

June 24, 2006- July 4, 2006

Media Packet

- **Ferris professor rescues dog**
- **Ferris professor and students take a trip to Southeast**
- **FSU reaches record summer enrollment**
- **Kids enjoy FSU Sports Program**
- **Schools get biggest boost in 5 years**
- **Local bands fill Hemlock Park with music**
- **Local employees celebrate Ferris program graduation**
- **University offers faculty options to program run by state teachers' union**

The Pioneer

June 24 & 25, 2006

Ferris professor rescues dog

Liz Wilson rescues a dog originally from Ludington that traveled to Big Rapids.

BIG RAPIDS - Liz Wilson is used to rescuing animals.

But until last Easter, she had never saved an animal in worse condition than a dog named Bailey.

Bailey left her home in Ludington during the first week of January. She eventually made it to Big Rapids, where she was found about four months later by Wilson, a professor at Ferris State University.

Along the way, Bailey traveled at least 80 miles and lost about 30 pounds. It was a miracle the 10-year-old dog was still alive because it was already partially blind and had a seizure disorder, Wilson said.

"I've rescued animals all my life," she said. "If I didn't help the dog I didn't think anybody else would. It wouldn't have went much longer."

Wilson was gathering flowers to put in her yard from a ravine near the Ferris' College of Business when she saw a white object lying on the ground. Wilson initially thought it was dead, but when she got closer she realized it was a dog, and it was alive, but it was struggling.

"When I got within 10 feet ... I saw she was just skin and bones," Wilson said. "It was terrible looking, bones protruding ... the collar just hung on it."

Wilson has several rescued cats at her house and certainly wasn't going to let a dog possibly die.

She tried to grab the dog, but as she moved closer to the dog it continued to walk away from her. After two hours, she decided to go to Wal-Mart and buy some food to entice the dog.

But Wilson still couldn't get the dog to come with her. She thought about calling a dogcatcher but didn't want to see the dog get shot because it was so weak.

So, she called her friend John Caserta, a professor at Ferris, to help her get the dog. By the time they got to the ravine, the dog had moved toward campus.

Before it went onto State Street, Wilson was able to get in front of the dog and grab it. The dog bit her, but did not break her skin because it was too weak.

Wilson took the dog to her home and nursed it. She realized if she hadn't saw the dog it probably wouldn't have lasted much longer. "In its feces I found a rock ... about the size of a quarter and some pine needles," she said.

But as the dog got stronger it barked and carried on, Wilson said. She would walk it to the end of her driveway and the dog would look toward the ravne.

Wilson knew the dog had a name and telephone number on its collar, but was afraid to call the number because she thought the dog had been abused.

After a couple of days, Wilson discovered the dog could sit and lie down so she figured it came from a good home.

"I asked it, 'Do you want me to call these numbers?' And she looked at me funny, so I did," she said.

Wilson feared the worst, but she still called the veterinary clinic number on the tag. And much to her relief, she was told the dog had a good home.

Bailey's owner, Diane Kazmarski, had given up on finding her dog after about one month. She said she was grateful Wilson did what some people might not have done.

"I just told her I appreciated what she did," Kazmarski said. "There aren't too many people that would do that."

Kazmarski asked Wilson if there was anything she could do to repay her for finding Bailey, and Wilson had one simple request.

"I said, 'I really don't want anything. I just want a picture of that dog when she's happy and fat,'" Wilson said.

Wilson received the picture of Bailey last week. Bailey isn't fat just yet, but she is happy, thanks to Wilson.

The Pioneer
(Up and Down the River)
June 24 & 25, 2006

Ferris professor and students take a trip to Southeast

Vietnam holds a certain morbid fascination for Americans - after all, it's the site of one of our greatest national humiliations. Yet just as America isn't the same as it was in 1975, Vietnam has changed, and it has thrown open its doors to foreign tourists and students. The students that we took to Southeast Asia this year represented the third such study aboard that Ferris State has sent, and it's part of an ongoing effort to strengthen a link with An Giang University in Vietnam. Our tour group also visited Angkor Wat Cambodia and Seoul, Korea.

An Giang University is located in Long Xuyen (pronounced "long sween"), a provincial town about the size of Metro Grand Rapids. The city isn't a tourist destination in and of itself; most foreigners simply pass through. Yet this means that, more than any other places on our itinerary, Long Xuyen is the real Vietnam--the country in its work clothes. We met with school officials and students during our visit

The group traveled to other places in Vietnam as well, collecting biological and water samples and studying the climate and culture. We flew to Phu Quoc Island the kind of place you'd expect to see a Club Med, an isolated tropical islet covered in verdant jungle and lined with spectacular beaches. We called one the "flour beach" because of its fine-grained white sand that the tides kept clean and immaculate. It was on the protected side of the isle, so there were no waves to speak of, and the water was clear enough to see the bottom no matter how far out we waded in search of specimens.

We also traveled to Dalat, up in the mountains, which is a logical destination for a school trip because it's been a center of Vietnamese learning for a long time. Thanks to the high altitude, the city has a cooler climate, and until the advent of air conditioning, it was the only place university students could study without getting sweat stains all over their books.

The town has the air of a French provincial town, bursting with flowers that won't grow anywhere else in Vietnam, with bustling cafes and even a radio antenna that looks like a small Eiffel Tower in red and white.

Our final destination was Saigon, where our work took on more of a cultural, rather than a biological, character. Ho Chi Minh City is its official name, but everyone still calls the city Saigon and it is the most cosmopolitan city in Vietnam, abuzz with foreign tourists and investors and filled with towering buildings and colossal billboards. If it weren't for the countless war museums and red flags, you might think that the south had won the war.

Saigon is the new face of Vietnam, with all the amenities of a capitalist western country, and this attitude is slowly spreading throughout the country. It was a

privilege to be able to see the country in the midst of this change, and it is, clear from what we saw that great things are in store for the country. The apocalypse is past. Phil Watson is a Professor of Biology at Ferris State University. He has traveled to Vietnam seven times since 2000. He was never in Vietnam before the year 2000 and spent a semester there in 2002. He lives with his wife Maureen and his sons Alex who is attending U of M and Scott who is attending GVSU.

The Pioneer

June 27, 2006

FSU reaches record summer enrollment

BIG RAPIDS - Summer enrollment has once again hit a record high at Ferris State University with 5,091 students attending summer semester classes.

This is the third consecutive year enrollment has been up during summer semester for the university. Summer 2006 enrollment figures mark an increase of 174 students more than last year's total of 4,917.

Stricter enrollment standards are one initiative officials attribute to successful growth and retention, saying stricter academic standards lead to better-prepared students enrolling at the university.

"We have more serious students and the summer is attractive for students who want to knock off another class or two," said Craig Westman, associate dean of enrollment services and director of admissions and records.

Vice President for Student Affairs Daniel Burcham also noted the university's special offer of a free, private room for summer semester is an added bonus. To qualify for the free room, students must be enrolled in classes on the Big Rapids campus, take six credits or more at regular tuition rates and purchase a meal plan with a minimum of 10 meals per week.

The Pioneer

June 30, 2006

Kids enjoy FSU Sports Program

In a courtesy photo kids play a game of Polo. Cole Groves, an 8-year-old student at Brookside Elementary School, zeroes in on his target during archery practice Thursday at Ferris State University's Student Recreation Center. Many area students are participating in the university's summer sports program.

The Grand Rapids Press

July 1, 2006

Schools get biggest boost in 5 years

Budget deal includes \$210 hike in per-pupil aid, 3 percent more for colleges

LANSING - Gov. Jennifer Granholm and legislative leaders reached a budget deal Friday that provides the biggest increase in education funding in five years.

Schools would receive \$210 more per pupil next year, while universities and community colleges would get an overall 13 percent budget increase.

Not included is Granholm's plan to boost the Michigan Merit Award from a maximum of \$3,000 to \$4,000 and allowing college students who have completed two years to qualify.

And in a separate budget issue, no agreement was reached on a proposed 48-month lifetime limit on cash assistance to welfare recipients.

The budget plan instead reflects the money available for the 2007 fiscal year, \$19.5 million more than earlier estimates.

"We are investing in the economic future of our state by increasing support for our public schools and higher education," Granholm said.

The \$210-per-pupil boost was more than the \$200 Granholm proposed but less than the \$225 the Senate passed and the \$230 the House approved.

Educators say the big increase will be offset by growing health care, retirement and fuel costs.

Ray Telman, executive director of the Middle Cities Education Association, representing mid-sized urban districts, said schools may still be making cuts, despite the increases.

"You're still going to have school districts that are going to have the need to do that," he said.

The state's 15 public universities and 28 community colleges start with 3 percent increases.

But under a formula that appears to boost those with the lowest per-pupil funding, Wayne State and Michigan Tech get smaller increases while Grand Valley State gets the largest. Grand Valley has the lowest state aid per student.

That equalization is welcome news, said Mike Boulus, executive director of the Presidents Council, State Universities of Michigan.

"I'm glad we're moving in a positive direction for the first time in five years," he said.

"It's gratifying to see the end product was more than we had in the entire process."

Sen. Mike Goschka, R-Brant, the chairman of the Senate subcommittee on higher ed spending, said the budget reflects a change of thinking about higher ed.

"We have really turned a corner to where people understand the vital importance of our universities," he said.

The budget agreement also provides funding to train and hire about 50 new Michigan State Police troopers. The recruits are expected to offset anticipated retirements and maintain the department's trooper level at about 1,050. Trooper numbers topped out at nearly 1,350 in fiscal year 2000.

Matt Wesaw, director of governmental affairs for the Michigan State Police Troopers Association, said he's grateful for the additional police, but said with 1,250 troopers, "I think we could adequately fulfill all the mandates the Legislature has placed on us."

Higher funding

This year's budget allocations for state universities, entire and per student, with next year's increase:

Current	Per pupil	Pct..
Central Michigan		
\$80,061,900	\$3,736	2.9%
Eastern Michigan		
\$76,140,600	\$4,019	2.7%
Ferris State		
\$48,634,700	\$4,611	2.9%
Grand Valley		
\$61,129,900	\$3,151	6%
Lake Superior		
\$12,506,300	\$4,827	3.4%
Michigan state		
\$283,730,800	\$6,782	3%
Michigan Tech		
\$48,018,000	\$8,095	2.5%
Northern Michigan		
\$45,051,600	\$5,348	3%

Oakland		
\$50,685,700	\$3,664	3.4%
Saginaw Valley		
\$27,499,800	\$3,595	5%
University of Michigan		
\$316,368,500	\$8,048	3%
UM-Deachocn		
\$24,739,200	\$3,973	2.9%
UM-Flint		
\$20,903,100	\$4,231	3%
Wayne State		
\$214,666,300	\$8,603	2.5%
Western Michigan		
\$109,595,200	\$4,569	2.9%

The Pioneer

July 3, 2006

Local bands fill Hemlock Park with music

Day in the park: Members of the band, Four Finger Five warm up prior to their set at the Hemlock Park band shell Saturday afternoon. Four Finger Five is one of six bands that performed at a free concert, organized in part by Ferris State University's Music Industry Management Program.

Cadillac News

July 3, 2006

Local employees celebrate Ferris program graduation

CADILLAC - "An education is something no one can ever take away from you. It always pays dividends toward your future," said Roberta Teahen at a dinner Thursday night aimed at honoring graduates from an industrial program.

Teahen is a dean at Ferris State University in Big Rapids. FSU worked with local industries to create a program focused on honing worker's skills in industrial maintenance.

"I learned a lot about things I had no knowledge of. It was also good to have a refresher course on things I knew about. Overall, it was a good learning experience," said John Nichols, a program graduate who was sponsored by Four Winns.

It took three years for the seven men to complete the program. They attended three-and-a-half hour classes twice a week. To graduate they had to pass an exam for each of the 23 courses.

"The graduates completed 489 hours of training plus on-the-job training. They used what we were teaching them in work-applied learning," said Tom Crandall, the director of corporate and professional development at FSU.

"It would be hard for an employee to learn that stuff in our facility," said Christopher Stanley, the maintenance and facilities manager of BorgWarner Automotive.

"A lot of employees don't have time to take college classes, which are pretty narrow. This program gave them broad training," he said.

Though most program graduates agree they are glad the course is finally over, they also feel the time was well spent.

"The things I learned will be helpful down the road. It is good to know how to deal with electrical things. People get into trouble working with things they have no knowledge of.

That's when people get hurt or die," said Ron DeHaan, a graduate of the program who works at Four Winns Boats.

The program was challenging. Tim Edwards, Ellis Sneary, Gerald Babcock, Bill Yount, DeHaan, David Bayer and Nichols were the men who graduated from the program, but they weren't the only ones who were enrolled.

"These seven who graduated are the cream of the crop," Crandall said.

Insurance holds up Ferris contract

The Grand Rapids Press

July 3, 2006

University offers faculty options to program run by state teachers' union

The same health insurance plan causing contract disputes in school districts has become an issue for faculty at Ferris State University.

Their contract expired Friday, and health insurance is one of the issues standing in the way of a new deal since negotiations began in February.

Faculty health care has been provided through a state teachers' union affiliate known as MESSA, or Michigan Education Special Services Association. Administrators want to change that.

The faculty union also is asking for a 5 percent salary increase across the board. And it wants the university to fully fund health coverage instead of the two-thirds it now covers.

Administrators have offered a 2 percent salary increase and bonuses that would amount to about a 3 percent increase total, spokeswoman Shelly Armstrong said.

In health care, they would like professors to pick from among the MESSA plan or four plans provided through Blue Cross-Blue Shield.

"We do have other plans that have been very desirable and affordable to a large number of our employees," Armstrong said. "Health-care costs are going to continue to escalate." She said fully covered health care is "just not a reasonable expectation."

Next year, MESSA insurance per individual will be \$15,419. Of that, Ferris will pay \$10,740 and the professors' share is \$4,679.

Under one of the Blue Cross plans, family coverage would be \$13,560. Of that, Ferris would pay \$10,740 and employees \$2,820.

The Blue Cross single-person plan would cost \$4,230, with Ferris paying \$3,554 and the employee \$676.

But Mike Ryan, president of the ° Ferris Faculty Association, said the plans offered by the university are cheaper in the short run but, because they are self-funded, they would become more expensive.

He said professors believe the university has the funds to fully cover the MESSA plan. The university says it has 6 percent, or \$8 million of its \$124 million general fund, in savings. Union leaders said, considering all funds, the university has about \$60 million in reserves.

"They are sitting in a lot of money. They're raising tuition, and we believe they certainly can afford our offer," Ryan said. "I expect it to be a long, long summer and a hard fall."

Administrators have said they intend to bring in a mediator to help them resolve the issues.