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Macomb Township Voice

June 7, 2006

SC4 creates maritime academy partnership

St. Clair County Community College in Port Huron and the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in Traverse City are signing an articulation agreement that gives local students a chance to work aboard the giant freighters that pass by the Blue Water Area.

The agreement was unveiled Tuesday, May 23, aboard the academy's 225-foot Training Ship State of Michigan, a floating classroom and laboratory, which was docked at the Acheson Ventures Seaway Terminal in Port Huron.

The academy is a division of Northwestern Michigan College and is the nation's only freshwater academy. Students beginning this fall can take one year of core classes at SC4; those classes would transfer to the academy.

"This region is steeped in maritime history. Shipbuilding was a booming business in Marine City in the 1800s. Giant ships frequently stopped and continue to dock along the St. Clair River, serving a vital component in the economic cycle of the Great Lakes," said SC4 President Rose Bellanca.

"Ship watching already is a popular pastime in Port Huron, attracting thousands of people each year to the banks of the St. Clair River. The agreement between SC4 and the Great Lakes Maritime Academy will give people a chance to go beyond just watching the giant ships. It will give them an opportunity to become an active part of the thriving maritime community."

At the academy in Traverse City, students can choose from either a deck officer program or engineering officer program.

The programs take on average at least two years to complete.

A deck officer is responsible for the navigation of the ship and the loading and unloading of cargo. Deck officers are prepared to become pilots and mates. Engineering officers are responsible for the efficient operation and maintenance of engines and support machinery on board. The average age for a merchant marine officer is 50, and as a result the industry is beginning to experience a generational changeover with a constant demand for new employees. More than 40 new officers will be needed each year to fill jobs aboard industry vessels.

The Great Lakes Maritime Academy uses the 225-foot former U.S. Navy submarine surveillance ship State of Michigan as its training ship for all academy students. The vessel was built in 1986 and used by the Navy for tracking Soviet submarines. As the Soviet threat diminished in the 1990s, the Navy decided to decommission the ship.

In 1998, the ship was transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard for primary use in drug enforcement. The \$26 million ship then was turned over to the academy in 2002 and supplements the academy's existing training ship, the 55-foot Northwestern.

Northwestern Michigan College recently completed a \$34.7 million project to build new facilities for the Great Lakes Maritime Academy on the Traverse City waterfront.

Upon graduation from the academy, students are qualified to sail the Great Lakes or oceans and are granted both an associate degree in maritime technology from Northwestern Michigan College and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Ferris State University.

Detroit Legal News

June 12, 2006

Online game teaches judicial branch basics

Wielding a gavel, Kid Justice combats robot spiders and battles Lady Anarchy and her minions, evildoers who have made trouble in the Hall of Justice Learning Center.

If that sounds like a video game - it is. "Kid Justice Conquers Chaos," a new online game, has been added to the educational resources on the Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center's Web site.

"Although the game can be used on its own, we encourage teachers to pair the game and lesson plans with a tour of the Learning Center at the Hall of Justice," said Rachael L. Drenovsky, Learning Center coordinator.

The game is aligned with the Michigan Curriculum Framework's social standards for later elementary and is appropriate for classroom or home use. A companion teachers' guide with lesson plans is available through the Web site.

As the game unfolds, Kid Justice, the daughter of Lady Justice, learns that someone is trying to create mischief at the Learning Center. In her search for the culprits, she encounters characters who offer pieces of evidence to solve the mystery. But first, she must answer important questions about the court system. Information is all around her, but she must find where it is hidden.

The game was completed as part of a joint project with Ferris State University's Digital Animation and Design Program. Developed with input from educators and legal experts, the project was funded by a grant from the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

"Kid Justice Conquers Chaos" is at
<http://www.courts.michigan.gov/plc/KidJustice/index.htm>.

For information about tours, call (517) 373-7444 or visit **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Muskegon Chronicle

June 20, 2006

While you're sleeping

Nighttime contact lenses may improve your vision

Not keen on the prospect of corrective surgery, Mary Carlson really made up her mind based on her allergies and her love of water sports.

"I have a terrible time with allergies," says the 49-year-old nurse at Mercy General Health Partners, "and contacts really bothered me during the day."

So 1 1/2 years ago, Carlson opted to try orthokeratology. Specifically, she tried the treatment called Corneal Refractive Therapy, or CRT.

An alternative to glasses, contact lenses and surgery, with orthokeratology an eye patient wears an oxygen permeable therapeutic contact lenses, while asleep. The lenses reshape the corneas. Wearers remove the lenses when they awake for the day.

For Mary Carlson, CRT almost immediately began to do its thing. Her resulting vision is "20-20," says the Muskegon resident, "and I can even stop wearing them for a day. And by evening, I don't even need reading glasses."

An added plus: "I can do swimming or tubing or anything in the water without having to worry about contacts falling out."

Orthokeratology has been around for decades, originating in the 1940s. The first effective, dependable technologies appeared in the 1960s, albeit with inconsistent results.

In June 2002, the Federal Drug Administration approved CRT. In 2004 and 2005, the FDA approved some other designs of the technology, such as Contex, DreamLens, Emerald, and a Bausch & Lomb technique called Vision Shaping Treatment.

In the past few years, there have been enough advances to encourage more people with nearsightedness to consider orthokeratology instead of Lasik eye surgery. U.S. doctors began offering Lasik in the mid-1990s.

"It's really come a long way," says -Korrine Swain, a Muskegon optometrist who first encountered the treatment as a student at the Ferris State University College of Optometry.

Take it from her son. Noah Swain, 16 and a forward on the Reeths-Puffer High School soccer team, had become "a little self-conscious" about wearing glasses. He also worried about contacts getting jarred loose, either during matches or when he was boating.

After several years of continuing CRT, "They really have made a huge difference in my life," Noah says. "... The more I use them, the more I grow to appreciate them."

The only downside; as Noah figures it is when he forgets to put the lenses in at night.

" ... The next morning I realize I can't see as well," he says. "That makes me really appreciate what the contacts are doing for me."

Eye-care professionals offer caveats about orthokeratology. Not everyone is a candidate. The technology best serves those who have low to moderate nearsightedness.

Also, the treatment is temporary, and therefore a permanent thing. If someone quits wearing the lenses, their eyesight will soon return to its original state.

One reason some of Korrine Swain's patients opt for orthokeratology, she says, is because they're apprehensive about undergoing refractive surgery. "Some people are leery of it," she says. "They have a phobia about it."

Treatment costs about one-third to one-fifth the cost of eye surgery: around \$1,000 for the initial eye examination and fitting. Lasik surgery can run \$3,000 to \$5,000.

The lenses are subject to the same wear and tear as any contact lens. Therefore they may have to be replaced every few years. Replacements lenses run about \$150. Patients should check with their insurance carriers to determine whether orthokeratology is covered.

That fact that Laurie Fisher's insurance did not cover the treatment did not deter the substitute teacher from trying it.

Fisher first underwent treatment during the second week in April. Today her vision is 20-15, "which is better than I ever had with glasses or contact senses."

The cost, says Fisher, was worth it.

"I would have had to put that kind of money out for prescription glasses and prescription sunglasses anyway," she says. "The big thing for me is the freedom. We do a lot of things on the water, in boats, and it's nice to not have to worry about losing prescription glasses overboard. For anybody involved in any type of sport, this is great."

Detroit Free Press
(Blog by Detroit Free Press columnist Susan Ager)
July 13, 2006

Seeking Stimulation on US 31

Next Tuesday I'm leaving Traverse City for Ludington, where I'm due at 3 p.m. Any suggestions where I should stop along the way, for a view, a snack or a surprise? (And did you know US 31 runs from near Mackinaw City all the way to Spanish Fort, Ala.? Alas, I will only be on it for 62 miles.)

Susan,

Just came from a drive down US 31 this week in order to visit the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia housed at Ferris State University and a meeting with Dr. David Pilgrim, the museum's founder. I've rarely met an individual as passionate about his work. David has been collecting racist memorabilia for over 30 years, when he bought a mammy salt shaker from an antiques dealer as a young boy and promptly smashed it to bits before the dealer's eyes. He has since built an amazing collection--the only public collection of its type in the country--and uses it to teach tolerance to students, who come from miles to visit. It shouldn't take you more than an hour. Mammies, pickaninnies, Uncle Toms, savages, Sambos--you'll see them all, alas. The most unfortunate thing I learned is that racist memorabilia is a very hot commodity these days with new product based on old designs being churned out around the country and sold under the cover of Ebay. Meet David Pilgrim! An hour with him will change your world!

WZZM 13

July 14, 2006

Local Expert Weighs in on Mid-East Conflict

A local expert says the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers just provided a reason to go after the Hezbollah.

Doctor Michael Harris with Ferris State University says the militant group has steadily gained power with help from Iran and Syria, but he says Israel only has a limited time to act.

"The US will not intervene and will be somewhat quietly supportive of Israeli actions," Harris said. "The Russians will be opposing it for a variety of reasons, so international pressure against Israel will start to build in the next few days."

Harris says the fighting has surpassed the missing soldiers. It's now more about stopping a threat to Israel.

Muskegon Chronicle

July 15, 2006

CMU, WMU, Ferris State report tuition hikes for fall

Students at Western Michigan, Central Michigan and Ferris State universities will see a hike in tuition this fall.

Western students will see a 6 percent hike this fall while Ferris will have a 5.68 percent increase. CMU has come up with a plan where returning undergraduates will not face a tuition increase, in keeping with the school's program called "The CMU Promise."

But incoming freshmen and new transfer students at CMU will pay a credit hour rate that is about 18 percent higher than that paid by new students last year. But the rate will stay the same as they go through school, which translates to a 3.6 percent tuition increase per year over a five-year academic career.

"People are finding it to be a very good deal," university President Mike Rao said last week.

The new undergraduate tuition rate for incoming students will be \$251 per credit hour. Grand Valley State announced last week it had raised tuition from 5.9 percent for freshmen to 9 percent for graduate students.

Western Michigan trustees Friday adopted a \$295 million budget that includes a 6 percent tuition boost.

A full-time freshman or sophomore from Michigan will pay \$3,088 for the fall semester, not including fees, compared with \$2,913 last fall. Full-time in-state juniors or seniors will pay \$3,412 this fall, up from \$3,219 last fall.

The budget includes an \$8.3 million deficit that Western Michigan officials expect to cover by tapping savings.

Also Friday, Ferris State trustees approved a 2006-07 budget that includes an average 5.68 percent increase in tuition and fees. Full-time tuition rates will increase 6.82 percent while part-time students will see a lower percentage increase.

Initial recommendations called for an overall average increase of 6.1 percent, the Pioneer of Big Rapids reported.

Western Michigan's budget anticipates a 2.9 percent boost in state support, or \$3.2 million. "It's a positive move toward recouping the funding losses of recent years, but we're still \$14 million less than we were in 2003," President Judith Bailey said.

At Ferris State, higher state support will "barely cover" mandatory increases in payments into the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System, President David Eisler

said. WMU sophomore Brad VanWormer reacted to the tuition increase by thinking about his loans.

"They're raising (tuition) higher than inflation increases. I can see a raise as costs go up and time goes on.... But not 6 percent (over a school year). That's quite a chunk of change," the 19-year-old business management major said.

"I'm not comfortable with it but I can live with it," Board of Trustees Chairman James P. Holden said of the hike.

Holden said he can live with passing some costs onto students because officials have taken action to reduce spending as much as possible.

Under a tentative agreement between Republican legislative leaders and Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Michigan's 15 public universities will get an average 3 percent funding increase in the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1.

That would be the first significant state aid increase in the past five years and slightly more than most schools were expecting when budget talks began earlier this year. Western's graduate programs took a hit last week.

A review of graduate programs that bubbled with controversy this spring came to a close Friday as the WMU Board of Trustees signed off on which programs would be eliminated.

This past spring, administration slated 21 doctorate and master's programs, plus two specialist programs for closure. But some of those decisions caused an uproar, and a formal appeals process ensued.

On Friday, WMU President Judith I. Bailey recommended to the board that 11 graduate programs be discontinued.

Only three of those programs -- a doctoral degree in comparative religion, a Master of Arts degree in teaching geography and a Master of Arts in art -- had submitted appeals to continue.

Formal appeals saved 10 of the programs, including doctoral programs clinical psychology, statistics and Spanish. Two other programs will be suspended so that officials can make improvements.

"The decision, I think, is very sad," Brian Wilson, chairman of the comparative religion department, said of losing the doctoral program.

Detroit News, Wood TV 8, Detroit Free Press, Grand Rapids Press

July 15, 2006

Western Michigan, Ferris State approve tuition plan

Increases in state subsidies were not big enough to allow Western Michigan University and Ferris State University to avoid raising tuition rates for the 2006-07 academic year.

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Pioneer

July 15 & 16, 2006

Full-time students will pay 6.82 percent more than the previous year.

BIG RAPIDS --- Ferris State University students will see a 5.68 percent overall increase in their bills for tuition and fees, but they can take some comfort in knowing the increase isn't as high as what was initially recommended.

The Ferris Board of Trustees voted to approve the 2006-07 general operating budget, which included an overall 5.68 percent average increase in tuition and fees, during the regular meeting Friday morning.

Full-time tuition rates will increase 6.82 percent, meaning a student taking 15 credits will pay 'about \$240 per credit hour, up from \$224 per credit hour in 2005-06. Part-time students will see a lower percentage increase. The discrepancy is due to an effort to make all tuition per-credit hours cost the same, regardless of how many credits the student takes, university officials said.

Initial tuition recommendations called for an overall average 6.1 percent increase, a figure that was changed Friday morning in the board's finance committee meeting.

Combined with the tuition increase was a plan to cut \$660,000 from the budget, a number that will now be \$1,147,000 because of the lowered amount of the increase.

FSU President David Eisler said a tuition increase is necessary because costs to the university have been steadily increasing and the financial increase from the state will "barely cover" the state-mandated increases in the Michigan Public School Employees Retirement System. Other increases include scholarships, utilities and compensation and benefits for employees.

"We have to raise tuition to try and cover these things," Eisler said. The change in the amount of the increase was due to the board trying to help students, he said.

"They looked at the challenges for the students out there and saw how costs were going up," Eisler said. "The board takes strongly their obligation to keep Ferris available and affordable."

The board members are well aware of the students' perspective. "We're all former students," said Chair Arthur Tebo. "I worked my way through school. I think in economic hard times, we all have to address it."

While the amount of money the board saved students by reducing the tuition increase isn't likely to be significant per credit hour, Tebo said it would add up for individuals. "I think we're all suffering," he said. "We would have liked to have had zero increase, but that's not realistic."

Students returning to campus in the fall also will see increases in housing and dining rate fees, under increases approved in room and board rates in the housing and food service operating budget: University apartments, residence halls and meal plan rates will increase 5.9 percent.

Incoming freshmen and new transfer students at Central Michigan University will pay a credit hour rate that is about 18 percent higher than that paid by new students last year. But the rate will stay the same as they go through school, which translates to a 3.6 percent tuition increase per year over a five-year academic career, according to the Associated Press.

Pioneer

July 15 & 16, 2006

Comin' at You

Some people see just a bunch of trees. Leonard Johnson saw prime real estate for a golf course. The Ferris State University professor had his eyes on the land just east of the entrance to Northend Riverside Park and, quickly, his mind began to race.

Johnson saw placed to take down vegetation and couple of trees. He began jotting down notes- the plan already beginning to take shape, years before approval.

After talks with the City of Big Rapids and with the Department of Natural Resources, Johnson finally got the opportunity to turn the land into an 18-hole disc golf course, which is now partially open to the public.

"The biggest catch came in gaining permission from the DNR," said Johnson. "Tim (Vogel, director of public works) and I met with a rep from the DNR and we produced a letter of understanding."

All of the holes will be east of the entrance to the park, but the course does cross Rails-to-Trails, which provided the greatest obstacle for, Johnson. After talks, Johnson and the city agreed with the DNR to put up easements from each side of the trails for the players.

"That was our biggest stumbling block, without a doubt," said Vogel. "We had to get approval from the DNR to use Northend Riverside Park for that purpose."

Once he. Gained permission, Johnson began the design.

His signature hole is No. 5, which will play as a, 90-degree dog leg right totaling 390 feet. There is potential danger lining the fairway as well as numerous trees preventing players a straight shot at the dog leg. Then there is the second shot - uphill 150 feet toward a basket perched on top of a hill.

"There is a lot of risk-reward to try to get a three (par)," said Johnson. "It requires a tight, accurate drive and a precise second shot, otherwise the disc could roll back down the hill and to your feet."

Not all of the holes came so easy to Johnson. Places where he thought he could shape holes changed. Friends who also have walked the park and have years of experience playing gave advice in how to make certain holes even better.

One of those friends was Aaron Humphreys. Humphreys, who is a police officer for Ferris State for the past two-and-a-half years, has played disc, golf for roughly 10 years. In the end, Johnson found 18 distinct holes ranging from 200 to 500 feet - each a par 3 - that give a player of any level a chance at a little fun.

"I used to play a lot, but now with my career it's tough," said Humphreys, who was between rounds. "I'm excited about this course - it will give me an opportunity to play more."

Each hole will have two tee boxes. The shorter red tees for novices will play at roughly 4,500 feet, while the back blue tees will be close to 6,000 feet - not including the walk between holes.

"The fact that the course will have short and long tees makes it friendlier to everyone and on par to some of the professional courses I've played," said Johnson, who plays on the Professional Disc Golf Association tour. "The short tees are challenging but not too difficult."

Currently, only nine holes are open - one through six and 16, 17 and 18. Johnson hopes to have the other nine holes completed by Labor Day.

"One of the reasons I like playing is it is fairly inexpensive to play," said Humphreys.

"And one of the reasons why I like (the course in Big Rapids) is there are elevation changes. It is slightly more challenging, but aesthetically more pleasing."

It will take some time for the other nine holes to be finished.

Johnson will have to cut down the ferns that have cropped up, a tree or two and put in the baskets, which cost \$6,000 for 18. Johnson has footed the bill for the entire course because he wants to generate interest in the area along with having a place closer to play.

Leonard taking the majority of the cost was a major selling point for the city, according to Vogel.

"Leonard has developed and funded the course himself," he said. "It didn't take a whole lot of persuasion because he took on most of the responsibilities of the cost."

In the future, Johnson would like to have cement tee boxes and sponsors for each of the 18 holes. He already has three lined up.

But once the entire course is completed, Johnson hopes to have league play begin in the fall. There also will be winter and summer league opportunities and potentially an annual tournament - if sponsors can be secured.

"It might start slow, but eventually as word gets out, I think they will come out," said Johnson, who has seen the course in Mount Pleasant gain popularity by leaps and bounds since it opened a couple of years ago. "I can see maybe a club team from Ferris playing a team from Central (Michigan) some day."

"I think a course like this will recruit students to our university," added Humphreys.

"There are a lot of students who love to play, especially on the east side of the state and this will help recruit them."

The cost to play is free and the course will be open whenever the park is.

Lansing Bureau

July 16, 2006

More high-tech needed in higher ed

LANSING -- Michigan's public universities are churning out more grads -- nearly 60,000 degrees in 2005 up from some 52,000 in 1999 -- but not enough of them are math, science, health and other technical majors to fill future job demands, some policy-makers say.

Less than 30 percent of degrees granted in 2004-05 are in those fields, according to a recent report from the House Fiscal Agency, a nonpartisan office of the Michigan House of Representatives.

The percentage of high-tech degrees ranged from 17.1 percent at Eastern Michigan University and Saginaw Valley State University to 83.4 percent at Michigan Technological University, which specializes in engineering, according to the report.

Degrees include associate's, bachelor's, master's, doctorates and professional degrees. On average, the state's 15 universities grant 29.7 percent of their degrees in high-tech fields and 70.3 percent in general degrees.

Michigan lawmakers hope to encourage more investment in those programs -- and recognize the fact that it's more expensive to educate when labs are involved.

A formula for next year's state budget is based in part on awarding more aid to universities that graduate students in those programs.

"There's no doubt we need more graduates from our universities from math, science, engineering and health programs," said Rep. Jerry Kooiman, R-Grand Rapids, a member of the House Appropriations Committee, who helped write the formula. "We're giving the universities money based on the outcomes in math and science to generate more degrees in those areas."

He said he hopes it will drive more decisions like Grand Valley State University's plan to double its engineering program.

A recent national report by the General Accounting Office raised concerns that the United States is not graduating enough people with high-tech skills, even as employment grows in those areas.

It found that 27 percent of degrees were granted in science, technology, engineering and math fields in 2003-04, a drop from 32 percent a decade earlier.

During the same time period, employment rose 23 percent in the technology sectors, compared with 17 percent in other fields.

In addition, the report noted that women and minorities are a growing segment of the work force, but those groups are traditionally under-represented in technical fields.

Getting more Michigan residents to post-secondary education has been a high priority of state leaders as Michigan's traditional manufacturing base erodes.

The Cherry Commission, a 2004 group of college presidents, lawmakers, business leaders and others led by Lt. Gov. John Cherry, cited the need in the next decade for 100,000 new, skilled medical workers. It called for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth to better inform the work force about job opportunities and the training required, and for better university tracking of what happens to graduates.

Both those projects are being developed, said John Austin, vice president of the State Board of Education and an adviser to the Cherry Commission.

For the most part, the free market dictates what programs are offered, and what students go into them.

Austin said he agrees with the approach to give more state aid to higher-cost programs to eliminate disincentives against them. But he said the Cherry Commission deliberately avoided any recommendations that would limit state aid only to those offerings where jobs were in demand.

"The Cherry Commission did not recommend a heavy-handed approach," he said.

Austin said the next great innovation could come from an artist or designer, rather than an engineer or scientist.

"We can't predict, based on what we need today, who the next Google inventor is going to be. You don't want to kill off the golden goose of people who are nurtured in creative fields," he said.

Some career experts say the new mandatory high school curriculum, with four years of math, including Algebra II, and three years of science, will help funnel more students to those programs.

William Potter, director of Ferris State University's Career Institute for Education and Workforce Development, said studies show that only about one-third of students are ready for college upon graduation. Students who aren't ready for college-level courses aren't likely to go into difficult fields, he said.

"I think we need our students better prepared to make that choice and not to default away from it," he said.

There's still a need for liberal arts majors, said Dan Hurley, director of university relations and administrative services for the Presidents Council, State Universities of

Michigan. For example, he said information technology companies sometimes prefer broadly educated workers because they adapt and can be trained.

Phil Gardner, director of research for Michigan State University's Collegiate Employment Research Institute, said students need a little more academic and emotional support to tough out the difficult academic courses in high-tech fields. In India and China, students are just put on a science path without options, he said, while U.S. students who become frustrated with a difficult set of courses are free to switch majors.

"Kids have to understand that science and math are hard, but there are ways to do it and you have to be persistent," Gardner said.

Pioneer

July 15 & 16, 2006

Johnson's passion leads to professional status

BIG RAPIDS - To say Leonard Johnson loves the game of disc golf would be an understatement. The Ferris State University professor has traveled the country playing in tournaments or just for fun, while on vacation or on a quick weekend getaway.

Johnson has competed in tournaments in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin as well as taking disc vacations, hitting different courses every day between Big Rapids and North Carolina.

To Johnson, it doesn't get any better than hitting the course.

"I already have 60,000 miles on my jeep and I haven't had it for two years yet," he said.

"I really don't mind - it keeps me young and it keeps me fit and it's a lot of fun."

That is one of the primary reasons why Johnson has been talking to the city of Big Rapids. For the past five years Johnson has tried to put in a disc golf course within the city, but wasn't able to start until recently, when he and Big Rapids were approved by the Department of Natural Resources.

The DNR had to approve a plan because the course crosses the Rails-to-Trails in Northend Riverside Park twice.

Johnson's love for the sport began in the 1970s when he took up Ultimate Frisbee - a 7-on-7 team sport when he was in college.

Johnson became reacquainted with the sport when he came to Ferris State in 1999 to teach education. A friend told him about a course near Kalamazoo and Johnson hit the road.

"I showed up one day and I was amazed how the sport has grown," he said. "I fell in love with it all over again. I started to play in leagues and in tournaments - I traveled all over to play."

Johnson competed in different levels, including novice, amateur master, professional master and grand master.

He won a handful of tournaments, but refused to take any money until 2001 when he captured the grand masters title in Kalamazoo.

"I figured it was just time (to turn professional)," said Johnson, who has won between 20 and 30 tournaments in his career on the Professional Disc Golf Association tour.

The key to success, as in any sport, comes down to practice. There are several types of discs, ranging from \$8 to \$16, that can be thrown during competition - for driving (some discs are designed to go left to right or right to left depending on the design of the hole), for medium-length shots (a little heavier so it won't go flying past the hole) and those considered putts (thick rims around the disc that are not meant for distance).

Johnson knows of touring players in the Professional Disc Golf Association who practice 100 putts every day. Those are the type of players, Johnson said, who make more than \$30,000 a year, not counting endorsements.

"It takes a lot of practice and perseverance, just like any sport," he said. "At this level, there isn't much that separates me from other pros. They can throw farther, but at this point it really is mental." Still, Johnson still is a good professional.

He has a professional rating of 937 based on scores on courses that other professionals have played. A top rating would be 1000.

"That is very respectable for my age group," said Johnson, whose best round was rated a 980 - two strokes behind a touring pro.

If playing and a full-time job wasn't enough for Johnson, he also has gone into developing courses. Johnson did some investigating and finally found some land that could be turned into a course in Northend Riverside Park.

"I've been walking the property for five years, ever since I talked to Tim (Vogel, Big Rapids directory of public works)," he said. "I've played a lot of different courses and I think I can draw from that (experience)."

Nine holes of the course are open, with the rest of the 18 holes to open by Labor Day.

Johnson believes the course will have many of the same attributes as other courses he has played: There will be two sets of tees for beginners and professionals, holes that allow for plenty of risk-reward and, most importantly, a lot of fun.

"I really expect this to be popular," said Johnson, who hopes one day form a club team at Ferris State and play other squads from colleges around the state, including Central Michigan University.

Pioneer

July 15 & 16, 2006

Former Big Rapids resident directs 'Trailer park Musical'

SAUGATUCK - David Armstrong doesn't know a lot about trailer parks, though he did once live across the street from a trailer. That was in 1964, the year Armstrong's family moved from Iowa to Big Rapids, the same year he entered kindergarten.

Since then, Armstrong - who now makes his home in New York - has grown into a respected director with 146 separate productions to his credit. Armstrong has directed musicals, dramas, comedies. But he owes it all to a single experience that took place over 40 years ago.

"The first show I ever saw was Ferris State University's production of 'The King and I,'" Armstrong said. "My father was a professor at Ferris and he took me to the show.

There were all these little kids running around the stage and with the lights and music it looked like so much fun. I said, 'Daddy, daddy, I want to do that!'

"My whole career in theater, in fact, might have started there at Ferris back in '65," Armstrong added.

Armstrong's father explained that the play he was watching was the result of weeks of hard work and rehearsal; that did little to dampen his enthusiasm.

Now Armstrong, who admits he hasn't been around a mobile home in decades, is directing a play at Saugatuck's Mason Street Warehouse theater that celebrates trailer park life.

"The Great American Trailer Park Musical" centers on the quirky lives of the Armadillo Acres trailer park residents. According to Armstrong, the musical has it all; agoraphobic wives, transient strippers and a host of other oddball locals.

The musical numbers range from a disco dream sequence to country & western dance hall tunes.

"The music just kicks," Armstrong said. "Every number just sticks in your head." Armstrong added the play was "the funniest thing I have ever directed, or seen, for that matter.

"But the wonderful thing is that in spite of being just so funny, there are at least three scenes in the show that always make me cry."

Despite the title, Armstrong said the play doesn't make fun of trailer park residents. Rather, it offers exaggerated caricatures - admittedly stereotypical - of "just plain folks."

Armstrong predicts the play will become extremely popular in years to come.

"This is one of those shows you just know every other theater in the country is going to be doing soon," Armstrong said. "This is a play for people who would rather be watching the Jerry Springer Show than going to a theater. We're very lucky to be able to offer this Broadway cast in Saugatuck."

"The Great American Trailer Park Musical" opened Friday and runs through July 30.

Tickets are available at (269) 857-4898 or online at **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

The Mason Street Warehouse is located in the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, 400 Culver St. in Saugatuck.

Huron Daily Tribune

July 17, 2006

It's about priorities

If we want to improve Michigan's economy for the long haul, we are going to have to invest in education beyond high school.

Most in our state agree that our future must not be as dependent upon the auto industry as we are and have been. Diversifying the economy means more than one thing to be sure, but high tech careers is part of the equation. So is an educated and skilled work force.

Word came out Saturday that two Michigan universities are increasing their tuition for this next academic year - Western Michigan University and Ferris State University. Western will hike its tuition 6 percent while Ferris will boost its full-time tuition rates about 6.8 percent. Freshmen can expect to pay more than \$3,000 for the fall semester at Western.

Juniors and seniors will pay more than \$3,400.

Colleges and universities have steadily increased tuition in recent years as state funding has decreased. They have not been exempt from the effects of Michigan's poor economy. But they can and must be part of the solution.

Now, a tentative pact between GOP legislators and Gov. Jennifer Granholm calls for a 3 percent boost in funding for public universities as of Oct. 1. That's a start, but only a start. We need to get serious about examining how our colleges and universities are being run.

And we need to set funding standards according to our priorities. If changing the direction of Michigan's economy is a priority, then higher education needs to be treated as a priority because without one we will not have the other. And that needs to include affordable educational opportunities - from trade schools to community colleges and four-year colleges and universities - that will provide our future workers and leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to lead this state to a better future. Oh, and that means they shouldn't spend the next 20 years of their lives digging out of debt.

It can be done. Finding the "how" needs to be a priority.

Niles Daily Star

July 22, 2006

Joining police longtime goal for Sriver

NILES - The decision was made years ago.

Amber Sriver knew as a student at Brandywine Middle School she wanted to be in law enforcement.

Deciding on where to pursue her career wasn't too hard, either.

"The main reason I'm in Berrien County is because I know some of the people," Sriver said. "It's nice to protect the people I know."

Srivers goal was accomplished when she was sworn in as a Berrien County Sheriff's Deputy in June. But, her path to law enforcement started in Niles.

Srivers said it was no secret to her parents, Mike and Susan, or her 30-year-old sister Christina that she wanted to be a cop.

"My mom was kind of worried," Srivers said.

But, Srivers said her mother also felt her youngest daughter took the path she did for a reason.

Srivers graduated from Brandywine High School in 2002. During her time as a Bobcat, she competed in volleyball, basketball and softball and as a senior was honored as the school's female athlete of the year.

It was on the diamond where Srivers said she excelled the most. She earned all-state honors twice as a first baseman for Brandywine.

The team as a whole performed at a top level under head coach Jim Myers, Srivers said.

During her four years, the Bobcats earned four conference titles and won the Class C state championship crown in Srivers senior year in 2001.

"It's hard to explain" the feeling of winning the state championship, Srivers said. "It was definitely a payoff for all the work."

There was also a payoff that went along with learning under Myers. Srivers said the one time Army sergeant pushed his team to perform at their best under every circumstance.

"He was part of the help that made me ready for this career," Srivers said of Myers. "He definitely taught me discipline."

Ferris State University was the next challenge for Sriver. She continued to play varsity softball for the Bulldogs, but moved from first base to outfield.

Her head coach Keri Becker was also a sergeant in the Army. Becker's commitments overseas even forced her to miss the opening weeks of Sriver's junior season at Ferris.

"Military structure has kind of been my experience with all my coaches and staff," Sriver said.

Sriver started the law enforcement academy her senior year at Ferris. Six women and 25 men were enrolled.

Once again, Sriver's teachers were bred in the military. Two former Army sergeants ran the academy and students were required to salute all officers.

The daily routine and activities also resembled boot camp, she said. Each day started at 6 a.m. and was filled with physical workouts and simulated training sessions.

Sriver said she was required to do a certain amount of push-ups in the span of one minute to enter the academy. A similar challenge was issued before graduating. By the time she left, Sriver said she was doing 49 push-ups in one minute.

"You just have to set your standards high," she said. "I just did everything the males would do."

The drills placed students in simulated crime scenarios called prism training. They were handed real guns loaded with paintball-like ammunition and asked to perform during a crime situation.

In Sriver's case, she said the computer program placed her in a face-off with a shotgun-toting suspect in a trench coat. Instructors would record how many shots were fired and where they hit.

"It would train you for real life scenarios. When you took your gun belt off you were actually sweating," Sriver said.

Graduating from Ferris earned Sriver a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and certification from the Michigan Commission On Law Enforcement Standards, which sets the state's standards for members of law enforcement.

Sriver said the Commission allows graduates a one-year grace period to find a job in law enforcement. Then, the certification expires.

Sriver said she interviewed with superior officers at the Berrien County Sheriff's Department shortly after graduation. Then came the standard psychiatric, drug and physical health tests.

Then?

"Just basically waiting," she said.

Sriver was eventually offered a position as a deputy with the department.

"I was very relived and happy to get in with the county," she said.

And not just any county, but in an area she is familiar with, and, one that offers a variety of opportunities.

"Berrien County covers quite a large area. You get to see different areas throughout the county and get some good experience," Sriver said.

But, Sriver said the main attraction to the job in southwest Michigan for her is not knowing what each day has in store.

"It's always something different to keep you on your toes," she said. "I like the challenge."

Duty with the sheriff's department started in the northern part of Berrien County, Sriver said. Her shifts began at 10 p.m. and ended at 6 a.m.

She is now on patrol in Niles Township. She arrives for her eight-hour shift at the Berrien County Courthouse in Niles at 2 p.m. It's the same place she meets with her field training officer, Dep. Terry Ellis.

Ellis was a police officer in Niles Township for more than 19 years. He has been with the Berrien County

Sheriff's Department for five years. Ellis said Sriver has a solid grasp on what it takes to be in law enforcement.

"She's very bright. She's very smart. She doesn't think the whole world revolves around writing tickets and making arrests," Ellis said. "She sees the overall issue of being a police officer. Shoot, someday I may be working for her."

Sriver heads to a patrol car in the back parking lot to perform a check of the vehicle. She places a shotgun in a holster mounted between the two front seats and locks the weapon in. Sriver already carries a 9 mm Hechler and Koch.

She checks the exterior of the car for dents and the back seat for anything that may have been left by an arrested suspect on a previous shift.

Soon after, it's time to hit the road.

Sriver made the decision to enter law enforcement in middle school, before she knew what the job entailed. She was coached in softball by two Army sergeants and took instruction at the academy for two more.

Yet, she took all the challenges head-on and, now, she said, she's reaping the rewards.

"It finally paid off. I'm wearing brown," Sriver said.

Pioneer

July 22 & 23, 2006

FSU and faculty to mediate

University and Ferris Faculty Association work on contract details.

BIG RAPIDS - The expiration date of the Ferris State University Faculty Association contract - June 30 - came and went without a new agreement.

Negotiations have now moved to mediation, at the request of the university and with the FFA concurring. Talks began in February and have not made significant progress. The first mediated session began at 5:30 p.m. Friday evening and continued long into the night. Representatives from both sides were unable to offer comment on the progress of the mediation by the Pioneer's deadline Friday.

The FFA and the university disagree on several matters, including salaries and health care benefits. The FFA has proposed a five-year, five percent across the board salary increase and fully-funded Michigan Education Special Services Association. The university has proposed a 2 percent across the board salary increase with supplemental market adjustments, which combined would mean about a 3 percent increase for five years. The university also is offering a variety of different health insurance options they believe are more affordable.

Michael Ryan, FFA president, said the faculty are looking to keep salaries on pace with inflation and retain health coverage that is as good as the v now have. He said the other plans are not comparable with MESSA. Currently, faculty members have MESSA insurance and they pay a portion of the cost.

The university believes the other options are comparable and would provide faculty members with greater flexibility.

"If the FFA were to agree to the university's health care proposal, they would still be required to contribute their share to the cost of MESSA, but they would be given the option to vote for MESSA or Blue Cross Blue Shield/Priority Health medical plans.

This would allow faculty to be more accountable for their own health care decisions," said Shelly Armstrong, associate vice president for marketing and communications. If progress is not made soon, returning students may not see professors in their classes this fall.

Ryan said the 450 faculty covered by the contract are contacted every time a meeting takes place to keep them informed and several general membership meetings are planned for August. From the communication the bargaining team has received from the membership, Ryan says t they are prepared for an uphill battle.

"They're resolved to get a contract before they go back to work," he said. "We need a tentative agreement in place before we begin classes in the fall... There's still plenty of time."

Classes begin Aug. 28.

Past negotiations between the FFA and the university have been stormy; terms of the current contract, negotiated in 2002, went back and forth for several months before agreement was reached. In 2002, FFA members conducted informational picketing and there was talk of a strike. The last strike occurred in 1997 and lasted four and a half days.

Pioneer

July 22 & 23, 2006

W.I.S.E receives donation

Donation: Women's Information Services Inc. Director Pam Forbes accepts a check for \$648 and books from Ferris State University Professional Women representatives Mary Gallagher-Eustice and Shelly Armstrong. The funds raised from FPW's annual book drive will help support WISE operations and the books will be added to the shelter's resource center utilized by women and children who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

FPW is a Ferris organization that provides women with networking, professional development and community service opportunities. In addition to the book drive, FPW sponsors an annual golf outing with proceeds supporting a Ferris student scholarship.

FPW also sponsors a variety of causes in support of women of all ages in addition to recognizing an outstanding Ferris "woman of the year."

The Grand Rapids Press

July 23, 2006

Spring Lake's Josey prepares for Ferris State

Spring Lake running standout Megan Josey is preparing for her first year at Ferris State University.

Josey, who was awarded a half scholarship to run cross country and track for the Bulldogs, already has begun her college workouts.

"I'm running about 40-45 miles per week," said Josey, whose entire family has been involved in running at one point. "Sometimes I do two-a-day runs and try to get in the weight room.

"Running just really works for me. It gets my mind off things."

Last year, she finished tenth in the Division 2 state cross country finals with a personal best time of 18:27.1.

Her fastest times at the state track and field finals were 5:16 for the 1,600 and 11:23 for the 3,200.

Josey played some softball and AYSO soccer early on, but decided to give track a try in eighth grade.

"Before that, I kind of just sat on the couch," Josey said. "I just decided I wanted to get on a team.

"My dad (Glenn) said I'd be fast in track when he saw me running across the soccer field.

He ran track in high school and my mom (Carol) always liked jogging."

Her younger brother Daniel also runs cross country and track. It all started clicking for Josey during her junior season when she decided to train year-round.

"I've always been a decent runner, but my junior year I trained a lot and ran through the winter," Josey said. "My senior cross country season I did pretty well from training year-round."

How did she feel upon hearing the scholarship news?

"I was happy," said Josey, who plans to major in elementary education.

"It's a coach and a team that wants me; I'm looking forward to it. I want to first be a good student, then would like to help my team win the conference. It would be cool to go to the Division II national championships some day."

Pioneer

July 24, 2006

Governor talks jobs

Granholm speaks about jobs and the economy with former Electrolux employees.

BIG RAPIDS - Two former Electrolux employees spoke about the financial challenges they face and possible training options with Gov. Jennifer Granholm at a breakfast roundtable discussion Saturday at Cranker's Coney Island Restaurant.

Kathy Pellow and Kristy Taylor spoke with the Michigan governor about what they've done since Greenville-based Electrolux moved to Mexico. Pat Tobin, Mecosta County's Democratic chairman, joined in the discussion.

Pellow, who worked for 27 years at Electrolux, has been unable to find another job and is hesitant to have to go back to school to start a different career.

"A group of us who were working at Electrolux were going to start a business," she told the governor, "but we can't get a loan because neither of us have jobs."

Taylor, who took a nine-dollar cut in pay to find another job, told Granholm that she had to continue working but faced new challenges.

"I have to drive from Greenville to Grand Rapids each day," she said. "Once I pay for childcare, gas, food and other expenses, there's not enough for health insurance."

Taylor, who receives coverage at no charge, noted that it would cost an additional \$125 weekly in order to have her family on a healthcare plan.

"This is a classic problem we are finding here in Michigan that there's tons of great, experienced workers who have found themselves victims by a globalized economy and don't want to go back to school," Granholm said. "That's the challenge for a state like Michigan, how do we bring those jobs back in a global economy?"

Michigan's governor noted the state was able to bring a new manufacturer into Electrolux's place, United Solar. Granholm highlighted Universal Solar as an advanced manufacturer using specialized training offered by Montcalm Community College and Ferris State University.

"It's a classic example in Michigan," she added. "The state came in and offered Electrolux zero taxes. The local community offered zero taxes. Electrolux decided that despite the concessions that the workers and Greenville offered to take, to go to Mexico where they could pay workers \$1.57 an hour. It's the classic example of why, in a global economy where people can pay so low of wages, why we have to transition the workforce and the state and move into a different direction.

"We have to make the federal government enforce the trade agreements they've entered into. I continually say that NAFTA and CAFTA have given us the shaft. And it is true.

In Michigan we have more of the manufacturing with automakers and suppliers. The flip side is that we were able to locate a solar panel company to Greenville. United Solar has come in and they have one plant and will end up with five plants.

It will be wonderful for Greenville. It is an advanced manufacturing and that's all the kinds of things we want to be as a state. Meantime, every body who has been left out in the cold by Electrolux with zero benefits and all, are facing the economic challenges."

Granholm also spoke about universal access to health care in Michigan and how the plan would provide affordable healthcare.

Another issue Granholm noted about former Electrolux employees, and others who have lost jobs in the manufacturing area, is training for new jobs.

"Montcalm Community College and Ferris State are packaging training in a way that is relevant to the vacancies in today's economy," she told Pellow and Taylor.

"Ferris is bringing in a special six-month training for the health care field. There's a lot of different options for training that will fit your needs."

Granholm noted that it was important for her to meet with Pellow and Taylor in Big Rapids to highlight what Ferris State University is doing for former Electrolux employees.

"They are offering training for those victimized by the global economy," the governor added. "Ferris State has been flexible on where they locate training. They are willing to take it on the road and take it to the people. President (David) Eisler is a great example of creative thinking. Their full mantra has been for relative careers."

Granholm said the largest issue facing Michigan's residents now is the economy.

"People need to know that I have set in motion the most aggressive economic plan than any state in the nation. It creates jobs today, infrastructure jobs like road projects and construction. It puts forward \$3.8 billion in projects.

"It deals with training and replacing workers, like Electrolux employees, back into today's economy with skills training in relative areas, investing and diversifying our economy. We have the largest amount invested than any state for 21st century jobs.

We're diversifying in areas that won't be outsourced.

"Our education is second to none, and the legislature has passed the highest standards in the nation that we expect of high school graduates. I want to double the number of college graduates in Michigan as well.

"If we do that, we will be the most-educated state in the nation for the next generation going through the pipeline."

Pioneer

July 24, 2006

Student-athletes have to strike a delicate daily balance

BIG RAPIDS - Teghan Thelen, like so many other first-year college student-athletes, had to take a crash course of sorts: Student-Athlete 101.

Thelen, now a sophomore member of Ferris State's women's basketball team, figured she needed to have her proverbial ducks neatly in a row to become successful in the delicate act of balancing academics and athletics. A 2005 Michigan Miss Basketball finalist, Thelen realized that with daily practices, team meetings, traveling and more, she had to fast become a time management authority - even as a freshman.

"It's a tough adjustment you have to make when you first come to college and realize all of these things you have to get done with your athletic team and also with academics," said Thelen, a former all-state guard who prepped at Pewamo-Westphalia High School before she signed with Ferris State to join a women's basketball program that perennially ranks among the best in the nation, academically. "One of the things that makes it a little easier is that you have a set schedule and because you have that set schedule you have to be disciplined enough to stick to it and follow it and you can't afford to procrastinate.

"You want to be able to go out and have fun and do all of those things, but you also have to stay on top of your responsibilities, too."

Thelen's first season of college basketball included long road trips to Kingsville, Texas, Miami Shores, Fla., Indiana and the Upper Peninsula. She, like hundreds of her fellow student-athletes at Ferris, work with the coaching staff and some times counselors to make sure academics are not compromised for athletics and athletics are not compromised as a result of academics. Veteran student-athletes, particularly those taking higher level or graduate classes, have developed a comfort zone in this balancing act.

The comfort zone does not make it easy, but it does make life easier.

Casey McKinnon, an All-American member of Ferris State's women's golf team, knows all too well the potential pitfalls in the path of student-athletes. The former Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year, from St. Ignace, has managed to excel both on the classroom and on the course thanks to her willingness to be a competitor both in academics and athletics throughout her career.

"As far as juggling class, homework and golf, I have a very tight time-management schedule during golf season," said McKinnon, a member of the Bulldog golf team that finished second in the nation this season at the NCAA Division II Women's Golf Championships in Allendale. "I struggled this past semester with my 400-level courses because many of them required group work. The groups I was apart of had to compromise with me on meeting times during the week, rather than weekends for assignments due at the beginning of the following week," she added. "We also had to

break up the work instead of using "teamwork" so I could spend time on academics when it fit into my tournament schedule."

Beyond academics and athletics, however, many high school and college student-athletes have financial responsibilities - in the form of jobs.

"It's hard to find time to do everything during the season," said Ferris State hockey captain Adam Welch. "You have meetings, practices, games, trips, fundraisers, clinics and so many other things you have to do, but at the same time you have; to make sure that you're taking care; of your academics ... since that is; what you're really here for."

The Third Annual Back to School Survey, published by Capital One,, states that approximately 72 percent of college students have a full of part-time job.

High-school students have similar issues.

"I didn't run my junior year because I had to step away from it and go to work at a job," Morley' Stanwood High School runner Wade Bowman said this spring. "It was tough for me to walk away from track and field, because I love that sport and I love being around my teammates and the coaches so much; but at the same time I just felt like it was something that I had to do at that time."

Bowman returned, however, and managed to find a balance that helped him meet his needs, but still, compete in athletics and be a teenager and have fun.

"The consequence of overworking is mainly stress," said Dr. Jeffery Arnett, a developmental psychologist in an online article published by nextstepmagazine.com about the balancing act. "A lot of people in college do experience high stress because of the things they have to balance.

"There aren't too many people who are too productive if they are working all the time," Arnett added in the article. "You might put in, hours and get less done."

Many people involved in athletics believe that one of the benefits of sports is it does teach young people how to strike a balance in their lives.

"You have to find the time to study ... even with all of the practices and the games that you're in," said Morley Stanwood's Tiffany Medler, who was a member of the quarter-finals-reaching basketball team and track and field squad during her time as a Mohawk.

"You have to make sure you get your studying in because of your responsibilities with school, work and athletics.... Then, you also have a social life, too.

"So, there are a lot of things you have to do and you have to make sure you're managing your time the right way to get everything done you need to get done."