

N O R T H W E S T E R N M I C H I G A N C O L L E G E

WHITE PINE PRESS

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

Faculty Raise Concerns Over BarCharts

Are students buying materials they don't need?

Breanne Russell In Sept. 2015, NMC instructors discovered a discrepancy in the listings for their course materials, at both the online bookstore and on campus. Without prior notification, bookstore recommended materials were appearing alongside required textbooks. Instructors had never seen these QuickStudy Academic foldouts by BarCharts Inc. before, had no idea of the validity of the information contained in them, and no control over how they were being marketed to their students. However, after reaching out to the administration about their concerns, the BarCharts were removed from the course materials list.

Some instructors were taken aback this fall when they learned that these recommended materials were once again showing up among their course material — now highlighted as study aids. “When we took them down previously there wasn’t the ability at that point to distinguish that they were study aids and not required,” said Vicki Cook, Vice President of Finance and Administration. “We have since worked with the company that designs our website to ensure that it was clearer that they were study guides.”

According to Rhonda Greiner, bookstore manager, the BarCharts have been sold at NMC for over 20 years. She is not sure why instructors have only noticed them now.

Still, their inclusion concerns many faculty, including communications instructor and department chair Deirdre Mahoney. “On every college and university campus in the U.S., the curriculum belongs to the faculty. It’s considered sacred space. Pairing faculty-selected texts with Quick Study BarCharts through NMC’s online bookstore is an overstep, particularly when the faculty is not consulted or provided opportunity even to review the materials for accuracy or appropriateness. The BarCharts simply appear as texts sanctioned by the faculty, which of course is not true. I understand the desire to turn a stronger profit in these times of intense retail competition, but the bookstore’s current practice misleads the students and angers the faculty.”

The goal of BarCharts is clearly defined on their marketing literature, “A + B + C + D = Sales.” A, use “shelf takers,” or holders, and put them where students can see, “right next to the text books.” B, list QuickStudy guides online as “optional or bookstore recommended, under the textbooks.” C, put extra displays throughout the bookstore, and D, make sure you don’t run out. Follow these simple steps and bookstores can sit back and “watch [their] sales soar!” A textbook manager from Morehead State University, who is quoted by BarCharts, said including QuickStudy charts in students’ orders “can be anywhere from \$5 to \$50 added on to each sale.” According to a customer service representative at BarCharts Inc., stores stand to make a 40% mark-up on these QuickStudy pamphlets. Are these materials there to help students study or merely boost the profits of faltering bookstores?

NMC’s bookstore has seen consistent decreases in sales over



Above Top: BarCharts can be seen nested among required textbooks. Above bottom: BarCharts listed online among other course materials.

the last few years. According to the Fiscal Year '17 Operational Plan, the greatest loss to date, 24%, was recorded in Spring 2015. Greiner attributes various causes to the decline in sales. “Purchases from outside sources is one main factor. Another is fewer instructors requiring materials and the use of more online resources instead of traditional materials. Decline in enrollment corresponds to a reduction in sales. Offering rental textbooks reduces revenue, since these are less costly to the students.”

There is no doubt that the dynamics of college bookstores are changing. In fact, some colleges are losing their textbook vendors altogether and turning to online sources who can provide less expensive materials. Bookstores are shifting from text-rich enclaves to everyday convenience stores. When the goal is to keep prices low for students already burdened by tuition, this may become a necessary transition.

It doesn't seem, however, that these BarChart add-ons are keeping NMC's bookstore from dipping into the red. From Aug. to Nov. 2016, BarCharts sales reached a little over \$5,000. The majority of them were sold at the campus store

and not online, and make up a small percent of the total sales, which in past years has reached upwards of \$80,000.

Any added cost to students’ already pricy materials bill worries communications advisor and instructor Janet Lively. “It is outrageous that we would not be consulted or that we don’t have control over what is presented to our students,” said Lively. “We’re working really hard to try and limit textbook costs. We’re really trying hard to save students money. This goes directly against everything we are trying to do.” None of her students have reported using the QuickStudy aids.

Simply put, students are paying \$7 to \$10 for printed and laminated sheets of notes. Notes, said Jerry Dobek, science/math instructor and department head of Astronomy, that students should be taking in class. “There is a great connection between the pencil, the hand, and the brain. I want that hand connection, it is a great way for them to learn, to think in terms of critical thinking, for themselves, by writing out the notes. When you hand them the BarCharts, you take the pencil out of their hand. That’s controlling their learning. I’m the one that should be controlling their learning. Not the bookstore.”

Greiner said that there are a number of instructors and students, however, who appreciate the study aids. “A student the other day came in to get an Astronomy book and she said ‘Oh good you have the BarCharts to go with it,’” said Greiner. “The kids love them.” Out of all the BarCharts sold this fall semester, only one was returned.

At this point there is little action that faculty can take to address these ancillary items other than reaching out to administration and the bookstore. Greiner said that she has already removed the QuickStudy guides from a communications course as requested by the instructor, and welcomes any other faculty who’d like them removed to contact her.

At the online bookstore, the QuickStudy listings include an additional paragraph: “BarCharts are a great way to supplement your study time! Packed with information, they provide a quick, easy-to-use method to remember basics and learn key points.” Perhaps the administration could compromise and also include a disclaimer that the study aids have not been reviewed by instructors and are not required for their course. This might address concerns that these guides are intrinsically connected to instructors. Students could then make an educated decision to purchase, and instructors would not have to jump through additional hoops to clarify these materials are not needed — or discover at the end of the semester, through course evaluations, that students were dissatisfied because these materials were not utilized.

In the meantime, if students are confused about course materials they should reach out to their instructors directly. If they do purchase BarCharts and do not need them, they have 30 days to return.



Photo by Devon Hains

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Printed by Stafford Media Solutions and distributed free.
Printed on 100% recycled paper

#NoDAPL Success

Above: #NoDAPL/Stand With Standing Rock protestors demonstrate in Traverse City on Nov. 15. On Mon. Dec. 5, the Army Corps of Engineers announced they will not grant permits for the pipeline to continue to build through Sioux land and will look for alternative routes. The pipeline corporations claim the decision has no impact on their plans to continue construction.

NMC News

Three to join Board of Trustees

Two new faces will join the NMC Board of Trustees: Michael Estes and Rachel Johnson. Estes and Chris Bott won the majority vote in Nov. and Johnson has been appointed to fill the vacancy left by Steven Rawlings who resigned last month. Estes is the former mayor of Traverse City, Bott is a local accountant who previously sat on the Board of Trustees and attended NMC for his Associate's degree, and Johnson works for Cherryland Electric Cooperative and previously worked as an adjunct instructor at NMC.

NMC Union and Administration Approve Contract

NMC Administration and the Faculty Union have approved a three-year collective bargaining agreement after more than a year. The proposal includes:

- A 20-step salary plan that maintains the current 3.71% step increase for faculty moving along the plan. It will also include a 1% annual payment for faculty at step 20. In January 2017, there will be a 0.3% scale adjustment to the salary plan.
- An enhanced formal evaluation process.
- Reinstating a faculty report to the Board of Trustees agenda.

Correction

WPP Issue 5, "Poets Meet Musicians": Tom Mair was incorrectly spelled Tom Muir.

Non-Discrimination Policy Notice

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The Safety Pin Movement

Puncturing xenophobia while unifying allies

James Robinson
Staff Writer

With the departure of Thanksgiving and impending arrival of New Year's Eve, the holiday season has officially arrived. What better way to celebrate this season of holiday cheer than with a story of kindness and compassion?

One particular story being shared across social media begins with an ordinary trip to the supermarket. An anonymous woman is finishing up her Thanksgiving shopping when a Middle Eastern woman walks up to her with her teenage daughter. She is nervous and asks for the woman's help: "How do you make stuffing? How long do you cook the turkey? Should you put stuffing in the turkey?" The woman smiles and politely answers these questions. With her meal-prep worries relieved, the Middle Eastern woman thanks the anonymous woman and turns away to continue shopping. Her daughter turns back and nods at the safety pin fastened to the woman's clothes; "She thought it would be okay to ask you," the daughter says, before walking away to join her mother.

You may ask: why is a safety pin so important to this story? In this instance, it's

more than a cheap clothing fastener. In the past few months, the safety pin has become a ubiquitous symbol of social activism. Some believe this began as a Norwegian protest during World War II, in which citizens wore paperclips on their collars as a silent protest and symbol of resistance against Nazi ideology. More recently, after Brexit (the British vote to leave the European Union), many people began wearing safety pins (instead of paperclips) as a protest against the xenophobia aimed at refugees seeking asylum in Europe.

Those who choose to fasten a safety pin to their clothing are declaring themselves as "safe" allies to the many groups — such as African Americans, Muslims, undocumented immigrants, refugees, the disabled, and LGBTQ — that might feel marginalized, threatened, or intimidated. The safety pin tells these people you are willing and able stand up for them or sit down and listen to their stories without judging their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

While this movement has many supporters, it also has its fair share of critics. Some mock the so-called "diaper pin"

movement as a tantrum against the outcome of the recent presidential election. Others see the safety pin as a substitute for real action aimed at social change. They view the pin as a way to alleviate guilt over passivity to the treatment of marginalized citizens. Zack Linly, a freelance writer for the *Washington Post*, describes these safety pins as "self-gifted gold stars" that can be worn and taken off with little effort. A safety pin alone means very little unless it's backed up with meaningful action.

Getting involved in your campus and community is a great way to take action. NMC students can get involved with groups such as Voices, Students United For Gender Rights (SUGR), Students United for Social and Environmental Justice, and Students for Education and Disability Awareness. These groups, among others, focus on bringing positive social change to the campus and surrounding community. You can view a complete list of student groups by visiting NMC's main webpage and clicking on the "Student Services" tab, and selecting "Student Life" in the drop down menu. Furthermore, donating to organizations that help marginalized people — including

the Anti-Defamation League, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Planned Parenthood, Stand With Standing Rock, and the American Civil Liberties Union — is another great way to take action. These organizations always appreciate contributions.

Safety pin or not, the greatest contribution you can make is standing up to injustice. One of the best ways to do this, as explained by *U.S. Uncut* writer Tom Cahill, is by practicing de-escalation techniques. If you happen to be confronted with a hate crime, try to engage in conversation with the person who's being targeted. Introduce yourself and get the conversation flowing. Talk about a movie you recently watched or a good book you've been reading. Ask them questions about their hobbies, interests, life goals, etc. Whatever you decide to talk with them about, continue building a safe space in which the aggressor's presence is ignored. Hopefully, they will get the message, give up, and walk away. If the person wants, accompany them to a place where they feel safe. While the safety pin movement has its pros and cons, it's important to remember that everyone deserves to be treated with kindness and respect.



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PSY 225: Human Sexuality Offers Diverse Experience

Deanna Luton
Staff Writer

Last winter, I was struggling to find an additional three credits to bring my enrollment status to full time.

Browsing the library bulletin board, I saw a doge meme that caught my eye and made me laugh. It was advertising for an Open Education Resources class called Human Sexuality. This higher level psychology class intrigued me. Not knowing what to expect, I walked in on the first day and discovered a one-of-a-kind course.

The unique classroom atmosphere is credited to instructor Susan Odgers's ease with facilitating and nurturing relationships between individuals who were once strangers. It is an environment that she has spent decades perfecting. "I started teaching PSY 225 at NMC in 1989. It has been one of my greatest joys since then. Countless former students have told me how much the course has meant to them. They've not only used the information/credits to further their degrees and careers but have incorporated our classroom experience towards having better personal relationships, greater success as parents and more fully alive roles as citizens."

Odgers's class is different than any other I've taken at NMC. Instead of seeing nothing but the back of my peers' heads, Odgers's alters the classroom dynamic from the start by arranging the desks into a big circle so that students can make eye contact when speaking in class discussions and during lectures. On the first day, everyone makes a name tag which they bring to each class. This basic formality creates a foundation of familiarity and a sense of friendship in the group, as does the sheet of phone numbers students are given, which provide contacts for studying and working on projects outside of class, and doubling as a future networking tool.

These simple gestures ease the sometimes awkward transition from stranger to acquaintance into something more seamless. "Every semester, class, student is unique!" said Odgers. "That's one of the factors that keeps it all fresh for me. One of the many reasons we sit in a circle is because we all learn from one another. Information does not only flow outwards from the front of the room. I've worked hard to create a class I'd want to take: fast paced, deep, interesting, creative, dynamic, and fun!"

The class covers a wide variety of topics from marriage and sexuality to gender identity and childbirth. It is a diverse course that allowed me to understand myself, people I love, and the world around me. I recommend this class to anyone who is



an incoming freshman at NMC. Samuel Taylor, a psychology major, agrees. "Susan's class created a great environment for personal growth and various ways for each student to thrive academically."

There were even several dual enrolled students in my class. Megan Yagle, former dual enrolled student at NMC who is now attending Central Michigan University said, "Susan's class is a great learning experience. Not only are you learning about human sexuality, you learn so much about who you are. Each week we were given a journal writing assignment that made us think about ourselves, whether it was about sexuality and what we thought about it or if it were just about our perspectives on different topics."

"Odgers makes class more of a community," Yagle continued. "Everyone feels like they belong and that they are cared for by their classmates. At first, I was skeptical of the

three-hour-long course, but it seemed to breeze by. I didn't think I would be able to sit through it, yet it would always end too soon." As 2:15pm neared, we all yearned for more time to explore the topic at hand.

Yagle said, "PSY 225 is helpful for forming and exploring your own identity and Odgers's class offers a safe place to do so. Sexuality is a very large part of being human and understanding yourself is the first step in understanding the world around you."

The class is largely based on five journals written over the semester which require deep self-reflection in addition to observations of art at the Denno Museum, cultural awareness, and the basic scientific research skills that surround studying the subject. Odgers also believes it is critical to inform oneself about the biological and psychological sources of reproduction. Julie Dyson, who attended Calvin College and received a bachelor's degree in social work, said that "Susan's human sexuality class gives students the space to discuss one of the most intimate, diverse, and fascinating parts about being human. She brings in panelists to discuss transgender, orientation, abuse, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, birthing options, and cultural norms. If you want to be engaged, open your mind to others and explore your own experience with sexuality, you should take Susan's class."

The unique design of Odgers's class would not be possible without her incredible networking skills. Last spring I met Mayor Jim Carruthers, and our class shared with him the issues affecting the youth of Traverse City. This is just one example of the many amazing potential networking opportunities that Odgers exposes her students to.

This class isn't just for young people. Meri Thayer, NMC student and Odgers's future teacher's assistant, says people of all ages and backgrounds benefit from the course. "I think when people hear human sexuality they automatically think sex. But the class is about so much more than that. Sex is two bodies coming together for mutual pleasure or reproduction. But the idea of sexuality is on such a wider scope; it's not necessarily physical. It has aspects that I don't believe most adults have been able to explore or even been introduced to, especially since sexuality and the way it's portrayed and acted upon is still very much controlled by our society. If there's any class you take, regardless of your degree or career path — or if you're not even pursuing either — take this class."

Homeless in High School

Laureen Horan
Staff Writer

As temperatures drop and conditions become brutal, the well-being of the homeless in northern Michigan is a growing concern. With an estimated 600 homeless individuals residing in the Grand Traverse area, many find themselves without a bed or shelter in the cold winter months.

One local high school has concerns about keeping students fed this time of year. Traverse City High School on Three Mile Road constructs a curriculum that fits the needs of all students, regardless of their background or issues with traditional education.

The school aims to help students achieve success, but success is hard to obtain when students go hungry at home. According to the TCHS website, nearly 70 percent of the student population is homeless and the school is having trouble keeping their pantry full. It recently received a donated refrigerator from Step Up Northern Michigan and is looking for fresh produce as well as non-perishable food items. Donations are always welcome during school hours. To learn more about how to help, contact TCHS at 231-933-5680.

Homeless shelters in Traverse City such as Goodwill Inn are usually full, but members of the Goodwill Street Outreach Program scour the streets at night convincing homeless individuals to get out of the streets and connected with Safe Harbor, an alliance of local churches. The program helps the homeless get medical attention, find jobs, and assist with obtaining secure housing. Program coordinator Ryan Hannon said they service roughly 200 individuals per year. Earlier this week, a fundraiser held at NMC collected over 150 hoodies and winter apparel

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items to donate to the Goodwill Street Outreach Program. The "Hoodies for the Homeless" fundraiser aims to keep as many people warm as possible this season.

Aside from cold temperatures, a life on the street is often combined with violence, alcohol and drugs. It's a dangerous and short-lived lifestyle to settle into and it's impacting communities all over the state. Michigan is ranked fifth in the United States and first in the Midwest for number of homeless residents, with a homeless population of over 85,000.

Over 35,000 of those reside in the Detroit Metro area (Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Monroe counties). This includes over 5,500 children in families and 192 unaccompanied minors. This area has the highest density of homeless individuals in all of Michigan.

With statistics taken into consideration, it's likely that we all know someone who is affected by homelessness. As a community, the best thing we can do to help this growing issue is give as much as possible. Food, clothing, hygiene items, winter apparel — anything that will help keep people warm. For more information about homelessness in Michigan, visit www.TheCampaignToEndHomelessness.com.

Donald and the Golden Glass Elevator

“To all the women—and especially the young women—who put their faith in this campaign and in me, I want you to know that nothing has made me prouder than to be your champion. I know we have not, still, shattered the highest and hardest glass ceiling but *someday, someone* will and hopefully sooner than we might think right now. And to all the little girls who are watching this: never doubt that you are valuable and *powerful* and deserving of every chance and opportunity to pursue and achieve your own dreams.”

-Hillary Clinton, November 9, 2016 (Concession Speech on CNN)

Maya James
Staff Writer

Let these words linger for a second. For many women on that day of judgement, it was heartbreaking to

know that anyone in modern society has to be reminded that they are valuable, powerful, and deserving of their dreams. It's heartbreaking that a common message permeates our times: women can do anything except be president.

November 8, 2016, our 58th United States presidential election has left this millennial with a temporary gap in an already lethal self-esteem problem. I am not alone. Republican, Democrat or otherwise, millennials have extremely high rates of anxiety and self-doubt which can be fueled deeply by politics. When compared to the elections of our ancestors, I can say with no contest that this one has been wracked full of nervous energy, from California to Rhode Island to Michigan.

This election was a huge hit, and the nature of politics has taken a turn for the rest of our country's history. Some may be left with a sigh of relief, but those with extremely raw nerves have been abandoned. Fair, unfair, rigged, not rigged, democratic or unbalanced electoral process aside, Donald Trump is going to be president. Once again, let this linger for a second. The one-time steak mogul and reality star who made a cameo appearance in “Home Alone 2” is now going to be our commander-in-chief, the decision maker of our nation's federal and international relations, and possessor of nuclear codes. During primary season, the thought of Trump as president was a joke. Today it is the reaffirmation of our nation as a one-party state, falling to its knees in relapse, once again dominated by the Republican party.

Personally, it strikes a terrifying chord. This September I fell victim to sexual assault. After explaining how my most intimate walls were broken down by force in my first police report ever, after my self-image shattered and my grades plummeted while pressured by my peers to keep going as if nothing happened (as if rape was not even a crime or a traumatizing experience), I was propelled into a world where a man who allegedly raped a 12-year old, who said he would date his own daughter, who influences peaceful protestors to be “roughed up,” who incites death threats on journalists asking questions that are “too difficult,” and who jokes about grabbing woman's genitals and kissing them without consent, could be elected as commander-in-chief, a position I revere.

Many citizens have chosen to respect Trump's election, to see where he takes the presidency, instead of protesting before any rights are actually taken away from Latinos, LGBTQ, black people or Jews. Unfortunately, it was not long before Trump made his first appointment: Stephen Bannon as Chief Strategist. Bannon is a middle-aged white ex-executive of Breitbart news, a white-supremacist publication plagued with anti-woman and anti-minority hate-speech. There is little doubt that legislation under Trump will make it increasingly hard for women and minorities, such as myself, to trust the administration to represent our liberties and

rights as citizens in general.

Trump plans to assign Lt. General Michael T. Flynn as his national security advisor. You know, the guy screaming “USA! USA! USA!” and “LOCK HER UP!” at Republican National Conventions. Flynn has proposed a religious war on all non-Protestants, particularly geared toward Muslims both innocent and guilty of terror (women and children alike). A man who said, “The world badly needs an Islamic Reformation, and we should not be surprised if violence is involved. It's normal.” However, picking apart every member of the Trump administration before they take action is, in fact, jumping the gun. But I am a journalist, and Trump has targeted my peers publicly, calling us slanderous bullies, all because someone, somewhere, may make a claim he doesn't agree with.

I am not afraid of him.

I will continue to state factual news regardless of his administration's agenda. I urge all people to exercise their free speech do the same. This doesn't mean I will promote the division between my fellow Americans. We are all citizens in a country that prides itself on its constitution, as well as its “united” nature, but it is not unusual for there to be separation right now. A large group of Americans, mostly white, and lower to middle class, have demanded their voices to be heard, louder and prouder than those that may not look like them. Neo-nazi and avid Trump supporter Richard Spencer said that “America was, until this past generation, a white country, designed for ourselves and our posterity. It is our creation, it is our inheritance, and it belongs to us.”

Am I the only one who feels like he might be telling the truth in some kind of screwed up way? Today the House and Senate stand as a one-party system with the Republican representatives outnumbering the Democrats. There is hardly any representation for political parties outside the two dominating parties' guidelines. While many voted for the progressive country they want, perhaps the government has always been trying to prove to minorities that this melting pot is a selective one, not an inclusive one. A tyranny founded on actions like the extermination of Native Americans by early settlers, slavery instituted by the planter elite, and Jim Crow laws. Trump perpetuates a system that is unfit for anyone who does not fit in the ideal “American” body type, race, gender, orientation, or party.

As a country we cannot be sore losers or sore winners. There has to be a better option as our government could crumble under new inexperienced leadership. According to the *Washington Post*, based on the way Trump is picking his cabinet, the best option may only be to rebuild our system through unity.

Let's be a united people defiant of hate from all demographics, and let's start with the millennials. While millennial voters turned out, it was less than in 2012, and that's unacceptable. Over the next four years the United States needs to hear our desperate pleas for rights more than any other time in history.

Taking a Break from Tech

Tom Clarke
Staff Writer

Much of what we learn today is gathered from the shining artificial lights of screens around the world. From the cell

phones in our pockets to the television sets in our living rooms to the laptops we lug around, younger generations can only wonder what life was like without technology occupying every moment. Humanity thrived for thousands of years before the invention of the lightbulb, yet we are compelled to frequently check our social media accounts rather than attend social events, to text our family and friends rather than mail them a letter or pay a house call. The modern world forces us to indulge less in sources of entertainment aside from Netflix, video games, or the latest television shows.

Constant screen exposure not only suffocates social, professional, and academic life, but can have adverse medical effects including vision acuity fluctuations. According to an article “How to Relieve Computer Eye Strain,” published online by the UK company Specsavers, symptoms that indicate eye strain include “eye discomfort, headaches, sore, tired, burning or itching eyes, difficulty focusing, watery eyes, dry eyes, blurred or double vision, and increased sensitivity to light.” These irritating symptoms can lead to rubbing one's eyes and other fidgeting, potentially causing deformity of the eyes and structural damage to the cornea.

There is no denying the compulsion to look at any screen for an extended period of time is unhealthy. Unfortunately, suffering from these symptoms is not as simple as burning one's hand on a stovetop and learning never to put it there again. Individuals run the risk of gradual irreparable damage to our eyesight if we cannot bring ourselves to live more independently from screen exposure. The trick is learning how to moderate the positive stimulus these sources of entertainment and instant conventional gratifications provide.

Much of this exposure is expected in a world where sending an email, sending a text, or making a call can mean the difference between an F or an A on a paper. It is important to balance the time we spend proportionally throughout our day. The difficulty we have separating ourselves from these screens only shows how there is a compulsive addiction at play. When it comes to smartphone use causing car accidents, it's easy to see they are potentially detrimental to us.

So you may be asking yourself this question: “What is there to do to occupy my time?” Start by picking three days out of the week where you unplug your TV and computer, and leave your cell phone off until the end of your day. Let your friends and family know you're taking a break from tech and you'll answer their messages later.

What will you do with all that in-between time? The most important thing to do while taking a break from tech is to incite your own imagination and uncover a screen-free list of activities yourself, but here's some suggestions to get you started. Go on a walk, read a book, or write notes in a journal. Cook and share a meal with your family or friends, go out to a café and read the newspaper, then grab a buddy and find a hiking trail. Take a drive out of the city, or go buy a fishing pole and spend a few hours by the water. Rather than going on a date to the movies, go out into the countryside stargazing. Explore abandoned historical sites, or take the time to write a letter to someone you truly care for. The list goes on and on.

Make sure to mingle with people around you and socialize. Not having a cell phone will allow for more time to improve your conversational skills and really get to know people for who they are behind the screen.

Trump Drains Swamp, Fills Cabinet

Early nominees, well known in Washington, give a hint to coming direction

Isaac Vanderwal
Staff Writer

On November 8, 2016, Donald J. Trump was elected to be the next President of the United States of America. In the past month the President-elect had his hands full with cabinet appointments. It is never an easy process, but this time around it's surrounded with contention and controversy. Through all the speculations and discussions revolving around the decided and undecided positions, Trump has said that he alone knows "who the finalists are."

Pamela Engel and Oliver Darcy in *Business Insider* said that the President-elect's process resembles a medium all too familiar: the reality TV show. Drama surrounds Trump, his behavior as President-elect, and his incoming cabinet. C-SPAN had a live feed in the lobby of Trump

Tower, there's controversy over the appointment of Stephen Bannon as Chief Strategist, and there was outcry from Trump allies when Mitt Romney was being considered for Secretary of State.

In contrast to President Barack Obama's transition into power, Trump has received widespread coverage. In 2008, Obama set out to create a bipartisan team akin to Lincoln's cabinet. However he had to compromise and his cabinet ended up as a "kind-of team of rivals but only a little bit." Trump hasn't bothered reaching out to his rivals. His supporters may hope for a "team of outsiders" like the President-elect himself, but with his current picks, it is unlikely.

With every choice Trump makes, we get a peek into what his presidency will look like: a cabinet filled with the political, financial, and conservative elite.



Former Mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani



Former Massachusetts Governor, Mitt Romney



Former Director of CIA, General David Petraeus

Secretary of State - Undecided

Trump's choice for Secretary of State is mostly unclear. Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, former presidential candidate and Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, and former Director of the CIA General David Petraeus are the leading contestants in what could be described as a contest for "America's Next Top Diplomat."

Americans love an underdog, and in "America's Next Top Diplomat," Rudy Giuliani fits the bill. Mika Brzezinski on "Morning Joe" describes the former mayor's strategy as "barfing out his credentials every day," which co-host Joe Scarborough describes as "unbecoming." This comes after huge backlash from rumors of Giuliani being appointed Attorney General. Giuliani has a private sector history that resembles the criticisms of Hillary Clinton: giving speeches to Wall Street banks, and a relationship with a state oil company in Qatar. Giuliani has also worked with the company that proposed the Keystone Pipeline, which needed approval from the State Department. These potential conflicts of interest cast Giuliani as an underdog but nevertheless, Americans like a comeback story. If the Cleveland Cavaliers and Chicago Cubs can come back from 3-1 disadvantages to win championships, maybe even Giuliani can come back from losing Attorney General with a Secretary of State position.

If "America's Next Top Diplomat" wants to follow reality TV format to get good ratings it

needs a contestant everyone can hate. This person should be divisive to the judges, and generally disliked by other contestants and the viewers. Enter Mitt Romney. The former governor is not favorable among Trump's usual liberal critics, due to his behavior during the 2012 presidential bid, and he's certainly not popular among the President-elect's base after calling Trump a "phony," a "fraud," and claiming "his promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University." Kellyanne Conway, Trump's own campaign manager, considers a Romney appointment a betrayal to Trump's supporters. Her comments, MSNBC reported, which have made Trump "furious."

The contest for Secretary of State is heating up, but it needs a wildcard: General David Petraeus. Petraeus served as Director of the CIA under the Obama administration until his resignation in 2012 following a scandal regarding an extramarital affair with his biographer, with whom Petraeus shared classified information. Days before his resignation, *The New York Times* described his performance as Director of the CIA as a "demanding boss who does not hesitate to order substandard work redone." His mishandling of classified material and potential role in the mismanagement of the terrorist attack in Benghazi draw some parallels between himself and a certain Trump opponent.

Cabinet updates: Trump has selected four new front-runners for Secretary of State: John R. Bolton, an ambassador to the United Nations under President George W. Bush; Jon M. Huntsman Jr., the former Utah governor and ambassador to China under President Obama; Rex W. Tillerson, the president and chief executive of Exxon Mobil; and Senator Joe Manchin III, Democrat of West Virginia. He has also chosen Ben Carson, known for his 2016 Presidential campaign, as Secretary of Housing and Development.



Attorney General - Alabama Senator Jeff Sessions

Sessions was previously considered for being a potential running mate, and was on Trump's shortlist according to *Politico*. During the campaign he served as an advisor on immigration and national security to Mr. Trump. During his time as senator for Alabama, Sessions served as chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, as well as on Senate Committees on Environment and Public Works, the Budget, and Armed Services. Prior to the Senate, Jeff Sessions was Attorney General for Alabama, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama under Ronald Reagan, and was a captain in the United States Army Reserve.

The man certainly has credentials, but his agenda for the Justice Department doesn't have Democrats any less worried than when Rudy Giuliani was rumored to be the favored pick. Where Giuliani's tenure as mayor garnered criticism over racially charged procedures of the NYPD, Sessions was passed up for a position in an Alabaman district by the Reagan administration for alleged racist remarks such as referring to a black assistant attorney as "boy" and joking that he thought the KKK was alright until he learned members smoked pot. The Justice Department under Sessions will see combating national security threats as a major priority, but Sessions will have to face tough questions from the Senate about the future of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice.

Director of the Central Intelligence Agency - Representative of Kansas's 4th District, Mike Pompeo

Pompeo has represented Kansas's 4th district since 2011, where he serves on two House Committees: Energy and Commerce, and Intelligence. He is also on the Subcommittee on the Central Intelligence Agency as well as the Subcommittee on the National Security Agency and Cybersecurity. Pompeo has served in the military, reaching the rank of captain in the United States Army.

He is a natural pick given his experience in CIA Subcommittees and Trump's desire to be "very, very tough on cyber and cyber warfare." It's currently unclear if Pompeo will face a tough confirmation process. He's been applauded for both a strong work ethic and strong understanding of policy, but there are criticisms over his call to return to bulk collection of domestic phone records and of him describing the hunger strikes at Guantanamo Bay as a "political stunt."



Secretary of Education - Former Chairwoman of the Michigan Republican Party, Betsy DeVos

Donald Trump's pick for Secretary of Education comes straight from Michigan. DeVos is a Holland native, and graduated from Calvin College. The DeVos name is recognizable throughout the state. DeVos's husband ran for governor against Jennifer Granholm, and her father-in-law is a co-founder of the multi-level marketing corporation Amway Global. Her brother is also the co-founder of the former private security company Blackwater USA.

DeVos herself is known for championing the idea of "school choice" in Michigan, and is actively working to improve the quality and availability of charter schools. Like any other Trump cabinet appointment there is controversy. The president of the largest teacher's union in the country cautioned Americans to be wary of DeVos's "reckless and extreme ideology." The National Education Association president said that "she has consistently pushed a corporate agenda to privatize, de-professionalize, and impose cookie-cutter solutions to public education."

Nevertheless, charter schools are popular among an incredible majority of elected officials, so her plan to increase access to charter schools for low-income and minority children will most likely get her approved by the Senate.

Treasury Secretary - Former Goldman Sachs partner Steven Mnuchin

Mnuchin was officially nominated for the position on November 29. He has said tax reform will be a top priority. It is hoped that with Mnuchin regulations that permitted Donald Trump to pay \$0 in federal income tax may change. Mnuchin is coming into the position of Treasury Secretary without any prior political experience, but he was the finance chair of Trump's campaign and has also provided funding for movies like the "X-Men" franchise and "Avatar" from a hedge fund he started after 17 years of experience at Goldman Sachs. Trump's pick prompted an *Associated Press* article detailing Mnuchin's time as head of OneWest, which foreclosed on countless Americans during the financial crisis. One of these Americans, Teena Colebook, expressed her disappointment in the nomination. She voted for Donald Trump in hopes that he "would knock the moneyed elites from their perch."

Initial reactions after the election attributed Trump's victory to a civil rebellion against the nation's elites, but as his cabinet becomes crowded with financial and political loyalists, it is beginning to resemble a spoils system bordering on cronyism.



Ann Hosler
Staff Writer

I love making treats that you can grab for a quick snack, with morning coffee, or while enjoying some tea in the evening. These cookies definitely fit all three! The butter rum flavoring can be switched to your heart's desire (or to align with a certain holiday), while the yield will depend on the size of your cookie cutters. My batch produced 74 1" long cookies (with 1/4" to 1/2" thickness — I'm not very consistent). In addition, I was able to make three ninjabread men (very real and serious cookie cutters, about 3" long and deadly). I even had enough dough to make about 5–8 more 1" cookies, but ran out of space.

Butter Rum Cookie Cutouts

Yields 74 1" Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3/4 tsp butter extract and 3/4 tsp rum extract (or 1 1/2 tsp butter rum extract —if you can find it!)
- Cookie icing (optional)

Directions

1. Cream butter until light and fluffy
2. Slowly add in sugar and mix until well-combined
3. Beat in the egg as well as the butter, rum, and vanilla extracts
4. Slowly mix in flour, scraping sides of bowl as needed
5. Cover bowl and refrigerate for about 30-60 minutes
6. Preheat oven to 350°F; prepare non-stick cookie sheets or cover baking pans with foil
7. Lightly flour surface for working with dough
8. Remove half of the dough from bowl and roll it to desired thickness (1/8", 1/4", or 1/2")
9. Cut shapes with cookie cutters, repeat with other half
10. Bake for 9-12 minutes, remove and cool
11. If icing, let cool at least 30-45 minutes before applying, then allow it to harden several hours before storing in airtight container

Ninja Cookie Cutters found at Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2grtB5s>



TROPICAL SUNRISE COMIX PRESENTS.....

"JUST A PENGUIN THING"

STORY BY JOE CURTIS
ART BY BEN BRADSHAW



Winter Gamerland

Ann Hosler
Staff Writer

Soon we'll be enjoying the break between fall and spring semesters, and if you're looking for a new game to fill your time, there's some exciting titles recently or soon-to-be released. Brew some coffee, pop on your headset, and prepare to game the night away.



Watch Dogs 2 (Win/PS4/XBO): Anyone who played the original *Watch Dogs* has reason to pause at running out to buy the sequel, but Ubisoft listened to criticism and improved many gameplay areas. In this game you're playing hacker Marcus Holloway, a member of a hacking collective in San Francisco. The revamped hacking system is fun and challenging, spicing up your missions (or pummel through them if you prefer). There are plenty of areas to explore, abilities to unlock, and technology to abuse.

Release Date: Available Now



Pokémon Sun and Moon (3DS): Journey as a Pokémon trainer through Alola, helping out its people while exploring and beating island trials. Once you complete the main campaign, be sure to go catch Ultra Beasts, visit Gladion for a unique Type, and open up the Battle Tree!

Release Date: Available Now



Final Fantasy XV (PS4, XBO): After many delays, the next installment in the series is here. Play crown-prince Noctis, who is accompanied by his three bro-friends as he flees a nation set on killing him. Instead of *Final Fantasy's* typical battle menus, the game uses real-time, action-based commands. The open world is beautiful and has a lot to explore, and there is a day/night cycle that adds an additional element of danger to your after-dark travels. Come for the bromance, stay for the many hours of in-depth story.

Release Date: Available Now



The Last Guardian (PS4): At E3 2015 I was in awe of the 5-minute long gameplay session of this action-adventure game. Not only is the interplay between the boy (who the player controls) and Trico the guardian adorable, Trico augments your actions, helping complete various puzzle elements. You'll also need to care for Trico, and his degree of interaction with you and how well you can control it is dependent upon how he's treated.

Release Date: December 6, 2016



Super Mario Run (iOS): This side-scroller puts you in control of Mario, where you'll be making him run and jump. Sometimes he'll jump higher, sometimes he'll collect coins, and sometimes he'll bop enemies on the head. Defeat levels quickly and discover that the princess is in another castle. Don't scoff, you know that all sounds amazing.

Release Date: December 15, 2016 (Android TBA)



Assassin's Creed—the movie!: I have a love affair with *Assassin's Creed*, so I may be a touch biased but this movie looks fantastic. Featuring an original story, the main character Callum—played by Michael Fassbender—is rescued by Abstergo Industries and must take part in their ongoing Animus studies (unlocking genetic memories), linking him to an assassin ancestor in 15th century Spain, during the Spanish Inquisition.

Check out the trailer: youtu.be/4haJD6W136c

Release Date: December 21, 2016

Sam Gorcyca
Staff Writer

Christmas is around the corner and as we all know, it's time to find gifts — and hopefully get some in return. It can be difficult to find something really worthwhile as a gamer if you're used to playing AAA titles (the best of the best) or have a low powered computer to play on. Luckily, this holiday, there are a few games worth the time and money to keep you going until next year.

Humble Bundle: For those on the hunt, websites like Humble Bundle offer good games at low costs. Their December monthly subscription bundle, which costs \$12 and includes eight games, offered *Dragon Dogma Dark Arisen* (regularly \$29.99), which I hope to personally play in the future. Humble Bumble also has limited-time donation bundles, which has three payment tiers: any amount you want, the current average (typically ranges from \$2 - \$6), and a mid/high dollar amount. The tier denotes what you unlock and how much you pay goes toward charity, the Humble staff, and game developers. The current "Staff Picks" donation game bundle has a \$14 tier that includes six games plus *Grim Dawn* (regularly \$24.99).

Undertale: Indie developer Toby Fox created the ultimate game for teaching tolerance and decisiveness. When this game debuted on Kickstarter the description merely read "An RPG where no one has to die," and it has stood up to the title. As the game progresses you encounter a series of monsters as you work your way through a labyrinth of puzzles. The real test comes when you reach battles and you much choose how to proceed. Either you attack or you can try to talk your way out of it. Will you show kindness or will you slaughter them all?

You will get the best experience if you play without walkthroughs. And pay close attention! There is a secret that Toby Fox hid in the game that made me so happy.

Undertale costs \$10 on Steam, but during sales it may cost \$5 for the game and another \$5 if you want the soundtrack. I recommend the soundtrack as it is perfect for studying, with a fun range of music that keeps you focused.

Dark Souls: Prepare to Die Edition: Prepare to die—a lot. From Software's *Dark Souls* has spawned a new era in hardcore gaming. The objective (besides not dying every five seconds) is to become the new King of Cinders. This game has a rich background and stands to be one of the most popular game series out there. It is a must buy for anyone looking for a challenge and something to keep them coming back for more. The game also features an online element where you can invade worlds to attack other players (taking out exam frustrations on unsuspecting newcomers is a good way to keep yourself happy). With as many awesome weapons as there are enemies, *Dark Souls* might be the game that adds to your agitation during exams, though. Get it for \$19.99 on Steam.

Garry's Mod: A sandbox game that seems to need no introduction, *Garry's Mod* has an open world environment you can play in with your friends. The website describes a world where the player can "spawn objects and weld them together to create your own contraptions. You can do it offline or join the thousands of players who play online each day." You can also kill each other, your favorite video game characters, and pretty much anything else. As long as you're in the mood for a good time and don't take anything seriously, it is a great buy. This game costs \$9.99 on Steam (but is cheaper during the hoilday sales) and for a few hours of laughs that will melt your tension away, it is worth the price.

Team Fortress 2: Hold on, what is a free game doing on here? This game is worth the time to download for three simple reasons: massive chaos, loads of people, and hats. Developed by Valve Corporation, *Team Fortress 2* is a team-based first-person shooter. It's a fun distraction while waiting for more serious game sales to come your way.



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Holidays Abound

Twenty unsuspecting days to celebrate this December

Zack Harrington
Staff Writer

December is markedly the most wonderful time of the year. Whether you celebrate more traditional holidays such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or Ramadan, it does one good to remember that each day is worth celebrating. Let's be realistic though — December is also one of the busiest months. Maybe you don't have time to party every day, but there is at least one day every week you could spare to partake in a holiday you never observed before. Here are my suggestions!

Wednesday, December 7

National Pearl Harbor Day is a day of solemn remembrance. Brave lives were lost and are honored with the military tradition of flying the American flag at half-mast until sunset. However, it is the perfect day to remember the importance of being balanced as it is also National Cotton Candy Day. Celebrate how our lives are better now thanks to our troops and this sticky delicacy!

Saturday, December 10

This day is used to commemorate three institutions: the Nobel Prize, Human Rights, and the Dewey Decimal System. Each strive to create fairness and equality among every person, to reward patience and greatness, and make the world a better place.

Tuesday, December 13

Violins, also called fiddles, are one of the most flexible instruments made, able to play in almost any genre. The earliest violins had strings made of horsehair. So throw a hoedown and (learn to) play the violin in celebration of National Violin and National Horse Day! Considering you might not have a violin or horse, it is best observed as an introspective day to dwell on the contributions of both of these beautiful creations.

Friday, December 16

A very goofy storm has brewed on this day. The date not only marks Barbie and Barney Backlash Day but also Ugly Sweater Day, Chocolate Covered Anything Day, Underdog Day, and Free Shipping Day. The mind boggles to imagine the possibilities. Perhaps your loved ones will show you mercy and ship you some tasty treats. Maybe they'll blackmail you some pics of you during your "awkward stage." Or you can have the best of all worlds and celebrate this day with them, enjoying how silly you can be.

Wednesday, December 21

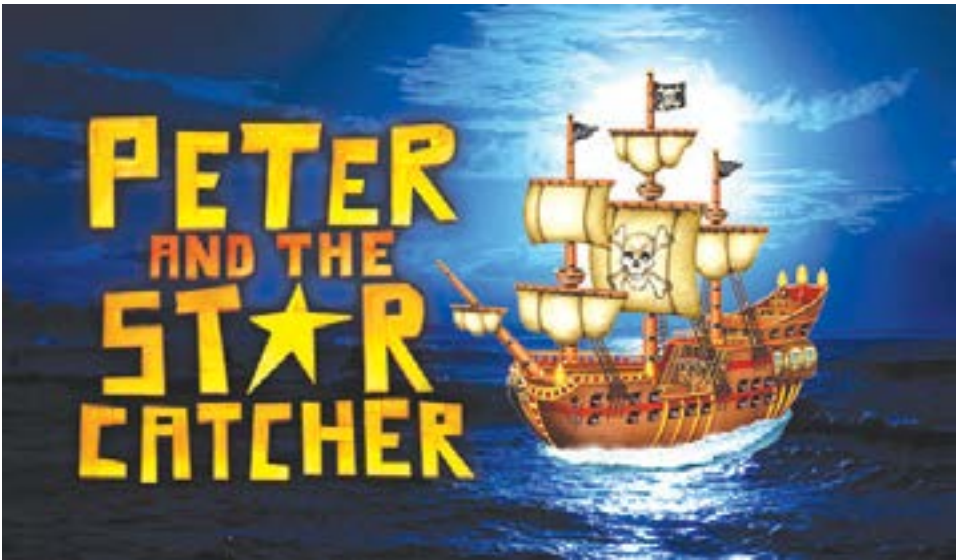
This is the darkest day in America: the Winter Solstice. Because the 21st will be the shortest day, outdoor activities will be bittersweet. Take advantage of the long night and celebrate National Crossword Puzzle and National Flashlight Day by staying inside and playing with paper and pen by torchlight.

Friday, December 23

All other holidays in December often last for multiple days. If you want to do something similar but different, try observing Festivus, enjoying a week-long holiday with a different theme every day. Start by getting inspired with three of your friends by watching *Seinfeld*. Next, observe National Eggnog Day with a toast. Move on to National Pumpkin Pie Day and split a pie four ways. Trade candy canes the 26th and dare each other to eat fruitcake the day after. Buy chocolate candy as tokens of friendship on the 28th and share a meal of pepper pot soup while finishing your marathon of *Seinfeld* the next day. Celebrate Bacon Day ('nuff said). For a bonus, ring in the New Year with a resolution to try even more unique holidays in 2017!

"Peter and the Starcatcher"

Give the gift of theater



Taylor McLain
Staff Writer

Struggling to find the perfect gift for your loved ones this holiday season? Take them to go see "Peter and the Starcatcher" (written By Rick Elice, Music by Wayne Barker) at the Old Town Playhouse. Directed by Josh Thomas, the show is filled with childlike wonder and creativity we often find we lacking in our day-to-day lives, along with enough humor and heart to fill any treasure chest.

This wickedly imaginative play provides a humorous and fantastical backstory for the beloved character of Peter Pan and his arch-nemesis, Captain Hook. We first meet Peter as a poor orphaned boy on the high seas. But soon his sad and lonely world is turned upside down when he meets Molly, the daughter of famous Starcatcher Lord Astor.

Upon entering the theater and seeing the stage I was immediately struck with a sense of nostalgia. It was decorated with a number of cardboard boxes with various things written on them in bold black marker. The boxes were piled up in a dark room next to a number of wooden rafters with a circular window on the back wall. If this room sounds familiar to you, like some far off memory of building forts, then you're in the right mindset.

The show began with Thomas telling us of when he was young, of a time when he and his brother played around in the seemingly endless pile of boxes in his parent's attic. He then invited us all back to that time, when we played in our attics, built forts out of blankets, and pretended we could be anything we wanted. It was a refreshing experience for the young at heart — and perhaps even for those who weren't fortunate enough to have such memories.

The cast is made up of only a handful of people, with few props or complicated set pieces, but ultimately it worked to the play's advantage. The professional sound effects collaborated with the actors' precise timing and movement. Along with the creative use of the props, it gave the audience just enough information to allow their minds to fill in the

"Peter Pan in Neverland" has always been the stuff of dreams, and the creative adaptations in "Peter and the Starcatcher" drive the story forward in a cohesive manner. All and all the perfect gift for the young, and the young at heart.

blanks. You feel like you're participating in a wonderful game of pretend.

The script overall is funny, with quick wit and fast paced humor. Sentimental moments and gut-busting laughter are excellently balanced. While Peter Pan purists may scratch their heads at some of the plot decisions, ultimately the play stands on its own. It poses the question: what if? "Peter Pan in Neverland" has always been the stuff of dreams, and the creative adaptations in "Peter and the Starcatcher" drive the story forward in a cohesive manner. All in all the perfect gift for the young — as well as the young at heart.

Upcoming Shows:

- December
- Thurs. 8, 7:30 p.m.
 - Fri. 9, 7:30 p.m.
 - Sat. 10, 7:30 p.m.
 - Sun. 11, 2 p.m. matinee
 - Thurs. 15, 7:30 p.m.
 - Fri. 16, 7:30 p.m.
 - Sat. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Old Town Playhouse
148 E 8th St, Traverse City, MI 49684
(231) 947-2210
oldtownplayhouse.com





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Photos courtesy of Nick Walsh

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

One Piece At A Time

Maya James
Staff Writer

As a local, I still consider Traverse City to be a relatively small town. Cities such as this can develop a common mindset with the lack of diversity in the clothes they wear to where they dine out. It is within this common mindset where outsiders shine—and they stick out like a sore thumb.

Businesses are frequently being developed and introduced into Traverse City by creative and innovative freethinkers. If you are someone who enjoys the ambiance of Yen Yoga, Brew, BlkMarket, Seven Monks, Higher Self, or Source, but are mourning the loss of the most beloved Inside Out Gallery, there is still a light of hope that shines through. It all starts with the story of one bright and brilliant force of nature: Shanny Brooke.

Originally, Brooke assumed her calling was in operatic singing. After vigorous work in voice training she discovered an inner fire that led her to Interlochen Arts Academy. Interlochen exposed her to diversity and the discipline needed to expand her skill level.

At the age of 18, Brooke was accepted into the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland. Her audition was excellent and her acceptance based purely on raw talent. But it was an overwhelming step for Brooke, young and alone in a new city, and after two years in the conservatory she dropped out, reconsidering opera as a career due to its

cutthroat nature. “At a certain point, everyone is at the same skill level,” said Brooke. “Then your way up the ladder depends on how many backs you are going to stab.”

After moving to Fort Lauderdale to be closer to her mother, Brooke returned home to Michigan and pursued a business in the restaurant industry with her father. Unfortunately, altercations caused a rift in the family and she decided to move on. This brought a wave of depression and feelings of failure for Brooke, who turned to art to soothe the many burns of her ended pursuits.

She began painting after meeting her partner Pam at a mutual friend’s party. Their relationship has been met with homophobic adversity, but they have always been quite happy. Pam runs a very successful local dog training and babysitting business, thus inspiring the focus of Brooke’s first creations.

“At first I painted our dogs,” remembers Brooke. “Soon enough Pam’s clients started wanting portraits of their dogs.” An artist was born.

These dogs were not average—garnished in high contrast vibrant colors and saturated with intense emotion. They were non-traditional in every way, besides the picture-perfect proportions of their quirky personalities. Soon, Brooke began receiving commissions and expanded into other subjects, experimenting with her unique style. This fierce passion drove her to advocate for other unconventional artists in the

“Higher Art” show of 2015.

It was a social experiment Brooke said. “Of the 55 artists I chose to display, I picked six super-traditional landscape artists, and the rest were more out of the box. I was worried at first that the only artists who would sell were the traditional artists, and I was fully prepared to be let down.” The opposite occurred. Of the artists at her show, the ones whose art depicted landscapes, sunflowers, bumblebees and fields, barely sold a thing. “I want every artist to be successful,” said Brooke. “I understand why the other stores or galleries may feel discouraged to carry other kinds of art. They have to pay their bills and may feel like if they carry too large of a variety that too many things might not sell or take longer to sell, that they are taking a huge risk. But Traverse City is ready for modern art.”

Traverse City needs—now more than ever—a safe space for outsiders and creative thinkers to express themselves and achieve success. Brooke’s Higher Art Gallery at 126 S. Union in downtown Traverse City will be open almost every day through Christmas until their winter hours kick in. The amazingly-designed hub features crystallized skulls, jewelry and affordable masterpieces and prints, some as low as \$10. Light up your inner outsider and maybe find something new for your home in this contemporary art gallery.

