



Ferris State University

TORCH

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HERE'S WHAT'S INSIDE

SUSTAINABILITY

Ferris' Bulldog Sustainability Alliance RSO introduces several upcoming events to raise funds and spread conservation awareness in the community

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BECOMING ALL AMERICAN

Ferris sophomore center Zack Hankins writes on his journey to three GLIAC championships and historic All-American honors

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The scientific resistance

Earth Day gets political

Harley Harrison

Torch Reporter

Marching has been the latest trend of 2017 and as Earth Day approaches, scientists are gearing up to take their stance to the streets.

While the official March for Science takes place at the National Mall in Washington D.C., there are currently 514 satellite marches registered in approximately 37 different countries, according to marchforscience.com, the official march registration website.

In Michigan alone, there are 14 satellite marches planned for Saturday, April 22, taking place in Alpena, Ann Arbor, Cheboygan, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Houghton, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marquette, Midland, Petoskey, Sault Ste. Marie, Ypsilanti and Big Rapids.

"Participants will gather at Top Taggart Field between 3 and 3:30 p.m., and begin marching at 3:30," said coordinator and Ferris mathematics professor Victor Piercey in a press release.

There are a number of reasons science-lovers will be marching, including President Trump's tweets, which have raised concerns within the science community and have influenced people to march.

"It's really cold outside, they are calling it a major freeze, weeks ahead of normal," President Trump stated in a 2015 tweet. "Man, we could use a big fat dose of global warming!"

In another tweet from 2014, Trump stated, "This is very expensive GLOBAL WARMING bullshit has got to stop. Our planet is freezing, record low temps and our GW scientists are stuck on ice."

But the climate debate goes beyond the virtual world of Twitter. According to various news reports, science enthusiasts are also upset over Trump's executive order that was signed on Tuesday, March 28.

"With today's executive action, I am taking historic steps to lift the restrictions on American energy, to reverse government intrusion, and to cancel job-killing regulations," said President Trump in a press conference with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Victor Piercey

Despite the political controversy, the March for Science website

claims to be nonpartisan.

"The March for Science is the first step of a global movement to defend the vital role science plays in our health, safety, economies and governments," the website states. "Science, scientists and evidence-based policymaking are under attack. Budget cuts, censorship of researchers, disappearing datasets and threats to dismantle government agencies harm us all, putting our health, food, air, water, climate and jobs at risk. It is time for people who support science to take a public stand and be counted."

For anyone seeking more information about the March for Science, they can visit marchforscience.com.



EARTH WEEK EVENTS

Honey Buns for Honey Bees Fundraiser

April 17 - 21 from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. in the Quad and UC
The Bulldog Sustainability Alliance will be raising money for the Pollinator Partnership.

Outdoor Club Flower Pot Sale

April 18 - 20 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. in UC Lounge and 202

Keynote Event: Kirtland's Warbler & Jack Pine Forests

April 19 6:30 p.m. in UCB 202A
Speaker will be fish and wildlife biologist Chris Mensing.

The Big Rapids March for Science

April 22 3:30 p.m. at Top Taggart Field

Global warming IS real

Global warming has been a hot button topic for decades. Starting with the science community, it's migrating to social and political communities as well.

With that comes the injections of personal belief and religion. Unfortunately to those who feel global warming is an exaggeration: facts cannot be changed due to personal aspects.

First, it's a common misconception that climate change and global warming are two independent phenomena. They aren't. Climate change is defined as the change in global and or regional climate patterns. Global warming is the steady pattern of increasing global temperature.



Melanie Bale
Torch Reporter

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA), whose mission it is to understand and predict changes in climate and the many aspects of our planet, temperatures globally have been on a steady incline. 2016 marks the highest average temperature since 1880, the year we started keeping records.

Second, why is the common thought amongst Americans that religion has the

highest opinion over science? Religion is based off personal accounts of history, almost like a game of telephone. Science is a method. It is a sound basis for discovering what is true in a repeatedly tested process. So are Americans too scared to be wrong about their opinions than to accept something as proven true? It's possible to be religious and still trust science.

Lastly, I'd like to draw attention to the ever increasing number of extreme weather events. Hurricane Alex hit in January of 2016 even though the season runs from June to November. Alaska saw temperatures 10 degrees above average in February and the northeast saw

up to 20 degrees below average. Countries such as Japan have even seen an increase in earthquakes, such as the 2011 earthquake that produced tsunami waves 10 meters in height.

Further information can be found at reputable sources such as NOAA, The Weather Channel, The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Center for Environmental Information (NCEI).

The best thing citizens can do is continue to support the agencies in the wake of Trump's gag rule and funding cut-off for these agencies.

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NEWS

"With the rise of human trafficking cases in Michigan, it's never been more important to increase our awareness of this growing epidemic"

-President David Eisler, See below for story

Angela Graf | News Editor | grafa1@ferris.edu

Modern day slavery

Human trafficking in the mitten

Harley Harrison & Marley Tucker

Torch Staff

Human trafficking is commonly perceived as a foreign issue that is rarely acknowledged as a problem that could occur in a town such as Big Rapids.

The Ferris State University Coalition Against Slavery and the Professional Convention Management Association student organization hosted a two-day conference Wednesday, April 5, and Thursday, April 6, to promote human trafficking awareness.

"I think it's important for college students to hear about this, not only to better educate them, but to learn the warning signs so you can help and prevent this problem," said Ferris hospitality management junior Jessica Smith. "You never know that there could be someone sitting right next to you that's being trafficked, so it's important to know to help other people."

The keynote speaker of the Thursday session was Carmen Kucinich, a licensed professional counselor in the state of Michigan and a victim's advocate for the FBI.

"Who can become a victim? Anybody," Kucinich said. "Now, we do know that the focus is on those with the biggest vulnerability. The biggest vulnerability tends to be our runaways. Teenagers run away, and they don't have a plan right? They have \$10 and a backpack, and they need some place to go. They need all of these things, and they are more vulnerable to being recruited. The life expectancy of a child victim after being brought into this type of life, if they're not recovered, is only seven years. Drugs, STDs, suicide and violence put them at the highest risk."

In 2015, the National Human Traffick-



Jessica Smith

ing Resource Center (NHTRC) received a total of 24,757 signals, which are defined as incoming communications. 3.6 percent of these signals were received in Michigan, which is the sixth highest percentage in the United States.

"With the rise of human trafficking cases in Michigan, it's never been more important to increase our awareness of this growing epidemic," said Ferris President David Eisler.

According to NHTRC, the most common venues for potential sex trafficking are commercial front brothels or hotels, and the most common venues for potential labor trafficking are domestic work or farms.

"I want you to stop and think about this: if you go to the store and buy a tomato, do you know for sure that it wasn't picked by someone who was exploited or trafficked?" said Grand Valley State University nursing professor Dr. Joy Washburn. "The other thing with all of this is to remember that it is a human being used. You can sell a human being over and over and over again. I hate to use the word renewable resource for them, but that is truly how traffickers look at their victims. It is a commodity. It is not a person."

For more information visit humantraffickinghotline.org. Reports can be made through the human trafficking hotline at 1 (888) 373-7888.



Dr. Joy Washburn



Photo by: Andrea Cordes | Torch Photographer

According to keynote speaker Carmen Kucinich, the life expectancy of child human trafficking victims is only seven years because of drug use, STDs, suicide and the infliction of other violent acts.

NHTRC 2015 VICTIM DEMOGRAPHICS

Labor Trafficking

Adults - 581 cases

Minors - 114 cases

Females - 411 cases

Males - 333 cases

Sex Trafficking

Adults - 2,954 cases

Minors - 1,379 cases

Females - 3,780 cases

Males - 168 cases

The above information was taken from a 2015 report by The National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Update on student government elections

Theories and solutions for low vote counts

Andrea Lenhart & Nick Vander Wulp

Torch Staff

With the recent Student Government elections, many students are questioning why there was only one candidate for president and such low voter turnout. Current President Josh Olszewski breaks down the facts.

"About 15 students returned to Student Government from last year, and currently we have around 40 members," Olszewski said.

According to Olszewski, the majority of the students in Student Government are under-

classmen that are looking for leadership positions, but may not have been ready to take on the role of president.

"It is a large commitment, and you have to make sure that it's right for you," Olszewski said. "Patrick served on my cabinet as a treasurer. He's been in the organization a while, so he was ready to take the position."

As for the low voter rate, Student Government pushed the election process in many ways.



Josh Olszewski

"We created a Facebook event for it, because we know many students are on Facebook," Olszewski said. "We had posters, we are planning on sending a follow up survey and asking people why they did not vote, so hopefully we will be able to gather info so that next year we can disseminate info the

way people want it."

Olszewski thinks that one possibility for such low voter rates could be because there was only one candidate and the write-in process was not well-known to students.

"We're not about endorsing one candidate over the other. We did our best to really say, 'Here's Patrick, here's his platform and what he wants to run on, but also, here is the process of writing someone in,'" Olszewski said.

According to Olszewski, in previous years there has almost always been more than one candidate.

However, Olszewski has higher hopes for election season in years to come.

"The president appoints their cabinet, which will likely be underclassmen, so hopefully after they hold a cabinet or even a committee head next year or years to come, they will feel like they can hold the president position," Olszewski said.

Ferris hospitality management sophomore Maria Rodgers is looking forward to her next few years in Student Government.

"I plan on moving from my position as representative in Student Government as a senator for the college of business, and ultimately taking a position on the Executive Board," Rodgers said. "Being a younger student in Student Government has given me an opportunity to watch some of the older members and their contributions towards Student Government."

According to Olszewski, everyone that he has come into contact with wished they had gotten involved earlier in their college career.

"If there is any student out there who is thinking about doing anything, it doesn't even have to be Student Government, just try it and see what happens," Olszewski said. "The worst that could happen is that you step away and say 'Well that's not for me,' and then you try something else."



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- ON THE RECORD -

A roundup of this week's crime at Ferris State University

A brief report

By Angela Graf - News Editor

Smash and dash

April 10, 7:30 p.m. officers responded to a hit and run accident in Lot 10.

No trouble here, officer

April 11, 9:25 p.m. officers responded to a

report of a domestic dispute in Bond Hall, where yelling had been heard. Investigation showed no such incident and the people present also claimed there was no problem.

Act of God

April 12, 3:00 p.m. officers received a report of a vehicle damaged in Lot 16. A fence had

blown over onto the vehicle and inflicted a small dent.

Shoulda just stopped

April 16, 9:10 p.m. officers stopped a vehicle on Stadium Drive near Campus Drive for failure to yield to a stop sign. The driver was found to be driving on a suspended license

and was cited.

The Ferris Department of Public Safety issued 339 tickets between the April 10 and 18, totaling \$3,110.



Photo by: Aubrey Kemme | Multimedia Editor

Approved senate bill 332-333 prevents MIP first-offenders from receiving a misdemeanor, however it does not protect against more serious charges upon a second or third offense.

Crimes and misdemeanors

First offense MIPs reduced to civil infraction

Kip Biby

Torch Reporter

Younger Ferris students may be breathing a sigh of relief as new Michigan legislation makes a first offense minor in possession (MIP) charge a civil infraction instead of a misdemeanor.

Senate bill 332-333 was signed in December of last year by Governor Rick Snyder. Before the bill passed, a first time MIP charge was a misdemeanor crime but was most often taken off of the offender's record after a probation period.

Jacob Buse is a Ferris graduate and a Mecosta County district court probation officer. Buse handles many Ferris student MIP cases that are expunged after a probationary period.

In a written statement to the Torch, Buse said, "As I understand the changes to the MIP sections of the Liquor Control Code, an extra step is added to prevent young people gaining misdemeanor charges by making the first MIP charged a civil infraction, with subsequent MIPs going through mostly the same misdemeanor process. From my position as a probation officer, the only real changes for me will be a reduction in my caseload and the overall criminal caseload of the Court."

Ferris director of public safety, Bruce Borkovich, does not feel the reduction in penalty will aid in deterring underage drinking.

"I felt the old law made people more accountable, while providing a first offender with a process to elim-

inate a criminal record," Borkovich said. "I do not feel that the misdemeanor charge was excessive. It gave some level of accountability, and still provided a process for avoiding a criminal record. People choose a behavior that deviates from the requirements of a law because the perceived benefits of the behavior outweigh the consequences of the behavior. Reducing the charge to a civil infraction seems to lessen the consequences of the behavior."

Ferris psychology junior Garrett Organek, does not believe a misdemeanor for a MIP is necessary.

"I definitely favor MIPs being a civil infraction over a misdemeanor," Organek said. "I do not think that getting in trouble for underage drinking should have that big of an impact further on in someone's life. People drink regardless if they are old enough to or not and I think most people know this. I guess it depends on the individual, but I personally know several people who have received MIPs as misdemeanors and it did not stop them from drinking."

The bill does prevent an offender from receiving a misdemeanor on their first MIP offense but upon their second or third offense an offender could have to face more serious consequences.



Garrett Organek



Jacob Buse

NEWS BRIEFS

By Angela Graf - News Editor

Torchbearer Awards

Ferris' Center for Leadership, Activities and Career Services (CLACS) office will be hosting the annual Torchbearer Award Ceremony 7 p.m. Thursday, April 20. This yearly event provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding Ferris students, faculty and staff. The event is open for anyone to attend. Refreshments will be served at 6 p.m. in UCB 202 and attire for the event is business-casual.

Media festival

Media professionals from around the region will flock to Ferris to take part in a day-long event hosted by the Ferris School of Digital Media and the Media Communication Association registered student organization (RSO). The event will take place Friday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the IRC. For a full schedule, visit the Ferris Media Festival Facebook page.

Ferris State Torch Corrections

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Photo by: Keith Salowich | Editor in Chief

Ferris communication and public advocacy senior Michael Williams registers to speak during the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality public hearing on behalf of Ferris' Bulldog Sustainability Alliance RSO.

Boiling hot

MDEQ hosts public hearing; more than 600 gather to speak on controversial water topic

Keith Salowich & Marley Tucker
Torch Staff

Two hours prior to the event, more than 100 Michigan residents had already registered to speak during the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) public hearing.

Bus-loads of residents from Flint, Detroit and other Michigan communities descended on Ferris State to voice their concerns regarding Nestlé's pending permit with the MDEQ. The purpose of the event was to offer information and collect opinions from the public on Nestlé's proposal to increase the amount of groundwater being pumped from a site in Osceola County from 150 gallons per minute to 400 gallons per minute.

Flint resident Claudia Perkins-Milton was just one of many Flint residents to make the 160-mile journey to Ferris State.

"Every day that I have to cook or clean, I use bottled water. I have to open a thousand bottles of water per day to cook properly, to bathe my grandkids and myself. Those are the things that happen because we don't trust the water," Perkins-Milton said. "Of course anything that is going to violate water in any way, shape or form we're going to stand up against it."

Hundreds of individuals put their thoughts on the record via the public hearing and separate listening stations where people could speak away from the crowd of more than 600 and for a longer duration.

President of Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation Peggy Case led off the public hearing by opposing Nestlé's permit for increased pumping of groundwater on the grounds that their environmental impact estimates were based on computer models instead of other physical evidence.

Case's testimony was met with applause throughout the room.

The crowd also got rowdy for other speakers, at one point chanting for the MDEQ to, "Do your jobs," chanting "Flint Lives Matter" and faking excessive coughs during a Nestlé representative's time at the mic, among other call-outs.

Ferris communication and public advocacy senior Michael Williams was among the last people waiting to speak after buses back to Flint and Detroit had departed and much of the crowd had dispersed for the night.

"You have heard the voices of Michigan tonight," Williams said. "We are not to commoditize our human right. The DEQ's decision is supposed to be based on fact. We have precedent, we have court rulings. Those are your facts. We have rivers that have dried up and streams that have been exposed.

That's your proof. A model is not proof."

The public hearing portion of the event began at 7 p.m. and was only expected to run until 9 p.m. But due to an unprecedented interest, the event was extended more than three hours. Each registered person was allowed three minutes to speak.

Ewart resident Beth Gilmer spent more than two months at Standing Rock and is now taking on a water issue in her own backyard.

"The DEQ needs to be on the side of the people, and not on big corporation's side. Our voices have to be heard," Gilmer said. "The only way for any of these issues that are coming up to be fixed is for us to write, to call, to be present at these meetings. I know that the population of Ewart is against it, but the people need to show up to demonstrate this."

Former Ferris State student and Big Rapids resident Justin Macauley was motivated to speak during the public hearing as a result of his time following the protests at Standing Rock, North Dakota.

"Nestlé waters thinks that they can take water, which is a human right. You have the right to drink it, I have the right to drink it. It falls from the sky and they're trying to put a price tag on it and sell it," Macauley said. "As a human being, I have to do something about that for seven generations to come for other people. If I don't do something about it, then who is?"

Grand Rapids resident Connie Swinger states that women in her United Methodist church group have been against bottled water since the inception of the idea.

"I think [Michigan residents] need to be more water conscious and we need to pay attention to what's happening," Swinger said. "I don't think that Nestle should make a profit and take the water for almost nothing for it, especially when there are people in Flint who don't have drinkable water at all. \$200 is not enough for all of the water."

A Ferris State University sign was posted warning those in attendance that signs, banners, chanting and unauthorized solicitation were prohibited and would be grounds for removal. This disrupted the plans of the Bulldog Sustainability Alliance, Conscious Consumer Coalition and FSU Outdoor Club RSOs, who had prepared a sign for the sit-in that they had organized for the event.

Others with signs were also turned away and several police officers present helped to ensure that these rules were followed.

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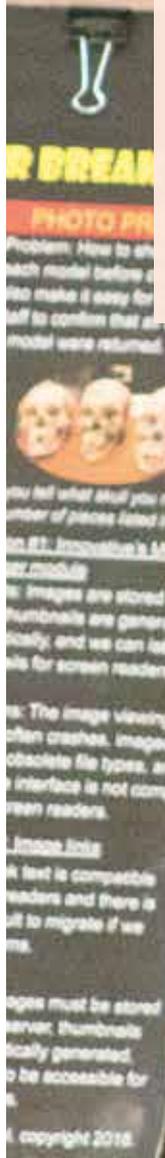
“Explore”

Ferris Assistant Professor Gail L. Bullard spoke at the exhibition reception for the new display in the FSU Fine Art Gallery in the University Center. The exhibit features artwork created by Ferris and Kendall faculty members and will be on display from April 6 to March 6.

Gallery hours:

Monday - Friday, 11:00am to 6:00pm
 Saturday - 11:00am to 3:00pm
 Sunday - Closed

Photo by: Odette Lopez |Torch Photographer



Bills, bills, bills

Which college degrees pay off in the long run?

Marley Tucker
 Torch Reporter

As college students navigate the future, many are faced with the dilemma of choosing majors that suit them and provide healthy starting salaries.

Balancing job satisfaction and adequate pay can be difficult when students have to choose fields of study that will determine potential career paths to pursue for the rest of their lives.

According to a 2016 report from Michigan State University's Collegiate Employment Research Institute (CERI), which releases data on starting salary information from thousands of employers across the country each year, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) majors dominate the field. Engineering, math and computer science fields land on the list of highest-paid bachelor's degrees. This is not a surprise to many.

"I believe that there are going to be employment opportunities in the future for me," said Ferris information security and intelligence junior Abbie-Jo Johnson. "The information security program itself sets you up for future success. The field of information security is growing every year because technology is improving and hackers are getting better at what they do. There are very few programs in the United States that are DOD and NSA accredited. Ferris is one of them. It takes a lot and you have to have a passion for it."

Among some of the highest paid starting salary careers for college graduates are found in finance and accounting. Ferris offers an accounting-finance dual degree program, which is not found in other Michigan schools.

"Accounting and finance are sufficiently different but share much of the common ground," said

Ferris finance associate professor Cheolwoo Lee. "They are complementary and very closely inter-related, too. When a student has this degree, employers would find this job candidate quite attractive for hire because understanding both accounting and finance can lead to seamless job performance and decision making. As uncertainty increases due to increased complexity and volatility in our society, the role of wealth management is expected to grow rapidly."

According to the 2010-11 edition of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation Outlook Handbook, in the decade from 2014 to 2024, employment of financial analysts and financial examiners is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations.

While some students search for the highest payoff when selecting their major, others believe that sticking with what you love is most important.

"I believe that you should do what you love first and the money will come," said Ferris advertising and integrative marketing communications senior Julia Rogers. "I think if you put your heart into your work, good things will come your way."

To find out more information about degree programs that Ferris offers, you can check out Ferris' 2016-17 catalogue or log onto MyFSU to find what classes are offered in upcoming semesters.



Abbie-Jo Johnson



Julia Rogers

TOP 10 COLLEGE MAJORS WITH HIGHEST STARTING SALARIES

- 1. Chemical Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$63,389
 Salary Range: \$34,850-\$100,600
- 2. Computer Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$63,313
 Salary Range: \$34,800-\$100,200
- 3. Electrical Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$61,173
 Salary Range: \$32,800-\$97,900
- 4. Software Design**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$60,104
 Salary Range: \$33,200-\$94,000
- 5. Mechanical Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$59,681
 Salary Range: \$33,900-\$82,250
- 6. Computer Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$58,995
 Salary Range: \$34,450-\$86,650
- 7. Computer Science**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$56,974
 Salary Range: \$34,000-\$86,000
- 8. Civil Engineering**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$55,879
 Salary Range: \$34,700-\$89,650
- 9. Management Information Systems**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$51,690
 Salary Range: \$30,000-\$85,000
- 10. Construction**
 Average Annual Starting Salary: \$49,672
 Salary Range: \$23,850-\$76,050

The above information was taken from a 2016 report by Michigan State University's Collegiate Employment Research Institute

LIFESTYLES

“If me being out prevents just one suicide or helps one parent accept their child, then any sacrifice I had to make was totally worth it,”
- Janae Kroczaleski see page 7

Nick Vander Wulp | Lifestyles Editor | vandern8@ferris.edu

Bulldog Sustainability Alliance wags tail over Earth Week

Promoting a sustainable future

Alexandra Bourne
Torch Reporter

Changes to the Bulldog Sustainability Alliance (BSA) registered student organization (RSO) has seen positive results according to Ferris math senior and BSA vice president Kyle Denney.

“Now, it seems like on campus, people have a happier connotation towards the events rather than mild confusion,” Denney said.

The BSA is focused on promoting sustainability on campus and in the community.

The organization has been working with the city of Big Rapids to plant more milkweed, which helps monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

According to BSA President and Ferris environmental biology senior Symon Cronk, these efforts have given Big Rapids the nickname “Monarch Mayor.” The Card Wildlife

Center will be hosting an event called Butterfly Flyaway, related to these conservation efforts.

“[My favorite part has been] seeing the work of the year come together,” Cronk said. “This year has been trialed with some challenges and obstacles. But to see it come together like this and put together what looks to be a great Earth Week, I’m thrilled to see it. It’s a very satisfying and busy time.”



Kyle Denney

“Our goals and values are something we think about and work with all year,” said Ferris psychology junior and BSA secretary Laura Markham. “It’s really nice during Earth Week to see how prevalent they are across campus.”

During Earth Week, the BSA will be hosting multiple philanthropic fundraisers.

“We’re going to be doing Honey Buns for Honey Bees,” Cronk said. “We run all week long and sell locally made honey buns for one dollar, and proceeds will go to the Pollinator Partnership. Our organization also made seed bombs with native wildflower mixes for one dollar.”

The honey buns will be sold from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until Friday, April 21, in the North Quad and University Center (UC).

According to Cronk, this will be the third



Laura Markham

year BSA has been involved with Ferris’ Earth Week celebrations.

This year, BSA will be bringing in Chris Mensing, a fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to discuss the Kirtland’s Warbler, one of North America’s rarest songbirds, and their native habitat, Michigan jack pine forests. The event will be 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 19 in UC ballroom 202A.

“This has been a time for us to rally all year and put on a great event, to bring something here to the campus and give back to the students,” Cronk said.

Students interested in getting involved with BSA can follow them on Facebook, Twitter, OrgSync and Snapchat, where they will be sharing stories throughout Earth Week. Meetings are 11 a.m. every Tuesdays.



Symon Cronk



Graphic by: Sarah Massey | Production Assistant



Photo by: Aubrey Kemme | Multimedia Editor

Janae Kroczaleski shares with Ferris students the challenges she's faced as a transgender woman and a cancer survivor.

Who I'm supposed to be

Former Ferris student and bodybuilder speaks about LGBTQ+ community and healthcare

Briana Hammontree
Interim Reporter

The College of Pharmacy invited a Ferris graduate to share her journey to becoming a transgender woman and the healthcare issues that the LGBTQ+ community faces.

Students sat with friends in the small auditorium, talking to one another about homework assignments, parties and the latest gossip. Then Janae Kroczaleski took the podium and the room fell quiet.

As a cancer survivor and transgender woman, Kroczaleski came to Ferris to share her story as well as educate pharmacy students about healthcare's connection with sexuality and genders.

As a former male world champion bodybuilder and world record-holding powerlifter, Kroczaleski has dealt with the backlash of being openly transgender not only with her work, but with her family and friends as well.

"My middle brother is very protective of me now," Kroczaleski said. "When I first came out, some people in my family were talking crap about me and he basically said that if people did he would pop everybody. But at the same time, I know that it really bothers him and it feels like he is losing his brother."

As Kroczaleski shared her story with the small group of students,

the emotions in the room began to change. What was once light-hearted changed to serious and emotional.

"If me being out prevents just one suicide or helps one parent accept their child, then any sacrifice I had to make was totally worth it," Kroczaleski said.

The event soon took a more educational turn as Kroczaleski transitioned the topic towards healthcare.

Kroczaleski and many others in the LGBTQ+ community cannot use the luxury of health insurance to cover surgeries and required therapy sessions. However, some of the pharmaceutical therapies are covered. In addition, more insurances are adding more to their benefits for the LGBTQ+ community.

Ferris pharmacy graduate student Michael Oisten listened to Kroczaleski speak.

"I came to the event because I plan on working in a retail setting once I graduate and I know that deals heavily with just the regular community as well as the individuals subsets, and personally I take it as something to pride in to give somebody the best healthcare I can," Oisten said.



Michael Oisten

Adjunct Instructor – Political Science
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TORCH CONFESSIONS

A full plate

Torch staff members write about a slightly embarrassing aspect of his or her life because hey, we all have those.

I may have been a tad over-ambitious.

I had always imagined finishing off my last semester of college easily—maybe only 12 credits and no Friday classes. I had heard of other seniors doing it, sometimes even managing to save cultural enrichment classes, or the “fun” classes for the end.

When I scheduled my final semester of classes last fall, I was slapped in the face with my own reality. A Friday-free semester was off the table and to my surprise, my credits added up to 17, the most I’d ever signed up for. This is in addition to an internship and a part-time job.

“OK, this will be fine,” I thought to myself, with my beginning-of-the-semester motivation still intact. “I’ll just tough it out and finish strong.” In retrospect, this self-convincing was ridiculous and irresponsible.

Now that only two weeks of the semester remain before finals, I laugh as I look back and see how naïve I was to think the



Adrianna Walker
Torch Reporter

last semester of college would be anything but terribly grueling. What was I thinking?

A never-ending plethora of assignments, quizzes, exams and studying is close to impossible when you have chronic senioritis and a severe I-wanna-get-out-of-Big-Rapids disorder, on top of other off-campus responsibilities.

I simply put too much on my plate this semester, nearly setting myself up for failure.

When the time comes to schedule your last semester of college, I’d recommend not doing what I did.

Over-packing your plate only ensures that something will be sacrificed, whether it be a grade in a class, your job, or your mental and physical health.

If a schedule seems daunting or impossible, it probably is.



Submitted Photo

Fellow Delta Zeta sister Marissa Van Alst gives McKenzie Freeman a piggyback ride during one of the warmer days in BR.

One busy Bulldog

Juggling the college load

Alicia Jaimes

Torch Reporter

Ferris dental hygiene sophomore McKenzie Freeman is a student who was determined to endure the ups and downs of the “college experience.”

Freeman is from Birch Run and she came to Ferris in hopes of expanding her education to create a better future.

Freeman’s course load includes taking Advanced English Composition, Public Health, Health Care Information Systems, Marketing and Health Care Management.

“My Mondays and Wednesdays are my busiest because I don’t have class Tuesdays or Thursdays,” Freeman said.

Freeman works at Selfies Soup and Salad between classes forcing her to have to schedule her work around her courses.

When the day is over, Freeman

likes to unwind by participating in three on-campus organizations: Ferris Club Tennis, PetSavers and her sorority, Delta Zeta.

Being involved in the Ferris community has given Freeman the opportunity to better transition into college while meeting new friends and life-long sisters.

“I know McKenzie through our sorority. We met during one of our first sorority events and found out that we lived down the hall from one another,” said Ferris human resource management freshman Mollie Doornbos.

Ferris psychology freshman Taya Treiber is another sorority sister who recalls some of the adventures she and Freeman had.

Treiber’s favorite memory with Freeman is going to Walmart to buy frames for their composites, a photo with their sorority name and every current sorority member.

Although Freeman may be able to let loose at Walmart and soror-

ity dances, she still considers her spring semester to be a hectic one.

“My stress level is higher than average, I would say about a seven or eight,” Freeman said.

Freeman grew up in a close-knit, supportive family. Freeman

prefers to spend what little free time she has with her friends and family, though her time for relaxation is slim this semester.

“I honestly don’t go home often. If I’m lucky, once a month. But mostly for events at home like weddings and such,” Freeman said. “Usually, if I go home I’m missing out on opportunities and events with my RSOs here on campus.”

Freeman plans to find a job in dental hygiene so that she can live independently and someplace warm in the future.



McKenzie Freeman

Water protectors

Circle of Tribal Nations RSO adviser Scott Herron (left) shows one of the projects students have been working on to protect the water in Michigan. Involved in this project are Ferris public health junior Heather Luttrell (center) and Ferris communications senior Tori McGeshick (right).

Photo by: Samantha Dow | Torch Photographer





HELLO
my name is

INTERN

Graphic by: Jordan Lodge & Sarah Massey | Production

Dawg days of summer

The sun is coming out and the dawgs are almost done

Tia-Jane' Oakes
Interim Reporter

The end of the semester is here and Ferris students are preparing for their summer classes and internships to begin.

The weather has changed for the betterment of the student atmosphere, who look forward to doing internships during the summer of 2017.

Ferris health administration sophomore Alana Brown said her internship involves a little bit of traveling and she's excited to visit states that she has never been to before.

"I thought all internships would be boring but I can't wait to start mine," Brown said.

Summer classes start Tuesday, May 16, though most students dread the thought of doing work during sunny days.

"I don't like the thought of having school during the summer, but I do love the thought of graduating early," said Ferris health systems

senior Lakendra Brown.

Most students take summer classes to receive general education course credit such as science and english.

"Most of the main course classes are not offered in the summer, which is fine because those classes tend to be difficult," Brown said.

"I thought all internships would be boring."

- Alana Brown

"I have nothing serious planned for the summer except to go back home and find a job," said Ferris nuclear medicine senior Rebecca Tinsley.

Despite summer classes and internships starting in less than a month, numerous students are still counting down to the end of spring semester where the looming summer break awaits.

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SPORTS

"Every day, I had to make a decision to not fall into a lull and allow myself to slack off."
- Zack Hankins See page 11 for story

Apply now! | Sports Editor



Hot bat in the hot corner

Third baseman Lexi Hongisto's bat provides boost for the Bulldogs

Jacob Carlson

Torch Reporter

In a season full of curveballs, Ferris State Softball's sophomore third baseman Lexi Hongisto has provided stability and power at the plate.

Hongisto, a public relations major from Gladstone, transitioned from shortstop to third base this year and hasn't missed a step as she leads the team with six home runs, 16 doubles, 30 RBIs and a .352 batting average.

Hongisto's work ethic and knowledge of the game made the transition to third base a seamless one.

"You can tell that Lexi is passionate about the game of softball," said Ferris shortstop



Sarah Johnson

Sarah Johnson. "She has a love and understanding for the sport and that makes her great on the field. She works hard in practice, and she puts in the time to make herself the best player she can be."

Hongisto has been a force at the plate this year, batting .347 with 20 multi-base hits. Hongisto has been batting in the third and fourth spots of the lineup and has used the extra chances with runners in scoring position to elevate her game.

"When there's runners in scoring position I think I always do better. I don't change my approach but I just think it would really suck if a hitter in front of me got on with two outs and I

didn't do anything to hit them in," Hongisto said.

Crediting her dad and summer ball in helping her prepare for the college season, Hongisto's biggest adjustment came when she was asked to move



Logan Fleming

to third base where she has certainly noticed a difference from shortstop. "It is 100 percent different from shortstop. It's called the hot corner for a reason," Hongisto said. "I get balls hit at me so hard and I don't have any time to think about it. It's all just reaction time."

The team went down to Florida for spring training before coming back up for conference play that has seen the team go 7-9, good enough for ninth in the conference. Hongisto has been the driving force behind the Bulldogs effort to get back into contention for the GLIAC tournament where they'll look to win their first championship since 2000.

"Lexi never stops grinding for improvement and for the win at the end of the day," said Ferris second baseman Logan Fleming. "That is something that is very important for the team, to have someone like her who just doesn't stop fighting until the last pitch and the last out. She feeds out this intense vibe that grows on people to just never give up."

Hongisto and the rest of the Bulldogs return to the diamond in a doubleheader against Walsh University 1 p.m. Saturday, April 22, in Big Rapids.

Becoming an All-American

GLIAC Player of the Year and Bulldog men's basketball center Zach Hankins shares his journey to success



Photo by: Samantha Dow | Torch Photographer

Ferris sophomore center Zach Hankins helped the Bulldogs to the winningest season in school history with a 28-5 record.

Zack Hankins

Guest Writer

If it were easy, anyone could do it. This has been my stance on life since I came to Ferris three years ago to play basketball and heard it during one of my first conditioning sessions. Once I made it through that session, I knew that the next five years would be some of the hardest and most rewarding years of my life.

Just before my senior year of high school, I had broken my foot and was only able to play the last two games of the season. Luckily, Coach Andy Bronkema of Ferris State had taken a chance on me, a tall kid from a small northern Michigan town, and offered a small scholarship to play for his program.

Three thousand dollars wasn't much but for me, it was everything. It was the opportunity to continue to play the game I loved at a higher level, even though I had an injury my entire senior year. Going in, there wasn't much expected of me, but I was determined to be the best.

Since then, my life has consisted of hours and hours of training, lifting, shooting and playing basketball. This of course is always

mixed in with the long class days and finishing homework when I can.

On an average day, I will spend between three and four hours of my day on bettering myself for the game. Pre-season workouts generally consist of lifts and conditioning, with open gym afterwards so we continually use our skills on the court. Post-season has skill work, lifting and open gym as well. During the season, every day after class I make my way to the film room in order to scout our next opponent.

We then head to practice, which consists of personal drills that develop the skills of each position individually, along with team drills, where we practice plays and play against one another.

After the first few weeks of working out and playing with the team during my freshman year, I was informed that I would be taking a redshirt year to develop my athleticism and skills further. This meant that after our full practices and workouts, I would continue to run drills and hone my skills with a coach for another hour alongside my other redshirt teammates.

Every day, I had to make a decision to not fall into a lull and allow myself to slack off. There were other people out there working harder than me and I had to keep up. The

team won the GLIAC tournament championship that year, but I was looking forward to the next year where I could play and earn my ring.

One year later, I now had the chance to play on the court in games, but without the pressure of winning on my shoulders. The seniors would be the ones who needed to make plays, and I was just a boost of energy off the bench. I could focus on the further development of my game without having stress cloud my goals.

We ended up winning the GLIAC championship that year as we had the last, but I was still looking forward to the next year. This time, I would have to step up.

Going into the 2016-17 season, expectations were scattered. We had lost four seniors who had all been starters and major contributors, and our young group was not filled with much playing experience. My personal goal for the year was to average a double-double. Our team's goal was to go for a three-peat in the GLIAC tournament, win regionals and make it to the Elite Eight in the nation.

In some ways we exceeded our goals, having one of the most successful seasons in this program's history, winning the regular season championship along with the GLIAC

tournament championship and breaking the record for most wins in a season. However, the regional title still evaded us.

Personally, I exceeded my own beliefs of what the season would hold. I became the first Ferris State basketball player to win the title of GLIAC Player of the Year as a sophomore, and further to win the Regional Player of the Year and become an All-American.

I take confidence and pride in my work ethic, going as hard as I can during workouts and practice. But the rewards of my work took me by surprise. They reflect my work, but they also reflect on my teammates. In my mind, any personal awards are team awards, and I have been very blessed by the people who surround me in this program.

It would be easy for me and the other members of my team to look back at this year and feel satisfied, assuming that next year will take care of itself. To believe that we are just that good, and to forget all of the work and determination it took every day to win each game, one at a time. But championships don't come easy and we know that.

Championships come when you lift for an hour, run sprints for conditioning, and still push yourself to get in the gym and shoot afterwards.

Hankin's 2016-17 Accolades

First Team All-American

GLIAC Player of the Year

First Team All-GLIAC

Set new GLIAC and Ferris record with 130 blocks in a season

Regular season GLIAC Championship

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Sports Shorts

By Beau Jensen, Torch Reporter

An electric ending

The Ferris State men's golf team paring day was cut short due to harsh weather at the Midwest Regional #4 where the Dawgs finished in eighth place overall.

The first and only play of the day went off fine weather-wise, giving the Dawgs a first day score of 300.

Jack Weller led the pack for the Dawgs where he placed 14th individually and recorded a 73 on the day.

As the spring season rolls on, the Bulldogs will be hoping for clear skies when they head to Nashport, Ohio, Friday, April 21, until Sunday, April 23, for the GLIAC championships.

Bulldog invite

The Bulldogs ended the Bulldog Invitational with four individual championships as they hosted their one and only home track and field contest of the season.

The Bulldog field event men had a day with senior Gunnar Meyer taking first in the javelin throw with a toss of 54.21m. Sophomore Cody Stilwell took the men's hammer throw with a lob of 60.50m.

Junior Jon Cok was able to leap over the competition with a high jump of 2.00m. Zach Mckenzie led things for the Dawgs on the track, winning the men's 3,000 meters with a time of 8:58.03.

The Bulldog track & field program will be on the road when they make the trip to Allendale, Saturday, April 22, at the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Al Owens Invite.

Young and successful

It's not every day that assistant coaches receive the credit they deserve, but Bulldog volleyball assistant coach Christa Cooper was recently awarded the AVCA Thirty Under 30 Award.

In Cooper's three years under the tutelage of Head Coach Tia Brandel-Wilhelm she has helped the program win three consecutive regular season and GLIAC tournament championships.

One of only three NCAA Div. 2 coaches to receive the honor this year, the award is meant to recognize young coaching talent in college athletics. Cooper graduated from Michigan Tech in 2009, where she was a captain on the school's volleyball team.



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FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY



Photo by: Samantha Dow | Torch Photographer

Ferris sophomore defenseman Zach Yoder .

Bulldog backstory

Transfer sophomore defenseman Zach Yoder takes winding road to Ferris State

Jacob Carlson

Torch Reporter

The journey to become a Ferris State hockey player has included a few unexpected twists and turns for one of its newest members.

Growing up in Georgia, Ferris State transfer de-

fenseman Zach Yoder was introduced to the sport at the age of five by his neighbors in the form of roller hockey. Yoder eventually traded the wheels for skates and started down a path that would lead him to many places.

Yoder, who is now majoring in finance and accounting, is hard at work preparing for his first season on the

Transfer | see page 13



Photo by: Kaitlyn Kirchner | Torch photographer

Top Dawg

Zach Mckenzie

Keith Salowich

Editor-in-Chief

Ferris sophomore distance runner Zach Mckenzie is going the distance. He's going for speed.

The Dexter native ran well enough for first place in the 3,000 meters during the Bulldog Invitational Saturday, April 8, clocking a time of 8:58.03 and beating

out 12 competitors in the race.

Mckenzie finished 95th in the 5,000 meter in a field of more than 130 runners. He set a personal best for the race with a time of 15:33.35 in the Bucknell Bison Outdoor Classic held Friday, April 14, in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Ferris track and field teams will next compete at the two-day GVSU Al Owens Invite beginning Saturday, April 22, in Allendale.

“Simple is powerful”



Photo by: Andrea Cordes | Torch Photographer

The men's tennis team claimed their third consecutive GLIAC Championship with their most recent victory over conference foe Tiffin.

Men's tennis climbs to No. 15 nationally following “simple” philosophy

Cody Burkhard

Torch Reporter

Hunt has a ‘simple’ motto when it comes to tennis. “Simple is powerful.” He emphasizes fundamentals of tennis, execution and positioning to his players, which is evident in their performance.

Ferris men's tennis clinched their third straight GLIAC Championship with an undefeated weekend on the road at Walsh and Tiffin.

The Bulldogs swept Walsh 9-0 on Friday, April 14, and defeated Tiffin 7-2 on Saturday, April 15, to remain undefeated in conference and claim the regular season championship.

These victories improved Ferris's record to 16-2 overall and a flawless 10-0 conference record, which lands the Dawgs at No. 15 in the nation.

The Bulldogs doubles pairings were perfect on the weekend, winning every match against both the Cavaliers and the Dragons. Ferris' Till Von Winning, Vasil Surduk, Nur Adim Iswan and Pablo Munoz Baroja were also undefeated in both matches in singles flights.

Dominance has been a theme for the Bulldogs all season as they have seven sweeps on the year. Ten of their 16 wins have been by a score of 8-1 or better.

“We have a lot of talented players,” head coach Danny Hunt said. “Our three through six, essentially we could take them out and insert

a new two or three people in there and get similar results.”

The undefeated conference stretch saw the Bulldogs battle past perennial powerhouses like Northwood, who won 20 consecutive conference championships from 1995 to 2014, and Grand Valley State, who finished No. 2 in the GLIAC standings.

“We tried to stay simple; played the percentages, looked for their weaknesses, utilized our strengths,” Ferris senior Raleigh Grossbaum said.



Even at this point in the season Hunt and the rest of the Bulldogs are still focusing on fine tuning their fundamentals, though it's tough to argue against that strategy with the results shown on the court.

“We're focusing on execution, setting ourselves up and getting in the right positions. We can't execute if we're not in the right positions,” Hunt said.

With the regular season in the books, the GLIAC Tournament will kick off Friday, April 21, in Midland, Michigan. Being the No. 1 seed, Ferris will receive a first round bye before taking on the winner of the No. 4 and No. 5 seed matchup on Saturday, April 22.

TRANSFER

Continued from page 12

blueline with the Bulldogs. The 6-foot-5, 184-pound defenseman made a lot of stops before ultimately deciding to join the Bulldogs. This was a decision that certainly made Ferris State Head Coach Bob Daniels happy.

“We're going to have a defenseman that is really seasoned,” Daniels said. “He is going to understand our systems completely, he's played college hockey. It's really going to be like rolling out a junior defenseman and the upside is we have him for three more years.”

Yoder found his way into Michigan when he began playing for the Muskegon Lumberjacks of the United States Hockey League (USHL) in 2012. He spent parts of two seasons there where he tallied one goal, seven assists and 14 penalty minutes in 41 games. As his time in Muskegon carried on, the franchise went through ownership changes that saw a new coaching staff take charge. It wasn't long before Yoder received a call in the middle of class at Mona Shores High School letting him know that he had been dropped from the roster.

“To be honest I was kind of expecting it. But at the same time, it was not a good feeling because I didn't know where I was going to go,” Yoder said.

After some talk with coaches, Yoder was able to secure a tryout for another USHL team. There he was met by a scout for the Janesville Jets of the North American Hockey League (NAHL) who had interest in signing him. After being cut from his USHL tryout, Yoder decided to pack his bags and head to Wisconsin to try and reestablish himself with a new team in a new league.

Yoder spent two years in the NAHL with Janesville where he enjoyed a breakout year in the 2014-15 season that saw him tally four goals, 20 assists, 58 penalty minutes, and a plus 44 rating in 58 games. His success didn't go unnoticed as he was recog-

nized as the 2014-15 NAHL's North Division defenseman of the year.

“It was a good feeling obviously. I wanted to be one of the top guys in the division and I knew if I wanted to move on I had to be,” Yoder said.

After a strong final season of junior hockey, Yoder received a Division 1 offer to play for the Air Force Academy. After visiting the campus located just north of Colorado Springs, with the help of his family, Yoder decided that he was going to sign with the Falcons and see how the military route played out for him.

Yoder registered one goal and eight assists in 29 games for the Air Force during his freshman campaign in the 2015-16 season. His time on the ice was better than his time off. For Yoder, halfway through the season it became apparent that the Air Force wasn't for him. Met with the reality that he would be leaving, Yoder focused on improving his game in hopes of spiking interest from another Division 1 school.

After Yoder was released by the Air Force, he sent out a few emails and eventually came in contact with Ferris State. A visit with the coaching staff was all it took for Yoder to decide on transferring to Ferris. Yoder sat out the 2016-17 season due to NCAA requirements regarding transferred players but used the time to adjust to his new team. Hours and hours on the ice, in the video room, and in the weight room have helped prepare Yoder for his first year with the Bulldogs.

“I'm working out and trying to get stronger,” Yoder said. “My goal this summer is to just get stronger and be ready physically.”

Yoder looks to work his way into the lineup next year as the Bulldogs aim to rebound from a season that saw them go 13-19-5.

The Dawgs will be returning without five seniors from this year's team including standout forward Gerald Mayhew who led the team in scoring the past three seasons.

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OPINIONS

“My heart instantly melted and I thought to myself: Yep this is the one.”
— Jen Corrie See page 15 for story

Travis Sacher | Opinions Editor | sachert@ferris.edu

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Chat with the chief Editor in Chief, Keith Salowich

The Big Event X is not nearly as cool as the name suggests, but it's still pretty cool.

The “X” isn't short for extreme. It's a Roman numeral. That means students at Ferris have been organizing and volunteering in the Big Event to give back to Big Rapids residents for ten years.

Last year, more than 1,700 students assisted 285 households with yard work and other chores as part of the event.

But let's keep it in perspective. It is not a day devoted to collecting volunteer hours. It is not a day for

taking selfies with a rake. It's kind of a day for free food and t-shirts, but it's mostly about goodwill and giving back to the surrounding community.

Oh, and it's also a day to beg Big Rapids residents for forgiveness after they've had to deal with our shit the other 364 days of the year.

Yeah, it's annoying when entire families are crowding the salad bar in the Rock, but it's nothing compared to what some college students make townies endure.

We litter and drink outside. We

set bad examples for children and listen to loud music. We act holier than thou after getting a semester's worth of credits under our belt.

I'll repeat the disclaimer that not all college students are that insufferable, but some certainly are. However, the Big Event helps make up for that.

The lone day of service is a great way to encourage unity between our school and our city. We get to meet new people, earn the warm fuzzy feeling that volunteering provides and feel like

we're part of a movement making a big difference.

Spending the morning raking leaves isn't going to make a colossal difference in the community. Yet, keep in mind that while you're raking, Bobby is cleaning out gutters and Jane is painting an old shed. Meanwhile, more than 1,000 other Bulldogs are performing similar tasks. Now THAT'S making a difference.

And THAT'S pretty cool.

The Big Event will take place Saturday, April 22, and registration is still open through Orgsync.

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Travis Sacher | Opinions Editor | Email: sachert@ferris.edu

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Copy Editor Jen Corrie adopted her dog Axel from the Big Rapids Animal Rescue Coalition.

Dogs for dawgs

Why you should adopt instead of shop



Jen Corrie
Copy Editor

Despite endless dog hair, toys littering my floor and stinky cans of food, adopting a shelter dog is officially the best decision I've made in my life this year.

My search in the local shelter ended with a beautiful black lab who has instantly become my close companion.

His shelter story was a short one—someone found him playing in the road and brought him to the Big Rapids Animal Rescue Coalition. They waited two weeks for his potential owner to come get him but no one came or called. It was obvious that he'd been mistreated. He was underweight, his ribs poking out underneath his skin. He also flinched at sudden movements, which is a good indication that he's been struck by a human before.

After he was done smelling my hands and shoes, he sat down on my feet and looked up at me backwards with his copper eyes as if I were some sort of saint. My heart instantly melted and I thought to myself: "Yep, this is the one."

I took him home and decided to name him Axel, after a character from one of my favorite video games— Kingdom Hearts. By now, he's been an irreplaceable joy in my life, among the many stresses of young adulthood.

Axel is extremely mellow. He listens quite well, is house-trained and he doesn't bark at people or other dogs. He's a priceless gem, straight from the pound.

The thing about shelter dogs is that yes, a few of

them are aggressive. Most of the time, that aggression comes from previous owners who mistreated the animal. But mistreatment doesn't guarantee aggression—Axel is a prime example of that. An overwhelming amount of shelter dogs are sweet and more friendly than most human beings.

Another issue is that most dog owners buy their pets as puppies, either from a pet store or from a breeder. Puppies are adorable and they also deserve good homes, but you don't know what their personality is going to be like until they get a little older, just like kids don't show their true colors until they become old enough to talk in complete sentences. Puppies also require as much attention as a toddler, since it takes a while to housetrain them. Most shelter dogs aren't pups, but that usually means no potty training and they are out of their chewing phase.

Sadly, a lot of older dogs are in shelters, with more than half of their life behind them already. They need good homes as much as those puppies do. My mother actually ended up adopting a seven-year-old husky mix from the same shelter that I got Axel from, and she is absolutely the sweetest dog I've ever met.

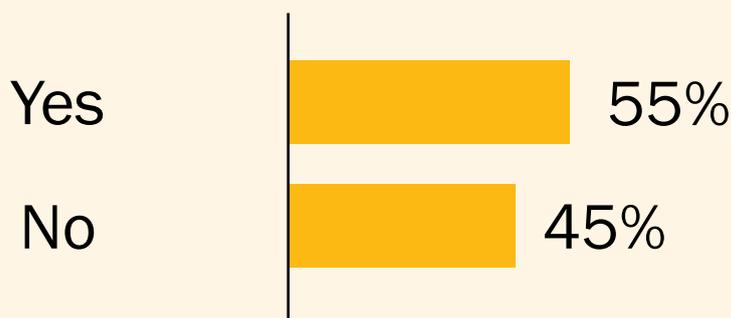
I'm proud to say that Axel is a rescue. The truth is that yes, there are good and responsible dog breeders out there, but the problem is that there are too many of them. Not to mention the people who constantly breed dogs, sell the pups off for a profit and then dump the mother off at a shelter when her reproductive organs are worn out from litter after litter. I've decided to stop supporting dog breeders and adopt as a life pledge from here on.

So, if you do decide to get a dog, good for you. Head down to your nearest shelter and see what friendly faces they have. Chances are, you'll find a new best bud just like I did.

TORCH POLL RESULTS



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The wait is over

Impressions of being 21



Travis Sacher
Opinions Editor

One of the most prominent milestone birthdays occurred for me a couple of weeks back—my 21st.

I have dreamed of this age for the entirety of my previous 20 years of existence and it finally happened. Now that I have had some time to experience the change in age, I've made a few first impressions of the age 21.

The first feeling I remember when I woke up Monday, April 3, was, 'Wow, my head hurts.'

After that, it hit me that my age was no longer a barrier for entry into public places such as party stores, bars and venues. I will never again miss a great show because entry is 21 and older, or ever miss a night of fun with my friends or brother because the bar denies entry to people under 21. Underage covers, LOL, see ya later.

In the few weeks since my birthday, I've visited many different restaurants and bars in Big Rapids. At each new location, I've ordered a different alcoholic beverage. The drink menu is so vast and original at each establishment that it's fun trying something new each time.

Being 21 is a relief. It's like I'm fully accepted into society because of my age now. I am free to participate in many new activities. I can visit wineries, breweries or clubs in New York City. And I can purchase classy bottles of wine as gifts for friends and family.

Now for some not-so-bright spots that come with this age. My current bank account balance looks like a monster truck over ran it. While the excitement of going out is undeniable, it

does come with a price. While I saved some spending money for the initial shock, it will be time to "grow up" and go to the liquor store more, and buy individual drinks at the bar less. Also, the urge to go out to eat has never been so grand to me. The urge to cook has never been so minimal.

One more initial impression I've experienced is the feeling that adult life is here. I've held a job since I was 13 years old, lived in multiple states in a variety of different locations and financially supported myself.

Regardless of all of that, before I was 21, I have had a mark on April 3, 2017, for years. Now that that destination point has come and is gone, there's no future point in time to which I desire to come. Living will now be a new journey—an exciting one, a terrifying one and one of new and endless experiences to be had.



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The rules of English majors

Why my English literature major is advantageous

Whenever someone asks me what my major is, I always brace myself for the inevitable question: "So, you want to be a teacher?"

English majors have, for some reason, a bad reputation. People often say to me that's what you major in when you don't know what you want to do with your life. There are no jobs for English majors besides teaching. The few jobs that exist don't pay well, especially in regards to literature, so it's an impractical major that doesn't translate to the real world. Furthermore, it's often described as an easy, blow-off major. All you do is read and write book summaries, leaving plenty of time to party.

It pains me every time I hear someone judge me poorly based on their misconceptions of what an English major means. While there are many wonderful advantages to this field of study, I will focus primarily on refuting those four misconceptions I often encounter.

To start, it is not easy at all. Yes, we do read. But we read A LOT. On average, I have to read two to three books per week, and that's only for my literature classes. General education requirements have more readings. Furthermore, the papers I write after the readings are not just summaries of the book. At the college level, I am expected to write in-depth analysis and research essays connecting multiple works.

And yes, I do have a career plan for after graduation. No, it is not teaching. I want to be an editor of young adult fiction novels in a publishing house or work in journalism.

What an English degree tells employers is that you can communicate effectively. This is a skill that is highly coveted in all fields



Alexa Bourne
Torch Reporter

of work. An English major doesn't limit my options—it expands them.

In fact, an article published by the Huffington Post cited data from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce saying that, "right after graduating, English and history majors reported 9.8 and 9.5 percent unemployment, respectively, while economics and political science graduates came in at 10.4 and 11.1 percent. 'Practical' computer science degrees didn't make graduates more employable, with the 'comp sci' unemployment rate coming in at 8.7 percent."

The article later said that a 2012 survey showed employers prefer liberal arts graduates.

Jobs that are regularly occupied by English majors include corporate communications directors, editors-in-chief, content marketing managers, web producers, technical writers, journalists, lobbyists, paralegals, lawyers, ambassadors, judges, public relations managers, senators, screenwriters and lyricists.

Famous English majors include actress Emma Watson, actor Hugh Grant, director Martin Scorsese, Executive Producer and news correspondent Barbara Walters, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, former Walt Disney Company CEO Michael Eisner, 2012 Presidential candidate Mitt Romney and many others.

An article from Dear English Major cited data from the National Association of

Colleges and Employers in 2014, claiming "English majors had an average starting salary of \$33,574." The article followed that with data from the United States Department of Labor stating that as of May 2014, the national mean annual salary was \$47,230 for all occupations regardless of level.

In regards to the argument that there are no 'real life' applications for an English degree, I refer back to the Huffington Post article. The article cited neuroscience research which found that "reading fiction improved a variety of brain functions, including enhanced empathy and improved imagination and visualization abilities. Reading also improves cognition and mental health, helping us to destress, sleep better and even helps you stay sharp."

The article later quoted David Skorton from Scientific American arguing that English majors can help solve the world's environmental and humanitarian crises.

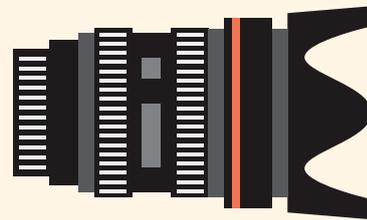
"Even the most profound scientific knowledge won't solve world problems such as hunger, poverty and environmental damage if we fail to respect, understand and engage cultural differences," Skorton argued. "Combined with the fact that research has found reading fiction to boost empathy and social skills, English students are poised to become powerful and effective defenders of human rights—to shape the global cultural conversation and respect individual and cultural differences and rights."

So no, I do not want to be a teacher. Yes, I do know what I want to do with my degree. It isn't just a filler. Yes, I can be just as successful as anyone else. Maybe even more.



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