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The Grand Rapids Press

July 17, 2005

Teacher opens private art studio

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP -- Art teacher Regina Johandes has noticed art classes disappearing from public school curricula in West Michigan because of school budget cuts.

To keep art alive for kids, the former Fennville elementary school art teacher has opened what may be the area's first independent art school, Ms. Art's Studio in Holland Township.

"School art programs are being cut every year. As an art teacher, I felt the time was right to give the community an art school for all ages," said Johandes, who recently opened Ms. Art's Studio at 112161 James St.

Area public school officials, however, do not agree with Johandes' assessment of art being minimized in their districts. Holland Public Schools Superintendent Frank Garcia says Holland has maintained elementary art programs at the same level for years.

"The board's priority is to not cut any educational programs but to expand them," Garcia said, noting no educational programs were eliminated despite tight budgets.

West Ottawa School District Assistant Superintendent Richard Zuker said the district has reduced class time for art, music, library and physical fitness by about 45 minutes a month to add Spanish-language classes in the elementary schools.

But, Zuker said, the district is expanding art opportunities at the middle school and two high schools, including advanced-placement art classes in conjunction with Kendall College of Art Design, which is part of Ferris State University, in Grand Rapids, But Johandes said she had the opposite experience while teaching art in Grand Rapids and Fennville

"In Fennville, art teaching has gone from the classroom to art-on-a-cart," said Johandes, explaining art teachers have to take their course and art supplies on carts to different elementary school classrooms

Fennville Schools Superintendent Mark Dobias the district had reassigned the art room for other classes due to last year's addition of all-day, every-day kindergarten classes.

"It's a one-year deal, because when we open the new elementary school next year, we will have a (brand new) art room there," said Dobias. He called the art class change a temporary reassignment of resources.

Ms. Art's Studio is housed in a 2,600-square-foot building Johandes has decorated expansively with hanging sculptures, brightly colored displays and splashes of paint everywhere, including floors, couches and a refrigerator and stove.

"Our motto is 'Where the paint flies and the clay is amazing,' " said Johandes, who has 16 years of experience teaching and a master's degree in education leadership from Grand Valley State University.

Johandes said the new facility is geared toward developing artistic skills in a variety of art mediums from painting and ceramics, to sculpture and mosaics.

"I believe that everyone has an artist within them that needs to be let out to flourish through practice encouragement and positive feedback," she said.

Johandes also earned undergraduate degrees in science education, advertising and public relations. She hopes to have her facility approved by the state as an academy of the arts later this year.

Ms. Art's Studio has more than 500 projects budding artists can try.

"We do both private and group lessons for young kids at 2 on up to the young at heart at 82," Johandes said. She has 10 part-time staff members.

The studio is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

The studio charges \$10 an hour for instruction and will offer "get acquainted" discounts during the summer.

Pioneer

August 11, 2005

John H. Landis named Clinical of the Year Laboratory Scientist

CANADIAN LAKES - The highest honor given by the Michigan Society for Clinical Laboratory Science is the Clinical Laboratory Scientist of the Year award. This award is given to the individual who best exemplifies the clinical laboratory profession by active service to the profession, the professional organizations, and the community.

The outgoing MSCLS President, John H. Landis of Canadian Lakes has been selected as the 2005 honoree. Landis has been very active in MSCLS and the clinical laboratory science profession for his entire career. He earned his Bachelors degree in medical technology and biology from Albion College and a Master of Science in pathology from Michigan State University. In 2002 he retired as Professor and Program Director of the clinical laboratory science programs at Ferris State University after 29 years of service. In 1992 Landis was named a Distinguished Teacher at FSU. He continues to teach part time on-line for Ferris State University and the University of Cincinnati and is a consultant for Bayer Diagnostics Hematology division and for the American Proficiency Institute of Traverse City.

His MSCLS activities include president elect, president, past president, secretary, district representative, nomination committee chair and hematology scientific assembly chair, as well as being a regular speaker at MSCLS annual meetings. His dedication to CLS education was recognized with the Donna Duberg Mentorship award in 2002. He has recruited many students to the profession and into MSCLS.

Nationally, he serves as chair of the 18 member CLS Program Review Committee of the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences. NAACLS accredits over 500 clinical laboratory science educational programs in the U.S. in medical technology, medical laboratory technician, histotechnologist, cytogenetics technologist and diagnostic molecular scientist. Landis was elected to a second four-year term on the CLSPRC in 2003.

The Grand Rapids Press

August 13, 2005

Packed campuses predicted

WEST MICHIGAN -- It's too soon to tell how many freshmen will show up on college campuses this fall, but early counts indicate it is shaping up to be a solid year for local schools.

Administrators at Ferris State University's Kendall College of Art and Design are projecting a 50 percent jump in freshman enrollment on the Grand Rapids campus, where the incoming class is expected to swell to 184 students compared to last year's class of 123.

Sandra Davison-Wilson, Kendall's vice chancellor for administration and finance, attributed the increase to beefed-up recruiting efforts.

"We are in a growth mode," she said, adding, "We're still able to handle this capacity with the facilities that we have."

Meanwhile, Cornerstone University administrators are thrilled about an anticipated 25 percent enrollment increase. They watched freshman enrollment dip by 50 students to 278 in fall 2004, but expect to make gains this fall and welcome at least 348 freshmen to campus.

"Everyone around here is doing back flips and cartwheels," said Brent Rudin, Cornerstone's associate dean of admissions and marketing. "It's still a strong year for us.

It's recovery plus some."

The school set an enrollment record in the fall of 2000 with 359 freshmen, and administrators hope to break that by the time school starts this fall.

Peek in the admissions office window at Aquinas College, and you might catch Paula Meehan doing a few cartwheels, too. She is projecting an 18 percent boost for the upcoming freshman class, which totaled 405 as of this week.

The college recently increased its marketing efforts and saw a 27 percent hike in the number of freshman applications it received this year compared to last.

Al Wetherell, Davenport University's executive vice president for operations, attributes the expected 16 percent freshman enrollment increase at his school to the added visibility of the new Caledonia campus. Of the 620 students enrolled for classes at Davenport this fall, 170 are from the Grand Rapids area. Last year, 114 area students enrolled.

At Grand Valley State University and Hope College, administrators have spent the summer working to manage freshman enrollment. Both schools reported increases in applications and used waiting lists to handle the overflow.

Hope is expecting a freshman class of 780 students. About 330 students were put on a waiting list due to space constraints.

Grand Valley administrators received a record 13,262 applications for roughly 3,400 spots in this fall's freshman class. About 400 students spent the summer on a waiting list, with only 42 of those getting last-minute invitations to enroll earlier this month.

At Calvin College, Tom McWhertor, vice president of enrollment, is relieved this fall's freshman enrollment is back on target after last fall's unexplained dip that resulted in about a \$1 million budget shortfall. Last fall, 902 freshmen enrolled at Calvin, compared to the 1,016 expected this fall. The college has room for about 1,040 freshmen.

McWhertor characterized this year's enrollment projection as "pretty good" but "not quite what we were hoping."

Calvin administrators wanted more freshmen to help make up for last year's shortfall.

Administrators boosted marketing efforts, which resulted in 24 percent more applicants.

However, that was lower than in previous years.

Administrators at Grand Rapids Community College are reporting strong enrollment numbers, too. Last fall, GRCC welcomed 4,162 freshmen. So far, 3,936 have enrolled for classes this fall. Administrators say they will continue to enroll students through the next few weeks, but report that seats are limited in freshman art, math, English and science courses.

Pioneer

August 17, 2005

Clinical lab receives donation

Generous donation: The Ferris State University Clinical Laboratory Science Program recently received several donated pieces of equipment from Mecosta County Medical Center, including BacTAlert, and phlebotomy chairs and tables. Accepting the BacTAlert are Ellen Haneline, Clinical Laboratory, Respiratory and Health Administration Programs department head; Jacqueline Hooper, College of Health Sciences dean; Daniel deRegnier, Clinical Laboratory Science programs associate professor; and John Kuehn, Mecosta County Medical Center Laboratory manager. The highly-technical BacTAlert is used in clinical laboratories to detect the presence of bacteria in a patient's blood. The medical center's donation enables Ferris students in the Medical Laboratory Technology and Medical Technology programs to gain valuable experience using state-of-the-art equipment. "Mecosta County Medical Center is and continues to be a strong supporter of the Clinical Laboratory programs at Ferris," program coordinator Barbara Ross, said.

Grand Rapids Business Journal

August 22, 2005

FSU and MCC also get grants

Ferris State University and Muskegon Community College also received grants from the state to help diminish the shortage of health-care workers.

Julie Coon, director of the school of nursing at Ferris State University, said the school received two grants for a total of \$596,097 to help fund two programs. The grants will be used for an accelerated associate's degree program in respiratory care at its Grand Rapids campus and to establish an institute for clinical instruction in nursing, similar to the grant Grand Valley State University received.

"That's a huge problem that we have in nursing education," Coon said. "We don't have enough faculty to provide quality clinical education."

Ferris is partnering with Saint Mary's Health Care for both grants.

Muskegon Community College Nursing Director Pamela Brown said the approximately \$1.6 million in grants MCC received will be used three ways. The school has increased the capacity for the licensed practical nurse (LPN) to registered nurse (RN) program, is planning to start an accelerated program for LPN's who are looking to return to school to become RNs. and is planning to increase the number of adjunct faculty available by sending nurses to participate in the GVSU or Ferris clinical instructor training.

The college is partnering with Mercy General Health Partners and Hackley Hospital for the grants.

Ferris State University plans to train at least 12 clinical instructors and 48 allied health professionals, while Muskegon Community College plans to add 50 nurses to the work force and the equivalent of two full-time clinical instructor positions.

Pioneer

August 23, 2005

Ferris State welcomes back faculty, staff

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University kicked off a week-long schedule of activities on Monday to welcome faculty and staff back on campus, beginning with Convocation Day in G. Mennen Williams Auditorium.

Convocation Day events included a welcome address, where new faculty and staff were announced, and was followed by a Ferris Faculty Association luncheon, Clerical Technical Association luncheon, college and department meetings and a new faculty reception, hosted by President David L. and Patsy Eisler.

Echoing the sentiments of Academic Senate President Adnan Dakkuri and President Eisler, Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Harris thanked Ferris' faculty and staff, saying, "Faculty and staff at Ferris care ... they are people who work hard and who are dedicated to the university."

Added Eisler, it is the hard work and dedication of Ferris' faculty and staff which make Ferris a learning university where people work together to create an engaged campus.

Some university-wide initiatives currently under way at Ferris are classroom updates; technology upgrades, including becoming a wireless campus; refurbishment of the Instructional Resource Center; and higher education partnerships with community colleges to launch new programs across the state.

"The faculty and staff are the people who make all of this possible," he said. "You make a difference for our university and we appreciate your efforts."

Eisler also expressed his gratitude during the CTA luncheon, held in the Centennial Dining Room, where administrators and the bargaining unit gathered to sign the CTA bargaining agreement that was approved during the Ferris Board of Trustees' July meeting.

"I'm very grateful for the leadership of the team members involved in the negotiation process," Eisler said. "This is a wonderful example of hard work and cooperation."

Pioneer

August 24, 2005

Bulldog Bonanza to be held Sept. 14

BIG RAPIDS - The 15th annual Bulldog Bonanza will be held from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 14 at the Ferris State University Wink Arena.

The Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce, Ferris State University, and the Downtown Business Association of Big Rapids have teamed up with sponsors South Big Rapids Business Association (Sears, Mad Dogs Deli, Save A Lot, etc.) and Alltel on State Street, to sponsor this year's event.

A few spaces still are available, so if your business wants in on the action, call the chamber to register!

The sponsors note that the Bulldog Bonanza provides an opportunity to showcase products or merchandise to 2,500 plus potential customers - new and returning FSU students who bring their spending dollars to the community.

It's like having 2,500 customers at your business at one time, according to a chamber press release. Bulldog Bonanza is a great marketing tool, so bring your goodies, your freebies, your promotional items, and the students will be boppin' back to your store for more, the release continues.

Sponsors also suggest that since the love of music is something everyone can relate to, that this year's theme of "Tune In" to the Community is perfect for the event.

"So dig out your old Jimi Hendrix costume or your Dolly Pardon wig, paste on some side burns, bring in your strobe lights and foggers, and let's show the Ferris students that they have landed in Funky Town," the release concludes. "There is a prize for the best decorated booth, so let your big hair down and your imagination run wild."

For more information or to register your business for Bulldog Bonanza, contact the chamber, (231) 796-7649 or events@mecostacounty.com.

Pioneer

August 25, 2005

Running with the big dogs

The big day was finally here. It was not another typical day. This was the day I was going to transform myself back into a college football player- or so I thought.

I was going to go out there and show the current Ferris State football team what made us champions back in 1099. It was also going to be my first step toward preparing myself for the upcoming alumni flag football game against Ferris archrival Grand Valley State University on Saturday.

As the work day ended, I left my office at Ferris State. Ah yes, it was time to take off the shirt and tie, and put back on the old, smelly cleats and long T-shirt. In approximately two hours, I would return to the Ferris practice field as a player for the first time in more than five years.

I had often dreamed of this moment.

After two hours of anticipation, I began driving toward the field. As I pulled in, I could hear the loud noises of players calling out plays and motivating chants. I thought to myself, I'm finally home.

I know this was just a voluntary preseason practice amongst players, but to me it seemed like so much more than that - this was my former sanctuary. Soon after I walked on the field, Ferris State All-American wide receiver, Carlton Brewster, yelled out, "Hey old-timer, you're late. Where you been? We've been waiting on you."

I had been telling (Brewster) all summer I was coming to work out, and this was his way of welcoming back the old guy.

The receivers were lined up, doing one-on-one passing drills, so as a former receiver, it seemed only fitting for me to hop in line and take a shot.

It's my turn up.

The quarterback calls the play. I'm supposed to go down and out. Here it goes.

While looking back for the ball, I hear something going by my ear that sounds like a bullet. As I reach my hands in the air, it is already too late. The ball lands on the ground 10 feet beyond me, the line of receivers behind me scream, "Get your head around faster."

I begin to jog back, thinking to myself, wow, what a difference five years make. But I wasn't going to give up that easily. I had to show these young whippersnappers what I was made of.

But, honestly, as time went on, I was the guy in the back of the line, with his hands on his knees, telling the next guy to go ahead of him - and they did, over and over again.

I did manage to catch a few passes and run a few good routes, but as the session came to a close, it was painfully obvious that the lesson I had come to teach was now beyond my physical capabilities.

During the last two years as an administrator, I have gained a false sense of youthfulness. In most instances, I have been the youngest guy around, working with people a couple of decades older than me.

And, hey, I'm the fastest guy in my men's softball league.

But that evening I came back, I realized that there's a big difference going from being an administrator back to being a student-athlete.

Don't get me wrong, it was great fun.

I felt like I went home again. The streets were the same, but the guys on them were a whole lot tougher than I remembered.

The Grand Rapids Press

August 27, 2005

Gaza evacuation gives hope for peace amid fears

As a young Israeli soldier, Michael Harris worked at checkpoints in the Gaza Strip, from which more than 8,000 Israeli settlers have been evacuated.

Nothing would make him happier than if the withdrawal eventually enabled his three sons to visit an Israel at peace, says Harris, now a Ferris State University administrator.

"Even though I've been a warrior, I'm certainly a person who believes in peace and humankind," said Harris, 49, Ferris' vice president for academic affairs and a political scientist.

One of his sons agrees the evacuation was necessary. But he fears it won't stop Palestinian militant's intent on Israel's destruction.

"I'm in support of them having a state, but I don't think it will bring peace because the terrorists won't stop until they have everything," said Amit Harris, 16, a junior at Rockford High School.

The removal of settlers from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements over the past two weeks riveted world attention on scenes of weeping settlers being torn from their homes and synagogues.

In West Michigan, the scenes were wrenching for native Israelis and hopeful for Palestinians. While people from both groups shared hope for peace, they also shared skepticism the withdrawal will bring it soon.

"I am not optimistic at all for a peace, a justified, permanent peace," said Khalil Shatara, 83. "It will end up in a war again unless America uses all its power to influence both parties."

Born in the West Bank, the Palestinian Catholic lived briefly in Gaza City during the war following Israeli statehood in 1948.

Shatara, a Kentwood resident, calls the evacuation "a good step forward" but says peace won't take hold unless Israel relinquishes the entire West Bank and Palestinians have their own state.

"From what I can see, only Jesus can solve that question," said Shatara, a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church.

"I've been hearing about the coming of Jesus since I was 6 years old. I think it will stay a problem until then."

Fayruz Kamal, a Palestinian Muslim from Jerusalem, was "very happy" with the withdrawal but agrees Israel needs to pull out of the West Bank completely. Jerusalem

should be an international city where Jews, Muslims and Christians can live peaceably, she says.

"The fanatics from both sides are making it hard," said Kamal, an Arabic teacher translator from Wyoming. "It has to be a state called Palestine next to a state called Israel. They should live and let live, live in peace."

Up to Palestinians now

Rabbi Michael Schadick supports Palestinian statehood, but says it's now up to Mahmoud Abbas and other Palestinian leaders to rein in violence.

"This shows the lengths Israelis will go to try to bring about peace," said Schadick, rabbi of Temple Emanuel. "I believe it's time now for the Palestinian side to return the favor and begin to make some efforts to pursue peace."

But at Chabad House of Western Michigan, Orthodox Rabbi Yosef Weingarten watched in horror as the last settlers were removed from a West Bank synagogue.

"This is a disgrace, taking people from the holiest places of the country and forcing them out," Weingarten lamented. "It's the most tragic event in modern Jewish history."

Calling the withdrawal "an award to terrorism," Weingarten said it won't satisfy militants who want all of Israel and will use Gaza as an international terrorist haven. He disputes Palestinians' claim to Gaza or the West Bank.

"This is the land of Israel God gave us to inhabit. There's plenty of land all over" the Mid-east for Palestinians to live, he insisted.

Having recently returned from the Gaza Strip, the Rev. Lou Anderson says the situation is more complex than most Americans realize.

Skeptical about Sharon

The retired West Michigan Catholic priest spent July with a Michigan Peace Team of priests and nuns, trying to bring non-violent Christian witness to the area.

He saw Palestinians waiting for two days to get through an Israeli checkpoint, and heard the "polite rage" of Palestinian college students over U.S. support of Israel.

The vast majority of Palestinians do not support terrorism and many Israelis are pushing for peace, Anderson said. He is skeptical of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's motives.

"I think what he's doing is a political movement to say, 'Look at the initiatives we took in Gaza, but we're going to keep the West Bank settlements,'" Anderson said.

Michael Harris welcomes the withdrawal as a pragmatic step toward peace. But he says Palestinian authorities must reciprocate by governing effectively and ensuring militants don't use Gaza as an attack base.

"I can only hope the voice of the moderates prevails among the Palestinians as it did among the Israelis," said Harris, a member of Temple Emanuel.

Like him, his wife, Tali, served in the Israeli Army. Both thought it was wrong when Israel started encouraging Jews to settle in Gaza.

Still, it was painful for them to watch settlers being dragged from their homes and defiant protesters pelting Israeli soldiers with food and acid from rooftops.

"When you see scenes like that, all the emotions and memories and stories from Jewish history come up," said Tali Harris, 47, a registered nurse.

"They were chased from every single country in the entire world, and here we're doing it to our own brothers. It's just unbelievable."

Given that history, it is hard for her to be optimistic about peace. But she has faith in Israel.

"They did not raise us to fight and kill and terrorize the world," she said. "They raised us hoping for peace all our life, and we still hope."

The Grand Rapids Press

August 28, 2005

Heavy drinkers don't fit in, anti-alcohol campaigns contend

As some 400,000 young adults pack up their stuff and head to Michigan's four-year college campuses, some of the worst advice about alcohol comes from their parents, a researcher at Michigan State University contends.

"I don't want you drinking like everyone else," is the wrong finger-wagging advice to give, according to Dennis Martell, MSU's health education coordinator.

That's because surveys show when it comes to alcohol, students think everyone else is drinking more of it than, they really are, Martell said.

Once they have a grasp on the true average behavior, through a "social norm" campaign, they will engage in less-risky behavior, according to the theory.

After a three-year study of its marketing campaign aimed at giving students an accurate picture of their peers' drinking habits, MSU says overall drinking is down, and high-risk drinking is down dramatically.

A national study in 2000 found most students overestimated the number of drinks per week their peers consumed, pegging it at nine when it actually was less than five.

Although some researchers, notably at Harvard University, dispute the effectiveness of the social norm campaigns, Grand Valley State University also reports the strategy helped drop the rate of binge drinking on its Allendale campus.

The MSU campaign uses posters, student resident hall advisers and ads in the campus newspaper to let students know if they don't drink, or don't drink excessively, they're not out of step with their peers.

"What you perceive is what is going to dictate what you do, especially if you're a freshman trying to fit in," Martell said.

Eventually, the theory goes, heavy drinkers will be viewed as those who don't fit in.

'Once a week or less'

MSU has used a social norm campaign since 2000, after an MSU student died of alcohol poisoning on his 21st birthday in 1998 and the university suffered a tarnished reputation when a post-basketball tournament riot broke out in 1999.

Recent ads at MSU show young people shooting pool, attending a football game or playing basketball with such messages as "Most MSU students report drinking once a week or less."

In a survey of 1,073 MSU students in April, a majority of students . reported they drank moderately, zero to four drinks, the last time they went to a party. That means 57 percent were considered moderate drinkers or abstainers compared with 48 percent in 2002.

When it comes to extreme drinking, the rate dropped to 19 percent of students this year, down from 28 percent in 2002. Extreme drinking was defined as eight or more drinks. The average consumption was 3.4 drinks per sitting, down from 4.2 drinks in 2002.

MSU's campaign also gives students information on protective behavior, such as alternating alcoholic drinks with nonalcoholic beverages and avoiding drinking games, which Martell says are dangerous because they deliver a large amount of alcohol fast to inexperienced drinkers.

Industry-funded research

The social norm theory emphasizes the moderate drinkers and abstainers. In contrast, large-scale surveys by Harvard University between 1993 and 2001 drew widespread attention to heavy drinkers.

The Harvard studies reported that 44 percent of students binge drink, defined as five drinks for males and four drinks for females.

But the surveys also found there's a growing polarization of students, with one-fourth bingeing frequently - three or more times within two weeks - and one-fifth abstaining.

MSU has received \$200,000 in U.S. Department of Education grants to study celebratory drinking and \$300,000 in grants from the National Social Norms Resource Center at Northern Illinois University, which helped pioneer the theory. The social norm grant to MSU is funded by the philanthropic arm of Anheuser Busch, the world's largest brewery.

Henry Wechsler, director of Harvard's college alcohol studies program, is a critic of industry-funded research.

"The philosophy of social norms is appealing to the industry because it says things aren't as bad as you think," he said. He also said social norms haven't been isolated as the reason drinking has dropped at some universities.

But Michael Haines, director of the National Social Norms Resource Center, in DeKalb, Ill., said social norms are effective because they appeal to what's right with students.

Haines also defends the use of money from Anheuser Busch Foundation.

"That's a silly argument. If you were trying to prohibit car fatalities and you took money from GM would that taint you?" he said.

Nancy Harper, director of GVSU's alcohol education, research and training laboratories, said her university shuns alcohol-industry funds.

"We've never used any funding from the alcohol industry, and we don't believe it's appropriate to do so. Their goals are definitely at odds with our goals," she said.

GVSU is a model

As students head to the Grand Valley campus, they will see posters in dorms and classroom buildings promoting the campus as a place to study.

The social norm message is that "75 percent of Grand Valley students drink moderately or not at all," Harper said. The university also offers alcohol-free housing and alcohol-free social activities.

Harper said the rate of frequent binge drinkers dropped from 9 percent of students to less than 4.5 percent in the past five years.

Grand Valley was declared a national model for alcohol and drug abuse prevention by the U.S. Department of Education last year. It received more than \$400,000 in federal grants since 2001.

Although Harper agrees with Harvard's Wechsler's view on alcohol industry funding, Harper is convinced social norm campaigns work.

"To say social norms doesn't work is like saying hammers don't work well," she said.

"Certain hammers don't work well in the hands of people who don't know how to use hammers."

Ferris State and Western Michigan universities also have social norm campaigns. The University of Michigan is beginning to implement a campaign.

In 2003, U-M's binge rate was 52 percent, compared with the national rate of 44 percent, based on five drinks for men and four drinks for women at least once in the previous two weeks, said Patrice Flax, coordinator of U-M alcohol prevention program.

Frequent binge drinking - bingeing three or more times within two weeks - was 25 percent in 2003, compared with national rates of 23 percent in 2001.

"Those are the students I'm concerned about," Flax said. Mark Minelli, a Central Michigan University health science professor, said social norms were a prevailing theory in the 1990s, but research hasn't shown them effective as a sole strategy. He said

strong law enforcement and policies, such as banning open containers in a city, also are needed.

"I don't think you should put all your eggs in any one basket," he said.

The Grand Rapids Press

August 28, 2005

Teachers, reformers differ on 'qualified'

WASHINGTON - By the end of the school year, every teacher of every major subject in every school will be highly qualified.

That's the government's promise, anyway.

The reality will be far less rosy, say experts who have analyzed how states are responding to President Bush's education law and its unprecedented review of teacher quality.

As the centerpiece of his domestic agenda, the No Child Left Behind Act aims to dramatically improve learning by ensuring all students have highly qualified teachers.

Yet, in a nation of 3 million teachers, the definition of highly qualified varies widely and may not ensure quality at all - not what Bush and Congress intended.

Given considerable leeway, many states are declaring their teachers to be highly qualified without making sure those teachers know their subjects, independent reviews show.

The law also lacks specific penalties for states that fail to get all their teachers qualified, which could hamper enforcement by the Education Department.

Already, most states say more than 90 percent of their teachers are highly qualified. But the notion that top teachers fill most classrooms is greeted skeptically because of questions over how the states define quality and how they collect their data.

"It's an un-kept promise," said Chester Finn Jr., a former assistant education secretary who runs the Fordham Foundation think tank in Washington. "Worse yet, it's the illusion of a kept promise."

Under the law, states have until the end of the 2005-OG school year to make sure teachers in every core class, from math and science to arts and languages, have a bachelor's degree, a state license or certificate, and are competent in every subject they teach. Teachers in isolated, rural areas have an extra year to qualify.

State standards

The requirement that teachers are competent in their subjects is the driving force, as the government tries for the first time to ensure teachers know their subjects.

Teachers can prove they know their content by passing a test or having a major in each subject they handle. But many teachers find those options unrealistic or demeaning.

So veteran teachers often qualify under a third option not available to new teachers - meeting a state standard of quality.

Many states use point systems to grade whether teachers are experts, giving credit for conferences attended or committees served on. Other factors include years in the classroom, teaching awards and job evaluations. Some states use gains in test scores by a teacher's students; others say having a state license is simply good enough.

To teachers, the process often is confusing, burdensome and ill-focused. The law aims to make sure a math teacher knows math. But it does not measure a teacher's devotion or ability to connect with students.

"It has nothing to do with me as a teacher," said Terrie Tudor, a drama teacher from Wheaton, Ill. "It's a legal definition and a document. That's what we're trying to reach."

Norma De La Rosa, a reading teacher in El Paso, Texas, said it is fine to hold teachers accountable, but the judging often is unfair and subjective. Teachers' unions and state leaders say they believe states have tried to strike a balance, following the law while being fair to veteran instructors.

It is fair for states to use several ways to evaluate longtime teachers rather than force them to go back to school or pass an exam, said Tom Blanford, a teacher quality leader at the National Education Association.

A genuine measure?

Jean Miller, who oversees teacher quality for the Council of Chief State School officers, said crediting teachers for working on a curriculum committee, for example, makes sense. It shows they know fine details of the content they teach, she said.

Asked if most states are genuinely measuring subject knowledge, she said: "I really do have confidence in that."

Others, resoundingly, do not.

Among them are the Education Trust, which advocates for poor and minority children; the nonpartisan Education Commission of the States; the independent Center on Education Policy, citing lenient standards; and the National Center on Teacher Quality.

Teachers take offense at such criticisms.

Laverne Moore a 36-year teacher in Honolulu, helped design her state's standard. Teachers must get 100 points to qualify and can earn credit by taking college courses.

Pioneer

August 30, 2005

Ferris Founders' Day Thursday

BIG RAPIDS - This year's Founders' Day, hosted by Ferris State University, celebrates Woodbridge and Helen Ferris.

Founders' Day, held on Thursday, will begin with a coffee hour sponsored by the History Commemoration Task Force from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Rankin Center Founders' Room. An address by President David Eisler called "Ferris and its Future" will be immediately following in the Rankin Center Dome Room.

A Ferris faculty and staff picnic luncheon will take place on the Campus Quad from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Eisler will hold a question and answer session at 2 p.m. in the Founders' Room.

Ferris State, formerly Big Rapids Industrial School, held its first classes on Sept. 1, 1884, in two rented rooms in downtown Big Rapids.

"What better time to celebrate Ferris' beginnings than on this date when the first class was held," Eisler said.

"It seems like an appropriate time to reconnect with the past and celebrate our heritage, as well as look to the future and where the university is headed."

Activities on the FSU Campus Quad will continue from 4 to 7 p.m. with a picnic, Jeff Gordon NASCAR racing simulator, moonwalk and cow-milking contests.

Dinner will be served from 4 to 6:30 p.m. and the cost is \$5. At 5:30 p.m. the university's Homecoming 2005 logo and theme will be unveiled.

"Ferris is part of the Big Rapids community, so tying Founders' Day celebrations into the city's Riverdays and Sesquicentennial celebrations is a wonderful way to honor our history and kick off a weekend full of activities," Eisler said.

The public is invited to participate in a scavenger hunt on Aug. 30. The student hunt begins at 4:30 p.m. and the community hunt begins at 5 p.m. at the FSU Campus Quad.

Two-person teams will compete for iPod Shuffles for the student winners and \$25 Meijer gift certificates for the community winners.