

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.*

## NMC Alumni's Family Torn Apart By War and Terror

**Kathryn DePauw**

Editor in Chief  
A late summer sun shone down on the young couple exchanging marriage vows in front of family and friends at Gallagher's Farm in Leelanau County. It was a clear afternoon but something was hanging over the typically joyful festivities. As NMC alumni Edris Fana and Emma Smith experienced one of the most important days of their lives, their thoughts couldn't help but be pulled halfway around the world.

On the same day, 6,370 miles away, the Taliban marched into the dusty streets of Kabul. They had taken control of most of Fana's native Afghanistan already, but on that day they seized the capital too. On that day, the government would fall.

Fana's parents were in Kabul, watching the wedding virtually. "My parents were home but you could see that they were trying to enjoy my wedding through the lense of my phone," he explained. "You could also tell that they were trying to not show any worry and that it was just another day, just so I don't worry."

It was the best day of his life, but he did worry. "I could not stop thinking about the fall of my country, my parents, and what the people might be going through."

Fana was born in Afghanistan in 1994. He was only there for 11 days before his family fled to Pakistan. While a small number of his family stayed in the country and lived under Taliban rule, the rest (about 50) fled and became refugees — like him. He grew up separated from his country and his extended family.

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan weeks after the attack on Sept 11, 2001. Armed forces remained in the country until the withdrawal, completed on Aug 30, ended the U.S.'s longest war. During this time, as terrorist organizations in the country were pushed out, many Afghans returned to their home. Fana and his family came back in 2003, after 10 years of living as refugees.

Many Afghans returned at this time with a feeling of hope; that with an American presence the Taliban would be held at bay. "It was a hope that we could work for a better tomorrow for our country," Fana explained at a recent National Writers Series event which focused on the current crisis in Afghanistan. "It was the light at the end of the tunnel that a lot of Afghans wanted to see."

Fana spent the rest of his childhood attending an American school in Kabul. His parents had to start over and decided to focus on helping their country. They began working to improve the lives of Afghan youth in order to "show them, to never go back to that period."

Fana came to the United States on Dec 18, 2012, to study aviation at NMC and become a pilot. He went on to achieve his dreams. "In Pakistan, our house was very close to the airport. Every time a plane took off it would be over our house. While I was flying kites, I would see the bottom of the plane and wonder what it would be like to be a pilot," he told Interlochen Public Radio in 2020.

His success didn't stop there. "Coming from a place that I didn't have the opportunity to practice leadership, or to have any experience of what I was capable of, it was NMC that presented me with opportunities to grow," Fana said in a 2016 commencement speech.



Edris Fana during training on an NMC seaplane in 2018.

He became the first international student to be the president of NMC's student government association. He earned his associate's degree from NMC and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Ferris State through the University Center. He earned his commercial pilot's license. He spoke at NMC's 2015 and 2016 commencement ceremonies. He fell in love and got married.

The several months before his wedding saw rapid change in his homeland. President Trump signed a peace agreement with the Taliban in February, 2020. The deal laid out a 14-month withdrawal of all foreign troops and the release of approximately 5,000 prisoners. In return, the Taliban promised to not allow enemies of the United States and its allies, including al-Qaeda — the perpetrator of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks — to use Afghanistan as a base of operations.

Taliban and allied militant groups began a widespread offensive on May 1, 2021. By June, it is estimated that they controlled 50-70% of rural Afghanistan.

On Aug 15, when the capital fell, Fana's parents were still in the country, unable to get a flight out for their son's wedding. They had U.S. visas ready to go but were two out of tens of thousands that were attempting to evacuate in the final days. They were unable to reach the airport before the borders closed. They remain in Kabul, with all their paperwork ready, hoping for a way out. Fana has waited nine years for a reunion with them and will likely have to wait longer.

"It was not even in my dreams that one day Afghanistan would go back to what it was," Fana said. "It's a return of history."

Despite Afghanistan being his homeland, the place his parents are, Fana doesn't see a life for himself there. At least not for the foreseeable future.

"Home is where you feel comfortable, feel safe, dream big and a place where you can raise your family without fear. That explains America for me right now as Afghanistan fell back to the hands of those that do not believe in human rights." Fana's hope now is that his parents will join him and his brother in Michigan and make a new home for themselves here in the United States.



Photo Credit: Edris Fana



## NMC in History

Originally published in the Nor'Western, this photo shows cars lined up and ready to race in the twin Bay Sports Car Club Rally. Held on Sunday, October 6, 1968, the event was won by Jack Weiszer. NMC administrative staff members, John Anderson and Bob Warner, took second place.

Photo courtesy of Ann Swaney/NMC Archives

# NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE WHITE PINE PRESS

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
**PRODUCTION MANAGER**  
**COPY EDITOR**

Kathryn DePauw

**STAFF WRITERS**

Kyle Hoffman  
Ally Licht  
Micah Mabey

**PAGE DESIGNER**  
**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Martha Sprout

**FACULTY ADVISER**  
**DESIGN ADVISER**

Jacob Wheeler  
Kathy Schwartz

welcomes comments,  
suggestions, ideas for news  
stories and calendar items.

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

**NEWSROOM** 231.995.1173

**DISTRIBUTION**

**ADVERTISING**

**EMAIL** [whitepinepress@gmail.com](mailto:whitepinepress@gmail.com)

## White Pine Press is Hiring

Are you a writer, editor, 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 that offers real-world experience while you do what you love. If you would like to learn more, contact faculty advisor Jacob Wheeler, faculty advisor at 612-804-5975 or email [jwheeler@nmc.edu](mailto:jwheeler@nmc.edu)

Looking for more *White Pine Press* content? Find the latest issue of the *White Pine Press* and archives of our entire history online at [whitepinepresstc.com](http://whitepinepresstc.com). You can also connect with us on social media:

Facebook: [facebook.com/thewhitepinepress](https://facebook.com/thewhitepinepress)

Instagram: [instagram.com/tcwhitepinepress](https://instagram.com/tcwhitepinepress)

### Non-Discrimination Policy Notice

Northwestern Michigan College is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, height, weight, marital status or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. [nmc.edu/nondiscrimination](http://nmc.edu/nondiscrimination)

# CNN Reporter Shares Her Middle East Experiences at NMC Event



**Ally Licht**  
Staff Writer

The head of an Iraqi household offered fried eggs to the bloodied group of soldiers stranded in his courtyard after they were ambushed by a suicide car bomber. Arwa Damon, CNN Senior International correspondent, was traveling with that unit and remembers this moment of generosity on that day, "We were his guests, and so he offered what he could."

Damon spoke at this month's International Affairs Forum event held at NMC's Milliken Auditorium. The event, "Middle East: War, Women, and Struggle," touched on her experiences with the civilians of Middle Eastern countries and how she has been impacted by their struggles of living in conflict. Many of the stories she has written about the Middle East don't capture these moments of humanity. She believes that if the world could see these moments, our perspectives on the Middle East and elsewhere would change.

With the recent U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Damon argues that the Taliban will be able to "get away with anything as long as threats aren't made [to the U.S.]." The fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban regime has left thousands of women and children vulnerable. For 20 years these women and young girls were able to get a glimpse into an alternative reality, one that was "full of hope and opportunity," claims Damon. A bright future that was stolen away from them in a matter of weeks.

She believes the world becoming numb to the noise of constant conflict could lead to inaction. "Shutting out the problem doesn't dismiss the issue," Damon says. Changing the channel to avoid the news is a privilege and it's an option that the civilians of these war-ravaged countries don't have. Damon believes that currently, the Afghan future is "extremely bleak" and many of these women and children are facing a future without hope. What happens in one country doesn't occur in a

vacuum, she argues, and what the Afghan people are facing today will catch up to the United States in one way or another.

"[The U.S. needs to] refine our moral compass," says Damon. During her talk, she discussed society's "fear of the other", which leads to the dismissal of outside groups that may be viewed as a threat, in this case refugees. She believes that the cost of closed borders and refusing to help these desperate individuals could lead to a next-generation threat.

When refugees are shut out of their countries, they are left with no purpose or place of belonging. This is how ISIS and other terrorist groups become so appealing, according to Damon. They give these civilians a place to belong, a purpose. She believes, the world needs to turn its attention back to the people that are battered by war and bring hope back into these children's eyes.

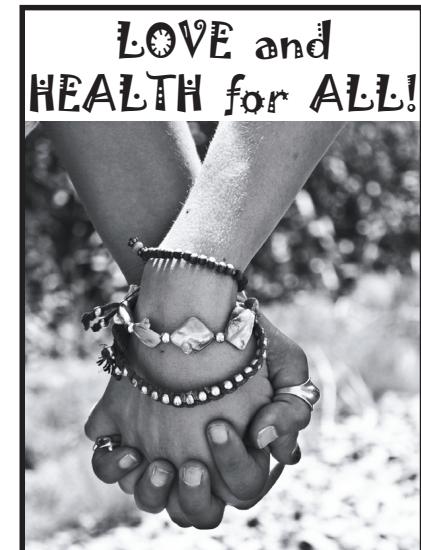
Damon is working hard to be part of the solution. As the president and co-founder of the non-profit organization International Network for Aid, Relief, and Assistance (INARA), she is using her personal experience in war zones and war-torn nations to serve war-wounded children and their families.

The organization was inspired by the outcome of a CNN report Damon gave on a 4-year-old Baghdad boy named Youssif. Youssif had been doused with gas and set on fire while he was playing outside his home, causing massive scarring on his face that prevented him from being able to eat anything bigger than a grain of rice.

This report led to viewers donating to support his extensive facial reconstruction and counseling in the United States. Youssif has since made plans to become a doctor and is grateful for the kindness shown to him by strangers.

"His defining moment wasn't of the attack itself, but of the kindness and compassion he was shown after," states Damon. INARA has helped hundreds of children like Youssif with medical care and has allowed war-torn families to believe in the future again.

Damon wishes that world leaders could just see the impact these wars have on children. As they grow up, all they know is the violence, despair, and humiliation they've faced from being caught up in these conflicts. "The impact that kindness and compassion have on an individual shouldn't be negated."



**GTCHD OFFERS:**  
**Birth Control**  
**Pregnancy Tests**  
**STI/STD Testing & Treatments**  
**Breast/Cervical Cancer Screenings**  
**Annual Exams**  
**HIV Testing**

**Appointments are confidential and open to all.**  
[www.gtchd.org/581](http://www.gtchd.org/581)  
**231-995-6113**



Medicaid Accepted/Uninsured Welcome

## News in Brief:

**Student Government Association grants help fund student group projects.** Written proposals for the fall semester must be submitted online and presented to the SGA between October 1–November 15. Meetings are held weekly and proposals must be submitted by Wednesday at 5 p.m. on the week that you plan to present. Visit [www.nmc.edu/student-services/student-life/student-groups/sga](http://www.nmc.edu/student-services/student-life/student-groups/sga) to learn more.

**Win prizes at the Student Life Office!** Solve brain teasers in exchange for Student Life Dollars to earn cool prizes like gas cards, gift cards, snacks and more. Unlimited hints available!

**Military service can be counted as credits after a four-year effort.** Active duty sea service can now count towards an engineering officer bachelor's degree from NMC's Great Lakes Maritime Academy (GLMA). It took four years of cooperation with faculty, staff, and United States Coast Guard officials to get the program approved, according to GLMA Superintendent Jerry Achenbach.

"In addition to allowing cadets to bypass redundant training, the approval will allow student veterans to complete the engineering program within the constraints of GI bill benefits," an NMC press release stated. "Due to sea service requirements, the current GLMA program exceeds the 36 months of benefits awarded to veterans by the GI bill."

**Biden's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate:** President Biden plans to combat the virus with vaccine and testing requirements for organizations with more than 100 employees. NMC is in the process of reviewing the new mandates with legal counsel and other college partners like the Michigan Community College Association. In a press release, NMC reported that most employees have chosen to receive the vaccine. NMC strongly encourages all staff and students to get vaccinated.

**Get your shot!** Protect yourself and your community at NMC's COVID-19 vaccine clinic. It will be held Monday, October 11, from 1-4 pm at the Innovation Center on NMC's main campus.

**NMC students are awarded millions in COVID relief funds.** Students received \$3 million in American Rescue Plan funds this month. Since April, 2020, NMC has distributed \$5.2 million to students. "As the pandemic persists, so do our students' challenges," NMC President Nick Nissley said. "We're pleased to be able to efficiently steward these taxpayer dollars and distribute them to students who have persevered toward their goals through 18 months."

## On tap at the Dennos Museum

Offering study spaces, gifts, world-class exhibits!

On behalf of all of us at the Dennos Museum Center at Northwestern Michigan College, welcome back! I hope your fall semester is off to a great start.

Looking for something to do in between classes or on the weekends with your family and friends? Your NMC student ID earns you FREE admission to the museum. Simply show your student ID at the front desk. Or, if you're off campus, you can browse our online collections catalog at [dennosmuseum.catalogaccess.com](http://dennosmuseum.catalogaccess.com).

The museum also offers lots of quiet, comfortable work spaces—including new outdoor seating during open hours. It's the perfect place to catch up on conversation or connect to our wifi network to get a few emails done.

Finally, I hope you'll take a few moments to shop the museum store. Along with a wonderful selection of local, national, and international gifts and crafts, every dollar you spend supports NMC and the Dennos Museum Center. I hope you will check out our updated online store at [shop.dennosmuseum.org](http://shop.dennosmuseum.org)!

— Craig Hadley, Dennos Museum executive director

# Classic Car Links Three Generations and NMC



Mike McIntosh (left) enjoying the sunroof of his family's car.



Mackenzie McIntosh sitting in the driver's seat of the Isetta prior to restoration.



**1217 E FRONT ST  
231.929.2999**

**1294 W SOUTH AIRPORT RD  
231.935.9355**

**JIMMYJOHNS.COM**

## Kathryn DePauw Editor in Chief

Every car tells a story, and this one begins in 1957 with a traveling insurance salesman and ends at NMC — with a trophy.

One of the top recipients at this year's 15th annual Mike McIntosh Memorial Truck and Car Show on Sept. 11 was Kevin McIntosh with a '57 BMW Isetta. Winning this award, at a show named in his dad's honor, is a story decades in the making.

The Isetta has been in their family since his grandfather, Al, purchased it new in 1957. He picked it for its tiny size and great gas mileage. The cramped car may have not been the most comfortable choice for a traveling insurance salesman in Ludington, but his decision has inspired the generations of his family. Little could he have known that his son would grow up with an intense love of cars.

His son, Mike McIntosh, taught automotive at NMC for 34 years. He loved NASCAR, muscle cars from the 60's and 70's, and anything that was fast. Despite Mike's preferences, he held onto the tiny Isetta, always intending to fix it up. Wayne Moody, Program Coordinator for NMC's Automotive Technology Department, worked with Mike at the time. "He had this thing, this funny car that he always wanted to put in the car show, but it wasn't finished yet. It was an oddball car."

"Everything about that car is what he hates," Kevin said with a laugh. "It's ugly and it's slow." And yet, his father held onto it. Its value and enjoyment was purely sentimental for him. "He wanted to fix it up because it was part of the family." Mike took it to NMC twice to fix it up with the help of students, but both times decided it was too important to risk being damaged.

Kevin will never forget the first time he saw the Isetta. His grandfather was dropping off the car at his house. "I loved the car the first time I saw it." He was ten years old and remembers how he had the privilege of backing the Isetta up off the truck bed it was delivered on.

For a young boy, the car sparked endless possibilities. "My first thought was that I was going to be doing donuts and driving it around the yard like a go-cart." His father put an end to those daydreams rather quickly, but made sure to spread the joy of the car around.

Mike would drive him and the neighborhood kids around the Silver Lake Elementary subdivision. "All the people I knew as childhood friends talked about playing in the car," Kevin said. "Sitting in it, sticking their heads out of the sunroof. Those are the stories I like to hear about what the car does to people."

Kevin's love of his father and the car,

kept the thought of restoration in his mind. "Something I've always wanted to do since my dad passed, was enter it in the car show." He started the restoration in September 2020. Garfield Auto did all of the work and had the car finished for this year's show — with two weeks to spare.

Mike, Moody, and Jerry Dobek, NMC's Sciences and Astronomy Department Head, held the first car show at NMC in 2004, the same year Mike retired. In 2005, the car show didn't happen. Mike passed away that year and the community took some time to mourn. The following year, Moody brought the car show back in his honor.

This year, Moody estimates the car show saw the most engagement in its history, 110 cars registered at the event. And the show was the "smoothest" he has ever run. Money raised at the event benefits the Automotive Tech Foundation Fund which supports the program in many ways including equipment, field trips and the Mike McIntosh Scholarship. At the yearly event, trophies are awarded to the top 30 cars: the top 5, and the next top 25.

Completing the project was the fulfillment of a goal, but winning a top 5 trophy was something else. "It felt really good," Kevin said. "It reaffirmed everything that I thought about the car. [My dad] would have been ecstatic about it."

Kevin's 13-year-old daughter, Mackenzie, was with him that day. She got up at 6:30 in the morning to get ready for the car show. It seems that this car has become a family tradition that will be continued for generations to come.

## 2021 Mike McIntosh Memorial Car & Truck Show Winners

### The TOP 25 recipients

- Bob Kindt, 1964 BMW
- Jag Smith, 1957 Bel Air
- Chuck Bennet, 1994 Mustang Cobra
- Dave and Sue Penney, 1955 Ford Pickup
- Charles Wheeler, 1967 Chevy II
- Mark Wilson, 1968 Firebird
- Nora Socks, 1963 T-Bird
- Jerry Zeits, 2003 Corvette
- Louie LaFranier, 1929 Model A
- Christopher Walls, 2021 Corvette
- John Saier, 1957 Bel Air
- Pam Everson, 1970 Camaro
- Doris Guffey, 1938 Chevy Pick up
- John Fortuna, 1953 Sunbeam Alpine
- Marc Premil, 1970 Dodge Coronet
- Gerry Fritch, 1968 Camaro
- Paul Ritter, 1961 Galaxie
- Leo Goepfrich, 1939 Ford Coupe
- Paul Sabourin, 1949 Ford Coupe
- Anthony Fortuna, 1963 Studebaker
- Avanti Dave Penney, 1955 Ford Fairlane
- Ron Davis, 1970 Dodge Challenger
- Vern Barker, 1966 GTO
- Paul Pepera, 1965 Mustang
- Mike Yakabowski, 1961 Chevy Apache Pickup

### The Top 5 recipients

- Kevin McIntosh, 1957 BMW Isetta
- Robert Parker, 1969 Jeep Gladiator
- The Irish Family, 1968 Ford Bronco
- Brian Wheelock, 1971 Ford Pinto
- Gary Allen, 1948 Ford F1 Pickup

Photos by Kevin Malntosh



Wendy (left) and Kevin McIntosh in front of their '57 isletta, which won a top 5 award at this year's McIntosh Memorial Car & Truck Show.

# Cars, Chrome, and Community

## Mike McIntosh Memorial Truck & Car Show Returns

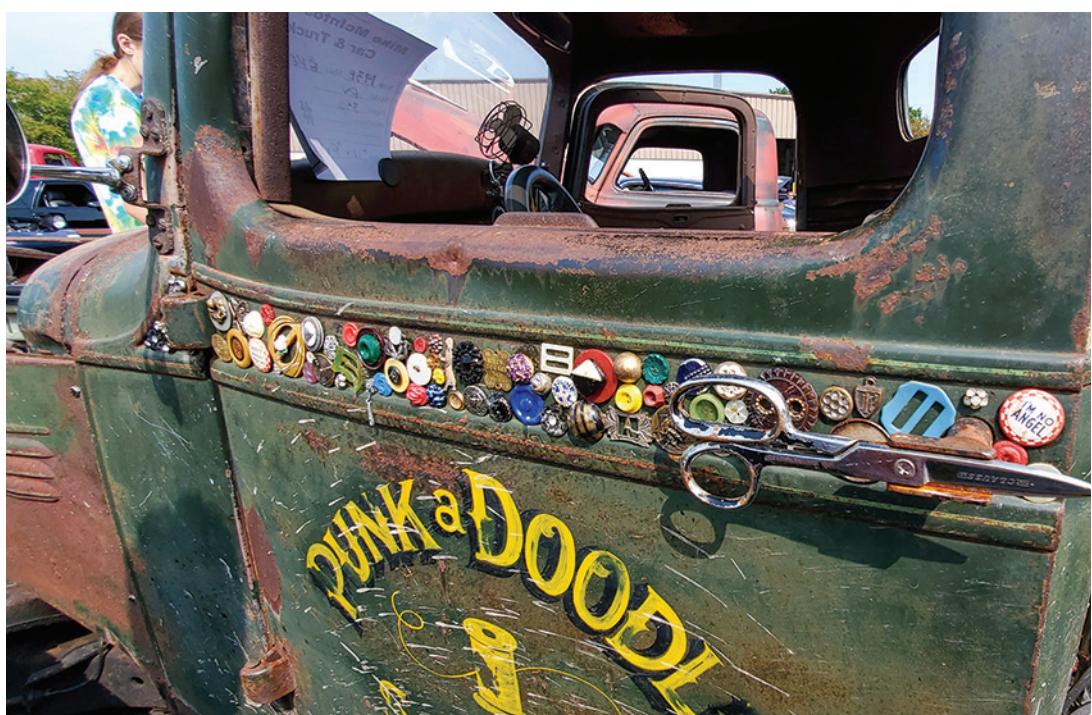
Photos by : Kathryn DePauw



1952 MG-TD, owner unknown



1961 Ford Galaxie Owned by Paul and Lynn Ritter (A Top 25 recipient)



1938 Chevy Pickup, owned by Doris "Punky" Guffey. She used the scissors, seen here as door handles, to sew seat covers in the 1980's for General Motors in Detroit. (A Top 25 recipient)



Visitors flocked to the annual event to pick their top 30 out of over 100 vehicles.



1931 Ford Coupe, owned by Lou and Diana Aug.

# NMC Powers Up With New Esports League

Credit:NMC



**Kyle Hoffman**  
Staff Writer

NMC has officially jumped on the esports bandwagon. Esports (electronic sports) is the term that refers to competitive video gaming, and colleges across the country are creating leagues in this growing sport.

Terri Gustafson is the Director of Educational Technology at NMC and the director of the new esports group. The role came to her after a community member brought the idea of the student group to NMC's Vice President for Student Services and Technologies, Todd Neibauer. Announcements and planning of the club were set to start on April 1, 2020, but COVID-19 lockdowns delayed it by one year. With the help of surrounding schools with established esports groups, NMC officially started an esports student group earlier this Spring with the opening of its E-gaming lab in West Hall.

There are currently two varsity teams: an Overwatch team, and a Rocket League team. Both varsity teams practice and play league tournaments once a week. Each player receives a jersey and a keycard that gives them access to the esports lab. While they hosted tryouts, there were just enough players for each team (including backup substitute players), so no cuts were made.

There is also a separate Rocket League Club started by three nursing students looking to compete in a separate open league. The group is inclusive to all, from the most competitive to the most casual players.

The top priority for the esports team is recruiting. "We need bodies. That's been the hardest thing actually, recruiting students to want to be on the teams," says Gustafson. The group has done mass text messaging, social media, information sessions, open houses, and flyers to get the word out. The Overwatch varsity team is still looking for more players to serve as alternates. The club is also looking for people to help out with animations, graphics, statistics, and streams.

The group has plans to begin streaming tournaments on Twitch soon. With only one student controlling the streaming process, recruitment for these support roles is becoming a top priority. "I'm looking for anything from graphics to broadcasting to anything. The whole point is to have a new student-involvement group," says Gustafson.

Once the support staff is fully established, the organization can look to expand. A few students have expressed interest in a Valorant team, but there are not enough interested students to fulfill the five characters needed for a team. Another potential is Super Smash Bros., as that



would only require 1-2 players. Gustafson hopes to add at least two more teams in the future. If there are enough interested students, a team can be created around any game.

Varsity players must meet certain requirements in order to play in a collegiate league.

- They must be a high school graduate, ruling out dual-enrolled students.
- Players must be full-time students.
- They must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA.
- A student-athlete must sign a letter of intent to the team as well.

If one does join the varsity team, there are big benefits. Each player gets \$1,000 a year in scholarships (\$500 per semester), a custom jersey, the opportunity to compete in a video game they love against teams across the country, and potential recruitment to a university esports team. Currently, tournaments are held virtually.

With Rocket League and Overwatch seasons starting, esports are in full stride at NMC and the momentum is likely to grow. In 2020, the estimated global audience was 586 million, double what it was in 2015. \$173 million was won in 2019. With the unique ability of the team to adjust and accommodate student interests and skill level, the future of gaming at NMC has limitless potential.

**HOP ON THE BAYLINE!**  
[WWW.BATA.NET](http://WWW.BATA.NET)

**bayline**  
FROM BATA

*6am - 9pm : Every 15 minutes  
East Front @ College Dr.*



**BATA**  
Bay Area Transportation Authority

- **Buses on-demand**
- **Download the TransLoc app.**
- **\$3.00 for students**

**link**  
on-demand

**NEW**



# VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 27, 2021 ▶ 11AM-1PM OR 6-8PM

**YOU'RE READY.  
SO ARE WE.**

Ferris Offers flexible, convenient classes in Traverse City and online. Transfer up to 90 Northwestern Michigan College credit hours. Discover financial aid opportunities and meet with our admission experts at the Virtual Open House to learn how to get started.

Join us any time between **11am-1pm or 6-8pm**.

Move Ferris forward. Register now.

**FERRIS.EDU/EVERYWHERE/OPEN-HOUSE**

**FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY**

**TRAVERSE CITY**



Ferris State University is an equal opportunity institution. For information on the University's Policy on Non-Discrimination, visit [ferris.edu/non-discrimination](http://ferris.edu/non-discrimination). If you have a disability and require accommodation to participate in this event, contact Jocelyn Goheen, Director of Student Services, at (616) 451-4777 to request accommodations at least 72 hours in advance. 20210922

# Footliters “The Guys” takes the Stage

## A Poignant Tribute to a National Tragedy

**Micah Mabey**

Staff Writer

The sun was setting over the water behind the Cadillac Rotary Performing Arts Pavilion. It was a beautiful night and Joseph Bauman, president of The Cadillac Footliters theatre troupe, took the stage. The star of the night? Anne Nelson's play, “The Guys.”

Bauman began with a simple, yet sincere “thank you all for being here,” before explaining what was going on in the beautiful space they'd made ready for the performance. Then? The metaphorical curtains rose up and what followed was a beautiful, heart-wrenching, poignant story about love, loss, and all the grief that follows.

“‘The Guys’ was written in the days and weeks following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and was placed on stage that same year. Its emotion and anger are palpable, but its hope is absolutely manifest,” Bauman explained. “I saw a powerful production honoring the 10-year anniversary

and dreamed of presenting it to Cadillac this year – the 20th Anniversary.”

In “The Guys”, the audience follows only two characters, as they sit together in the aftermath of national tragedy. Joan, an editor, helps Nick, a New York Fire Department captain, prepare the eulogies for the eight firefighters who died under his command that day.

The play debuted off-Broadway at The Flea Theater on December 4, 2001, directed by Jim Simpson and starring Sigourney Weaver and Bill Murray.

“It is an understatement to say that dramas sell a LOT fewer tickets than comedies and musicals,” Bauman said. “As the president of a very small community theatre organization, dramas can simply be an emotional, time, and monetary drain on an organization that needs to build credibility among attendees, volunteers, and donors with EVERY action.

Wasted energy, frankly, does not strengthen reputation.”

Bauman explained that even though they knew it could be a bust, the Footliters Board of Directors understood that “The Guys” was an important story, and with the 20th anniversary of 9/11, the time was right. So, how could they justify the financial risk?

Lightbulb.

“The Footliters’ mission is to “engage, enrich, and entertain” and we knew that this show had the potential to at LEAST engage

a new group of theater goers and enrich our small community with a timely drama, done for free, in a public space — and in the shadow of Cadillac’s own firehouse.” The troupe also coordinated with local firefighters, letting them choose a charity and organized the performances as fundraising events. The money raised was donated to the Veterans Serving Veterans Park in Cadillac — a 33-acre community park currently under construction.

In the two free performances put on at the Pavilion, Footliters collected nearly \$3,000 to put towards this cause.

“This show is about being seen, being remembered, and never, ever forgetting the men and women who ran toward the fire and smoke even though (and, perhaps, because) they had families, lives, and dreams waiting for them at home. With this show, we honored those brave men and women, remembered the people they were, and challenged ourselves to evoke the feeling of pulling together to cope during (and heal wounds from) that national tragedy.”

As the director, Bauman understood that this was a difficult show to do right. “You can miss the mark and make it too schmaltzy or underplay it,” he said. “You can make the people (real people) caricatures. You can overplay or misplay the emotion.”

His intent as a director was to “force the two actors to connect to the people they portrayed and try to forget what people might “expect” from this show and, instead, show them two real people with real hopes, fears, and triumphs.”

Bauman believes it was an honor to bring the show to the near 400 people who came to see it.

“Very little money was realized by the Footliters, but I am exceedingly proud of meeting our mission and supporting our national mission from 20 years ago, to #neverforget.”



## PorchFest, Changed by COVID But Still Going Strong

**Micah Mabey**

Staff Writer

It was a hot Sunday for this time of year as small groups of onlookers crowded balconies, front stoops, rooftops, and old library steps. Or maybe it just seemed that the heat was so drastic due to all of the cool - even cold - days that came prior. But nonetheless, the community was buzzing with anticipation for the return of something that quickly became a beloved staple of our little beach town.

Of course we’re referencing the now annual Traverse City Central Neighborhood PorchFest.

Having its initial run in 2019, PorchFest managed to survive through the lock-down of 2020; bringing safe, summer fun when so many things seemed uncertain. As an outdoor musical festival full of local bands, singer-songwriters, and, well, whatever kind of music can fit on someone’s front porch. You can find it all — and with the best vibes — at PorchFest.

In 2021, the downtown neighborhood still observes the tradition, and the tunes are flying just as high as one could imagine. The musicians seem to be ready to come back to the scene with a vengeance, and the hosts of these outdoor “venues” are still just as excited to have guitars wail, basses boom, and drum kits kick their way through a sunny afternoon.

PorchFest has evolved, too, since its conception.

That first year, it was just good vibes being lofted through the air as a small moment of community connection. Which was by no means something to scoff at. But now? Some believe that it has a different meaning entirely.

Singer/Song-writer Jack M. Senff, who performed for his second year in a row at PorchFest, had some poignant words to say on the topic, “When I played PorchFest last year it was deep in the middle of a pre-vaccine pandemic, when live music had all but stalled the world over. As I strummed my guitar and sang about the darkness around us, a light spilled into the streets of Central Neighborhood in the form of friends, families, and strangers alike—those seeking reprieve from our necessary — but devastating — social distancing measures that had driven so many of us inside or apart from “normal life” as we knew it. For a single afternoon we were able to gather safely and feel, together, the healing nature that can be music and art, as a single community of folks wading through great uncertainty together.”

And, by golly, he was right. Concerts from your favorite stars — Harry Styles, The National, take your pick of whoever’s on the top 40 these days — canceled. All across the world. England, Paris, Michigan — all of them rescheduled or shut down. And no one knew when they would be coming back. And that was scary. For many, that sense of escapism that a concert, the outing before and after, and whatever else came in that evening, that was all they waited for. After a long week the thought of “Okay, at least I get to see a show again” was quite enough.

“This year, though restrictions have eased and most of us are vaccinated, there was a lingering sense of relief as I played my guitar, sang my songs, and watched the passerby smiling and waving, all of us on our way to some safe return to normality,” Senff said.

It’s the smiling and the waving that really seems to catch us now, isn’t it? Now that we can see people’s faces again, even if they are strangers. The moment to share a smile, share a song, and share the day. Ain’t that enough? After losing so much, to receive even those few moments of joy and connection — how touching that can feel.

Here’s to another year.



Chris Stefaniciw preparing his set for Porch Fest 2021