

WHITE PINE PRESS

We hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may.

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Dennos Museum Hosts Indigenous Peoples' Community Day

Minnie Bardenhagen
Editor-in-Chief

On Oct. 13, the Traverse City District Library and the Dennos Museum at Northwestern Michigan College hosted their annual Indigenous Peoples' Day community event. Families with young children visited the museum for a story and a dance presentation.

Liz Celeste, the Curator of Education and Exhibitions at the Dennos, has helped put on the event since she started working at the museum three years ago.

"I think it's important not just for the kids, but also the parents and the adults... all ages... to come and learn about whose land we're on and about, not just the history, but who still exists in this space," Celeste said, "For the museum to be able to host and have some of the artwork on display that we have in our collection from the Indigenous populations, from this area, from the Great Lakes region, I think it's pretty special for people to see the creative energy."

The Dennos Museum is known for its collection of art by the Inuit, the indigenous peoples of the Northern Arctic. Holding one of the most comprehensive Inuit art collections in the country, the exhibit represents indigenous artists from Alaska, Greenland, and the Canadian Arctic.

Celeste described the collection as: "One

of the largest and most historically complete in the United States, at least... Which is pretty wild and pretty special. It is a special collection."

One storyteller at the event, NMC humanities professor Julieanna Frost, acknowledged the impact the event and similar events have on kids.

"I think it's foundational for young people to be exposed [to] and learn about the various histories in the United States," Frost explained, "To understand the diversity of the United States and how this diversity makes us stronger, better, and builds up communities. I think it's extremely important."

Frost mentioned that NMC and the wider Traverse community have many programs to help educate people about the indigenous population and give resources to the population.

"One of the classes that I teach is Native American history, and I'm really glad that that aspect is part of our curriculum here," said Frost, "Then, of course, NASO, the Native American Student Organization... a lot of people don't know that we have that."

"There are just so many things, but you've gotta be exposed and find out about them. Which sometimes isn't so easy."



Photo credit Minnie Bardenhagen

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Mayoral, City Commission Candidates Address NMC Student Issues Ahead of Nov. 4 Election

Minnie Bardenhagen
Editor-in-Chief

On Nov. 4, two candidates for mayor of Traverse City and five candidates for the city commission will see if they successfully won over the community. The two mayoral candidates trying for a 2-year term are Amy Shamroe, the incumbent mayor, and Tim Werner, who is currently a member of the city commission. The five candidates for the three available seats on the city commission are Lance Boehmer, the leader of an automotive software company who serves on BATA's Board of Directors; Kenneth Funk, who serves as a Traverse City firefighter; Mary Mills, a former office administrator who previously served on Traverse City's Master Plan Leadership Team; Laura Ness, who serves as Chair of the City of Traverse City and Garfield Township Recreational Authority; and Peter Schous, who serves on Empire's Planning Commission. The Nov. ballot will also have three city proposals on it. The first two proposals ask voters to authorize movement of funds to and from the Brown Bridge Trust Fund. The third proposal asks voters to approve the use of an ethics ordinance on all elected and appointed Traverse City officials.

The *White Pine Press* asked each of the candidates what NMC means to them, what message they have for students, and how they will address key issues facing students today. To read the full Q&A, visit our website: whitepinepresstc.com. For more information on early voting, election day voting, poll locations and hours, and voter registration information, you can visit the City of Traverse City's website or Traverse Connect's website.

White Pine Press: What does NMC mean to you, and what does it mean to Traverse City?

Amy Shamroe (mayoral candidate): NMC is a place of education and innovation in our community. It is a place where students exploring their possibilities, whether just out of high school or looking for a positive life change, can find a beginning or new career path. For me, it is also where I work. Being on the non-credit side helping with workforce training at Extended Education and Training has been

really important in helping me understand NMC is truly a place for lifelong learning for everyone in our community, including kids in the College for Kids program and adults who might want to explore a new language or take a pottery class without a degree path. It truly is an asset for the entire region.

Tim Werner (mayoral candidate): To me, NMC means our community values education, young adults, and the future. Too often, Traverse City slips into thinking of NMC as buildings and land, not students who are a vital part of our community today and in the future.

Lance Boehmer: NMC is a cornerstone of Traverse City's identity. It's where our future workforce, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders are built and grow. Beyond education, it's an economic and cultural driver, from the aviation and maritime academies to the arts programs that bring new life to downtown. When NMC thrives, Traverse City thrives.

Kenneth Funk: For me, NMC is an amazing asset to have right in our backyard! Community colleges are a vital component of our education system that provide opportunities to dual-enrolled high school students, non-traditional college students seeking certifications and associate degrees, and also young women and men who cannot or do not want to take on the debt of traditional colleges and universities but still desire the benefits of post-secondary education. I can personally say that I had the unique opportunity to meet with a young man from France, who traveled to Traverse City, specifically to participate in the NMC flight program and achieve his dream of becoming a pilot. How amazing it is that NMC has a world-renowned reputation for its flight program!

Mary Mills: NMC was the foundation of my educational journey. I started here, earned my associate degree, and that opened the door for me to go on and earn my Master's. It gave me not just an education, but confidence, direction, and a real sense of possibility.

For Traverse City, NMC is essential. It provides opportunities for people right here in our community—

whether they're just starting out, changing careers, or coming back to school later in life. It supports our local economy, our workforce, and our future. I'm proud to be an NMC graduate, and I know how much this college means to our community.

Laura Ness: To me, NMC means opportunity. Through its accessible and affordable educational programs, NMC gives students of all ages the chance to learn, gain new skills, and build their futures right here in Traverse City.

For my family, NMC has provided many meaningful opportunities, including engaging summer programs like College for Kids, the NMC Children's Choir, high school dual enrollment credits, art and cultural experiences at the Denno's Museum, and career exploration through NMC's robust academic programs.

Through its many initiatives and strong partnerships, NMC enriches not only Traverse City but our entire region by training healthcare workers, culinary professionals, and Great Lakes Maritime Academy officers; advancing expertise in drone technology; and generating economic opportunity and innovative approaches to protect the Great Lakes through the new Freshwater Research & Innovation Center.

Peter Schous: I feel NMC provides the best opportunity for in-person learning while local students earn their college degrees, which helps keep talent in our local community. In my experience, NMC is dedicated to making Traverse City and our local area a better place to live and work, offering programs that support student success and have a positive impact on the community. The offerings of career and technical training are key for our local businesses as well as new and emerging businesses entering this region.

As a father of seven, NMC provides me the comfort that my children will not have to relocate for higher education and technical skills training. As a local business owner, the customized training and workforce development training are key to ensure this region establishes a year-round economy that can support future generations to come.

Visit whitepinepresstc.com for the full Q&A.

From left to right: Peter Schous, Lance Boehmer, Kenneth Funk, Amy Shamroe, Laura Ness, Mary Mills, Tim Werner

Photos courtesy of campaign and government websites



“We See You, We Care”

NMC Students and Staff Walk to End Period Poverty in Kenya

Eily Knight
Staff Writer

Photo credit Keiara Pettengill

Sixty-five percent of women across Kenya have no access to period pads, according to Amref Health Africa. And so, on Oct. 11, sporting matching red backpacks, more than 70 collective NMC staff, students, and faculty walked four miles around Boardman Lake, raising approximately \$7,000 in funds to provide women and girls in Kenya with menstrual pads through PadMad. Access to safe pads is critical in keeping Kenyan girls in school, which will lead them to greater opportunities without risking their vaginal health or prostituting themselves. The walk shows them that there are people across the world in their corner fighting for them, to encourage them to keep fighting for themselves.

“When I heard about this, I was intrigued and thought, ‘maybe we could do something here at NMC.’” Having just walked around Boardman Lake himself, Jim Bensley, NMC Director of International Services and Learning, proposed a walk in solidarity and support of ending period poverty in Kenya in conjunction with PadMad.

According to their website, PadMad aims to eliminate period poverty and promote dignity for marginalized women in Kenya. The non-profit not only provides these women with a 10-pack of reusable pads designed to last up to five years, but also employs them to manufacture the pads, which helps end the cycle of poverty. The biodegradable cotton pads are environmentally friendly, with 77 million single-use pads in landfills avoided and 1.17kg of carbon emissions prevented.

Madhvi Dalal, professional pharmacist, yoga instructor, and PadMad’s CEO and founder, moved from the UK to Kenya to teach students yoga and dance. While visiting the slums, she noticed a huge disproportion of severe vaginal and uterine infections due to the lack of access to safe period products.

“They wouldn’t use a ‘product,’ so to speak,” Dalal said. Girls and women of menstrual age in Kenya are often forced to use unsanitary and unsafe substitutes for pads. This includes mattress pieces, cow or elephant dung, leaves, and even other women’s discarded, blood-covered pads.

Even if they are fortunate enough to have access to an education, without access to sanitary pads, girls have no choice but to stay home during their periods, causing them to miss up to five days of school per month. To avoid being absent from school, many girls resort to transactional sex with their teachers to get one pad. Sometimes two, depending on the quality of the sex. This causes many girls to contract HIV, a very prevalent STI in Kenya, which has no cure according to the National Institutes of Health.

“These girls will do anything, anything to stay in school because it’s their only way to break poverty—to get an education,” said Tanja

Wittrock. Wittrock is a retired large animal veterinarian, NMC biology and anatomy/physiology instructor, and co-founder of Uplift Travel, the organization hosting Dalal’s visit and facilitating the NMC student trip to Kenya in May.

“It feels so hard to do anything,” Jayden Eskew, an NMC world cultures student at the walk, expressed. “But even if you do the smallest thing like this, where you come with your friends and show up for the community, you’re making a difference.”

Many other students expressed a similar sentiment, like Dakota Mummey, who added, “If we don’t help each other, then how would we get anywhere?”

Although the walk fundraised more than \$7,000 for PadMad, the biggest impact of the event is to show these girls that people across the world are seeing their struggles and fighting for them, as stated by Wittrock and Dalal. The red backpacks were not only a fashion bonus with extra snacks and water inside for walkers, but they also showcased solidarity. They express to these marginalized women that they are seen and heard, which empowers and gives them hope for the future.

Wittrock recalled a conversation she had with a Kenyan girl one night, who said, “Many tourists come, and maybe in their buses, they take some pictures of us. But they don’t see us. You see us. You see me.”

To drive this point home, a volunteer was asked to collect video messages from people participating in the walk to send to the women and girls in Kenya. The messages range from anticipation of saying hello in person on the upcoming student trip to Kenya in May, school advice, and most importantly, sentiments of encouragement and empowerment, which were displayed by a pair of girls who cheered, “Woman to woman, we see you, and we care.”

As a morale booster for walkers, the multicultural club also implemented a series of activities halfway through the walk, boosted by 2010s dance-pop. These competitive but fun games included a three-legged race and an egg-and-spoon walk challenge.

Besides the walk, during her visit, Dalal



also worked with students at NMC in classes, including Introduction to Social Work, World Cultures, and Gender and Society, to “offer a unique opportunity for students to engage with real-world issues,” said Bensley. Not only does this give students a break from typical bookwork, but it also allows them to speak directly to a passionate expert who is actively working to overcome global issues.

Dalal also spent time interacting with the Traverse City community as a whole, including visiting local high school students, Rotary communities, and hosting an event at a local winery.

“It’s just been an incredible week,” Dalal stated, “and most importantly, to see how the community has come together and really doing... They’re so engaged. I’ve loved it.”

She expressed that the walk would, hopefully, return next year for those who are interested in participating again and to give those who missed it a chance to support a good cause.

For just \$8, the price of a standard Starbucks coffee,

a period pad kit can be sponsored through PadMad’s website (padmadkenya.com), which can change the course of a girl’s life by protecting their health and education. More information on the cause can be found by contacting Jim Bensley’s office or scanning the QR code on posters about the walk, which can be found on bulletin boards around campus.



DO YOU HAVE A PERIOD?

Undergraduate student and faculty from NMC* are running a large-scale survey on individuals’ access to period products in Northern Michigan. Please consider briefly sharing your experiences and contributing to women’s health research in the region.



The survey link can also be accessed at the following web address:

<https://www.smartsurvey.com/s/periodmichigan/>
QUESTIONS? CONTACT RESEARCHER FROM *NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE AT ZBURKS@NMC.EDU

Periods of Change

Madhvi Dalal's Fight Against Period Poverty

Isabelle Plamondon Staff Writer “My superpower,” Madhvi Dalal told a group of students on the International Affairs Forum Student Leadership Team (STL) on Oct. 10, “is just to try—to have the courage to try.”

The group of students fell silent for a moment, taking in the quiet confidence behind her words. Dalal wasn't there to lecture about entrepreneurship or charity; she was there to talk about courage—the kind that led her from a pharmacy in Wales to the classrooms of Kenya, where a conversation about health education sparked a grassroots movement called PadMad.

This group interview, as well as the independent interview with Dalal and the *White Pine Press*, happened as a result of the efforts of NMC's International Affairs Forum (IAF), the college's flagship public-dialogue series on global issues. Since 1994, IAF has brought diplomats, authors, policy experts, and social innovators to northern Michigan to stimulate local engagement with worldwide challenges.

Dalal also spoke at the Oct. 8 screening of *Powerful Women* and joined the Oct. 11 “Walk to End Period Poverty in Kenya,” where the pads made with PadMad, as well as handcrafted Kenyan Jewelry, were being sold. You can find *White Pine Press* coverage of the walk on page four. With 71 participants walking and the sales of pads and jewelry, they raised over \$7,000—enough to provide reusable pads to more than 700 girls for six years.

When Dalal left her career as a pharmacist in Wales and moved to Kenya, she wasn't chasing a mission—she was chasing an adventure.

Once in Kenya, she began teaching yoga and dance classes and soon stumbled into menstrual health education after discovering why her students would periodically miss their classes.

In an interview with Right for Education, Dalal recalled learning that many girls were missing school for lack of menstrual products—resorting to “pieces of mattress foam, leaves, or unhygienic cloths.” That realization propelled her into founding PadMad, a social enterprise tackling

period poverty with locally made reusable sanitary pads and community-based education.

What started as a community sewing initiative became a registered enterprise producing certified reusable pads that meet Kenya Bureau of Standards guidelines—a policy milestone Dalal helped shape herself.

“The idea of making something standard with minimum quality requirements,” she explained, “was to make sure we weren't creating another problem, like infections from unsafe materials.”

In The Samburu Project's May 2024 spotlight, PadMad was praised for creating a “ripple effect of empowerment,” where girls gain confidence, attend school regularly, and women gain employment through local textile work. She said, “The majority of women I work with are single mothers, but there's a sisterhood that forms. Whether they have little or much, they share.”

However, the ripple effects of PadMad go beyond menstrual health. “It's not just about menstrual health,” Dalal said. “It's about dignity—being able to carry yourself through it by yourself.” Her work, rooted in compassion and cultural understanding, has reshaped how communities view not only menstruation, but also empowerment itself.

Dalal learned early that talking about menstruation wasn't just about access; it was about conversation. “Now I know that taboo really wasn't a taboo,” she said, “It's just that people don't talk about it.”

She also emphasized that change begins at home: “We encourage every father, every mother, every sibling to talk about it at home. That's the safety net. That's where you should feel comfortable asking questions.”

Dalal recognizes that menstrual inequality doesn't exist in isolation. She stated, “If there's a systemic problem, we bring in partners.” She further explained, “For example, if they don't have water, we work with organizations that bring in water solutions.”

This approach further reflects the “systems change”

philosophy she describes in her Medium essay titled ‘Four Lessons from the Frontlines of Period Poverty in Kenya,’ that meaningful impact comes from co-creating dignity, not dependence.

When asked about success, Dalal doesn't cite figures or findings. “The impact really isn't in the numbers,” she told the IAF student group, “it's in how I've impacted those people.”

She recalled visiting a kindergarten class in a Nairobi slum where the teacher asked what the children were grateful for. She recalled them saying things like “I'm happy the sun is shining,” or “I'm happy my parents brought me to school.”

“These were children living in real poverty,” she said softly, “yet their joy was so profound.” She then compared that moment to the rest of the world and said, “That should be our gratitude. We forget the little things that bring us joy.”

When asked what advice she'd offer young social entrepreneurs, Dalal said, “Dignity is universal. Whatever you're promoting, make sure that the individual can carry themselves through it, by themselves.” She clarified, “Independence rather than interdependence—that's dignity.”

Dalal's aforementioned superpower has touched hundreds of communities and thousands of girls and women. In the end, her greatest impact may be inspiring others to find that same courage in themselves.

“As much as you can refine your ego with all the things you've done,” she said quietly, “what really matters is how many people you've touched, and how you want to be remembered.”

Photo by Keiara Pettengill



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What's New at No Kings Day 2.0?

Minnie Bardenhagen
Editor-in-Chief

On Saturday, Oct. 18, organized mass protests against the Trump Administration took place across the country, including at Traverse City's Civic Center park, in the second round of 'No Kings Day.' The first No Kings Day occurred in June on the same day that President Trump hosted a military parade in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the US military. It also coincided with Trump's birthday.

Inspired/prompted by mass government firings, the beginnings of mass deportation efforts, and several other controversial moves by the Trump Administration, the first No Kings Day brought out more than five million protestors, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, one of the event's organizers. Since then, the Trump Administration has taken more controversial actions to enact its agenda, such as sending National Guard troops into Los Angeles, the nation's capital, and Chicago, and striking Venezuelan boats, which President Trump alleged were carrying drugs toward the United States. This time around, the events garnered approximately seven million people nationwide, according to the organizers, including several thousand who attended the rally in Traverse City.

Protestors at the Civic Center braved a light fall rain and voiced their opposition to the Trump Administration with signs, costumes, speakers, and music.

Costumes ranged from inflatable sharks to outfits referencing popular movies and shows. One attendee dressed as Gandalf from The Lord of the Rings, and held a sign on their staff that read "you shall not rule." Several signs referenced the new season of Southpark, which ruthlessly joked about Trump and his administration.

Signs held a variety of messages. Many denounced Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), congressional leaders, the deployment of National Guard troops into American cities, and the support the administration has shown Israel in its war in Gaza. One cardboard sign adorned with yellow golf balls read "balls for the members of Congress who lost theirs."

A recurring symbol in both signs and costumes was the frog. Sally Backofen and Annie Longe, two attendees with frog headbands, explained that the idea of protesting in frog costumes originated in Portland, Oregon. After President Trump had described Portland as overrun by "ANTIFA thugs" and "burning to the ground," protesters in the city set out to prove him wrong by peacefully protesting in inflatable frog costumes. The frog and inflatable costumes have since become a nationwide phenomenon in anti-Trump protests.

Both Backofen and Longe attended the first No Kings Day rally in June, and they shared that their distaste for the administration's actions has not quelled since then. They cited the attacks on Caribbean ships and the sometimes violent nature of ICE raids as concerns.

"For me, it's just the absolute power grab that continues, increasingly, day by day," Backofen explained, "I just think that we've really reached a tipping point where, if the Supreme Court doesn't stop this... I think we're there, you know?"

Longe echoed a similar sentiment, "[Trump is] continuing to make decisions that are congressional, Congress's decisions. He's making autocratic decisions, such as how we allocate funds, how we use money."

Frog costumes weren't the only method rally-goers chose to prove their peace. NMC student Amira Fakir spent her time at the protest making balloon animals for the young children in attendance.

"I was told that all these crazy Republicans and radicals and whatever keep on saying that we're causing problems, and we're dangerous. Why not make balloon animals, to be like, 'Is this really threatening? It's a balloon animal.'"

Fakir had attended previous protests against the Trump Administration. This time, however, Fakir was grappling with the personal effects the administration's immigration agenda had on her immigrant family members.

"My family came to America for freedom and for safety, and yet, here we are. They had to leave America for freedom and for safety. And I think that's a shame."

The Civic Center, which is approximately a five-minute walk from NMC's main campus, was an easy place for interested students to access compared to the Governmental Center, where the previous No Kings Day took place. An NMC student, who asked to remain anonymous, saw the protest as an accessible opportunity.

"This is my first protest at all... I knew this was happening, and I wanted to come and show my... distaste for the current president and the current government," the student explained, "Seeing all the authoritarian policies he tried to implement... It's my chance to say, 'Hey, I don't like this kind of thing.'"

Another student, who wished to be referred to as Leah, did not attend the first No Kings Day protest, but decided to attend the second one after she became increasingly aware of the actions of the Trump Administration.

"I've been paying closer attention because everything has been escalating so much. I think one of the big things for me is probably the ICE raids."

After an hour of music and speakers, including Betty Coffia, a Michigan State Representative from the 103rd district, a crowd of protestors moved to the US-31 intersection next to NMC's main campus. Protestors held up their signs at the passing cars, some of which honked with approval as they drove by.



Photo credit Jacob Dodson

Violent Crime to Car Crashes

How Traverse City Grapples With Public Safety Issues

Jace Dunlap
Staff Writer

With the July 26 Walmart stabbing making national headlines, questions about public safety may naturally occur in the heads of Traverse City residents, who are used to a relatively quiet city in terms of violent crime. In July, 42-year-old Bradford James Gille entered the Traverse City Walmart and left at gunpoint after stabbing 11 other shoppers. He was held on a \$1 million bond and was charged with 11 counts of assault and terrorism after pleading not guilty. Though many of the victims sustained potentially fatal wounds, all 11 survived the egregious act of violence.

After the attack, the Traverse City community tried to come together, helping those affected. NMC opened its campus for three days after the attack, offering mental health support for those affected or anyone needing help. Prosecutor Noelle Moeggenberg advocated for Gilles to be tried with terrorism because of the drastic effect the attack had on the wider Traverse City area. Governor Gretchen Whitmer took to X to comment on her sympathies to the community, “I’m in touch with law enforcement about the horrible news out of Traverse City. Our thoughts are with the victims and the community reeling from this brutal act of violence. I am grateful to the first responders for their swift response to apprehend the suspect.”

Regardless of how well handled a community attack is, there will always be a mark left on the victims and their families. This mark, however, extends to the entire Traverse City community. Charlie Lantz, a lifelong resident of Traverse City and first-year student at NMC, commented on the public safety concern, “When I was a child, growing up in Traverse City seemed relatively safe... The older I have gotten the more Traverse City changes and the more I realized I do not have the same sense of safety I did back then, not because I didn’t know what to look for but because now I have seen and experienced what can happen even in a ‘safe, small town’.” Even with these changes in safety concern Lantz recognizes that at NMC he feels significantly safer on campus compared to walking around town or in high school, “On many occasions during the day or at night walking around town is not safe for younger students and even younger looking people.”

The Pew Research Center Reports that six-in-10 U.S. adults believe that violent crime rate reduction needs to be a top priority for the President and Congress. However, in the FBI’s annual report in 2022, all categories of violent crime made up about 16% of

national crimes, where vehicle accidents by themselves made up 12%, making it the highest percentage in the individual category apart from theft.

Every summer, Traverse City hosts the National Cherry Festival, bringing people from all over the world to come and experience Traverse City cherries. While many find this festival to be a fun and exciting event, many locals dread it because of the traffic caused by tourism. One of Grand Traverse County Sheriff Michael Shea’s biggest concerns right now is automotive safety, and utilizing their units to be able to monitor hotspots for public safety. Shea commented on safety regarding tourism, saying, “I don’t think a high amount of crime comes from tourists or tourism itself, but it does cause issues with traffic, crashes, and the number of people that move into the area.”

According to a 2024 Statewide Traffic Crash Data Year-End Report by the Michigan State Police, 3,454 car crashes occurred in Grand Traverse County. Ten of these crashes were fatal, and nearly 3,000 of them caused property damage.

“That said, tourism means additional people, which also equates to additional potential problems.” Shea also recognized that right now, mass casualty accidents all over the nation have Americans on high alert, and he feels that this can cause lots of concern for people. “As our population increases, so do the problems associated with that increase. Unfortunately, crime is one of those problems.”

Looking from a pedestrian point of view, Lantz added about Cherry Festival, “During the tourism season, going downtown is usually off the table... Between crazy traffic and drivers making driving or walking anywhere seem almost impossible due to the safety hazard of bad drivers who can’t navigate the streets, to locals who get such bad road rage due to the insane amount of traffic, the roads become what seems like more of a game of chicken than the ability to safely travel.”

Traverse City has a moderate crime rate, consistent with surrounding areas. However, regardless of statistics, violent crimes will make people uneasy, and for a smaller town like Traverse City, these are much more sparing compared to other places in Michigan. Flint and Detroit have some of the highest crime rates in Michigan, and unfortunately, many of these crimes are desensitized, leaving families of the victims at a loss. Due to these rates of crime and the lack of wealth in many cities, communities are unable to heal.

ADVERTISEMENT

Passion for helping students succeed drives GVSU’s Fousset

Michele Coffill
Grand Valley State University

Grand Valley State University students in Traverse City are

in a new location that offers a more vibrant campus experience, close access to resources and connections.

GVSU is among five universities that offer classes in partnership with Northwestern Michigan College. All five had operated from NMC’s University Center, near Boardman Lake in Traverse City. The partners celebrated their new location in the Beckett Building on NMC’s Front Street Campus on September 23.

One of those connections is Jessie Fousset, who serves as GVSU’s assistant director of students - Northern Michigan Region. Fousset said the move to the Front Street Campus has helped strengthen the relationship between Grand Valley and NMC, adding that students benefit by being closer to shared institutional resources.

“Being here on campus is a huge win for students at NMC who want to enroll in GVSU degree programs,” Fousset said. “The Beckett Building has been updated to feature classrooms with state-of-the-art technology, labs and collaborative spaces.”



Jessie Fousset

Since 1995, more than 3,000 Northern Michigan students have earned Grand Valley degrees in Traverse City.

Whether transfer students, adult learners or new-to-college students, Fousset said Grand Valley can offer students what they are

seeking: a cost-effective, timely academic path that can lead to a career in Northern Michigan.

“We have degrees designed for students with an associate’s degree who want to complete a bachelor’s degree, as well as certificates in business fundamentals, leadership and other valuable credentials,” she said.

Fousset’s own path started at the University of Tampa, where she served in the student life office. From there, she worked in fundraising and helped plan large-scale events for a Kansas

City pediatric charity that provides medical grants to help children’s families who may struggle to afford medical equipment, care or travel-related costs.

After earning a master’s degree in social justice and education at the University College of London’s Institute of Education, she moved to Traverse City with a goal of returning to work in higher education.

“I’m enthusiastic about supporting students and am open to meeting with anyone interested in completing a bachelor’s degree in Northern Michigan,” Fousset said.

Fousset is available to meet with students virtually or in-person at the Beckett Building on NMC’s Front Street Campus. Connect with her at foussetj@gvsu.edu.

The pathway to your future in Northern Michigan

Whether you are an adult student returning to school, a transfer student seeking a bachelor’s degree, or a graduate student, Grand Valley has the programming and support you need to get you to where you want to be. Learn more at gvsu.edu/traverse.

The Soundtrack to Opposition

How Music Shapes Protests

Sydney Boettcher
Staff Writer

I've long been fascinated by protest music. Art has always been our way of keeping tabs on the heartbeat of society, and that's especially true with music. Songs like "What's Going On" by Marvin Gaye and "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival capture the anti-war movement of the '60s and '70s. Going back even further, "Which Side Are You On?" archives the labor struggles of coal miners in the 1930s. After nearly 90 years, that song is still covered and performed by artists like Tom Morello, Willi Carlisle, and Dropkick Murphys. These songs resonate with people and drive them to political action; I wanted to know why.

On Oct. 18, people across America marched in response to the Trump administration's current actions. At the No Kings rally at the Traverse City Civic Center I asked people what their favorite protest songs were and why, what protesting meant to them, and how music fit into that.

When I first got there, the crowd was massive, much bigger than I expected. I didn't know where to start. Then, someone caught my eye: an older man in a kilt carrying a Bodhrán drum.

A Bodhrán drum is an Irish drum, also called the 'poor man's tambourine,' as it shares visual similarities with the instrument, and was originally built from farm tools. The Bodhrán was popular in the 18th century, but gained a massive modern resurgence after Seamus O'Kane altered the design and began mass-producing it.

The man's name was Rob, and his favorite protest song was "For What It's Worth" by Bruce Springsteen. Rob told me that he liked it because it was still relevant to what was happening today. Rob also recommended anything by Joan Baez.

Shortly after I arrived, the crowd started moving from the Civic Center to the corner of Fair Street and E Front Street, just outside of the NMC campus. I followed the protesters for a while, just watching. Some people were playing music from speakers: I heard Bob Dylan, Jesse Welles, and a few others; some people were chanting into microphones, keeping the energy up.

One person, Ben, was playing a Djembe (pronounced Jem-bay), a drum originating from West Africa. Its origins can be traced to the Mandinka caste of blacksmiths, and its spread is directly connected to the Mandinka diaspora during the first millennium.

Ben told me, "music is a way to bring people together, keep people motivated, [and] keep the rhythm going." He said he had brought the Djembe to "make some noise." His favorite protest songs were "War Pigs" by Black Sabbath and "With God on Our Side" by Bob Dylan.

Two women I spoke to, Kelly & Kris, were ringing cowbells. It wasn't quite music, but it was close enough. Kris mentioned "Stars and Stripes" by Eminem. She had listened to it earlier today before the protest. She said, "It helps get you pumped up."

While we were talking, Kris mentioned some counterprotesters who had driven by earlier, and voiced her support for them and their actions. "This is democracy, you're free to believe in what you want, and so am I."

One woman I spoke to, who has chosen to remain anonymous, said something that really interested me. She told me that she had an aunt who grew up in Nazi Germany, and how her father was "disappeared" by the Gestapo.

She also mentioned her father, who fought at the end of WW2, "You knew he saw some shit because he wouldn't talk about it. Not like he couldn't, but like he would always change the subject."

She said that she was out here protesting today because she was afraid America was descending into that same dark place her aunt had grown up in.

She described herself as fairly new to protesting. "I wasn't really political until my kids went to college. That's when I got aware."

Her first protest was the 'Hands Off' protest, a nationwide one-day movement similar to 'No Kings'. She said that she "felt like I was doing something."

"There's power in numbers... It's like pennies. A few of them don't mean much, but they feel a lot bigger when there's a whole jar of them."

Music is the only language everyone on Earth can understand. It brings people together in ways few other things can. It evokes powerful emotions in the people it resonates with, and that is what makes it so potent as a vehicle for political messaging. Something about it hijacks a part of our brain and taps into something primordial. One man I spoke to, Alec, called it "the heartbeat of our species." He compared it to the rhythm of our mother's heartbeat, the first thing we all hear.



Photo credit Minnie Bardenhagen