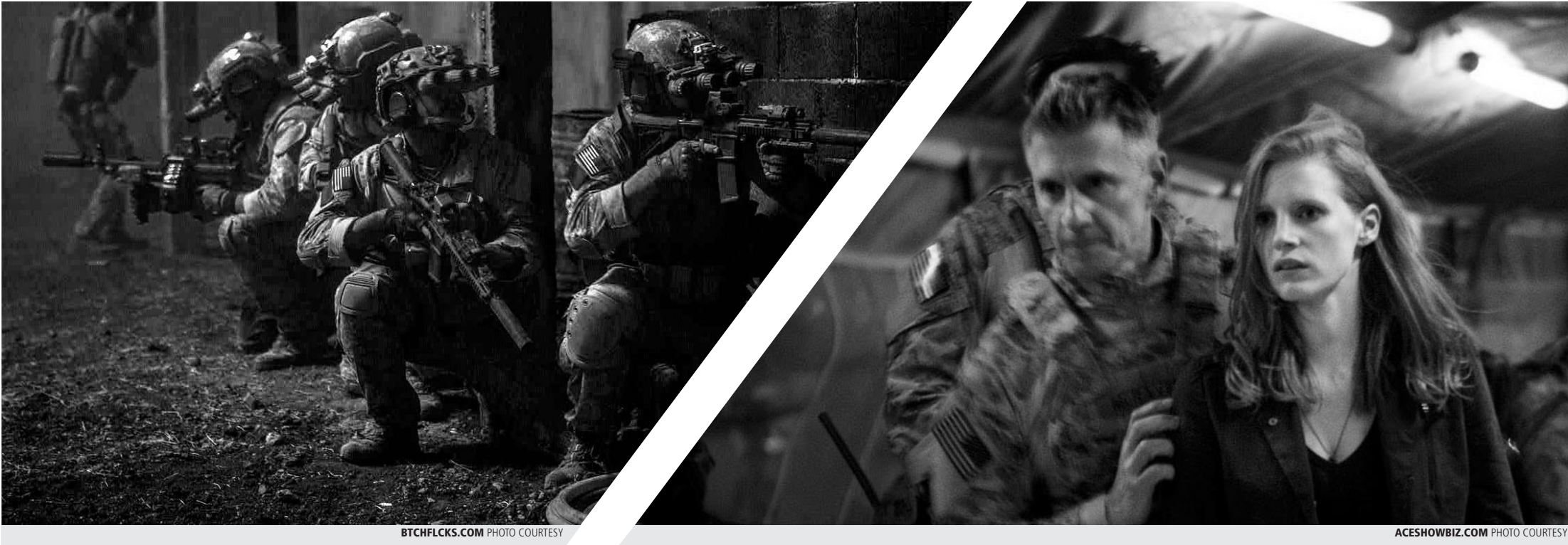


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## ‘Zero’ director Bigelow didn’t invent the torture apologist



JUSTIN FITINS  
*Voice Correspondent*

Zero Dark Thirty, the fictionalized account of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden has reawakened the debate on torture. The film has been accused by more than a few critics (at The Guardian, The Atlantic, and the New Yorker) of being either pro-torture or avoiding the debate about its use altogether.

There is no way to know if the film’s director Kathryn Bigelow intended to insinuate that without the use of torture, Osama bin Laden would never have been caught.

And frankly, it doesn’t matter. An artist can be as pro-torture as she likes, and having confused

ethics is not criminal. While legally sanctioned torture is ethically indefensible and ineffective at gathering information, there is still plenty of room for confusion.

It may be impossible to have a black and white discussion about torture in America ever again. A combination of chauvinism, special operations mystique, and a shift in legal and military methodology rendered the topic complex enough. Common euphemisms like “advanced interrogation tactics” are symptomatic of how senseless and insensate the discussion has become.

Since the American Revolution, the military has carefully selected men whose sole military purpose is to conduct precise violence and then fade into obscurity. There is nothing to like about this, it is unpleasant business.

But it will not be solved by defanging the military’s special operations groups. There is also no discounting

ZERO DARK OPS  
CONTINUED B6



## ‘Les Misérables’ destined for an Oscar

By NATHAN CLARK  
*Photo Editor*

Every once and awhile, a film hits the big screen with such nostalgia and power that everyone knows it will be nominated to win an Oscar. With an all-star cast that includes Hugh Jackman, Anne Hathaway and Russell Crowe, it’s no surprise that Les Misérables is one of those films.

Set shortly after the French Revolution, the film follows the story of former convict Jean Valjean, played by Jackman, who turns his life around and lives honestly after violating parole. He later takes in and raises the daughter of one of his employees, played by Hathaway, while being endlessly pursued by his former jailor, played by Crowe.

The movie is based on the classic musical production by the same name, so straight dialogue is almost all but absent in the film. Every line spoken, with the exception of a few, is sung.

Musicals are incredibly scarce in Hollywood theses days, so seeing “Les Misérables” feels like a breath of fresh air after a parade of countless unoriginal remakes and movie adaptations of semi-successful “tween” novels.

But the downside of it being a musical is the same problem that plagues any musical theater. When one or two actors are singing, every line is heard and understood clearly. When groups of actors are singing, it’s hard to make out what is being said; most the words become lost in a torrent of vocal chaos.

Surprisingly, for the main cast being professional actors and not professional singers, the singing was quite good. Every main song sung was spot on and catchy, leading many moviegoers to leave the theater humming the tunes stuck in their heads.

Visually, the film is spectacular. It makes full use of the benefits of digital technology and set design with epic scenes that are all but impossible to conduct in a theater production.

Whether or not you’re a fan of musicals, “Les Misérables” is an enjoyable film worth seeing on the big screen.

Grade: **A**  
Rating: **PG-13**  
Genre: **Musical**  
Runtime: **157 min**

## ‘Zero Dark Thirty’ exposes terrors of today

By ADRIAN HEDDEN  
*Managing Editor*

When the World Trade Center was sent crumbling to the ground by hijacked jetliners piloted by terrorists, the American consciousness was sent into a tailspin. Citizens gripped with fear asked themselves why and how such a heinous act could befall this proud nation.

But for more than a decade, agents of the CIA continued their hunt to answer the greater question: Who?

The surreptitious search for Osama bin Laden, believed to be behind the attacks, served as the premise for Katherine Bigelow’s latest political ascent on the Academy Awards, “Zero Dark Thirty.”

The director of 2009’s “The Hurt Locker,” a heart-wrenching tale of an Army bomb squad’s struggle to survive that took home

six Oscars that year, brought viewers another gritty and poignant attempt to explain – or at least express – America’s desperation and fear over the past decade in the Middle East.

Her latest film is a clear contender for this year’s Academy Awards as it delves deep into the bitter fear billowing in the wake of Twin Towers’ collapse and the nationally inflated emotions that led to a state obsessed with revenge.

Bigelow spares viewers little violence as realistic torture scenes and murderous raids comprise a film criticized for the sadism it alleges but sympathetic of the difficulties in defending America from the invisible al-Qaida.

Realistically bleak sets take viewers into dank interrogation bunkers as suspected terrorists are beaten and tortured with a variety of methods that would shock most viewers out of their blissful ignorance. Lead actress Jessica Chastain is a dedicated and uncompromising participant in

the brutality.

Chastain embodies the obsession of the American public. Vindictive to destroy the man blamed for one of the worst attacks on American soil, Chastain will stop at nothing to find and kill Bin Laden, even ignoring her superiors’ orders to give up the hunt.

But when faced with the vile mutilation exercised in questioning of suspected enemies, her face becomes awash with guilt long hidden by patriotism.

“Zero Dark Thirty” does more than “The Hurt Locker” in providing an objective dramatization of the politics and cruelty surrounding the war on terror. Unlike many post-9/11 war films, Bigelow’s latest goes further than war’s inconvenience and zeroes in on its terror.

Grade: **A**  
Rated: **R**  
Genre: **Thriller**  
Runtime: **157 min**



## Oscars continue on brink of mediocrity

Expanded nominees pose an affront to the strength of the Academy



ADRIAN HEDDEN

As projectors click to life in the hidden abscesses of movie theaters around the world, the whirling phantasmagoria ensues unabated by the passage of time.

But as days draw nearer to late February, the film industry becomes a battleground. Oscar season is upon us, and the heavy-hitters of Hollywood have never had more work cut out for them.

Traditionally a competition of serious, politically informed and currently relevant dramas, the Oscars were once a time for high-powered directors with A-list casts to address presently topical subject matter during the last few months of the year.

When the 81<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards of 2009 were met with low

television ratings, the customary five nominations for best picture were expanded to 10. This allowed for the inclusion of films in 2010 that otherwise would not have seen a nod.

Effects-based science fiction films such as “Avatar” and “District 9” were nominated as well as animated children’s flick, “Up.” Also released earlier in the year than typical Oscar nominations, these films made it clear that the awards ceremony was experiencing a new order.

Academy President Sid Ganis announced in the summer of 2009 that the nominations would be grown in order to revitalize interest in the ceremony. This was a practice that hadn’t been undertaken since the 16<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards in 1944.

Gone is the end-of-the-year excitement of “Oscar season.” With its two or three months of high-stakes, socially relevant releases, the Oscars were once a reward to true cinemaphiles after wading through the cheese-fest of the summer blockbuster saturation.

But the expansion has diluted the potency of The Academy Awards by allowing many high-budget, even comedic blockbusters to trickle in.

It is a sham for powerful films such as “Zero Dark Thirty,” released this year in wide-circulation just weeks after nominations were announced

to compete with a comedy like “The Silver Linings Playbook,” which came out in the early fall and has built its goofy following for the better part of five months.

Expanded nominees have even led to an animated, child-geared film getting the nod for Best Picture each year since. This has pilfered prestige from the well-sought award for Best Animated Feature.

By pulling films from the entire year and multiple, sometimes cliché genres, The Oscars have become a popularity contest more akin to the pop-sensibilities of the Golden Globes than the prestige and craft of the Academy.

Movie-goers can only wonder of the chaos that may ensue.

It has been a long-guarded tradition that pictures that take home the major awards at the Globes may be nominated, but will not double dip at the Oscars. With clear Oscar favorite “Argo” taking Best Drama and Best Director at the Golden Globes, it seems the Oscars may actually be out for director Ben Affleck.

If Affleck wins big at both ceremonies, the American people will further usurp the Oscars’ credibility and soil the red carpet in sugar-coated, repetitive excrement for generations to come.





ST. JOSEPH MERCY PHOTO COURTESY

Cropping up awareness: A hoop house was erected at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital to allow sustainable gardening year-round.

# HOME GROWN

Knowing the difference, local farmers ask where *your* food comes from

By ANNA ELIAS  
Staff Writer

Considering where food comes from is a task many consumers fail to think of or even care about. Whether corn is grown with unsafe practices or pigs which eat the corn are kept in cages too small for them, Oscar Bee, 31, a small local farmer in Saline considers every day what goes in to making safe, informed choices. He describes a food hierarchy when he chooses what vegetables, dairy, meats and other products to consume. “I go with what I’ve grown first, whether that’s vegetables or goat’s milk etc., and then the next is what friends or family or those close to me have grown,” Bee said. “And then,

farmers markets and food co-ops.” Other members of the community also feel strongly about eating locally. Farmer Ann Elder helps to run the Community Farm of Ann Arbor. The farm sells shares as part of a Community Supported Agriculture food system. CSA’s are important, according to Elder, to promote the community’s interaction with its own diet. “Foods in the grocery store are often grown, picked and put on the shelf without community interaction, Elder said.” Interaction with the food is a recurring theme for many farmers who encourage consumers to have conversations with those closest to the food and to understand the growing process.

“For me, the most important thing is that people know where their food comes from,” Bee said. “They can figure out what’s important to them and find the right farm that practices the growing methods that they are most comfortable with.” While many consumers are interested in a connection to food and the inherent benefits brought to the local economy, others feel that they don’t have to eat exclusively local. “I’m not a purist of local growing, nor am I advocating for people to be total purists. You’re not going to be able to grow a banana in Michigan, but you sure can grow a lot,” said winter-time CSA owner, Rena Basch. “Why would you buy an apple from Chile or Washington State when Michigan grows great apples?”

While eating locally makes an impact in local economies, farmers say the benefit far surpasses economic growth and nutritional value. People argue that the carbon footprint of the product being consumed is greatly reduced when it is locally sourced. “Mono-crop agriculture or conventional agriculture is just not a good system,” Elder said. “It’s not sustainable to the Earth and not sustainable to the people long term.” According to the Environmental Working Group, buying local produce reduces the carbon footprint of 20-25 percent on average. This reduces the amount of fossil fuels needed for transportation of the product, and helps reduce the impact on climate change, according to the EWG. Produce is not the only product

that people consider to locally source. Bee lives in a co-operative home where residents grow most of what they consume, including meat. “I have a strong connection with my food,” Bee said. “I’m part of the process when it comes to animal sustenance.” The importance of eating meat that lines up with ideal growing and raising practices is also stressed by Bee. “If I eat some corn from a conventional farm, I have a handful of food where I’m not satisfied with the growing practices. If I eat animal protein in that same fashion, there’s a giant bucketful of that same kind of corn that could potentially go into it,” Bee said. Numerous attempts by *The Voice* to contact factory farms, including messages left for spokespersons, were unsuccessful.



ST. JOSEPH MERCY PHOTO COURTESY

Sustainable Sales: Vegetables from the hoop house are sold at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Farmer’s Market





KELLY BRACHA THE WASHTENAW VOICE

**A Driving Interest:** Auto industry professionals and auto enthusiasts examine Chevrolet's 2014 lineup. For more about the Auto Show and for more photos, visit [washtenawvoice.com](http://washtenawvoice.com)

## CONTINUED FROM MEDIAPHILE

## ZERO DARK OPS FROM B4

the value special warfare has had in shaping history. Their deployment is a function of government and it is our responsibility to elect leaders who will utilize groups like the Navy SEALs responsibly.

Torture very likely has occurred in the undertaking of secret missions by Special Operations personnel. Conduct in war is not under the purview of civic law.

This is not a pleasing assumption, however. There is a tremendous difference between the fog of war and judicial sponsorship of torture.

Nowhere in the Bush administration's innuendos about interrogation was there any attempt to hide the fact the US soldiers during the Vietnam War had been dishonorably discharged for water boarding POWs. There was no hiding the fact that military regulations would have to be changed to allow these new methods to be used legally.

But no thinking person wants to be in favor of torture. There is instinctual recoil that comes with nestling so close to the abhorrent.

While this abrogation of responsibility is intolerable, it is at least understandable. What is less clear is the path we as a country took to get to the tangle we find ourselves in today.

There is a vocal and consistent group that would have us believe that George W. Bush decided one day that torture was fine and that he would

simply rewrite all of military law on the topic because it happened to catch his whim.

But those in search of the source of military torture tactics in the United States need look no further than Bill Clinton.

President Clinton set the stage for torture when he approved what the CIA calls "extraordinary renditions," according to documents on FAS.org.

If CIA operatives took custody of a suspected terrorist who was uncooperative, rather than torturing them, they would simply hand them over to a government that would have no problem brutalizing the accused. There is no ethical difference between this practice and the Bush era's stance on torture.

According to CNN, Clinton admitted publicly to making many attempts on bin Laden's life through CIA special operations after the bombing of the USS Cole in 2000. Clinton has never justified or apologized for the use of these renditions for intelligence gathering.

The legal groundwork for torture had been laid prior to the presidency of George W. Bush, and it was not too great a manipulation to simply cut out the middle man and do the dirty work ourselves. Bush may have been unethical in his decision to implement torture on behalf of the United States citizenry, but at least he was honest about it.

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