

# License to Love

Same-sex couples make history in Ann Arbor

A NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD NEWSPAPER

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# WASHTENAW VOICE

March 24, 2014 Volume 20, Issue 16

<u> Always Listeniņg</u>

# A job nobody wants

Faculty union elects new president who accepts with apprehension

Managing Editor

Amid brewing tension between Washtenaw Community College's teachers and administration, the faculty union has elected new leadership.

Maryam Barrie reluctantly assumed the role of president of the WCC Education Association on March

By NATALIE WRIGHT 6 after her predecessor Jennifer Baker decided that her time in the position had come to an end after a four-year tenure.

> Baker announced her decision not to run for reelection in an email to union members on Feb. 6, citing

> > **BARRIE** CONTINUED A3



Maryam Barrie, WCC Education Association President. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

## One last ride

#### WCC instructor Mark Daily helps student carry out a last wish

By JON PRICE

Staff Writer

For Washtenaw Community College student Mike Szeliga, the past few years had been painful ones. But by last fall, things were finally looking up for the young man.

Szeliga, 34, of Willis, was finishing the motorcycle service technology program at WCC and had just learned that he was going to be an uncle.

"His sister had been married for 10 years; she had been trying to get pregnant for 10 years," Shelley Eisner, Szeliga's mother said. "He was ecstatic."

Just days after receiving the good news, the unthinkable happened.

"I found Mike all by myself," Eisner said. "It was a Saturday. I went downstairs to get him to cut the grass, and he was gone."

Szeliga died of an apparent reaction to medications he was taking for a variety of illnesses.

His family was devastated. "The past seven years were just hell for him." Eisner said, "He had recently been through a divorce and then his ex-wife passed away."

"Mehow," a Polish variation of the name Michael, as he was known to his family, seemed to finally be coming out of his slump.

Plagued by health issues and emotional stresses over the years, he had recently stopped smoking, started taking martial-arts classes and seemed to have discovered his life's passion, working on motorcycles.

"He was very enthusiastic about motorcycles," lab assistant Wayne Keesey said. "He was always willing to learn, especially on the Harleys."

The Harley-Davidson name seemed to have a special resonance with Szeliga.

"When he started at Washtenaw, he

**MOTORCYCLE** CONTINUED **A6** 



Travis Smith, 25, a motorcycle service technician major from St. Johns, Mark Daily, motorcycle service technology instructor and Steve Matthews, 63, a retired motorcycle technician from Canton, pose next to the bike WCC student Mike Szeliga was working on before his death. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

# **WCC to release SOQs**

By NATALIE WRIGHT Managing Editor

Washtenaw Community College agreed last week to release the data results of the Student Opinion Questionnaires for all WCC instructors for the last five years.

Despite denying The Voice's November request for the SOQs, the school has conceded that the students' evaluations of their instructors are not exempt under Michigan's Freedom of Information Act, and, therefore, are open public records.

 $After two \, Freedom \, of \, Information \,$ Act requests, one appeal, conversations with 100 students and consultations with a lawyer at the Student Press Law Center, WCC's general counsel Larry Barkoff told The Voice

that once it makes a transfer to the college for \$168.40, it will get access to the SOQ data results reports, the format that instructors receive the SOQs in.

The fee is associated with the time that it took the college to compile the record. It's based on five hours of work at \$33.68 per hour.

The college denied the request initially in order to uphold the contract with its faculty union. The contract outlined procedures for termination of faculty as a consequence of continuous sub-par SOQ results, but specified that the SOQs must be kept confidential.

With the college's release of the SOQs, this part of the contract is now null and void, Faculty Union President Maryam Barrie said.

Perhaps it's a good thing, she said, if

the administration can no longer fire faculty based on their SOQ results. But it might make it harder on the school to figure out a new way to evaluate faculty, she noted.

Barrie added that she fears the SOQs will become a "popularity contest" among faculty. She fears that students do not take the time to write honest, worthwhile comments.

Although more than 100 students who were interviewed by the newspaper in November overwhelmingly said that making the SOQs public would lead to more time spent on the evaluations and more thorough comments, Barrie has her doubts.

"I guess we will see," she said.

See the Voice's take on the recent SOQ debate. A4

# **WCC** educators: Regarding SOQs, what do you have to hide?



**ERIC WADE** 

As a Washtenaw Community College student and a taxpayer who has paid for much of my tuition out of pocket, I can't help but to be a little

Opinion Questionnaires.

I first must dispute the idea that students are not the customers.

I pay my tuition, I am the customer. When other students pay back their student loans, as many of the educators at WCC once had, they most cer-

tainly are the customers. As a Washtenaw County resident, I

upset by the recently published let- see myself as an investor. My tax dolters to the editors about the Student lars are an investment to my community, not a transaction of currency for goods or service.

When I pay my taxes, I expect that A customer is someone who trades the money is used for upkeep and as arrency for goods or service. My edu- an investment in my community, and cation is a service that I pay for. When that is how I feel about WCC as an institution. By my money going to the college, I hope that more people recognize Washtenaw County as a place

CONTINUED A4

# Death sentence or a 'redo?'

#### Washtenaw student opts for the latter

By DAVID FITCH Staff Writer

Midlife crisis had already hit when Brian Myers took a trip to the doctor's office in the summer of 2008. He had no idea, though, that that day, his life would change course.

Myers spotted the school across the street and decided to check it out.

Three hours later and he was enrolling for his first semester, a semester that would start turning his midlife crisis into Chapter Two of his story, a chapter which he is loving.

Today, he is a Washtenaw Community College grad and a tutor in the Computer Commons.

But let's rewind.

Myers was 28 and living in Chicago when he found out that he was supposed to die, when he found out that he was HIV positive.

"At that time, most people didn't survive more than a few years," he

Myers remembered the fear and confusion that took over during the

In 1989, Myers' first partner, Lou, passed away of AIDS. It left him devastated and wondering how much longer he had.

"I was just moved into a new apartment, and I had said a prayer asking God to please spare me my life, and I will do whatever it is you want me to do," said Myers.

When he was 44, cancer claimed the life of his second partner, Kevin.



Computer Commons tutor Brian Myers, 55, an administrative technology student, found WCC on a whim. That whim, though would be a pivotal step in his midlife 'redo.' KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

Not long after, in 2006, Myers lost his job organizing nonprofit events and services. He was at the end of his rope,

"I found myself in the suburbs with a big house and all the wonderful things of life, and I hated my life," he said.

Here, he said, began his midlife crisis, a crisis that would lead him into classrooms at Washtenaw.

"And I just decided that I had traveled all over the world. I have bought homes, condos, cars. I have partied the

thing that I really hadn't done was go to college because I never thought I would be alive long enough to get a college degree.

night away," Myers said. "And the only

"And so when I had my midlife crisis, I said, 'I'm going to get a college degree. I don't care."

On a whim, as he describes it, he found Washtenaw and decided to enroll. His first classes, intro to

> **MYERS** CONTINUED A6



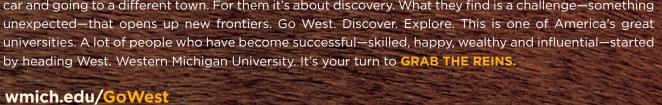


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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



# complete YOUR COLLEGE experience!

with Student Development and Activities

STAY CONNECTED! HTTP://TINYW.CC/SDA Be the first to find out about new tickets and activities!

#### Ice Cream Sundaes!

Join Student Activities for a delicious and sweet treat!

Date: March 27

Time: 12 n m - 1 n m

Time: 12 p.m.- 1 p.m.

Location: SC Community Room

Price: FREE!

#### **Lunch with the President**

Sign-up and you could be chosen to have free lunch with WCC's President Dr. Rose Bellanca!

New winners will be selected throughout the semester!

Sign up here:

http://tinyurl.com/wcclunchcontest

### Become a Student Activities Support Officer!

Do you want to make a difference in campus life at WCC? Become a Student Activities Support Officer! This is a paid, on-campus position that is designed to kick-start your professional career! Learn resumebuilding skills that include leadership, marketing, event planning, and much more!

For more information and to sign-up go to http://tinyurl.com/sdaofficer

#### **Tickets Coming Soon:**

- Traverse City Trip
- Tiger's GameCedar Point

WCC STUDENT

& ACTIVITIES

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Earth Day Celebration**

Learn many ways to be green, save energy, and have a positive impact on the environment!

Date: April 10<sup>th</sup>

Time: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Location: Student Center Community Room
Price: FREE!

#### **Upcoming Sports Opportunities!**

#### Women's Club Softball First Practices

Dates: Monday March 31<sup>st</sup> and Thursday April 3<sup>rd</sup> Time: 5:30pm-7:30pm

Where: WCC Softball Diamond located next to the WCC Health and Fitness Center Please bring your WCC Student ID and your own mitt (if you have one). Please pre-register to join this team in the WCC Sports Office prior to the first practice.

#### Interested in a Competitive Dance Team?

We are currently looking for any WCC students that may be interested in being part of a competitive dance team at WCC. If you are interested, please come into the WCC Sports Office in SC116 to let us know! We will be gaging interest with the hope of starting a team in the near future.

#### March Madness Bracket Contest

Stop by WCC Sports (SC116) or email <u>elemm@wccnet.edu</u> between Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> for a men's and women's NCAA Basketball bracket. Brackets are due by 11am on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Winners of each bracket will receive a t-shirt.

#### Interested in Upcoming Intramural Sports?

Stop by the WCC Sports office to grab an intramural sports schedule which includes sports such as golf, flag football, basketball, softball, kickball, ultimate frisbee and more! Sign-up at the office for all opportunities.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please contact the WCC Sports Office by calling 734-973-3720 or emailing <a href="mailto:elemm@wccnet.edu">elemm@wccnet.edu</a>. You can also come into the office and see us and sign up in SC 116.

BARRIE FROM A1

the "strained" relationship with the administration as the leading cause. Though she has done everything in her power to improve the situation, she said, the relationship remains in decline and she has exhausted all of her options.

"It is extremely difficult and exhausting to work in an environment where my integrity and good will toward this college are, at best, received with skepticism and disregard by the upper administration," she wrote.

So, Barrie stepped up to fill Baker's shoes – shoes that aren't very appealing at the moment, she said.

"Really, no one wants to do this job right now," Barrie said. "I couldn't really say that I wanted this, but I am willing and I hope I will do well for our members, the school and our students as we move forward during this really challenging time."

Though the strife between the faculty and the administration has quieted this year, it has not dissipated, she said.

"I think we just have less expectation that they're going to listen to us," Barrie said. "It's no longer a big surprise when that doesn't happen."

Breege Concannon, newly elected second vice president of the WCCEA, echoed this sentiment.

"It's not been as frantic as it felt last year, but that doesn't mean there's any less of a problem," she said. "People have been kind of more resigned to more of the same, I think."

Yet, despite Barrie's reservations,

other union members convinced her that she is the best person for the job with her 29 years of experience at WCC and her experience within the union, especially in contract negotiations.

And when the time came to vote, Barrie's only competition was Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, who received one write-in vote.

Barrie will bring a much different leadership style and personality to the position than Baker, Concannon said.

"She's very calm," Concannon said. "Even her voice is very calm. She can diffuse a conversation just with her voice."

It makes sense that Barrie used to work as a poet.

Her calmness and pensiveness are apparent upon stepping into her office, which she has festooned with Tibetan prayer flags, pictures of the Hindu god Ganesh, photos of her children and clusters of artificial flowers.

Barrie's personality is definitely an advantage for the faculty moving forward through the tension, Baker said.

"She is absolutely the best person to take this position on," she wrote. "She is thoughtful, wise and measured in her approach to issues and she has the respect and the support of the faculty."

And Baker added words of encouragement in her note to the faculty, for the organization moving forward under Barrie's leadership:

"As we move forward through whatever changes and challenges we face, may we remain united, with a clear unwavering commitment to always act in the best interest of our students."

#### 2014 WCCEA EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP BOARD

Maryam Barrie, president Michael Duff, first vice president Breege Concannon, second vice president

Tom Zimmerman, secretary Kathy Butcher, treasurer David Fitzpatrick, chief negotiator

### WCC millage renewal on November ballot

By JON PRICE school's funding comes from tuition Staff Writer

In November, Ann Arbor residents will vote on whether or not to renew an existing millage for Washtenaw Community College, which would otherwise expire in 2016.

According to the college, the existing millage provides \$11.2 million annually to the school.

WCC's Government and Media Relations Director Jason Morgan said that local tax dollars cover nearly half of the school's operating cost.

"48 percent of WCC is funded by local property taxes," Morgan said. "That reduces tuition and allows us to do most of the things we do here."

Morgan said that 34 percent of the

and 13 percent is from the state.

"A little bit extra comes from federal grants and other sources," he said.

The money that comes to the school through tax dollars goes into a "general operations fund," which means that it can be used to cover just about anything the college's Board of Trustees sees fit.

"That is why we inform the public and inform the community about the impact of WCC," Morgan said. "So that they understand when it comes time to vote why there is value in WCC."

Since voters will be asked to renew the current millage, not to approve a new one at the Nov. 4 ballot, they would not see a significant change in their taxes.

#### **CALENDAR**

Year of Energy

#### Wednesday, March 26

Geothermal energy talk and tour in OE 123 from 3:30-5 p.m. Join **Energy Manager Bill Ghrist and Mechanical** and Electrical Manager Beau Burgen to learn about the geothermal energy systems on campus. For more information, contact ethompso@wccnet.edu

#### Friday, March 28

Sustainable dinner and a movie starts at 5:30 p.m. at Garrett's. The movie will play at 7:30 p.m. in the Towsley Auditorium. For more information and tickets, contact garrets@wccnet.edu

#### Monday, March 31

WCC Community Garden in LA 374 at 3:30 p.m. Get involved in the new WCC Community Garden with counselor Kimberly Groce. For more information, contact ethompso@wccnet.edu

#### College Visitations

#### Monday, March 24

Madonna University, from 9-11 a.m. in the first floor of the SC

#### Wednesday, March 26

Walsh College, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. in the first floor of the SC

Oakland University, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. in the first floor of the SC

Eastern Michigan University, from 1-5 p.m. in SC 206

#### Thursday, March 27 Eastern Michigan University, from noon-4 p.m. in SC 206

#### Wednesday, April 2

Lawrence Technological University, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. in the first floor of the SC

University of Michigan - Flint, from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. in in the first floor

Eastern Michigan University, from 1-5 p.m. in SC 206

#### Thursday, April 3

Eastern Michigan University, from noon-4 p.m. in SC 206

#### **SECURITY NOTES**

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

#### Larceny

A student attending the Health and Fitness Center had her car broken into during her workout on March 6 between 3-4 p.m. The student returned to her vehicle, a 2013 Ford Edge, and saw that her right passenger window was broken and her purse, containing her wallet and cell phone, removed from the vehicle.

#### Wolf Pack mascot a new look By David Fitch Staff Writer Washtenaw's mascot, Alpha, has entered the digital world. A contest put on by Student Development and Activities chose a winning digital drawing of the wolf which will be featured on school paraphernalia. Graphic design major Erik Morris' design was selected as the winner. Morris, 18, of Saline, said that he entered on a whim one day after he heard that the competition was seeking more entries. He said he spent the better part of a day on it, working partially off of photographs of the actual mascot costume. "It went through several iterations of not being remotely proportional," he said, laughing. But eventually, he got it and is excited to see his work on college products. "That's actually what interests me most about graphic design is actually having my stuff used," he said. "I'm an extremely practically oriented graphic Peter Leshkevich, director of student development and activities, in an email to The Washtenaw Voice commended Morris on his "We are excited to use it on sports uniforms, bookstore apparel and more. It turned out amazing." said Leshkevich. Morris is a Voice contributor whose work has been featured throughout the year. "I'm proud of Eric, and I'm not at all surprised," said Voice adviser Keith Gave. "He is an immensely talented artist who has developed an outstanding portfolio of work in our pages. He has a brilliant future." Alpha is a relatively recently "elected" mascot. "Wolf Pack" was voted to replace Warriors as the school team name by the student body in July of 2012. Then, a year ago, in March of 2013, the name Alpha was chosen by a similar process, as per the approval of the Board of Trustees.

**ERIK MORRIS | COURTESY ILLUSTRATIONS** 

Voice illustrator gives

#### **BRIEFS**

#### BELLANCA APPOINTED ON THE ACCT

WCC President Rose Bellanca has been appointed a two-year term on the Advisory Committee of Presidents for the Association of Community College Trustees to provide presidential perspective on the services, policies and positions of the Association.

#### GALLERYONE PRESENTS EXPANDING THE LINE: ARCHITECTURAL DELINEATION

GalleryOne will open an exhibition on April 7 that chronicles architectural drawing techniques from the 1920s through the present day in different methods. The exhibition runs until May 30.

**FASHION FORWARD** The Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber will host Fashion Forward, a spring 2014 fashion show

coordinated by A2Y Converge, the A2Y Chamber's

Young Professionals Organization, to help support lo-

The event will take place at the Ann Arbor City Club on Friday, April 4 at 8 p.m.

For more information visit: www.a2ychamber.org

#### 'HER HIGHNESS THE PRINCE'

The Comic Opera Guild will offer WCC students, faculty and staff free admission to its main production this season, "Her Highness the Prince."

The presentations will be held on April 5 at 8 p.m. and on April 6 at 3 p.m. in the Towsley Auditorium. General admission tickets are \$20, seniors \$17.

For more information, call 734-973-3267.

#### WOMEN IN NON-TRADITIONAL CAREERS

The Student Resource and Women's Center will hold a panel discussion with female construction professionals and WCC construction program faculty to promote non-traditional careers for women on April 11 from noon-2:30 p.m. in the Henry Landau building. To reserve a spot call 734-677-5105.

#### **EDITORIAL**

#### With public SOQs, WCC and The Voice take a stand for student success

For journalists, nothing can be more satisfying than winning a battle for information that the public has a right to know.

We are proud to announce that we have won such a battle.

More than three months after The Voice filed a Freedom of Information Act request for the Student Opinion Questionnaires for all Washtenaw instructors, the college has agreed to released them.

Originally the school denied the request, but more than 100 interviews with students, several articles and a lot of help from our lawyer at

the Student Press Law Center have led the school to accept that the SOQs fall under the definition of public information, meaning legally it had no choice but to release them.

The Voice has big plans for the

We want to give WCC students transparency that they've never had before regarding the quality of the teaching at the college.

The SOQs will be published soon. We ask our fellow students to take advantage of this tool and to use it to get the best education they can for their dollars.

Faculty members' reactions to the call for public SOQs, while not surprising, have been disheartening. Some speak like they have no respect at all for their students.

In interviews, in classrooms, in the hallways and in letters to the editor we heard generalized judgments from faculty members about WCC's entire student body, or college students as a whole, as being apathetic grade-grubbers.

Students cannot be trusted with this information, they said.

The only purpose of making the SOQs public is so students can pick the "easiest" instructors, they said.

Instructors who get high SOQs only get them, they said, because they hand out A's like candy.

The problem with making generalized statements about WCC's student body, is you're likely to be wrong. This college is incredibly diverse in every demographic. Students come here from a multitude of backgrounds with a multitude of goals. WCC is a pathway to so many different places and grades are not always the way to

Students come here to find and perfect their trade.

They come here to make themselves more marketable after earning another degree.

They come here to do something different, to change paths after a long career.

They come here to discover their passion in life before moving to a bigger pond.

To assume that the entire student body functions with two motives - laziness and a desire to get good grades - is both absurd and offensive.

To our fellow students: Let us prove them all wrong.

#### SOOs FROM A1

they want to live, which improves my property value, much the same as good roads, parks and primary schools would do.

As a taxpayer, I care little about the individual student, but care about the overall performance of the college - over which residents vote in trustees

As a student, it is absolutely essential that students have access to SOQs to make sure they get the best for their tuition dollar. But there is no reason SOQs shouldn't be made public for taxpayers as well, since it is their dollars being invested in this institution.

A little bit of transparency might go a long way in keeping the faith in our elected trustees, for if they are battling so hard to keep the SOQs concealed, then there must be something to hide. And if there is something to hide, then at the next trustee election the voters might decide they want a more transparent trustee.

In one of the letters to the editor, instructor David Horowitz wrote that students' names and grades should be included with the SOQs. He states that this would help to insure accuracy in the evaluation. I don't agree.

Adding the students' names to an SOQ would make them fear repercussions for a poor evaluation of an instructor, leading to inaccuracies in the evaluation.

Secondly, there is no correlation between publishing a student's grades and the accuracy in a student's evaluation of faculty. What would this mean anyway? If students gets great grades then they are more trustworthy.

Trustworthy: That would be the source if students had access to the SOQs to decide their next instructors. Not RateMyProfssor.com.

Faculty union President Jennifer Baker was quoted as saying that students should go to RateMyProfessor to get information on instructors. But anyone, whether they have set foot in a classroom or not, can create an unverified profile and rate any professor as many times

Furthermore, the last place I would want to obtain information when deciding an instructor is the same place I go after registering to see if my next instructor is "hot."

Why are some of the faculty disturbed about the release of SOQs? If they do their job educating, engaging and preparing students for their chosen career path, then they have

nothing to fear. Sure, there may be a few bad reviews that misrepresent the instructor, but I just bought a television from Amazon that had a few bad reviews. But I bought it because it had many, many more good reviews.

To me it sounds as if the faculty of WCC feel that the students aren't educated enough to make decisions based on evidence.

If that is the case, then none of the educators at WCC are doing their jobs.

Contact Staff Writer Eric Wade at eswade@wccnet.edu and follow him @ logosethosmedia.

#### CORRECTIONS

A photo teaser on Page A1 of the March 10 issue should have directed

# A NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD NEWSPAPER

Volume 20, Issue 16

4800 E. Huron River Dr. TI 106 Ann Arbor, MI 48105

thewashtenawvoice@gmail.com

The Washtenaw Voice is produced fortnightly by students of Washtenaw Community College and the views expressed herein will not imply endorsement or approval by the faculty, administration or Board of Trustees of WCC.

Student publications are important in establishing and maintaining an atmosphere of free and responsible discussion and in bringing matters of concern and importance to the attention of the campus community. Editorial responsibility for The Voice lies with the students, who will strive for balance, fairness and integrity in their coverage of issues and events while employing the best habits and practices of free inquiry and expression.

The Washtenaw Voice does not represent or endorse the accuracy or reliability of any of the information or content in advertisements contained in the newspaper or its website, www.washtenawvoice.com, nor the quality of any products, information or other materials displayed or obtained as a result of an advertisement or any other information or offer in or in connection with the services or products advertised.

The Voice welcomes letters to the editor from its readers and will make every effort to publish them. We reserve the right to edit letters for space considerations, and ask that writers limit their comments to no more than 400 words. All letters must include a name and contact information, such as an email address or phone number, so the letters can be verified before they are printed.

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

A copy of each edition of The Washtenaw Voice is free to everyone. Additional copies are available at The Voice newsroom, TI 106, for 25 cents each.

**EDITOR** Maria Rigou drigou@wccnet.edu MANAGING EDITOR Natalie Wright nkwright@wccnet.edu **PHOTO EDITOR** Kelly Bracha kbracha@wccnet.edu **GRAPHIC DESIGNERS** Brian Auten bgauten@wccnet.edu EJ Stout estout@wccnet.edu **ONLINE EDITOR** Christina Fleming cfleming@wccnet.edu **VIDEO EDITOR** 

James Saoud

**Becky Alliston** 

jsaoud@wccnet.edu

ealliston@wccnet.edu

**ADVERTISING MANAGER** 

**STAFF WRITERS** M. M. Donaldson mmorrisdonaldson@wccnet.edu David Fitch drfitch@wccnet.edu Jon Price iprice18@wccnet.edu **Eric Garant** egarant@wccnet.edu **Bob Conradi** rconradi@wccnet.edu Eric Wade eswade@wccnet.edu **CONTRIBUTORS** Marko Delic Sophia Chesnokova Hannah Reaume Peter Hochgraf **COPY EDITOR** 

**ADVISER** Keith Gave kgave@wccnet.edu

Nina Di Mauro

# College's 'official communication' becomes unofficial funny papers



NATALIE WRIGHT

What's black and white and drawn

Washtenaw Community College's west publication "On the Record."

Since it appeared next to every Voice newsstand throughout WCC's halls two weeks ago, some employees have taken to adorning their copies of "On the Record" and sending them to

Atop one was a pencil rendering of the former Soviet Union's notorious hammer and sickle.

On another the word "Truth" was plastered across the top (we're thinking it was sarcastic) and "A publication of the NSA" was added to the flag.

In one classroom, the publication was used as an example of uninspired

At least the faculty is getting some

use out of the publication, if not the intended use.

Newly elected faculty union President Maryam Barrie called the publication, which according the administration is intended as a communication with faculty and staff, "weird" and "bizarre" and said she is confused about why the college is attempting to advertise to its own employees.

It seems, she said, that the publication is aimed at appearances, not

Several faculty members have approached *The Voice* staff asking what we think of it. The answer: It's a great though we're thrilled that the administrators believe, as we do, in the power of the printed word, in newsprint.

"On the Record" presents only facts, WCC President Rose Bellanca said at a recent lunch with The Voice staff. It's not in direct competition with *The* Voice, she said, because it doesn't present both sides of the story.

In other words, it's not tied down by those pesky journalistic ethics.

Yet, it looks just similar enough to a real newspaper to be insulting.

You could call it propaganda; you could call it a newsletter; you could call it an attempt to show the community that the administration is making

an "earnest" attempt to communicate with the faculty. But please, please do not call it a newspaper.

Bottom line: "On the Record" seems like a frivolous use of taxpay-

The college spent \$2,258 to buy 39 newsstands and it will pay \$420 every two weeks for the printing of the publication, according to the publication's editor Annessa Carlisle, executive director of public relations and

This may not seem like a huge cost, but when you consider the time that several well-paid employees spend example of what a newspaper is not - writing, editing and designing it, the expense is substantial. Over the course of the year, it's easily equivalent to full scholarships for a few students or to the amount of oncoming budget cuts.

> Instead of putting time and money into a publication that is being ridiculed by those for whom it was intended, these employees could be crafting press releases about all the great things going on at this college which is closer to the job description they were hired to do - and sending them to publications with credibility.

Contact Managing Editor Natalie Wright at nkwright@wccnet.edu and follow her @NatalieKay6.

### Conflict is closer to home than we think



**MARIA RIGOU** 

A year has passed since the death of former Venezuelan president/dictator Hugo Chavez, and things have gotten worse for the country.

Chavez died last year after a battle with cancer that was supposedly "injected" by the United States, as declared by his successor, Nicolas

It is hard to really explain what has been happening with Venezuela's people since then, but I think that we can summarize it with the following expression: People are unhappy.

Maduro was Chavez's vice president and was brought on to power by an apparently extremely fraudulent election against Henrique Capriles.

Things started to stir up in Venezuela and suddenly (or maybe not so much?) at the end of February the opposition was organizing and

marching to complain about the government.

So what is really happening?

The country faces incredible inflation rates that reached 56 percent last year, shortages of basic commodities, like toilet paper and one of the highest rates of violent crime in the world.

If this is not enough to make people unhappy, then what is?

Venezuelans, organized by the opposition, took to the streets, mainly in middle-class neighborhoods. The government's base of support is the poor and so the opposition has to fight those ideals *and* target the social problems that are affecting everyone.

The government responded by filling the streets with National Guard troops that fired tear gas and rubber bullets to anti-government activists.

Official government numbers say that 22 people have been killed and more than 260 have been injured since

Things have been so bad in Venezuela that Air Canada has ceased all activity in that country. CNN, the cable news network, was asked to leave by Maduro and the Mormon Church will pull 152 missionaries.

What troubles me the most are two things: On one hand, other conflicts in Europe and the Middle East are gaining momentum, and I feel like Venezuela's plight is being ignored by the media or maybe put to the side.

And on the other hand, I feel like this is the destiny of most Latin American countries, and Venezuela is just the first country that will lead by example. What will happen if this escalades and is replicated in other countries? How many people have to die to get a fair standard of living?

I have no solution to this problem. I just ask that we start paying more attention to other countries instead of focusing on what the people in Crimea actually want (because 95.5 percent of the population voted in favor of seceding to Russia, according to the Associated Press).

I read in an article by the AP that U.S. lawmakers are pushing legislation that requires President Obama start imposing sanction on Venezuela. Is this ever going to happen?

And even if it does, considering that Venezuela is openly anti-U.S., will this change anything?

I hope it does. For the sake of Venezuelans and Latin Americans in general.

Contact Editor Maria Rigou at drigou@wccnet.edu and follow her at @mariarigou.

# NFL needs head examined before banning racial slurs



ERIC GARANT

Following weeks of deliberation, the NFL's competition committee ultimately decided against passing a rule that would have explicitly banned the use of the n-word, and possibly all racial and homosexual slurs, on the field.

The consideration of the rule sparked contentious debate. Some thought it would help to bring about social progress. Others thought that banning the word in a workplace where blacks are the majority was nothing short of racist.

In announcing that it would not pass the rule, the committee said that officials already have the leeway to penalize slurs under the unsportsmanlike conduct rule, which prohibits "abusive, threatening or insulting language."

Committee co-chairman Jeff for saying his team name? Fischer said that penalizing the use of racial and homosexual slurs will be a "very significant point of emphasis" during the upcoming season.

The proposed ban would have been problematic for a number of reasons, and both it and this compromise represent another example of the league, whose 2013 revenue exceeded \$9 billion, according to Forbes, attempting to sweep its problems under the rug.

Enforcing a strict ban on slurs would have been a nightmare. Punishing them under the unsportsmanlike conduct rule is better, but that rule is vague and requires large amounts of interpretation from officials.

Plus, there's the problem of there being an incredible amount of racial and homosexual slurs. How are officials expected to keep track of them

It's also impossible to ignore the hypocrisy of a league banning its players from using racial slurs while allowing one of its teams (the Washington Redskins) to use a racial slur as its name. How can you penalize a player

The Jonathon Martin-Richie Incognito incident left the NFL with egg on its face. This is the league's attempt to prove that it is fostering a professional environment for its workers.

It won't make a difference, and it probably isn't even intended to. It's a typically lame, political-correctness move by a league that isn't interested in cleaning up its problems, only in masking them so that the dollars can keep rolling in.

The NFL doesn't care about how it is, only about how it is perceived. We've already seen this play once, in a spot where the stakes were even higher.

The NFL tried to keep the truth about concussions under wraps for as long as it could. When it couldn't any longer, it took minimal steps, making rules changes that have failed to make the game safer. The amount of concussions suffered by players has not dipped significantly

> NFL CONTINUED A6



By JAMES SAOUD Staff Writer

Walking through the halls at Washtenaw Community College, it's hard to gauge an opinion on what exactly students are thinking. Between foreign conflicts, missing airplanes and the dawn of the long-awaited spring season – it's not surprising if **for about spring?** they have a lot on their minds.

So we thought we'd ask one of them: Jordan Woodside, 23, a criminal justice major from Pinckney.

WASHTENAW VOICE: Why do you think WCC doesn't have a student government?

want to get too involved in our campus

probably. WCC's like the, I don't know, everyone who goes to bigger universities, a lot of those people want to be involved in everything like that. I think it'd be good to get a student government, but maybe people just didn't know about it as much.

wv: What are you most excited be hijacked.

**J:** The lack of snow. I can go out running again. I can go on a four-wheeler. I can be active. I can be outside.

wv: Which city has the better night life Ann Arbor or Ypsilanti?

**J:** Ann Arbor. It's a college town and **J:** Well, I honestly think people don't Ypsilanti is kind of scary if you walk through there at two in the morning.

wv: What happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight 370?

J: I think it got hijacked. I don't think it crashed. I think it's the most possible thing. They've searched thousands and thousands and thousands of miles. I just think it had to

wv: Are you nervous about the Russian/Ukraine conflict affecting the United States?

J: I don't think anything will happen. I don't think we're going to get involved just because our president is so, like, anti-everything like that. I mean, he doesn't want to do anything like that, so I don't think we're going to get involved.

### Salt, sugar and fat: these are a few of our favorite things



M. M. DONALDSON

For several nights, I have been dreaming of Oreos and Oscar Mayer wieners. Usually, this is an effect of eating late at night but, in this case, it is due to reading late at night.

I first became aware of Michael Moss' recently released book "Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us" during a nutrition conference. The presenter referred to this book several times as she discussed the emotions and habits humans have with food. Each of the three ingredients is the building blocks of processed food, and each has cadres of scientists studying the bliss point for salt, sugar and fat.

As I pondered a review of my nocturnal literature, I abruptly found out how disturbing the stories of processed foods are in "Salt Sugar Fat."

What alerted me to the disquiet was an advertisement on my Twitter feed. It informed me that my dreams of processed meat needn't be rudely awakened if I possessed the Oscar Mayer bacon alarm clock.

It will not only buzz, or more aptly, sizzle me awake, as it is also equipped with Smell-O-Vision. A few scented puffs of fried pork surely have the power to eject someone from the cozy confines of a bed.

This is not a joke for those who could win one of these alarm clocks. The competition started on the second day of lent, for those of Catholic faith. It ends April 4, for some who will celebrate as National Hospital Admitting Clerks Day; be thoughtful of those clerks who check in heartattack victims.

The marketing ploys of big food presents itself ridiculously, like a jewel-studded undergarment offered by

Vicki's Whisper. Bacon and bras could both be considered utilitarian in nature. Now they are symbols of overt excess and propelled by mass capitalism to the point of perversion.

The 1.53-minute video ad attempts to create a bliss point in the viewers' minds. My limited imagination never equated bacon with the bodice-ripper themed ad produced by Oscar Mayer, which is part of the blended family of Kraft food companies.

Nor have I fantasized how my tortured dreams could cause me to writhe in my bed while a piece of meat full of saturated fat hangs over me, threatening like a stormy sky. Makes me want to light up a cigarette, which is not farfetched in Moss' examination of the food conglomerate being subject to the marketing ploys of Phillip Morris for over 20 years.

"Salt Sugar Fat" is mirthful, such as when Moss quotes Kathleen Spear, senior vice president at Kraft, saying, "we ought to make sure we're not directly or indirectly or subliminally encouraging overconsumption."

Moss details the history of some of America's most beloved processed foods and evokes nostalgia when he covers the birth and growing pains of Tang, Kool-Aid and Capri Sun. He also exposes the effort gone into marketing the food we eat, creating salt, sugar and fat as staples in the American diet. It also reveals how our bodies can addictively crave these ingredients.

As far as alarm clocks go, I doubt oatmeal, which is a better breakfast choice, will be a future contender.

M. M. Donaldson is a staff writer with The Voice and a journalism student at WCC. She has a bachelor's degree in Family and Community Services from Michigan State University, and has several years experience with nutrition issues affecting infants through older adults.

She can be reached at mmorrisdonaldson@wccnet.edu, and follow on Twitter @MMDonaldson1 or Facebook at M.M. Donaldson

# Voice Box

### "What gets you through winter psychologically?"



"I'd just have to say the people you hang out with because the classes in winter suck, and this weather is horrible so you just got to make the most of it when you hang out with people. If you hang out with good people, you get good vibes and it's just a good time. Even (during) breaks when you are walking

with someone, even for that five or 10 minutes, it's worth it so then when you go into class you're in a good mood."

Morgan Harris, 17, Wayne, undecided



"I don't know. It's always a rough time for me every winter. Spending time with my friends and anything creative like art, painting, drawing. I'd say it's made me feel more content with my life right now especially since I can't do anything because my life usually consists of being outside, and I have some sort

of seasonal depression so during the wintertime I can't really express myself."

ALI AL-SHEHMANI, 17, Ann Arbor, math and science



"Especially in Michigan, knowing that we experience all four seasons which I love, so just knowing that spring is coming and it's not that long of a winter. I haven't liked it this winter because it's been so cold."

ELIZABETH WOZNIAK, 19, Hartland, general studies



"Food, sleep, a lot of sleep and my friends. They play a big role in my life. I eat the right kinds of foods in the winter... Like strawberries. Towards the summer, because people are already in a good mood, people already eat a lot of junk food ... in winter you need something to get you awake and get

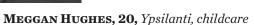
your mind thinking because you get really lazy. What you fuel your body with is the main thing."

HAJAR HABBAS-NIMER, 17, Ypsilanti, auto body repair

INTERVIEWS AND PHOTOS BY DAVID FITCH, STAFF WRITER



"Music and future vacation plans ... Cedar Point, South Korea, New York. Listening to music reminds me of the feeling of summertime. When it's supposed to get warmer, I can feel it in the air."





"I don't come out of the house unless I really have to. To get me up and get me motivated, I have to tell myself, 'It'll be over! Spring is coming! It will be over!' If I don't have to go out of the house I won't because I can barely drive in the winter. This winter, I've been in three accidents already and my car

is not torn up, thank God. And I've slipped and fallen like three times. I'm not really a winter person."

DERICA FOXHALL, 20, Belleville, childcare



"Songs about spring, usually songs that have nothing to do with winter. That one Pharrell Williams song, 'Happy,' that works, too. It makes me feel like it's spring or summer. Winter's kind of cold. It makes me think of depressing songs."

AMARIAH CARTER, 17, Ypsilanti, digital video production



of warmer days, not the hope, the dream of warmer days, just imagining the snow disappear. And then just staying warm, which usually means three pairs of socks and a big sweater."

"The thought of summer, the hope

AEISHA ALI-KHODJA, 16, Ypsilanti, baking and pastry

# WCC songwriting instructor releases first EP

Staff Writer

Spencer Michaud, Washtenaw Community College songwriting instructor has released his debut record "Tightrope Walker."

The first batch of limited edition

recordings were made available March 22 at Michaud's opening for the Ben By DAVID FITCH Daniels Band at The Ark, with digital versions having been released to Kickstarter supporters earlier this

> The four-track EP features contributions from WCC-ers past and present like Recording Technology instructor Jim Roll, who served as recording engineer,

bassist Graham Lapp and drummer Gabriel Craft, who took Michaud's class.

News

"He's quite a storyteller," said Roll, referring to the "epic" nature of the songs. Michaud also brought in Ross

Federman, drummer for the Ann Arborbased band Tally Hall, to aid in the mastering process.

Michaud was trying to capture a "whimsical" feel in his tracks, said Federman. And Federman did just that, bringing a new energy into the project, said Michaud.

The result? A finished album that pleases even the perfectionist Michaud.

It's been a halting process to produce his first recording, though, one in which he said he had to fight the demons of self-doubt.

"When you do something as personal

as an album, you can feel like people are rejecting you if they don't like your stuff, and that's not necessarily true," he said. "Your art is different than you."

The EP comes at the end of a long road, one that he has shared with the semesters of students coming through his songwriting class.

For more information, visit http://www.spencermichaud.com.



WCC student Mike Szeliga died before finishing his custom 2002 Harley Davidson sportster. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

#### **MOTORCYCLE FROM A1**

said 'I'm going to get me a bike,' and he did," Eisner said. "That bike got him through a divorce and his wife's death. It meant everything to him."

That bike was a 2002, Harley-Davidson Sportster, and for Szeliga it was love at first sight.

"He would always talk about what he was going to do," Eisner said. "He would come upstairs and say, 'I want to powder-coat that.' And I would be like 'what the hell does that even mean?"

"But I knew he was happy. The only time he was happy was when he was working on his motorcycle," She said.

Szeliga had big plans for the bike, according to his motorcycle service technology instructor Mark Daily. "I have another Harley-Davidson,"

Daily said. "My bike was all black, and he asked if I thought we could make his bike like mine. I said, 'yeah, I would like that."

Daily worked with Szeliga in their free time, customizing the motorcycle and swapping out parts to get it ready for the road.

"He had taken the bike home with him because it was summer," Daily said. "Then, come September, I got a call from his mother ... "

Eisner informed Daily that she had found Szeliga dead earlier that week, with his motorcycle studies close by

"I asked her: 'Did he finish the bike?'

She said no, he didn't, and there are parts laying all over the house and garage," Daily said.

Daily wanted to finish the bike for his student, knowing there was a considerable amount of work that had to go into it. He offered to purchase the Harley from Eisner, so when he finished it, the bike could be hauled to shows and schools to help pique interest in WCC's motorcycle technology and automotive programs.

"When Mark called to ask me that, my heart just melted," Eisner said. She

**66** But I knew he was happy. The only time he was happy was when he was working on his motorcycle "

was very happy to learn that Daily and a few of his students would help to make her son's dream a reality.

The students, Steve Matthews, Travis Smith, Danny Mcmanamon and Dave Lewis have all worked on the bike in their own spare time, Daily said.

"They are all a perfect representation of the kind of students we have at WCC: selfless and highly motivated," Daily said.

Szeliga's former classmates remember him fondly and are glad to see his wish being carried out.

"I saw how much he put into his bike," Earnest Cornett, 26, said. "So I knew that's what he wanted to do for sure."

Cornett had several classes with Szeliga and said there was no doubt in his mind, what his friend was passionate about.

"He was always in the shop, always hanging around." Cornett said, "Pretty much anyone who is here, around all the time, they really want to do this stuff, you know? That's who he was."

Szeliga spent so much time in the shop that he earned himself yet another nickname from his peers and instructors: "Metal Mike."

"He had spikes and rings and big earlobes, all kinds of piercings, the whole shot," Keesey said, "He had so much metal on him, we didn't think he could get through a metal detector. But he was always a good kid."

Szeliga's mother was unaware of the playful tag, but the humor was not lost on her when she found out.

"If you ever saw Mike," she said, "he had holes in his ears the size of half dollars, piercings on his face and his leather, which cost him an arm and a leg.

"But it was only the best when it came to his Harley."

Eisner seemed amused at her son's second nickname but to her, he would always be "Mehow."

"That's what he wanted to get on the license plate, when the bike was finished: 'Mehow."

#### MYERS FROM A1

computers and business law, began in the August of 2008, the earliest time available.

And it was quite a shock.

"Believe me, when I came back to school, I was one freaked out 50-year-old!" he said.

But Myers settled into his new life—the life of a student, a student who was 20 or 30 years older than many of his classmates.

"It's hysterical at times," he said. "I look at everybody and I'm old enough to be your father, some of you your grandfather. Sometimes I feel really out of place, and sometimes I just sit there and laugh."

Now, five years later, he is still "living the redo."

He wheeled his chair over to a student in technical distress sitting at one of the stations in the Computer Commons. Swiftly figuring out what the problem was, he went to work asking questions, zeroing in on the problem, but never handing the answer to the student.

And for many students, he is the calming voice that keeps them on track in their sometimes frustrating required computer classes.

For Deborah Ring, 62, a culinary student from Ann Arbor, Myers was a saving grace when she found herself over her head in Word Processing and Document Formatting class.

"I have a lot of fears about the computer, and I am having a terrible time in my class. I can't follow the teacher. I'm totally at a loss,"

she said. "And he's very, very good at understanding that people have fears and calming them, which is an enormous first step."

Liz Hobart, 30, of Ann Arbor, said that Myers works with a new sense of attentiveness to students' needs. The business major said that without being asked Myers will walk by and just check in with students.

After serving as a lab tech for Business Office Systems courses, he was recommended for the tutor job at the computer commons under Debra Guerrero, the director of Learning and

Support Services. "He encourages the students to work as much to their ability as possible, which is what a good tutor does," said Guerrero.

His aptitude for teaching, he said, led him to his goal of becoming a teacher. After transferring from WCC to Eastern Michigan University, Myers is almost at the end of his goal of a bachelor's in communication and business from EMU. He hopes to become a teacher at Washtenaw - if the opportunity arises, he said.

Myers also recently applied for a graduate assistant teaching position at EMU. If he gets the position, he will go for his master's, he said. If not, no harm. But the future is wide open for this 55-year-old—something he couldn't imagine once upon a time.

Now perhaps he'll be a good example for others.

"I always say that half the problem with most people when they get older is that they quit living," he said. "They

"They quit challenging themselves."



Amar Ghalib free-styled rap in Arabic as guitarist Michael Buttiglione played along. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

# Talent on display

By MARIA RIGOU

With a half-full Towsley Auditorium as an audience, Washtenaw Community College students dazzled in the annual spring talent show last week.

"WCC's Got Talent," hosted by Student Activities on March 20, gave students the stage to show their entertainment skills to students, staff and friends and family. Onlookers cheered on as they performed songs, read poems and free-styled.

The show was opened by

Competition Team that performed the song "Careful with Me."

This year's show featured, among others, the talent of Patricia Ortiz-Tello, a belly dancer who is originally from Peru. The 31-year-old Ann Arbor resident is enrolled in ballet classes at WCC to improve her skills as a dancer.

One special moment of the night: Susan got asked to the prom! But the two WTMC students left before we could learn more.

The next talent show is scheduled for November of this year, but dates are not confirmed yet. Auditions for the talent show are generally held one

enrolled students.

#### NFL FROM A5

since 2010, when rules barring helmet-to-helmet hits and hits on defenseless players were enacted.

The seriousness of head injuries has only become more apparent with time. You could almost field a team from the ex-players who have committed suicide in the last five years following brain trauma they suffered in the NFL.

And yet, the league does not seem to be adequately informing its players. After two years of the NFL supposedly making head injuries a priority, a 2012 survey by The Sporting News found that 56 percent of players would still hide their concussion symptoms in order to stay on the field.

But hey, the NFL is doing the best it can. Right?

Consider two illuminating facts from Best Tickets, a site that tracks ticket sales and other sports trends: 66.72 percent, or slightly more than two-thirds, of NFL players are black, and black players earn the fourthhighest average salary among racial groups.

If the NFL has a racism problem, it isn't on the field. Commissioner Roger Goodell and the rest of the NFL higher-ups know this. Yet they will continue to look everywhere but in the mirror to find the source of the league's ills.

Contact Sports Writer Eric Garant at egarant@wccnet.edu and follow him @garanteric.



Patricia Ortiz-Tello, also known as Alma, performed a traditional bellydance at the WCC talent show. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

the Saline Dance Steps Studio

month before the event. WCC's talent show is open to all

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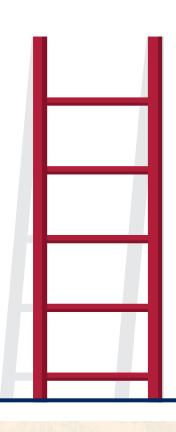
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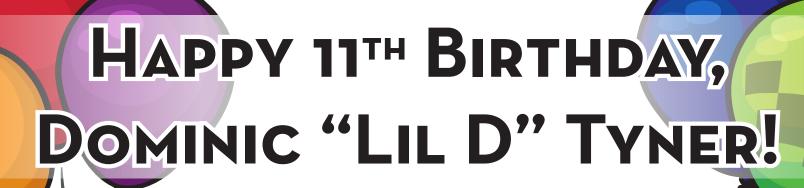
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# Ukraine:

Where the heart is bigger than any conflict

Sofia Chesnokova

By SOFIA CHESNOKOVA Voice Correspondent

I am standing on the bus station in downtown Ann Arbor. Spring is almost

here, and everything around is standing motionless waiting for a sunshine.

Peaceful and normal life is not only the sign of the place where I am now, but also for my family and friends who are in a Russian province. In the middle of nowhere, somewhere in Siberia, people are waiting for a

spring, too. They are on the periphery of a global event. But it is too far away to care much about social shaking.

The guy who has just come is staring at me:

"Are you waiting for No. 6?"

"Six or five. Depends which one is here faster," I answer.

"Where are you from?" He hears my accent.

"Russia."

"Wow! And what do you think about Ukraine?"

And here the global reality is rushing into my calm March in Michigan. Again.

Some of Americans talk to me about Pasternak, others ask if we really-really use Skype (nope, we use pigeon mail). Almost everybody tells me how freaking cold my place is, as they spent there at least some winters.

But now my talks with strangers are not the same. Sympathy with the taste of misunderstanding — that's what I feel when someone decides to chat with me a bit. Putin, Obama, Ukraine, pre-war are pretty confusing

topics to talk about, but that's what people think first now.

On the Washtenaw Community College campus, a guy asked me if I was going back. I was and I am.

> "How can you?" he asked. "There is a lot of shit there!"

> Well, I think I don't need to explain to strangers something about belonging, loving the culture, language and land of your ancestors. Talking about what is shit and why I should be afraid of it is useless, too.

People now expect me to speak the words of a

flaming dissident. However, I am not so politically inclined. The only one opinion that makes sense for me is that "big politics" isn't so easy to talk about in bus stations and on Facebook.

But stop. A month ago my Facebook feed was full of Einstein quotations, recipes of cakes and ads about rent. Now I am a Facebook friend of almost 200 "professionals" in geopolitics.

In a war of propaganda, nobody really knows the truth; every day I am bombarded by "scary videos from Sevastopol," opinions about Putin and Obama, pictures of the Ukrainian flag. Then someone says that actions of the West are stupid, and in an hour he gets 200 likes and minus 20 friends.

My Georgian friends remember the conflict of 2008. Everybody becomes an enemy to everybody in two words. People are confused because nothing is clear. But they hate to be confused; they are scared by the lack of non-biased information, and they try to fill

> UKRAINE CONTINUED **B5**



Kiev residents pile flowers to honor the dead in Maidan, or Independence Square, as they learn that their southern region of Crimea has been declared a part of Russia by the local parliament. MATTHEW SCHOFIELD | MCT

# WCC student fled Syria

**By JON PRICE** Staff Writer

In the summer of 2012, Ahnas Alzahabi was using a webcam to communicate with his parents in Syria when he heard a loud bang.

He watched as they ducked below

windows for cover, a flurry of bullets had hit the apartments they were liv-

"It was rare where our house was," Alzahabi said, "but in other parts of the country people would consider that very normal, not even worth mentioning."

No one in his family was injured during the firefight but bullets pierced the windows of the apartment complex and cars lined up in front of the building. Alzahabi, 21, is a business student

at Washtenaw Community College. He was born in the United States; his father was an instructor at Eastern Michigan University. His mother, Soumaya, 36, is a preschool teacher. She was born in Damascus, but moved to the United States when she was 15.

Alzahabi lived with his parents and two younger brothers, Husam, 16, and Humam, 11, in Ann Arbor until 2006, when his parents decided to move to Damascus to be closer to their family.

"My father wanted us to have that experience of living in Syria," he said. Despite recent violence in the region, Alzahabi had very fond memories of living in Damascus. He had visited the country when he was younger, but only during the summer.

"There was a big difference in visiting and actually living there," Alzahabi said, "but I adapted really well to the change."

Alzahabi spent the entirety of his high-school studies in Syria and was enrolled as a freshman at Damascus University in 2011, and then he received a letter that changed everything for him and his family.

The letter was from the Syrian government, informing him that he had been selected in the military draft and he was to report to a government office and register at once.

"I was frightened when I heard the news of him being requested for the draft," his mother said. "Joining the military during these times had a high risk of being killed or causing harm to fellow Syrians.

"Even commuting in the city exposes him at risk of detention at any of the many checkpoints. In Syrian prisons, many young men are starved to death, beaten, tortured and in most cases they aren't even accused or guilty of

The violence there is being perpetrated by the regime, Alzahabi said.

The most recent conflict in Syria began in April 2011. Civilians who were peacefully protesting the dictatorship were brutally attacked. Soldiers in the Syrian regime and paid mercenaries began to rape, torture and kill protesters and members of their families.

Men, women and children were killed indiscriminately if they had family members, friends or associates that were thought to be part of the protests that were taking place, he said.

Many media outlets have labeled the crisis a civil war; Alzahabi doesn't believe the term applies to

CONTINUED **B5** 

# Drawing Club students have a 'macabre' sketching opportunity

By DAVID FITCH

Staff Writer

Seldom do college students come face-to-face with human mortality and sketch what they see. But these young artists volunteered. A handful of Washtenaw students from the Academic Drawing

Club were given the unique opportunity to sketch at the Washtenaw Community College cadaver lab on March 6. The students were joined by Nick Reszetar, the club adviser,

supervisors Bryan Miller, a WCC math and science instructor, and student cadaver lab volunteer Justin Fitins, 31, a math and natural science major from Ann Arbor.

As the students entered the lab, some of them for the first time, the gravity of their rare opportunity sank in.

When the covers were first removed and they were able to see their subjects, dead silence overcame the room. Respect, more than curiosity or artistic ambition filled the lab.

On the wall, a plaque read, "So embrace this gift with excitement and be eager to use the gift which you will have forever...the gift of knowledge."

That was why these students were here. They wanted to see and learn to grow their art.

Quentin Burton, 21, said that seeing the face of the cadaver,

while unnerving, was helpful. "I'm studying portraiture, and I want to get really good at it, so you got to study the skull and the muscles of the face a lot," said Burton, an art major from Ypsilanti.

a souvenir. AHNAS ALZAHABI | COURTESY PHOTO

For Jesse Gilbert, a 29-year-old art major from Ann Arbor, the experience was deeply informative and also gave him an increased appreciation for the work that goes into becoming a great artist like Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci or other greats.

"Getting to be able to draw like I want to is going to take a lot of work. That feels more true than ever after going to the lab," he said.



Lorena Ganser, 24, a graphic design major from Ann Arbor, displays her drawing from the Academic Drawing Club's trip to the WCC cadaver lab last Thursday. DAVID FITCH | WASHTENAW VOICE

**DRAWING CLUB** CONTINUED **B3** 

A partially exploded mortar round that struck the house of Alzhabi's grandparents

in 2012. No one was injured and Alzahabi said his grandmother kept the round as

# And you call this 'Global Warming?'

BY ROBERT CONRADI Staff Writer

This winter has been cold, no question. We have set records for the lowest temperature on a given date and for the amount of snow. Talk-show pundits and politicians are saying that this proves global warming is a hoax.

But is it? Human reckoning can be strange. According to Katharine Hayhoe, director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University, studies have shown that the temperature around us can influence our opinion on global warming.

"The temperature of our surroundings, even if it's not the weather outside, even if it's our room, actually has an impact on whether we think that the entire planet is getting warmer or not," Hayhoe said.

Our human nature makes it hard to believe in a warming planet while we are shivering.

And our local weather is chaotic. Michiganders often say, "If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes." Weather will always be changeable, but climate is more predictable.

"Climate," says Hayhoe "is the long-term average of weather statistics over 20-30 years."

CONTINUED B3

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# Who's up for Hash Bash?

By JON PRICE Staff Writer

St. Patrick's Day has come and gone, but for Ann Arborites the real festival of green happens on April 5, with the 43rd annual "Hash Bash."

The annual event is held on the Diag of University of Michigan's campus, starting at "high noon."

"It's a really exciting time to be involved in Hash Bash," Jamie Lowell, owner of 3rd Coast Compassion Center, a medical marijuana collective in Ypsilanti, said. "It started as a protest when John Sinclair was given

10 years (in prison) for passing two joints to an undercover officer."

Sinclair, a prominent counter-

Sinclair, a prominent counterculture figure and pro-marijuana activist, was jailed in 1967. He was released in 1971 when the Michigan State Supreme Court declared the law that sent him to prison unconstitutional.

The first Hash Bash was held in April 1972 in response to the court's decision.

"Ann Arbor is a traditionally progressive area," Lowell said. "People are willing to do something that makes sense, in light of those who still have hang-ups about it."

Lowell warns that those using marijuana on the university's campus will

be arrested, while those who are "enjoying" the adjacent Monroe Street Fair, will only be subject to a small fine.

Live music, speeches from prominent activist and light-hearted civil disobedience rule the day.

Medical-marijuana patients, organizers and activist gather with the goal of reforming marijuana laws. However, the Ann Arbor Police Department warns that existing laws will be enforced.

"On campus, state laws are enforced where possession of marijuana offenses may be punishable by up to one-year in prison or a \$2,000 fine," said Diane Brown, spokesperson for the department.





Scenes from the 2012 Hash Bash. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

#### DRAWING CLUB FROM B1

These students were walking in the footsteps of great artistic explorers who had come before them. Artists like Michelangelo, who braved the sea of public disapproval for his dissection of cadavers, and da Vinci, who completed more than 240 such drawings, paved the way for these students 500 years ago.

"They're never going to forget it," said Reszetar. "It's going to inform their work."

The experience, while informing them as artists, also shocked them, even those who had done it before.

"I think I was just trying to detach myself," said club President Lorena Ganser, of Ypsilanti. For the 24-year-old graphic design major who had done this once before, it was still a challenge to draw while trying to stay composed.

The room smelled of the fluids used to maintain and preserve the bodies. The stainless steel tables and cabinets looked cold in the fluorescent light of the lab.

The air was filled by the whirr of the ventilation system and punctuated by conversations between the artists and their supervisors.

Gilbert talked with Fitins earnestly about the rib cage, while Ganser sat in a chair across the room, studying her subject and sketching.

Those seeing the cadavers needed to be able to separate themselves from emotional reactions, otherwise, as Miller told the group at the outset, their bodies could react to the "very macabre" scene and pass out.

The bodies aren't like what students can study in anatomy books, said Jesse Gilbert, a 29-year-old art major from Ann Arbor. These were the real things, unlabeled and without the commonly expected color-coding.

"It was very difficult to identify things and draw them," he said. "It became less about figure drawing and more about just drawing organic stuff as you see it and trying to organize the general shapes you would see and the general textures."

And so, occasionally having to step out of the room, but always pressing on, the students gained more knowledge of body structures as well as some new perspectives on life.

"That's what we are going to be no matter what. They were a person," said Ganser.

Yet, even in death, the individuals who had donated their bodies were helping young artists to grow, a priceless gift that would not be lost.

#### CLIMATE FROM B1

By this measure, the average world temperature is increasing.

Global warming – what is happening to the whole planet – may not coincide with what we are experiencing in our own locale. The lower 48 states only constitute 1.5 percent of the earth's surface. Conditions differ in other parts. For example, temperatures in Alaska and Scandinavia have been much warmer than average this year.

Our current cold weather has been blamed on the "polar vortex." This is not a new thing.

"The mainline media has erroneously called these cold snaps we've
been getting the polar vortex," said
Derek Posselt, assistant professor
in the Department of Atmospheric,
Oceanic, and Space Sciences at the
University of Michigan. "It sounds
like kind of a neat term, and it's very
evocative, but really the polar vortex
is just that massive amount of cold air
up over the pole that sits there spinning during every winter."

Posselt says that the cold we have been experiencing this winter is caused by "wobbles" in the arctic air circulation. These wobbles cause the jet stream to dip low over North America, drawing the Arctic air into our neighborhoods.

Such dips in the polar vortex are not that unusual when viewed over

a period of many decades, but since they have not happened for about 15 years, they seem catastrophic. Hayhoe says that in view of historical data, the recent dearth of subzero winters is what is unusual.

Atmospheric scientists prefer the term "climate change" to global warming because it is more consistent with what we actually observe in our local space and time. Individuals do not see a gradual and consistent increase in

temperature.

"What we do see in the places where we live, we see that our plants

a n d
flowers are
blooming earlier in
the year,"
Hayhoe
said. "We
can see that
certain animal
and plant and

and trees

and plant and insect species are moving northward."

"We also see that the risks of certain types of extreme weather are chang-

"We also see that the risks of certain types of extreme weather are changing," she continued. "Specifically, our heavy precipitation events are getting more frequent." There is active debate among scientists about what could be causing the wobbles in the jet stream to form and to persist. It is possible that warming in the Arctic, which is happening four times faster than warming elsewhere, may be influencing the weather pattern, Posselt suggests. Ironically, global warming may sometimes cause local cooling.

Though some details are disputed, other things are certain.

"The things that drive a warming planet, the effect that carbon dioxide has on the planet, that's sim-

ply not debated by anyone anymore,"
Posselt said.
"Even the skeptical scientists don't argue with that whatsoever. You

can show we are accumulating carbon dioxide and we know definitively what effect that has on the planet."

"Secondly, if you average the temperatures over the whole globe, the planet is warming, and that's not debated either," Posselt said. This winter in Michigan we are indeed experiencing record-low temperatures. But this must be viewed from a planetary perspective.

"Now days, on average, we are breaking our high temperature records twice as frequently as we are breaking our low temperature records," Hayhoe said.

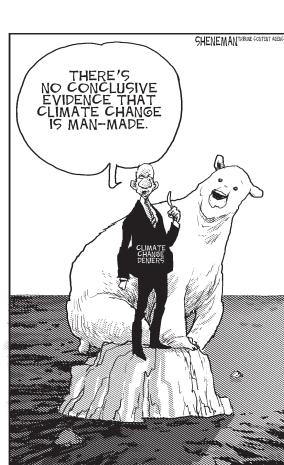
Washtenaw Community College has declared its seriousness in addressing climate change. Both former president Larry Whitworth and current president Rose Bellanca have signed the American College and University President's Climate Commitment (ACUPCC). In January, the college filed a plan to work toward carbon neutrality. (For more information, visit: http://sustainable.wccnet.edu/.)

"The college does have a climate action sustainability plan, and we are intending to implement it," said Dale Petty, WCC instructor and sustainability guru. "We are not taking a pause from that."

"Having said that," he added, "this has been the hardest bicycling winter that I can remember."

There is a positive side to this winter's cold. Certain invasive species such as emerald ash borers and the Colorado Pine Bark Beetle die in subzero temperatures. Other pests may also face a setback.

"I'll admit that sometimes on these -15 degree days I'll think, 'Die mosquitoes; die,'" Posselt said.





Seriously?

tion by our unusually cold winter. Atmospheric

scientists remind us that Michigan, and even our

whole country, is a small part of the globe, and

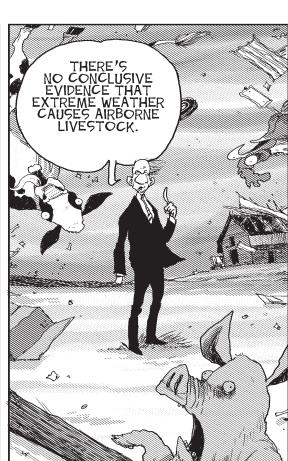
this winter is just a moment in time.

average temperature of the planet over 20-30

years, is continuing.

Global warming, defined as a change in the

Global warming has been called into ques-



MCT CAMPUS

# 'Non-Stop' - but at times perhaps it should

"Non-Stop" features Liam Neeson as Bill Marks, reprising his role of aging, action-hero with a "certain set of skills".

On an overseas flight from New York to London, Marks, a U.S. air marshal, receives a series of ominous texts from an unknown passenger threatening to kill someone onboard every 20-minutes until \$150 million is transferred into a bank account.

Neeson's character eventually discovers the account specified was opened in his name and he was being framed for the hijacking. His unseen adversary seems to have the upper hand through a series of bizarre plottwist and action sequences that keep the film from going into a complete

An impressive supporting cast, including Julianne Moore ("Big Lebowski," "Children of Men") and Corey Stoll ("House of Cards") seem to be underused and swift changes in the direction of the story seem forced

However, at times the action scenes reach impressive heights and Neeson delivers a strong performance, solidifying his status as everyone's favorite silver-haired hero.

As Marks matches wits with the tech-savvy terrorist, CGI and highly choreographed fight scenes seem to

upstage the plot, which in this high-altitude thriller, barely stays above ground from the takeoff.

Overall, the action-packed 106 minutes ensures "Non-Stop" serves its purpose as a guy's-nightout flick. But it ultimately falls short of Harrison Ford as the President, kicking terrorist ass

on Air Force One.

Entertaining and exciting yet lacking in any real depth, the film is worth seeing - but smart viewers will wait until it's out on DVD.



FORBES.COM | COURTESY PHOTO

# 'Need for Speed' can't keep up with video games

Staff Writer

When AMC's "Breaking Bad" ended late last year, it seemed the entire cast could move on to do virtually whatever they wanted. By the time the show ended, they were some of the biggest names in the industry. One name in particular: Aaron Paul.

In the crime-drama, Paul displayed some major acting chops that competed with veteran character actor and lead of the series Bryan Cranston.

It seems almost like an insult to fans that a brainless car-chase video game adaptation would be the next time Paul was seen on screen.

The plot of "Need for Speed" was dull. The acting was amateurish. And the runtime was damn near offensive.

By JAMES SAOUD This thing hardly had enough story for the first 30 minutes, let alone an entire two-hour feature.

> The film features a similar revenge plot to just about any other movie with a revenge plot ever made and is inhabited by characters who are painfully familiar. Imagine, for

a moment, if 2009's "Fast & Furious" was less interesting and original.

In fact, during "Need for Speed" I actually longed for that series while coming to the realization that there are too many talented and unrecognized filmmakers in the world for theaters to be taken up by movies

Grade: D+

Genre: Action

**Runtime:** 131 Minutes

Rating: PG-13

That said, "Need for Speed" deserves some recognition, with virtu-

ally all of the praise landing on the stunt team and the camera department.

> It takes a lot of courage to make an action film with almost no CGI nowadays. And between the photography and stunts, they pull off some massive achievements.

However, the great action scenes cannot come close to saving the plot, pacing and acting presented in this movie.

Aaron Paul really has no excuse for showing up in this. He deserves much better, as he has proved to everyone



through his work on "Breaking Bad." Before spending your money on "Need for Speed," I highly suggest you

play your old copies of one of the video games instead. It's a much more interesting experience.

# **Ann Arbor Film Festival** a surreal experience

JAMES SAOUD Video Editor

Exiting the theater after watching a film from the Ann Arbor Film Festival is surreal.

I speak from experience, walking alone to my car after seeing one of the festival's closing films last year. My ears were ringing as colors swirled in my head with memories of Takashi Makino's "2012," which later went on to win Best International Film at the festival.

This year's festival will be held March 25-30, with different events

taking place all around downtown Ann Arbor, including the Michigan and State theaters.

The festival will feature every- that receive so much praise every hing from documentary to animation. However, since its start in 1963, the Ann Arbor Film Festival has established a reputation for experimental cinema, both from today and from

Experimental cinema is impossible to define, as it takes no definitive shape. The films labeled as "experimental" are just as different from one another as they are from the films we may see at a multiplex somewhere.

These are not the types of film we

These are far from the superhero blockbusters, romantic comedies, and even the Oscar favorites

The films here have a focus on imagery and sound rather than character and plot.

As a video production student here at Washtenaw Community College, between the hundreds of films I'd seen outside of school, the many I'd studied for classes, and the films I'd produced myself, I thought I had a grasp understanding cinema inside and out.

Until I walked into a screening at the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

# Students compete in local film festival

More than 20 Washtenaw stu- "sub-director" for his group's project. lents took part in the first-ever Kat Ruff, the event organizer, said Broke Student Film Festival 14-Day that WCC has made a great showing

The WCC students made up two teams, Fortnight Productions and Ten Arms Productions. Fortnight Productions included of WCC students Eileen Meier, Brian Johnson, festival are very promising. Jake Farah, Chris Ozminski, Travis Mike Chu, Jessica Brusher, Przemek Ozog, Audra Meagher, Gabe Heiss, Scott Campbell and Philip Rachford,

Ben Armes, Justin Erion, Angela Juzswik, and Garrett Sammons. They were joined by actor Adam Johns. Students Jeremy Liesen and Shane Law aided both groups.

The competition gave students the more manageable time frame.

"Usually, we're used to the 48-hour competitions, and that's a little rushed for me. In this one, you actually get to sit down and go through really

By DAVID FITCH in-depth stages of production for a Staff Writer couple of weeks," said Reynolds, 25, of Ypsilanti, who served as actor and the

in the festival in the past.

"I'm so honored to have their films in my film festival," said Ruff, adding that many of the WCC submissions that she has already seen for this year's

The film festival, now in its third Reynolds, Zac Chrysan, Alex Mojica, year, has rapidly expanded from its inaugural event, which had eight film entries, to now, when the three-day event is expected to draw 900-1200 people, said Adam Nelson, Ruff's fiancé. Nelson, a former WCC film student, prised of WCC students Brad Tennant, has been involved in the organization of the event since the beginning.

Submissions for the 14-Day Challenge were due on March 22.

This year's BSFF event will run April 4-6 at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield and will rush of a time-pressured production, feature submissions from the 14-Day Challenge as well as two other BSFF categories, International Broke Student Film Festival and Films in

www.brokestudentfilmfestival.com.



#### KEY:

- Michigan Theater
- UMMA's Helmut Stern Auditorium
- State Theater
- Filmmaker in Attendance

#### TICKET **INFORMATION:**

Screenings

General Admission - \$9 Students/Seniors/AAFF Members - \$7

All Midnight Movies - \$7 Festival Pass

Weekend Pass

General Admission - \$95

General Admission - \$55 Students/Seniors/AAFF Members - \$45

Students/Seniors/AAFF Members - \$80

Info from http://www.aafilmfest.org

### 52nd AAFF Highlights

For full 2014 schedule visit aafilmfest.org

#### TUESDAY, March 25

- 6 p.m. Opening Night Reception (Grand Foyer)
- 8:15 p.m. Opening Night Screening (Main Auditorium)

#### WEDNESDAY, March 26

- 3 p.m. Music Videos in Competition (Main Auditorium)
- 7:15 p.m. Films in Competition 1 (Main Auditorium)
- 9:30 p.m. Out Night: Films in Competition (Main Auditorium)

#### THURSDAY, March 27

- ▶ 3 p.m. "Edweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer" (Screening Room)
  - 6:45 p.m. "Manakamana" (Screening Room) ■ 7:15 p.m. - Films in Competition 2 (Main Auditorium)
  - 9:30 p.m. Films in Competition 3 (Main Auditorium)

#### FRIDAY, March 28

- → 3 p.m. "From Gulf to Gulf to Gulf"
  - 7:15 p.m. Films in Competition 4 (Main Auditorium)
  - 9:30 p.m. Animated Films in Competition (Main Auditorium)
  - 12 a.m. "Suburbia"

#### SATURDAY, March 29

- 11 a.m. Films in Competition 5 (Main Auditorium)
- 11 a.m. Films in Competition 6 (Screening Room)
- 1 p.m. Films in Competition 7 (Screening Room) ■ 3 p.m. - Films in Competition 8 (Screening Room)
- 7:15 p.m. Films in Competition 9 (Main Auditorium) ■ 9:30 p.m. - Films in Competition 10 (Main Auditorium)

#### SUNDAY, March 30

- ▶ 12 p.m. "Reconversão"
  - 1 p.m. Films in Competition 11 (Main Auditorium)
  - 2 p.m. "The Forgotten Space"
  - 3 p.m. Films in Competition 12 (Screening Room)
  - 6 p.m. Award Screening 1 (Main Auditorium)
  - 8:15 p.m. Award Screening 2 (Main Auditorium)

a video lab assistant.

Ten Arms Productions was com-

but one that was, according to some, a

Exhibition. For more on BSFF, visit: http://



#### UKRAINE FROM B1

the vacuum with hysteria.

One of my friends claims on his page: "These hard days we shouldn't give way to despair or say loud words which are just shameful."

But nobody listens.

I was raised in the 1990s, and now I see how my generation, people who view themselves as cynical individuals with independent opinions, people who don't trust TV are successfully influenced by artless provocations.

We who associated politics with

dirt and lies are standing in the middle of it. We – smart and nice people in real life - cannot understand that reality is not only a black side and white side with a fat middle line, or that in the situation of information's over-

when I post a new funny video with kitties because now we must forget about daily life. I am sorry to tell you, guys, but now when our brothers and sisters in Ukraine need our Facebook support so much, someone is painting the wood, another one is listening to

abundance we should be very accurate. People I like and respect blame me to post some kitty videos. to forget about it. far away we are from Moscow or Kiev.



Kiev residents pile flowers to honor the dead in Maidan, or Independence Square, as they learn that their southern region of Crimea has been declared a part of Russia by the local parliament. RENI BAITENMANN | COURTESY PHOTO

Chopin, a third one is kissing and the next one is selling soap. How can they?

What is surprising me a lot is that those champions of liberty showed their anti-Soviet moods, quoting "The Gulag Archipelago" and saying that individual views are inviolable. But nowadays they block me on Facebook because I as an individual would like

So nice, I can just slam the laptop

I called my father recently. He has no idea what's going on, because he consciously prefers not to read newspapers. Also, he is in Siberia, and if you look at the map you will see how far,

People there are calm and indifferent, maybe too indifferent. Father has no clue of the world situation. He switched off all channels except Discovery, Discovery History and classical movies. Again, I asked him why he did it. He explained and concluded: We can help anybody now and here and not with a Facebook status, but with an action.

Violence and crime are happening every minute, and if it occurred in the country whose language we can understand or somewhere in an Arabic desert, it makes no difference. The violence is still happening.

We have tools to make this world a little bit better, but in 99 percent of cases it is not an open browser. I know it is much easier to preach than to follow. However, when you remember it's easier not to discuss online that which we don't really know well. The sad story is that all these Facebookexperts know that, as Father does, but something made them forget.

The man at the bus station in Ann Arbor is waiting for my answer about Ukraine.

I can say a lot about this country. Ukraine is a charming place, glossy and hospitable, the place associated with rich meals, ruddy beauties, summers near the sea, endless and alive.



Ukrainian soldiers were back in control of their anti-aircaft base at the city of Yevpatoria in Crimea recently. SERGEI L. LOIKO | LOS ANGELES TIMES | MCT

And you are endless and alive near this sea, too. I was in the Crimea at the age of 13 after six days by train from my city to Simferopol. The pink, gentle Crimea was a big adventure for me, the first traveling without parents, the first and the last time when I stole a good from a seller - a ripe, sugary watermelon.

It was the first meeting with a sea, when you wake up in an old-fashioned boarding house and shadows of cypress are patting on the ceiling, and you hear it. Waves are rustling somewhere outside. I don't care if it is now Ukraine or Russia, because boarders were changing and will change again, but Crimea is still Crimea, the land of vulnerable memories of childhood.

This wasn't my last meeting with Ukraine.

From Kiev you can go to Odessa, rent a big room in the old city. Your landlord is an old half-Jewish Mark Ignatievich, who never knocks even 10 *hryvnias* from the rental price, but who cares about every single guest as he or she is his own kid.

You spend days talking with friends, eating crispy fish and swimming. Then, after the sunset, you walk past the

streets with a bottle of a homemade red wine, listening to lovely Russian and Ukrainian languages and finally enter the house through the window since Mark Ignatievich is sleeping and you don't want to wake him up with a doorbell.

In the bedroom you talk again, while a south summer night is chirring and crunching. Next noon, when you wake up, Mark Ignatievich makes you a huge breakfast with products from the local marketplace.

This country is an intimate pleasure, and there is no difference where the board between us is laying. It is a place where a heart is bigger than any of conflicts, and I don't want to know a different Ukraine.

"Well, Ukraine," I finally say. "You know, I visited Kiev and Odessa, the city on the Black seashore, this summer, in July. It was a nice trip to this place, which means a lot to me."

The man who's waiting for No. 6 looks disappointed.

Sofia Chesnokova is an anthropology major from Siberia, Russia. Contact her at schesnokova@wccnet.edu

#### SYRIA FROM B1

the infighting going on in the country.

"That implies that there are two equal sides that are fighting for something," he said, noting that civilians are simply defending themselves against brutal government crackdowns.

"It's very serious," he said. "If the secret police detain you, your whereabouts are completely unknown."

Once detained, people are subject to inhumane tactics in order to elicit information.

Torture is very common," he said. "They say 'give us names. We want more information,' and they will go after your family member as well."

Alzahabi enjoys living in Ann Arbor, but hopes that one day he will be able to return to Syria.

"To be honest, right now I don't have that option. But in the future, hopefully the near future, I would like to go back to Syria."

He said that most Syrians who have relocated outside the country do not share this sentiment with him.

"Many Syrians are discouraged from moving back, even before the crisis," he said: "I believe you should help. You have to help your people, you have to help your country."

However, Alzahabi said there are many aspects of life in this country that he enjoys very much.

One of the things I am grateful for in the U.S. is the education," he said. "Washtenaw is a wonderful institution."

He chose to study business because it seemed like the most promising program in terms of having a well-paying career.

"I need to work, so that way I can help my family," he said. Alzahabi said that the move was a tough and confusing time for him and his family.

"My dad has been jobless for six months," he said. "It's been difficult, really difficult."

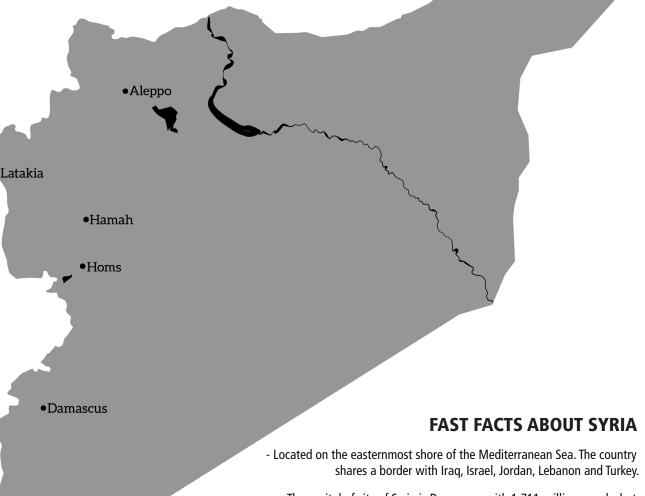
He is doing very well in school and hopes that he will be able to use his education to not only better his familv but to make life better for fellow Syrians as well.

Alzahabi believes his education in America is superior to the one he would have received in Damascus. "It's a whole different system of education here, a whole different style," he said. Since both of his parents are teachers, they also appreciate the quality education Alzahabi is receiving at WCC.

"I find it very important for my son to have a good education. He was talking about becoming a lawyer since he was in middle school," his mother said.

Earlier this month, he applied for and was granted a booth by the Student Activities Office. He set up a presentation in the Student Center, where he answered questions and dispelled misinformation about the country.

"Syria is a mosaic," he explained to other students at the forum. "It's made up of many people and cultures. The main thing I would like people to know is that Syria will survive."



- The capitol of city of Syria is Damascus, with 1.711-million people, but Aleppo is the largest, with 2.302-million people.

same size as the state of Washington.

- Syria was formerly part of the Ottoman Empire until it was dissolved in 1918.

- Syria has a population of approximately 22-million and is only about the

PETER HOCHGRAF | WASHTENAW VOICE



Ahnas Alzahabi, 21, setting up a booth in the Student Center Building at WCC in early March. He spent the day answering questions about Syria for his peers. JON PRICE | WASHTENAW VOICE

### Arts Club expands on cultural appreciation

BY HANNAH REAUME

Voice Correspondent

After taking a semester-long hiatus, the Washtenaw Community College Arts Club is back in action and planning some exciting trips.

With the addition of new members and an entirely new student board, the future of the club looks brighter than ever, its leaders say.

President of the club, Seth Illingworth, hopes the organization can be a way for students to find solidarity, as well as to gain a broader view of the world around us.

"The events that this club participates in convey how art can give meaning, hope, joy and understanding to people of any background," Illingworth said. "At the very least, I hope that the club can foster peoples' appreciation for the arts while they are having a good time and going to amazing places."

He hopes to maintain the new student board for the fall semester — to be able to continue to offer the opportunities of the club to all WCC students.

"Overall, I am very excited to see what the future holds for the Arts Club," he said. "I think we have an awesome staff right now, and I hope it grows. At first, I was nervous to be president of this club, but now, I feel like I am part of a great team."

The board members encourage all students with an interest in art and culture to join them at a Friday meeting and take part in the club's event trips. Students aren't required to be artists or art majors. All the board asks is that they come interested in expanding themselves culturally.

The club took its first trip of the semester to the Detroit Institute of Arts on March 21. Past trips by the club have included visits to the DIA, the Arab National Museum and the Cincinnati Museum Center. The club has also gone to theater performances such as Shakespeare in the Arb, "The Butler Did It, Again!" by Tim Kelly and "Pamina Devi – A Cambodian Magical Flute," performed by the Khmer Arts Ensemble, among many others.

The Arts Club welcomes all WCC students to check it out at its next meeting, Friday, April 4, at 4 p.m. LA 152.

# MEET **CLUBS**

#### Arts Club

WHEN: First Friday of every month at 4 p.m.

WHERE:

WHO: Open to all interested WCC students MORE INFO: Email sillingworth@wccnet.edu

#### Healthy Lifestyle Club

WHEN: Every Tuesday, 1-2 p.m.

WHERE:

WHO: Open to all interested WCC students

MORE INFO: Email klhart@wccnet.edu

### Healthy Lifestyle Club promotes better living

By MARKO DELIC Voice Correspondent

"Health is wealth," says Kelsey Hart, a Washtenaw Community College marketing student whose interest in healthier lifestyle - including food and alternatives to sweets – prompted her start a club that introduces it all.

Started last October, the HLC has shown that people have a lot of interest in health and support this club, whose membership doubled this semester.

was not something she planned when she began her col-"Me and my friends shared our healthy secrets and

Hart, 21, of Dexter, acknowledged that starting a club

talked about how living can be made healthy," she said. "That's when the idea for the club kicked in." Julia Bell-Streety, 22, a nutrition major from Ann Arbor,

and Diante Harris, 22, also of Ann Arbor and a business major, joined Hart in starting the club. "In the future, I would like to run a business related

to health," Hart said. "This is why I do this. I'm learning a lot as I share." Bell-Streety is a budding expert on the topic, and her

interest brought her to her major. These three young people do not play an authority role, but find themselves comfortable in the role of member-leaders.

"I learn more than I do share," Hart said.

new skills.

With an encouraging and supportive attitude, they welcome everyone and share with whoever is interested. While the club brings its members a lot of new knowledge about health, running it brings a lot of

"I've taught myself responsibility and various other leadership skills," said Hart, who pushes other members not to fear sharing their passion. This, she said, helps her cope with all the stress as well.

"You're in control of your own life" she said. "It is up to people how seriously they think about life. The choices are in humans' hands, whether they're good or bad. And according to the club's unwritten policy, questioning things is essential."



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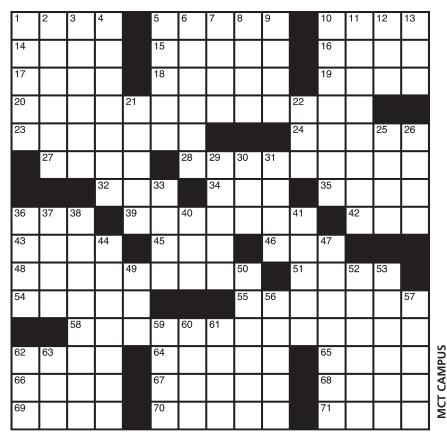






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#### LA TIMES CROSSWORD



#### **SUDOKU**

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#### **ANSWERS**

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### **CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING**

Students and WCC employees: Classified ads in The Voice are free. Local business owners: Looking for help? Post your free help wanted ads in The Voice. Send ads to thewashtenawvoice@gmail.com.

Note: Deadline for the April 7, 2014 issue is Tuesday, April 1, at 5 p.m.

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BARN AND YARD HELP: 10 hours/ week, some flexibility, north side of Ann Arbor. Physical work such as lifting 50-pound bags, mucking, sweeping and shoveling. Prefer experience with horses or farming. Knowledge of plants a plus. \$11/hour. Must have own car. If you need more hours, a neighbor has similar needs. Contact: riverbendfarm@comcast.net.

**SEASONAL PART-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE:** Canton Leisure Services is now hiring for seasonal part-time positions that start in April-June 2014. Positions may include: lifeguards, summer camp counselors and supervisors, therapeutic recreation camp staff, special events coordinators, park laborers, Pheasant Run Golf Course staff, Canton Sports Center staff and more. If you enjoy a fast-paced, exciting work environment, don't miss this opportunity to join a great team this summer! Students, here's your chance to gain valuable work experience in your field of study. Apply today at www.canton-mi.org/humanresources/jobs.asp. For more information, call 734-394-5260

Below is a sample of recent employment want ads which have been posted with WCC Career Services. Students are invited to read these ads and to contact Career Services to find out how to apply for the openings. Career Services is located in ML 104. For more information, phone 734-677-5155, email careers@wccnet.edu, or visit www.wccnet.edu/careerconnection/.

Front desk/receptionist needed for fast-paced chiropractic/massage therapy practice. Great customer service skills a must. Excellent computer skills with speed and accuracy of data entry. Multitasking required with telephone, computer, patient and practitioner contact.

**Assistant Press Operator: Position** is entry-level press assistant, but qualified

candidate will be trained to become a press operator. Lots of room for advancement for the right candidate. While art knowledge is helpful to the position and machine operation, candidates should be hard-working and able to handle a deadline driven production schedule. This is not a design position; you will be making an actual product in a production-based, high-output environment!

Floater Teacher for the infant, toddler or preschool rooms when needed. Also, substitute in classrooms for teachers who are out. Responsible for setting up snacks and lunches, feeding children and cleaning. Applicant must be reliable, dependable, energetic, nurturing and possess a happy go lucky attitude.

Patient Care Coordinator for pediatric dentist office. Duties include greeting patients and their families, answering telephones, scheduling and confirming appointments, responding to clinical inquiries, handle billing inquiries and maintaining an impeccable office presence.

**Internship, local government:** This part-time, paid internship allows students to apply their knowledge and skills to significant problems in the public, private or non-profit sectors and offers an opportunity to develop and enhance skills in areas of professional interest. Work accomplished during this internship is expected to be challenging and of significance and value to the internship organization. Currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students are encouraged to apply for this position. Projects are tailored to the student's specific areas of interest.

Security agent: Entry-level position,

of company assets and people, monitoring of building security systems. Certified Nursing Assistant: Fulland part-time candidates to fill afternoon/

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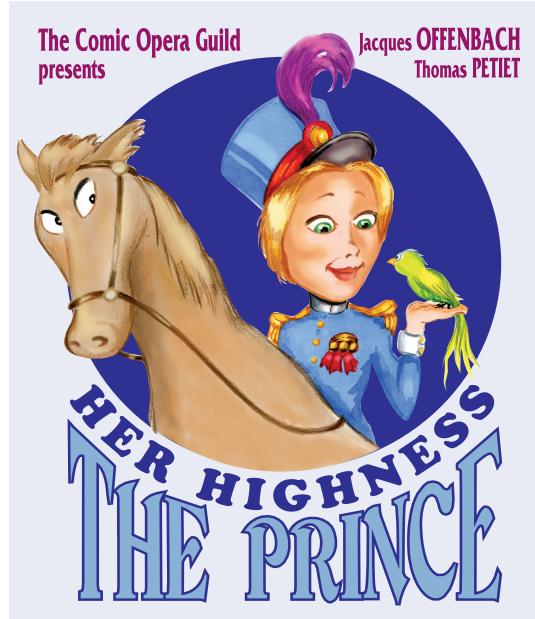
Project Specialist: The ideal candidate must have excellent computer and communication skills, working knowledge of Windows OS and IOS, Android and other Smart Device operating systems. Must also have knowledge of .NET. Must be wellorganized, flexible, have the ability to interact with staff (at all levels) and must be able to operate with a high level of professionalism. Must possess excellent oral and written skills with a talent for training large groups of internal and external clients. Some travel may be required.



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# EQUAL and MARRIED and GAY

March 24, 2014



Elizabeth Patten, 52, holds up the line number she received back in October of last year as she hugs and kisses her soon-to-be wife Jonnie Terry, 50. The couple, who have been together for 28 years, is the first to have a same-sex wedding in Washtenaw County since Michigan's ban on gay marriage was ruled unconstitutional the previous day. "This marriage is an expression of many varieties of love," 6th Circuit Federal Judge Judith Levy, who presided over the ceremony said as she wed the couple. "To marry is a civil right and that's how it should be." KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

# Same-sex couples make history in Ann Arbor

Staff Writer

It's not often that romance trumps

bureaucracy. But it did on Saturday.

As hundreds of couples braved the bitter cold to line up for hours outside of the Washtenaw County Clerk's Office, which opened its doors at 9 a.m. to marry them, Washtenaw County Sheriff's deputies walked up and down the lines, handing out applications and hurrying the ecstatic couples along.

The atmosphere was overwhelmingly positive, without a detractor in sight. Passersby honked and waved, others stopped and dropped off flowers or coffee to show their support.

Some of the couples exchanged wedding vows within minutes after getting their licenses.

"We've been here since 5:30 (a.m.),"

By JON PRICE Alexi Chapin-Smith said. "We're hoping this will be a way for us to get legal recognition of our marriage, in our

> Alexi Chapin-Smith and her wife, Jennifer Chapin-Smith, chose to change their last names before they were legally wed, to signify their commitment to one another. The couple was the first to line up in front of the clerk's office Saturday.

> "But some of the other couples were here as early as yesterday," Alexi Chapin-Smith said. "They cruised by various times in the night, like 2:30 (a.m.), to see if anyone was there."

> The Ann Arbor residents have been together for the past 14 years and asked local-government officials to consider opening the clerk's office

"There was a real scramble to talk to the clerk and ask him to open up today,"

Jennifer Chapin-Smith said, "he was doing whatever it took. The sheriff's department had to get a deputy here, staff had to come in on Saturday and it was not a simple matter."

Amidst the blissful, celebratory atmosphere, some couples were feeling tense, knowing an injunction could be handed down from a high court that might possibly put a stop to the proceedings.

"If it were struck down and the piece of paper wasn't worth anything for a while, eventually it will go to the Supreme Court," Alexi Chapin-Smith said, "hopefully the Supreme Court would recognize the way this is going and that constitutionally it's not right to treat us as second-class citizens."

For the earliest ones in line, that was not the case - and the first staterecognized, same-sex marriage went off without hitch. Jonnie Terry, 50,

and Elizabeth Patten, 52, both of Ann Arbor, were married at about 9:25 a.m.

Washtenaw County's first gay marriage took place in the clerk's office. They were surrounded by friends and strangers, and a hoard of media there to document history.

After the announcement was made, a jarring applause and camera flashes, accompanied by loud cheers, smiles, tears and hugs filled the normally mundane, municipal building with an overwhelming feeling of pride and accomplishment.

"We got here at seven," an emotional Pam Rai said, "We're getting married today!"

Rai, 32, who is a court clerk herself and her partner Pamila Denhan, 31, of Ypsilanti, were excited to be a part of history and feel they should have the same rights as traditional couples are afforded.

"We love each other," Rai said, "like anyone else, like my parents."

Many shared in the joy that Rai and Denhan felt Saturday, even those not directly affected by the ban being struck down.

"My son and his wife refused to get married for years," Soabra Briere, 64, said, "till California legalized gay marriage. It is a strong family value for us."

Briere believes in the social change but also thinks that issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples would have a positive economic impact on the state.

"A lot of people left Michigan," Briere said, "this ends those reasons why people left.

"Marriage should be between two adults, period."

Additional reporting by Managing Editor Natalie Wright

# A history lesson even a 7-year-old can appreciate

Beth Sherman learned about Friday's ruling from her 7-year-old son, Ben, who woke her up after hearing about it on TV.

She asked him if he understood what the news meant

"I was crying, and he came up and hugged me," Sherman said. "And he said, 'It means you and mommy can get married legally in Michigan."

By NATALIE WRIGHT Karen Hawver, 49, have been together was delayed. for more than 20 years and have four children between them, all of whom joined them at the clerk's office on Saturday along with a few friends.

> Sherman's 12-year-old daughter Emma even joined her in a trip to Detroit to sit in on the trial.

"I'm just really, really excited today," Emma said. "It was hard to get up this morning, but it also wasn't hard at all." Sherman and Hawver held firmly their number 33 card that reserved their space from when they lined up

Karen Hawver and Beth Sherman waited with their children: Bradley, 18, Ben, 7, Faith, 15, and Emma, 12, outside of the

Washtenaw County Clerk's Office on Saturday morning. JAMES SAOUD | WASHTENAW VOICE

"My congregation,

the Church of the

Good Shepard, we

supportive of the

LGBTQ community

The Rev. Deborah Dean-Ware, who was at the Washtenaw

County Clerk's Office on Saturday to marry couples who

have been

since 1987."

received their licenses

When a county official began handing out new numbers, the couple rushed to the front of the line to see if their number would be honored, as they were told. They were assured that all numbers would be honored even if there were duplicates.

Among a lot of confusion, the women kept their spirits high. "We just feel like we're excited to be a part of history," Sherman

JAMES SAOUD | WASHTENAW VOICE



"I just can't

believe it's real.

I never thought

it would happen

in my lifetime ...

It's numbing."

-Sandy Stoner, of Ypsilanti, who mar-

ried her partner Ronda Stoner on







When Kevin Sharp, 52, of the

"We are just pleased as can be that Michigan has finally come into the 21st century and is supporting marriage equality," Sharp said. "I'd be out here getting married, but I forgot to

Sharp said he plans to get his birth

# **Bringing the**



BY JAMES SAOUD Staff Writer

Though Saturday morning in Ann Arbor was occupied with a warm and welcoming atmosphere, it was tough to shake off the cold temperature.

People's Food Co-op, showed up to pass out coffee to ecstatic couples, tired reporters and even passersby, everyone sighed with relief and crowded around the cloud of steam.

get my birth certificate."

certificate on Monday and get married as soon as possible.



Erica Goethel sat down in line outside the Washtenaw County Clerk's office to write her marriage vows. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

# **County workers** embrace a sweet surprise

By Natalie Wright

As Erica Goethel sat outside the clerk's office Saturday morning writing her wedding vows, she used her American/gay-pride flag as a wind-breaker.

Goethel, 20, and her longtime partner, Karen Spicer, 27, both Washtenaw County employees, were in line at 6:30 a.m. and waited in line until the doors opened at 9 a.m. And it paid off; they got number 15.

The couple heard the news Friday night via Facebook, they said.

"I was not prepared for it yesterday," Goethel said, explaining that she lost hope when 4:30 p.m. rolled around on Friday, the clerk's office closed and there was no word from the judge.

"I think he did this for a reason," she said, as a truck drove by, honking at the crowd that cheered in response, "so that this scene could happen today."



Goethel and her longtime partner Karen Spicer. JAMES SAOUD | WASHTENAW VOICE

# Finally! 'Love has to win'

Managing Editor if I have to."

When the Rev. Ted van Roekel of Universal Life Church approached the line shortly before the office's doors opened at 9 a.m., he drew a crowd.

"Finally!" he boomed. "(we're) getting people legally, finally married." He brought 180 marriage licenses with him, three for each couple, he said.

and if necessary I'll take them all," he By NATALIE WRIGHT said. "I'll do it right here on the street

> Annette Bowman, a close friend of van Roekel's and a Washtenaw Community College student, went with him. She helped couples commemorate this landmark day by taking their photos and writing down their email addresses with a promise to send the pictures their way.

"I started crying when I was walking up to the crowd," Bowman said. "You know, "They said they're doing 60 licenses, once in a while love has to win."



"The only things we're doing here: **Maintaining** security, making sure nobody gets messed with out here."

Sgt. Kurt Schiappacasse, Washtenaw County Sheriff's deputy, who walked up and down the line outside the clerk's office distributing marriage license applications.



#### **WCC** instructor sheds a tear for civil rights

By Natalie Wright Managing Editor

Claire Sparklin, a Washtenaw Community College communications teacher, stood in the front of the clerk's office Saturday morning holding up a sign that read 'Put a ring on it,' as couples filed past her to marry.

Sparklin, who stood in support of the gay community with her friend Jenn Lowen, was not there to get married, or to join friends who married. She was there to "celebrate with everyone," she

"We just came down to watch civil rights happen," she said. "This is a powerful stand for civil rights, a stand that needed to happen.

 $\hbox{``I think this is no different than when}\\$ t was illegal for interracial couples to marry," she added.

Sparklin said she teared up Friday night when the news broke that the clerk's office would open its doors on Saturday to marry 60 couples.

"I always cry at weddings," she said, 'especially when they make civil rights



Friends shared an emotional embrace while waiting for the Washtenaw County Clerk's Office to open its doors for gay couples to get married. KELLY BRACHA | WASHTENAW VOICE

#### **EDITORIAL**

# Witness to history in the making

The 2004 same-sex marriage ban was ruled unconstitutional by U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman in what was an historic day for Michiganders.

Hundreds of people rushed to courthouses, which opened specially on Saturday across the state, to get marriage licenses. Impromptu ceremonies were being held as Michigan joined the 17 other states that allow same-sex marriages.

Anticipation grew in Ann Arbor as gay and lesbian couples started to queue outside the courthouse at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, motivated by the idea that by Monday, the state attorney general might appeal the decision.

Cars driving past the line honked in a show of support and the crowd cheered in thanks. Supporters, some of whom didn't even know any of the couples showed up with signs and congratulations, bundles of flow- alize their dream. ers that they distributed amongst the crowd and treats like coffee and doughnuts. There were even rumors of someone bringing wedding cake

With not a single dissident in sight, the atmosphere on the street and in the clerk's office was contagiously positive. For young journalists reporting at the scene, it was difficult to remain professional and hold back the tears.

Some couples said that they couldn't actually believe that this was country. happening in their lifetime.

But it is. The first same-sex wedding in Michigan was performed in Ingham County by Clerk Barb Byrum, who kicked off the wave of weddings that si- a part of it. multaneously occurred throughout the state. On Saturday Washtenaw County issued 74 marriage licenses to couples

that gave words of encouragement who couldn't wait a day longer to re-

Since 2012, there has been a change in the landscape in the country, and more and more states have ruled in favor of gay couples. In the summer of 2013, the Defense of Marriage Act was overturned, recognizing same-sex marriages at the

Hoards of photographers and videographers filled the courthouse and the street outside, because this is an historic day for Michigan and for the

And The Voice was there to cover it (just like The New York Times, The Associated Press and many other media outlets), because for us, this is history and it was an honor to be

> When attitudes evolve, policy evolves. The country evolves. The



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