

Being Brutus

Newly-revealed Brutus speaks on his experience living a double life



Photo courtesy of Ferris State Athletics

Kolton Grive, the former Brutus mascot, waves goodbye to fans while welcoming the new Brutus mascot.

Dylan Rider
Sports Editor

In front of a crowd of 1,950, Kolton Grice lifted a bulldog-sized weight off his shoulders, which signaled to the Ferris community that he was Brutus.

Grice, an information security and intelligence senior, had the golden bone handed off to him by Emma Franklin, who had played Brutus since 2020, during her reveal in 2022. Since then, Grice has been one of the few students to take up the helm of the bulldog mascot with his reveal on Feb. 23.

The mascot is a facet of Ferris State's Student Alumni Gold Club. Wearing the Brutus suit requires the wearer to be sworn to a vow of secre-

cy via a non-disclosure agreement. For Grice, the secrecy presented a challenge.

"At first you feel guilty because you're like 'Oh, shoot, I'm lying to all the people I care about what I'm doing in my free time,'" Grice said. "They want to hang out with me, but I have this obligation to do, and I have to make up some excuses to not hurt their feelings... That's why I was kind of excited about retiring a little bit because then I can hang out more with my buddies, which I've had to sacrifice most of the time for this."

Grice found the best way to defuse people asking him if he was Brutus was to tell a white lie that he would have to sub-in for Brutus here or there or that he was just a

handler. He believed that this would "satisfy their curiosity."

Alongside the trials of keeping his identity a secret, Grice experienced rowdy opposing fans at rivalry games, a baby throwing up on him, near exhaustion from a parade, and even handsy grandmas. However, one of the bigger issues he faced was living two lives.

"That's the most difficult part, to be honest," Grice said. "There's so many people that you know from both [regular life and from playing Brutus]. It gets a little tricky and it also makes it a little awkward. The best way I found out to go about it is just to be quiet and not interact with them altogether. That way you don't actually slip up and say something that

makes you sound like you're a weirdo."

Since picking up the suit in 2022, Grice estimated that he had performed between 200-300 events as Brutus, which included Ferris' national championship game in Texas.

Welding engineering technology senior Cody Langlois, who also played Brutus and was revealed earlier this year, believes Grice was the right person to help return the SAGC to its pre-COVID strength.

"He was the first mascot," Langlois said. "One of the things that they told me in my interview, [was that] they're trying to get the Student Alumni Gold Club, as well as the Brutus program back to what it was before COVID. I

think Kolton's personality, his laid-back style in the suit, the way he interacted with people, and the way that he performed at events definitely played a big role in getting back to what it was. He has [also] recruited a lot into the Student Alumni Gold Club."

With Langlois and Grice sharing the mascot role, Langlois found it "wonderful" to be able to talk about the Brutus secret with somebody.

Diagnostic medical sonography senior Madi Bozek, who met Grice through a mutual friend, had performed with Grice in the Brutus costume while she was on the university's dance team. While being friends with Grice and performing with Brutus, she had a suspicion her friend was donning the suit.

"He kept making up excuses like 'Oh, I have to go do this.' or 'Oh, I have to sub in for this because the other guy is sick,'" Bozek said. "I started making the joke [saying he was Brutus] ... We just kind of rolled with it as a joke. Then it turns out the joke was reality."

Bozek had no hard feelings about the secret, as she understood Brutus had an NDA. She also understood the importance of Brutus by saying he is "one of the faces of the school."

Grice's retirement puts an end to his time as Brutus but he will go down as one of the few students who put time and sweat into representing the university.

News

Ember St. Amour | News Editor | stamoue@ferris.edu



The former location of JCPenney on 125 S. Michigan Ave set to temporarily house Gotion offices.

Photo credit: Brianna Wichman | Freelance Photographer

Jessica Oakes
Editor-in-chief

The upcoming Gotion factory, dubbed “Project Elephant” in 2022, has garnered national attention. Local Mecosta County residents continue to voice their opposition to the electric vehicle battery component factory through protest, the formation of an environmental protection organization and ousting several public officials.

Concerns for the factory range from waste water to national security. While Gotion North America is headquartered in California, it is the subsidiary of Gotion High-tech Co., Ltd., a company based in Shanghai, China. Signs reading “No CCP” were placed by disgruntled citizens across Green Charter Township to show their worry of the plant bringing Chinese communism to the area. Business Insider, one of the several national outlets to report on local tensions regarding the factory, reports that over 200 Chinese companies currently operate across the state of Michigan.

Ferris is a financial partner in Project Elephant. President Bill Pink himself was present for the project’s announcement. The project in its entirety has a price tag of over \$2 billion and is set to bring over 2,000 jobs to the area.

News surrounding the factory breaks frequently. Catch up on Mecosta County Gotion happenings since 2022 with this timeline:



23rd Annual Great Lakes Infectious Disease Conference

Event organized by College of Pharmacy set to take place soon

Tate Zellman
News Reporter

The 23rd Annual Great Lakes Infectious Disease Conference will be held on March 16 and will give students, pharmacists and professors a chance to be informed by professional speakers.

The event is planned to last the entire day. In addition, the conference has options for in-person or virtual, which participants can select during registration.

Pharmacy practice professor Michael Klepser noted what students could learn from the conference.

“It costs over \$7 billion dollars annually to treat individuals with infectious diseases,” Klepser said. “This places a significant toll on patients and the health care economics. We as ID [infectious diseases] practitioners strive to be good stewards of antibiotics and strive to promote appropriate use of antibiotics and vaccines.”

Klepser didn’t just make his case on how infectious diseases affect the country, but he also concisely explained the impacts infectious diseases have in the state of Michigan.

In addition to mentioning why it’s important to talk about infectious diseases, Klepser finds it important to tie the Great Lakes into the topic of infectious diseases as well.

“ID pharmacy practice in

the Great Lakes involves a small number of close-knit, passionate pharmacists,” Klepser said. “Coming together at GLID provides us another opportunity to share our experiences amongst ourselves and with the attendees to strengthen ID practice in the state and surrounding areas.”

According to Klepser, the GLID attempts to expose attendees to infectious diseases topics ranging in scope from an overview of important advancements to in-depth and comprehensive presentations on emerging issues on infectious diseases. The “in-depth” and “emerging issues” areas occur since infectious diseases can be found everywhere, including the Great Lakes area.

Pharmacy practice assistant professor Benjamin Pontefract mentioned the most important aspects of talking about diseases, health and education when the conference takes place.

“Infectious disease is everywhere in the world of health care,” Pontefract said. “Having this presentation each year allows for the infectious disease experts to provide a condensed, laser-focused, discussion on these topics to pharmacists who see these disease states on a regular basis but may not fully understand all of the evidence behind the recommendations.”

On the topics of health and

education, Pontefract finds it a necessity that front-line pharmacists are equipped with the knowledge they need to successfully treat patients with such infections by providing education provided by local experts in the field.

Pontefract also stated that one of the topics presented each year is the “Top Five Infectious Diseases” which mentions the top infectious disease of the previous year. COVID-19, with its new variants and continuous effect on society, has a great chance to go down as one of the top five infectious disease topics in 2023. That list will be mentioned in the conference at 12:45 p.m.

Despite living in a world that has been able to handle COVID-19 better with vaccinations, Pontefract stated the importance of the conference itself in a COVID-19 world.

“The profession of pharmacy is still seeing the effects of the pandemic,” Pontefract said. “Patients still become affected by COVID-19, and we need pharmacists now more than ever to educate health-care professionals on the best way to use the newest antivirals that we have available.”

More information about this event can be found on the ferris.edu Campus Calendar. Contact WebTeam@Ferris.edu for any questions or any help with registration.



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The future of student government

SGA’s new president’s plans for the organization



Photo credit: Brianna Wichman | Freelance Photographer

Student Government Association election winner Stephen Bender debating during the Feb. 13 debate.

Kourtney Fairchild
News Reporter

Computer information systems junior Stephen Bender was recently elected as the Student Government Association president after a “series of unfortunate events” in the organization.

Bender ran against finance and economics sophomore Pedro Saltini for the first multi-candidate election in six years. This election came after the previous president resigned and an interim president was appointed.

Throughout their campaigns, Bender and Saltini stressed how important improving SGA and making them a valuable resource to students again was.

Bender plans to start his presidency by updating the SGA website

since this is the first place students will go for information about the organization. The website is currently about five years outdated.

SGA is known for the Big Event, a 16-year tradition of community volunteering. They are currently unsure if this event will be possible this year and have looked into replacement options.

“This year has been so hectic, so we aren’t sure if we have the capacity right now to even host something like that,” Bender said.

SGA plans to volunteer at a retirement home in the community in place of this event.

They are also currently making plans to start working with Big Rapids Public Schools to send volunteers to the elementary, middle and high schools. They’re waiting for a

response from the superintendent to see what needs they have.

SGA’s current budget is over \$90,000, part of which comes from student tuition, and these events are the only plans they have with this money right now, according to Bender.

The Founders’ Room is reserved for 90 minutes every Tuesday for the SGA meeting, but the meetings rarely last that long and have not been that long this semester, with most meetings lasting no more than 30 minutes.

One section of the meeting is set aside for executive reports where the president, vice president, chief of staff, director of philanthropy, grand treasure and the press secretary all have the option to give a report. Most of the time, there are

no reports. Bender said he is going to encourage the cabinet to attend the meetings with their reports so more discussion can be had during this time.

After executive reports, there are committee reports. Bender is on the tuition and fees committee and plans to start bringing a report of what they discussed at their last meeting. He is also going to encourage other people to join committees to learn more about what’s happening on campus and bring that information to SGA.

“I want other students to bring news from all areas of campus, which we don’t really have going on right now,” Bender said. “Student government meetings are kind of their own, separate thing and we just don’t hear much.”

There are currently two hearings of the public at the SGA meeting, one at the beginning and one at the end. Bender, with the suggestion from vice president-elect Brock Harrick, is considering changing the second hearing of the public to be more of a suggestions segment. This would allow general members, students and community members to bring up suggestions for changes within SGA and on campus and for SGA to get feedback to make improvements.

Bender has many plans for changes within the organization in the hopes of making the organization for the students once again.

MICHIGAN NEWS UPDATE

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Clinton Township: Investigation of an explosion of a warehouse that happened on March 5 is expected to start this week, according to WWMT.

The explosion’s cause is unknown as of March 11, but officials found butane and nitrous tanks that weren’t authorized to be there, in the building, according to the Detroit Free Press. The building was inspected in September 2022, and the tanks were not there. The reason behind the tanks being there is currently unclear.

The Environmental Protection Agency was on the site helping in the collection of the hazardous materials, which included vape pens and lithium batteries. They also collected debris that may have been contaminated by these hazardous materials.

Clinton Township’s Fire Marshall Chuck Champagne explained that the department has the building maintained.

“The scene is secure as we’ve said and has been secure since the fire was placed under control, and it will be secure until the investigation is complete,” said Champagne.

The debris from the explosion was found up to two miles from the building. Town supervisor Bob Cannon explained that some of the debris is sharper than knives.

“All the debris that’s out there is really dangerous,” Cannon said. “I’ve seen people going out there and picking up things to take home for souvenirs. Please don’t do that, it’s very, very dangerous.”

Cannon hopes that the investigation will give answers as to what caused the

GLOBAL NEWS UPDATE

Ember St. Amour
News Editor

Gaza: The Israel Defense Forces built a road that spans across Northern Gaza from Israel to the coast.

The road spans over three miles and connects roads that were previously unconnected. The road is also wider than a typical road in Gaza.

The road was built for the IDF to have an accessible place to move troops and equipment. According to BBC News, some experts, including senior fellow Khaled Elgindy, are worried that the road will be used as a barrier instead.

“By dividing Gaza in half, Israel will control not only what goes in and out of Gaza, but also movement within Gaza,” Elgindy said. “This includes quite possibly preventing the 1.5 million displaced Palestinians in the south from returning to their homes in the north.”

Former British Army officer Justin Crump, who runs a risk intelligence company Sibylline, feels differently and explains the impact the road will have.

“It certainly looks like it’s part of a longer-term strategy to have at least some form of security intervention and control in the Gaza Strip,” said Crump. “This area cuts off Gaza City from the south of the strip, making it an effective control line to monitor or limit movement, and has relatively open fields of fire.”



Culture

Giuliana Denicolo | Culture Editor | denicog@ferris.edu

“The Mission” on tour Ferris presents highly valued piece from local luthier



Photo by: Ni’Jah Rankin | Culture Reporter

A hand-crafted guitar displayed at the FSU Fine Arts Gallery.

Ni’Jah Rankin
Culture Reporter

Ferris’ Fine Arts Gallery presents a viewing and a video of Bryan Galloup’s collaborative work called “The Mission” until Saturday, March 23.

Galloup has been in this craft since 1976. Along with being a luthier, he runs Galloup Guitars in Big Rapids. Galloup Guitars preserves fine-stringed instruments and makes a line of guitars, along with training future craftsmen and women.

“The Mission” is a single hand-crafted guitar that Galloup collaborated with other skilled artisans to create for Art Basel Miami Beach in 2020, with the guitar being valued at over \$25,000.

Galloup explained how the name of the exhibit represented two things.

“It was a mission to get that by concept to completion,” Galloup said. “It also refers to mission-style furniture.”

Galloup believes that this guitar is one of a kind.

“It is a concept piece. I make guitars. This is something that will never be repeated,” Galloup said.

As this guitar is made from scratch, Galloup goes as far as to pick out the wood himself. Some of the woods he chose, he states, are

regulated by the U.S. government because they are the most endangered woods in the world.

The process of building “The Mission” was tense, especially with having a deadline, but also making sure not to rush to the finish line.

“It ended up almost being a reality TV show, and it just became very tough to pull off,” Galloup said. “Every piece that was performed on that [instrument] was nailed right down till the very end.”

Galloup has a long-term relationship with Ferris, as he’s befriended many of the professors and general staff members over the years.

Because of his long-standing connection to the university, his work was able to make it into Ferris’ art gallery.

Professor Daniel Cronk is a long-time friend of Galloup’s. Cronk recommended Galloup’s work to Carrie Weis, the museum and art gallery director for Ferris. Weis then asked Cronk to connect them for his work to be in the Art Gallery before its next destination.

“We’ve known each other most of our lives, starting in our late teens,” Cronk said. “Weis asked me to make introductions which of course was my pleasure.”

Cronk holds Galloup’s craftsmanship in high regard and hopes that everyone will be able to see it.

“Bryan is a master - it is our privilege to be in his sphere,” Cronk said. “I hope everyone will take advantage of the opportunity to view this amazing work.”

Weis has reviewed many projects throughout her time at the art gallery. There are usually about one or two exhibits she and the gallery assistant choose each year.

She expressed the many reasons why Galloup stood out for the gallery.

“He is a really big deal in the music world,” Weis said. “The piece that he created is really unique, and it was made for the Miami Basel, which is an art exhibit that features work from the best artists from five different continents.”

“The Mission” has been on a tour since it was built in 2020. Weis believes that it would be a great opportunity to have “The Mission” at Ferris’ art gallery since it is only in Big Rapids temporarily.

“The Mission” will be in the gallery from March 11 to March 22. Ferris’ Fine Arts Gallery is located on the top floor of the David L. Eisler Center. The gallery is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Disc golf team’s culture of community Ferris disc golf team continues to put in work over spring break

Blase Gapinski
Freelance Reporter

The Ferris State disc golf team has returned from their traditional spring break trip prepared and ready to win nationals by establishing a new culture dedicated to teamwork.

Each year when spring break comes around, the disc golf team takes a trip to prepare for the College Disc Golf National Championship. This year, the team traveled to Rock Hills, South Carolina, which is where the 2024 National College Disc Golf Championship is set to be held April 3-6.

Head coach Leonard Johnson took the first national championship team there in 2015 before their victory. The team has kept this tradition alive for almost ten years and has won four national championships since the implementation.

President and team captain Benji Zorn experienced his first spring break with the team in 2023. With it being his first year, he didn’t connect with a lot of the team up until the trip. One of his goals since taking charge is to make the environment friendlier and more welcoming for new faces.

“We’ve really instilled a positive culture of support. It’s definitely less toxic, we’re more supportive

of others, and it’s as a result has helped everyone on the team feel more comfortable,” Zorn said. “It’s especially helped us prepare new people for our big trips, like spring break and nationals, and gets them more involved.”

To establish this mentality early on, Zorn and the team have been meeting since early August. Zorn wanted everyone together as soon as possible to start meeting. This gave them more time to get well acquainted with one another before the season as well as form the team’s executive board.

As president, Zorn is responsible for budgeting, fundraising, signing the team up for tournaments and organizing all team practices and clinics. By forming an e-board, Zorn’s transition into his presidency was smoother. He credits the e-board for getting the team where they are today.

“A big thing we’ve pushed this year is team camaraderie. We’ve had different team dynamics in the past, and we really want to push a positive, uplifting, really supportive community, because that’s honestly what winning culture is. We’re getting things organized so we’re not stressing over things that we could have planned ahead for. It has been a lot, but I feel like we have put our-

selves into a wonderful spot,” Zorn said.

Delaney Beckett, women’s team captain, has found herself a part of the team rather quickly despite it being her first year.

“Everyone has done a great job of welcoming us and seeing us as just as capable athletes as they are,” Beckett said. “They know that we have the skills and the abilities they do and we’re deserving of the same recognition the guys get.”

Her favorite parts of taking the trip during spring break were spending time with the team and furthering their relationships on and off the course. This motion of support and camaraderie has led to her finding a group of people she has been able to rely on since joining the team.

“We get to go out and play a really fun game and building a friendship off of it helps that they’re not only focused on the game, but they’re also focused on all aspects of you, the team, and wanting to do well,” Beckett said. “It has brought a lot of awesome relationships into my life, and it has just increased the enjoyment that I get while being at Ferris and what I get to do with my life.”

CONT. ON PG. 6



Photo by: Blase Gapinski | Freelance Reporter

Benji Zorn practices at the U.S. Disc Golf Championship course.

Spring fashion blossoms

2024 trends for the upcoming season

Giuliana Denicolo
Culture Editor

As the groundhog predicted, spring came early this year, meaning that it's time to talk about 2024's spring fashion trends.

This spring season, many of the latest trends are here to stay. However, some are gaining more momentum as the clouds part and the sun shines.

Bows have been a trend that's been all over social media since last fall. Even though seasons are changing, the popularity of a pink silky bow is staying in style.

People have used bows as

an accessory for their purses, shoes and hair. In 2024, women are proud to be in touch with their girly side and their inner child. The addition of a bow is just the way to embrace that.

This spring, bows are moving from an accessory to a statement piece. "Glamour" magazine suggests wearing them as earrings, nail art or on your clothing to enhance your look.

Red is leaving behind its autumn roots to become a spring color. Ladies and gents, look no further for your pop of color. This season, it's black cherry, burgundy, merlot and oxblood red.

The publication "Who What

Wear" describes these colors as a "rich color trend" and expects to see it everywhere for a long time. From belts and bags to shoes and jackets, red is the go-to color that subtly adds a bit of pizzazz to your wardrobe.

If you want to take the commitment one step further, paint your lips red to match your makeup to all your accessories.

Spring is a time to look and feel your best. After braving the cold for several months, it's what we all deserve. This year, jumpsuits are back and just the way to perfect comfort and style.

Jumpsuits are comfy, they're timeless, they're ver-

satile and they're perfect for almost all occasions. Not only can they be found in all different materials, but they also can be long or short sleeves and long or short pants.

You can dress them up in strappy heels and a leather jacket for a date night. Or dress them down in sneakers and a jean jacket to run errands. Karen Kane, a fashion brand, offers many ways to style a jumpsuit and many different places to go wearing one.

Whether you want to spend this season lounging or serving, this year's spring trends are for everyone to blossom as their best selves.



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

DISC GOLF CONT.

With nationals around the corner, this is a time when alumni players step up and help out with coaching. Zachary Bemben, a former player, was one of the coaches who attended the trip with the team. He works with each player throughout spring break honing in on their skills and getting them prepared for the biggest event of the season.

"As coaches, we are making sure that they're throwing not only good shots but making smart decisions as well because throwing good shots is only half of the battle," Bemben said. "The other half is the mental side of things so we're just instilling a strong sense of confidence in each player."

Coming back was an easy decision for Bemben. Throughout his four years, he was actively involved with the team and looks back at his

time as some of his favorite memories while at school. He always felt like he was part of a family and that was one of the contributing factors as to why he came back.

"If you don't feel like a family out here, there's no reason to do this," Bemben said. "Making sure that teams don't form cliques within each other because that is something that happens with teams and it tears them apart. I think that's something that Ferris does really well, and we've always done it."

The women's division is currently ranked 20th nationally, and the men's division is currently 27th. As a tight-knit community, all players and coaches are just as invested in one another as they are in the game of disc golf.

"It's a tradition of excellence here," Zorn said. "We're working, we're grinding every day, treating this like a varsity sport because we are

competing at that level. I love disc golf more than anything, but this team is why I want to be here. I want to make everyone proud and do good for this university."

Zorn is appreciative of the opportunity that the team currently has. They have the chance to not only compete for the national title with one another but a chance to bring home a fifth title for the Bulldogs.

"This is an amazing opportunity we have to compete at the national level not just for one another not just because it's disc golf, but because this is for Ferris," Zorn said.

The team actively encourages anyone who wants to learn the game of disc golf or participate in practices to reach out to them. They are set to leave for nationals on Monday, April 1. For updates or inquiries, refer to the Ferris State Disc Golf Instagram page.



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Happy Women's History Month from the Torch to you!

Look out for more content to celebrate the month throughout the next few editions!

Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Double the deals

Big Rapids welcomes a second Dollar Tree

Brook Blausey
Culture Reporter

Within its 4.56 miles, Big Rapids is home to a total of 1,749 businesses. Some of these businesses include a Family Dollar, a Dollar General and now, as of Feb. 2, two Dollar Trees.

Big Rapids local Allison LeVeque has worked for locally owned business Quinn's Music for 16 years. LeVeque loves the new Dollar Tree because of its convenience.

"The new Dollar Tree is the best thing that could have happened to my son and [me]," LeVeque said. "We now live within walking distance to the new store so if my son wants to go get a treat or a toy, it's awesome. It's very clean and the staff is just so friendly."

LeVeque thinks that Dollar Tree is in a perfect spot. She feels that the new location is more convenient for people living on this side of town.

"A lot of this side of town is disabled, elderly and lower income," LeVeque said. "We need this because a lot of people are able to get good things at a good cost. With this location, people don't have to travel all the way across town to get things... I don't even have to get in my

vehicle."

Carlleen Rose has owned Kilwins for 34 years. Similarly to LeVeque, Rose feels that this will allow more people to come downtown and view the shops that are already there.

Rose feels that adding a well-known business like Dollar Tree to downtown allows more customers to come to the area and view the stores downtown has to offer.

"Anytime you have a business that drives people to your downtown, it gives you an opportunity to take advantage of that by being aggressive and offering really great things," Rose said. "Anytime you have somebody that's making a trip in the downtown district, you can figure out a way to set them on the spot. So, I appreciate the fact that people are coming to all sorts of different businesses in our downtown district."

Even though Big Rapids now has two Dollar Trees, Rose believes if the people of Big Rapids wanted and needed it, it would stay in business.

"The customers will let you know whether another Dollar Tree is needed in town," Rose said. "I think pot shops are the perfect example of that. We have so many pot shops coming to town and so many of them are leaving, because

of supply and demand."

Rose enjoys the addition of a second Dollar Tree to the town but also hopes that other businesses open in the area that the town doesn't already have.

"There's a whole pile of things that I would like to see come downtown," Rose said. "Like more restaurants, more shopping, shops for men, something for kids. I mean, there's a whole list of things that I would love to see happen in the downtown district."

A new member of Big Rapids, Isabella Ashe agrees that this new Dollar Tree is beneficial to the community as a whole. Ashe makes candles from her home and the Dollar Tree allows for her to keep her business affordable.

"I can get so many different types of candles that are cheap rather than ordering so many online. I can only get a pack of five or 10 whereas the Dollar Tree has them priced in dollars," Ashe said.

The Torch reached out to both of Big Rapids' Dollar Trees for a comment on the new location but did not receive a response.

The new store is located at 210 N. Michigan Ave and is open from Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Photo by: Brianna Wichman | Freelance Photographer

The new Dollar Tree located at 206 North Michigan Avenue.



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Luck of the sober

Non-alcoholic ways to celebrate your St. Patrick's day

Isabelle Marks
News Reporter

St. Patrick's Day often centers around drinking, which makes it a holiday some non-drinkers may not celebrate or acknowledge. However, if you want to join in the celebration, here are some non-alcoholic ways to celebrate:

1. Gather with friends to watch a St. Patrick's Day TV special or movie.
2. Enjoy green snacks.
3. Watch a St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City, Philadelphia, or even Dublin, Ireland.
4. Attend a local St. Patrick's Day parade.
5. List the reasons why you feel lucky.
6. Reach out to family. A simple "Happy St. Patrick's Day!" can go a long way in connecting with loved ones.
7. Get festive and wear green.
8. Consider going out to eat on St. Patrick's Day.
9. Cook a St. Patrick's Day meal for family or friends.

However, you choose to celebrate it, may your day be full of luck and joyful moments. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Opinions

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EDITOR'S COLUMN:

In defense of Big Rapids



Photo by: Jessica Oakes | Editor in Chief

Big Rapids' historic downtown captured on a sunny March afternoon.

Jessica Oakes
Editor-In-Chief

It seems like a Bulldog's favorite pastime includes making fun of and complaining about our city of Big Rapids. I call that a waste.

I've joked about how hard it is to be respected as a Ferris student when I hang out with Grand Valley students in Grand Rapids. One of my close friends there refuses to come to Big Rapids.

I can understand a healthy rivalry, but we, as the residents of this town, should do better.

The main complaints I hear are that Big Rapids is too empty, too small and too country. I'm well aware it is far from perfect, but I really appreciate some of these

qualities as a college student.

First, Big Rapids is far from empty. As someone who grew up in a village 20 minutes from a Walmart and 45 minutes from a Meijer, I'll admit that I was excited to move here.

I hear people tell me that there is "nothing to do" here, but the town has a bowling alley, roller skating, axe throwing, a rage room, karaoke, a farmers market, cafes, desert shops and miles of trails for walking and hiking. Not to mention any activities offered on campus for those who prefer to stay close, or the few bars and revolving door of dispensaries for those who want to get as far away as possible.

I guess any town without a movie theater or Target

doesn't have anything at all.

My friends and I take the long journey down U.S. 131 to Grand Rapids for anything we don't have around the corner. We also acknowledge how much our bank accounts would suffer if we lived anywhere with more options.

It would not be good for me to have a record store down the road, just like it would not be good for my friends to have an Ulta nearby.

Big Rapids is the perfect place to save money for a few years. I don't think I have any room to complain about living in a quiet town when my rent is as low as it is.

I can admit that Big Rapids is small. I may have gotten used to smaller towns growing up, but I acknowledge that this place might

as well have only two roads.

When I was 19 and fresh out of a pandemic year, I wasn't ready for anything more than that. I had no idea how much I needed this stepping stone before I moved anywhere metropolitan.

This is an affordable town with a small campus next to farmland and Amish country. To use respectful terms, some may find themselves frustrated with the conservative, blue-collar atmosphere of Big Rapids. I know I did.

In time, I got over my generalizations about the town and Ferris' student demographic. As it turns out, I hardly struggled to find people I could connect with on nearly anything.

People seem to fall into Ferris. They come here be-

cause it's affordable, close to home or it has a program they thought they'd like as a freshman. This creates a student body that doesn't believe they're better than other people simply because of the logo on their degree.

We all know the things we don't like about life here. Most of us will leave the moment we graduate, and many of us thought about leaving early. Those who stay through the end of our four years grow to appreciate it.

Our next homes may have better stores, restaurants and politics, but they won't have Clay Cliffs, an absurd fishnet-clad Brutus statue or the people we learned to grocery shop with.

The self-doubt journey

Opening the conversation about self-doubt and improvement



Graphic by: Harmony Goodman | Production Manager

Harmony Goodman
Production Manager

On Monday, Feb. 26, I sat in the empty Torch office in tears.

In our last edition, I helped lay out and put together our Black History Month Special Edition. This edition led me to question my own design abilities more than I ever have before.

Ever since I started college in the fall of 2022, I have been experiencing severe self-doubt. I have always had the fear of “not making it” in my chosen profession. However, recently it has been getting worse.

Self-doubt is a normal thing, lots of people experience it. According to Mind-Doc, most people will experience some sort of self-doubt in their lives.

Self-doubt is defined as the lack of confidence in ourselves and our abilities.

I won't lie and say that

I don't play any part in my self-doubt. It is true that, in college, I have procrastinated here and there because of my mental health. However, when you're already feeling down and feel bad about yourself and your work, it becomes a seemingly never-ending cycle. One that I have been stuck in for a while now.

After I left the Torch office that night, I was kept awake by my anxious thoughts. I felt like a poser to the whole Torch staff. Then I remembered that even though I feel this way every time I make a mistake or feel doubtful, my coworkers and bosses do not feel the same.

I have been called “Master of InDesign” in our slide-shows by our Editor-in-Chief Jessica Oakes.

I've been given kudos from our advisor Dr. Garrett Stack.

I've even had our sports editor Dylan Rider share his excitement with me about

layout ideas.

They may not know it, but everyone here has helped me realize that it's okay to make mistakes. I'm still learning and that's what helps me grow as a designer.

I know now that I need to get myself out of the procrastination slump I have been in. This means that the sooner I start improving my self-confidence, the more I can begin putting in my 100% to everything I do. This way, I will begin to fight away my own self-doubt and break the cycle I have been stuck in.

At the end of the day, we as people are constantly improving in our careers. We will never stop learning.

Don't be too hard on yourself right now because, one day, you will be able to look at where you started and where you are now, and you'll begin to realize it is all a part of the process.

Consumer ethical dilemma

Unethical business practices make for unethical consumption

Hailey Nye
Production Assistant

In an age where more people want to be aware of their impact on the world, where we spend our money and what businesses we support is an important and rarely discussed topic of conversation.

Is it even possible to live a life where you can spend your money fully knowing that it's going to a company with ethical business practices? Are there even any businesses with these qualities out there?

Unfortunately, businesses that are entirely ethical in all aspects are few and far between. Even if they are deemed moral and ethical businesses, it begs the question of personal ethics. Everyone has their own ethical standpoint on how a business should run, but the question of what is ethical to each person is a conversation too big for this article.

It's well known that many established and trusted businesses stray from the best practices. Well-known businesses such as Temu, Shein and Amazon come to mind, but the list runs further than you would expect.

Companies use cheap labor from foreign countries that have relaxed labor laws and may even employ children. They pollute the environment with waste and use materials that are detri-

mental to the health of the employees and consumers. These companies save money, but at what cost to their employees, the environment and the consumer?

With all these concerns, how should consumers learn to spend their money to support ethical businesses? Research seems to be the simplest answer. Identifying which businesses are certified B Corporations is a trusted way of knowing that a company meets high social and environmental performances.

Doing this research appears to be an easy fix, but life is not so simple.

The reality is that most people can't sacrifice their time to research every single product they use in every area of their lives and ensure the brand they support is proven to be ethical in its practices. There are too many products and services that the average consumer uses.

If someone does happen to have the time to go through with the research, then I'm sure you'll find that many of the businesses we currently support as consumers are unethical in some way.

If you want to educate yourself and pursue ethical consuming behaviors, that means severely limiting your choices on where you spend your money. To pursue this, it means the average person would have to completely turn their life around with

their spending habits.

Customers are already limited in where and what they spend their money on due to a variety of personal factors. How is one supposed to go to the store to buy a notebook for class when you're worrying if the company that produced the notebook contributed to deforestation or pollution?

The realization is that it's almost impossible to live a life where you only spend your money on ethical businesses because there are too many commonplace businesses that harm the world in one way or another.

Changing our habits won't do the world any good unless businesses change. But the conversation of businesses changing for the better has been discussed too many times with little or no change.

I want to spend my money wisely and ethically, but how can I? I have the pessimistic view that, on an individual scale, we won't change the world. Even so, changing even a few aspects of where to spend your money may create a spark in others for the better.

Even a little effort means that you care and you're trying to be a more active and aware consumer.

If you want to learn more about what businesses are certified B Corporations, visit bcorporation.net/find-a-b-corp to learn more.



Graphic by: Hailey Nye | Production Assistant

Sports

Dylan Rider | Sports Editor | riderd1@ferris.edu

Bulldog hockey suffers first round exit

Ferris swept by Bemidji State Beavers in road playoff series



Photo credits: Sam Mulder | Torch Photographer

Junior Zach Faremouth shoots and scores at the Feb. 24 match against Bemidji State.

Connor Grypma
Sports Reporter

Ferris State fell in both of its quarterfinal playoff matchups to the Bemidji State Beavers on Friday, March 8 and

Saturday, March 9. The eighth-seeded Bulldogs suffered a 5-4 overtime loss to the one-seeded Beavers before losing 4-0 in their final game on Saturday. Friday's matchup saw the

Bulldogs go up 2-0 early with two straight tallies from senior forward Austin McCarthy in the first period before the Beavers came back and scored twice to even the score early in the second.

Freshman forward Emerson Goode and sophomore defenseman Andrew Noel both cashed in later in the second to put the Bulldogs back up 4-2. This was Noel's first goal of the season.

The Beavers scored late in the second to bring the game within a goal and the final period became a defensive battle for the Bulldogs. Neither team could find the back of the net until the Beavers put the extra attacker on the ice and tied the game 4-4 with less than a minute remaining in regulation. Just 30 seconds into the overtime period, Bemidji scored to secure the 5-4 victory in game one.

Senior forward Antonio Venuto commented on the team's mindset before the game on Friday.

"We need to have the right mindset of knowing we can win," Venuto said. "A lot of people are counting us out already. We have a chip on our shoulder being the underdog in all these games, so it'll bring us a lot more energy."

Saturday's matchup was

the final game for the Bulldogs as they suffered a 4-0 loss in the second game of the series.

The first period was a defensive battle with neither team getting on the board, but the Beavers quickly changed that with three goals in the second. The Bulldogs failed to score and Bemidji scored another goal early in the third to make it 4-0 ending the Bulldog's season.

Senior defenseman Drew Cooper spoke on the season's outcome following the series loss.

"We gave it our all this weekend," Cooper said. "Obviously it's not ideal to come up short but I know the team is proud of its efforts. We saw our fair share of ups and downs along the way, but the attitude and relationships within our team never dipped."

The Bulldogs' roster may look majorly different next year as the team has eight seniors. Goaltenders Logan Stein and Noah Giesbrecht, defensemen Ben Schultheis

and Cooper and forwards McCarthy, Jacob Dirks and Venuto all have another year of eligibility. Forward Jason Brancheau and defensemen Brendan MacLaren and Nick Hale are out of eligibility.

MacLaren, who captained the Bulldogs for two years, explained what his time as a Bulldog meant to him.

"With my hockey career coming to an end, I still feel like it truly hasn't hit me yet," MacLaren said. "Being a Bulldog changed my life forever and I have made so many great relationships over my five years here at Ferris. [I'm] forever grateful that I had the opportunity to live out my dream of being a DI hockey player."

Ferris ended its season with a collective 10-24-2 record including the two playoff losses. More information is to be announced on the Bulldogs roster changes this off-season before hockey returns in early October.

Women's basketball falls in GLIAC semifinals

Bulldogs look to NCAA tournament after falling to Wildcats in semifinals

Caden Hofmann
Sports Reporter

The Ferris State women's basketball team fell in the semi-finals of the GLIAC tournament versus the Northern Michigan Wildcats on Saturday, March 9 after defeating the Saginaw Valley State Cardinals at home in the quarterfinals on Wednesday, March 6.

In the first round of the GLIAC conference tournament, the Bulldogs (22-5, 15-3 in the GLIAC) took down the Cardinals (10-19, 7-11 in the GLIAC) with a score of 54-47. Then did not advance to the conference championship as the Wildcats (21-8, 13-5 in the GLIAC) defeated Ferris by the score of 63-56.

Due to Ferris being the second seed in the GLIAC conference, they hosted their game against Saginaw Valley State. These two teams are familiar with each other as the teams already met each other two times during the season and split the season series. Ferris took the first game 59-57, and the Cardinals won the second game 47-44.

Head coach Kurt Westen-

dorp knew this would be a close game

"You know what you're going to get with them," Westendorp said. "It was super physical the first two games and that is just the style they like to play."

After the first quarter, the Bulldogs were down 13-9. However, the team was able to put together a scoring run in the second quarter to go into halftime up 28-19. Ferris never looked back after halftime and did not allow the Cardinals to get back into the game. Ultimately beating them 54-47.

Ferris won the turnover battle, as Ferris turned the ball over just 13 times compared to the Cardinals' 18 times. The team also generated more points off turnovers, winning that battle 17-11.

Four Bulldogs tallied two or more steals, including junior guard Kenzie Bowers who ended up with two steals.

"In practice, we always talk about the 'Most Important Girl' which is our last line of defense," Bowers said. "I just happened to be in that spot a lot today and was just able to pick off the pass and get into

transition."

Ferris faced another familiar opponent in the semi-finals on Saturday, March 9. The Northern Michigan Wildcats, whom the Bulldogs had already beaten twice prior to this matchup by scores of 79-67 and 71-66. The result was not the same, and Ferris dropped this one.

The game was back and forth the entire contest and consisted of 12 lead changes and six ties. Neither team was having a great offensive first half which led to The Bulldogs going into the break down 23-25. In the second half, the Wildcats started the third quarter on an 8-0 run and it was hard for Ferris to gain any ground when trying to mount a comeback.

Ferris shot 35% from the field on the day and struggled mightily from beyond the arc shooting just 23% from range. Ferris was also out-rebounded 42-33 and that was one of Westendorp's biggest takeaways.

"We can not give up as many rebounds as we gave up," Westendorp said. "Those are momentum plays and momentum killers and North-

ern did a great job at making those plays"

The Bulldogs season is not over, as the team prepares for the NCAA tournament. Westendorp knows the team has to "play a complete game" in their tournament contests next week.

Ferris will be participating in the DII women's basketball tournament as they secured their spot as an at-large bid. Ferris locked down the number three seed in the Midwest region. The Bulldogs will play against the sixth-seed Lewis University Flyers who finished with a record of 23-8 and won the GLVC tournament.

Senior Forward Kady Blanchard has nothing but confidence going into the tournament.

"We are very confident," Blanchard said. "We have a veteran team and are all playing for each other, we haven't played Lewis yet so it will be fun to play someone we haven't seen, and we are all excited to go out and win with each other."

Ferris' tournament game will be held Friday, March 15 at 12 p.m. at the GVSU Fieldhouse in Allendale, MI.



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics

Forward Mya Hiram dribbles around a Wildcat opponent.

Men's basketball stakes claim as GLIAC champs

The Bulldogs defeat Grand Valley to win the GLIAC tournament

Jeffery Walker
Sports Reporter

Ferris State men's basketball's GLIAC tournament run ended with them being crowned as GLIAC champions while punching their ticket to the NCAA tournament on March 10 at the Berry Evans Center in Marquette, Michigan.

The Bulldogs entered the GLIAC tournament as the No. 3 seed after they finished the regular season 22-7 and 12-6 in GLIAC. Ferris had to run a gauntlet of the Wisconsin-Parkside Rangers, Wayne State Warriors and the Grand Valley State Lakers to win the tournament.

The team earned the opportunity to host their first game of the tournament, facing the Rangers on March 6.

The game against Wisconsin-Parkside ended in a win for the Bulldogs 84-82, as they were able to complete the comeback win as they were down at halftime 41-33. The Bulldogs scored 51 second-half points and outscored the Rangers by 10 points to win the game.

The Bulldogs' combination of efforts had four players in double figures as senior forward Dolapo Olayinka, senior guard Ben Davidson, senior guard Amari Lee and junior guard Ethan Erickson all finished 16 points.

Head coach Andy Bronkema is pleased to be with this team advancing in the GLIAC tournament.

"We are we're looking forward to it," Bronkema said. "We want to continue, to find a way to get better every day

that we're playing and find a way to enjoy each other every day and enjoy the hard work that we put in and just keep coming together as a team. It's not easy to be in the final four of your conference tournament and here we are again in the final four I'm proud of that, I'm proud of these guys, but we want to turn the page and get the next one now."

The Bulldogs then traveled to Northern Michigan University's Berry Evans Center, where the GLIAC tournament finals were held. The team faced off against Wayne State on March 9 for a chance to advance to the championship.

In the game, the Bulldogs found themselves down at halftime as the Warriors commanded a 45-36 lead, the team found success in the second half scoring 55 points and holding their opponent to 36 second-half points to win the game with a final score of 91-81 to advance to the championship.

Senior forward Vejas Grazulis led the way offensively, as he scored 26 to help keep Ferris dancing.

The Bulldogs' championship foe was a familiar one, as Ferris faced their archrival Grand Valley for the right to win the GLIAC. Before their championship bout, the Bulldogs and Lakers split the regular season series, which included a loss to Grand Valley just three weeks prior.

Ferris claimed victory over Grand Valley, beating the Lakers 87-76 for a GLIAC title. The victory marked the Bulldogs' fifth GLIAC champi-

onship in seven years.

Davidson expressed his feelings about winning the GLIAC tourney in his final year.

"I've never won the GLIAC tourney before," Davidson said. "So to be able to win it in my final year is an amazing feeling! I'm so proud of everyone on the team for getting it done in Marquette. Getting an automatic bid in the NCAA tournament is something that we are all proud of and being able to beat our rivals in the championship game makes it a little more sweet! I love this team, and now that we are finally all healthy it's awesome that we get to show everyone what we are capable of."

Leading the way for the team in victory against the Lakers were three players off the bench, Erickson with 20 points, Grazulis with 16 points and Lee with 15 points.

Lee talked about what the team will do to have success in the NCAA tournament.

"We must continue to trust the work we put in and trust each other," Lee said. "Basketball is a team sport, and we need everyone on this roster in order to be successful."

The Bulldogs will open their NCAA tournament at the University of Indianapolis' Nicoson Hall to face their interconference opponent Northern Michigan on March 16 with game time set for 7:30 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Okedi Matseka

All GLIAC - 2nd team honoree Dolapo Olayinka leaps over a Wayne State Warriors defender.



Photo courtesy of Ferris Athletics/Sandy Gholston

#21 Ethan Erickson, #0 Dolapo Olayinka, and #35 Reece Hazelton celebrate winning the GLIAC tournament against the Grand Valley Lakers.

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COACHES CORNER: Jake Schumann

Softball coach speaks on his team in his second season behind the bench

Jael Snowden
Sports Reporter

Ferris State softball's season is in full swing, with the team posting a 12-13 record through 25 games played this season. The Bulldogs have yet to have their home opener, which will come on Tuesday, March 19.

In an interview with the Torch, softball bench boss Jake Schumann discussed the team's play so far before they made an 8-4 run in Florida alongside the struggles of a young season.

Q: The team's performance record-wise isn't where you

want it to be, with the team being 4-9, how would you say you guys are preparing for this next stretch of games down in Florida?

A: We have played three weekends already, two down in Tennessee and we are hitting really well, and pitching good enough to be undefeated, to be honest with you. It's just our defenses let us down pretty badly. So we're hoping that the three weekends outside and this week's practice with the nice weather, and then being in Florida for 10 days is going to sure up that part of our game. Just in time for the end of March when we

start GLIAC play.

Q: On that defensive end of the field, are you looking at any player in particular to step up and become a leader on that side of the ball? Or is it just more of a conditioning thing and getting everyone back into game shape?

A: I think we haven't taken a live outdoor rep in practice since October. Being inside an indoor facility isn't conducive to being prepared for a live game. Not to make excuses, but it's a pretty good one. We're gonna practice this weekend down in Orlando. Then we will have all these

games and the ability to take some more balls out in Big Sky so we're hoping these 10 days are gonna fix that for us.

Q: In terms of pitching, what has the team's greatest strength been?

A: Knock on wood, we've been throwing strikes, you know, if you throw strikes, the ball gets put in play and gives us a chance to be successful. We are not giving out free bases a lot. And we got a couple of newcomers that are throwing really well. Sophomore Izzy Regner is throwing great, freshman Ashley Webb took advantage of her oppor-

tunity last week. We have a senior Aryn Gallacher who goes out and does her job and induces ground balls. That's where the defense comes in. We gotta be able to pick up and throw it. But we are doing well, their pitches are doing good, a lot better than we were at this point last year.

Q: Around this time last year, the team was 3-10. Heading into a similar situation, as a reflection on that, how would you say this is a bit different from last year?

A: Well, our schedule is a heck of a lot tougher. This

year we played three defending conference champs and a handful of NCAA regional teams. We're gonna go play the number 10 team in the country, our first game down in Florida. So yeah, it's been a tough schedule so far the first three weekends. But we're young, and that's what I wanted us to go get out and see. I wanted us to be prepared for GLIAC play and a tough schedule is the only way I know how to do that.



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