

Tensions rise in factory planning



Photo by: Jessica Oakes | News Editor

Ferris alumnus Rod McKenzie joined local anti-Gotion protestors in front of Williams Auditorium after Green Charter Township's informational panel moved to a virtual format.

Protestors line State Street in demonstration against battery components factory

Jessica Oakes
News Editor

Big Rapids and Green Charter Township community members gathered near campus on Wednesday with concerns about the upcoming Gotion factory's employment plans and alleged ties to the Chinese Communist Party.

Students were notified about a peaceful protest starting at the Ferris campus entrance, which would then proceed north from the intersection of Perry Street and State Street.

Protesters brandished American flags and signs reading "No Gotion" and "No CCP."

Gotion Inc. is Silicon Valley based with a parent company headquartered in China. Since Oct. 2022, Ferris has been involved in slowly progressing plans for a Gotion battery components factory, set to bring over 2,300 jobs to the area by 2030.

"We are here because Jim Chapman with the Green Township Board has locked us out of the open public meeting," protester Lori Brock said.

Green Charter Township supervisor Jim Chapman, a Ferris alumnus, moved Wednesday's informational panel to a virtual format due to safety concerns. The Big Rapids Pioneer reported Chapman's thought process behind the move.

"Multiple out-of-the-area groups are recruiting to use antifa tactics to shut down Green Township's panel discussion on April 5," Chapman said. "They will endanger our residents. The only choice is to cancel in-person attendance and take this opportunity online."

According to the Pioneer, Chapman used the term antifa to refer to "extreme tactics" used in protest, not in reference to the left-wing, anti-fascist group by the same name.

"We also found [that] they said they weren't Chinese owned, and they were pushing that they were [Volkswagen] owned. But it's VW China that owns 25%," Brock said.

Chapman previously described the company's ownership in an article uploaded by UpNorthLive.

"The original owner was Chinese. But VW Germany owns 25% of it," Chapman said. "45% of it is owned by stockholders. It's on the Chinese stock exchange, but it's also... [on the] Swiss Stock Exchange."

A 2021 article from Berlin-based media outlet electrive.com reported that Volkswagen China increased their share of Gotion High-Tech to 26.47%.

Protestor Rod McKenzie is a Detroit native and Ferris alumnus. He believes the move to a virtual meeting was a violation of the cit-

izens' first amendment rights and that the group of protestors posed no threat to other members of the community. McKenzie and over 60 other community members chose to voice their concerns on the streets rather than in the virtual panel.

"As an American, I'd rather see Chrysler [or] Dodge put a truck plant here, or something... I'd at least know what to expect from them," McKenzie said.

Holding a home-made sign with a painted hammer and sickle to represent the Communist flag, McKenzie's concern echos a statement made by former Republican gubernatorial candidate Tudor Dixon on Fox News.

"These are not going to be American jobs," Dixon said to host Tucker Carlson. "They're bringing Chinese nationals in to take these jobs. And they will be housed at the local university where the local university has just so happened to be telling people, 'This is such a good idea, you have to have this corporation here.'"

The assertion that the Gotion factory will spread Communist ideology throughout the region, aided by employee housing on Ferris' campus, were addressed by Gotion North American Vice President Chuck Thelen in Wednesday night's panel.

"Despite what any corrupt poli-

tician might say, there is no Communist plot within Gotion to make Big Rapids a center to spread Communism," Thelen said.

On the panel, Ferris alumnus Thelen joined Jim Chapman, Patrick Tiedt of Consumers Energy's community affairs, Jeremy Webb of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, The Right Place President and CEO Randy Thelen and Mecosta County Road Commission superintendent Tim Nestle. The session was moderated by Dean Michael Staley of Ferris' College of Engineering Technology.

"Has the Communist Party penetrated this company? No," Thelen said. "Do we have articles of incorporation that require a specific paragraph where you don't do business in the country of China? Yes, but it is not a corporate culture."

The "articles of incorporation" appear in reference to a specific portion of Gotion International's by-laws, gaining traction among locals as Article 9.

To quell concerns regarding the presence of "Chinese nationals" moving to the Big Rapids area for employment, Thelen announced a two-week recruiting priority for Big Rapids applicants. Employment agency Michigan Works! will be the factory's main recruiting partner for the entire project.

"We'll bring in roughly 20 to 50 people [from China] to help with the training," Thelen said. "I'm slated to be plant manager, and I can assure you I'm not a Communist."

While Ferris students expressed their confusion about the protest via social media, one also shared her concerns with the Torch.

"Gotion coming to Big Rapids will drastically change the face of this community," second year optometry student Ellen Corbett said. "I think locals of Big Rapids deserve a say when it comes to these changes. Many live here because they value the small-town environment and the quiet area."

President Bill Pink, who released a video encouraging students to steer clear of misinformation surrounding the factory, continues to support Ferris' partnership with Gotion.

"In the last, gosh, five to 10 years we've lost over 1000 jobs in this region," Pink said. "Something needs to happen. That is a dangerous indication for our region. And whatever we need to do on our end to be a support of our community, a support of work, that's what the university is here for."

This is a continuously progressing story between the university and surrounding townships.

News

Jessica Oakes | News Editor | oakesj3@ferris.edu

The event to give back



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Staff Photographer

The biggest student-led philanthropic effort in the state of Michigan connects volunteer Ferris students with local Big Rapids community members.

High demand for Big Event 2023

Meghan Hartley
News Reporter

The Big Event is making a big return for its 16th year at Ferris with more than double the community demand compared to last year, no COVID-19 restrictions and a later date.

On April 22, The Big Event, one of the Student Government Association's biggest events and the biggest student-led philanthropic event in the state of Michigan, will be taking place throughout the Big Rapids residential community. This event is an opportunity for student volunteers to make an impact in the city they call home.

According to SGA Vice President Dylan Andrews, The Big Event is a day to bridge the gap between the students and the Big Rapids locals.

"It's one of those things that people look forward to doing because they help those people out and it shows that sense of community," Andrews said. "You see every day there are people that have their clashes with the town's folk and such, and a lot of those students don't like the locals and the locals don't like the students. This [event] is where we can bridge that gap and that divide and show that we are not just students, we're united together as a front. It's something that is really impactful."

Surveying engineering junior and Director of Philanthropy Niko Lagreca says the activities change slightly every year depending on the needs of the residents.

"It's service hours," Lagreca said. "You help the community,

[and] it's a great resume builder. And if you end up liking it, join student government. There are more volunteering opportunities and it's just great camaraderie. You get to help the people that live in your town, and they need the help. It's all about helping each other."

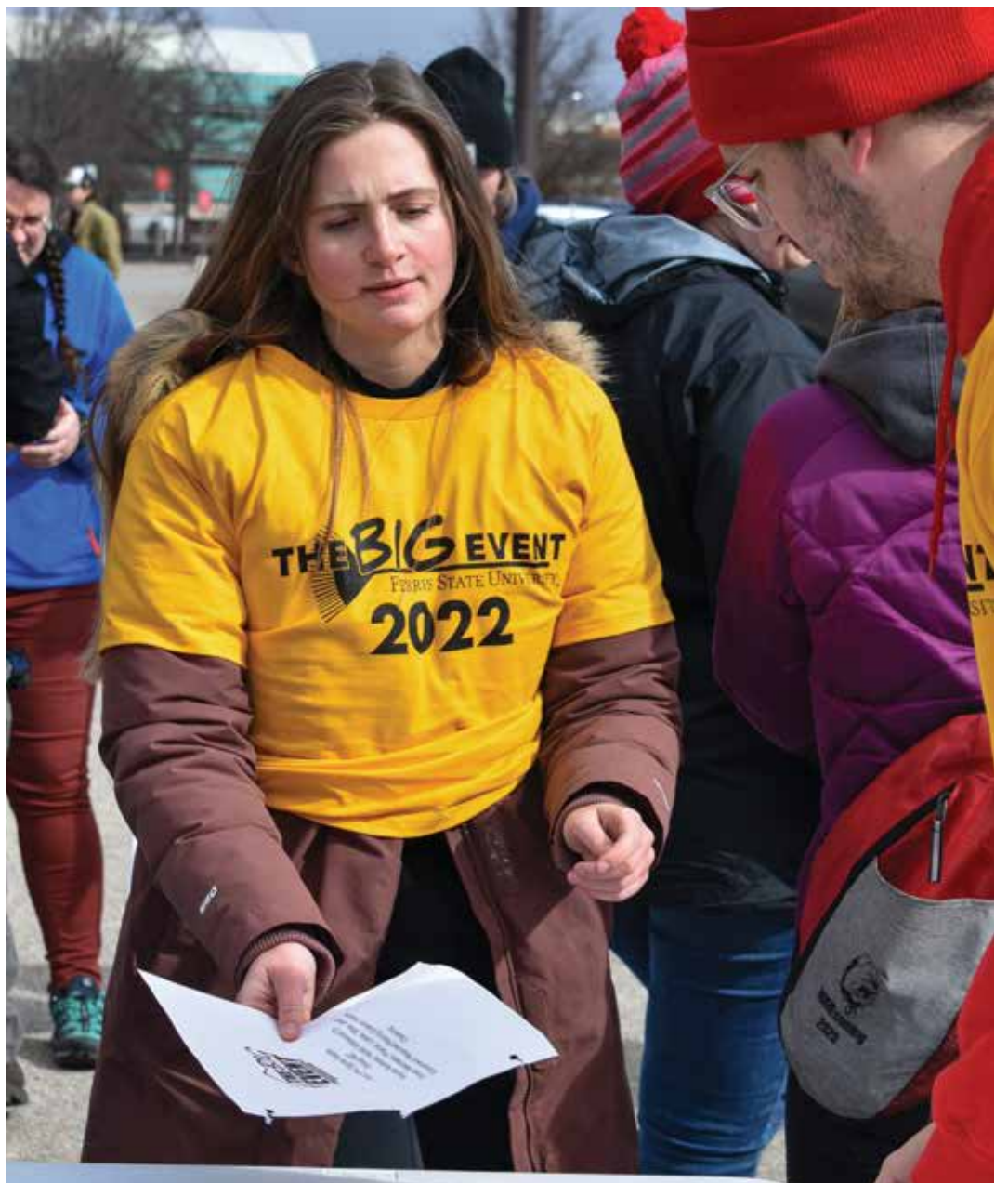
Lagreca says The Big Event is a great way for students to thank the residents for putting up with their shenanigans all year. He says the SGA is still hoping to have 100 more students sign up with how many houses have been added this year.

Business senior Becca Larsen is the president of Zeta Tau Alpha, one of the sororities on campus that participates in The Big Event almost every year. She says she loves getting to spend time with her sisters while being able to help out in the community.

Andrews says students should sign up because it is more than just doing simple yard work and making new friendships.

"They should do [The Big Event] because... you are helping the community," Andrews said. "Your impact in what you do could make somebody's whole month or even the year, especially in the times that we live in. There are some individuals that just don't get a lot of good things that happen or they have a very hard time, and this is that glimmer of hope for them."

Students who would still like to participate can sign up through SGA's Instagram or on Bulldog Connect up until April 14.



Former SGA members work through cold weather at the 2022 Big Event.

Photo from Torch Archives

DPS weighs in on police shortage



Photo by: Jordan Wilson | Staff Photographer

Members of Ferris' Department of Public Safety and criminal justice program share their experiences in the field with vacancies across the country.

How DPS is doing during a nationwide shortage of officers

Ember St. Amour
News Reporter

With police departments around the country experiencing staff shortages, Ferris' Department of Public Safety weighed in on their current staffing situation.

According to National Public Radio, police departments are shrinking and becoming short-staffed, causing some departments to get rid of some of their non-emergency jobs, such as dispatching officers to uninjured car accidents.

DPS Chief Abe Haroon explained what their staffing for sworn in officers currently looks like.

"We have eleven officers," Haroon said. "We are budgeted to have twelve, so we're down one position right now. Right now I'm selecting a new captain... The new captain would be the second person in charge, the second commander of DPS."

Haroon expanded on where the applicants for the captain position come from. He explained that

some of the applicants are in the force, and if one of them were to be promoted, DPS would have to hire someone new to fill the newly vacant position.

In addition to the uniformed officers, DPS also employs dispatchers, cadets and student parking enforcement workers.

Haroon also explained that although parking has moved buildings, DPS is still in charge of some aspects of parking.

"A little bit of the resources were shifted," Haroon said. "The issues of parking and stuff, that's all handled outside of DPS. So the only thing I'm responsible for is the enforcement, and I do hire student staff in order to do that enforcement. But my numbers there have not changed."

Detective Sergeant Timothy Jacobs explained his thoughts on why nationwide recruitment might be low.

"Nationwide retirements are up I think," Jacobs said. "I think [media representation] also prevents

somebody that may be thinking about going into [law enforcement], as they see some of the negative connotations without actually... scratching the surface to see what good the police actually do and can do for their community."

Haroon explained why he thinks enrollment in the force has been getting worse.

"After George Floyd nobody wanted to be a police officer because they associated it with something negative," Haroon said. "You need to turn that around because, for the most part, the men and women [in law enforcement are] outstanding individuals with very high morals and characters... But, unfortunately, [there] are some bad actors."

Criminal justice sophomore Nicole Janisz is a DPS cadet. She went over how she felt enrollment was in her criminal justice classes.

"As of right now, it seems like our classes [are] pretty good," Janisz said. "[In] the majority of the

classes that I'm in, the majority of the class says they want to go into law enforcement."

Janisz explained that anyone who wants to apply for a cadet position can, regardless of their major, because DPS teaches how to do the duties at hand. DPS is currently looking for applicants for next year.

Haroon explained how having cadet training can help retain a job in the future.

"They're generally at the police academy, so it's a really good fit for them," Haroon said. "They get that exposure to law enforcement. And then as they graduate, I believe they're both selected to already have jobs because police are very, very high demand right now. So, they're already selected to have jobs, and it kind of gives them that exposure while they're still students at Ferris."

Education sophomore Ayanna Curry, who recently switched her major from criminal justice with a focus in corrections, had a differ-

ent opinion.

"Law enforcement, they get it all," Curry said. "[Those interested in] public safety, they have a lot more opportunities to be able to get experience working in the field. But what about other things? What about the Department of Corrections and... other walks of life in the criminal justice field?... It's not just law enforcement."

Curry explained that she felt switching her major to education would allow her to continue her goal of helping troubled youth by encouraging them throughout their education.

Jacobs is hopeful that the amount of vacant jobs across the nation will decrease. He explained that he has seen several shortages throughout his career and they have all been resolved, so he hopes to see this trend continue in the future.

ON THE RECORD

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

Jessica Oakes
News Editor

ASSAULT ON DAMASCUS

April 5, 12:30-1:30 a.m. - One student reported an instance of physical assault inside a vehicle on Damascus Road near East Campus Suites. The case was sent to prosecutor review and is still pending investigation.

PARKING PASS POACHER

March 13 - 24, time unknown - In a case of larceny, one student was caught using a faculty/staff parking hang tag in their car. The student allegedly found the tag on campus and used it to park in faculty/staff parking lots. The case was sent to the Office of Student Conduct in judicial referral.

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Students react to Trump's indictment

Nolan Harris
News Reporter

WHAT HAPPENED?

Seven years after the beginning of his presidency and two years since the U.S. Capitol was sieged, police led former President Donald Trump to a courtroom to be formally charged with 34 felony counts.

One of the counts is for misappropriated campaign funds. This implies that donations taken from American citizens were used dishonestly by the president of the time. Trump pleaded not guilty.

This has serious implications that raise the case from a misdemeanor through the spectrum of felonies all the way to a class E felony, the least severe felony within the classes.

“Under New York state law, it is a felony to falsify business records with intent to defraud intent to conceal another crime,” Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said in a news conference after Trump's arraignment.

There have been many reactions to this nuanced legal issue. With the beginning of a historic legal battle that will unfold over this decade, here are some of the early thoughts.

THE MEDIA

Large conservative outlets are focusing on how the charges are in a vacuum of misdemeanors offenses. This is shaky ground to build a prosecution off of.

MSNBC has featured articles on 76% of Americans that believe the conviction is political, as Trump looks to run in 2024. They have also been disappointed in the charges not being more serious.

FERRIS STUDENTS

One student who wished to stay anonymous claims that they do not keep up with clickbait articles, saying “99% of Trump Articles are irrelevant.”

Those that felt they had a decent grasp on the situation had to look at a number of sources.

“Looking at the way the media is covering it now, you'll see all kinds of perspectives,” television and digital media production senior Ethan Krieger said. “Fox News appears to be doing it's best to paint Trump as a victim.”

Krieger says he tries to focus on neutral sources to find his information.

“Trump seems to be covering his tracks, and I think the charges he faces are rather serious,” Krieger said. “I don't think [the legal procedures] are unfair. It wouldn't make sense for the judicial process to give preferential treatment just because Trump is running [for president].”

Krieger is not the only student on campus who believes the trial should be taken seriously.

“I think it is a dangerous state for [the] current electoral climate to even suggest that special treatment be given on the basis of political success or failure,” computer information science junior Chandler Schroendenger said. “With the largest core issues being misappropriation of campaign funds, I think this is a serious issue.”

College educated voters and 18-24-year-olds were some of Trump's weakest supporters. Pew Research reports that among voters who lean Democratic, 41% are college educated. This is compared to 30% of Republican voters. Research from Tufts University shows that roughly half of all eligible young people voted in 2020, increasing 11 points from 2016. Among this group, 65% voted for Joe Biden.



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Donald Trump becomes first former United States president to face criminal charges.

MICHIGAN NEWS UPDATE

Jessica Oakes
News Editor

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer repealed Michigan's infamous 1931 abortion ban, further protecting reproductive rights beyond her tenure in Lansing.

Whitmer erased any possibility of the ban re-entering Michigan's constitution at last Wednesday's signing, which it previously could have if enough citizen signatures were collected.

According to the state of Michigan's website, the nearly century-old ban made no exception for rape or incest and would have criminalized abortion services for nurses and doctors. It had been dormant until the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in June.

“Today we're going to take action to make sure that our statutes and our laws reflect our values and our constitution,” Whitmer said to the press at the signing in Birmingham.

As reported by the Associated Press, state courts blocked the ban from taking effect before citizens voted to pass

Michigan's third proposal in November. Proposal 3 garnered more signatures than any other ballot proposal in Michigan history and made the 1931 ban unenforceable.

Michigan's Democratic House and Senate sent a repeal of the ban to Whitmer's desk in March 2023. Democratic state Rep. Laurie Pohutsky of Livonia sponsored the legislation, stating at the signing that “this is far from the end of the story.”

“We cannot allow archaic laws to remain on our books under the assumption that they'll never be used again,” Pohutsky said. “We don't know what the future will hold, and we don't know what plans abortion opponents have.”

Democratic speakers publicly called out GOP lawmakers at last Wednesday's event. Whitmer, among others, called abortion restriction “un-American, anti-free and, frankly, sickening.”

After the repeal of the ban, Genevieve Marnon with Right to Life of Michigan said to FOX47 that the organization will still be working hard to “hold officials accountable.”

GLOBAL NEWS UPDATE

Jessica Oakes
News Editor

Two Black Tennessee lawmakers were expelled from their positions after speaking in favor of gun-control reform in the state's House of Representatives.

Less than two weeks after the fatal shooting at The Covenant School in Nashville, Reps. Justin Pearson, Justin Jones and Gloria Johnson protested on the House floor after the House speaker had gavelled.

“What we see today is just a spectacle. What we see today is a lynch mob assembled to not lynch me, but our democratic process,” Jones said early in his defense.

Rep. Johnny Garrett, R-Goodlettsville, led the Republican case against Jones.

“This is just not about one specific instance or one specific rule that may have been broken. The rules here are for order,” Garrett said.

The Washington Post reports that Johnson, a white, retired schoolteacher who lost a student to gun violence, was only one vote short of being expelled as well. As broadcasted on CNN, Johnson said the

reason she kept her position while her freshman colleagues were expelled “may have to do with the color of our skin.”

Republican Rep. Jody Barrett of Dickson originally intended to vote to remove all three lawmakers but later decided against Johnson's expulsion. When asked by WSMV4 if race played a role in his vote, he replied with “absolutely not.”

“The other two gentlemen were going in and out of the room during the session last Thursday... trying to incite the crowd,” Barrett said.

Jones and Pearson's respective districts are expected to hold special elections to fill their vacancies, as tens of thousands of Tennesseans across Memphis and Nashville are currently without representation.

Culture

Giuliana Denicolo | Culture Editor | denicog@ferris.edu

Be an ally outside of April

Learn more about autism awareness



Graphic by: Sienna Parmelee | Production Manager

Jasmine Baar
Freelance Reporter

With the rate of autism globally increasing, around one in 54 children in the United States have an Autism Spectrum Disorder, according to NBC news health reporter Aria Bendix.

Despite this, autism awareness remains low, and many people are still not familiar with the condition's traits or how it affects individuals and their families.

Kaye Lafond is working towards her master's degree in social work at Ferris. She lived 30 years without people knowing she was autistic, instead, those around her just thought she was "weird or rude." She believes that people shouldn't be afraid to have uncomfortable conversations in order to be respectful and use the preferred terminology.

"Autism isn't a suitcase, or backpack or an accessory. It's not a dirty word," Lafond said. "Remember to be respectful, you're talking to an adult person."

By understanding and accommodating the unique communication needs of individuals with autism, a sense of acceptance and respect for all individuals is fostered.

"The main thing to keep in mind when communicating with anyone from a marginalized identity is un-

derstanding your own gaps," Lafond said. "You should take that person's word about what it's like to be them and let them have the authority to share their experiences."

Lafond encourages everyone to consume content from people with autism for the month of April. While consuming content on autism, she recommends asking the question, "Is this coming from an autistic person themselves? Or is this a nonautistic person trying to represent and speak for the community?"

She suggests reading "Unmasking Autism" by Devon Price, who is an autistic psychologist. He reiterates the fact that autistic people in the media are often misrepresented, adding that we need to call out ableism and start supporting more autistic creators.

In 2021, singer-songwriter Sia co-wrote and directed a film called "Music," starring trained dancer Maddie Ziegler. In the film, Ziegler plays a character with autism, even though she is neurotypical in real life. The autistic community was outraged and suggested that Sia was promoting ableism by not hiring a neurodivergent actress for the role.

"When nonautistic people put out content on autistic people, it often misses important context and depth of understanding," La-

fond said.

Lafond was only diagnosed with autism four years ago and was first believed to show signs of ADHD. She says that a person who is diagnosed with autism later in life is usually diagnosed with ADHD first. After she was diagnosed with ADHD, Lafond went down a rabbit hole of researching the disorder and eventually ran into content on autism.

"I cannot begin to tell you how I've never felt so seen," Lafond said. "I was excited about the possibility of finding out what was actually going on with me."

She explained that doing research about autism was like a lighthouse in a storm. As she learned about others' experiences with having autism and being undiagnosed, she decided to seek medical advice.

"I told the clinician that I was expecting autism, and her response to me was that I couldn't be autistic because I had a job and a boyfriend," Lafond said.

That remark had left her feeling astonished and neglected. After some time and research, Lafond continued the process of trying to get diagnosed. She had to push the medical community into believing she was neurodivergent.

"I would not have gotten my diagnosis if it wasn't for my own self-advocacy," Lafond said.

Director of Accessibility and Disability Services Julie Alexander tries to be the "ultimate ally" in her work. She believes the need for allies in the disability world is deep. Alexander works to amplify the voices of neurodivergent students at Ferris. It is her job to ensure that all students with a disability have access to on-campus disability services and can obtain accommodations to help them better pursue their education.

She explains that "neurodiversity is an umbrella term that autism falls under" and that it describes people who think differently than your "neurotypical person."

There are many different aspects of accessibility that Alexander works with, whether it's physical or mental. She wants to make sure students have a "healthy line of communication" with their professors.

Alexander's biggest hope for this Autism Awareness Month is for Ferris faculty and students to step out of their comfort zones and join the conversation. She believes that people with autism "bring a rich diversity" to the world.

Keep an eye out on Ferris' event calendar to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorders.

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Bringing drag to Big Rapids

LGBTQ+ Resource Center presents drag trivia



Graphic by: Sienna Parmelee | Production Manager

Marlow Losey
Copy Editor

On Sunday, April 16, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center is bringing drag to the David L. Eisler Center for a night of trivia.

Hostess Cherry Poppins will start the event by announcing and welcoming the drag performers. From Beauty Beyond Drag Productions, the event will welcome Miss. Moscato, Vivienne Von Dion and Countess Hexen as performers. Bringing in the music, the event will welcome DJ BittaSweet.

Drag trivia will be the first “big solo” event since the center’s director, Becca Osborne, started. Osborne was the main planner of this event but had help from Beauty Beyond Drag Productions and Student Life.

Television and digital media production freshman Liz Brown believes that drag is “wonderful to watch” because of the song, dance and drama.

“It’s just fun. I know for those who do drag, a lot of it is about expression and escape,” Brown said.

As for the trivia, the questions will be based on important moments in LGBTQ+ history, politics, pop culture and correctly identifying various pride flags and termi-

nology for specific identities in the community. In the end, the winner will receive a big prize.

“My hope is that people will show up and have fun,” Osborne said. “There will be multiple drag performances as well as trivia, so I’m hoping people come to participate and interact with the performers.”

Recently, drag restrictions have been put in place. In Tennessee, all drag performances are now considered adult cabaret performances and are banned from occurring within 1,000 feet of schools, public parks and places of worship. This Tennessee bill was passed alongside a bill banning transgender minors from receiving gender-affirming care.

Social work sophomore Bryanna Monaco believes that drag should not be restricted because it isn’t a bad thing to do.

“[Drag queens] work so hard to be someone they feel comfortable having an audience with,” Monaco said. “They don’t do anything wrong, but lawmakers are trying to stop them from doing the one thing they love most in the world.”

As there currently is no concern about the LGBTQ+ Resource Center’s drag trivia event being restricted, Osborne is still fearful

that these laws could fuel hate for those against drag in the Big Rapids community.

“These anti-drag laws make small towns a scary place to be,” Osborne said. “Luckily, I haven’t seen anything in Big Rapids regarding a stance on drag performances, so hopefully it all goes well.”

While Osborne fears the event taking place in Big Rapids, computer information science junior Chandler Schroeder expresses hopeful positivity about bringing drag to a small town. Schroeder believes that bringing drag queens to campus will shine a positive light on the community.

“I look forward to bringing positive exposure for a new art form to be introduced to the community,” Schroeder said. “I understand the Big Rapids community is more on the isolated side, so giving local residents and the campus populous a positive, relaxed experience with something that might not be well understood in the wider community will be good for the cultural development of the region.”

Schroeder believes that exhibiting drag is important to show that it’s a “wide net of performance art categories” and that it has a large range.

“Think of it like clowns. They can be scary, sexy or just plain goofy and welcome in kids spaces,” Schroeder said. “It seems like a frivolous and arguably damaging exercise to try and stifle such an expression of free speech in the form of a wide variety of performance arts.”

Even though there are concerns about the town the event is happening in, the LGBTQ+ Resource Center is happy to welcome drag to Big Rapids, and students are happy to see it.

This event will be held in the DEC ballrooms A and B from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The Ferris State Torch Corrections

**For the story 31st on the 31st
released on April 5th**

We mistakenly mischaracterized details of Pretty Brayah’s absence from YBBW’s annual fashion show. We said that Brayah had canceled on YBBW and provided no further explanation. Brayah became unavailable due to a medical emergency. Further, we mistakenly implied that Brayah was already paid for her appearance. Funds were allocated to be paid to her upon the completion of the appearance. But, as Brayah did not appear, the funds were returned.

TORCH TUNES: A playlist to make the chore of spring cleaning bearable

Evan Hibbard
Staff Photographer

It's already spring, and with the changing of the seasons and new responsibilities to go with it, I've prepared a playlist to help you get through spring cleaning.

HOLD ON – ALABAMA SHAKES

There are few songs that feel as peaceful and reassuring as this classic by Alabama Shakes. Brittney Howard's soulful vocals soothe the listener and reassure them to just "hold on," and it'll all be alright. The song isn't particularly a "spring" song, but it fits the mood of reluctantly having to clean pretty well.

SPRING – ANGEL OLSEN

One of the few songs on the playlist actually titled after the sea-

son, this shimmering ballad by the St. Louis native tells the story of a dysfunctional relationship, seemingly during the month of spring. The track begins with a simple piano melody underneath Olsen's powerful vocals before swelling into a mammoth crescendo accompanied by an equally large distorted guitar solo.

SPRING (AMONG THE LIVING) – MY MORNING JACKET

Another epic, building rock song from Jim James and crew, this song will give you the burst of energy you need to get motivated to clean. James begins by mumbling in his own unique way, "Boy I was Ready, Boy I was ready for spring," before the song explodes into the familiar sound of an MMJ jam. With a runtime of 6:01, "Spring (Among the Living)" is still a short-

er song by MMJ's standards. For more expansive jams of theirs, check out "Dondante" (7:59) and "Touch Me I'm Going To Scream, Pt. 2" (8:12).

SPRING IN HOURS – FLORIST

The final of the explicitly titled "spring" songs on the playlist, this tranquil grooving track from Florist's 2022 self-titled effort is one to listen to on a night just after its rained with the bugs buzzing in the distance. Using cricket sounds as an actual backing track, Florist offers up one of the most indicative songs of the feelings brought on by spring. With this track, you can just smell the "April showers."

BATH COUNTY – WEDNESDAY

While not specifically mentioning spring, the song has a distinctively "road-trip" feel, so this can



Graphic by: Sienna Parmelee | Production Manager

be one you save for a drive home as the end of the year begins to bear down. The Asheville, North Carolina band's new record "Rat Saw God" also released on April 7, so the inclusion of this new single makes for perfect timing. Check out this rollicking soon-to-be classic from the alt-country band as well as their new album, which is so far my favorite of the year.

STARDEW VALLEY OVERTURE – CONCERNEDAPE, CAT – C418

Spring is the season most associated with nature to me, so for the last two tracks on the playlist I included songs from two of the most nature-y games to ever be

released, "Stardew Valley" and "Minecraft." Relax at the end of a long day of spring cleaning with the "Stardew Valley Overture" and then slowly drift off to sleep with the playful and ethereal "Cat," a masterful mix of synths and drum machines from "Minecraft – Volume Alpha," the acclaimed collection of Minecraft tunes from German maestro Daniel Rosenfeld, more commonly known as C418.

I hope you enjoyed this playlist because I had a lot of fun making it. Let us know what your go to spring cleaning playlist is, and if it's now been replaced with this one.

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Expires 5/31/2023

Opinions

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EDITORS COLUMN:

After the buzz

Noah Kolenda
Editor-In-Chief

Over my three-year tenure at the Torch, I have dabbled in many tech reviews. Before I leave these 12 pages for good, I wanted to look back and give you my thoughts after the buzz has worn off. From phones to smart home gadgets and more, let's talk about how everything's held up.

Z FLIP3

In January I gave you my initial thoughts and review on picking up a used foldable phone to dip your toe into the new form factor. After three months, I'd be hesitant to continue the recommendation I made for most consumers. My unit is still holding up fairly well at the exterior with a simple, clear TPU case. The inside display is an entirely different story.

In my more minimal work usage in the not-so-long time I've had this, I have managed to put several deep scratches on the interior display's mandatory screen protector. I also seem to have started to tear that protector at the right edge of the fold crease. For the three to five times a day I pick up this phone to check my email or field a call, I am incredibly disappointed with the durability so far. While I'm not worried for myself, as I'll likely be able to get this protector replaced on an upcoming trip to a city with a Samsung store, you simply would not have that luxury here

and would require mail-in service for just about any repair.

This is a big issue to settle with if you're an acrylic wearer like me, or are just a little rough on your phone in general. If you're someone that keeps your nails short and is willing to be a bit more careful with your phone, I can still recommend this to you. It's still a cool phone that makes me smile just about any time I touch it. I can even look past the eccentricities of OneUI, Samsung's skin for Android, because of just how quirky and shockingly useful the folding aspect actually was for daily tasks. Personally, though, if I had to do it over again, I'd likely skip this in lieu of something a bit more durable and have waited for science to catch up a bit more to my acrylics.

THE SMART HOME

In October of 2021 I brought to you my childhood dream of having the smart home. After living with it for nearly two years, I can confidently say that it was resoundingly not worth it due to the limitations caused by being a renter. I also forgot one key aspect of the puzzle in my execution: manual backup.

While having color-changing, voice-activated lights is awesome, you don't always want them to be voice-activated or color-changing. The main issues I ran into with my renter-friendly setup revolved around poor Wi-Fi service and the want for simple, manual control that didn't take the device offline.

These problems were usually cyclical, as a Wi-Fi outage would lead to the breaking of voice control, which would lead to the usage of the physical light switch, lessening the chance everything would just sort itself out when things came back online.

The solutions to this? They're either not renter-friendly, installing smart light switches; would be extremely expensive, mounting used iPads that are just smart home controllers; or further bog down our already challenged network that I can't maintain myself. What I'd recommend today? A paired-down setup with equally paired-down expectations.

Until you own and can install smart light switches, a mesh Wi-Fi network or can commit to an even more deeply integrated system like that offered by HomeKit, I wouldn't bother with more than a smart bulb you'll control via Bluetooth here and there for some ambiance. Anything more within the conditions of a college apartment requires more attention than any one student has time for. I will not be resetting my smart home at my next rental. I'll be holding off until I can build the champaign smart home of my dreams.

IPHONE 12

The iPhone 12 was my first tech review at the Torch, and one I treasure fondly. While I stand by what I said in my award-winning review of this phone, it simply was not

the iPhone in that year's lineup for me. After nine months of using the iPhone 12, I transitioned to the iPhone 12 Pro Max, and that's where I've stayed since for my personal phone.

While the iPhone 12 standard is still a wonderful phone, even two and a half years after its initial launch, its smaller battery was just not up to my power user standard. With Screen Time that would make your eyes water, I needed to step up to the phone with the biggest battery they sold that year. My original iPhone 12 does still live on to this day, though, as I sold it to a friend as her first iPhone ever.

If you're in the market for a cheaper iPhone or just don't want to pay for incremental changes, this is still a top buy if you can find one with good battery health used. Or better yet, check out carrier deals and see if you could score this for next to nothing or free, brand new in box. This phone has aged very well alongside its Pro, Pro Max and Mini counterparts and is worth another look if you're not in need of the latest and greatest.

I am very thankful to have gotten an opportunity to report on these pieces of tech throughout my time at the Torch. I know as a college newspaper we are not the typical place for these types of stories, but I hope you've enjoyed my perspective, nonetheless. I also hope I may have helped you pick up a new piece of tech along the way.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Evan Hibbard

Evan Hibbard
Photographer

Hi, my name is Evan Hibbard, and I'm a junior in the TDMP program, a photographer and occasionally a writer here at the Torch.

My path at the Torch has been anything but normal since I started as a freelance writer at the end of last year before becoming a full-time photographer over the last semester.

With my new position at the Torch, I have been fortunate enough to sit on the sidelines for basketball, football, hockey, tennis and

softball games, as well as some local events where I have taken some photos that I feel genuinely proud of. It's truly been a great experience for me.

Before I came to the Torch, I also had a lot of trouble meeting people and making friends. Now, I can confidently say that I've met some of my closest friends through the Torch. It has really been a great experience that's forced me to get out of my shell and talk to people, when I previously would have just sat in the corner with my head down, getting my work done.

In my free time I enjoy playing guitar and bass, writing, playing video games and hanging out with my parents' cats, Admiral, Juno and Molly, when I'm home. I also spend a lot of time at CMU, where pretty much all of my high school friends live in a house together.

Overall, I'd say that I've had a great time at the Torch, and I'm confident in saying that the friends I've made here are going to be very good friends for a very long time.



Photo Provided by Evan Hibbard | Photographer

Deficiency of fun

How Big Rapids lacks entertainment for college students

Brandon Wirth
Sports Reporter

As one of the highest valued schools in the state, Ferris brings a lot of benefits for the college scene. When it comes to things like athletics and campus foods, there aren't many schools trumping our beloved university. However, there are two major elements that Ferris struggles with: location and entertainment.

Almost 9,000 people called Big Rapids home in 2021, according to Census Bureau data. While this is a 15.8 percent increase from the year prior, this number is a 16.3 percent decrease compared to the previous decade. How does this relate to entertainment? Simple, less people means less need for entertainment.

When it comes to campus activities, Ferris does a solid job of providing things to do for students. Activities like concerts, intramural sports and various workshops can give students opportunities to experience the fun of being on campus. On the other hand, there are very minimal opportunities for entertainment outside of Ferris besides some bars and establishments for people to enjoy. The problem is that those who don't drink or enjoy the party scene may feel left out or pressured due to the lack of options. At the end of the day, Big Rapids is missing a lot of common entertainment options that many other college towns have.

During a profit shortage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Big Rapids AMC has been closed for over two years now. Franchise fans, Friday night film aficionados and other community members now must travel almost an hour to the nearest theater to see a new movie. Aggressive gas prices and the convenience of streaming services has made going to the movies with friends and family an almost obsolete idea in this area.

Another exotic entertainment activity that was once in Big Rapids was a paintball facility. The Precision Combat Arena provided a building that housed simulated battles for a multitude of years in

the downtown area. The company did well enough to stay afloat for over seven years, but its departure definitely took away an option for the community to try something new.

Many other college campuses in Michigan have multiple options off campus for entertainment like laser tag, mini golf courses, trampoline parks, waterparks and arcades. Whether it's a common chain or an independent business, the options are a relatively close distance to campus, unlike Big Rapids.

So what does the town have for entertainment? A subsidized bowling alley, an ancient roller rink, an overpriced axe-throwing facility, a few often-crowded bars, a difficult golf course, a pair of longer disc golf courses, small stretches of river for tubing and pickleball courts that have yet to be constructed.

Now don't get me wrong, we have it better than some other locations, but we as a town should have higher expectations than being better than average. Big Rapids has been a successful home for countless people and families, and we don't want that to change. It's about time we see some growth towards the college population. Here's what I believe the city can do to make that happen.

1. INSTALL AN ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

Obviously, this would be the number one solution everyone could agree with. What should we do if we don't have it already? Build something.

One ideal location for an arcade, laser tag or mini golf center is the old JCPenney store. Being in the downtown area, as well as having plenty of space inside, would give the location huge potential. Not only that, but the estimated rent of about \$200,000 per year, according to Showcase.com, gives an adequate business plenty of room to draw in a profit after the building purchase.

2. SHIFT MARKETING FOCUS TOWARDS YOUNGER AUDIENCES

Growing up in a retirement town really gave me perspective on this

element. During my early school years, there was really nothing to do in our town besides old-timer's bingo and the weekly fish fry. These are great and all, but not many kids want to join their parents in these activities.

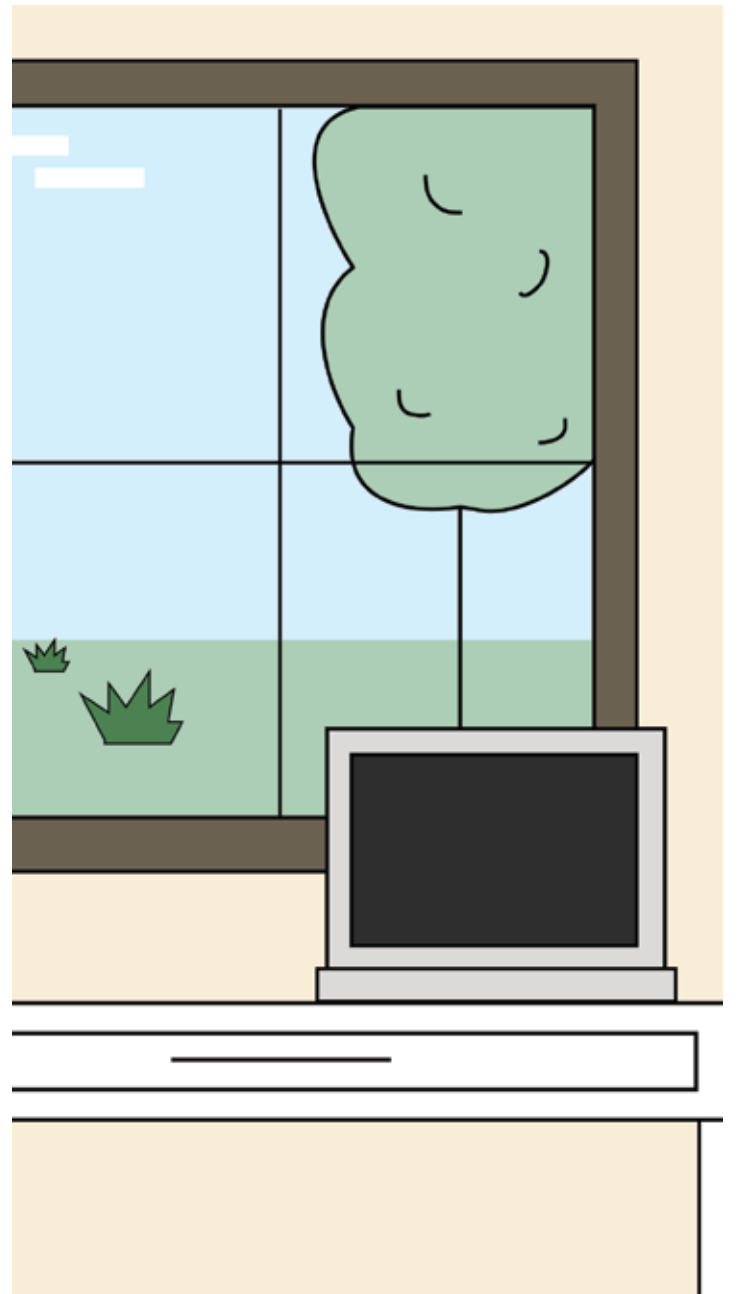
Luckily, the town has now turned focus this past year to family and more kid-oriented fun, such as adding an ice rink, mountain bike trails and a disc golf course.

Big Rapids reminds me a lot of this situation, where they have a variety of activities but a lack of advancement towards the younger population. Organizing things like Gus Macker basketball tournaments downtown as well as discounted student swim nights at the community pool are better options than a local parade.

3. USE FERRIS'S POWER OF COLLABORATION

Partnering with Ferris allows a direct connection for students to help organize events they are likely to participate in. Working directly with Big Rapids businesses and establishments also allows students to learn the process of partnership and management. After all, it is one of the school's core values and arguably one of the most emphasized values since President Bill Pink took office just over a year ago. Getting perspective from students gives the community organizations an idea of what kind of fun can draw in this demographic of customers, especially with the number one considered element: money.

All in all, Big Rapids has a lot of potential, but not a lot to offer when it comes to entertainment. As one who has lived in the area for all 22 years of my life, I would love to see advancements made



Graphic by: Sienna Parmelee | Production Manager

within the industry. People like me are willing to try new things, but it's hard to commit to recreational activities that require equipment purchasing and time to become good-enough to reap benefits.

Economically, Americans increased impromptu spending habits over last year by over 14%, per PR Newswire. Our post-Covid world has created the urgency within people to get out and do

something rather than just stay inside. The equation of logic is there, now it's time for the town to get to work on finding the solution to make Big Rapids live up to its name's expectations in the world of entertainment.

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Sports

Brody Keiser | Sports Editor | keiserb1@ferris.edu

Late inning theatrics



Photo by: Evan Hibbard | Torch Photographer

Kaitlyn Orme puts a ball in play during Ferris' 9-5 victory over Purdue Northwest. She had a hit, RBI and two runs scored in the victory.

Softball starts the weekend with an extra inning thriller

Joseph Nagy
Sports Reporter

The Bulldogs ended their five game losing streak with a weekend split in GLIAC conference action.

The Bulldogs played host to Wisconsin Parkside and Purdue Northwest and earned the two game split to move to 4-7 in conference play. Playing a total of 17 innings on Friday started a marathon of softball for the weekend.

Head coach Jake Schumann's squad scored a quick five runs in the first inning against Purdue Northwest, thanks to aggressive

running on the basepaths.

Adding three more runs in the bottom of the second and another run in the bottom of the sixth, the Bulldogs took game one with some breathing room. However, a stout pitching battle in the second game brought nine scoreless innings from both teams, leaving it to Josie Prince to win the game in the bottom of the tenth with a deep two run double.

"This is about as perfect as we've played in a day," Schumann said. "We just rose to the occasion in the last inning."

Kristie Gray earned the win in game one for the Bulldogs with a

save going to Aryn Gallacher. Gallacher also got the win in game two to get to 7-7 on the season.

Center fielder Kylie Winkels and third baseman Brookelyn Verbeek were the top producers on the day, driving in three runs in game one. The big winner of the day was Prince, who clinched the Friday sweep for the Bulldogs with a deep drive to right field for the walk-off double.

The following day, the softball team held the first ever strike out cancer game, raising over \$1600 for cancer research. Playing in front of one of the largest crowds of the season, the Bulldogs fell

short by dropping two to the Rangers of Wisconsin Parkside.

"It was a great opportunity for us to raise some money for cancer research," Schumann said. "It's something that we've been doing for a long time as an association, and this is the first time that we've done it at Ferris State."

Winkels and Prince both picked up two hits in the first game, including a two RBI double by Prince. The second game saw standout hitting performances from Verbeek and Winkels, as they both brought in runs at the plate.

Mckenzie Cleland got the start on the bump for game one, pitch-

ing a total of three innings before being retired by Aubrie Lafferty, Catherine O'Donohue and Mauri Viness. Game two brought in Aryn Gallacher in the first inning. She was relieved by Kristie Gray and Sophie Wisniski, who each picked up a strikeout.

The Bulldogs will hit the road for a six game trip, battling against two non-conference regional opponents in Ashland on April 11 and Ohio Dominican on April 12. The Bulldogs will finish the trip against Davenport on April 15.

SCORECARD

Men's Tennis

April 8 - Ferris 5, Grand Valley 2

Women's Tennis

April 8 - Grand Valley 7, Ferris 0

Track and Field

April 8 - Golden Grizzly Invite:
Donis Harris 1st in 5000 meters, Whitney Farrell 3rd in 3000-meter steeplechase

Bulldogs break records



Photo by: Ethan Hamilton | Ferris Track and Field team

Whitney Farrell races during the Bulldogs' meet at Oakland for the Golden Grizzly Invite. She broke the school record in the steeplechase during the meet.

Donis Harris and Whitney Farrell set new school records at Golden Grizzly Invite

Jeffery Walker
Sports Reporter

Two Bulldogs broke records at Oakland University on Saturday in the Golden Grizzly Invite.

Donis Harris and Whitney Farrell both set new school records in their respective events, paving the way for a strong team showing.

"I thought our team had a good overall performance," head coach Jared Kelsh said. "It was a big stepping stone in the right direction."

Harris won the men's 5,000 meters, posting a school and personal record at 14:24.16. He also had a NCAA Division II National Provisional qualification time.

"I was seeded second going into the weekend," Harris said. "So it's always a good feeling to place better than you're expected to do. I ran the previous record two years ago, and it's been a goal to beat it ever since."

Even though he just beat his record, Harris has a new goal in mind: he wants to run even closer to the 14-minute mark.

He's not the only one breaking records as his teammate, a freshman for the Bulldogs, set a record of her own.

Farrell competed in her first steeplechase at the Golden Grizzly Invite.

"I was definitely surprised when I finished," Farrell said. "Coach told me I broke the school record. I really had no expectations going into it because it was my first time. At first I was really hesitant about racing it, but I'm really glad that coach had encouraged me to try it out."

Farrell placed third overall in the 3,000-meter steeplechase and broke a school record with a time

of 11:23.65.

Other Bulldogs also performed well at the meet, giving the Bulldogs a strong team performance.

Brandon Wirth placed fifth in the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase with a time of 9:39.80, and Kyle Drouillard placed seventh in the men's hammer throwing with a throw of 50.66 meters.

Sydney Kubiak placed seventh in the women's 5,000 meters with a time of 17:57.75, and Melanea Strauss placed 10th in the women's 5,000 meters with a time of 18:19.97.

Nyah Tyron placed sixth in the women's 400-meter hurdles, posting a time of 1:06.51. Kaylee Huey just missed the top ten, finishing 11th in the women's 3,000-meter steeplechase at 12:17.21, and Claudia Wilkinson placed eighth in the women's high jump with a 1.55-meter jump.

Rebecca Marvin placed 10th with a 10.94-meter throw in the women's shot put, Brianna Copley placed second with a 41.67-meter throw and Emma Stephayn placed eighth with a 38.05-meter throw in the women's discus. Stephayn also placed 10th in the women's hammer throw with a throw of 43.88 meters.

With an all-around good team performance for the Bulldogs, they will be looking to build off this successful Golden Grizzly Invite.

Ferris will be back in action for the Bison Invite on Saturday, April 15, and Sunday, April 16.

Brandon Wirth is a sports reporter for the Torch and he is on the Ferris track team. He did not contribute to the writing of this article.

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Golf looks to GLIAC championships

Dylan Rider
Opinions Editor

The Ferris men's and women's golf teams have their sights set on the GLIAC championship.

Following the men's tied-second place finish at the Bill Blazer Memorial and the women's finishing second at the UMSL Spring Invite, both teams have only one more step to take before the post-season.

Unfortunately, both teams have had the displeasure of experiencing Michigan weather, which prevented the teams from being able to get out on grass.

"It's gonna be a challenge anytime you're from the north and you're going south to play tournaments... against teams who have been outside for three months," head coach Sam Stark said. "You just have to embrace that. You have to find it as another chip on your shoulder and not an excuse."

WOMENS

Since the women began playing in early March, they have yet to finish below sixth place in any of their tournaments. Following their second place ranking after day one of the UMSL Spring Invite, the women stayed strong and kept their sec-

ond place ranking

This finish only continues the dominant performances brought forth by the women. Helping lead the team are juniors Dani Staskowski and Alayna Eldred, the oldest and most experienced players on the team.

Eldred gave her assessment of where the team stands heading into the GLIAC championship.

"I'm very pleased with where our team is at," Eldred said. "Region wise, we're in a much more comfortable position than we were last spring, which is really exciting to see. We have three freshmen that are really making an impact on the team right now and kind of rotating in and out of the lineup, and they've been really huge for us this year especially. We're definitely trending in the right direction, which has been awesome to see."

Eldred added that she's not satisfied with her game so far during this spring season and that she's set on ending her "vendetta" of not qualifying for nationals.

One standout fact regarding the women's team is that it is comprised of six freshmen.

"Their developments been enjoyable to watch," Stark said. "It's been fun to see them do the things that I know they're capable of but

they're not quite sure that they're capable of. They're just reaching a bit beyond what they've ever done before... The best part of the college experience is seeing that come to fruition and see that light-bulb go off."

Stark thinks being able to rotate the freshmen in and having them perform at a high level already is a way to show potential recruits what Ferris has to offer.

The women's team will make their run for GLIAC championship glory starting on Friday, April 21, and will end on April 23.

MENS

Since beginning in early March, the men have played in five multi-day outings and have placed in the top ten in four of them. Most recently, the men placed second (T-2nd) in the Bill Blazer Memorial.

The men's team did not get to enjoy much of a break, as they had two tournaments in a five day span.

"This has been a bit of a gauntlet week for us," Stark said. "With Easter break, we decided to pretty much take a whole week to play two tournaments. We just finished up in Nashville Sunday through Tuesday. [We had] practice rounds on Thursday in Ohio and then

[had] two tournament rounds Friday and Saturday. So this is really the crux of our season. It's the time of year when we need to be doing our best and our guys are getting closer and closer to that as we head towards the GLIAC championship."

Leading the men's team is freshman Caleb Bond. Bond shot a tournament leading 141 through both days at the Bill Blazer Memorial.

Stark raved about Bond's performance as of late.

"[He] really started to come

into his own at the end of the fall season, and he's just continued that in the spring," Stark said. "He finished second place individually in a really good field last week at Findlay's tournament in Kentucky. He then followed it up with actually his first collegiate victory this Monday and Tuesday in Nashville on [a] good field. He's really starting to kind of lead us golf wise."

The men's team will begin GLIAC championships on Friday, April 14, and it will run until April 16.



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9:15am

Sanket Tonde

Sanket is a Character Artist with four years of experience in the industry and is currently working at Bluepoint Games. After graduating from Savannah College of Art and Design, he shipped his first AAA title, God of War Ragnarok, while working at Santa Monica Studio as an External Development Artist. His passion is to create memorable characters while thriving in this ever-evolving profession.



10:30am

Fuad Shamieh

Fuad Shamieh is a Senior Solutions Engineer at Triplelift, working to enable the future of CTV through advertising. He received his Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering from the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario, Canada and was previously an Applications Engineer at Evertz Microsystems responsible for designing and deploying multimedia pipelines for broadcast providers.



11:45am

Lauren Stefl

2018 TDMP graduate Lauren Stefl is a freelance Videographer and Photographer currently focusing on sports coverage. Her work has led her to the National Women's Soccer League, FIFA Youth World Cups, and most recently the four-time Women's World Cup Champion United States Women's National Soccer Team where she provides creative coverage across a variety of visual mediums.



1:30pm

Chris Goosman

Chris Goosman is an audio professional from Ann Arbor, MI who is currently a Media Solutions Engineer at the University of Michigan Center for Academic Innovation, a mastering engineer who owns Baseline Audio Labs, and the resident sound designer for both the Croswell Opera House in Adrian, MI and the Encore Musical Theatre Company in Dexter, MI.



2:45pm

Justin Mayle

Justin Mayle is a seasoned artist and game industry veteran of over twelve years. He's worked on mobile, VR and AAA titles such as Farpoint, Life is Strange, and Destiny. He specializes in lighting and environment art and creating immersive worlds and experiences for players.

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