

WINTER 2012

# GRAND VALLEY

## MAGAZINE



**Students are  
fierce about rugby,  
50 other  
sports clubs**

# Contents

A construction worker wearing a red hard hat, safety glasses, and a tan jacket is working on a large, rusty steel beam. The worker is positioned in a trench, and a yellow level is visible in the background. The scene is set outdoors, with a concrete wall and a dirt ground.

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**GRAND VALLEY**  
MAGAZINE

See the entire magazine online at  
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Connect with students, faculty, staff and alumni  
through Grand Valley's official social media channels.

### On the cover:

*photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker*

The women's rugby team is one of 50 sports club  
teams on campus. Read more on page 14.

### On these pages:

*photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker*

Work on the Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and  
Information Commons continues through the winter.  
The library on the Allendale Campus and the new  
L. William Seidman Center on the Pew Grand Rapids  
Campus are set to open in 2013.

The *Grand Valley Magazine* is printed on FSC-certified paper manufactured  
with electricity in the form of renewable energy (wind, hydro, and biogas).  
The cover includes a minimum of 10% postconsumer recovered fiber.

## Bookmarks

Looking for a good book? Check out these recommendations from Grand Valley faculty and staff members:

### **Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide**

(New York University Press, 2006)

by Henry Jenkins

Kim Roberts, associate professor of film and video, enjoys the way Jenkins provides examples of how consumers of media are leaving behind their passive ways and opting to engage in the story worlds being created through a variety of media. “He touches on several facets of how communities are built around these worlds and what it means to grassroots activism, media literacy, corporate branding, politics and popular culture,” she said. “He writes in a style that is approachable and fun, whereas other books on this complex topic can be overwhelming and intimidating. It made me want to jump in and join up!”

### **In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto**

(Penguin Press, 2008)

by Michael Pollan

“I recently saw a magazine ad for frozen waffles, with smiling children and the words: ‘Nutrition has never had a tastier disguise,’” said Jo Miller, associate professor of English. “I thought of this book, in which Pollan exposes the role of ‘nutritionism,’ an ideology that has transformed food in our culture.” Miller said the author encourages people to think of food as a delivery system for nutrients, rather than as a social occasion or an important part of cultural identity. This ideology strips food of its important social role in our lives that leaves us, Pollan writes, vulnerable to the whims of food experts, who have things to sell us.

### **Big History and the Future of Humanity**

(Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

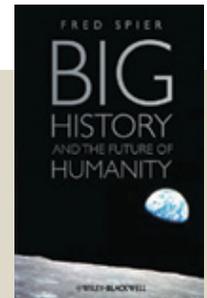
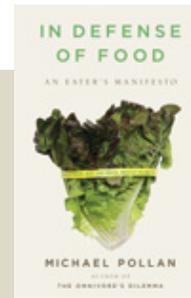
by Fred Spier

Craig Benjamin, associate professor of history, said this little book by one of the world’s finest big historians offers a breathtaking overview of the history of the cosmos, Earth, and humanity in just 250 pages. “By placing human history in the context of the great sweep of cosmic history, Spier is able to show us where we have come from, where we are now, and what the future might hold for humans, our planet and the universe,” Benjamin said.

An archive of past Bookmarks is now online at [www.gvsu.edu/gvmagazine/books](http://www.gvsu.edu/gvmagazine/books). The website also offers a page to submit a book for recommendation and a listing of previous Community Reading Project books.

*Special order these books at University Bookstore and receive a 20 percent discount.*

*Contact: [ubsbooks@gvsu.edu](mailto:ubsbooks@gvsu.edu) or (616) 331-3521.*



## Land purchase will expand health care programs

Grand Valley purchased land in downtown Grand Rapids for \$3.25 million to allow for future expansion of its health care programs.

The Board of Trustees approved the purchase in November. The 1.6 acre site is adjacent to the university’s Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences on Michigan Street, Grand Rapids’ “Medical Mile.” Rockford Development Group will manage the site until the university is ready to begin construction.

Grand Valley is the region’s No. 1 provider of health care

workers, and 5,000 students currently study in one of the university’s health care programs. CHS opened in 2003. It is full to capacity, and officials said additional laboratories and classrooms are needed to accommodate enrollment demand.

Officials are working to identify which health-related programs would be placed in the new building on the Lafayette-Hastings site, which is bordered by Hastings and Trowbridge streets and Lafayette and Prospect avenues.



photo by Amanda Pitts

Students in the Radiologic and Imaging program work in a lab in the Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences. Grand Valley purchased land that will allow for expansion of health care programs.

## Aging population dominates health care forecast

Grand Valley released its third edition of “Health Check: Analyzing Trends in West Michigan” on January 5. The report, supported by a grant from by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Blue Care Network, identifies significant health-related issues facing Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon and Allegan counties.

Paul Isely, professor and chair of economics, said demographics is one of the biggest stories coming out of the report. “The aging population is one reason why we’re seeing increases in obesity, which is leading to increases in diabetes and asthma,” said Isely. “The health care needs of the baby boom generation will change dramatically.”

Isely said caring for the large number of people with asthma and diabetes totals about \$800 million, more than the compensation costs of the entire furniture industry in West Michigan.

Hari Singh, professor of economics, said the report shows a significant increase in the number of individuals in the 45-64 and the over 65 age groups, and a drop in the number of individuals in the 18-34 age group in West Michigan. Singh said if the trend continues, the community will face a substantial burden of chronic health problems and, as a result, an increase in health care expenditures.

“The good news is we can change some of the bad trends by modifying our behavior,” said Singh. “For example, exercising would reduce obesity, which would bring down health care costs. Another focus is low birth weight babies. These babies tend to have a lifetime of health issues. Better prenatal care would reduce health care costs significantly.”

Other challenges include a continued nursing shortage. The report shows that each year in West Michigan, 900 fewer



photo by Adam Bird

Paul Isely, professor and chair of economics, leads the audience through the third area Health Check, which analyzes health care trends in West Michigan.

nurses are being trained than needed. On the positive side, the report shows that cancer rates, strokes, heart disease and smoking are all down.

View the report online at [tinyurl.com/7d4qj3a](http://tinyurl.com/7d4qj3a).

## GVSU remembers many campus contributions of Meijer



Frederik ‘Fred’ Meijer, pictured at the WGVS studios, was a tremendous supporter of Grand Valley and the West Michigan community. He died on November 25 at age 91.

People at Grand Valley and in Michigan mourned the passing of Frederik “Fred” Meijer, who died on November 25.

Meijer, chairman emeritus of Meijer Inc., was a successful businessman and generous philanthropist who cared deeply about the Grand Rapids and West Michigan community. Throughout his life he made many contributions that helped local medical institutions, educational facilities and nature preserves. He was 91.

“Mr. Meijer’s generosity, from the beginning of Grand Valley’s history, has been critical to our success and has helped make us the university that we are today,” said President Thomas J. Haas.

A member of the Advisory Cabinet for the Grand Valley University Foundation, Meijer was a university supporter since the early days of the college. He generously gave to help create the Meijer Public Broadcast Center and Frederik Meijer Honors College. See more on page 28.

After donating land to help create the Meijer Campus in Holland, he became a member of the “Land Barons.” Under the leadership of Richard M. DeVos, this small group of philanthropists helped secure land and funding for expansion of Grand Valley’s Grand Rapids campaign.

# Meijer Foundation gifts famed ‘Portraits of American Poets’ to Grand Valley

A poetry-inspired gift to Grand Valley from the Meijer Foundation was unveiled following the Fall Arts Celebration Poetry Night in October. “Portraits of American Poets,” is a series of 28 paintings by Michigan native Jack Richard Smith, who now resides in Taos, New Mexico. He is widely regarded as one of the most powerful contemporary painters working in the country.

The artist and a number of poets in the series were on hand for the unveiling. The series, which is on exhibit in the Eberhard Center, includes portraits of U.S. Poet Laureates Ted Kooser, Billy Collins and Charles Simic; Noble Laureate Derek Walcott; and Michigan-born poets Jim Harrison and Dan Gerber, among others. The collection of 6-by-6-inch oil on copper paintings was first exhibited at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, prior to a 2009 tour to various U.S. cities.

Smith, born in Fremont in 1950, began his training at



photo by Dianne Carroll-Burdick

President Thomas J. Haas and Marcia Haas look at paintings of notable poets by Jack Richard Smith, at right. The series of paintings, gifted to Grand Valley by the Meijer Foundation, was unveiled October 21 following Poetry Night in the Eberhard Center.

Interlochen Arts Academy when he was only 16. As a young man he was also encouraged by both Harrison and Gerber to pursue his love of poetry.

The artist spent three years traveling across the country to the homes and studios of poets he admired because of their important contributions

to literary America. Spending the time to sketch, photograph and converse with each one, the paintings were done after Smith returned to his studio in Taos.

## Grand Valley ranked top 20 in world for sustainable practices

Grand Valley ranked 16th for sustainable practices in an international survey called the GreenMetric World University Ranking.

The ranking system was developed by faculty members from Universitas Indonesia and allows universities throughout the world to compare their efforts in sustainability and environment-friendly university management. The system also allows universities in developing countries to

evaluate how sustainable they are compared to universities in developed countries.

“Our efforts continue to shine, and now on a global scale,” said Norman Christopher, director of the Sustainable Community Development Initiative. “This new recognition can be a platform for many new discussions, such as our partnerships with international universities where our students travel to study.”

## Representing Grand Valley

Steve Vander Clay, '89, wears a Laker fleece while vacationing with family in North Carolina.

Do you represent Grand Valley when you travel? If so, send a photo of yourself wearing a Grand Valley T-shirt with a brief description to Grand Valley Magazine at [gvmagazine@gvsu.edu](mailto:gvmagazine@gvsu.edu) and it may be seen in a future publication.



# Mobile app tracks grades, account balances

Students can access their grades and view their class schedule on an iPhone or Android.

The myGV mobile application, a free app launched last semester, provides campus news, class schedules, grades, housing assignments, and account balances and transactions.

The framework to get started on the app was provided by SunGard, a software and information technology company that specializes in higher education. A team of staff members from Grand Valley's Information Technology department designed and developed the features and functions of the app.

"We've noticed a demand for something like this for a while," said Brian Snyder, web programmer in the IT department. "We want to provide an easy and convenient way for the campus community to retrieve campus information and personal account information."

Snyder said new features for faculty members include class lists, students enrolled in each class and meal plan balances.

Students in Grand Valley's Mobile Applications and Services Lab in the School of Computing and Information Systems earlier developed the Laker Mobile app, a free app that features news, maps, multimedia content and a directory.



Students can access their grades, class schedule and more with a new mobile app developed by the Information Technology department.

## Report shows solid return on investment

National and state data show that Grand Valley continues to excel in the areas of graduation rates, alumni working in Michigan and holding down the cost of a college degree. The university issued its fifth Accountability Report at its November 4 Board of Trustees meeting.

The report has been cited as a national model for universities to prove their return on investment. Grand Valley puts together the report using sourced data that shows the university attracts students with academic performances in the top tier for the state's public universities.



### Highlights from this year's report:

- Grand Valley's graduation rate is near the top of the 15 public universities in the state
- Of recent graduates who are employed, 84 percent are working in Michigan
- In 10 years, Grand Valley's enrollment has gone up more than 44 percent, with students from every corner of Michigan
- Grand Valley's tuition remains in the bottom half of Michigan's universities
- Grand Valley receives the lowest state funding per student of any of Michigan's public universities
- Grand Valley has the largest share in the growth of degrees granted in Michigan since 2001
- The university pumps more than \$680 million into the Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon counties



The full report can be viewed at [www.gvsu.edu/accountability](http://www.gvsu.edu/accountability), click on "Accountability."

# Biggest Laker

Student loses more than 150 pounds using campus resources — by Leah Zuber

Ruben Rodriguez's life drastically changed after his father was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in the summer of 2010.

Rodriguez weighed more than 300 pounds and decided that he would do all he could not to follow in his father's footsteps. "I was scared for my life from that point on," he said. "I was pretty big and I knew it. I thought I was going to be the next one diagnosed in my family."

Rodriguez was also concerned about living long enough to see his niece grow up. "She was 3 months old when I decided to lose weight. I want to be here for her, and I knew I wouldn't if I continued to live the way I was," he said.

He immediately began dieting after his father was diagnosed and the results were dramatic. With support from family and friends, regular exercise routines at Grand Valley's Campus Recreation Center and

making healthy choices from a campus meal plan, Rodriguez lost 156 pounds in 13 months.

A secondary education major from Holland, Rodriguez continued to diet and began to work out when classes started and he moved back to campus that fall. "One day my roommate and I decided to train for a 5K, which is when I started using the Rec Center. I used the treadmills, track, everything I could. A month later I began lifting weights. When I combined dieting, cardio and weight lifting, the pounds began to drop," he said.

## Favorite healthy choices

**Breakfast:** Egg whites, one slice of wheat toast

**Mid-morning snack:** Protein shake after workout

**Lunch:** Turkey sandwich with no dressing or cheese

**Dinner:** Salad with light or no dressing

He cut out fast food and drinks loaded with sugar, and chose to eat salads and healthier meals. "A lot of people think it's hard to eat healthy on campus, but really there are a lot of healthy options here," he said. "My favorites are the salads at the Connection, and River Landing in the Kirkhof Center." Campus Dining offers nutritional information on its website, [www.gvsu.edu/campusdine](http://www.gvsu.edu/campusdine).

Rodriguez said the most challenging part was setting goals each week and sometimes not reaching them.

"A lot of friends went out to eat and I couldn't go with them. It was tough to watch other people eating, but I knew it was worth it in the long run," he said.

People wanting to lose weight should do what they want to do at the gym and not worry about what others are doing, Rodriguez said. "If you can only walk on the treadmill instead of run, by all means, walk on the treadmill. Don't let anyone bring you down," he said.

Today, Rodriguez maintains a healthy weight by working out five days a week at the Recreation Center. He rotates chest and triceps workouts with shoulder and biceps sets, and spends one hour on cardio machines each time.



photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Ruben Rodriguez, pictured in the Recreation Center, lost more than 150 pounds using campus resources and services. The Holland native was motivated to change his habits after his father was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. At his heaviest, Rodriguez weighed more than 300 pounds.

"If you can only walk on the treadmill instead of run, by all means, walk on the treadmill. Don't let anyone bring you down."

— Ruben Rodriguez

# King week speakers inspire, encourage campus to act

Keynote speakers during Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Week urged the campus community to continue to work for human rights and be inspired by King's messages as, they said, there is much work left to do.

Attorney, professor and civil rights advocate Michelle Alexander gave two presentations that stemmed from her book, *The New Jim Crow*, in which she likened America's criminal justice system to the Jim Crow laws that regulated blacks in the South to second-class citizens.

"The system of mass incarceration today functions like the systems we supposedly left behind years ago," she said.

She projected that the nation's war on drugs, formalized during the Reagan administration, led to the dramatic rise in the prison population. Over a 30-year period, she said, the number of prisoners quintupled to more

than 2 million today, the most of any country in the world.

Alexander said only a national social movement, similar to the civil rights movement of the King era, will remedy mass incarceration.

In a presentation on January 16, Bakari Kitwana, author of *Hip-Hop Activism in the Obama Era*, drew connections between activists from the civil rights era and activists from the hip-hop era.

Kitwana said the 2008 election of President Obama was the first political victory for young people. He projected that political apathy and unrest occurred because the young voters who helped elect Obama into office stopped being political activists, although there is a resurgence in activism with Occupy Wall Street.

He suggested to students in the audience that they do not need to wait for an invitation to be an activist. "Just jump in,"



photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Michelle Alexander gives a presentation in the Cook-DeWitt Center during Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Week. The author of 'The New Jim Crow,' Alexander said a social movement is needed to stop mass incarceration in America.

Kitwana said. "To be inspiring to others, the most important thing is to be engaged yourself."

Alexander recognized that attempting to overhaul America's criminal justice system is a daunting task.

"We are so rooted in our political and social structures that this will not fade away without a radical shift," she said. "We need to go back and pick up where people like Dr. King left off."

## Laker baseball team travels to Cuba

You wouldn't think that a coach would be pleased that his team dropped three games in a row.

But when your team travels to a communist country, plays against its elite all-star team and represents the university well, you would understand.

The Laker baseball team traveled to Havana, Cuba, in early January on a humanitarian mission with First Hand Aid, a Grand Rapids nonprofit organization that brings medical supplies and aid to Cuba.

The Lakers brought bags of over-the-counter medicine, toiletries and other supplies to deliver to Cuban clinics and

baseball equipment to give to Cuban youth. They played three exhibition games against the Cuban national team.

"Our trip was extremely successful," said head coach Steve Lyon, who marks his 15th year at Grand Valley this season. "The people there were just great and our guys had a great experience on the playing field and off."

The Cuba trip was more than two years in the making. Lyon said travel agents first discouraged him because of the necessary international flights, but then Athletic Director Tim Selgo met officials from First Hand Aid who helped with travel licenses and other details.



photo by Charlie Pryor

Laker baseball players pose with players from the Cuban national team after a game in Havana. Grand Valley played three exhibition games in Cuba while on a humanitarian trip with First Hand Aid.

Catcher Jared Cowan, a senior from Davison, said it was the trip of a lifetime. "Not everybody gets to go to a

country most people can't visit and see a culture that most people can't see," he said.

## UICA honors student for arts advocacy and vision — by Mary Isca Pirkola

Not everybody gets a custom-made piece of jewelry designed in their honor. But then, Amber Stout isn't just anybody.

Stout, who will graduate from Grand Valley in April, is an art and design major, with an emphasis in graphic design and a minor in non-profit administration. The Women + the Arts committee at the Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts in Grand Rapids, selected Stout for a Junior Maven Award in October because of her involvement with an after-school arts program, ArtWorks.

The Maven Award is given to innovative women who embody the spirit of an arts advocate and generously share their creative vision and wisdom to make the community a better place. Previous Mavens have included Kate Pew Wolters, member

of the Grand Valley Board of Trustees who established the Kate and Richard Wolters Foundation, which is supportive of nonprofit arts groups; and artist Linda LaFontsee, who has mentored and showcased many artists at LaFontsee Gallery/Underground Studio.

Stout, a native of Grand Rapids, first became involved with ArtWorks as a senior at Northview High School. "I was so fortunate to be selected for the printmaking group," said Stout. "It was led by Alynn Guerra, who did the 2011 Festival of the Arts poster." Stout's student group designed and printed banners for a client, the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, as part of an emerald ash borer public awareness campaign.

The UICA committee said

they chose to honor Stout because she represented everything they were looking for in a Junior Maven: her long history with the ArtWorks program, first as an intern, then as a lead artist; her dedication to the Avenue for the Arts; and her continued involvement with UICA while actively pursuing a career in graphic design. The award was presented at a luncheon that highlighted the 10th anniversary of UICA's ArtWorks youth job-training program, for youth interested in creative careers.

"Amber is a student with an exceptionally inquisitive mind," said Dellas Henke, professor of art and design. "She also has a fearlessness to try new things, to 'fail' even, which is why she succeeds so often. These are qualities that are rarely so apparent in an undergraduate career, especially at the same time."

Last summer, Stout returned to the ArtWorks program as a lead artist to teach graphic design to her own group of 13 young students. Much of their work followed the themes of "take flight," "soar" and "nurture" and were loosely related to the ArtWorks program, which was featured at the very luncheon where Stout received her award. "The experience not only gave me skills, but also a bit of confidence to try printmaking techniques at Grand Valley," she said.



Her actual award was a unique jewelry design created by Renee Zettle-Sterling, associate professor of art and design. She created a silver pendant with touches of gold and a matching pair of earrings, as a more youthful design than the traditional brooch awarded to Mavens.

The Dwelling Place's Avenue of the Arts Market has also benefited from both intern and volunteer efforts by Stout, as she managed several community events and worked to oversee the entire 2010 operation. While still a student, she also served as an arts administration intern, led tours of exhibitions at UICA, and worked as a student web and graphic designer with the Community Research Institute in Grand Valley's Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy.

"Amber defies easy distinctions between being locally and globally focused," said Paul Wittenbraker, associate professor of art and design. "She has a deep love of Grand Rapids, her hometown, but is also engaged with ideas that resonate in broad cultural contexts."



*photos by Amanda Pitts*

Amber Stout received a Junior Maven Award from UICA for her commitment to arts in the community. Above is the pendant created for Stout by an art and design faculty member.

# LAKER ATHLETICS BY THE NUMBERS



8

straight Directors' Cup trophies as top all-around athletic program in Division II

11

national championships (4 football, 2 soccer and 1 each for women's basketball, volleyball, women's cross country, women's indoor track and field, and women's outdoor track and field)

6' 8"

Ben Lanning is tallest Laker men's basketball player

51.2

percent of 531 student athletes have a 3.0 GPA or higher and will earn academic honors

5' 2"

Jasmine Padin is shortest Laker women's basketball player; also 5th all-time in total assists (378)

13

consecutive GLIAC Presidents' Cup trophies as conference's top overall program



768

wins (most by any Laker coach) for softball head coach Doug Woods in his 21-year coaching career

1

university (in Division I, II, III) to win women's cross country, indoor and outdoor track and field national championships in 1 academic year (2010-2011)

photo by Elizabeth Lienau

## Making connections, making a difference

When Lakers work together they can do anything. No one knows that better than Grand Valley supporters Dan Carter, '84, and Carl Erickson, who both rallied their respective employees to make a difference for the university and the community.

Carter is a partner at

Hungerford, Aldrin, Nichols and Carter, PC, and Erickson is a former professor of computer science at Grand Valley and president and co-founder of Atomic Object. They both led successful Alumni Workplace Connections programs in their workplaces last year.

The program is designed

to connect graduates and their companies in support of university projects. Individual gifts from alumni and other Grand Valley supporters within the company combine to increase the size of the overall gift, which is often matched by the employer. Giving back as a team allows alumni to relive the school spirit they experienced during their college years, and generate excitement throughout a company or organization.

### Hungerford, Aldrin, Nichols and Carter, PC

Positive experiences with Seidman College of Business graduates inspired Carter, former employee Kyle Purdy, '03 and '08, and Janet Bruner, '07 and '08, to give back to the university by creating an Alumni Workplace Connections program to benefit the L. William Seidman Center. Carter asked for a five-year commitment from employees, 70 percent of whom are associated with Grand Valley in some way. The company offered to match any gifts raised in the program.

Carter stressed the fact that even small gifts can make a difference. "Combined with the gifts of others over five years, \$2 a paycheck could add up to more than \$10,000. Most of us wouldn't miss \$2 from each paycheck," he said.

Another reason Carter started the program was to reconnect with the university that significantly influenced his career and continues to influence the West Michigan community. More than \$30,000 has been committed by the firm and its employees for the Seidman Center.

Carter said he is impressed with the talent he sees coming from the Seidman



Dan Carter, '84, partner at Hungerford, Aldrin, Nichols and Carter, PC, led a successful Alumni Workplace Connections program.



"Supporting Grand Valley is like economic development for Michigan."

— Dan Carter, '84

College of Business. "Supporting Grand Valley is like economic development for Michigan," he said.

### Atomic Object

Carl Erickson's long-standing relationship with Grand Valley inspired him to launch an Alumni Workplace Connections program to help with the construction of the Mary Idema Pew Library Learning and Information Commons. Erickson was a professor of computing and information systems at Grand Valley for 10 years before establishing



photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

**Carl Erickson, president and co-founder of Atomic Object, said about 50 percent of his employees are Grand Valley graduates and that is one reason why it was important to him to give back to the university as a company.**

Atomic Object, a software design and development company in Grand Rapids. He approached his employees with the hope they would see how they and the company have benefited from Grand Valley. Nearly 50 percent of Atomic Object's employees are Grand Valley graduates. The company also offers internship positions to Grand Valley students.

Erickson said he cares about the relationships he has with the university and his employees. "I work with smart and creative people," Erickson said. "I am happy to add a new word — generous — to describe the people I work with." Their generosity was demonstrated through their collective gift of \$28,000 for the Pew Library.

Erickson treasures his relationship with the university and the opportunities it has provided him and Atomic Object. "I will always have a soft spot in my heart for

Grand Valley," he said.

These two programs raised nearly \$60,000. Carter and Erickson both said that the university is a strong factor in the West Michigan economy. "Grand Valley's investment in West Michigan is a critical component of the economic transition our state is going through," said Erickson. "The university provides an affordable, high-quality education and Grand Valley students tend to stay in Michigan. We need smart, educated young people coming into the workforce."

As more Lakers fill the leadership ranks at businesses and organizations across the country, the opportunity for Alumni Workplace Connections programs is growing, which means great things for Grand Valley.

## Giving Matters

### Please take our call

Grand Valley students are supporting the university and learning critical skills by contacting alumni and parents through the Telephone Outreach Program. Student callers share Grand Valley news, update contact information and identify opportunities to give back to the university. By calling supporters, students learn communication and leadership skills that help them succeed in their careers.

You can help them and receive university updates by simply taking their call. For more information about the Telephone Outreach Program, go to [www.gvsu.edu/giving/top](http://www.gvsu.edu/giving/top).

## Alumni leadership challenged to action

At the Alumni Celebration of Leadership event at Reserve last fall, more than 150 alumni leaders celebrated the past year and discussed the future of Grand Valley.

President Thomas J. Haas, past President Mark A. Murray and President Emeritus Arend D. Lubbers were in attendance and spoke of how alumni can affect the university. "How you live, and what you give are the most important factors in the university's future," Lubbers said. Haas issued a challenge for alumni to double their support by 2015. The challenge was accepted by those present as representatives of alumni leadership. Audio clips of the celebration and photos are available online at [www.gvsu.edu/giving/events](http://www.gvsu.edu/giving/events).

## February is Matching Gift Month

You can double the impact of your gift to Grand Valley by taking advantage of employers who match gifts to nonprofit organizations. February is Matching Gift Month and a perfect time to find out if your employer participates in a match. Employers may match your gift by doubling or even tripling its value. Some companies even match gifts by retirees or spouses/partners. Employer gift matching is an easy, effective means to give back to Grand Valley.

Identify an employer match when giving by visiting [www.gvsu.edu/give](http://www.gvsu.edu/give). For more information on whether your company matches gifts, visit [www.matchinggifts.com/gvsu](http://www.matchinggifts.com/gvsu).



# SPORTS CLUBS TURN HEADS

## NEWCOMERS, SEASONED VETERANS COMPRISE 50 TEAMS ON CAMPUS

— by Leah Zuber

**T**hey beat teams from universities like Harvard and Ohio State and are regional and national champions.

They are determined, hard-working and can usually be found in sweat-soaked gear.

They are the 1,500 students who are members of the more than 50 sports clubs at Grand Valley.

“Many students are making their decision to attend Grand Valley based on opportunities to continue to play competitive sports at a collegiate level,” said Bob Stoll, associate dean of the Office of Student Life. “And they’re staying here because they can continue to play.”

When Stoll joined Grand Valley 29 years ago there were a handful of sports clubs and intramural sports teams. “Since then it’s exploded,” he said. “It’s because of the

nature of our students. No one wants to hang up their skates when they go to college.”

Eric Garvelink, sports clubs graduate assistant, said new clubs are always forming. “There’s something for everyone,” he said. “The growing number of new clubs demonstrates students’ anxiousness to get involved on campus.”

### DODGEBALL

“Head shots guaranteed” is their slogan and the players on Grand Valley’s dodgeball team live by it.

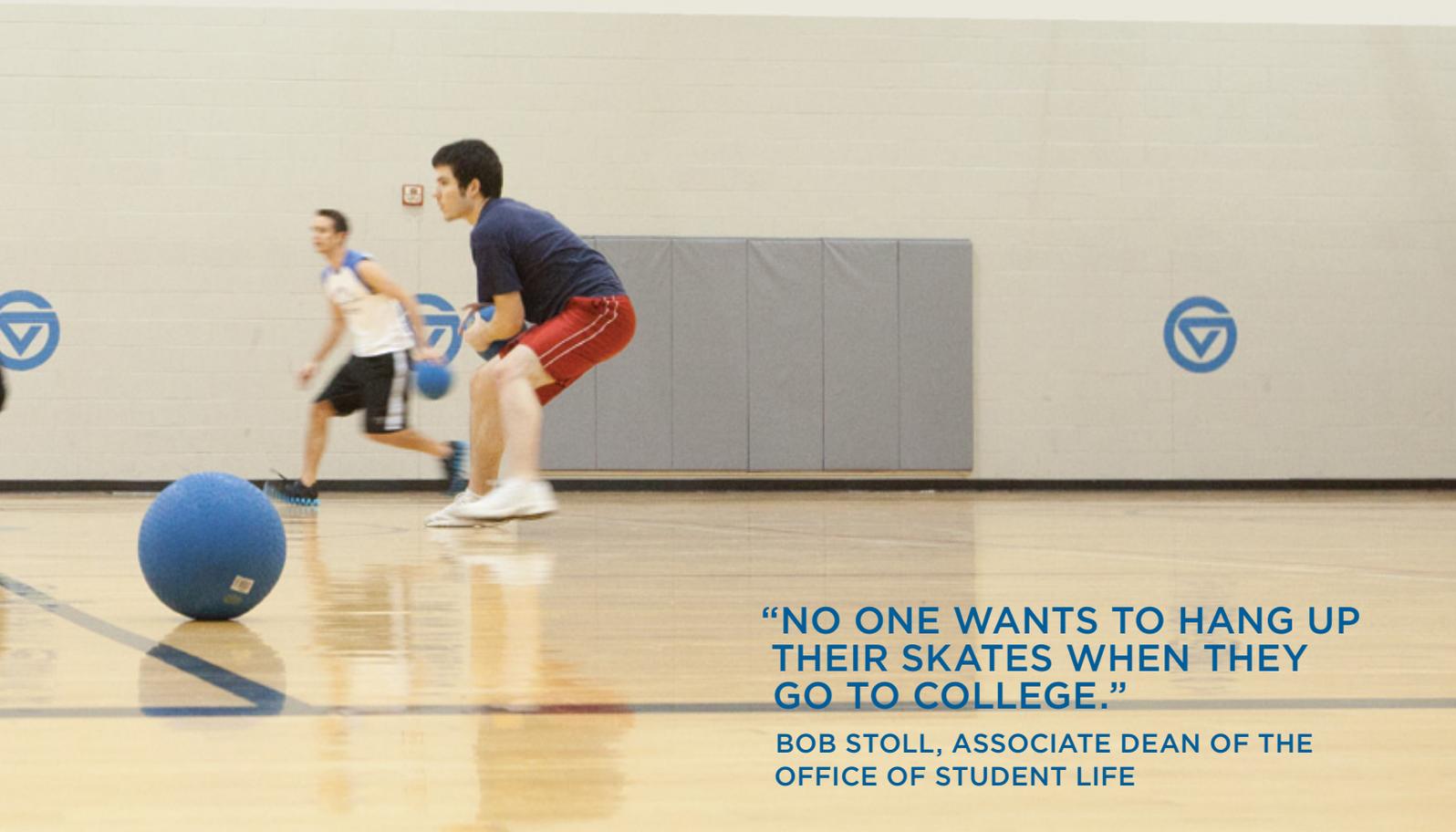
Founded in 2005, Grand Valley’s Dodgeball Club is a four-time national club champion with more than 50 players on the varsity and junior varsity teams. Thirty players, 15 on each team, compete on a basketball-sized court, and the goal is to knock

out as many players on the opposing team as possible.

There are no specific positions like offense or defense, so to speak. “There are people who are better at catching a ball and others have rockets for arms and can throw harder and longer, so we place them strategically on the court,” said Mark Trippiedi, vice president of Dodgeball Club and a broadcasting major.

The team took first place at the National College Dodgeball Association (NCDA) championship from 2006-2010, when they beat Division I and Division II dodgeball teams from Michigan State University, University of Michigan and others throughout the Midwest.

“I love the competitiveness of it all,” said Brian Savalle, Dodgeball Club treasurer and a criminal justice and sociology major. “It gives me the chance, for three days out of the week



**“NO ONE WANTS TO HANG UP THEIR SKATES WHEN THEY GO TO COLLEGE.”**

**BOB STOLL, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF THE OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE**

*photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker*

when we practice, to relax, hang out with friends and relieve some stress from classes.”

**WOMEN’S RUGBY**

The women, or “ruggers” as they call themselves, on Grand Valley’s rugby team describe the sport as a mix between soccer and football.

The women’s rugby club at Grand Valley began about 12 years ago. Last fall, the team hosted a national rugby tournament and beat Ball State University, 92-0, in the first round and took first place overall. Last year, the team played against Ohio State and Penn State in the playoffs leading to the Midwest Final Four tournament.

“We continue to grow and get better every year and we always welcome rookies,” said Jordan Wiseman, captain and club president. “I always wanted

to play hockey and football in high school, but my mom never let me, so I was excited to learn about the women’s rugby team when I came to Grand Valley.”

Emma Pesci, a business major from Wisconsin, played rugby in high school and wanted to attend a university with a strong women’s team. “I asked my high school coach if he knew of any schools with successful rugby teams and he recommended Grand Valley,” she said. “I love it here; Grand Valley has a great reputation.”

**MEN’S ICE HOCKEY**

The men’s ice hockey club at Grand Valley has 50 players divided between Division II and Division III teams, but they regularly play against Division I hockey teams.

The Grand Valley teams include students who were



*courtesy photo*

More than 1,500 Grand Valley students participate in sports clubs such as dodgeball, rugby, hockey and rowing.



courtesy photo

Men's and women's rowing teams consistently compete in national and international regattas.

named All-American athletes in high school. Coach Michael Forbes is a former NHL player who played for the Boston Bruins.

The team has made it to the Men's Division II Ice Hockey American Collegiate Hockey Association National Championship each year since 2007 and won the national championship in 2010.

C.J. Pobur, a film and video major who plays forward, described the group as a powerhouse. "We basically go all year-round," he said. "The seasons starts in September and we play through March. We love to see a full house of fans at the arena when we play home games."

The team practices and hosts home games at the Georgetown Ice Arena in

Hudsonville, a short distance from the Allendale Campus.

## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROWING

Ask anyone on the men's or women's rowing team and they will say rowing is a lifestyle. Their teammates are family, rowing is their hobby and their free time is spent practicing.

Rowing was one of the first sports founded at Grand Valley more than 50 years ago. The men's and women's teams compete at international and national regattas, including races in England, Croatia and Boston, and the have won regattas that included rowing teams from Harvard and Rutgers universities.

Marco Benedetti, one of three captains for the men's

team, came from Ohio to row at Grand Valley because he heard positive things about the program. "I knew if I went to Grand Valley I would be able to get better, which was one of my biggest goals," he said.

The men's and women's teams placed first in overall team points at the American Collegiate Rowing Association National Championship Regatta from 2008-2011, and, last May, four Grand Valley crews placed third at the Dad Vail Regatta, which is the largest collegiate regatta in North America. Grand Valley hosts the Lubbers Cup Regatta in Spring Lake; teams from the Midwest travel to West Michigan to compete each year.

## NEW STUDENT RECREATION FIELDS DEDICATED

Student-athletes were part of a ribbon-cutting ceremony held October 22 for the dedication of the new student recreation fields at Grand Valley. The fields provide more room for the growing number of students involved in varsity athletics, intramural sports and clubs on campus.

The fields encompass 65 acres and include a stormwater management system, rugby field, lacrosse field, 400-meter track, two softball fields, track throws area and picnic shelters. There is also a building for concessions, locker rooms and scoring. The fields were created using recycled rubber and synthetic turf, eliminating the need for water and mowing, which will reduce emissions.

The project was accepted into the Sustainable Sites Initiative, a pilot program that hopes to create national guidelines for sustainable land design.



Learn about the more than 50 sports clubs at Grand Valley at [www.gvsustudentlifesports.com](http://www.gvsustudentlifesports.com) or follow on Twitter at [@GVClubSports](https://twitter.com/GVClubSports).



# FINDING YOUR PATH AND CAREER PASSION

UNIQUE TOOL HELPS GUIDE, CHALLENGE  
STUDENTS THROUGH COLLEGE — by Michele Coffill



photo by Elizabeth Lienau

Amanda Tamburrino studies in the Commons. She used many Grand Valley resources, including the Blueprint for Student Success, to help her decide on a major.

Amanda Tamburrino had been a pre-nursing major because she thought she wanted to work in a hospital. After taking several science-based courses, Tamburrino knew it wasn't for her. She changed her major to business because of its varied possibilities.

She continued to fine-tune her path of study at the end of her second year, choosing health communications as a minor to "tie both my wishes together — medical and business," she said.

Tamburrino said she is pleased with her decision but getting to that point was incredibly stressful. "It's hard to make a decision that will affect the rest of your life," she said.

Tamburrino enrolled in Grand Valley without declaring a major, joining about 20 percent of her first-year peers. She said as a high school student in Caledonia, she considered nursing or teaching as possible careers but was never truly passionate about either.

"It really terrified me, I just couldn't make up my mind," she said.

Perhaps she shouldn't have been so hard on herself. Tamburrino took the right steps and used Grand Valley resources to help decide on a major. She met with a career counselor, took skill assessment tests, met with an academic advisor and, from time to time, glanced at the Blueprint for Success.

The Four-Year Blueprint for Student Success was developed to help students answer a common question: "Am I on the right track?" After five years of input from students, administration, faculty and staff members, a taskforce unveiled the Grand Valley blueprint in 2009.

With a graphic illustration, the blueprint helps Grand Valley first-year students identify academic and campus community landmarks to reach. For example, points on



photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Students meet for tutoring sessions in the Student Academic Success Center in the Student Services Building. The SASC is often the first stop for students who are undecided about a major.

the timeline include Attend Transitions, Participate in Service Learning, Take US 102 (a career exploration course) and Meet with an Academic Advisor. The blueprint continues each year through the fourth year (and beyond) with timeline points pertinent to that year of study. Under each year's timelines are lists of academic challenges, campus resources and opportunities for engagement.

Nancy Giardina, assistant vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, led the taskforce through implementation of the blueprint. Giardina said its catalyst was a report published by the American Association of Colleges and Universities about how institutions can better prepare students to live and work in the 21st century. Giardina said the AACU report discussed student persistence, retention, employable skills and high-impact learning experiences.

The university's blueprint taskforce also took into consideration the mindset of today's college students, Giardina said. "Millennial students are needing more

direction," she said. "Grand Valley also has a high percentage of first-generation-in-college students. So those students come to Grand Valley with no family background of scheduling classes or what college life is like."

Getting the blueprint in front of those 3,200 first-time-in-college students, and others, involved cooperation from academic units and student service departments like Housing, Career Services, Student Senate, Student Life, and Student Academic Success Center.

Colleen Lindsay-Bailey, assistant director for Housing and Residence Life, said each first-year living center has a large blueprint banner hanging in a common area. She also said living center staff members incorporate the blueprint when talking with a resident.

"When a living center director meets with a student, and the student talks about changing a major, the director will pull out the blueprint," Lindsay-Bailey said. "It really opens the eyes of students to see all these services and resources available to them."

Lindsay-Bailey said the

blueprint has helped streamline how housing connects students to campus resources. "These students live with us and we're connecting with them on an emotional level. We're naturally doing all of these things anyway, but the blueprint puts everything in one spot for us," she said.

The blueprint serves as a good complement to another tool Grand Valley uses to connect with first-year students, the MAP-Works survey, which stands for Making Achievements Possible. The survey is sent to students within the first month of the fall semester; half of its questions relate to academics, half relate to how a student connects to others on campus.

"MAP-Works has been a good thing for us. Even involved and active students might report on a survey that they are not feeling connected," Lindsay-Bailey said. "We wouldn't know that person was struggling until they left Grand Valley."

Faculty members who advise students are finding the meetings have become much more than helping a student select a course. Brian Hatzel, associate professor and chair of movement science,

said millennial students are more interested in job opportunities than students of seven or 10 years ago.

To help movement science students choose an emphasis, career exploration courses are offered, he said. "Students can take these courses early in their major," Hatzel said, adding they include components like job shadowing or observing a professional. Movement science encompasses programs in sport leadership, physical/health education, athletic training and exercise science.

Michael Messner, director of the Student Academic Success Center, agreed that jobs are very much on the minds of students. He said the majority of students who are the first in their families to attend college will choose a professional program, like nursing or education. The SASC is an umbrella department that oversees all advising programs for the university. SASC staff members are also advisors for students who haven't declared a major, like Tamburrino.

"We meet about three times a year with undecided students to go over career advising and assessments," Messner said. "We

# THE BLUEPRINT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

At right is the Blueprint for Student Success, with a sampling of points on each year's timeline. The blueprint was developed to help answer a common question: Am I on the right track?

also look at salaries and the job outlook to help students find the career that will fit their lifestyle."

Before she met with advisors and career counselors, Tamburrino said she came close to leaving Grand Valley. Now confident in her choice of majors, Tamburrino is ready to engage in more of what the university has to offer. As detailed in the blueprint, she attended Campus Life Night, an event that draws thousands of students to the Fieldhouse to learn more about the university's 350 student organizations.

"After that night, I decided to join a sorority, so I joined Delta Zeta, and also learned about so many more community service opportunities," she said.

Looking at the many landmarks on the blueprint might be daunting for some students. Tamburrino advised students to view it differently. "I could see how it might be overwhelming and people might wonder how they are supposed to do all these things, but the blueprint is really not stressful — it's about taking advantage of the resources available," she said.

## FIRST YEAR PERSONAL TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

- Admission
- Learn Laker Values
- Attend Convocation
- Meet with academic advisor during the first year
- Work on campus
- Participate in service learning
- Take US 102 (Career Education)

## SECOND YEAR EXPLORATION OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

- Attend sophomore welcome back event
- Take Map-Works
- Engage in research
- Gather secondary admit program application information
- Participate in Alternative Spring Break
- Explore internships
- Begin development of a resume

## THIRD YEAR INTEGRATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE LARGER CAMPUS COMMUNITY

- Confirm progress in major coursework
- Explore graduate school options
- Reconsider major based on secondary admit
- Participate in Laker Leadership program
- Engage in faculty/student research
- Participate in internships, co-ops, and practicum
- Confirm progress in major coursework and review all graduation requirements

## FOURTH AND BEYOND TRANSITION TO CAREER

- Begin job search
- Utilize Career Services resources
- Meet with major advisor about employment opportunities
- Participate in Student Scholarship Day
- Prepare job search portfolio
- Attend Grad Fest
- Graduation
- Professional certification

# MOVING BEYOND STEREOTYPES

2012 Year of Interfaith Understanding — by Mary Isca Pirkola

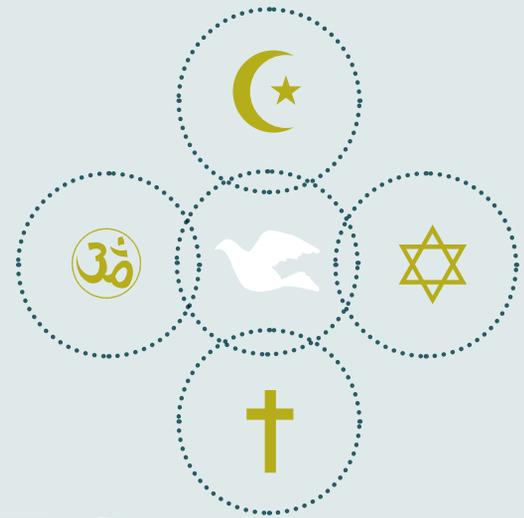


photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Professor Sheldon Kopperl leads a class discussion to raise awareness of derogatory stereotypes.

Jews are cheap and always try to bargain, Muslims are violent extremists and Christians are closed-minded. Unfortunately, that's what some people think. Grand Valley is part of a yearlong effort to help change misperceptions.

These and other derogatory stereotypes were the topic of a lively discussion initiated by Professor Sheldon Kopperl in his Liberal Studies 100 class. The class discussions were modeled, in part, after interfaith dialogues occurring throughout West Michigan. They are part of a larger project, the 2012 Year of Interfaith Understanding, designed to cultivate peace through community interest, understanding and acceptance of all faiths.

The endeavor was developed through a unique partnership led by Grand Valley's Kaufman Interfaith Institute, the *Grand Rapids Press*, WGVU Public Media, Grand Rapids mayor's office and three organizing councils representing campuses, congregations and community organizations. There was a conscious decision to kick off

events last September, following the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the U.S.

"The world has changed dramatically since the events of September 11," said Douglas Kindschi, director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. "For many people, their introduction to the religious landscape of the Middle East was the terrorist acts of a few individuals. As misinformation overtook facts, there grew an increasing need to open up the channels of dialogue. The goal of this yearlong program is for participants to truly understand other religions and to learn how to live in community with respect for their differences."

Respect was paramount in Kopperl's class. So much so that students were at first hesitant to participate in the discussion of stereotypes, fearing they might offend someone of another faith.

Kopperl, who is Jewish and co-advisor of the Jewish students' group Hillel, set them at ease by explaining they could name a stereotype without actually believing it. He even got the ball rolling



with his own comments about Jews. After writing comments on the board, the discussion turned more personal as Kopperl asked students to share a time when they felt uncomfortable when someone stereotyped them because of their beliefs, appearance or ethnicity. By the end of the class unit, students said they moved beyond stereotypes and misunderstandings as they learned about the many similarities between faiths. Some students also felt they enriched their own faith in the process of explaining it to others.

### Congregational and campus events

Interfaith services, tours of sacred spaces of worship and interfaith dialogues are being conducted at Christian churches, Jewish temples and Islamic mosques throughout West Michigan, in efforts to take

away the mystique of unfamiliar religions. Eight West Michigan colleges, seminaries and universities are also featuring interfaith understanding events throughout the year. For example, the Migrations of Islam project of the Muslim Studies Program and Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University brought a number of events to Grand Valley, including the Hijabi Monologues and the Poetic Visions Tour, among others.

“People often have the misconception that participating in interfaith activities requires a compromise of their own faith,” said Whitney Belprez, 2012 YIU project manager. “It’s not about conversion, but rather about conversation, and people learning to move from tolerance to acceptance of each other as people of faith.”

Many such conversations are taking place at Grand Valley, where students, faculty and

staff members participate in interfaith dialogues. “We started with 11 trained facilitators who each coordinate a group of interested people,” said Aaron Haight, assistant director for the Office of Student Life. The groups will meet about four to six times during the year; participants will share their faith background, explore other faiths, discuss the role of religion in world politics and society, and talk about how to work together on social issues.

Also working from the Office of Student Life is student

*photo by April Joy Galbreath*

**Patrick Lawrence, a senior from Almont, helps Sister Lucia Treanor with yard work during a community workday at the Franciscan Life Process Center.**

intern Emrie Carlton. She is coordinating service-learning opportunities for students via participation in the White House Interfaith & Community Service Campus Challenge, which kicked off at Grand Valley in January. Student leadership and cross-campus

**“I really felt the stresses of college life melt away while there.”**

Patrick Lawrence, who attended a community workday at the Franciscan Life Process Center



photos by April Joy Galbreath

Audience members interact with Muslim musicians from the Poetic Visions Tour, which features spiritually inspired folk rock music and hip hop poetry, brought to Grand Valley as part of the Migrations of Islam project of the Muslim Studies Program and Asian Studies Center at Michigan State University.

partners are encouraged in initiatives that address specific service priorities. Grand Valley participants have put their emphasis on the areas of education and poverty.

Many faculty members have incorporated aspects of interfaith understanding into this year's curricula, ranging from business ethics and philosophy to history and journalism. Jeremiah Cataldo, assistant professor of history, teaches an Honors College Special Topics course, "Alliance & Conflict: Religion & Society," over two semesters. By studying the history of early religions as informed

by the political and social mores of the times, Cataldo has equipped his students with a broader perspective to address historic and current issues of conflict and to develop possible solutions.

"Though most students in the class are quick to reject stereotypes, they also needed to expand their sphere of knowledge," said Cataldo. "By providing students the means to look beyond their own worldview, they are given the opportunity to study and better understand others."

Another aspect of the course is a required service learning experience. Every student



spends at least 10 hours with a religious organization of which they are not affiliated.

Alice Munday, a freshman from Canton, chose to visit St. Gregory's Abbey in Three Rivers. It is the home of a community of men living a contemplative vocation under the Rule of St. Benedict, within the Episcopal Church.

"I chose to spend time at St. Gregory's because I wanted to challenge some commonly accepted stereotypes of monks and learn more about how they practice their religious beliefs," said Munday. She attended all seven of the daily services spread throughout the day from 4 a.m.-8 p.m. "It was interesting to see how they schedule their life around God, rather than squeezing their worship into an otherwise busy day," she said.

She also had a tour of the grounds, free time to explore and shared her meals with the monks, prepared by them from ingredients mostly grown in their garden. She learned that no talking is allowed during meals, although one of the monks read aloud. "During my visit, they were reading and listening to a biography of Dr. Seuss, which was interesting," she said. "It wasn't an awkward silence, but a shared intentional

one. When there was a funny part in the book, the monks would laugh freely."

Several other classmates spent time at the Islamic Center and Mosque of Grand Rapids. Muslims, who are called to prayer five times a day, gather on Fridays at their mosque for communal prayer. Classmates attended a Friday worship service and a Sunday School class, and then spent time after each with the imam, who leads the prayers and addresses the congregation. Levi Bauer, a freshman from Reese, said his experience was very positive and enlightening. "While I had some confusion about the rituals and practices during the service, the imam later explained their meaning to us," Bauer said. "He also shared some of the doctrines of Islamic faith and how they are similar to Christianity and Judaism, but also how they differ."

Katelynn Chase, a freshman from Paw Paw, expected the mosque to be extravagant inside, but noticed the lack of seats in the prayer hall, because Islamic prayer involves standing, kneeling and prostrating on prayer rugs.

Nicole Summers, a freshman from Livonia, visited Temple Emmanuel, a Reform Judaism

synagogue in Grand Rapids. "When I first arrived at the synagogue, it was not what I expected," she said. "They have a school attached to the building, so we saw many little kids running around — all very excited to be learning. It was a very relaxed and peaceful environment." Summers, following a tour by Rabbi Michael Schadick, attended a couple services and a Torah class. She said she thought the services were interesting, and even though they were mostly in Hebrew, she was able to identify a few patterns similar to other faith practices.

## Community Service and Programming

Many community organizations, from the Grand Rapids Symphony to the World Affairs Council, have incorporated issues of interfaith understanding into their regularly scheduled programming for 2012.

Sister Lucia Treanor FSE, teaches in the Writing Department at Grand Valley. She is also the faculty advisor for Gatherings, the Catholic Student Association on campus, and Students for Life, a non-sectarian pro-life group. She welcomes the 2012 YIU as an opportunity to invite more people to participate in Community Workdays, held the second Saturday of each month, as one of many programs at the Franciscan Life Process Center, just outside Lowell.

Treanor lives at the center

with a dozen other sisters, who share the workload of self-sustenance on the 230-acre land. They raise rabbits, sheep, cows, horses and chickens; maintain gardens and orchards of apples, cherries, pears, peaches and plums. Each sister is responsible for a farm animal and a garden section. They always welcome help, from spring weed whacking and planting, to harvesting, canning and general maintenance tasks, like cleaning out the barns and washing windows. All ages are welcome and helpers are treated to a hot lunch following a morning of work.

Inspired by the philosophy and practice of St. Francis of Assisi, the program helps individuals accept each other as unique persons as they learn about life on a farm, working alongside the Franciscan sisters.

"We don't have a teaching focus on community workdays, but often answer questions from workers about our faith practices, or deep concerns they have about their own life, inside and outside of faith," said Treanor. "Following the teachings of St. Francis, we 'Preach always. If necessary use words.'"

Patrick Lawrence, a senior from Almont, said that for years he had heard about students going to the workdays, but this was the first time he participated. "The sisters' welcome, not to mention their homemade lunch, was heartwarming, and they

shine with a great love of life," Lawrence said. "I really felt the stresses of college life melt away while there." Lawrence is a member of St. Luke's University Parish and as a peer minister with Campus Ministries, hopes to organize events that are geared to a wide audience.

## Goals and opportunities

One of the highlights of the year will be the Grand Valley Triennial Interfaith Dialogue, an all-day event at DeVos Place on October 30, 2012. Featured speakers are three internationally respected experts in the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith traditions: Rabbi Donniel Hartman, Episcopal priest Marilyn McCord Adams, and Islamic studies professor Omid Safi. They will focus on resources and scriptures in their faith traditions that address the conference theme of "Living with God in the midst of suffering."

Community and campus groups, and individuals, continue to ask how they can get involved. The 2012 YIU website, [www.2012gr.org](http://www.2012gr.org), is constantly updated, providing details and contact information for the many campuses, congregations and community participants. Together the three councils have launched grass-root efforts to engage as much of the community as possible. Organizers hope their efforts create a solid foundation for continued growth and understanding, beyond 2012.

"Diversity is not only a racial or ethnic concern, but it also includes religion," said Kindschi. "As the population throughout the world and West Michigan changes to include more diversity, it becomes essential to confront the uncomfortable feelings and unwarranted fear inherent in the lack of true understanding."

## NEW RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR, MINOR PENDING

A new religious studies major and minor could be added the Grand Valley curriculum beginning in the fall semester, pending approval from the Board of Trustees. The program reinforces the idea of religious understanding and sensitivity as yet another dimension of campus diversity.

Faculty member Judy Whipps, co-chair of the Religious Studies Task Force, said the committee has been working on this proposal for more than five years.

"We're pleased that this new major would coincide with the Year of Interfaith Understanding," said Whipps. "The committee placed the major in Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies because we want the program to function as a university-wide major, including faculty and courses from all the colleges."

The study of religion includes courses in the humanities and social sciences, and understanding religious diversity is important for many professions, including medical fields, global business, politics and global social justice issues. Whipps said it is anticipated that students in these fields may double major or minor in religious studies.

"It's not about conversion, but rather about conversation, and people learning to move from tolerance to acceptance of each other as people of faith."

Whitney Belprez,  
2012 YIU project manager

# Students engage in life-changing research on Medical Mile

— by Dottie Barnes

The type of research being conducted on Medical Mile has the potential to change the future of medicine and health care, and Grand Valley students are right in the middle of it.

Undergraduate and graduate students are serving internships and landing jobs at research facilities like the Van Andel

Institute, Spectrum Health, Syzygy Biotech and Avalon Industries, all located in a one-mile stretch near and along Michigan Street in downtown Grand Rapids, known as Medical Mile.

## Syzygy Biotech

Barry Nowak is president and CEO of Syzygy Biotech,

a life sciences lab at the West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative, a SmartZone located in Grand Valley's Cook-DeVos Center for Health Sciences.

Nowak describes the company as a protein factory whose first commercial product (Taq Polymerase) is used by labs, universities and others to amplify DNA for use in research, testing and experimentation.

"The protein we produce let's you make copies of DNA," explained Nowak. "Protein is a key component in copying DNA, which is used everywhere — in hospitals, criminology, food safety, treatment for disease — it goes on and on."

Syzygy opened last year and Nowak said being located at Grand Valley has been the key to success. "We have access to students, faculty and consultants," he said. "I hired two of the top master's students in Grand Valley's biomedical program."

Nowak is talking about Pushpaja Dodla and Jenn Jakubowski, the 2010 and 2011, respectively, outstanding graduate students in cellular and molecular biology. Jakubowski is a senior molecular biologist with Syzygy.

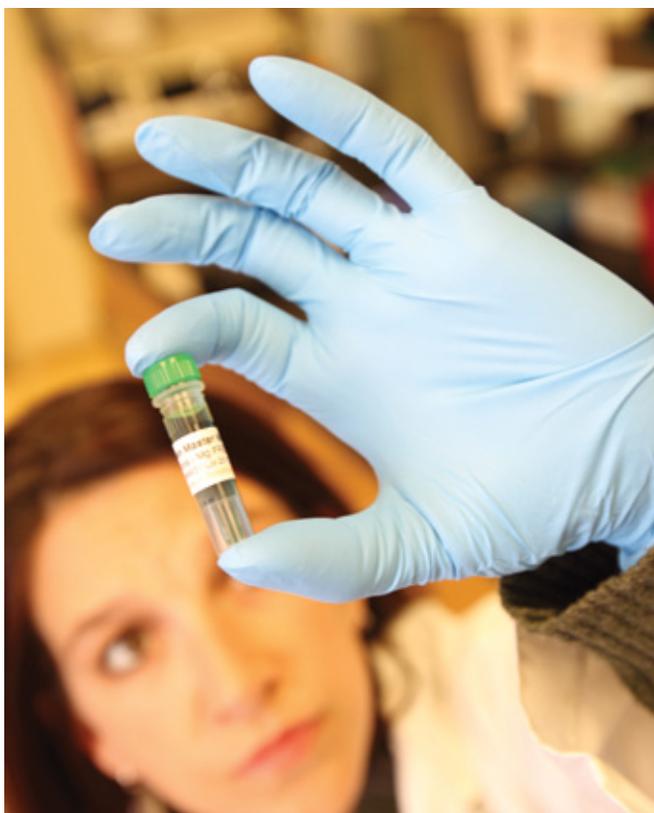
"I oversee the lab and quality control, and also the process of getting our product out," said Jakubowski. "It's exciting to be part of a company on the ground floor."

The Grand Rapids native described the work the company does as being the biological toner in a DNA copy machine. "Being able to copy DNA can accomplish so many things," she explained. "If you watch the television show 'CSI,' when the results come in identifying the killer, it's our enzyme that let them do that."

Jakubowski said she is often asked if she's found the cure for cancer yet. "I answer by saying that today could be the day we've given a researcher the tools to do so," she said. "Our research has the potential to accomplish great things in health care. Syzygy is part of the Gift of Life program; the enzymes from our company are used to match organs to potential recipients."

Brandon Nader worked as an intern at Syzygy before graduating from Grand Valley in April 2011 and is now a senior tech lab manager. "It's fun being part of something that is so important for future research," said Nader. "There is no such thing as a typical day in the lab."

Nader said he is currently working on what's called Quantitative PCR, or QPCR. "This allows researchers to look at expression or how much DNA is produced," he said. "Instead of just knowing whether a disease is present, researchers can measure how much disease is there. It's exciting work and researchers I've met at places



*courtesy photo*

Jenn Jakubowski is a senior molecular biologist with Syzygy.

like Cleveland Clinic and the University of Pittsburgh are excited about what we're doing."

### Avalon Industries

Avalon Industries is a medical device company that is also part of the West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative. Avalon is a leading supplier of disposable surgical components and a global leader in the manufacture of cardiovascular catheters.

Chris Knowlton, a 2007 graduate who majored in engineering, was hired at Avalon after graduating and Trevor Rolph, a senior majoring in project design and manufacturing and engineering, has had a co-op position with Avalon since 2010.

"This has been such a great opportunity for me," said Rolph. "I am involved in new product development and have been able to design and build several working prototypes of balloon catheters."

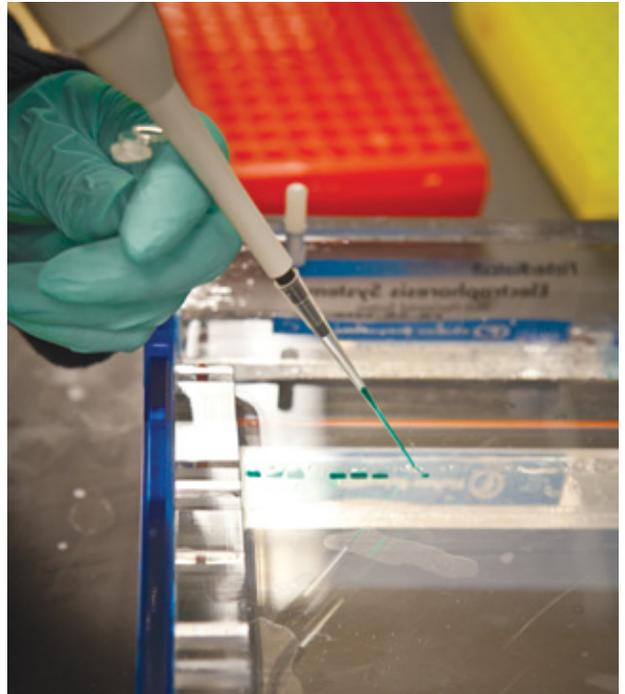
Rolph, a native of Ypsilanti, said his aunt has cerebral palsy and watching her benefit from medical equipment made him want to enter the field of life sciences. "It's a great field to be in. I'm working with devices that improve the quality of life," he said. "I'm connected to experts in the field who are excited about their work. We can be out to lunch and people will start drawing on napkins, sketching the heart and how a new device might work."

Rolph said Grand Valley fully prepared him for the challenging work on Medical Mile. "Grand Valley gave me the prior knowledge I needed to hit the ground running," he said. "It gave me the confidence and educational experience I needed in engineering to succeed."

Rolph said students in Grand Valley's engineering program are given a lot of responsibility. "With product design, there are no set answers; professors

"Our research has the potential to accomplish great things in health care."

— Jenn Jakubowski  
senior molecular biologist for Syzygy



photos by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Brandon Nader is a senior tech lab manager with Syzygy.

will tell you to make it work, figure it out on your own,” he said. “Sometimes there are five answers, sometimes none. It can be very difficult, but that’s what it’s like in the real world, in the industry. You are given something and told to figure it out. So, having that type of responsibility as a student was invaluable.”

### Van Andel Institute

Research at the Van Andel Institute has led to advances in cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Grand Valley undergraduate and graduate students have served summer and academic year internships at the institute since its opening in 2000.

Steven J. Triezenberg, director of the Van Andel Education Institute and dean of the VAI Graduate School, said scientists at the institute value these internships because of the energy, enthusiasm and curiosity that students

bring to their work.

“In most cases, these internships represent the first genuine research experience for an undergraduate student,” said Triezenberg. “The ‘doing’ of science is much different than learning about science.

“These internships uncover the complexity of science, the uncertainties. There is no answer key for a brand new experiment — and the frustrations — because experiments don’t always work, and experiments don’t always yield the expected answers.”

Jeff VanOss received a bachelor’s degree in electrical and computer engineering from Grand Valley in 2010. He is working toward a master’s degree in biomedical engineering and is a paid student intern at the institute.

“I work with cancer models in an imaging laboratory,” said VanOss. “As a computer engineer, I apply image processing to scans of those

models in order to get usable, quantitative results. We try to automate the process of interpreting these scans to make it quicker and more reliable. For example, three people might give three different results after looking at an X-ray; a computer program would be more consistent.”

The Holland native said he plans to work as a computer or electrical medical engineer after graduating. “Grand Valley offers a project-oriented engineering school, while other schools offer a more theoretical engineering program,” he said. “Grand Valley also offers the research opportunities necessary to advance in this field. It’s exciting to be able to create things that will help people, and interact with doctors and biologists and be able to understand what they are talking about.”

Brittany Merrifield is also a paid student intern at the institute. The Traverse City native is a senior studying

biomedical science who plans to apply for medical school in the spring.

“I manage and operate the micro ultrasound program in the imaging lab,” said Merrifield. “We look at different kinds of cancer models and measure the effectiveness of various therapies for those cancers. Various research throughout the institute comes to us in the lab and we’ll do the imaging for them and analyze the data.”

Merrifield said smaller class sizes and the ability to interact with faculty are what attracted her to Grand Valley.

Stewart Hildebrand said he knew he wanted to work with computers when he was 13 years old and living in Denmark. His family moved back to the States and he eventually enrolled at Grand Valley and earned a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering. He is now an intern at the Van Andel Institute, working with image processing and software that takes images and turns them into 3-D pictures.

“We handle all parts of development and design,” said Hildebrand. “We use a program called OsiriX to create 3-D images which makes images more presentable for analysis. It’s a lot of work and very time consuming, but these enhanced images will be much easier for doctors and health professionals to analyze.”

Grand Valley students have contributed to a number of published research papers with scientists from the institute and Triezenberg said some of their projects open up new ideas that form the kernel of a new research project.

“The availability of students from Grand Valley fits well with the opportunities for research experiences at the institute,” he said. “Such partnerships are important in building the regional intellectual community. Together we are much stronger!”



photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Trevor Rolph has a co-op position with Avalon Industries.

“...partnerships are important in building the regional intellectual community. Together we are much stronger!”

— Steven J. Triezenberg  
director of Van Andel  
Education Institute

Not a real orange, it's plastic. Johnson took it home from a Bible study class, saying it reminds her of the "fruits of the spirit." Johnson is an active member of His House Christian Fellowship, a student group.

It's a Scentbug: both a fan and fragrance diffuser.

Johnson sometimes keeps socks here, taking them off before going to sleep.

"I found this chair at the beginning of the year; pink's my favorite color," she said.

Johnson works at the Walker branch of the Kent District Library and checked these books out, although she said she's too busy to read them.

# Ashley Johnson, resident assistant; elementary education major

photography by Adam Bird

# Q&A

# Jeff Chamberlain

The Grand Valley Frederik Meijer Honors College is home to about 1,200 high-achievers. Running such a tight-knit program that's best described as a living-learning community takes work, compassion, and an unending desire to do whatever it takes to help students succeed. Jeff Chamberlain has been the director since 2007. It's normal to see him chatting with students (to whom he's known as Dr. J.) in his office, in the hallway, or in one of the many meeting rooms around the building. *Grand Valley*

*Magazine's* Nate Hoekstra talked to Chamberlain about what the Honors College has to offer, and what the program means to the university and its students.

**GVM:** Can you explain what's different between an honors student's experience and the experience of other students at Grand Valley?

**Jeff Chamberlain:** In general, the Frederik Meijer Honors College is a couple of things: it's a living-learning community and it is an alternative general education program. We

are actually one of Grand Valley's oldest living-learning communities, which means we have housing and academics in the same location. To us it means we're forming a genuine academic community. We often hear the students say they form a special bond with other honors students where they share jokes and learning experiences all while living in a close-knit living space. We do find that the students in the program tend to take academics more seriously. The students who live here will tell you this

living situation is a little more sedate than north campus, but it doesn't mean there's no opportunities to have fun. In fact, there are lots of fun events — just watch the honors students doing their lip sync at Homecoming! You'll hear peals of laughter, at times, from every floor and classroom.

We also integrate honors courses for a truly interdisciplinary approach to learning. Courses are taught by faculty members from different discipline areas, which means you're really getting more viewpoints because of the way it's presented. You'll find political scientists teaching with anthropologists, for example. These are dynamic classes with fabulous faculty, who are getting students to think critically about how this impacts their lives. It's a way that's engaging and empowering to our students.

**GVM:** Since you started with the honors college in 2007, it's grown by about 25 percent. What's been the biggest catalyst for that growth?

**JC:** Frankly, I would say that we are a success because of the success of our students. Potential students have heard from current students that there are great things happening here. They're telling them about their access to faculty, their experience, their education. They're being very successful and people are taking notice of their success. Admissions also deserves a lot of credit. They are extraordinary recruiters, and they really get the word out. When they have good prospective honors students on campus, they send them



photo by Elizabeth Lienau

Jeff Chamberlain, director of the Frederik Meijer Honors College, said a mix of living and learning helps students reach their potential, and that those students are the reason for the program's continued success.

over. We put them in touch with a student who talks about the program and what it's like, shows off their apartment. The students are wonderful; they are our best ambassadors and recruiters. They love it, and when they begin sharing about it, there is a snowball effect.

**GVM:** Is there a different attitude among honors students that helps them succeed in a more academically demanding program?

**JC:** There's an attitude in honors students that we look for in the admissions process. We make the decision on the whole package, not just the ACT score and the GPA. We want to see some motivation, some innovation, some initiative in students who are applying. That means they often carry through that initiative and we just have to provide the opportunities and they will run with them. That's why we use the tag line "Live, Learn, Lead," because we look for students who are motivated to do those things, and take advantage of the opportunities they're presented with here.

**GVM:** You've said that Grand Valley is seeing a big increase in the caliber of honors students that are coming here. What does that say about the quality of programs being offered?

**JC:** I think it says a great deal. Many students tell us they feel at home at Grand Valley. One person after another in this program tells us about their passion, not only for the academics, but for the program in general. Another thing we offer is the personal touch. We had one student who, as I recall, could have easily gone anywhere — she came here. I read in her application that her father had written a book. It sounded interesting, so I bought it and read it, then asked her questions about it when I



photo by Amanda Pitts

Honors College students are pictured outside the Niemeyer Learning and Living Center.

personally followed up with her. Many students don't get that sort of attention from other places. Other schools can be so big that they can't take the time for each student, and other schools are so small they don't have the resources to do what we can do here.

We're growing but we're taking steps to make sure the great learning environment and the personal touch stays in place. Combine that environment with the high-caliber programs we're offering here and you've got a world-class combination of experience along with education.

**GVM:** An honors curriculum is designed to be challenging to students. How do you help students who get into the program but start to feel overwhelmed by the rigorous demands of their schoolwork?

**JC:** We have been working on that for years. We have a mentor program where we take a mentor who is assigned to about seven to 10 freshmen, and make sure they understand the demands and the rigors they will face in academic life.

Hearing that from another student is much more powerful than if it comes from me or another staff member. A mentor is also someone they can rely on if they do really start to feel pressure. There are also other resources, like workshops, librarian visits, and Housing programs. We also use our close connections as a living-learning community to hold students accountable. If a student isn't showing up for class, faculty members will get in touch with us, we'll talk to the resident assistant, who will knock on that student's door and just say, "Hey, is everything OK?" and will try to address the problem right where they're living. It's just one of the ways we keep the students accountable and provide them with the support and help that they need.

**GVM:** You've done some intense study yourself, including earning a doctoral degree from the University of Chicago. How does your personal experience in academia help you relate to the students?

**JC:** It relates both in a good and a bad way. I had an experience

where high-level academics and research meant cutting the fun out of learning, but I also attended and taught at small schools where there was a real sense of community and fun, both of which encouraged effective learning.

I've found that here we have the community and the resources to have the best of both worlds. The high level of academic work is something we can all attain, but we've shown it can be done without the stuffy, no-fun attitude.

**GVM:** The honors program is very generously supported by the Meijer Foundation. How does that support help the program?

**JC:** It helps us constantly grow by trying new things, and innovating. It's added value to the honors college through a scholarship for first-generation college students. That opens a lot of doors. They also help with the Meijer Lecture Series — those are phenomenal! We're incredibly lucky to have their support. It allows us to give the students a much more rich experience in a multitude of ways.

## Unique research could reveal potential of wind power over Great Lakes — by Nate Hoekstra

Grand Valley researchers are in the middle of a new project that could be a key step in unleashing the energy potential of the winds above the Great Lakes.

The state-of-the-art project is being organized by Grand Valley's Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center, on the shores of Muskegon Lake. Researchers there have taken a brand-new technology and combined it with a decades-old buoy to make a functioning research platform that's one of only two in existence in the world, with the goal of validating a new way to measure offshore wind.

The research vessel, Wind Sentinel, is a bright yellow combination of an 8-ton buoy designed by the U.S. Navy during World War II, and a cutting-edge piece of technology

called the "Vindicator" that uses high-tech laser light pulses to measure wind speed, direction and other atmospheric information.

The application for the equipment is to measure wind information using new technology to determine the feasibility of future offshore wind development on the Great Lakes, but Arn Boezaart, MAREC's director, said scientists are interested in the new technology for other reasons as well. Data was gathered from the buoy for two months between October and its removal from the water in December, and the information appears to be consistent and matching data coming from other sources.

"We are actively talking with the National Weather Service in Grand Rapids," said

Boezaart. "They're interested in knowing more about the technology. They believe they may be able to use it to help their forecasting ability." The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration is also interested in exploring the use of the Vindicator technology.

While the new research equipment appears to be returning good data and atmospheric information back to a server at Grand Valley, Boezaart said the main goal of this first research deployment is to make sure the data is reliable. Researchers need to compare the data to existing acceptable standards to make sure it's accurate.

One big advantage that the buoy has in the research project is its portability, Boezaart said. Wind is normally measured on a tower or tall building on

land. To discover the potential wind energy on a body of water would require millions of dollars to build a wind measurement tower in the lake, and it could never be moved again. The buoy is highly mobile and can readily be moved by a service boat to a new location where it's capable of using laser pulses to measure wind up to a thousand times per second, at six different heights up to 120 meters simultaneously.

Grand Valley is working in partnership with the University of Michigan, where researchers hope to study the data for more in-depth analysis, and the Michigan State University Natural Features Inventory program, which will capture special data using sonic technology on-board the buoy to study flight patterns of birds and bats over the Great Lakes.

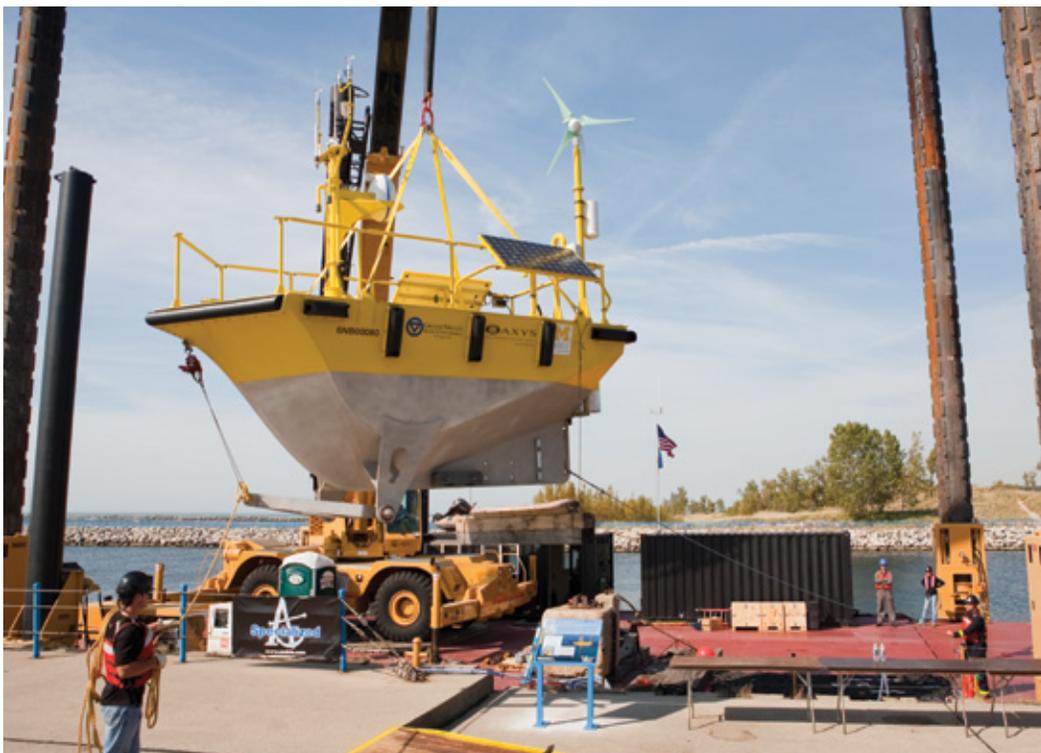
Funding issues could set the project back after a court decision forced a state department to pull funding from the project. Other funding options to continue the research are currently being explored.

Boezaart said he hopes researchers will be able to use the unique system to gather a full season of data in 2012 and is confident that the project will help set a new standard for wind measurement science.

"It's a truly remarkable research project," Boezaart said. "It's a fantastic first step in learning more about the potential of wind on the Great Lakes, and it's a move that will help to bring us closer to a renewable energy future."

*photo by April Joy Galbreath*

The 8-ton Wind Sentinel is prepared for launch into Lake Michigan in Muskegon last fall. The scientific equipment aboard the buoy could help reveal the energy potential of the winds from Lake Michigan.



## Problem-solving at its best

### Students create sustainable solutions in new partnership — by Leah Zuber

In a first-ever partnership, the City of Grand Rapids and students from Grand Valley are working together to create long-lasting sustainable solutions for the city.

In September 2010, the Grand Rapids City Commission approved the formation of the Transformational Research and Analysis Team, a partnership designed to conduct research and analysis in areas of interest vital to transforming city departmental operation and service delivery models.

Three graduate students and one undergraduate student were selected to serve on the first team: Margaret Carney, Shane Schamper, Farrah Curran and Aaron Ferguson. Olwen Urquhart is the team manager.

Carney, a public administration graduate student, is from Ludington and has worked in the accounting field for more than 20 years. “When I first started working on TRAT, we had no idea what to expect, so it just sort of evolved into this great experience for me to be able to learn the interworkings of the city,” she said.

TRAT students are learning research and business skills, said Norman Christopher, director of the Sustainable Community Development Initiative at Grand Valley. “The research these students are conducting is the platform for helping the city to make better decisions,” he said.

“These students are working on projects with top management. They are in high demand around here because the city is in need of sustainable solutions.”

— **Tom Almonte, assistant to city manager of Grand Rapids**



photo by April Joy Galbreath

TRAT team members Aaron Ferguson and Margaret Carney researched sustainable lighting methods and biofuel opportunities for the City of Grand Rapids, but most TRAT projects are kept confidential.

“The students are interacting with the important decision-makers by presenting their research data to department heads and recommending solutions for the city.”

TRAT has worked with 16 departments within the city, from engineering to accounting. While most projects are confidential, other projects the students have worked on include researching ways to conserve energy through lighting methods to evaluating biofuel opportunities.

Each city department is

allotted 100 hours for TRAT to research sustainable methods and practices suited for that specific department, then students present their results and recommendations. “It can be a challenge to learn their expectations because some departments like to see numbers, while others like to see ideas,” Carney said.

TRAT members Kevin Bergy, a graduate student majoring in accounting, and Aaron Ferguson, who just began the public administration graduate program, both said the most challenging aspect was getting acquainted with all the city departments. “We’ve worked with the city clerk, engineering and mayor’s offices so far, and one of the challenges is learning about how each office operates and to figure out the best methods to research,” Bergy said.

Last summer, TRAT job positions were posted to Laker

Jobs, Grand Valley’s online job database, and candidates were interviewed via ooVoo, an online teleconference tool.

“We’ve had student interns before, but never at this level of interaction,” said Tom Almonte, assistant to the city manager, who helped select the students for the team. “This partnership is unique because these students are working on projects with top management. They are in high demand around here because most of the city’s departments are in need of sustainable solutions that will help the city’s economic and environmental goals.”

The team completed 30 projects in just one year, said Christopher.

“Through this partnership, we are learning a great deal more about the in-depth issues the city is facing and how sustainable solutions can be developed,” he said.

# HOME COMING 2011

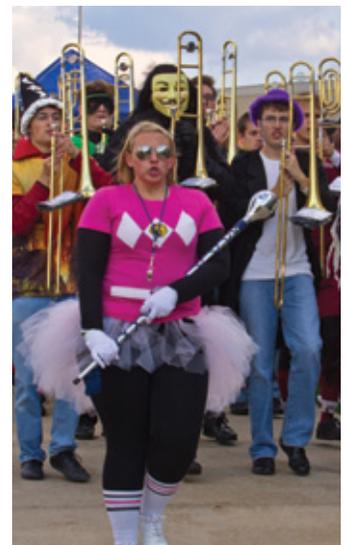
spellbinding reunion for thousands of Lakers

Alumni from all over the country poured into Allendale on Halloween weekend to share memories and create new ones during Homecoming 2011, "GVSU, You Put a Spell on Me." The successful weekend came to a close at Lubbers Stadium with a 24-20 Laker football victory over Michigan Tech University.



## 5K Run/Walk

The annual Homecoming 5K Run/Walk kicked off events on October 29. Due to construction on campus, the race started inside Lubbers Stadium and ended in the Kelly Family Sports Center. Nearly 65 alumni competed in the race, which boasted 305 runners overall. Many participants sported their favorite Halloween costumes.



## Seidman Grads Return

During the week, 50 Seidman College of Business alumni returned to campus classrooms to meet with students, answer questions and share first-hand experiences of their careers in the business industry.



## Pancake Breakfast

Eighty hungry alumni and friends enjoyed candy corn pancakes, sausage and coffee throughout the chilly morning, fueling up for a day full of activities.



## Bus from Southeast Michigan

It was the biggest carpool of the day; 42 alumni, family and friends hopped on a bus chartered by the Alumni Association to Allendale from the Detroit area in what has become a Grand Valley tradition.



## Alumni Expo & Tailgater

More than 800 Lakers gathered under the sunshine near the Kelly Family Sports Center for a one-of-a-kind spooky themed Grand Valley reunion complete with music, Halloween food, prizes and family friendly activities. A dozen campus departments hosted tables with information and giveaways. Thank you to the 28 alumni volunteers who helped make all of the events run smoothly.



## Reunion Row

Back by popular demand for the second year, Reunion Row welcomed more than 500 Lakers and their favorite groups and organizations, from Greek life to hospitality and softball alumni. The groups played lawn games and enjoyed snacks while reconnecting with their alma mater.



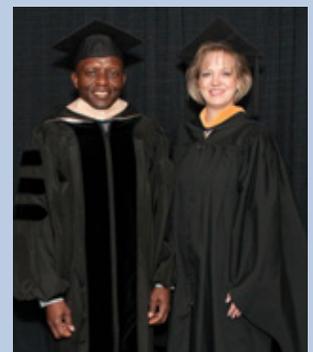
## Top honors presented at commencement

The Alumni Association bestowed its top honors to two of Grand Valley's finest at the December commencement ceremony held December 10 at Van Andel Arena in Grand Rapids.

Michelle Troseth, '83 & '97, received the Distinguished Alumni award. Troseth received bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from the Kirkhof College of Nursing. She is the executive vice president and chief professional practice officer for Clinical Practice Model Resource Center in Grand Rapids, a business unit of Elsevier.

Felix Ngassa, '07, associate professor of chemistry, received the Outstanding Educator Award. Ngassa was selected by the results of a survey filled out by alumni in their fifth year since graduation. He earned a master's of business administration degree from Grand Valley in 2007, and has published more than 30 research articles.

Both honorees were presented with awards before their colleagues, friends and family at a reception and dinner held at the Alumni House on December 9.



Pictured are Felix Ngassa, '07, and Michelle Troseth, '83 and '97.

## CLAS honors outstanding alumni



courtesy photo

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences celebrated the accomplishments of 11 graduates during Homecoming weekend. The 2011 Distinguished Alumni-in-Residence recipients are, left to right, Andrew Alverson, '97; Katie Mawby, '87; Kim Hansen, '80; Noel Boyle, '96; Brittany Hunter, '08; Liem Nguyen, '94; Jennifer Schaub, '02 & '07; Troy Schindlbeck, '95; and Ronald Sheets, '82. Not pictured are Clinton Randles, '01, and Peter Stevens, '01.

## CAREERS

### 1960s

**Peter J. DeWitt II, B.A., 1968**, received the Morris Hershson Award of Merit from the Reusable Industrial Packaging Association.

### 1970s

**Stephen M. VanderLaan, B.S., 1974**, has retired from Caledonia Community Schools after teaching for 37 years.

**Arthur R. Culver, B.S., 1975**, is the superintendent for East St. Louis District Schools in Illinois.

**Deborah A. Smith-Olson, B.S., 1975**, is CEO and vice chair for the Michigan Banking Association.

**Jody E. (Zuverink) Bacinski, B.S., 1976**, is the pastor at Voyage Wesleyan Church in Wyoming.

**James J. Hosford, B.A., 1977**, was inducted into the Grand Rapids Sports Hall of Fame.

**Lorenzo A. Moner, Jr., B.B.A., 1977**, was elected to the City of Inkster City Council, representing District 3.

**Steven H. Versluis, B.A., 1977**, stepped down from his seat after 24 years of service on the Walker City Commission.

**Leo T. Gabriel, B.S., 1978**, is a professor in management accounting for the College of Management at Metropolitan State University in Minnesota.

**Michael J. Tappy, B.S., 1978**, is a quality manager for Display Pack Inc. in Grand Rapids.

### 1980s

**Douglas W. Crim, B.B.A., 1981**, was named "Lansing Best Lawyers" Environmental Law Lawyer of the Year for 2012. He is a principal at Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone.

**Beth E. (Almburg) Delaney, B.S., 1985**, is the pastor at Filipino American Presbyterian Fellowship in Southfield.

**Patricia L. (Spencer) Sellner, B.S., 1986**, received the 2011 YWCA Tribute Award for Sports, Fitness and Wellness.

**Mark A. Dewey, B.S., 1987**, was inducted into the Grand Rapids Sports Hall of Fame.

**Patti J. (Smith) Janderno, B.S.N., 1987**, is a member of

## Lakers helping Lakers at Major Fair

Hundreds of students filled the Kirkhof Center in Allendale to look for career advice from fellow Lakers on November 2. More than 20 alumni volunteers staffed tables and provided encouragement to students who were undecided about a major, or contemplating a change in their path.

Laker alumni were ready to give tips on fields ranging from nursing to anthropology. Students were also supplied with information on career services and academic scholarships. The annual event is sponsored by the University Advising Council and Alumni Relations.



Pictured at the Major Fair are William Hudson, '78, and Maria Espinoza, '89.

the Board of Education for the Clinton County Regional Educational Service Agency.

**Lisa A. Minnella, B.S., 1988, M.Ed., 1992**, is principal of Mulick Park Elementary in Grand Rapids.

**Theresa J. (Woltanski) Grant, B.A., 1989**, is publishing her first novel, *Trajectories*, in March.

### 1990s

**Hendricka Stauffer, B.S., 1991**, was recognized as the Caledonia Education Foundation's 2011 Honored Alumnus.

**William J. Ward, B.S., 1991, M.S., 1998**, works in the communications department of Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

**Julia G. Bausman, M.Ed., 1992**, is an assistant professor of education in Waynesburg University in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.

**James Wilkinson, B.S., 1992**, is the inventor of the Veritek Process and formed a new company, Veritek Coal Processing Inc.

**Ana I. Aleman-Putman, B.A., 1993**, received the 2011 YWCA Tribute Award for Professions.

**Philip R. LaRochelle, B.S., 1993**, is a healthcare finance consultant for Lubaway, Masten & Co. in Milford.

**Drew P. Cataldo, B.S., 1994**, is the vice president of sales for All Covered.

**Paul J. Clemens, B.A., 1995**, received the Whiting Writer's Award.

**Melissa A. Stull, B.S., 1995**, is an intelligence analyst for Spectral.

**Kathleen B. Vogelsang, B.B.A., 1995, M.B.A., 1999**, was named to the Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services Board of Directors.

**Sharon L. (Zinnah) Greer, B.S.N., 1996**, is a clinical care coordinator for Carolinas Healthcare System.

**Timothy M. Basa, B.S., 1997**, is the vice president of sales for BullsEye Telecom in Southfield.

**Sarah A. (Haddouche) Oomen, B.S., 1997**, is an account executive for Berends Hendricks Stuit Insurance in Grandville.

**Joshua M. Lamers, B.B.A., 1998**, has opened Joshua

Tree Insurance and Financial Services in Kingman, Arizona.

**Shirley A. Tuggle, M.S.N., 1998**, is a quality manager for CentraCare, retiring from MDCH as a nurse consultant.

**Benjamin J. Hunter, B.A., 1999, M.S., 2003**, is the creator of Prospecto, a music festival held in Grand Rapids.

**Jason K. Kae-Smith, M.S.W., 1999**, is an AASECT, certified sex therapist in Grand Rapids.

**Sheila K. Marquardt, B.A., 1999**, is working for the educational studies department at Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois.

**Steven M. Slee, B.B.A., 1999**, is vice president/manager of the commercial middle for Fifth Third Bank in Raleigh, North Carolina.

## 2000s

**Kyle P. Hilla, B.S., 2000**, created the CallabraCam app for iPhones.

**Mark E. Rambo, B.S., 2000, M.P.A., 2003**, is the operations manager for Grand Valley's Pew Campus.

**Susan E. Roemer, B.S., 2000, M.P.T., 2003**, received Orthopedic Clinical Specialist Certification from the American Physical Therapy Association.

**Steve Wilkins, M.B.A., 2000**, is an application support analyst for Lake Michigan Credit Union in Grand Rapids.

**William A. Yates, B.A., 2000**, is the northeast zone manager for Farmers Insurance Group.

**Christopher J. Berry, B.B.A., 2001**, was appointed to the Easter Seals Michigan Board of Directors. He is also an attorney at Witzke Berry & Carter in Bloomfield Hills.

**Kathryn J. (Lauer) Hoover, B.S., 2001**, was appointed by Gov. Rick Snyder to the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board.

**Abbey L. (Hodgson) Mead, B.S., 2001**, is a customer care executive for Booking.com.

**Adrienne A. Wallace, B.S., 2001, M.S., 2005, M.P.A., 2008**, is the manager of volunteer services for Kids' Food Basket in Grand Rapids.

**Amber R. Castonguay, B.S., 2002**, was inducted into the 2011 GVSU Athletic Hall of Fame for softball.

**Eric C. Cowles, B.B.A., 2002**, was inducted into the 2011 GVSU Athletic Hall of Fame for golf.

**Darci R. Luyk, M.S., 2002**, is manager of physician relations and network development for Mary Free Bed Hospital & Rehabilitation Center.

**Joseph R. Modderman, B.S., 2002**, is head basketball coach at Allendale High School.

**Jason D. VanElst, B.S., 2002**, was inducted into the 2011 GVSU Athletic Hall of Fame for track and field.

**Sara L. Jonker, M.Ed., 2003**, is a first- and second-grade teacher at Central Elementary School in Petoskey.

**Kyle R. Purdy, B.B.A., 2003, M.B.A., 2008**, is an assurance senior associate for BDO USA, LLP.

**Erica R. Berens, B.B.A., 2004**, is a senior district manager for Farmers Insurance in Caledonia.

**Angela M. (Sharper) Brown, B.S., 2004**, is the external communications manager for CoStar Group in Fairfax, Virginia.

**Paul D. Cook, B.S., 2004**, is an assistant professor of chemistry for University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio.

**Elizabeth A. Kelly, B.S., 2004**, is a trainee for the Grand Rapids Ballet Company.

**Olivia M. Destrades Mendoza, B.A., 2004, M.Ed., 2010**, is a program coordinator in customized workplace English at the Literacy Center of West Michigan in Grand Rapids.

**Karen J. Messick, M.P.A., 2004**, was appointed to the Michigan Long-Term Care Supports and Services Advisory Commission.

**Reginald Spearmon, B.S., 2004**, was inducted into the 2011 GVSU Athletic Hall of Fame for football.

**Marie C. Cameron, B.B.A., 2005**, was inducted into the Harper Creek Hall of Fame in Battle Creek.

**Daniel R. Pear, B.S.N., 2005**, is a nurse practitioner at Edmondson, Rouse and Schmid Family Medicine in Saranac.

**Barbara Nan Schichtel, M.P.A., 2005**, was elected chair of the Community & Junior College Library Section of the American Library Association. She was also re-elected to the Board of Trustees of the Grand Rapids Historical Society.

**John M. Seals, M.Ed., 2005**, is director of residence life at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.

**Thomas J. Van Cleave, B.S., 2005**, is the master's degree program director for the International Partnership for Service Learning and Leadership in Portland, Oregon.

**Michael M. Maule, B.S., 2006**, joined the U.S. Army.

**Michael D. Tiffany, B.B.A., 2006**, was promoted to vice president, portfolio manager at Associated Banc-Corp in Chicago.

**Brian S. Tolsma, B.S., 2006**, joined Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics at the Hazel Crest, Illinois, patient care facility.

**Elizabeth J. Toman, B.S., 2006**, is associate director of operations systems of Urbana 12 for Intervarsity Christian Fellowship in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Mirela Tutundzic, B.A., 2006**, was inducted into the 2011 GVSU Athletic Hall of Fame for soccer.

**Matthew Wilson, B.A., 2006**, received a nomination in the full-length script category for the New York Innovation Theatre Awards.

**Natalie A. Bazan, B.A., 2007**, is the director of the Hopkins Public Library.

**Adrian R. Chouinard, B.S., 2007**, qualified to participate in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trial after completing the Chicago Marathon in October.

**Michael G. Dixon, Jr., M.Ed., 2007**, is the director of multicultural services and campus diversity for Manchester College in North Manchester, Indiana.

**Keri A. Gerken, B.S.N., 2007**, is a registered nurse for Spectrum Health-Bloggett.

**Michael K. Contry, B.S., 2007**, is a senior digital producer for Weber Shandwick in Birmingham.

**Daniel J. Vredevelde, B.B.A., 2007**, is a financial advisor for Edward Jones.

**Joseph J. Ferlito, B.S., 2008**, is a senior account executive for Franco Public Relations Group in Detroit.

**Laura (Wiebenga) Fouty, B.B.A., 2008**, is an agency accounts coordinator for Farmers Insurance Group in Caledonia.

**Jennifer L. Gregg, B.A., 2008**, is an ET3 in the U.S. Navy.

**Sarah M. Hollemans, B.S., 2008**, was a volunteer for the first Special Olympics and Peace Corps partnership in Morocco.

**Michael C. Vanden Berg, B.S., 2008, M.P.A., 2010**, is an IT trainer for Cherry Street Health in Grand Rapids.

**Chelsea L. Brayton, B.S., 2010**, is a math and career transitions teacher at McKinley Education Center in Adrian.

**Amanda J. Gillard, B.S., 2010**, is the ticket operations manager for the Grand Rapids Griffins.

**Erin L. Pinkster, M.B.A., 2010**, is an audit manager for Macatawa Bank in Grand Rapids.

**Rikki E. Brown, B.A., 2011**, has been awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Program scholarship to study in Russia.

**Stephanie A. Doran, M.S.W., 2011**, is the executive director of Uniting Three Fires Against Violence Coalition in Sault Ste. Marie.

**Kyle S. Kujawa, B.S., 2011**, is the public relations manager for the Grand Rapids Griffins.

**Brad J. Natelborg, B.E., 2011**, is a computer engineer for GE Aviation in Grand Rapids.

**Stephanie M. Rice, B.A., 2011**, is an assistant account executive for Weber Shandwick in Detroit.

**Jennifer M. (Brown) Walen, M.H.A., 2011**, is the director of revenue integrity and payer relations for Spectrum Health Medical Group.

## MARRIAGES

### 1990s

**Rita H. Kais, B.S., 1998, M.P.T., 2002**, and Eric Graham, on August 13, 2011.

### 2000s

**Adrienne A. Wallace, B.S., 2001, M.S., 2005, M.P.A., 2008**, and **Derek T. DeVries, B.S., 2000, M.S., 2005**, on October 7, 2011.

**Kristen S. Hamilton, B.S., 2002**, and Michael Woods, on October 1, 2011.

**Jessica Y. Rittenhouse, B.S., 2002**, and **Asa J. Lakeman, B.B.A., 2002**, on August 26, 2011.

**Angela S. Bajalieh, B.S., 2003**, and Jacob Khalaf, on September 21, 2008.

**Jennifer A. Hofmann, B.S., 2003**, and Jeb Beverwyk, on September 25, 2010.

**Heather M. Washburn, B.S.N., 2003**, and Shane McClure, on September 24, 2011.

**Cynthia R. Anderson, B.S., 2004**, and **Jeffrey A. Lopez, B.B.A., 2004**, on September 25, 2010.

**Ashley E. Ryan, B.S., 2004**, and **Stephen P. Czubak, B.S., 2002**, on October 23, 2010.

**Carly G. Miller, B.S., 2004**, and Steve Anderson on July 9, 2011.

**Kimberly A. Yount, B.S., 2004, D.P.T., 2007**, and Brett Kopchitz on May 7, 2011.

**Lindsay I. Crawford, B.S., 2005**, and Troy Elsenheimer on July 19, 2008.

**Michelle L. Lelli, B.S., 2006**, and **Brian T. Vandenbrand, B.S., 2006**, on August 20, 2011.

**Kristen M. Butts, B.A., 2007**, and **James A. Smoke, B.A., 2010**, on September 27, 2008.

**Chelsea Childs, B.B.A., 2007**, and Charles Fisher on August 12, 2011.

**Meredith J. Means, B.S., 2008**, and Robert Borreson on July 8, 2011.

**Nicole R. Roggenbuck, M.Ed., 2008**, and **Jonathon E. McCarthy, B.S., 2006, M.S.W., 2010**, on October 10, 2010.

**Alana K. Sims, B.S., 2008**, and Daniel Leland, on September 24, 2011.

**Erica M. Law, B.A., 2009**, and Robert W. Rumble on July 2, 2011.

**Christina M. LeVey, B.A., 2009**, and Mitchell E. Rowland, B.A., 2008, on June 10, 2011.

**Jena Voogd, B.S., 2009**, and Andrew Tucker on May 20, 2011.

**Elizabeth A. Fyneweaver, B.S., 2011**, and **Joseph M. Chiaramonte, B.S., 1997**, on September 10, 2011.

**Bridget F. Hodges, B.S., 2011**, and Kyle Start on August 6, 2011.

**Nichole L. Moore, B.A., 2011**, and Andrew Otten on July 1, 2011.

## BIRTHS

### 1970s

**James K. Stiff, B.Phil., 1979**, and wife Meredith announce a daughter, Mary Margaret, born March 21, 2011. Mary was welcomed by siblings Sarah, Anna, Rebekah, Philip, Clare and Valerie Rose. The family resides in Augusta, Georgia.

### 1990s

**Catherine S. (Carson) Fitzpatrick, B.S., 1992**, and husband Larry announce a daughter, Nathalie Marie, born August 29, 2011. The family resides in East Lansing.

**Jeffrey R. Reed, B.A., 1992**, and wife Martha announce a son, Cooper, born November 18, 2011. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Laura (Irrer) Miersen, B.S., 1997, M.P.T., 1999**, and **Mark C. Miersen, B.S.E., 1998**, announce a son, Luke Donald, born May 3, 2011. Luke was welcomed by siblings Meredith, Samuel and Kayleigh. The family resides in Alto.

**Patricia (Vining) Maravolo, B.S., 1998**, and husband Anthony announce a son, Nicholas Phillip, born October 18, 2011. Nicholas was welcomed by sister Marissa. The family resides in Cedar Springs.

**Carrie L. (Rikkens) Merchant, B.A., 1998**, and **Bryan M. Merchant, B.M.E., 1999**, announce a son, Ethan Tyler, born September 13, 2011. Ethan was welcomed by brother Lucas. The family resides in Grandville.

**Kelly M. (West) O'Day, B.S., 1999**, and husband Benjamin announce a daughter, Landry RYanne, born March 30, 2011. Landry was welcomed by sisters Riley and Marley. The family resides in San Diego, California.

### 2000s

**Melissa (Zarzecki) Clegg, B.S., 2000, M.Ed., 2005**, and **Daniel E. Clegg, B.S., 1998**, announce a daughter, Finley Marie, born June 19, 2011. Finley was welcomed by sibling Crawford. The family resides in Pierson.

**Kathryn C. (Dixon) Golicz, B.S., 2000, B.S.N., 2003**, and husband Eric announce a son, Aidan Robert, born June 30, 2011. Aidan was welcomed by siblings Brendan and Kaitlyn. The family resides in Farmington.

**Bonnie S. (Runnels) Makeham, B.S., 2001**, and husband Will announce a son, Colby William Peter, born August 17, 2011. The family resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Sara A. (Gapinski) Middlebrook, B.A., 2001**, and husband Scot announce a daughter, Gwen Margaret, born May 29, 2011. The family resides in Cedar Springs.

**Brenda S. (Kolbe) VanNevel, B.S., 2001**, and husband Lawrence announce a daughter, Molly Therese, born March 29, 2011. Molly was welcomed by sister Paige. The family resides in Elkhart, Indiana.

**Joseph A. Smith, B.S., 2011**, and wife Bethany announce a son, Micah William, born October 3, 2011. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Melissa A. (Smith) Byker, B.S., 2002, M.Ed., 2008**, and husband Barry announce twin sons, Lincoln Kahne and Jenson Cale, born September 13, 2011. Lincoln and Jenson were welcomed by sister, Eden. The family resides in Jenison.

**Kimberly L. Saindon, B.S., 2002**, and husband Scott announce a daughter, Addison Faith, born November 3, 2011. Addison was welcomed by sister Gracelyn. The family resides in Wyoming.

**Lisa A. (Wesch) Tieman, B.S.N., 2002**, and husband Brady announce a son, Brian Anthony, born June 28, 2011. The family resides in Plainfield, Illinois.

**Jennifer A. (Hoffman) Beverwyk, B.S., 2003**, and husband Jeb announce a daughter, Alexandra Eloise, born June 29, 2011. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Michelle L. (Larson) Dombrowski, B.S.N., 2003**, and **Alex A. Dombrowski, B.S., 2002**, announce a daughter, Scarlett Alexa, born April 1, 2011. The family resides in Dearborn.

**Eric J. Inch, B.S., 2003**, and wife Tammy announce a daughter, Madeline Patricia, born

August 24, 2011. Madeline was welcomed by sisters Adrianna and Allison. The family resides in Kentwood.

**Angela S. (Bajalieh) Khalaf, B.S., 2003**, and husband Jacob announce a daughter, Danielle Suham, born January 5, 2011. The family resides in Canton.

**Quinn M. (Hood) Steendam, B.F.A., 2003**, and husband Jeffrey announce a daughter, Haley Jay, born September 25, 2011. Haley is welcomed by brother Austin. The family resides in Rockford.

**Christina M. Juntunen, B.S.N., 2004**, and husband Cory announce twins, Abigail Rose and Rebekah Maria, born September 16, 2011. The family resides in Jenison.

**Olivia M. Destrades Mendoza, B.A., 2004, M.Ed., 2010**, and husband Jorge, announce a son, Gabriel Amaru, born March 7, 2011. Gabriel is welcomed by siblings Lourdes and Isabella. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Jessica M. Stone-Chapman, B.B.A., 2005**, and **Kevan Chapman, B.A., 2002**, announce a daughter, Olivia, born November 9, 2011. The family resides in Alexandria, Virginia.

**Lindsay I. (Crawford) Elsenheimer, B.S., 2005**, and husband Troy announce a daughter, Kalyn Madison, born June 20, 2011. The family resides in Greenville, South Carolina.

**Erika L. (Bisson) Holleran, B.S., 2005**, and **Kevin J. Holleran, B.S., 2005, M.S., 2008**, announce a son, Brendan Richard, born October 7, 2011. Brendan is welcomed by sister Helena. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Morgan L. (Rybarczyk) Callahan, B.B.A., 2006**, and **Joseph T. Callahan III, B.S., 2005**, announce a son, Bennett Joseph, born September 9, 2011. Bennett is welcomed by sister Grace. The family resides in St. Joseph.

**Jamie (Quarterman) DeVries, B.A., 2006**, and husband Ross announce a daughter, Bristol Kelly, born July 7, 2011. The family resides in Holland.

**Brandy (Witner) Reynhout, B.A., 2006**, and **Benjamin J. Reynhout, B.A., 2006**, announce a son, Gavin Malcolm, born April 17, 2011. Gavin is welcomed by sister Skye. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Laura (Bright) Hakim, B.S.W., 2006, M.S.W., 2008**, and **Thomas M. Hakim III, B.B.A., 2005**, announce a daughter, Adeline Olivia, born September 2, 2011. The family resides in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Keri A. Gerken, B.S.N., 2007**, and husband Grady announce a daughter, Addisyn Faith, born March 7, 2011. Addisyn is welcomed by sister Ayla. The family resides in Grand Rapids.

**Kenneth P. Leister, B.S., 2007, M.S., 2011**, and wife Nicole announce a daughter, Amelia Kathleen, born October 28, 2011. Amelia is welcomed by sister Adele. The family resides in Bath.

**Jennifer L. (Funk) LeMaire, B.S.N., 2007**, and husband Aaron, announce a daughter, Allison Michelle, born February 14, 2011. The family resides in Muskegon.

**Joel D. Schick, M.B.A., 2007**, and wife Taya announce a daughter, Ellie Christine, born October 10, 2011. The family resides in Ada.

**Kristen M. (Butts) Smoke, B.A., 2007**, and **James A. Smoke, B.A., 2010**, announce a daughter, Lorelai Kathryn, born December 20, 2009. The family resides in Queen Creek, Arizona.

**Jacquelyn M. Abeyta, B.S., 2009**, and husband Lawrence announce a son, Jaxon Charles, born July 20, 2011. Jaxon is welcomed by siblings Christian and Joseph. The family resides in Interlochen.

**Jennifer M. (Brown) Walen, M.H.A., 2011**, and **Joel A. Walen, B.S., 2004**, announce

a son, Owen Thomas, born December 20, 2010. Owen is welcomed by siblings Connor and Lillian. The family resides in Allendale.

## IN MEMORIAM

### 1970s

**John Adastik**, of Grand Rapids, B.B.A., 1974, on November 5, 2011.

**Thomas H. Devine**, of Pullman, B.Phil., 1977, on September 23, 2011.

### 1980s

**Jerry D. Fellows**, of Kentwood, B.S., 1986, on August 30, 2011.

**Martha Vandereyk**, of Grand Rapids, B.A., 1988, on November 15, 2011.

### 1990s

**Jon T. Muller**, of Grand Rapids, M.S.W., 1995, on October 8, 2011.

### 2000s

**Sarah E. Frazier**, of Midland, B.A., 2003, on October 1, 2011.

**Matthew K. Hales**, of Petoskey, B.B.A., 2006, on July 20, 2011.



## Congratulations December 2011 graduates

The Alumni Association wishes you the best as you venture out to shape your lives, your professions and your societies. You now join an alumni network of more than 81,000 people.

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# OFF-ROAD TRAILS

Student is national mountain biking champion — by Leah Zuber

Danielle Musto just wanted to get back into shape.

She never thought a simple bike ride would lead her down a path to become a national mountain biking champion.

Musto, a senior majoring in advertising and public relations, said she fell in love with biking when she went on a bike ride around Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids during the summer of 2002. “My boyfriend at the time, who’s now my husband, was really into cross country biking and always talked about it, so we went for a ride one day and that’s all it took,” she said. “I was hooked.”

Two months later, Musto competed in her first cross country race. “I had no idea what I’d gotten myself into,”

she said. “My husband said, ‘Don’t worry, you’re a beginner, you don’t have to wear anything special.’ So I showed up in a ribbed T-shirt and all the other beginner women were decked out and focused.”

Musto, 34, won that first beginner race and hundreds more after it. In October 2011, she won a national mountain biking championship in the Solo Single-Speed Division at the USA Cycling 24-hour National Championship in Colorado Springs, Colorado; she finished 12, 13-mile loops in less than 23 hours. “The most difficult part of that competition was the altitude difference,” she said. “I’m used to training in West Michigan and the altitude in Colorado



*courtesy photo*

was at about 7,000 feet, so you lose a bit of power because the oxygen is thinner that high up.”

Musto, a Grand Rapids native, enrolled at Grand Rapids Community College after high school then transferred to Aquinas College. While at Aquinas, she became a store merchandise manager and decided to transfer to Grand Valley because its classes fit her flexible schedule better.

“After taking a few public relations classes at Grand Valley I realized that I was really interested in the advertising and public relations program,” Musto said.

“Around the same time I also started getting really serious about bike racing, and stepped down from my position

at the store and started training more intensely.”

Musto said she is close to completing her bachelor’s degree and credits many of her advertising and public relations classes to her success in the cycling industry. “Learning the right communication and writing skills have definitely come into play when I look for sponsors and maintain my website and blog,” she said. ([www.daniellemusto.blogspot.com](http://www.daniellemusto.blogspot.com).)

Each year, Musto begins the outdoor racing season in late March, and said racing in the Pacific Northwest is her favorite area. “Northern California is a favorite because of the great weather and the ocean is beautiful. The first two 24-hour World Championship races I competed in were in British Columbia, and I have a lot of great memories from my early years of racing there,” she said.

During the peak of a racing season, her trainer will schedule training plans weeks in advance and include two to three intense workouts that range from one and half to three hours, then two longer endurance-based days that range from three to eight hours. Musto said she rides between 15-25 hours a week. “After a big race, though, I usually take a few days off where I do absolutely nothing,” she added.

When the snow and cold weather hits, Musto trains inside daily on a bike and with a strength coach; she tries to ride outside as much as possible. She also leads several spinning classes at the Ada Bike Shop, which is one of her sponsors.

In the past 10 years, she competed in the USA Cycling 24-hour National Championship four times, placed second twice and third once, and competed in the 24-hour World Championships twice.

During a race, Musto relies heavily on her mechanic, who manages her gear, and her



*photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker*

Danielle Musto fell in love with biking when she went on a bike ride around Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids in 2002. Nine years later, she was named a national mountain biking champion.

husband, who tracks calorie intake per hour and status in the competition. “In the middle of the night of a 24-hour race you become almost like a shell and can’t think very straight,” she said. “It helps to have someone there to track your progress.”

Being a national champion and well-known throughout the biking community doesn’t stop her from competing in local races, though. “Michigan has a big cycling community and there are a lot of strong women here and the courses are challenging, so there are short races that I’ve won here that I’m equally proud of,” she said.

Her favorite part about mountain biking is the adventure of it all, but her biggest challenge is mentally prepping herself for a race. “It’s hard to get up the courage at the start line to feel like you belong there. There are a lot of professional women who have been racing longer than me, but I just have to remind myself that anyone can win at any time,” she said.

Musto plans to participate in the European National Championship and National Championship in Alberta, Canada, this year.



## Grand Impact

**Wherever you are in the world, you are a part of the Laker family!**

This week of service is intended to unite Grand Valley alumni from around the globe in providing volunteer support in their own communities and in ways meaningful to each individual or group.

- Volunteer during the week at your favorite non-profit organization in the name of Grand Valley.
- Sign up to help with a project being planned by a regional alumni club, chapter, or alumni group near you.
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