

FORUM

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

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Alumnus named new director of RMSC

Grand Valley alumnus Kristofer Pachla has been named the new director of the Regional Math and Science Center.

Pachla brings with him a varied background, working in K-12 and higher education. He earned a bachelor's degree in physics and mathematics from Grand Valley in 2008, and a master's degree in educational leadership from Grand Valley in 2009.

Pachla is currently completing his doctoral degree in education policy and STEM teacher professional development from George Mason University. He also serves as an adjunct professor of physics at Grand Valley.

After graduating, Pachla taught physics for Fairfax County Public Schools in Vienna, Virginia, and

then served as a graduate research assistant with the Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement at George Mason University.

Pachla, who will begin his role on April 17, said that he has always gravitated toward Grand Valley's connection to the community.

"By becoming a catalyst and resource for professional development in the region, connecting students and educators to opportunities



Kristofer Pachla

and enriching Grand Valley's community through partnerships, I hope to cement the center's role as an essential component of the regional and state STEM education system," he said.

Pachla is no stranger to the RMSC. He worked as a graduate assistant at the center during the summer of 2008. In this role, he assisted with three summer camps and taught aerodynamics and geocaching to K-12 students, among other duties.

Before joining the university, Pachla served as a science education analyst in the Division of Undergraduate Education at the National Science Foundation. In this position, he provided grant support for the division's four primary grant programs, encompassing more than 2,000

incoming proposals and more than \$2 million in awarded funding.

"Inquiry in the STEM fields has provided the nation with opportunities to walk on the moon, roll on Mars and view close-ups of the stars," he said. "If I can inspire just one person to realize their science or mathematics-related dreams, then I'll consider that a success."

He replaces Karen Meyers who will retire in May. Meyers has worked in the RMSC for 24 years, and served as director since 2008. Meyers played a crucial role in the development and execution of the various outreach services the center provides to area K-12 teachers and students. *The center hosted Science Olympiad March 18, read more on page 4.*

Across Campus

Forum will detail myGVSU Campus Climate recommendations

Recommendations and action plans related to results from the myGVSU Climate Survey will be discussed at a campus forum on Thursday, March 30, at 10:30 a.m. in the Kirkhof Center, Pere Marquette Room.

Faculty, staff and student action teams delved into the 2015 survey results to develop recommendations for the Division of Inclusion and Equity in early March.

Also at the forum, information about ongoing analysis and protocol for requesting data will be shared.

The survey results are online at www.gvsu.edu/mygvsu. The forum will be livestreamed; those unable to attend in person can view it by accessing the website or watching a recording later.

myGVSU survey

learning, living, and working on campus
gvsu.edu/mygvsu

Holocaust survivor speaks to hundreds

Holocaust survivor Madga Brown asked the audience during her presentation March 15 to leave with three ideals: protect your freedom, think before you hate, and stand up against deniers.

Brown, 89, spoke about her survival to a crowd of more than 600 people in the Kirkhof Center during a Women's History Month event. She is a great aunt of Samantha Murray, Grand Valley student and president of the Hillel chapter.

In 1944, Brown and her family were taken from their home in Hungary to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland. Yet, for Brown, her journey began before that.

Her family experienced an immediate change in their lives before they were taken to Poland. She lived in a designated area called the "ghetto" and more than 40 people were forced to live in her house.

"One day, I was a regular child, enjoying my daily life," Brown said. "What happens when the pendulum swings and your happy days are severed?"

Then on Brown's 17th birthday, she and her family were escorted into a crowded train box car. Each car held hundreds of people who traveled for



Photo by Valerie Wojciechowski

Madga Brown speaks to an audience of about 600 in the Kirkhof Center about surviving the Holocaust. Brown is the great aunt of a Grand Valley student.

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three days with no food, drink, or any idea of where they were going.

"You cannot fathom what thirst is," Brown said. "Thirst so powerful that you forget your physical pain, you forget your stress, and the only thing you can focus on is a single sip of water."

Their destination was the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. When they arrived, men and women were separated. This was the last time Brown saw many members of her family.

"We were not human beings anymore," Brown said. "Nobody talked to us. Nobody looked at us."

A year later in March 1945, Brown and her group were sent on a march to Buchenwald. After escaping, Brown and the group hid in a nearby barn, lying in piles of hay for nearly two days. Two American Armed Forces soldiers discovered Brown and her group, leading to their liberation. She moved to the U.S. in 1946.

Brown was united with her brother, Miklos Brown, in 1962. For 40 years, Brown worked in a physician's office as a certified medical assistant. She is an active member and past president of the American Association of Medical Assistants, Illinois Society. She is also a member of the Speaker's Bureau of the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. Learn more about Brown at www.magdabrown.com.

Robin Hutchings, treasurer of Hillel at Grand Valley, said it was an honor to host Brown on campus. Hutchings praised Brown's audience and said their presence was significant.

The event was organized by Grand Valley's Women's Center and Hillel chapter. Hillel International is a Jewish campus organization.

Department restructures major program

The Geography and Sustainable Planning Department has restructured its major program in order to meet industry needs, and better equip students with the necessary skills to succeed in their careers.

Beginning in fall 2017, students can choose from one of three new emphases to accompany a bachelor of arts or bachelor of sciences degree in geography. They are geospatial technology (computer cartography, geographic information systems, remote sensing, imaging processing and GPS technology), urban and regional planning, and environment and global development.

Elena Lioubimtseva, department chair, said the changes were based on

student surveys, recommendations from external program reviewers and local and national benchmarking.

"This change is in response to a higher demand for GIS specialists, urban planners and environmental professionals who have strong, often more quantitative, analytical skills specific to each of these three areas," Lioubimtseva said. "Prospective employers from all over the world are looking for students with specific, well-defined professional skill sets in addition to a broad liberal arts education."

The department held an open house March 13 to connect prospective students with faculty and advisors. A keynote presentation was given by Rachel Hood, former executive director of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council.

In addition to dividing the program into three tracks, revisions are being made to many existing courses, and multiple new courses will be offered.

Women's Center celebrates 15 years

Campus community members gathered March 20 to celebrate the Women's Center's 15th anniversary at its annual EqualiTEA event.

Students, faculty and staff members enjoyed the centuries-old tradition of combining tea parties with conversations about politics and current issues. The 14th annual event took place in the Kirkhof Center.

Marlene Kowalski-Braun, associate vice provost for Student Affairs and assistant vice president for Inclusion and Equity, gave remarks, telling



Photo by Amanda Pitts

Attendees at EqualiTEA pose with props in a photo booth. The event celebrated the Women's Center's 15th anniversary.

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Faculty and staff members can find an online "Sketches" submission form on the Web at www.gvsu.edu/forum.

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Grand Valley State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.



GVFaces

Jodee Hunt, Faculty Fellow, OURS

Jodee Hunt learned of a job opening at Grand Valley while she was nearing the end of her graduate school career at the University of Kansas.

Two weeks after defending her dissertation, she moved to Allendale and began teaching biology classes at the university. Twenty-two years later, she's tackling a new challenge.

Hunt joined the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship as a faculty fellow, and will interact with academic units and faculty members who conduct scholarship and creative work with students. She may directly work with students, but her focus will be to facilitate faculty mentoring of undergraduate scholars.

Hunt said she would like to see more opportunities for faculty members to get involved in mentorship.

"Working with undergrads can be very intensive, but it's really worth that effort," Hunt said. "It's not always obvious, especially to newer faculty, that this position can be rewarding."

Since she started at the university in 1995, Hunt, professor of biology, has held various



Jodee Hunt

leadership positions. She said being a faculty fellow is yet another opportunity to make an impact.

"Grand Valley is frequently offering faculty, staff, administrators, and even students, opportunities to serve in positions in which we are still evolving," Hunt said. "Development is still happening in a big way, so anyone that is eager to make an impact has the opportunity to do so."

As a faculty fellow, Hunt focuses on being a mentor. She said it is a natural transition. Since she was a graduate student, Hunt has mentored 50 students in diverse fields.

What's Ahead

Lecturer to discuss issues of gender, globalization

An upcoming lecture will reveal new understandings of the central role that women and gender played in the traditionally male world of empires and overseas exploration.

Allyson Poska, professor of history at Mary Washington University, will present "Reconsidering the Spanish Atlantic: How Women's Lives Reframe Spain's Early Modern Empire" on Monday, March 27, at 4 p.m. The event will take place in the Holton-Hooker Learning and Living Center, room 121. Sponsored by the History Department and College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the event is LIB 100 and 201 approved for students.

Poska's work primarily demonstrates how new historical knowledge of women's lives in early modern Europe and the Atlantic World changes the understanding of early modern imperialism and the Atlantic World, defined as the rim of settlements in America populated by Europeans and Africans from the 15th century forward.

"Issues relating to gender and globalization are very relevant to our times as the interaction between peoples with very different resources, cultures, and access to power create conflicts and moral dilemmas as difficult to resolve today as they have ever been," said Paul Murphy, professor of history and lecture co-coordinator.

Poska's book, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia*, won the Roland H. Bainton Prize given by the 16th Century Studies Association in 2006.

Wesorick Center, KCAD partner to host artist for lecture, exhibition

Nationally recognized artist Ted Meyer believes in the power of art to heal both physical and emotional scars.

Through a collaboration between The Bonnie Wesorick Center for Health Care Transformation at Grand Valley and Kendall College of Art and Design of Ferris State University (KCAD), Meyer will visit West Michigan to discuss his journey and share stories of the patients he has chronicled on canvas.



Ted Meyer

He will present a lecture at Grand Valley in conjunction with an exhibit of his artwork at KCAD. Details of these events, which are free and open to the public, are below.

- **"Scarred for Life: Healing Through Art,"** the Distinguished Wesorick Lectureship, sponsored by the Wesorick Center, is Tuesday, March 28, from 1-2 p.m. at the DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium. RSVP online at www.gvsu.edu/wesorick/.

- **Meyer will give an informal presentation** on March 28 from 5-6 p.m. at the Mary Idema Pew Library, multipurpose room. This event is sponsored by several Grand Valley departments and colleges.

- **"Art and Healing," a collaborative exhibition** between KCAD students and Meyer will run March 21-April 8 at KCAD's Helen Miller Kendall Gallery, 17 Fountain St. NW in Grand Rapids. More information is at www.kcad.edu/events/healing-through-art/.

At the lecture, Meyer will discuss his project, "Scarred for Life: Monoprints of Human Scars," which highlights the courage of people who have been in medical crises or accidents through artwork. Evelyn Clingerman, executive director of the Wesorick Center, said research shows that engaging with art has positive health and spiritual benefits.

"In the Wesorick Center we role-model and teach others how to create places where people can thrive, not simply survive, and how to apply a health care paradigm that is more than fixing a scar or a body part," Clingerman said. The Wesorick Center is an endowed center promoting interprofessional collaboration through the Kirkhof College of Nursing.

Meyer is the current artist-in-residence at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine. His artwork has been displayed internationally at museums, hospitals and galleries. Learn more about Meyer at www.tedmeyer.com.

MIPERC hosts annual health expo

Students from two universities and the Kent ISD Early College Program will host the fourth annual Midwest Interprofessional Practice, Education and Research Center (MIPERC) Health Expo on Tuesday, March 28.

More than 300 presenters and attendees are expected at the expo, which will run from 5-7 p.m. in the Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room.

More than 40 teams of students from Grand Valley, Ferris State University and the Early College Program will present research on aspects of student wellness. Attendees will have opportunities to win prizes.

MIPERC is an organization founded by Grand Valley, Grand Rapids Medical Education Partners and Michigan State University-College of Human Medicine to develop regional infrastructure for interprofessional education, practice and research.

Details about the health expo are posted online at www.gvsu.edu/vphealth.

Mosaic Lecture will explore importance of math to Native American cultures

An upcoming lecture will discuss number systems developed and used by the Native cultures of the Americas, and the historical importance of mathematics to Native American cultures.

Robert Megginson, professor of mathematics and associate dean for undergraduate and graduate education for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan, will deliver the fourth annual Mosaic Lecture on Wednesday, March 29, at 7:30 p.m. in Manitou Hall, room 122. The lecture is approved for LIB 100 and 201 classes.

Jonathan Hodges, professor of mathematics and Mosaic Lecture coordinator, explained that people often think about mathematics as being independent of culture, but Megginson's lecture will prove that's not the case.

"Throughout history, diverse groups have made significant contributions to the development of mathematics, and it's important to understand and appreciate how mathematics reflects broader cultural values and needs," Hodges said.

Before his current role at the University of Michigan, Megginson served as the deputy director of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute in California.

Campus groups will honor women at ceremony

Four campus organizations and departments will recognize the achievements of students, faculty and staff members at the annual Celebrating Women Awards on Thursday, March 30, from 3-4:30 p.m. in the Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room.

The Women's Commission will present three awards: Maxine Swanson Award to Jennifer Palm, assistant to The Graduate School; Unsung Hero Award to Autumn Gorsline-Davis, academic department coordinator for Modern Languages and Literatures; and the Community Impact Award to Allison Ford, head coach of Grand Valley's synchronized skating team.

Awards and scholarships also will be presented by the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department, Women's Center, and Positive Black Women.

RSVP for the ceremony online at www.gvsu.edu/wcommission.

Hate crimes, discrimination topic of Sigal lecture

An upcoming lecture by a renowned interfaith scholar and activist will focus on hate crimes and religious discrimination in America.

Simran Jeet Singh, assistant professor of religion at Trinity University and senior religion fellow with the Sikh Coalition, will present the annual Rabbi Philip Sigal Memorial Lecture on Thursday, March 30, from 7-8:30 p.m. in the DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium. This event is LIB 100 and 201 approved for students.



Simran Jeet Singh

"As we often see, religious, racial and ethnic minorities in

America get lumped together as a categorical 'other,' and suffer similar acts of discrimination or violence," said Katie Gordon, campus interfaith resources coordinator and program manager for the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. "The way that many religious minorities are targeted calls for not only an intersectional understanding of race and religion, but also an intersectional response from the communities the discrimination affects."

Singh's expertise focuses on the history of religious communities and literatures in South Asia. He is a prolific writer who has contributed more than 50 opinion pieces to news outlets, including the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and the *Guardian*.

The annual lecture is named for Rabbi Phillip J. Sigal, a pioneer of the interfaith movement in West Michigan. After Sigal's death in 1985, a group of local academic and interfaith enthusiasts established the Sigal memorial lecture.

This year's lecture is sponsored by Campus Interfaith Resources, the Community Reading Project through the Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies and Office of Integrative Learning and Advising, Division of Inclusion and Equity, Muslim Students Association and the Religious Studies program.

To register for this event, presented by the Kaufman Interfaith Institute, visit www.gvsu.edu/s/Opr. For more information, visit www.gvsu.edu/interfaith, or call x15702.

FACULTY AND STAFF SKETCHES

In the News

Eric Kunnen, associate director of eLearning and Emerging Technologies, was interviewed by *Rapid Growth* for a story about how technology affects education.

Bowen named assistant vice president

Provost Gayle R. Davis announced the appointment of **Bonnie Bowen** as assistant vice president for Academic Affairs.

Bowen is the assistant dean in the College of Education; she will join the Office of the Provost in July after Kathy Gulembo retires.

Bowen joined Grand Valley in 2000. In her current role, she is responsible for policy creation and implementation, enhanced grant oversight and management of the college's budget. She has served the College of Education as administrative assistant and the financial assistant to the dean.



Bonnie Bowen

As assistant vice president, Bowen will be responsible for budget and resource management for the Academic and Student Affairs Division.

Davis said Bowen will work closely with Gulembo to ensure a smooth transition.

Sketches

WGVU-FM received the Station of the Year award from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters during a ceremony March 8 in Lansing.

David Oliver, engineering supervisor at WGVU Public Media, received the Carl E. Lee Broadcast Engineering Excellence Award from the Michigan Association of Broadcasters.

Amy Russell, associate professor of biology, wrote an article, "Fatalities at Wind Turbines May Threaten Population Viability of a Migratory Bat," in the journal *Biological Conservation*.

Dan Bergman, associate professor and chair of biomedical sciences, supervised students who gave a presentation, "Chronic Effects of Nonylphenol on Reproductive Behavior and Development of Crayfish," at the Annual Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Craig Benjamin, professor of history, Honors College, gave presentations, "Soviet Central Asia and the Presentation of History" and "Big History of the First Domesticates" at the World

History Association Conference at the University of Ghent, Belgium; and "A Little Big History of Private E.E. Benjamin" and "The Globalization of Big History" at the International Big History Association Conference at the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Brent Smith, assistant professor of liberal studies and religious studies, wrote a chapter, "Can't I Just Learn about Religion in My Church, Mosque, or Temple?" for a book, *Religion in Five Minutes*, published by Equinox Publishing.

Bopi Biddanda, professor of water resources gave an invited seminar, "Finding a 'Goldilocks Zone' for Carbon Cycling in a Great Lakes Watershed," at the Departmento Ecologia, University of Granada, in Spain. He also wrote an article, "A View of Michigan's Muskegon Lake Observatory Buoy," published in *Eos, Earth and Space News*.

Polly J. Diven, professor of political science and director of international relations, wrote an article, "Leveraging Aid: How Sri Lanka Hedges against Superpower Influence," at the annual conference of the International Studies Association in Baltimore, Maryland.

Jody Vogelzang, assistant professor of public health, wrote a chapter, "Creating Public Policy and Advocating for Nutrition Policies," for a book, *Nutrition in Public Health*, published by Jones and Bartlett Learning.

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audience members their attendance shows their support of the center, as well as gender justice and student success.

"The team of Women's Center staff members are boldly guiding a dynamic future of the center," she said, adding that gifts to the center's Enrichment Circle will support current and future programs.

The Women's Center Enrichment Circle was established in 2012 to provide the center with necessary resources to achieve plans for the next 10 years. Donations totaling \$34,000 started the circle; new donations will go toward the Women's Center Endowment Fund.

Jennifer Moss, WGVU Morning Edition host and reporter, was the host. She has served on the Women's Center Advisory Board since its inception in 2001.

Since the Women's Center was founded in 2001, it has assisted hundreds of students each year, hosted hundreds of programs, raised funds for organizations that work with women and girls, and provided dozens of nonprofit agencies with volunteers.

EqualTEA was among the events celebrating March as Women's History Month. For more information, visit www.gvsu.edu/women_cen.

RMSC hosts annual Science Olympiad

More than 1,000 local middle and high school students spent March 18 on campus building bottle rockets, constructing hovercrafts, solving crimes, exploring the chemistry of food and much more during the 33rd annual Region 12 Science Olympiad Tournament.

Hosted by Grand Valley's Regional Math and Science Center, the event gave students from more than 60 middle and high schools from West Michigan the opportunity to showcase their knowledge in biology, earth science, chemistry, physics and technology during various competitions.

"The students are participating in an event that acknowledges their gifts, passions, and abilities," said Karen Meyers, RMSC director.

"They are coached, encouraged and applauded for their success by their peers and learn that it is OK to be a 'science nerd.' They are rewarded for problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork in a setting that develops an understanding of how the world works."

During Grand Valley's first Science Olympiad Tournament in 1984, only 26 teams



Photo by John Meyers

Students from Byron Center compete in the Science Olympiad experimental design challenge.

competed from schools in Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, Allegan and Oceana counties. Now, approximately 70 teams sign up to compete each year. The top teams advanced to the state tournament, set for April 29 at Michigan State University.

Meyers said the yearly success of the Science Olympiad can be attributed to an expansive team effort, through volunteering by students, faculty and staff members, and area teachers and parents who serve as team coaches.