

WHITE PINE PRESS

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

Julia Belden
Staff Writer

It's the ultimate sunblock.

On Monday, Apr 8, the continental U.S. experienced a rare event: a total solar eclipse. Millions flocked to the path of totality, stretching from Texas to Maine, to witness the spectacle of the moon blocking out the sun.

Although Northern Michigan was outside of the path of totality, excitement about the event was palpable. Hundreds of posts and comments on the "Overheard in Traverse City" Facebook page sought information on where to find eclipse safety glasses, with several jokesters offering to "reschedule" the cosmic event for those who couldn't acquire the protective eyewear in time.

In Elk Rapids, dozens of eager eclipse viewers sat in the grass outside of Art & Connection, a local nonprofit community center. Kids (and many adults) participated in space-based craft activities as the moon slowly made its way across the surface of the sun.

According to *USA Today's* eclipse tracker, Northern Michigan experienced a partial eclipse that peaked at 3:12pm with 87.2% of the sun covered by the moon. The effects were noticeable: the temperature dropped slightly and a hint of unnatural darkness tinted the sky.

Like many onlookers, NMC student Katie Koester was impressed by the celestial show, calling it a moment of "pure wonder." Upon learning the next total eclipse crossing the U.S. won't be until 2045, she did a quick calculation and cringed.

"I'll be 40 years old then! That's terrifying," she laughed.

While most of us were content to sit back and enjoy the eclipse, scientists from around the country scrambled to gather data during the brief moment of totality. NMC Astronomy Instructor Dr. Gerald Dobek joined a line of astronomers and space photographers stationed strategically along the eclipse's path. The goal? Capturing enough images of the eclipse to stitch together, creating an eclipse



"megamovie" which would provide a never-before-seen look at the sun's outer atmosphere, called the corona.

"From the 2017 [total solar eclipse], we were looking to see if we could get greater detail of the corona down close to the surface area of the sun," said Dobek. "The only time we can get a good look at the corona is during a total solar eclipse."

The moon is just the right size to fit snugly over the bright orb of the sun, allowing scientists like Dobek to take detailed photographs of the corona that even spacecraft are unable to achieve.

"What we've found, especially near the polar regions, [the corona] comes out as filaments, just like hairs on your head," Dobek continued. "Now what we'd like to do is get further evidence on how that forms."

Dobek was originally slated to be stationed in Texas for the NASA-sponsored research project, but was re-routed to a park in Findlay, Ohio due to poor weather conditions in the Lone Star State. Over 1000 people flooded the area as he snapped solar photos during the 3 minute and 42 second totality.

"The temperature dropped 10 degrees" and street lamps turned on during the few minutes of darkness, Dobek said. He's happy with the photos he took, one of which features the coronal filaments erupting from the sun's south pole (at approximately the seven o'clock position—the sun is tilted on its axis).

"The science turned out really, really well," Dobek said. Once the eclipse megamovie is complete, it will be available for the public to watch at EclipseMegaMovie.org. Traverse City residents looking for some "extra space" in their lives can tune into Z93 Monday mornings at 7:50am to listen to Dr. Dobek talks about all things astronomy. NMC's Rogers Observatory also hosts public events and viewings on the first Friday of every month: visit GTastro.org for details.

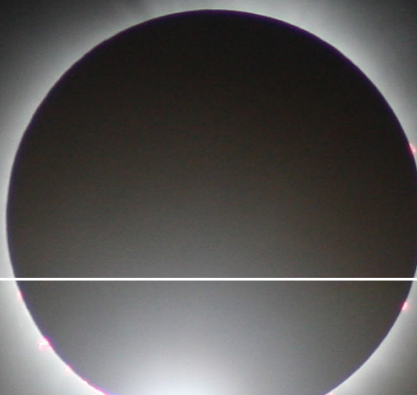


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NMC News in Brief

NMC Board of Trustees Correction

In the February 29 edition of the *White Pine Press*, we stated that the NMC Board of Trustees held an unrecorded meeting to select their new member: Bill Marsh. To correct our previous statement, it is within the Board's right to not record special meetings. A notice of the meeting was published at this blog post: <https://blogs.nmc.edu/?p=153015>. The link within this blog post that originally redirected to the PDF of the notice of the hearing, still leads to an error page on NMC's website.

White Pine Press Wins 15 Awards

Staff of the paper won 15 awards (including 5 first-place awards) at the Michigan Community College Press Association ceremony on April 6 for coverage published between March 1, 2023, and February 29, 2024. In all, 9 different students won awards.

- Julia Belden won first place for her Personality Profile on NMC alum Dr. Annie Kritcher; third place for her In-Depth Reporting on NMC's preparedness for an active shooter situation on campus, and honorable mention for her News Story on NMC's campus WiFi hurdles.
- Gabbi Chavarria won first place for her In-

Depth Reporting on NMC hiring a third-party hiring firm, and honorable mention for her Personality Profile on the women who feed Traverse City.

- Roberto Cuadra won first place for his Sports Feature Story (Division II) on Miguel Cabrera.
- Deanna Luton won first place for her Feature Story on homelessness in Traverse City.
- The *White Pine Press* staff won first place in the General Excellence category (Division II); shared second place for Front Page Design, and honorable mention for Overall Newspaper Design.
- Emma Marion and Jacob Pszczolkowski shared second place for Front Page Design.
- Pszczolkowski won second place for Inside Page Design.
- Aidan Pool won second place for his Sports Feature Story (Division II) on gender equity in sports.
- Eli Stallman won third place for his Column on taking romance slow.
- Nathan Neste won honorable mention for his Photo Essay on a demonstration for Middle East peace.



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White Pine Press is Hiring

Are you a writer, editor, page designer, ad salesperson, or photographer? Looking for a job?

The *White Pine Press* would like to offer you the opportunity to join our staff. The *White Pine Press* is a bi-weekly newspaper published during the NMC school year that offers real-world experience while you do what you love. And we pay!

If you would like to learn more, contact faculty adviser Jacob Wheeler at jwheeler@nmc.edu or editor-in-chief Emma Marion at emarion@nmc.edu.

Looking for more *White Pine Press* stories? Find the latest issues of the *White Pine Press* and archives of our entire history online at whitepinepresstc.com. You can also connect with us on social media:

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The *White Pine Press* welcomes comments, suggestions, ideas for news stories and calendar items.

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Looking Back:

White Pine Press Celebrates 40 Years

Jacob Wheeler
Faculty Adviser

This newspaper you hold in your hands (or are reading on our website, WhitePinePressTC.com) represents 40 years of hard work, ink-stained hands, late nights writing, friendships formed, and devotion to cover important topics that affect our NMC community.

Following the demise of its predecessor, the *Nor'Wester* in the early 1960s, faculty adviser Marilyn Jaquish guided the resurrection of campus journalism, and the *White Pine Press* was born during the 1983-84 school year. According to the book *Northwestern Michigan College: The Second Twenty Years*, the paper quickly became a standard campus feature, regularly winning awards at college journalism conferences. Some things don't change much. Our team continues to win awards today: we won 15 awards (including 5 for first place) at the Michigan Community College Press Association ceremony at Central Michigan University on April 6.

Some things change a lot: In 1983, the year Jaquish and her team launched the *White Pine Press*, the Challenger space shuttle made a successful voyage with the first American woman astronaut aboard; gas generally cost \$1 per gallon; crack cocaine was developed in the Bahamas; *Return of the Jedi* was the number one grossing film at the box office, and "Every Breath You Take" by the Police—on brand-new compact discs—hit number one on the charts.

These days, the Mars Rover transmits images to Earth from that faraway and exotic planet, and everyone with an iPhone or tablet can view them at home; we talk about reaching peak oil in our lifetime; Fentanyl is the drug killer; *Barbie* was the top grossing film of 2023, and Taylor Swift and her music dominate streaming platforms.

"The *White Pine Press* started out of a filing cabinet kept in a hallway in what is now Scholars Hall [back when] we had no computers," Jaquish told the newspaper staff in 2008 for the 25th-anniversary edition. She remained as faculty adviser until 2004. "A group of students with quite a force on campus had come to me wanting to start a newspaper, [despite the fact that] no one had real journalism experience." One of these students was then Student Government Association president and *NMC Magazine* writer Jimi Lee Haswell—a young woman whom Jaquish described as "six feet tall and very persuasive"—who became the founder and first Editor-in-Chief of the *White Pine Press*.

Haswell's late mother, Lois Golightly, a rabble-rouser who brought Judy Chicago's boundary-pushing exhibit "Birth Project" to NMC's campus in 1986, was a regular columnist in the early years of the *White Pine Press*. Golightly's column, "The Feminist Forum" ran from December 1983 to January 1986, and provided an expression of women's concerns worldwide. We covered Golightly's impact on Traverse City in a December 2021 story.

Slowly but surely, technology came to the newsroom. The *White Pine Press* got its first Macintosh computers in 1986. Initially a monthly newspaper in its first year, the *White Pine Press* increased to a bi-weekly schedule through the '80s and '90s. The student-run newspaper even published weekly for several years when NMC's enrollment soared following the economic recession of 2008-09. Between 2013-2019 we published six or seven times each semester, and have settled on five editions each semester since the pandemic.

Through it all, our catchy motto, "We hew to the line; let the chips fall where they may" has stuck. "I have always loved that idea that we journalists do what is right and necessary—come what may," said 1994-95 News Editor Annie Heitjan. Jaquish remembered the original newspaper staff had a contest to decide on the motto. "We urged a lot of people—faculty included—to give us slogan ideas. I just remember by consensus that that one best expressed what we wanted to happen with this publication."

Four decades later, the motto remains in the masthead of the paper you're holding.

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NMC Needs Room to Grow: How NMC's Master Plan Falls Short

Tadd Kaiser
Staff Writer

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is in trouble. The hurdles the college faces are economic, academic and social. Perhaps even existential.

As reported previously in the *White Pine Press*, NMC is engaged in an ongoing effort to create a new master plan for the school, which could include renovating and expanding its facilities through a redesign of the main campus. These proposals—which include the construction of a new dormitory and apartments, renovation of the Osterlin building, and the consolidation of University Center partner programs onto the main campus—should not be taken lightly. They have real implications for the future of the campus with regard to its logistical function, economic sustainability, and collegiate identity.

Housing and parking: two sides of the same coin

An important objection raised at a master plan community workshop in December was the issue of parking. The creation of a new dormitory and the potential migration of University Center partners onto the main campus both necessitate sufficient parking to accommodate these changes. Parking space is already limited on campus, and this proposal could exacerbate the problem.

It seems like a paradox to suggest that there is a need for more student housing on campus when enrollment numbers are at their lowest, although this may be an intelligent investment. Many students are discouraged from attending school at NMC because the price of housing in Traverse City makes living in the same city in which they attend school unaffordable. Still, the accuracy of the information suggested at the December meeting that there is a definite need for more student housing is questionable. The school has conducted no formal study on the availability of housing at NMC.

Jacob Dodson, a current resident of East Hall, said there are many empty rooms in his dormitory. Additionally, the current housing system is rather insecure. It is April, and the application process for summer term housing that begins early next month has not even begun.

“It doesn’t open until mid-April, and if I don’t get approved for housing for next month, I’d be homeless,” he said. That leaves students just a few short weeks to find housing on campus. This is the economic reality facing students, and no strategic initiative for increasing enrollment can be an effective one without understanding the essential needs of students that attend.

One use proposed by consulting firm TowerPinkster for the 55-acre campus drive property is a parking structure. To some students, like Emma Blach, this land seems more valuable for its walking trails and fresh air.

NMC fellow Ann Rogers wholeheartedly shares that view. Although Rogers thinks the land is inherently valuable as an outdoor recreation area for the community, she thinks the campus drive property could also be put to use for outdoor education.

“There is a huge need for more education in building resilience—subjects like renewable energy training, and environmental science training. I would love to see NMC be the leader, the shining light, if you will, for this northwest corner of Michigan,” she wrote. Rogers is part of a neighborhood organization working to protect the acreage. They call themselves the “Base of Old Mission.” When she was young, the land NMC owns was still a dense forest. She thinks clearing part of the land for use as a parking lot or other facilities is unwise. “The climate crisis is accelerating with temperatures the highest ever,” she said. “Mitigation is needed locally with trees providing the cooling needed.”

More athletics on campus?

One may wonder whether NMC has any other outdoor recreational or athletic areas available to the student body. It does, but these are very limited—a short disc-golf course, a small basketball court, and a large field next to a decrepit baseball diamond known around campus as “the green space”, located just behind North Hall. None of the proposals presented by TowerPinkster at the December workshop for improvements to the campus include any plans for the development of “the green space”, despite the fact that the college aims to create a “more vibrant” main campus.

All in all, proper space for outdoor athletic field programs is a weak, and otherwise nonexistent, part of NMC’s offerings that could be left entirely excluded from the new master plan. NMC has not one single intramural sports team, in part because the college has no real athletic field or stadium. TC Central High School across campus drive has one, though no arrangement exists for sharing its use. The two campuses are both organizationally and physically segregated.

When prospective students think about where they will attend college, many are attracted by the strength of athletic programs and facilities a college offers. Athletes are a major constituent of the best colleges and universities across the country. So, why not ours? As interest in NMC’s diverse and exceptionally unique programs grow, so, too, will students’ interest in our campus. These factors are on many student’s minds when they make a decision whether to attend our local college, or go elsewhere for an education. It’s not just athletes, but students, as a whole. Students like to attend athletic events. They add excitement and a profound joy for many that touches the heart of what, in their minds, the college experience should be.

While NMC pays more attention to its main campus housing in the interest of meeting

students’ needs, less has been made of the infrastructural problems these changes could eventually create and these pre-existing athletic deficits. If the college decides to prioritize its space and budget for housing and other redesigns that could potentially encroach on “the green space”, the ability the college may have to adjust to demand for parking may become limited. Despite assurances by Brandon List of TowerPinkster that there are no present plans for development of the “green space”, the college may be forced to eye it for development of new parking structures in the future.

The suggestion that the new dormitory be built on the site of the existing Dogwood parking lot is an indication that NMC may be acting only with a mind to increase enrollment numbers that are down at present, without regard for how the need for parking may dramatically increase over the course of the next 5, 10, or 15 years, and the crowding that may result. The college needs to do more to ensure ‘the green space’ is reserved for athletics in the master plan.

Enrollment at an all-time low

According to remarks president Nick Nissley expressed at the December Master Plan community workshop, enrollment numbers are at a record low, funding through state appropriations is declining, and the University Center may be in peril. The school, he says, faces the challenge of growing its revenue streams, both by increasing its existing ones, i.e. enrollment, and creating new ones (such as International Affairs Forum events, Gala to Give, and other school fundraisers). The initiative to annex Benzie County so Benzie students can attend NMC at in-county tuition rates, ought to be understood as a plan for this purpose.

With regard to the master plan, his strategy seems straightforward: enrollment numbers are down, so the school needs to undertake plans that will increase enrollment. It may be fair logic to build more student housing on campus and renovate facilities here to attract students.

Indeed, a vibrant college campus teeming with bright, motivated undergraduates is a goal for every undergraduate school. The new redesign of the Timothy J. Nelson Innovation Center (IC) was a much-needed step forward for the school. It brought life into a building whose structure was decades outdated, and created a new, spacious central meeting ground for students.

The Innovation Center is so spacious, in fact, that the lack of students on many evenings throughout the semester is palpable. See for yourself—have a stroll through the innovation center on any given Friday evening after 6 or 7 pm, and you will find but a few students doing work among the many dozens of tables in various rooms on the main floor and basement of the IC. This is also the case on weeknights and weekdays. The larger classrooms on the main floor appear to regularly go unused by instructors.

Unfortunately, this isn’t just the case for the Innovation Center; it’s the same for the Aero Park Campus on Parsons-Stulen drive. On any given day, at any given hour, several of the building’s many classrooms are unoccupied, and that grand, enormous building feels like a ghost-town. On most weeknights when a friend and I take a computer-aided drafting and design (CADD) course, it is one.

Troubles at the University Center

These crickets heard on main campus may be a reason behind Nissley’s proposal under the Master Plan to migrate the University Center partners out of that building and over to the main campus. There are, according to the study conducted by TowerPinkster, unused classrooms on the main campus that could meet the needs of University Center partners.

So, at face value, consolidating the University Center partners over to the main campus seems like another intelligent decision, one with the intention of fostering a close-knit “academic core,” as Brandon List of TowerPinkster put it. That is, until one really thinks about why NMC is encouraging this move. Building new dormitories on campus would meet the immediate needs of some students, but, when the school is facing the problem of declining enrollment, i.e. funding, where is the money for this project and others (like the redesign of the Osterlin building into a ‘one-stop student services center’) going to come from?

The answer is the University Center, itself. NMC intends to sell off the University Center property to pay for these projects. Real estate developers would buy the property at the drop of a hat, if made available for purchase. That real estate—waterfront on the Boardman Lake—is the kind of deal that real estate holding companies dream of. They see the commercial value behind the property, but with an educational building there already, why does NMC not?

Music only after 5 pm

The Audio Technology department for several years, occupied half the basement of the University Center, until they separated from the building in 2020. Their program, while a native NMC program, was significantly limited in their ability to practice their studies because their sharing of the space with Grand Valley State University (GVSU) would not allow them to play music before 5pm, when GVSU had concluded their business for the day. GVSU now leases the entire lower level of the University Center, and the classrooms the Audio Tech program previously occupied now go entirely unused and vacant.

It looks, as if NMC’s program was just made to vacate the building. It was, though, an unworkable arrangement, and when asked whose decision it was to leave the University Center, program coordinator Brady Corcoran stated that “it was a mutual decision; our students could not use musical equipment before 5 pm, and it was disruptive to Grand Valley.”

No doubt, this was a major hindrance for NMC's audio technology program. During COVID-19, Corcoran migrated the program's operations into Founder's Hall on main campus and seems complacent with the move. For the most part, Corcoran thinks the space suits his needs. "We're happy to be on main campus," Corcoran said. NMC's audio tech program is a growing program. "This year was the first year we've ever had three full sections of first-year students. It's the most we've ever had. Retention from first to second year has also been much better," he said.

Take a step back and consider how NMC prioritized an external organization's needs (GVSU's) over those of one of its own established programs. There is no good reason for this, yet, NMC's institutional policy concerning the scheduling of courses at the University Center, Staff Policy D-505.05, seems to incorrectly condone this hierarchy, as there are inherent inconsistencies with the University Center facility use policy.

Consider the following passages: "Northwestern Michigan College's property, buildings, parking lots and grounds are designed and reserved for supporting the purposes of the institution. Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) also makes its physical facilities available to responsible groups and organizations on a rental basis, after meeting College needs." Most of these "responsible groups and organizations" are none other than the University Center partners, and they lease space at the University Center on a rental basis. This clause is what enables the University Center to operate. It is the leading paragraph of NMC's facilities use procedure, and it's also codified in the University Center use policy, with the institutional effectiveness criterion being, namely, "operations". Despite this fact, the scheduling order at the University Center is outlined as follows: "a. University Center Partner Academic courses, b. NMC non-credit courses, c. NMC Academic courses..." in that order.

University partners consider pulling out

Now, the University Center partners are all thinking about pulling out, not long after NMC displaced one of its own programs. Some partners have already done so. The University of Michigan used to offer a Masters degree there. They no longer contract with the University Center. The fact is, the University Center partners may not really have NMC's best intentions at heart. The collapse of the University Center because of a premature withdrawal of its tenants would be a definitively bad result for the college, and the community that began to demand it back in the '80s and '90s. All the same, it is a likely one, unless the school considers these proposals carefully.

The problem of record low enrollment at NMC is an even greater issue that requires us to look at the bigger picture. If enrollment is down, but we are attracting students, for example, in the growing audio technology program, then, what is happening to them, otherwise, that is turning them away from school?

It is obvious that the direction the school is taking is uncertain, its plans lacks distant foresight, and its actions may not be orienting the school towards a sustainable future in which academic programs will flourish. Plans to sell off existing infrastructure to pay for constructions that won't necessarily generate revenue for the school are, quite frankly, ill-conceived. A new dormitory might fit the immediate needs of some students for housing, but its capacity is limited. Banking on the notion that new dorms will attract new students is only going to go so far as the capacity of the buildings and the duration of the students to live there, which is, again, limited by NMC's degree offerings. It's the equivalent of cutting off the arm to save the leg, as the proverb goes.

So, what is a better strategy that the school could use to turn things around? Well, in all honesty, we need look to no further than President Nissley's NMC Next strategy, which is actually a rather good one—it's right there, under its "Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Progress Trackers" section, where the first step is: "Enhance offerings..."

Baccalaureate Four-Year Degrees, The Only Answer

Ultimately, the whole of the problems that NMC is facing can be boiled down to this one shortcoming: NMC just isn't enhancing its fundamental offerings. Yes, we're offering some new associate degree programs, like the new Water Quality Environmental Technology degree, but associate programs aren't the issue. We've got a lot of those. It's Bachelor's degree programs we lack. If you look at what is happening at NMC with an open eye, if you talk to the students here, it becomes apparent that NMC is hemorrhaging students to four-year institutions mainly because it isn't offering a range of its own bachelor's degrees. The Bachelor's of Science in Maritime Technology and Nursing are among the few.

Now, as a matter of fact, NMC does offer another Bachelor's degree: the Bachelor's of Science in Marine Technology through its Great Lakes Water Studies Institute, and this is very important. The Great Lakes Water Studies Institute is a very unique program, and it offers the only Bachelor's degree in Marine Technology in the country, in which the school is investing heavily to boost future enrollment. Yet, under the Community College Act of 1966, a community college is specifically defined as "an educational institution providing collegiate and non-collegiate level education... the term does not include an educational institution or program that grants baccalaureate or higher degrees other than a baccalaureate degree in cement technology, maritime technology, energy production technology, or culinary arts." A Bachelor's of Science in Marine Technology is not included in these select few exceptions, and it cannot be misconstrued with the Maritime Technology degree that it offers. Therefore, NMC may no longer legally consider itself a community college while it seeks to offers this

baccalaureate degree.

A student that stays for four years is worth twice as much to the school as a student that only stays for two. If NMC were able to expand outside of the mindset that it needs to remain a two year college, then it could realize that it has the potential to be every bit as competitive as the schools that it hosts at its University Center campus. It could earn far more in enrollment revenue by offering four-year baccalaureate degrees than it gains by staying set as a two-year college. And, we've already got a lot of the infrastructure to do so. Why not make the University Center campus a place for NMC's own bachelor programs and other growing programs, like audio technology, environmental studies and sustainability, philosophy, religion, etc., that could better use them to benefit the school directly, and not transfer our students—the very life of the college—off to other institutions? I mean, that's the major source of revenue for thriving college campuses across Michigan. It should be ours, as well. So, what's holding NMC back?

For one, NMC relies on the limited arrangements it offers through the University Center partners to fill the demand for four-year degrees in past decades. The main reason, though, seems to be the way NMC has decided to financially structure itself under the tax code to remain a community college. NMC wants to maintain its status as a community college, so that it pays less in taxes than a four-year institution. For every county that NMC may include, it could levy added taxes to help pay for the school. This is where President Nissley's interest in annexing Benzie County comes in. It also helps them to keep the cost of tuition down because students can take advantage of certain loans and grants for associate degrees that are mainly awarded to students at community colleges, like Governor Whitmer's Michigan Reconnect program. Funding for that program, though, will most likely expire when Whitmer leaves office.

Our unique academic programs like the Water Studies Institute, which is poised to experience rapid growth in the coming years as they build a new Freshwater Research and Innovation Center, could enable us to grow quickly. Nissley's NMC Next strategies are well-intended, properly structured, and fundamentally solid, but the present thoughts and actions of the administration are being constrained by a longstanding, institutional-wide mindset that we need to remain within the boundaries of being a 2-year community college, rather than change and grow where we are, just as our students would like to do. In this respect, we are failing.

As a final thought, consider this: the name of our school is Northwestern Michigan College; not Northwestern Michigan Community College. NMC already has the potential to be just as great and competitive, if not more so, than other colleges in this state, but we need to realize it by understanding the seriousness of the problems we're facing. Planning construction projects that do otherwise by miring us in debt or potentially over-allocating our limited space may just harm us in the long term, especially if they're unfounded. The bonds students make here are being broken every couple years when they leave NMC. Many here simply opt not to get to know one another too closely. That doesn't foster a creative and rewarding academic experience. Our own academic programs have conflicted with third party educational institutes, whose interests are not those of the college. The accreditation of the Marine Technology Bachelor's degree remains a mystery, and that could potentially compromise both trust and the name of the institution. Incidentally, if we drive out our educators by turning them into disposable assets that operate under a third party because our operations are unsustainable, then, many valuable educators may want nothing to do with NMC, outside of the business arrangement they make. When has "It's just business," ever sounded good? Ultimately, even if NMC still wishes to regard itself as a community college for the time being, ask yourself, what kind of community is that?

The truth is, we are a community, and we've got some critical decisions to make. The way we plan for them may make all the difference.

Note: The author declares potential conflicts of interest: the author is a student taking some of his current classes in the Audio Technology program. In addition, the author has recently applied to create a new student group for students interested in playing outdoor Field Lacrosse.



Bridges Don't Need to Burn

Aidan Pool
Staff Writer

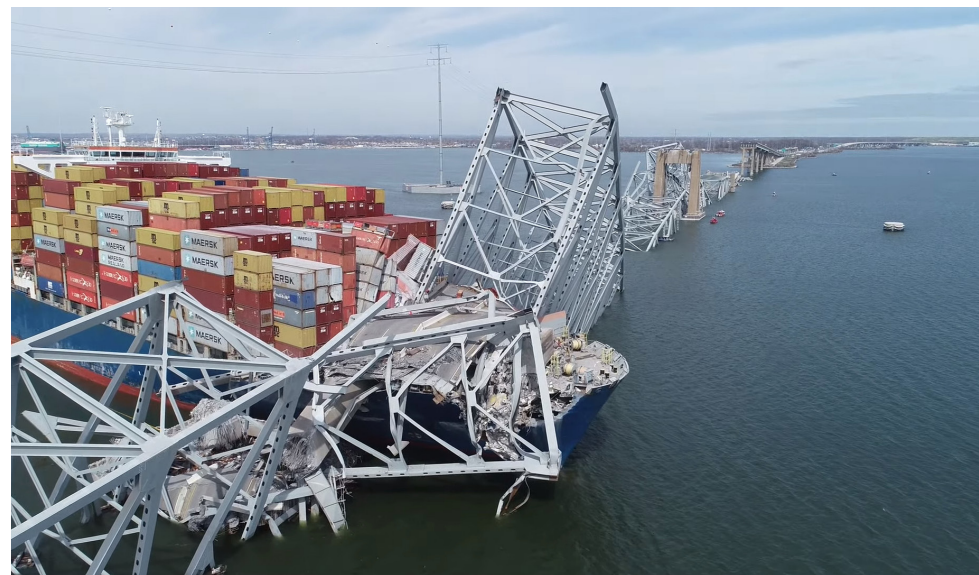
On March 26, a container ship going 9 miles per hour struck the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore. The impact immediately sent the bridge tumbling down.

Six construction workers are presumed dead after an unsuccessful search. The reason for the crash? The ship had lost power four minutes before reaching the bridge. As any experienced mariner will tell you: once you've lost power, you are at the mercy of the current.

Several small details surrounding the tragedy have been underreported. Firstly, the ship was fully loaded. A fully loaded ship is a lot harder to slow and stop than an unloaded ship, whether that's forward and backward or if it is swinging left and right. Secondly, the shipping channel that the vessel was in is roughly 700 feet wide, which is not a lot of real estate to work with should something go awry. However, the largest under-discussed detail is from the time that the ship lost power to the time it struck the bridge was roughly four minutes. Four short minutes. There is no way that a ship is going to stop in four minutes. There's not enough time to get a crew out to drop anchor in time. It's very similar to seeing a traffic jam and not having any brakes.

There has been an uptick of fear on social media from the general public surrounding their own bridges. Consider the Mackinac Bridge, which constantly has freights pass under it. Should there be reason to be concerned? The short answer is no. The chances of something like this happening are very low for several reasons. Accidents happen, but the crew and any pilots that may board a given vessel are trained to be able to handle situations where things go wrong. In the case of the Mackinac Bridge in particular, the channel that the freighters use does not see the vessel getting as close to a support structure as the channel in Baltimore.

It is very rare that something like the accident in Baltimore happens. In the entirety of American maritime history, there have been seven instances of a vessel striking a bridge and causing it to collapse in some capacity. Going forward, there are rumors that there will be tweaks in construction to make sure that bridges cannot get hit. One method is a man-made island around bridge supports so that the vessel runs aground before it can hit the bridge. As long as it does not block the channel, all involved would be in favor of this.



Aftermath of the Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse
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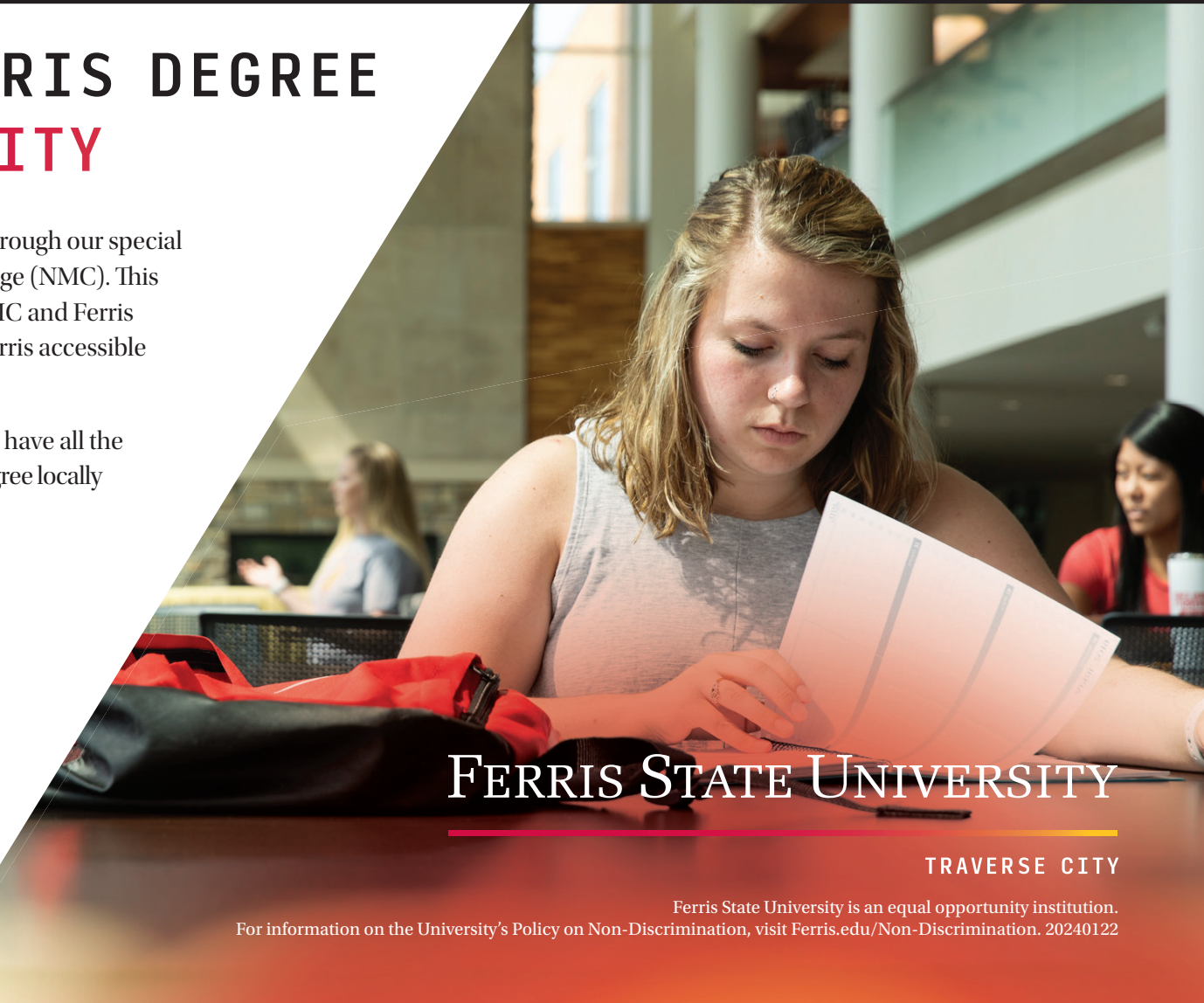
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NMC Prepares to Host Big Little Hero Race

Megan Thoreson
Staff Writer

On April 20 at 9:30am, the professional communications class of Northwestern Michigan College will be hosting their 9th annual “Big Little Hero Race,” which benefits Northern Michigan’s Big Brother Big Sister Program! Attendees dress up as super heroes for a 5k or 10k run at 10am, with all proceeds from registrations going to both Big Brothers Big Sisters and NMC’s College for Kids program.

Greg Saylor, a volunteer for the event and student of NMC’s professional communication class, shared his enthusiasm for this year’s race - “Last year we had local businesses set up drink and snack stands, there was a bouncy house for the kids and even a clown on stilts! The event is open to the public, and is for a very worthy cause.”

NMC Business instructor Kristy McDonald began organizing the event in 2015 as a project for her professional communications class. “We were working out of a text book, having students write fake professional letters and proposals, and the average grade and success rate in the class was really low. Honestly, it was boring for me too. So then I got the idea, ‘what if it were real?’”

McDonald began organizing the “Big Little Hero Race” as part of the professional communication class, to give the students the hands on experience needed to both engage her students and offer real world experience in working with the professional community to organize events and fundraisers. They chose the Big Brothers Big Sisters program to support to have an additional positive impact on the community. “Last year we were able to give \$5,000 to Littles in the form of scholarships to NMC’s College for Kids program!”

Two important pieces of the race are that it offers experiential learning for students of McDonald’s class, and gives the students the opportunity to give back to the community in an important way.

Nick Nissley, NMC president, has attended the event for years and will be showing up this year to show his support. “They’re helping make NMC’s college for kids courses accessible to kids who would probably have not been able to attend otherwise.” Nissley went on to commend McDonald for her commitment and courage to teach her class in such an innovative way. “Its exciting to see. I will be attending as Captain Hawk Owl, like I have every year since its conception.”

The idea of creating a support network for kids came about a century ago in 1904, when Ernest Coulter, a New York City court clerk, noticed an increase in juvenile delinquency within the court house that he worked. He formed Big Brothers around that time. Around the same time, “Ladies of Charity” were working with young girls coming through New York’s court system, which became Big Sisters. It wasn’t until 1977 that the two groups came together, previously separately known as Big Sisters International and Big Brothers Association, to form what we now know as “Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.” Today this system operates in all 50 states and in several other countries around the world.

The organization has been present in North Western Michigan for almost 50 years, and has served over 16,000 children! Mentorship plays an integral role in helping adolescents become more successful, reducing their likelihood to engage in risky behaviors such as violence, drug/alcohol abuse, and skipping school. Currently, there are more children on the waiting list to be matched with a Big than there are Bigs available. Spreading awareness of the need for mentorship in our area and celebrating how it positively affects our community are the main purposes for the “Big Little Hero Race.”

“I really would have benefited from being involved in a program like this when I was a kid,” Greg added, “so I want to work hard to help support our local Big Brothers Big Sisters, and spread awareness about the importance of mentorship!”



Photo Credit/GREG SAYLOR



Construction Creates Obstruction for Local Business

Megan Thoreson
Staff Writer

Construction on Parkway Ave. started March 10, creating glaring difficulties with travel from the east side to the west side of Traverse City. Lengthy detours, spring break tourism, and traffic jams on Eighth St, Fair St, and Woodmere are frustrating commuters and businesses alike. The College Plaza has noticed a decrease in foot traffic of 30% since construction began. Some of these businesses offer delivery or DoorDash and that avenue of business hasn’t been affected, nevertheless, with construction estimated to be ongoing until July of this year this could pose some issues for the businesses.

“MDOT Grandview Parkway Project” is planned to be broken into two segments, phase one includes Garfield Ave. to Front St., and will last until July of this year. Phase Two, which will include Front St. to Division, is scheduled to last until November of 2024. This extensive project has Traverse City investing \$3.2 million to replace underground water and waste water utilities, and improving sewers and waterways. New pedestrian crosswalks, lighting, and roadways will surely be appreciated by everyone, but in the meantime, local businesses fear a coming drought to endure.



Photo Credit/
JACQUELINE
SOUTHBY

GALA

to give ♡

The Garden Gala

Julia Belden
Staff Writer

Student groups across campus recently joined forces with NMC staff to host the second annual Gala to Give. The fundraiser raised over \$1,100 for the NMC Food Pantry. Gala attendees danced the night away at the Dennon Museum Center, enjoying live music from local artists Trillium Groove and Lily, as well as playlists curated by Audio Tech students.

NMC's Student Success and Alumni Relations teams spearheaded the event's organization with the help of student group leaders. The Gala provides interested students with the opportunity to learn event-planning skills. Other NMC staff pitched in with assistance – door prizes included a coveted complimentary 1-hour flight lesson with an NMC Aviation instructor.

NMC's Multicultural Club organized an incredible menu featuring local restaurants including Osorio Tacos y Salsa, Thai Cafe, The Good Bowl, and Le Macaron. Partygoers leaving for the night eagerly piled samosas, tacos, macarons, and more into to-go containers to enjoy at a later time.

Organizers hope that the Gala to Give will continue to be a yearly tradition. The NMC Food Pantry, this year's beneficiary, is available for students fighting food insecurity. Students can access the pantry in the Osterlin Building on the Main Campus. Non-perishable food items and toiletries may also be donated here. For more information, call the Student Life office at (231) 995-1118 or visit the Student Life section on nmc.edu.