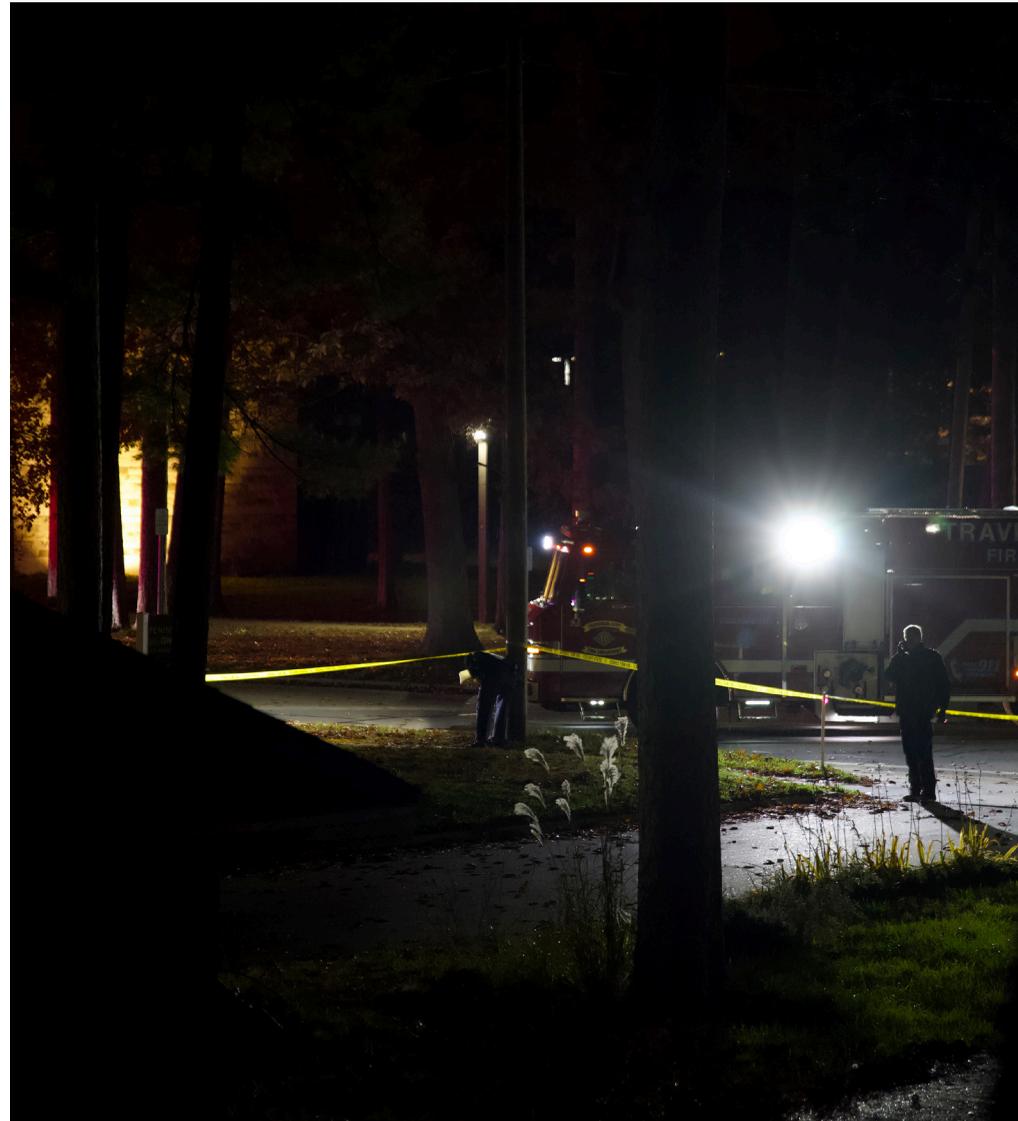


WHITE PINE PRESS

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



NMC Goes Into Lockdown During Nearby Traverse City Shooting

Jacob Dodson
Staff Writer

Minnie Bardenhagen
Editor-in-Chief

On Saturday, Nov. 15, several shots rang out near NMC's central campus as two individuals fired at police officers responding to a call about a potential car theft on E. Eighth Street, near Garfield Avenue.

Earlier that night, one of the individuals had allegedly already shot and killed Lawrence Boyd IV, a 32-year-old city parking services employee who had confronted them in the State St. parking deck. His body was discovered the following morning. Boyd graduated from NMC in 2021 with an associates degree.

When police responded to the call about a potential theft, unrelated to the shooting of Boyd, the two men

fled on foot and one of them shot at the cops pursuing them. One of these shots grazed the pant leg of an officer, who was not injured. This police chase led to a shelter-in-place order for the surrounding area, which included the college. NMC's lockdown started at 10:44pm on Nov. 15 and was lifted at 1:30am on Nov. 16. According to NMC's Communications Department, law enforcement notified campus security that there were gunshots fired near NMC's campus, and advised going into lockdown.

During NMC's Nov. 24 Board of Trustees meeting, Chair Laura Oblinger shared her gratitude towards the NMC security team, mentioning Campus Safety Coordinator Garrett Croon and Security Site Supervisor Robert Basso.

"Our students are our number one asset and very important to us," Oblinger stated, "...[We are grateful] for them taking such good care of our students."

The firearm used in the shooting was found just outside a room at the Super8 motel where suspect Eugene Thompson(17) was arrested. The second suspect, Hunter Vanderwaal (18), was found and arrested on NMC's campus, according to multiple news reports.

The two suspects are currently being held without bond in the Grand Traverse County Jail. They are scheduled for a probable cause conference on Dec. 2 and a preliminary examination on Dec. 9.

Has Student Engagement Increased with Enrollment

Eily Knight
Staff writer

Bulletin boards around campus are often layered with colorful posters

advertising student groups and events. For the NMC Student Life department, these posters represent more than vivid graphics with dates and times—they are invitations to feel connected, supported, and part of something bigger during a student's time at the college. With enrollment rates rising 6.3% since spring 2025, student connections seem more important to push now than ever.

With students returning to more normal routines post-pandemic, NMC's Student Life team sees this moment as an opportunity to strengthen campus culture. Engagement may not yet match the growing student population, but staff and student leaders are working to show how joining a club, attending an event, or simply stopping by a table can boost confidence, build friendships, and ultimately help students stay and thrive.

Trunk-or-Treat before Halloween is typically the most popular event of the year, registering 23 cars in 2024. But this year, only 13 cars signed up. Student participation hasn't declined dramatically in events like Fall Fest—an opportunity for students to explore different student groups—but attendance has stayed consistent with years where enrollment was lower.

Student Life office manager Katy Knight attributes some lack of participation to less foot traffic on campus due to online classes and dual-enrolled or early college students, whose enrollment has increased 13% since fall 2024, according to the admissions office. But she also said that students may be anxious to participate in events. Geographical factors may also inhibit students from participating.

"We want everyone to feel invited," said Knight, whose

responsibilities mostly revolve around arranging and helping student groups plan events, while also advising the Student Ambassador and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) groups.

With variations between commuters, early college and dual-enrolled students, and dorm residents spread throughout the Great Lakes, Aero Park, and main campuses, it's difficult to wrangle a decent number of students into one area.

"PTK is trying to come up with ways to combine the campuses, or to make a central location," Knight said.

Although they are still fleshing out ideas, PTK's plan aspires to benefit student engagement and morale on campus by giving students a sense of belongingness.

When students encounter opportunities, they're often unsure whether or not they are private events. That's where PTK's upcoming college project comes in: a sticker pasted to a table, sign, or outside of a door to signify that everyone is welcome.

Knight said the project is designed to reduce doubt or hesitation that turns students away from participating and missing a fun experience, especially for students who are new, nervous, or unsure of where they fit in.

State-wide initiatives like the Community College Guarantee and Michigan Reconnect, as well as the Admissions department's new marketing strategies, which the White Pine Press covered in our Sept. 25 issue, have all contributed to the enrollment boom. But the work doesn't end at attracting students on campus. Once classes begin, the focus shifts from recruiting to helping them stay, succeed, and enjoy the college experience.

Attending a single event can make a real difference. Events like Fall Fest and Paint and Sip—a student ambassador event in early November—allow students the opportunity to mingle, make friends, and explore their interests. These low-pressure

activities help break students out of their shells and feel more comfortable navigating campus, Knight said.

Some students find community through personal interests in a more intimate setting. NMC currently supports approximately 30 student groups, with more expected to come in the spring 2025 semester. According to Knight, these groups help students gain confidence and life skills during their experience at NMC.

"Clubs help students build leadership and social skills and they have more fun," Knight said.

She noted that engagement can look different for everyone. Some choose to take on leadership roles and plan events, while others prefer to simply show up for the experience, which is just as valuable.

Dean of Students Lisa Thomas echoed the importance of engagement.

"If you can feel connected and feel like you belong, you're more likely to stay and persist at whatever your educational or personal goals are," she said. "Belongingness is a really important part of the college experience."

Research across the country backs her up. In an article published by the University of Houston, data shows that over 19,000 undergraduate students from diverse educational backgrounds engaged with student affairs, including events and student groups, which led to an noticeably higher retention rate, "especially among first-time-in-college (FTIC) and Pell-eligible students."

Although it may be intimidating for some students to walk into an unfamiliar environment with strangers, it only takes one step, said Knight.

"You don't have to be outgoing or know anyone," Knight said. "Just show up, and we'll handle the rest."

White Pine Press is Hiring

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

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

If you would like to learn more, contact faculty adviser Jacob Wheeler at jwheeler@nmc.edu or editor-in-chief Minnie Bardenhagen at barden34@mail.nmc.edu

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

Facebook: facebook.com/thewhitepinepress

Instagram: 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

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

WHITEPINEPRESS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Minnie Bardenhagen

STAFF WRITERS
Isabelle Plamondon
Eily Knight
Jace Dunlap
Brooklyn Bucy
Sydney Boettcher

PAGE DESIGNERS
Tuklor Williams
Adeline DePauw

PHOTOGRAPHY
Jacob Dodson

DELIVERY
Devon Bruner

FACULTY ADVISER
Jacob Wheeler

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

NEWSROOM 231.995.1173
DISTRIBUTION
ADVERTISING
EMAIL whitepinepress@gmail.com

Housing is a Human Right

Walking for Hope in Traverse City

Isabelle Plamondon
Staff Writer

I felt the sharp, early-winter air as I walked toward Central United Methodist Church on Nov. 19 for the 10th annual Walk for Health and Housing. Before reaching the building, people were already on the move. Some knew each other, and some didn't, but all of us were headed in the same direction with the same intention: to learn, to listen, and to walk—literally—in the shoes of neighbors experiencing homelessness.

A large crowd of people soon grew at the back of the church, bundled up in the darkening night. Traverse City police officers, NMC students, college professors, social workers, and other community members and volunteers were slowly trickling into the groupings. Student volunteers held lights and speakers above their heads to illuminate the soon-to-be presenters.

NMC student AbyGale Koualske talked to me about her personal connections with the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity, and how she has friends who have experienced it. "It's not something that is silent and it isn't talked about enough," she said. When I asked what misconceptions people may have had about people she knows who've struggled with housing, she said, "That they're not trying or that they choose to end up where they are."

Brandon Everest, a sociology professor at NMC, opened the event, thanking everyone for participating and bringing their support before introducing Ryan Hannon, the outreach director for Central United Methodist Church.

Hannon laid out how the event would happen. We would be walking to resource outlets and hearing from professionals working with the homeless populations at every stop. The first of these professionals we would be hearing from was Hannon himself.

He said that the church uses what they call "radical hospitality," which goes beyond mere friendliness and emphasizes warmth, openness, and authenticity, fostering a welcoming and helpful relationship with the populations they aid. In reference to this, he talked about the showers, food, mail service for people without an address, socks and gloves, and countless community partners that the church provides.

His words were practical, but what they revealed was profound: a recognition that basic dignity begins with meeting basic needs. He invited anyone who could volunteer or donate to do so.

Along the walk, I talked to students who had come because their teachers encouraged them—but stayed because the cause mattered to them. Bee Sanderson, an NMC student pursuing social work, told me that what gives her hope is "the immense amount of community resources and people willing to help."

I talked with Lisa Blackford, a psychology professor at NMC, and asked her about the importance of students participating, to which she said that it was the first-hand experience that mattered. She said, "Part of the walk itself is understanding how far a person has to walk every day just to get resources," she said.

At the Jubilee House, staff described themselves as the "front lines of homelessness." Laundry, showers, warmth, and food—small things that aren't small at all when you have nowhere else to go.

On our walk to the Governmental Center, I finally realized just how large our group was. We ended up getting separated by three rounds of traffic lights at crosswalks, splitting the crowd along the busy street.

Once we arrived, Traverse City Mayor Amy Shamroe stepped up and spoke with blunt honesty. "We know that what we're [government employees and elected officials] doing is helping," she said, "and we know that it isn't a solution." She called their efforts "band-aids," but also emphasized momentum: "All those pieces [housing vouchers, PILOTS, etc.] start coming together to give us a clearer picture of how we get to ending homelessness."

Ashley Halladay-Schmandt, a director with the Northwest Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness who partnered with Central United Methodist Church to facilitate the walk, followed her with what might be one of the clearest truths of the night: "Housing ends homelessness, period." And yet, she added through teary eyes, "The people we serve don't get to stop when things get hard, and neither do we."

That echoed something I'd heard from multiple students walking alongside me—that

people who brought them here cared enough to act. Koualske was one of them, saying, "The people who got us here care the most." There was hope in that.

Safe Harbor came next, with Josh Brandt, the fundraising chair for Safe Harbor and a volunteer at Central United Methodist Church, sharing some statistics. This past year was the first year that Safe Harbor was open year-round, and they had a huge success in helping the unhoused populations: they provided 24,735 warm bed nights, 393 unique individuals served, 15,675 meals eaten, 8,192 hot showers, 3,259 loads of laundry, and had over 2,300 volunteers.

But the numbers weren't the only thing that stuck with me. "We see parents trying to hold their families together, veterans who have served this country, individuals rebuilding after addiction and loss," said Cole Ferris, from the Goodwill Inn.

Then he added, "What amazes me every time is that despite what they've been through, they still find ways to show compassion, share food, and to check on each other and care."

His message was one of possibility. "You can't heal if you don't have a safe place to rest," he said, "Every time someone gets housed... It's proof that compassion works."

At the street outreach stop, Goodwill's Homeless Services Manager Bailey LaPan said something that challenged every misconception I grew up hearing about "the homeless."

"Housing isn't something to earn," he told us. "It's a human right."

He talked about trauma, about trust that isn't handed over easily, and about showing up "tomorrow and the next day," as "consistent purveyors of hope."

He then said words that I'll never forget: "The people we serve aren't broken, the systems intended to support them are."

It clicked then—the language matters. The person-first language I heard most of the night wasn't performative; it was a practice of restoring dignity. A reminder: they are people first.

A sign read: "Who are we as human beings if we ignore the suffering of others?" The woman carrying it, Dana Henrick, told me she'd been handed it years ago during the same walk by someone who had to leave. She has carried it ever since. "It gives me hope," she told me, "Seeing this many people care about the same things is really inspiring."

Lastly, we heard from Traverse City Police Officer Krista Fryczynski, the unhoused people's liaison, who described what she sees every morning: exhausted people carrying everything they own on a bike or in a backpack, afraid to set their things down because they will likely get stolen. "I see individuals who are just trying to survive," she said,

"These struggles don't arise from a single choice."

She then said, "It is nearly impossible to stabilize any part of your life without a safe, consistent place to live." I knew she was right. I had watched that reality play out in my own father's life.

For 10 years, he drifted across couches—friends, coworkers, girlfriends, parents—always trying, always working, always slipping further behind. He worked multiple jobs and struggled with substance abuse. Eventually, when the couches ran out, and his car broke down, he became homeless.

As his daughter, I didn't understand what was happening. I couldn't help, and I didn't yet know how deep the trauma of housing insecurity can run.

Walking into each stop of this event, I kept thinking: he could have been walking these routes. He could have come to these same places hoping for warmth, for support, for someone to look him in the eyes and see a human being—not a problem, not a stereotype, not a failure.

Maybe that's why this walk felt heavier for me, and also more hopeful.

I came to the walk with my father's story in my heart—his homelessness, my helplessness, and years of not knowing what to do with the shame, fear, and grief that came with watching someone you love try to survive without stability.

But I left with something else. I left with the words of the speakers and the feelings they carried in my heart.

I left believing that change isn't theoretical—it's happening, slowly, imperfectly, unevenly, but happening. I left believing that hope doesn't just exist in broad systems and policies—it exists in people. And that the people experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness are exactly that: people—with stories, with trauma, with resilience, with compassion, with worth.



Photo by Isabelle Plamondon

Organization Promotes Petition to Redesign Voting in Michigan

Jace Dunlap
Staff Writer

A non-partisan, grassroots organization, Rank MI Vote was founded in 2019 to promote ranked-choice voting (RCV) in Michigan. The organization believes the implementation of RCV in Michigan would help reduce stress for voters, increase voter turnout, and help defuse political tensions. Rank MI Vote held a presentation to promote RCV in the Dutmers Theater at NMC's Denny's Museum on Nov. 19, to garner support for a petition they hope to take to Lansing to amend the Michigan constitution.

The premise of RCV is that voters would get more choices when it comes to voting. On the ballot, voters rank the candidates from whom they want to win, most to least. If the ballots are tallied and no candidate has a majority, whoever has the fewest votes has their ballots redistributed to other candidates, based on the ranking decided by the voter, until one person has a majority. Currently, Maine and Alaska use RCV, in addition to New York City, Minneapolis, and San Francisco, for some municipal elections. Rank MI Vote believes that because a candidate will be winning by a majority, the population they represent will be happier with them in office.

Rank MI Vote believes that Michigan's voting system would dramatically change for the better with the implementation of RCV. Rank MI Vote's website states that "Today, Michigan's election rules prevent local ballots from using Ranked Choice Voting, even in the five municipalities (Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Ferndale, Kalamazoo, and Royal Oak) that have voted in favor of implementing it." Michigan currently does not have any legislation for or against RCV, meaning it cannot be implemented until there is. Because of this, Rank MI Vote's goal is to gather a petition with 446,198 valid signatures to get RCV on the November 2026 ballot, hopefully creating an amendment to the Michigan constitution allowing the use of RCV. Additionally, they hold that amending the constitution itself would give RCV longevity in Michigan because it cannot be as easily removed when terms end, and there is a shift in political party control.

With the implementation of RCV, a few things will change. First, RCV would be used state-wide for the election of the US President, the US Senate & House, the Michigan Governor, Michigan Attorney General, and Michigan Secretary of State. Second, the date of the primaries would be moved closer to the beginning of the year to allow voters and clerks more time to prepare. Finally, it would change voting as we know it for younger generations. Joe Spaulding, the campaign director for Rank MI Vote, believes that these changes will give voters more freedom at the polls, and consequently, they will see a larger voter turnout. Spaulding said, "We are trying to give voters more choice and more voice".

Despite the efforts of Rank MI Vote, a poll done by Glengariff Group Inc. found 53.9% of survey participants from Michigan strongly oppose RCV, with majorities in opposition from both Democrats and Republicans. Many other projects and organizations, like Honest Election Project and StopRCV, believe that RCV may cause gaps in ballot integrity if adopted. Additionally, on Aug. 20, House Bill 4707, which would ban the use of RCV in Michigan, passed through the State House and was sent to the Senate. After reaching the Senate, the bill was sent to the Election and Ethics Committee for consideration. When asked for comment on this, Spaulding said that Rank MI Vote does not expect any further action from the committee, and the organization sees it as an injustice to citizens of Michigan because the bill was not brought forward by citizens, but pushed through the House by State Rep. Rachelle.

"Ranked Choice Voting, with its rounds of counting and reallocation, only breeds skepticism—especially whenever a close contest invites lawsuits and recount battles. Michigan doesn't need ballot-box gymnastics. We need integrity, clarity, and confidence, which are all qualities Ranked-Choice Voting cannot deliver," said Smit.

Michigan House Republicans added that another significant downside to implementing RCV is that it would have a steep cost, upwards of 10 of millions of dollars. In contrast, Rank MI Vote claims that the machines currently used for tabulation are capable of counting RCV ballots, only requiring "Minor software upgrades and state certification are all that's needed for implementation."

Rank MI Vote has continued to keep college-age adults in mind when pushing for RCV implementation. Spaulding reports that when looking for volunteers, they have seen a much

Pregnancy confirmation

NO PRESSURE. JUST CLARITY.

- ▶ Confirm your pregnancy with a free ultrasound
- ▶ Know how far along you are
- ▶ Understand your options

Thrive
MEDICAL CLINIC



thrivemedicalclinic.org | 231-929-3488



more diverse demographic of people wanting to help the organization than what you would typically expect. They have been surprised by the number of young men who have gotten involved with the program. Spaulding thinks this is because young people are willing to fight for this change because they want a better future with more options.

Photo by RankMIVote website

Investing in Hope

Malala Fund Leaders Speak on Male Allies and the Global Push for Girls' Education

Isabelle Plamondon “122 million girls have no access to education,” Sue Gunawardena-Vaughn, the Malala Fund’s Global Lead for Grant Strategy, told community members, students, and educators at Milliken Auditorium at NMC’s Dennon Museum. Her words hung in the earthy air, scents of turmeric and cumin wafting in from the hallway, where curry was served at the reception. A few gasped, and others quietly muttered to their seatmates at the absurd number.

Eily Knight
Staff Writer

With education being a given in the United States for everyone, regardless of gender, it seemed difficult for audience members to imagine a part of the world where women and girls are still merely objects meant to vanish behind marriage in their early teen years— but they exist.

On Nov. 11, Gunawardena-Vaughn participated in a student session with a World Cultures class, as well as other interested NMC students. This was followed by an event hosted by the International Affairs Forum (IAF) on Nov. 12, where Ziuaddin Yousafzai, a co-founder of the Malala fund and father to Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, joined her on stage. The pair dove into the mission of the Malala Fund with Dr. Ken Warner, the moderator for the event (and NMC Board member), while also sharing their personal experiences and inspiration behind their passion: ensuring education for all girls.

The Malala Fund is a non-profit organization dedicated to securing at least 12 years of free, safe, and quality education for girls across the world, who would otherwise have no access. Founded by Malala, the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner, and her father Ziauddin Yousafzai, the fund has been working for nearly 13 years in poverty-stricken countries, including Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Brazil, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania.

During the IAF-hosted event at NMC, Gunawardena-Vaughn talked about these countries and the new approach that the Malala Fund is taking. She said that following the Malala Fund’s Strategic Planning Meeting in January, they are moving away from simply buying the resources and choosing to instead focus on policy advocacy and fixing the problems at their roots, which will impact hundreds of thousands more girls.

One of the main ways that the Malala Fund is doing this is through what they call their “Education Champion Network,” also known as partners, which are organizations working on the ground in these countries for the Malala Fund.

“They work in tandem with local NGOs, government agencies, and regional and provincial governments to advance a girl’s rights to education through various aspects of legislation that is relevant to their country,” Gunawardena-Vaughn elaborated.

In Afghanistan, which Yousafzai notes has the highest number of out-of-school girls, the Taliban continues to issue a stream of restrictive edicts that systemically erase women and girls from public life.

“Girls are not allowed to access education, they’re not allowed to speak loudly in public— what a way to silence women and girls,” said Gunawardena-Vaughn, clearly aggravated by the injustice. She then called this a form of “invisibilizing” half the population, a reality that both Yousafzai and Gunawardena-Vaughn argue should be recognized globally as gender apartheid and codified as a crime against humanity.

“While the situation in Afghanistan is quite dire,” Gunawardena-Vaughn said, “other countries have huge populations of out-of-school girls as well.” She promptly continued down the list of countries, and what the Malala Fund and their partners are doing to help them. The fund also has initiatives in countries including Tanzania, Nigeria, Brazil, and Ethiopia.

“The kind of multiplier effect of these barriers makes it almost impossible for certain girls in certain communities to access education,” she said, reminding the audience that education is not a privilege but a fundamental human right.

However, laws are only good if the people and the communities support and implement them fully. “You have to change communities, you have to win hearts, you have to win minds, and then legislative policies that get passed will get implemented,” she said.

She further explained, with hopeful gusto, that what is essential to making these laws meaningful is “Building solidarity among youth across countries, amplifying the voices of rural and disadvantaged girls, and transforming community attitudes.”

Ziuaddin Yousafzai and Gunawardena-Vaughn had different experiences and upbringings, but both ended up leading them down a path to stand up and fight for what they believe in: a girl’s right to education.

Yousafzai grew up in a small village in Pakistan in a patriarchal family with five sisters and one older brother. Although they grew up under the same roof, he witnessed two entirely different parenting styles and expectations compared to his sisters.

He stated solemnly, “I could see that my parents had hundreds of dreams for this one boy, but for the five sisters, their only dream was to get them married as early as possible.”

He was always provided with better clothes, commodities, and most importantly,

education— his true passion, the most influential factor that changed and formed him into the man he is today. This led him to the realization that the worst discrimination that his five sisters went through was deprivation from schooling.

“Education changed me and transformed me into the kind of person that I became in my life, and it gave me the beautiful values of equality, compassion, love, and respect,” he said, “I became a staunch believer of education, particularly girls’ education.”

This inspired him to open a school of his own in the Swat Valley of Pakistan in 1994, which included girls—a rare and controversial move at the time. Although it struggled with financial hardships in its early days, the school that started with three students has blossomed to enroll a thousand students in this upcoming year.

His passion trickled into his own parenting, where he made sure to include and encourage his daughter, Malala, to follow her dreams and speak her mind— to equip her with the confidence to become the woman she wanted to be.

He is spearheading male allyship by discussing the benefits and importance that educating girls brings to a community with various community and religious leaders, something Gunawardena-Vaughn believes is very important.

“I think for fathers to hear from another father is, again, a very relational connection thing.” She said.

Being brought up by a father similar to Yousafzai, Gunawardena-Vaughn said she is living proof of the positive impact a father’s support has on his daughters.

“I have so much gratitude for fathers who allow their daughters to write their own stories and to dream huge dreams,” she said.

Her father rejected the label, she said, but for all intents and purposes, he was a feminist. She grew up in a household where her parents supported her education first and foremost, rather than marriage.

Her father’s own mother didn’t get married until she was 30 with a master’s degree, an unaccustomed path for a woman in the 1930s. But this ingrained the value of believing in and educating women, a principle he brought to his own family.

“When you educate a girl or woman, that impact is multigenerational,” she stated.

Refusing education to girls not only violates their fundamental right, but it also has economic consequences. She estimated that between fifteen to thirty trillion dollars is lost globally in income, assets, and resources by denying girls’ education. Knowledge allows them to unlock their potential, express their ideas, and bring value to not only their communities, but also the world, she claimed: “investing in girls is investing in hope.”

Yousafzai left the audience with one last piece of advice: to advocate for their rights when violated, to be the people who correct injustice rather than wait for someone else to get involved.

He stated, “When we stand for something, work for it, and we lead by example with empathy, the people really change.”

Anyone interested in volunteering or involving themselves with the Malala fund’s fight for girls’ education can contact Jim Bensley (jbensley@nmc.edu) for more information.

*From right to left: Eily Knight and Sue Gunawardena-Vaughn
Photo by Keiara Pettengill*



The Value of Diplomacy

Veteran and Retired Diplomat Remembers His Service as He Warns About the Present

Minnie Bardenhagen
Editor-In-Chief

“Some of you are not going to like the rest of this. I take responsibility,” Jack Segal said to a crowd of community members and veterans, “Today, I watch with concern as a former TV personality has become our Secretary of War.”

The day before his 80th birthday, Jack Segal made a speech during NMC’s Veterans’ Day ceremony on Nov. 11. Segal is an army veteran who served two tours in Vietnam and a retired diplomat who, among many things, was a primary crafter of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Agreement between the United States and Russia. His journey brought him to Northern Michigan, where he became an active member of the NMC community.

In his speech, he cautioned listeners about the leadership that Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth brings to the Pentagon. Segal spoke of his opposition to Hegseth’s effort to make the military less “woke,” saying that it takes attention away from strategy and focuses excessively on soldiers’ genders and looks. He expressed particular disgust at Hegseth’s message to military leaders who gathered in late September of this year, where he lectured them on grooming and fitness.

Segal warned of the increasing need for the Pentagon to focus on the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the growing relationships between the US’s adversaries, such as China and Russia, technological advancements, and the strategies and challenges that come with them.

“This is not reality TV, this is reality,” Segal said in his speech.

Before becoming President Trump’s Defense Secretary, Hegseth was primarily known for being a TV personality on Fox News starting in 2014. However, Hegseth has a military career that started in the early 2000s. After becoming part of the Minnesota National Guard, he was deployed to Guantanamo Bay, where he guarded the detainees. In the years that followed, he volunteered in the Iraq War, where he served as a civil affairs officer in Baghdad. Between 2011 and 2014, Hegseth taught at a Counterinsurgency Training Center in Afghanistan.

Segal made clear he does not think Hegseth’s military experience gave him enough knowledge to run the Pentagon. “Guarding 20 geriatric prisoners at Guantanamo, then going off to make money on Wall Street, then volunteering to serve in Baghdad as a public relations staffer, then finally, another resume-building, short-term training the last class of Afghan army officers in Kabul. And then back to Fox TV. It was an unlikely path to leading the two million military and civilian experts of our Department of Defense.”

“He goes to the Pentagon, he starts firing three and four-star generals... They will have 20, 30 years of experience... I just think he’s so horribly unqualified and that the president should

have seen that right away at the beginning,” Segal told the White Pine Press. He pointed out the chat leak in early March, where Hegseth revealed details of a military operation to a group chat on the app Signal that accidentally included a journalist.

“What I am worried about is the control of four nuclear forces, and that should not be in the hands of somebody as incompetent as Hegseth. He’s got way too much power.”

Segal was drafted into the army at the age of 19. He was considered for an officer position in the army, as he was a college student.

“That’s part of the indoctrination process... which I mean analytically, I look back at it... I mean, I was just a kid living in Philadelphia. I had never had a gun in my life.”

He went to Fort Benning, Georgia to undergo training to become an officer. While there, he had a roommate named Larry Stefan. Stefan and Segal were close, as they were both experiencing the same unknowns of being drafted. They ended up taking different paths in Vietnam. Stefan died four weeks into the war.

Segal keeps a picture of his gravestone, which shows how short his life was cut. “We were really brothers, ‘cause he didn’t know anything either.” Stefan’s name is inscribed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC.

For nine months, Segal evaded death and watched as soldiers in his platoon died or contracted serious injuries. That was until he was injured in an explosion, which sent him to the hospital for three months. His second tour in Vietnam consisted of more planning and paperwork before he quit to become a diplomat and work to help the US avoid future wars.

“Diplomacy backed by power gives us the leverage to seek opportunities to demonstrate our wisdom, to deescalate conflicts, and pursue wise solutions to our disagreements with our adversaries,” Segal said in his speech, “A future of more endless wars, more Vietnams, more Iraqs, more Afghanistans, more lives cut too short, like Larry Stefan’s was, need not be our destiny.”

Segal and his wife, Karen Segal, are former co-chairs of the International Affairs Forum (IAF) at NMC. This program brings international affairs experts to the college to talk about current global issues. Segal also taught classes at the NMC centering around world affairs.

Segal will be a featured panelist for IAF’s The True Cost of Defense documentary screening on Dec. 10 at 7pm in the Dennis Milliken Auditorium. The event is free of charge, and tickets are available on the IAF website.

Photo by Keiara Pettengill



**1217 E FRONT ST
231.929.2999**

**1294 W SOUTH AIRPORT RD
231.935.9355**

JIMMYJOHNS.COM

I Knocked, and No One Answered...

A Student's Experience Being Locked Out of Their Dorm During the Nov. 15 Lockdown

Jacob Dodson Staff Writer On Nov. 15 and 16, NMC was put into lockdown from 10:44pm to 1:30am after shots were fired in a larceny turned police chase near the college. That night, I wasn't thinking about violence or crimes—just feeding a cat and worrying about daily life. That's when I thought I heard five sharp booms. Usually, when you hear loud popping sounds or noises, you think of fireworks, but these were unmistakably gunshots, confirmed when I glanced out the window of my girlfriend's apartment near NMC's campus and saw a police car park at the intersection of Front and Fair Street. My initial thought was that it was the police officer who fired shots, not a citizen, and thinking nothing else of it, I walked back to student housing like normal. But as more and more police began streaming in, covering Front and Fair, and setting up a perimeter on every street connected to it in the area, I realized that this was very different.

There must have been at least 10 cars in total in view, including state police. While walking, I saw a security guard sitting in a car and asked him what was happening. As became a pattern through the night, he was not forthcoming with information. All he said was that the campus was locked down and to "get wherever I was going." I didn't know what that really meant at this point, but as it turns out, it's quite literal what that means in practice: during a lockdown, there is no entry to buildings, nor exit—and I experienced this first hand.

My keycard didn't work when trying to enter the

dorm, and no one would answer the call button, either. Eventually, after five attempts, I got somebody on the line who said I couldn't go in the building. Asking where I should go instead, they asked if I had a car to sleep in, which I didn't. After further conversation and a mumbling reply, I heard the words "Innovation Center," and promptly walked there instead.

The feeling of tension and danger was palpable at this stage, and after I walked there, I almost didn't knock on the door out of fear, but I did anyway, and the security guard thankfully let me in, though a bit begrudgingly. Inside, I found another student locked out of the dorm with nowhere to go, as well as hectic commotion.

The Innovation Center felt more like a command center, with security coming back and forth, and President Nick Nissley at the center, who had a grave look on his face. Security fluttered by, busy with new information and updates from the police, moving in and out. We students got no information besides to just stay put, and after about an hour of waiting, they eventually let us into our dorms.

This entire misadventure begs the question: What is the purpose of a lockdown? To prevent a shooter from entering campus buildings? Sure, but what about the students left on the outside, then? What if I had a car to go to, slept there, and the culprits decided to steal that car?

A student, who wishes to remain anonymous, told me that they had trouble getting into their apartment that night, with police having closed the road with sentry cars

and yellow tape, actively searching with flashlights and dogs right in their backyard. They eventually did get in, but only after getting permission from the police to move forward, and after they called security to open their doors for them. If there are murderers nearby, shouldn't the goal be to get people inside as soon as possible?

At the end of the day, these buildings require an ID. Technically, it is safer for the students already in these buildings to have the security of knowing that no one will be coming in. But what about the students left outside? All it takes is a moment for violence to strike, and whatever justifies the current system does not take this into account.

Upon receiving an email from the aforementioned student, President Nissley had this to say about protocols now and into the future.

"Our Security team will review this incident with our local law enforcement partners to identify any opportunities to improve how we prepare for and communicate in emergencies."

This was followed by a recommendation to contact NMC counseling services if they found the event to be stressful or traumatizing, which is similar to what Marcus Bennett, Associate Dean of Campus Life, wrote in an email he sent after the incident, too.

Regardless, it's clear that some codes and protocols need to be updated, and college faculty at least are aware of that. It's a miracle no one else was hurt that night.

Photo by Jacob Dodson



More ways to bank. *That's a plus.*

- + Mobile and Online Banking
- + Live Chat and Video Chat
- + Drive Thru ITMs/ATMs
- + Two Traverse City Locations



CREDIT UNION +
Bank on the *plus* side
tbacu.com

I listened to 365 albums this year

Sydney Boettcher
Staff Writer

There are more than 50,000 songs uploaded to Spotify every day. There's a lot of good music out there, but it's so hard to find diamonds when you have to dig through all this rough. Honestly, there's so much music being released everywhere all of the time that no one person could listen to it all. But perhaps one truly dedicated person could come close. So on New Year's Eve of 2024, I decided that for 2025, I wanted to listen to one album every day.

I did this for a few reasons. The big one is I love music, and I want to listen to as much of it as I can while I still have ears and a brain to use them.

I wanted to expand my tastes, step out of my comfort zone, and explore some genres I haven't really sunk my teeth into until now. I also wanted to address some musical blind spots I had; there's a long list of classic albums I just hadn't listened to until I started this challenge: Power Corruption and Lies, Blowout Comb, and Songs In The Key Of Life, to name a few.

I also wanted to hone my own fledgling composition skills. I'm studying Audio Technology at NMC, and part of that degree requires some music theory classes, which includes songwriting as part of my final exams. By exposing myself to as wide a range of music as I can, I'm opening my mind to the possibilities of what's even possible.

The challenge itself is pretty simple. Every day, I find an album I've never heard before, and listen to it from front to back, no skips—Any artist, genre, time period, or other category.

It went a lot smoother than I expected at first. I found time to listen easily: while I was driving, doing school work, or playing video games. I was almost always caught up, and when I wasn't, it was easy enough to jam in an extra album or two.

Partway through summer, I got a horrible cold and was out of commission for almost a week, and I fell out of the habit of listening to music entirely. Before long, I was over a month behind. So I hunkered down, put on my headphones, and got to work. As of writing, I have listened to 325 albums front to back, totalling almost 243 hours of listening (not counting repeats or albums I've listened to before).

All things considered, I'm happy I did this; it was a great idea. There were many albums I had little interest in that I only listened to because I had a quota to meet. More often than not, I really enjoyed those albums, and I wouldn't have given them the time of day if it weren't for this challenge. I found a lot of good music this year, and I'd like to share some of it with you.

Balloonisms by Mac Miller is my album of the year. It was my most anticipated album of 2025, and it did not disappoint. The production is dark and surreal, and Miller's lyrics are sharp, funny, and raw. I didn't start listening to him until after he had died and Circles had come out, so this album was the first and most likely last Mac Miller album rollout I'll ever get to experience. This is special to me, and I don't expect everyone to resonate with it as strongly as I did.

Another early favorite was The Mollusk, by Ween. A bizarre late '90s pseudo-concept alt-rock about the ocean: it's eclectic and challenging in sound and scope, but simply refuses to take itself for anything else seriously for a second. I aspire to this level of carefree brilliance and whimsy.

The Scholars by Car Seat Headrest is the album that reminded me why I love rock and roll. A sprawling, operatic, bombastic triumph of Prog Rock. Clocking in at 70 minutes long, it's an album that I will not soon forget.

Isola by Kent is a brooding and melodramatic Smashing Pumpkins-esque '90s sad rock album. The vibes are immaculate, with booming guitar riffs and wailing lyrics that hit you so hard you forget the whole thing is sung in Swedish.

United States of Horror is one of the most bizarre, abrasive, and aggressive albums I've heard in a long time. Glitchy hip hop mixed with industrial metal and punk, Ho99o9 tries their hardest to blow your speakers out and leave even the most hardcore listeners' ears ringing. If you like heavy stuff, you need to check this album out. It blew my mind.

HUMAN ERROR AT KENNY'S HOUSE is a collaboration between acclaimed underground hip hop producer Kenny Segal and experimental jazz trio HUMAN ERROR CLUB. It sounds like the four of them threw themselves into a blender just to see what would happen.

Lavender Country's self-titled 1973 debut is something special to me. I don't really know how to write about this album. It's beautiful, and it's queer to its core in a time when that wasn't accepted anywhere, let alone in country music. It's a celebration and declaration of identity, content to simply delight in itself. There is no end to this thought, not one I've come up with yet. I'm going to be thinking about this album for a long time.

I've come to realize that my opening statement was wrong. While there is a lot of rough, there are countless diamonds. There were very few albums I listened to that I didn't like. It kind of rekindled my hope for contemporary music. It doesn't matter what happens, good music will always be made, and I'll be right here, listening to it for as long as I can.

