

THE LIVE WIRE

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Manchester Community College

Free

MyCommnet Alert System Ready for Enrollment

By Joseph Cavanaugh
Live Wire Staff Writer

Software that allows college officials to notify students, faculty and staff of emergencies on campus has been purchased and installed by Connecticut Community Colleges. The system, called myCommnet Alert, will operate via text message and is available now, said Susan Gibbens, director of Public Safety and Environmental Health at Manchester Community College. All that is needed is for people to sign up.

"This system provides the MCC police department with another tool for emergency notification, and makes the campus a safer place," said Gibbens.

Enrollment in the notification system takes place through the myCommnet portal, and is permitted to all full-time or part-time faculty, staff and students, free of charge, Gibbens said. In the case of an emergency, the system will be activated, sending a text message to those who have enrolled, including details pertaining to the emergency, she said.

While the myCommnet Alert system is now in use by all Connecticut Community Colleges, emergency notification will be on a campus-specific basis, Gibbens said. Enrollment is voluntary, but encouraged, she said.

Some students are open to the program.

"Obviously it is up to the individual's discretion if they want to participate," said Nick Zemek, a full-time MCC student. "I don't see any downfall in signing up."

Others are more enthusiastic.

"I didn't know it was that easy to enroll," said part-time MCC student Danielle Saunders. "The next time I go on to myCommnet I'll have to sign up. It seems like a good idea."

The myCommnet Alert system is powered by MIR3, "a worldwide provider of emergency notification systems," according to an informational release about myCommnet Alert available from the Campus Police Department in the Frederick W. Lowe Building, room 170.

The goal of MIR3 includes "[allowing] immediate large-scale dissemination of time-critical information through voice or text to anyone, anywhere, any-



Graphic by Shannon Hogan

time," according to the company's website.

Approximately 100 students and faculty have enrolled in the MCC myCommnet Alert system so far, Gibbens said. A test of the system is tentatively planned for December, she said.

"It is encouraging to see [MCC] taking this step—using today's wireless capabilities in such a progressive, positive manner," said one MCC faculty member, who asked not to be identified. "Hopefully there won't be any emergencies that put the cam-

pus in imminent danger, but if there are, it is nice to know that someone is already thinking about it."

Personal information provided during enrollment in myCommnet Alert will be kept confidential and will only be used for emergency notification, according to the informational release about the system.

"Hopefully with this article and some more forthcoming advertisement," Gibbens said, "knowledge about the [myCommnet Alert] system will spread, and more students will sign up."

By David St. Jacques
Live Wire Layout Editor

Caution Mounts in Face of Recent Thefts

In the 2007 school year at Manchester Community College, there were 39 reported cases of larceny and two reported cases of burglary on campus, according to the MCC Police Department's Crime Log. The 2007 Crime Log lists only two of those cases as closed. Statistically, if your possessions are stolen on campus, the chances of getting your stuff back are almost nil.

Susan Gibbens, MCC's director of Public Safety and Environmental Health, said most of the thefts on campus are "crimes of opportunity" resulting from unattended property and unlocked lockers and vehicles.

"Unless, as in cases of pattern thieves, the thief is caught in the act, we have a very low incidence of recovery," said Gibbens.

This semester, MCC has suffered from a rash of vehicle break-ins as well. On Oct. 20 a group of people broke into nine vehicles in Lot C, specifically targeting

Hondas and Toyotas, said Gibbens. The thieves broke the vehicles' driver's side windows, removed the fuses that enable the vehicles' alarms, and made off with personal items, stereos, and other parts. On Nov. 3, a Honda and an Acura in Lot B were broken into in a similar fashion.

Lindsey Debelleis, an MCC student, had a CD player, textbooks, a backpack, a purse, and a cell phone stolen from her car on Oct. 7. She said the incident has left her with a bad feeling about safety on campus.

"School is a place where you are supposed to feel safe," said Debelleis. "I go to school expecting to learn, not to get my car broken into... because of these robberies I don't feel safe anymore."

Master Sgt. Mike Davis, of the MCPD, said that on a typical school day patrols are assigned to the AST, LRC, and the Lowe Building. Directed patrols

are also conducted around the school's parking lots. In response to the recent increase in vehicle break-ins, patrols have been "stepped up a bit," said Davis, and plans are in place to install five exterior security cameras around campus.

But, with a full-time police force of nine officers tasked with patrolling MCC's 160 acres of campus, the responsibility for preventing thefts falls mostly on students, staff, faculty and other visitors to campus. The school's security officers simply can't be everywhere all of the time, Davis said.

So, the question MCC attendees need to ask themselves is "What can I do to keep from becoming a victim of theft?"

In terms of vehicle break-ins, unfortunately, the old adage that "If someone wants your stuff badly enough, they're going to get it" remains true.

The "crimes of opportunity," however, can be prevented if attendees take simple steps to safeguard their belongings.

"Use locks on your lockers," said Gibbens. "Don't leave valuables visible in passenger compartments, keep your doors locked, and use the trunk [to place valuables] if you have one."

Gibbens said no one should hesitate to call with any suspicions or concerns.

"If something doesn't look right or feel right, report it," said Gibbens. "We'd rather be responding to an incident that turns out to be nothing than to find out after the fact that something could have been done."

MCCPD also encourages students, faculty and staff to call and request an escort to their vehicle at night if they feel unsafe for any reason. Call 860-512-3680 or visit the security window in the Lowe Building lobby at any time to ask for an escort.



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Winter Arts Festival Features Fine Arts, Music and Literature in One Evening

The Winter Arts Festival will be held Friday, Dec. 12, at 6 p.m., in the lobby of the AST and the Newspace Gallery. It includes an exhibition of student fine art, and vocal and instrumental performances by MCC students. The evening will also include the Writing Contest Awards Presentation in the Fireside Commons, in the library, in the LRC. Authors of the winning essays, short stories, and poems are: Sylvia Abbott, Barbara Benson, Joe Alasso, Kristina Cedrone, Chris Clark, Jason Cunningham, Amanda Gonsalves, Vivianne Grabinski, Amy Grigitis, Kevin Kelly, Andrew King, Siobahn Kinney, Brian Lalama, Nicole Marella, Nicole Marozzi, Molly Mitzman, J. Ashley Odell, Chetan Patel, Jeff Pinto, Cynthia Roberts-Diaz, Rayion Sawyers, Joseph Skelding, Christina Smith and Elizabeth Szewczyk. Excerpts from the winning entries will be read.

All students, faculty, staff, and members of the community are invited to share in this annual celebration of the arts at MCC. Refreshments will be provided. The event is free and open to the public. For more information contact Susan Classen-Sullivan at (860) 512-2693, or by email at sclassen-sullivan@mcc.commnet.edu.

Attention!

The Live Wire wants you! If you are interested in writing, taking photos, creating graphics, doing layout, or contributing to your student newspaper please stop by our office in the Lowe Building, room L253.

Economic Crises Affects National and Local Businesses

By Vernon Tyson
Live Wire Staff Writer

Multiple store locations and even some entire chains are finding it hard to stay afloat during America's economic troubles. All across the country big name companies are filing for bankruptcy or simply hanging it up, and this is also affecting local businesses.

An example of the national trend is the story of Circuit City. Going into the 2008 holiday season, Circuit City was probably the biggest name to take a hit, as they announced they were filing for bankruptcy protection in October. Its Connecticut locations are feeling the effect of that move, with stores in Enfield, Manchester and West Hartford all losing business to their long-time rivals, especially Best Buy.

"It has been a slow year, but still in some locations we double the revenue Circuit City puts out," said Dolly Rodriguez, an operations manager at the Enfield Best Buy. Best Buy is experiencing problems of its own, but it still soars above its rivals, said Rodriguez, so much so, that it is not even really considered a "rival."

"Now that this rivalry mentality is coming to an end, we can focus on our own ways of satisfying customer needs rather than looking at it like

'What can we offer that Circuit City doesn't?'" said Rodriguez. "It should be interesting to see what happens."

On the local level, smaller businesses have been struggling to survive against big box stores. Today's shopper is much more inclined to spend their dollar at the Home Depot 20 minutes away than the local hardware store down the street.

Donna Myron, a Manchester resident and casual shopper in the Buckland Hills area, said she would prefer there only be one or two stores to choose from.

"It gets frustrating when you buy something and then see it \$20 cheaper down the street. Then you gotta get your receipt and go through that whole process, and it really takes the jolly out of the season," said Myron.

But some consumers are making a conscious choice to spend locally.

"The atmosphere just isn't there, you know? They try to act like they care so much, but at the end of the day they're just mimicking the feel of small business," said Donald Wilkerson, a Windsor resident. "All these companies care about is money, and I have never had any angry disputes with any local store I shop at."

By Sarah Squires
Live Wire Staff Writer

Finals are coming up in a couple of days and those exams will bring along various degrees of test anxiety for students.

The main reason anxiety about a test usually comes up is that students are "afraid of failure," said Florence A. Sheils, the director of the Center for Student Development at Manchester Community College. It also comes up because students are not well-prepared and do not know how to study for specific disciplines, said Sheils. Studying for biology is different than studying for math or English.

The reasons for anxiety may be the same for most students, but the level of anxiety can vary from student to student. For Mary Costello, a first year student at MCC, anxiety comes the night before the test and hits hard. She puts off studying and then freaks out when she realizes the amount of material she has to go over. Caity Leamy, another first year student at MCC, anxiety comes much sooner and settles by the night before the test. She said she stresses herself out a few days before hand, telling herself she doesn't know the material, when in reality, she's faking herself out because she actually knows more than she lets herself believe. Like their different experiences with anxiety, students deal with it differently as well.

"I study like a madman, stress myself out beyond all measure, and drink lots of coffee," Leamy said.

Costello agreed. "Studying in advance definitely helps," she said.

For students who have it much worse, and possibly black out due to the anxiety, seeing a counselor well before the test is highly recommended, said Sheils. Learning the right way to study for different disciplines, that cramming is never helpful and learning along the way is ideal, though it takes time, Sheils said.

Also, students don't realize that they need two or three hours of study time, out of class, for every hour they spend in class, said Sheils, who also provides a means for this to happen.

Tutoring services are free at MCC. The sessions are twice a week for half an hour each, per course. They're broken up so that attendees can review the material and then have time to go over it at home. Sheils

Student Senate President Gets Positive Start

By Abigail Boulrice
Live Wire Staff Writer

This semester Donna Chambers was elected Student Senate President for Manchester Community College. The students voted her in and she has been doing her best to thank them ever since.

"I know a lot of the young people at the college," Chambers said. "A lot of them know me and a lot of them voted for me and I want to continue to inspire them and let them know they are somebody, they are important."

Running for Student Senate office is only one of the many ways Chambers has given back to the college.

"I'm one of the older adults going back to school," Chambers said. "I've always wanted to get back into school; little did I know I'd get as involved as I'm getting."

In addition to the Senate, Chambers is a member of the MCC Choir and she works with Career Services to put on the job fairs. She has been the opening act for the MCC Talent Show for the past two years, singing gospel songs. Chambers was part of the Ambassador's Club, and she volunteers at the annual Evening of Fine Wines wine auction event that raised money for the scholarship fund.

Outside of MCC, she is an ordained minister and a reverend at her church. She is also a licensed hair dresser and cosmetologist. Chambers was a substitute teacher at Cheney Tech, Prince Tech, and Goodwin Tech for 14 years. In high school, she was part of the student council and president of girl's league, she said. Now, she has added MCC Student Senate President to her resume.

"I want to make a change and a difference and add to what has already been

done," Chambers said. "I want to make a positive impact on student leadership. I want to be a good role model for students. I want to let people know how student government and how Student Senate work. I want to show people how things can change when people work together."

Though she was only elected in the middle of October, Chambers is already doing her best to better MCC. Her first mission is to equip all students at MCC with college IDs.

"A lot of people have busy schedules and they are not always aware of the one week they have to get student IDs," Chambers said. "If you miss it you have to wait till next semester and I don't agree with that. Also, she is working hard to increase the safety and security at MCC. The security in the parking lot has become an issue and Chambers hopes to resolve it."

"We are forming a team together to find out what we need to do," Chambers said. "Whether we need to hire more police or get cameras, things of that sort, we are working on it." Chambers has become known by other students at MCC as one to come up with ideas that are "all about the students," said Student Council Vice President, Sania Zaheer.

"I personally think she is incredibly intelligent," said Zaheer. "She's a good leader and she motivates us [the student senate] to do things we wouldn't do ourselves. She helps us work together."

The Student Senate meets monthly. For more information about student governance at MCC, visit the Student Senate office, Lowe 154K, or calls 860-512-3292.

Nervous? Tips for Test Anxiety

also suggested studying with classmates. Going over the material with someone else, even if they don't understand it as much as you do, is helpful. "If you can teach it, you know it," she said, adding that talking to classmates helps because you can see that they're "in the same boat you are."

As for the day of the test, there are things you can do to physically prepare yourself, including being well rested, well hydrated, and well fed, said Sheils. "You need enough fuel in your system," she said. Leamy agreed. The night before a test, she said she manages to stay calm and get some sleep.

"I heard that if you rest before a test . . . you do better," said Leamy. "And so far that method has worked."

With finals in a couple of days, tutoring sessions may be helpful. The CSD has entered what they call the "tutoring blitz," said Sheils. There will be sessions held on Friday, Dec. 12, and Saturday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Appointments are necessary, but walk-ins may be able to catch a session that was cancelled or is open.

In the past, the CSD has held workshops on how to reduce stress, but they've stopped due to lack of student participation, Sheils said. But, if it's something students are interested in, they can be restarted. For more information about the services offered by the Center for Student Development, call (860) 512-3300 or (860) 512-3303.

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The Green Column

Team Green's Mission is Sustainability

By Gregor Bugaeff
Live Wire Staff Writer

What is sustainability, and what is the sustainability committee? The answers mean a "greener" environment for those at Manchester Community College.

The sustainability team is all about making a difference in our environment, said Andrew Paterna, a professor at MCC and co-chairman of the sustainability committee, also known as "Team Green."

"It's the ability to provide for the needs of the current generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs," he said.

Or, in more laymen's terms "Going Green." What can you as an individual, as a member of humanity, do to protect and enrich your local communities, your state and your planet? These include changes like car pooling, reducing toxins, energy conservation and recycling, Paterna said. It also includes reusable energy, like wind and solar power, which are the front runners, and geothermal power too.

Thanks, in part, to the efforts of the committee and other students, faculty and staff on campus, MCC is already doing several things on the sustainability front, Paterna said.

The building and grounds department has stopped using herbicides in a five acre circle around MCC. There is a new composting heap set up behind the Lowe building with the goal of getting the new private cafeteria to start composting there as well. There was just a study completed on how the school can reduce its carbon footprint and reduce the amount of electricity used, which is currently costing the school more than \$1.2 million this year alone.

The committee is planning several upcoming events, like electronic recycling day (check the MCC web page for dates), and a "Freecycle" day to donate or receive used notebooks, school books and supplies. Paterna said his favorite "green" project is the MCC farmers market. Local food equals less gas and emissions, due to it not having to be trucked in from across the country.

Paterno said there has been a great turnout for committee meetings from faculty and staff, but that they really need the help of the students to make it work. For more information about becoming involved in MCC's Green Team, contact Paterna by phone at 860-512-2708 or via email at apaterna@mcc.commnet.edu.

When you join this committee everyone will be "Green" with Envy!

"Fill - er- up!" Lower Gas Prices Providing a Sign of Hope

By Brendan Kennedy
Live Wire Staff Writer

Gas prices are rapidly falling, and the change comes not a moment too soon for students at Manchester Community College.

From a high of almost \$5 earlier this year, prices across the state have fallen to below \$2.

"I'm glad they are better and hope they go down more," said student Daryn Price. "I'm not really sure if they will continue to

get cheaper, but I think so, it all depends on time."

Those who drive larger vehicles, with their larger tanks, are especially grateful for the fall.

"I drive a truck so I am glad that prices came down as much as they have," said student Hannah Rota. "I am not working just to put gas in my car anymore. The value of the

U.S. dollar had increased significantly and maintained this level for sometime; therefore I think prices are going to continue to fall because you can buy more with your dollar everyday."

A few stations around the MCC campus have lower gas prices, including Valero, CITGO, and Irving.

Back in the summertime gas prices

ranged from \$2.50 to \$4.13 per gallon, depending on where you went, which meant drivers would spend between \$50 to more than \$100 dollars just to fill their tanks. Now, at \$1.99 per gallon or less, that means many people can fill up for between \$20 and \$40.

Time will tell how much lower they will go.



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Where's the Fun in Consuming Alcohol?

By Rachel M. DePenning
Live Wire Editor



Most people look forward to their 21st birthday. And why not? You're legally able to go to bars and drink. I'm turning 21 next year. But honestly, I could care less about drinking.

I hate alcohol. Not that I think it tastes bad or anything, I've never even tried it. It just doesn't appeal to me. Perhaps it has something to do with being around it my whole life, and seeing what it does to people. I also don't see the fun in getting so wasted you do and say stupid things, without realizing it or without caring about it. And I don't know about you, but I hate being sick. So the hangover you get the next day, yeah, I think I'll pass.

I can't believe the number of people who enjoy drinking and getting drunk. They don't even care about the consequences. Or maybe they do. But still they drink. So it has me asking, why do people drink? "Because it's fun" is the most common answer. But tell me, where's the fun in damaging parts of your body? Or better yet, risking your life and others by your uncontrollable actions?

Did you know that alcohol can damage eggs and sperm, causing infertility? You wouldn't be able to have kids! Where's the fun in that?

Where's the fun in waking up the next morning, sick as a dog and regretting the amount you drank? Where's the fun in getting pulled over by police and charged with Driving Under the Influence, or worse, getting into a drunk-driving accident, especially one that takes someone else's life, or multiple lives?

Where's the fun in becoming an alcoholic, like so many do? Where's the fun in any of it?

Certain alcoholic beverages, like red wine, are said to have healthy benefits. Yet, the alcohol in it, according to www.webmd.com can increase your blood pressure, heart rate, the size of your heart, and cause an abnormal heartbeat, stomach ulcers, stomach cancer, cirrhosis, hepatitis, and liver cancer.

This is beneficial how?

Sure, it's okay to have an occasional drink at an occasional social event. But, for me personally, I'm just not going to get into it at all. I strongly dislike alcohol and for more reasons than I listed in this editorial.

I know alcohol is never going to be banned, like they tried to do back in 1920 with the Prohibition Act that was eventually repealed, and I must accept that. I just wish people were more responsible drinkers. And if they're not, then I wish they would stop drinking.

I also wish people would respect my decision to not drink, like I respect their decision to drink. It's like someone who chooses abstinence, or someone who chooses not to smoke. It's a personal choice, and people need to respect that.

Alcohol is dangerous in many ways, and it shouldn't be taken lightly. I hope all of you see and understand that. Be safe and be responsible when you drink.

"I also wish people would respect my decision to not drink, like I respect their decision to drink."

What has Become of Christmas?

By Joe Marandino
Live Wire Staff Writer

Once again, it is that special time of year when the biggest American holiday comes around and pretty much marks the end of one year and the beginning of a new one. Of all of the different religious holidays observed in the United States, it is Christmas that remains the dominant holiday in this great nation. Not everyone, but a great number of people, who celebrate this holiday have lost the true meaning of Christmas.

It is absolutely disconcerting to witness, year after year, how the true meaning of this Christian "holy day" has turned into a materialistic, over-commercialized feeding frenzy of a "holiday."

Isn't it amazing to see Christmas decorations and the fake Christmas trees go on display in some of the big box stores in October every year? For the most part, "Peace on earth and good will towards man" has turned into, "I have to max out my four credit cards and buy enough presents to fill the entire room, otherwise there is no possible way for little Johnny to have a good Christmas."

Imagine what type of example we are showing the children of this nation and the rest of the world for that matter, when every year in the days and weeks prior to Christmas, there is news footage showing adults violently attacking each other in front of their children over the last cheap doll on a store shelf. This is a real life episode of the "Jerry Springer Show" for the world to see every year. The celebration of the birth of Christ has totally lost all its meaning when people have to resort to gun violence and fighting over a spot in a long line outside waiting for a store to open hours later, so that they can try to get that limited supply Blackberry cell phone and obtain full bragging rights for the holiday. The big box stores and manufacturers are responsible for a large portion of this disgrace, because, every year, they intentionally offer limited supplies of a popular product to the public a few days right before Christmas in a strategic effort to boost the popularity and sales of that product.

During this long, drawn out holiday season, for some people, having a hot meal on the table, a warm house, good health and the opportunity to spend the holiday with family represents the true meaning of Christmas. Sadly, though, there are other people who are so disillusioned to the true meaning of the holiday that they require a plethora of material goods to make Christmas acceptable in their household. Some parents should be ashamed of themselves for instilling such materialistic values to their children at such a young age.

For example, just look at how two totally different types of social classes will value material goods in general. It is un-

fathomable that there are orphaned, sick children in places like Darfur or Somalia who are viciously abused and don't even have clothes on their backs. Some have even lived through the hell of genocide. Yet they are so grateful to have a measly piece of drift wood with grass tied to it for a makeshift doll and are so grateful to get a half a bowl of rice and some semi-clean water to wash it down because they haven't eaten in two or three weeks.

Meanwhile, in this country, there are some children who think that it is the end of the world and life is so unfair, harsh and bad because they didn't get that new \$600 gaming system along with the extra \$300 in game cartridges, and a \$3,000 high definition, flat screen, plasma TV and surround sound to play it on.

Whatever happened to the old fashioned family values of spending quality time with your kids instead of spending cash on your kids?

It is no wonder that this holiday is the biggest trash-generating day of the whole year, too. Think about the amount of discarded wrapping paper, Styrofoam, shrink wrapping material, cardboard, and batteries that weren't properly recycled and end up contaminating our landfills; never mind the millions of trees that were cut down, decorated and displayed for those few weeks and then strewn out to the curb to add to the countless tons of garbage.

I think it would be a fair assumption to say that Mary and Joseph certainly did not intend for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ to drift so far from its true meaning into such drastic commercialization, greed and profit mongering.

The good news is that, even though the economy has gotten so bad and so many people lost their jobs and don't have the extra cash to spend this holiday season, maybe some people will wake up to reality and cherish the simple things in life that are so important and really matter this time around.

The bad news is that for these same people, it had to take the economy to crash to change their attitudes.

The cash value and number of presents should not be the determining factor when it comes to having a good holiday. Regardless of one's race, religion, holiday observance or current financial situation, we should all be so grateful and content that we live in this incredible nation and are so fortunate to have the men and women of the armed forces, who have volunteered and self sacrificed so much to make this country safe while the rest of us are able to sit home, relax and enjoy this holiday season. That alone should be a good enough reason for everyone to be happy and grateful for what we have, not just now, but all year long.

Why Not Give Pot A Chance?

By Jason Cunningham
Live Wire Staff Writer

Before Question 2 was passed by voters in Massachusetts on Nov. 4, people were arrested for the simple possession of any amount of marijuana and could face up to six months in jail and a fine of up to \$500. Additionally, if a person was arrested for marijuana possession, a Criminal Offender Record Information report was created, which could jeopardize the arrestee's ability to obtain jobs, housing, and school loans, all for what is a minor offense. Now, fortunately, these unjust policies are put to rest.

The majority of Massachusetts voters, 65 percent, voted for the measure. That suggests that they think that marijuana needed to be decriminalized. What does this mean? Well, first off, anyone carrying a ounce or less (around \$200-\$400 worth, depending on the area) will only face a civil penalty of \$100, less than most speeding tickets, and confiscation of the drug. This means there will no longer be arrests made and there will be no Criminal Offender Record Information report created for people carrying and ounce or less of marijuana in Massachusetts.

The change in the law will also aid the state coffers. It will save Massachusetts approximately \$29.5 million per year in law enforcement resources that were spent on low-level marijuana possession arrests, according to a 2008 report by Harvard economist Jeffrey Miron.

According to About.com's Health section, marijuana is the most common illegal drug used in the United States and at least one-third of Americans have used marijuana at some point in their lives.

So what's so bad about pot? Well, long-term use can cause respiratory prob-

lems, a decreased sperm count in men and irregular menstruation in women, as well as short-term memory loss.

Most users of marijuana are completely aware of these risks and still use the substance, so why not let them? I just can't understand what is so bad about a drug that isn't any worse than alcohol and is commonly used in this country. Why should there be criminal charges against people who use it?

So, should Connecticut follow Massachusetts and decriminalize marijuana, like we did with gay marriage? No. Instead, I think, that we as an entire country should just legalize pot.

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP), a group of police, judges, prosecutors, corrections officials and FBI and DEA agents who have fought on the front lines of the war on drugs believe that ending prohibition is the only way to begin solving drug abuse and drug market violence problems. People who experienced this stuff first hand believe that legalizing at least some drugs, like marijuana, will help take the power out of the hands of drug dealers and put it back into the hands of the American people.

So why not legalize marijuana? Connecticut should set the example and be the first state to make marijuana legal for all purposes. By taxing the drugs sold, much like we do with tobacco, Connecticut could gain a fortune to build new roads, schools, and to help improve areas stricken by poverty and hunger.

It just seems crazy to me that our society can tolerate recreational drugs like alcohol and tobacco, which are both physically and psychologically addictive, and not tolerate drugs that aren't physically addictive like marijuana. It just doesn't make sense.



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Following My Dream

By Jessica Malaro
Great Path Academy

Every day people ask me the same question, "What do you want to do after high school?" Without hesitation my response is, "I want to train killer whales at Sea-World." Most people smile, put it out of their minds and go on about their lives. For me this has been my dream since I was five years old and I carry it with me everywhere I go.

The first time I saw the movie "Free Willy" something inside of me changed. For the first time I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. While visiting Florida in 1995, my father decided to take me to Sea-World. Although I was very young, I still remember the massive black and white figures behind the thick glass, gliding so fast through their light blue realm they left wakes which flowed over the top of the tank and soaked me with water. They intrigued me and left me smiling for weeks. It took me until age 14 to realize that this childhood dream was a possibility for an amazing career. I began to collect research on Orca whales and filed it into a large three ring binder. It is now 185 pages long and contains

facts, anatomy, stock information, training methods and much more. It took me three months to complete. I studied it day and night and tried to obtain every bit of information possible about these amazing animals.

In the summer of 2007, my sister and my brother-in-law took me to Niagara Falls, Canada, as a reward for getting high honors in the previous year. The main point of the trip was to visit Marine Land, an aquarium which holds four killer whales. When the day finally came, I felt the blood rush through my veins as I approached the tank. There before me were the large, dark figures I vaguely remembered, even more beautiful than ever. I began to talk to one of the employees about my future plans. She informed me that the trainer of the whale used in the film "Free Willy" still worked in the park. When I found him I asked if I could have a little bit of his time. We sat down and I pulled my binder out of my backpack. As he began to read it he reminisced about his times with the famous whale. He called over many other trainers to look at



it and help give any extra advice. Meeting him lifted my spirits even more. I then spent the next two days standing beside the tank observing the whales at rest, as well as performing during shows. I envied the few people on the other side of the barriers who got to live this life every day.

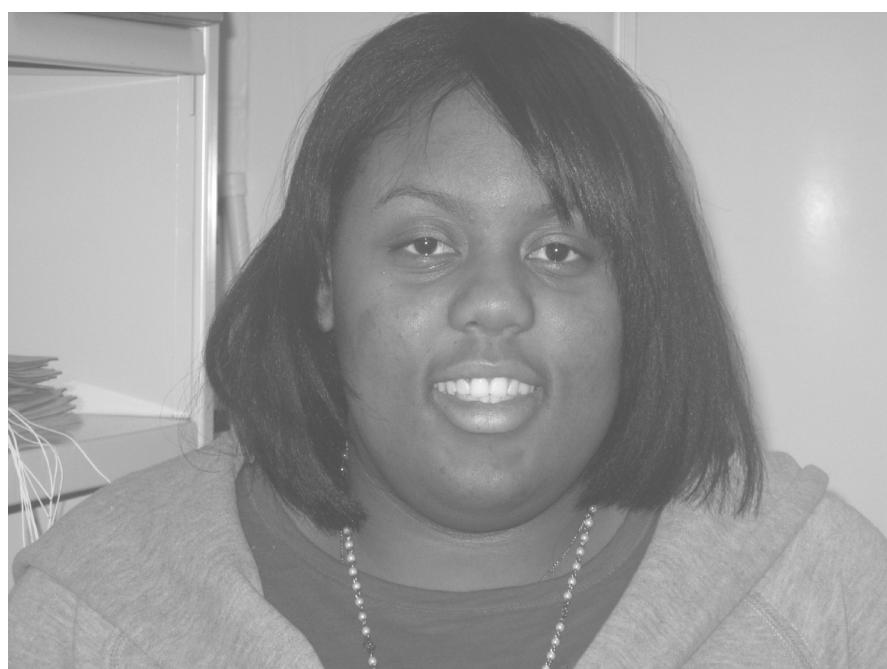
I realized soon after the trip that this job would not be handed to me. I hope to attend the University of Florida after graduation. I need many qualifications to be considered for this position. I need classes in Animal Husbandry, Zoology, Marine Biology, Psychology and Animal Behavior.

On top of school, I must be SCUBA certified, and CPR and First Aid certified. I also need to pass a vigorous swim test, which consists of a 220 foot free swim, a 110 foot underwater swim and a 24 foot free dive to retrieve a weight.

I believe that my passion for these creatures along with my will to learn about the ocean and everything that inhabits it, will take me farther in this field than most. I have now been studying the ocean for three years and I know I will learn something new about it every day for the rest of my life.

GPA Students Make Sports Their Passion

Story and photos by Syreeta Crawford and Kadeen McKenzie



Elacia Hall, 17, is a senior at Great Path Academy. Elacia was born in Springfield, Mass., and grew up in East Hartford. She currently resides there and plays volleyball for East Hartford High School. Elacia has been playing for three years and was inspired to play by her close friend, Melissa Wright, during her sophomore year. Ever since then, she has continued playing and loves it. She enjoys playing the back middle and setting position. She said she looks forward to winning, which she says is her favorite part of the sport. The only part of playing she dislikes is that people look down on her team because of where they all come from. She stated, "I hate when other teams come to our gym and say to their team, 'We are playing east Hartford so I know we are going to win.'" When she hears this, she said, it only pushes her harder to really prove people wrong. She looks forward to playing in the future and hopes to finish off her season by making it to the regional championships.

Kevin Acevedo is a six foot, one inch, 19 year old senior at Great Path Academy. He was born in Puerto Rico, but he grew up and currently resides in Hartford. During Kelvin's free time he enjoys boxing. He has been boxing for two years. He states, "The money is what really inspired me to play; who wouldn't play a sport that they enjoy for money?" Kelvin loves fighting and he says it's kind of like an adrenalin rush. The best part about boxing for him is the feeling of knocking out someone in a boxing match. The one thing he does dislike about boxing is getting hit, but he never lets that discourage him. Kelvin won his first professional fight on Oct. 04, at San Juan Center. His weight class is welterweight, but he said that may change in the future. Kelvin said he hopes to box in college and maybe have a promising career in professional boxing.



“Eating Our Angels” Evidence of MCC Student’s Dedication to Film

By Eliana Alvarez
Live Wire Staff Writer

If you are looking for the next best horror film, do not look any further than within the walls of Manchester Community College. Gregore Bugaeff, a communications major, has written, produced, directed, filmed and starred in his own feature length film.

Eating Our Angels is a combination of a horrific thrill and real-live events including back stage interviews with bands such as The Genitortures and Velvet Acid Christ. Both bands are known for their industrial metal sound and gothic appeal. The real live footage of these bands came from Gregore’s old T.V. cable show called *Gregore’s Degeneration X*.

Bugaeff, 44, started his college career back in 1986, at the University of Connecticut. He left in 1988 and spent some time at The Art Institute in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Bugaeff’s past also includes a stint in the U.S. Marines, and coaching swimming at E.O. Smith Regional High School, in Storrs, before he came to MCC. Bugaeff has been part of the Manchester Community family since the beginning of 2008 and now lives in Stafford Springs.

Though film making wasn’t always his first choice as a career, Bugaeff developed a passionate attraction towards making movies after he received a gift of a semester paid by his mother as long as he did not major in art. Bugaeff was also inspired by the American artist Robert Rauschenberg. Rauschenberg was most famous for his innovative

combination of non-traditional materials and objects used in his paintings and sculptures. In *Eating our Angels*, viewers can see both Bugaeff’s craze for horror films and his fascination with paranormal events and elements.

Despite the difficulty of the filmmaking process, Bugaeff describes filmmaking as something like “building a baby.” Some of the hair-pulling scenarios that Bugaeff faced during the making of the film include how he lost the footage more than once. Worst of all was the cyanide poisoning. To create a real sense of death and

being close to evil, Bugaeff actually drank cyanide, which made him ill for more than a month.

With that kind of dedication it is no surprise that those that know Bugaeff, such as communications professor Robert Kagan, describe him as a “bright creative person who is highly motivated.”

Bugaeff’s film is a true independent work. His editing alone was split between MCC computer labs and the Mac store. There are several pros and cons to being

an independent filmmaker, Bugaeff said. Taking on a project of this size was a bit overwhelming, but at the same time, it was liberating. Bugaeff said he had the freedom to do what he wanted with his project, avoiding messy situations with unions and insurance. In addition, he had complete control over how to make the film. He did many of the stunts and shot some of the scenes.

But it wasn’t all him, all the time. Also starring in the film is MCC student Elizabeth Grant, and several others, including Mark Makuch as the river victim, Vincent Orlando as the arm buyer, and Tommy Newman as chicken boy.

The premise of *Eating Our Angels* is that a plague has overtaken the church-ruled world in the year 3056. A warrior caste called the Sisterhood’s chosen elite, Sister Agatha, played by Grant, is only armed with a lantern of the sun and a time machine to stop the plague. She alone can stop the plague, which is in the form of a man played by Bugaeff. Her mission is to kill him... and I am not allowing myself to say anything else about it. Hey, I’m no spoiler. But with an original storyline, a dedicated filmmaking process and an impressive self-created soundtrack, this film is not one to miss.

Eating Our Angels is an hour and 10 minutes in length and is now available to be purchased or downloaded. You can find it on Filmbaby.com for \$9.99, and the trailer can be viewed on YouTube under the heading “Eating our Angels.”

As for Bugaeff, he said he is looking forward to future films. After graduating sometime in 2009, he plans to get a regular job; however, as he said, “I just want to be an artist.” Oh, and ladies: this budding filmmaker is single.

**“Worst of all
was the cyanide
poisoning...”**



“Gregore breaks through” with his first feature film.

Photo by Gregor Bugaeff

Many Choices for Musical Gifts this Holiday Season

By J. Eric D'Amico
Live Wire Assistant Editor

This holiday season there are lots of choices out there for gift-giving, some better than others. Here are some ideas for your shopping list.

Snow Patrol – *A Hundred Million Suns*

Once again, Snow Patrol brings listeners another fantastic album. *A Hundred Million Suns* includes the popular singles “Take Back the City” and “Crack the Shutters,” giving fans of the band the usual guitar driven Snow Patrol sound, but with a more upbeat tempo than previous albums. However, there are still elements of the relaxing, silver-tongued melodies seen on their previous albums such as *Final Straw*. If you liked Snow Patrol’s older music, you won’t be let down by *Suns*.

Copeland – *You Are My Sunshine*

After a brief recession from the music world, Copeland returns with a new album that has instantly become a new American pop standard of excellence. Singer Aaron Marsh’s voice has improved greatly, giving the band a vibrant sound that brings to mind slow summer days

and long ago memories. The earnest, finely-honed sound of this album is great for anyone who enjoys chill, laid back music.

Various Artists – *Brushfire Holiday's, Vol. 1*

I’m usually not one to listen to holiday music, but upon hearing this album, I was greatly impressed. A far stretch from the Christmas music your mom listens to, this great album collaboration features artists such as Jack Johnson, Matt Costa, and even a funky rendition of “Christmas Baby” performed by G. Love. It’s a fun, fresh, and upbeat album full of songs that you won’t be sick of by the end of the holiday season. A perfect buy for anyone who enjoys holiday music.

The Supervillains – *Massive*

The Supervillains newest album, *Massive*, contains a very upbeat and amusing collection

of songs. Notorious for their reggae/ska band sound and carefree lyrics, The Supervillains have put together a well-produced album. Great for anyone who enjoys the sound of bands such as Sublime, Long Beach Shortbus, Bob Marley, and Less Than Jake.

Nas – *Illmatic*

Rapper Nas is back, and shows no sign of ever slowing down with *Illmatic*, an album dubbed by many as the “greatest hip-hop album ever.” While you may disagree, nobody can deny the ferocious intelligence and genius rhymes Nas displays on his tracks. He continues to sharpen his prowess on *Illmatic*, leaving little doubt this new album is anything short of brilliant. With contributing artists like Q-Tip and Large Professor, Nas has compiled an album full of heavy and rhymes and amazing beats.

My name is Shannon Hogan and I’m your local music reporter. I’ve been actively involved in the Connecticut music scene for about 10 years as a musician and a fan. I like anything and everything and I’m always interested in new acts and upcoming shows. Feel free to email me at the Live Wire, livewire@mcc.commnet.edu, with show dates or your band’s website.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov. 30	Dec. 1	2	3	4	5	6
Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day 7	8	Don Caballero @ Cafe Nine, New Haven 9	Method Man & Redman @ Toad's Place, New Haven 10	Saving Abel @ Webster, Hartford 11	Thursday @ Toad's Place, New Haven 12	Avenge Seven-fold/Shinedown/ Shadows Fall @ Chevy Theatre, Wallingford 13
14	15	16	17	18	19	Wu-Tang Clan @ Toad's Place, New Haven 20
21	Hanukkah Begins at Sundown 22	23	Christmas Eve 24	Merry Christmas 25	Kwanzaa Begins 26	Shadows Fall @ Pearl St., Northhampton, Ma. 27
28	29	30	New Year's Eve 31	Jan. New Year's Day 1	2	Lynyrd Skynyrd @ Mohegan Sun 3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Do-It-Yourself Gift G

Black Bean Brownies

By David St. Jacques

Don't freak out. Yes, these are brownies made from black beans. Yes, that sounds off-putting. I came across this recipe online one night, probably very late, and I was possibly not thinking clearly. But I made them anyway, and they're delicious. They're also about eight million times healthier than regular brownies. Black beans are a good source of protein and fiber and agave nectar is one of the purest, healthiest, unrefined sweeteners out there. Use a butter substitute like Smart Balance Light, and you get low saturated fat, plus your Omega 3 oil. They're healthy, they taste like quality fudge brownies, and they're not hard to make.

Go now, and make a batch to serve to your friends and family for the holidays. Then, when they're all asking what's in them, give a demented laugh and tell them they're eating black beans. Do it.

Ingredients:

4 ounces unsweetened chocolate

1 cup unsalted butter or butter substitute

2 cups soft-cooked black beans, drained well (canned beans can also be used)

1 cup walnuts, chopped

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

¼ cup (granulated) natural coffee substitute (or instant coffee, for gluten-sensitive)

¼ teaspoon sea salt

4 large eggs

1½ cups light agave nectar (honey can be substituted if agave nectar isn't available)



Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line an 11- by 18-inch rimmed baking pan with wax paper and oil lightly with cooking spray.

Melt chocolate and butter in a bowl in the microwave for one and a half to two minutes on high. Stir with spoon until fully melted and evenly mixed. Place beans, one half cup walnuts, vanilla extract, and two spoonfuls of chocolate/butter mixture into food processor. Blend about two minutes or until smooth. Batter should be thick and beans should be smooth. Set aside.

In a large bowl, mix remaining walnuts and chocolate mixture, coffee substitute, and salt. Set aside.

In another bowl, beat eggs with an electric mixer until they are light and creamy. Add agave nectar or honey and beat well. Set aside.

Add bean/chocolate mixture and coffee/chocolate mixture. Stir until blended.

Add egg mixture, saving about one half cup. Mix well. Pour batter into the prepared pan. With an electric mixer, beat remaining half cup of egg mixture until light and fluffy. Drizzle over brownie batter. Use a toothpick to pull egg mixture through the batter, creating a marbled effect. Bake 30 to 40 minutes until brownies are set. Let brownies cool in pan completely before cutting into squares.

Note: For best results, refrigerate brownies after baking for several hours to firm them. They will be much easier to cut if chilled.

Makes 45 two-inch brownies.

<http://www.101cookbooks.com/archives/amazing-black-bean-brownies-recipe.html>

Jewelry with a Personal Touch

By Rachel DePenning

Self-made jewelry is one of the most thoughtful gifts you can give because you put thought into what you are going to make, how you are going to make it, and then you took the time to put it together. The following directions are for a necklace I made for one of the characters in a film I'm currently making. It's pretty easy and basic. You can get the materials at JoAnne Fabrics and Home Depot. Good luck!

Materials

Chain (any length desired)

2 clasps with ring (like a key chain)

Guitar pic

Star button

2 in. of thin wire

Super Glue

Directions:

Place one of the clasps on one end of the chain.

Poke hole at top of guitar pic. You can do this with a large safety pin.

Super Glue the button on to the guitar pic.

*If it has a back on it, you can easily cut it and file it down.

Put wire through hole in guitar pic. Form into a circle and wrap extra wire around the circle. Cut remaining wire.

Place the other clasp on the chain.

*Because you're using a ring clasp, you can place the clasp anywhere on the chain to adjust the size.

Other

Scrapbooking

Mixed CDs with homemade cover art

uide for the Holidays

The Best Hummus

By Shannon Hogan

This hummus is always a hit at my family gatherings. Hummus is a simple and healthy alternative to creamy dips and greasy hors d'oeuvres for pre-feast snacking. This dish is very customizable; skip the yogurt for a vegan-friendly hummus, double the cayenne for a little more heat, etc.

For the best hummus you'll need to start preparation two days ahead of when you intend on serving it, as the chickpeas must soak overnight and the hummus must also sit overnight for the best flavor and texture.

Ingredients:

2/3 lb. Dry chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

6 cups filtered water

2 tablespoons salt

OR replace dry chickpeas, water and salt for 4 cups canned chickpeas, drained.

1/4 cup lemon juice

4 cloves garlic, peeled

3 whole scallions (green onions)

2 heaping tablespoons plain yogurt

6 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste found in the ethnic or natural foods section of the grocery store)

2 shallot cloves, peeled

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (ground red pepper)



Directions:

2 Days Ahead: In a large bowl cover dry chickpeas with 1-2" cold water, soak overnight.

1 Day Ahead: Discard soaking water from chickpeas. Simmer chickpeas, covered, with 6 cups filtered water and salt for 4-6 hours, until tender. This can also be done in a crock-pot, on low heat for 6-8 hours. This takes much longer than using canned chickpeas but will taste much better. Drain.

Wash scallions and remove roots. In a food processor, mix drained chickpeas and all other ingredients and process to your desired texture. Refrigerate overnight.

Stir and serve with various fresh veggies and/or warm pita bread.

From "Anticraft" by Renee Rigdon and Zabet Stewart

Almond Cashew Burfi

By Danish Rehman

There's a reason people say a homemade gift is so much more sentimental than going out and buying a gift during the holidays. So stay home this holiday season and try this Indian delicacy. This recipe for Almond Cashew Burfi is really simple and makes for great treats that will please anyone's sweet tooth.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup almonds

1/2 cup walnuts

1/2 cup cashew nuts

1 1/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup water

1/2 teaspoon cardamom powder

1 tablespoon sliced almonds to garnish

Directions:

1. Dry grind the walnuts, cashews and almonds in a food processor.
2. Dry roast the ground nuts in a frying pan on low medium heat.
3. Roast them just enough so that the nuts start to give off an aroma. It will take about 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside in a separate bowl.
4. Put the sugar and water together in a saucepan on medium heat. Bring to a boil, which will approximately take 8-10 minutes on medium heat. Turn off the heat and stir in the cardamom powder.
5. Add the syrup to the bowl of nuts, and then spread over a greased 8-inch plate. *Note: don't let the syrup cool off. It must be spread while still hot.*
6. Wait a few minutes until burfi is set but still soft.
7. Then cut the burfi into any shape you like (such as square, diamond, triangle).
8. Garnish each piece of burfi with sliced almonds while the burfi is still soft.
9. Allow the burfi to cool for about an hour to dry and hold its shape. Now you can remove the burfi from the plate. Makes approximately 24 squares.
10. Burfi can be stored for a month.

Variations

1. Proportion of nuts can be changed to your choice.
2. You may also add pistachios and coconut powder.

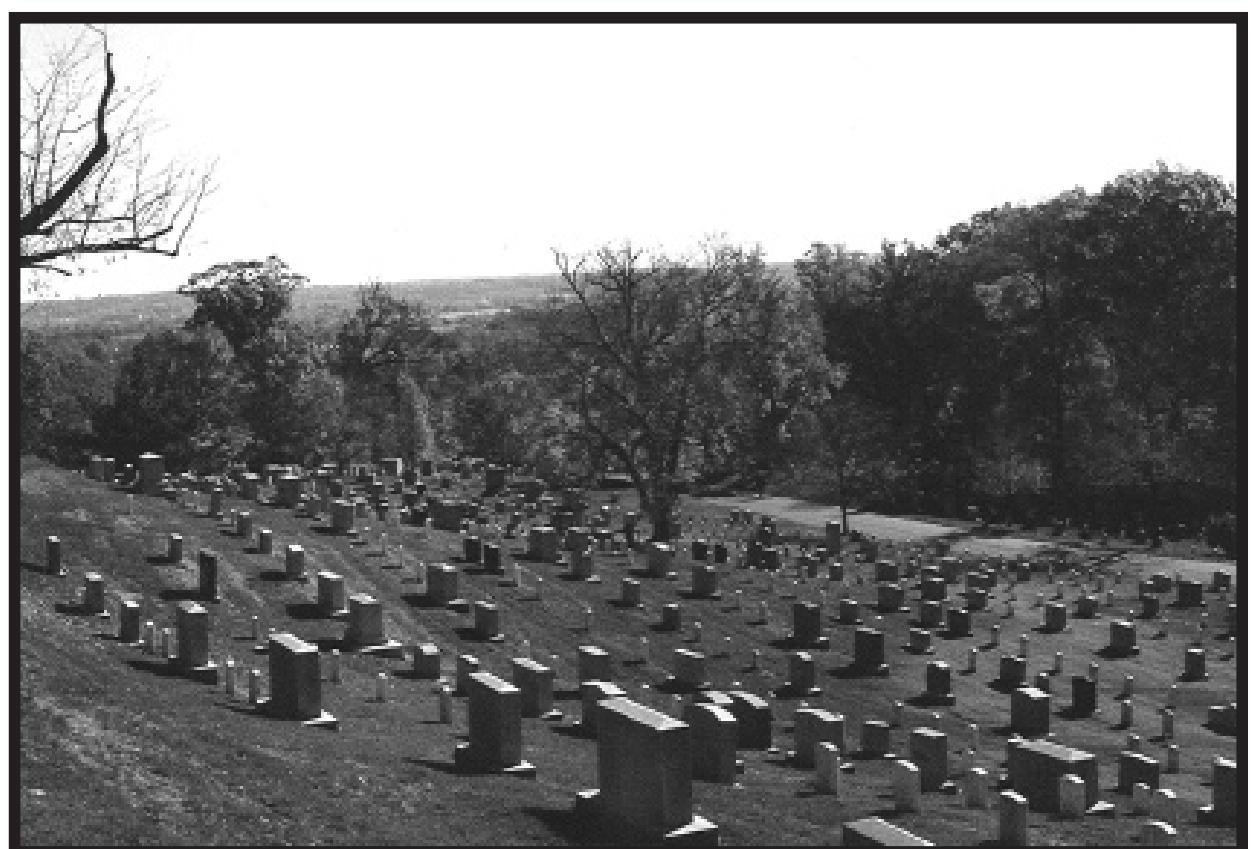
Source: <http://www.manjulaskitchen.com/2008/10/20/almond-cashew-burfi/>

Ideas:

Chores: shoveling, baby-sitting, tutoring

Volunteering

Washington, D.C.



The view from the top of a hill in Arlington National Cemetery in Fort Myer, Vir.



The western view of the Washington Monument towers over the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



The view of the Lincoln Memorial from the opposite end of the Reflecting Pool in the National Mall.

All photos by Shannon Hogan

From Nov. 7-9 more than 50 students, faculty, staff and other members of the Manchester Community College community embarked on a bus trip to Washington, D.C. The cultural visit included stops at some of the nation's capitals most visited tourist sights, including the Newseum, the White House, and Arlington National Cemetery. Below some of the students who went on the trip reflect on several of those stops.

A Time, and a Place, for Peace?

There is something hauntingly beautiful about cemeteries. Everything in my world feels different while I'm in one. The wind seems to come from all around me and then suddenly it stops altogether. I can't help but fill my mind with eerie images of countless bodies confined beneath the earth. Most people are fascinated by death, it's part of the human condition. But while you are in a cemetery it's the harshest focus.

Yet it still remains beautiful in so many ways. Past the painful feelings of sympathy for those who hold a permanent residence there, past my confused feelings about my own mortality, there is a soothing sense of warmth.

Recently, I joined a bus trip to Washington, D.C., from Manchester Community College. It was my third visit to this nation's great capital, and we were all fresh with feelings of victory and hope after Democrat Barack Obama won the presidency over Republican John McCain. I felt so proud to be there, and something I had seldom experienced came over me. I realized then that the last time I had really felt like that was when the towers of the World Trade Center in New York fell. The feeling was patriotism.

But after Pres. George W. Bush's second term, hope for me faded. It felt harder and harder to be proud of being an American. Oftentimes, my mom would joke about packing our bags and moving to Canada; if McCain had won the election that joke would've felt more like a concrete plan for me. The patriotism I feel now is unlike the kind provoked by the attacks on this country back on Sept. 11, 2001. Instead of sorrow and anger, I feel at peace. For the first time in my adult life, I realize everything is going to be okay. It is one of the few times that I've felt that spark of optimism that makes you feel cozy and safe.

During the trip, we visited Arlington National Cemetery, the final resting place of men and women to whom we, as a country, owe everything. Almost 300,000 veterans and military casualties are buried there. My girlfriend and I looked out, overwhelmed by its almost magical quality. We saw the burial site of Pres. John F. Kennedy and the Eternal Flame that marks his grave. It made tears cover my heart. We visited the grave of his brother, Robert F. Kennedy, where a single white wooden cross stood in his memory. We went to the Tomb of the Unknowns, where a soldier whose body has not been identified is buried for most of the wars the U.S. has fought. We watched the changing of the guard and we were sucked in entirely after that. We talked throughout our entire visit to Arlington National Cemetery about how it was the absolute best part of our trip.

Everything seemed new to me while we were there. I realized then that even though it should be, freedom has never been free in America's history. I never fully understood how many people, how many families, suffered the ultimate price to keep me feeling safe at night and comfortable in my bed. They have given me and every other American citizen the freedom to be the individuals that we are. They fought against tyranny and oppression so that others could fulfill the American dream.

We finished our visit to the cemetery at the Arlington House. It was the very last thing we did on the trip before we boarded the bus for home. We stared for almost 15 minutes at the magnificent view of Washington, D.C., from there. We looked out at the beauty of our nation's capital, with hope for what was to come next.

Barack Obama was president and we could already feel the change he begged us to believe in for so long leading up to his victory. It was almost as if you could see everything in the world move all at once in that small city. It is the beating heart of our country, and anyone not given the opportunity to visit it has been cheated. I looked back one last time out over the buildings and turned back to walk to the tour bus. As we coasted through the beautiful cemetery one last time, I felt a warmth in my heart like no other. I dreamed that maybe, just maybe, there would be a day when men and women wouldn't have to give their lives to protect the freedom that is so dear to us. After eight years of night, finally the dawn has arrived, and it made the world seem right again. I drifted off to sleep on the bus with thoughts of every individual in that cemetery, and I felt proud to be an American.

By Jason Cunningham

Union Station: More than Just Trains

Being on a trip to Washington, D.C., I was very excited to see everything that I could. On day 2 of our itinerary, we were scheduled to go to Union Station, D.C.'s main train station, which houses Amtrak and the city's Metro trains.

Now, I knew that Union Station was a huge thing in D.C., but I didn't think it was necessary for our group to actually go see it. But it was lunchtime and I was in no mood to argue, because everyone on the bus was starving. After leaving the bus, we made our way to the food. Going down two escalators, we came upon shops and cafes on either side of us. I was in a small group and we decided to walk around a bit before finding somewhere to eat. The station isn't just a station for trains, it has a conglomerate of shops, stores, restaurants, and cafes. We were getting too far ahead of ourselves and decided we should eat before we go crazy. Making our way to a huge set of stairs we decided to investigate the station's "basement."

On the bottom floor of the station there is a hall of food that goes on for what seemed forever. There were all sorts of food: from Chinese to deli to pizza. We were in a mini-heaven underneath this train station. I couldn't comprehend how big the whole place was. The smell of food was all around me and I had no problem choosing what I wanted to eat. The workers from the little shops were shoving food in our faces as we walked by. They would literally step out into our pathway and give us a toothpick of whatever they were trying to get us to buy. I had my eye on a deli since we made our way down the stairs. I am in love with Rueben sandwiches and I was really in the mood to have one. I placed my order and watched them make my sandwich from scratch and it was only about a five minute wait. After spending about \$8 on a sandwich, I was still hungry and spent another \$4 bucks on a pound of amazing macaroni and cheese from the same deli. I wolfed half that down and threw it away because I don't think carrying around macaroni and cheese in a backpack all day is a good idea.

Everyone's food was good and we were finally full, so we made our way back up to the mall and shops upstairs. The mall was very elegant with expensive stores that I would never go into for fear of breaking something. They had clothing stores where I would have to save up five weeks of money from food shopping just to be able to buy a jacket. But the elegance of the mall amazed me because I pictured it just being a room full of tracks with the smell of garbage and rats. Walking around, it felt like I was in another world because it was like there was only the mall going on. Stepping into the main hall of the station, with my girlfriend's hand in mine, we were both blown away by the grace of this huge room. With a restaurant in the middle it was jaw-dropping to walk through, having the light shine through the hundreds of windows overhead. I will never forget how the station looked and how it was one of my favorite stops on the trip. Union Station was an awesome time and I would recommend that anyone who visits the capital city should visit Union Station and realize how much a part of the city it is.

By Jonathan Stankiewicz



Visitors sign a large petition to Pres-Elect Obama at the Lincoln Memorial.

Photo by Shannon Hogan

An Epic Day as a Spy

In the times of crises, nations would rely on one specific force to gather Intel about their enemies: spies. While undercover inside enemy territory, the spies would try to gather and relay information to their allies in order to cripple the enemy's plans. Have you ever wanted to be a fancy agent like James Bond or Austin Powers for a day? At the International Spy museum in Washington, D.C., I was given a chance to assume an identity fit for an aspiring spy.

As I entered the museum, I was sent upstairs to the second floor to be briefed, like a spy, for any government. Then, I was given 30 seconds to memorize my new, assumed identity, for the duration of my visit to the museum. For the time I was there, I was known only as John Campbell, a clothing businessman. As I proceeded, I began to notice cameras or staff watching my every move, waiting to capture any spies who get careless. At one point, I began to realize that this wasn't just any old museum exhibit, it was a built-in adventure.

From UV light pens to micro-bot cameras, you get the opportunity to see the tools of trade that spies use in order to accomplish their missions. The museum also featured a special car made for spies, which included features for getting rid of pursuers. Each section of the museum contained the history of famous spy exploits, from how information was leaked to Russia on the nuclear bomb to spies involved in the Cold War. There were also interactive features where the individual is given a chance to decode a message or password from enemy lines on a computer. Finally, on the way out of the museum was the gift shop, which sold a variety of spy merchandise like the micro-bot camera. Before I left the museum, I decided to try the interactive quiz panel to test my skills as I spy.

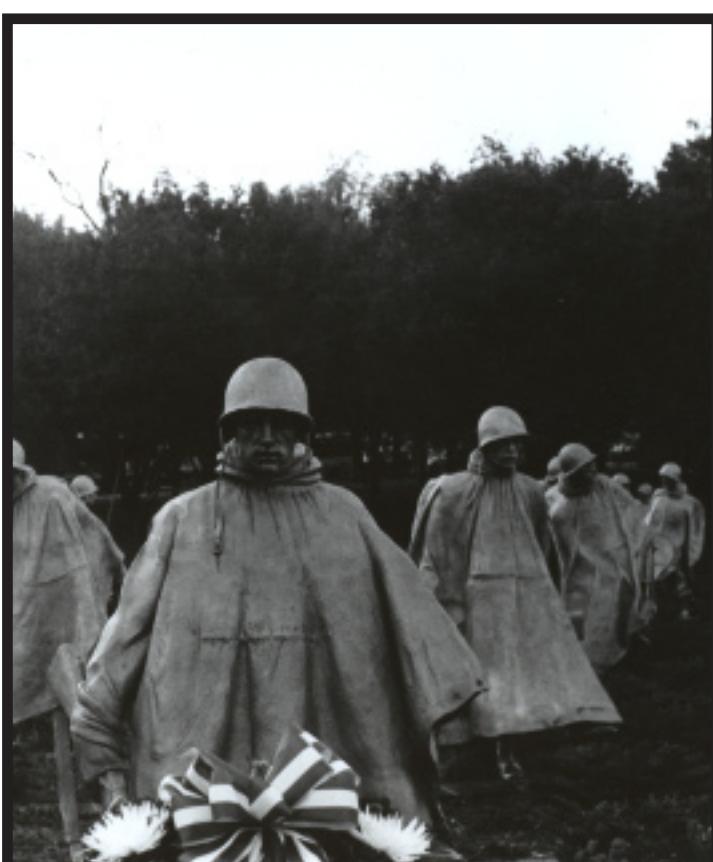
This panel asked me questions not only about my "secret" identity, but also about what I've done in the museum. Although, I was able to pass questions revolving around my identity, I had trouble answering which exact exhibits I had checked out. Despite my best efforts to guess where I was in the museum, not only was I caught in the act but I was also forced to report to the country's ministry for further questioning. Although I had failed in fulfilling my duty as a spy, at least I had a chance to see the unique history about the spy industry.

By Matthew Costello



Chaperones on the bus trip to Washington, D.C., Nov. 7-9 included, from left, Rebecca Townsend and Stephania Davis, who both teach communications, Lillian Ortiz, Dean of Institutional Development, and Wanda Haynes, who teaches English. They are standing on the 6th floor patio of the Newseum, which offers a great view of the U.S. Capitol building, in the background.

Photo by Thomas Townsend



The Korean War Memorial features 19 stainless steel statues of U.S. soldiers in full winter combat gear to represent the harsh winters of Korea.

Photo by Shannon Hogan



A view of the front of the White House.

Photo by Ashley E. Lang

Momentous Memorials and Monuments

I was 14, the first time I visited Washington, D.C. Now, at 20, I was given the opportunity to revisit the area and in doing so I realized that at 14 you do not fully appreciate all the culture and history that you are being shown. During my second trip, I took a guided night tour of some of the most recognized monuments in D.C. We stopped at the Lincoln Memorial, where right in front there was a decorated congratulation sign to Pres. Elect Barack Obama. The heading read "Yes We Can" and below the heading were thousands of signatures from visitors. There were so many names they were overlapping.

We also saw the White House, which was magnificent, and the Korean War Memorial. It was amazing because the impact of the war was extremely well presented in the memorial, which featured life-sized statues of soldiers posed as if they were still in battle. It will choke anyone up.

But, personally, I found the Vietnam Memorial to be, not only the most emotional, but also the most beautiful monument, on the tour. I was in awe of the volume of names this one monument held; name after name of missing or dead soldiers who fought for their country. Next to the inscribed names was one of four symbols: a cross denotes that a soldier is still missing, a diamond is a confirmed death, a diamond superimposed over a cross means that a soldier was missing and is now confirmed dead. The final symbol, a cross confined by a circle, shows that a missing soldier was found alive. This symbol, our guide said, has never been used since the wall was erected in 1982.

Along the bottom part of the wall were memorabilia left by families or people who have come to see the memorial. A pair of worn soldier boots was placed on the concrete. A few steps away a single red rose was left leaning against the memorial itself. Another few paces down was a picture frame with a young soldier's picture inside. I imagine that it was a photo of a soldier who lost his life fighting in Vietnam. Column after column of names flowed down the black granite wall. There are 58,256 names inscribed in honor of all those who fought and died in the Vietnam War. By far this memorial touched me the most because it shows you the volume of families and others affected by those dead and missing soldiers.

By Ashley E. Lang



A pair of soldiers boots left at the Vietnam Memorial by a visitor.

Photo by Ashley E. Lang



Rows of front pages from newspapers world wide after the 9/11 terrorist attacks are displayed inside of the Newseum.

Photo by Ashley E. Lang

News Comes Alive at the Newseum

This was my first time in Washington, D.C., and it was amazing. I don't like traveling, but this trip was worth it.

One of the stops was the Newseum, a museum of news and journalism. It was awesome. From the wall of Pulitzer Prize-winning photos to the many TV screens with video and audio of historic events, I walked around in complete awe. There was a wall dedicated to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, with front pages from a variety of newspapers, both nationally and internationally. There was also a cardboard cutout of Barack Obama, where visitors could take photos of themselves with our newly-elected president, like my good friend Matt Costello and I did. You could also get a taste for what it was like to be television reporter, for they had a section where you stood in front of a green screen, (an image of me would later be added in), and record on camera a short news story. Your video would later air on one of the big, flat screen TV's in the museum. The only part of the Newseum I didn't like was the 4D movie we watched with some weird glasses. The film itself was good; it showed three historic events in journalism, and was very interesting, as well as educational. But there was a lot of motion and things blown in my face. Let me explain. At certain parts of the film, the seats move and water and air are blasted at you. I know it's all part of the 4D experience, but it just wasn't for me.

Other than that, I really enjoyed myself at the Newseum. If you ever end up in D.C., I highly recommend you stop by there. Many trip-goers, including myself, didn't think this museum would be at all interesting. Turns out, it was one of the best stops and a favorite for many who went on the trip.

By Rachel DePenning

New Book Chronicles Cheshire Home Invasion

By Rebecca Bergeron
Live Wire Staff Writer

Michael Benson is author of the book "Murder in Connecticut," which tells the story of the most horrendous triple-murder in Connecticut's history. The book was published approximately one year after the events occurred.

The crime shocked people all over the country. It began when Jennifer Hawke-Petit took her daughter, Michaela, 11, along on a quick trip to the grocery store Sunday night, July 22, 2007. As the two left the store, they were unaware that they were being followed. Two men followed the mother and child back to their home, took note of their address, 300 Sorghum Mill Drive in quaint, but upscale, Cheshire, and made plans to invade the house later that night.

The story ends in a vicious disaster. Around 3 a.m., the vandals broke into the Petit household. First, Dr. William Petit, Jr., the husband and father of the family, was beaten upside the head with a baseball bat and left unconscious. After he regained consciousness, he was able to scramble his way out of his house before it was set ablaze. The mother was driven by one of the invaders to the bank and was forced to withdraw \$15,000, but during the transaction, she was able to signal the teller she and her family needed help.

When she and her attacker returned to the Petit home, Jennifer Hawke-Petit was left raped and strangled on the kitchen floor. The two daughters, Michaela, and Hayley, 17, were bound to their beds as gasoline was poured and lit on and around them. The two criminals thought the fire would diminish any traces of DNA. Michaela was also raped.

Though employees at the bank called Cheshire Police, and they responded to the home, it has been argued that the department did not act quickly enough. But they did catch the two criminals fleeing the house seconds after it had been set on fire.

William Petit had suddenly lost his entire family to the insanity of suspects Joshua Komisarjevsky, 26, and Steven Hayes, 44. He knew the lives of his family were taken prematurely, due to negligence within the judicial system, as Komisarjevsky and Hayes were convicted criminals that were released early from prison on parole just days before the home invasion occurred.

In his book, Benson quotes William Petit and other family members from a statement they released days after the incident saying, "Our precious family members have been the victims of horrible, senseless, violent assaults. We are understandably in shock and overwhelmed with sadness as we attempt to gather together to support one another and recognize these wonderful, giving, beautiful individuals who have been so cruelly taken from us."

The crime shocked people everywhere, including some students at Manchester Community College. "I was shocked to hear something like that happening," said student Marissa Friedman. "It's hard to imagine something so horrible happening in suburban Connecticut. It's unreal. I really feel horrible for the father." But the publication of "Murder in Connecticut," has upset some people almost as much as the original crime did.

"I wasn't aware a book had been written about it until very recently...but having heard about it, I find it strange that somebody has already published a book," said student Heather Blanchette. "Here is this man making potentially loads of money off a story that absolutely tore a man apart. For [Benson] to be making money off of something so tragic seems wrong, morally. I can't imagine Dr. Petit reading it and thinking, 'I'm so glad they put in writing what I've been fighting to escape every day.'"

In the year since the crime, William Petit has given up his dental practice and had the house he once called a home demolished. He has focused his attention toward instilling a new so-called "three-strikes law" in Connecticut that would keep repeat, violent offenders in jail without parole. And so, if a person is to commit three violent crimes, the "three-strikes law" would sentence that person to life in prison.

If such a measure had been in effect previously, the Petit family might never have been targeted. Hayes, the older of the two criminals, has a record of 27 previous burglaries. Nine months after the Petit home invasion, a law was passed that leaves an option open for judges to rule a three-time offender to life in jail, with parole. Though it isn't quite what Petit is fighting for, it proves the legal system is opening its eyes to violent, criminal acts.

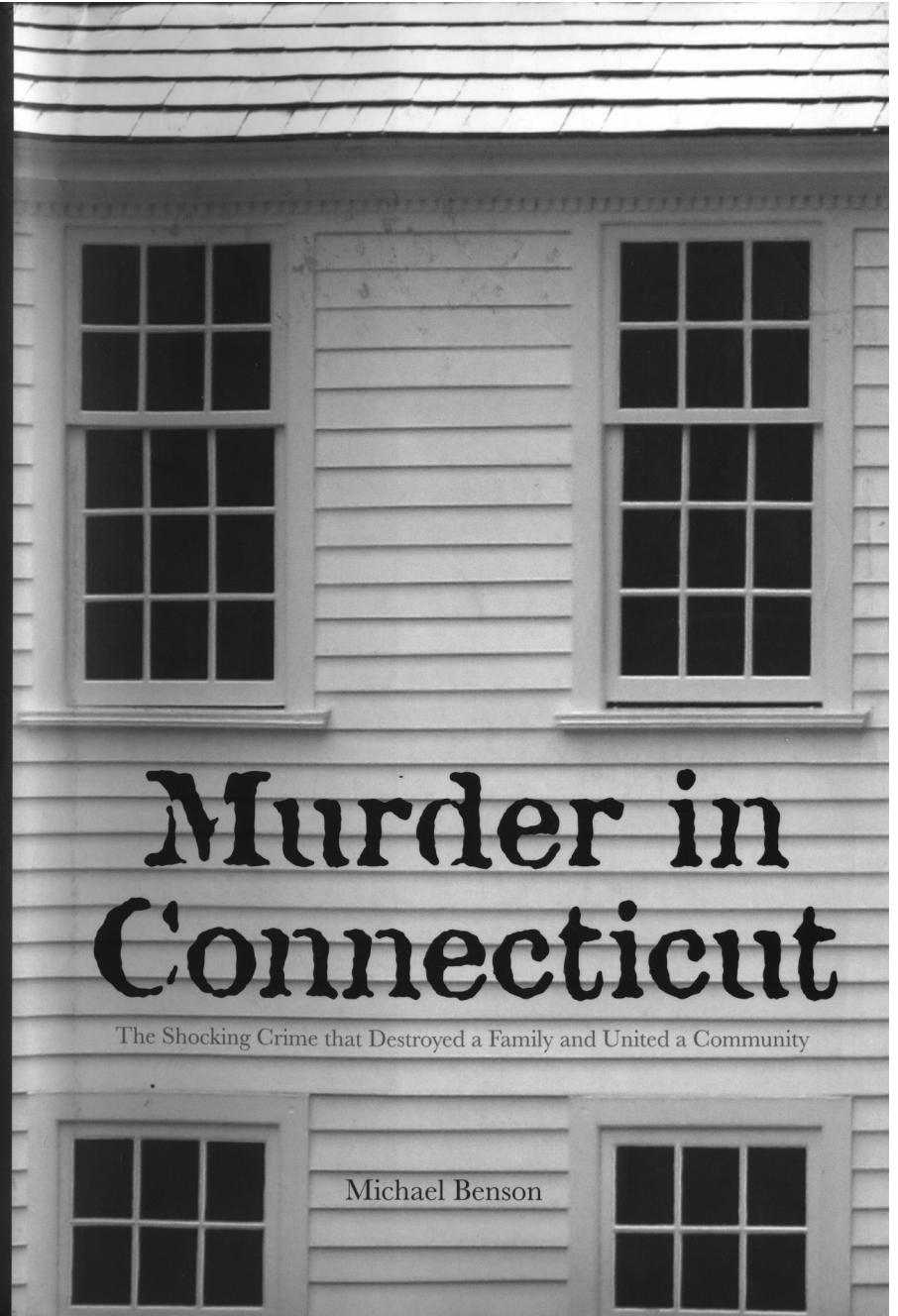
"Murder in Connecticut" goes further than just describing the incident of that terrible day. The book focuses not so heavily on the actual crimes committed, but rather focuses more on the strength of a small town to get through such a heart-breaking disaster. The invasion could have destroyed the town and destroyed the optimism left inside widower, Petit, but instead, it helped Petit fight for stricter laws so no one else should have to feel his pain.

"Murder in Connecticut" is a controversial book, as it can be seen as an invasion of privacy. It is a documented chronicle of a tragedy that would better be forgotten. Although it creates a lingering, heartrending memory, it also helps promote the importance of fighting for a cause and fighting for stricter law enforcement. In the opinion of some, Benson should feel shame for his incessant prying and documenting, but I think "Murder in Connecticut" is an important tool to understanding the terrible murders and break-in, and to help persuade readers to speak out in order to make change.

For information on "three-strikes law" and its progress through the judicial system, visit www.threestrikes.org. To get involved with charities that support Petit and his lost family members, visit www.shiningpeace.org or www.ctfightsms.org.

BENSON

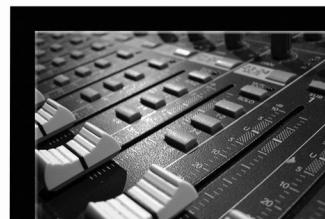
Murder in Connecticut



Murder in Connecticut

The Shocking Crime that Destroyed a Family and United a Community

Michael Benson



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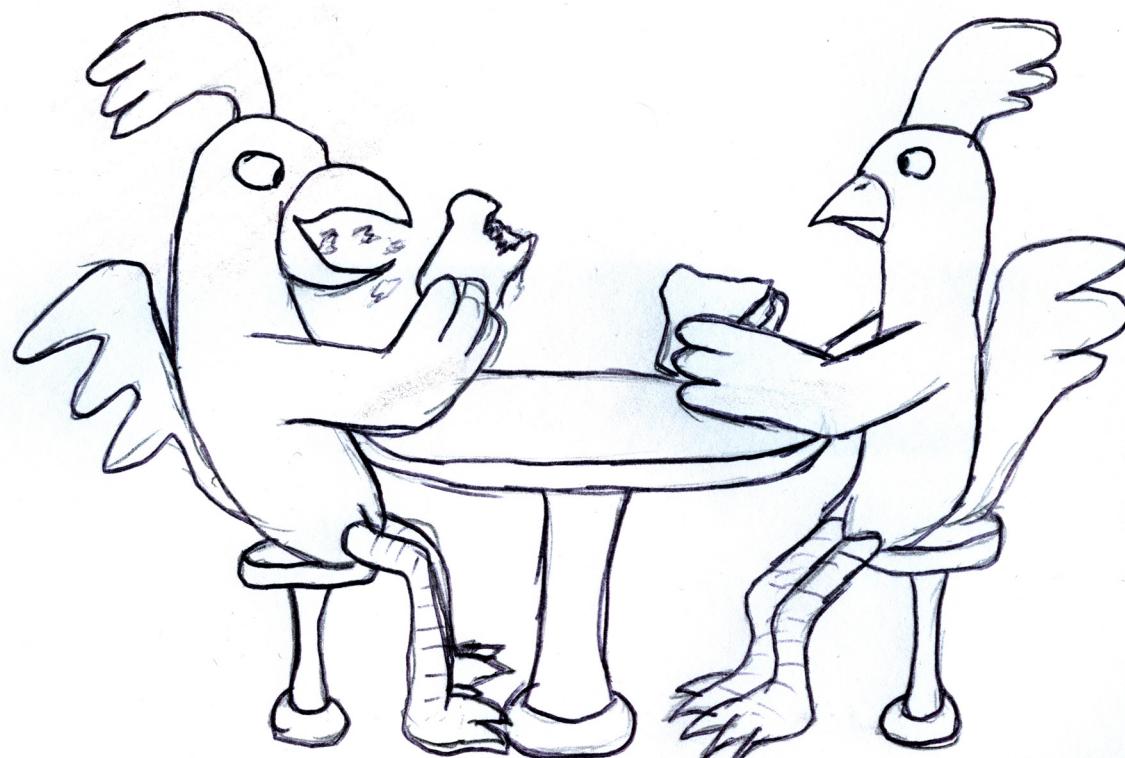
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By Eric Valad



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Bittersweet Season for Cougars Soccer

By Jonathan Stankiewicz
Live Wire Staff Writer

The Manchester Community College women's soccer team had a valiant year in 2008.

Having their best season ever (14-2), the women were ranked #1 in the NJCAA Region XXI Division III Tournament. Earlier this semester, the team beat Springfield Technical Community College 4-1 and only had Holyoke Community College in their way to get to the National Championship in Texas. During the Oct. 26 game, the women took a 1-0 lead five minutes in from Heather Kowalski on a pass from Ashley Boudle and never let up. With six saves from Nicole Morehouse in the net, the Cougars looked to be on their way to a District Championship.

But the excitement was short lived. Though playing in their first ever Division III Region XXI Championship, the women had a tough fight. Holyoke, whom the Cougars had beaten twice in the regular season (1-0, 2-1), defeated the women 4-1. But team members should have so much pride in the 2008 season. Having the best season ever in the team's history placed four members on the all-region first team: Julia Connor, Brittany Finger, Shelly Muratori, and Morehouse.

Many of the Cougars were standouts this season. Finger (43 points), Lindsay Estok (27 points), and Muratori (26 points) were in the Top 50 of leading scorers in their division (III). Co-Captain Goalie Morehouse was ranked #9 in goals against average, al-

lowing only 11 goals with 96 saves for Manchester.

The men's team earlier on in the season was certain to make huge headway not only in their District (XXI) but on a national level. The team finished 2008 with 17 wins - 13 by shutout - and just 11 goals allowed over 19 games.

At 17-2, the only thing in the men's way of a championship was Suffolk County Community College-Selden (18-0-1), the #1 ranked team in the nation, according to the Oct. 29 NJCAA Division III Poll. Beating SCCC would allow the men to go to Texas for the National Championship and to establish themselves as a dominant force in Division III soccer.

"Seventeen wins is better than we could possibly imagine," ninth year MCC Coach Jim Insinga said. "We've had good teams in the past and have had 15-16 wins. Seventeen wins is special, so we've exceeded expectations."

Insinga said he was excited to see his men succeed. Going into the District Championship, MCC checked in at the #4 slot in the Oct. 29 NJCAA Poll, are unbeaten at home over 11 games and went into the District Championship with a 12-game winning streak.

They beat SCCC on penalty kicks in an unbelievable thriller that propelled them to Texas and challenged the rest of the country.

"We beat the No. 1 team in the nation this afternoon," Insinga said, after the Nov. 1 win against

SCCC. "It took a lot of work, a lot of grit to come through this. I'm sure the teams down there are going to be just as good, but I can't imagine having to put as much effort into a game as we did today."

But the teams in Texas proved to be quite impressive and the MCC men lost to County College of Morris, of Randolph, N.J., 4-2 on Nov. 9. Despite the team's two losses, the Cougars were still one team out of four in the country still playing solate into November.

"We have a lot to be proud of being one of only four teams left," Insinga said after the tough loss. "The teams here are all excellent teams and on any given day we could have won a couple of games. We came up just a little short."

Yes, the men came up short on their hopes of a National Championship, but overall the men showed how they can prosper and be a threat on a nationwide scale.

Jemmy Cange led Division III in scoring with 74 points overall, contributing 31 goals for the Cougars. Mariusz Kurzakowski (45 points), Jason Walker (32 points), and Joe Danso (32 points) were all among the Top 50 scorers in the country this season. Goalie Jeff Gregor was ranked #9 in the country for goals against average, with an impressive .825 with 102 saves with only 11 goals allowed on the very long season. And the men's team had three representatives on the all-region first team, Cange, Gregor, and Kurzakowski.

Women's Basketball Team Faces Challenging Season

By Rob Parrott
Live Wire Staff Writer

The Manchester Community College women's basketball team is off to a dominating start so far this season. Coach Robert Turner said he is very happy with the intensity his team has shown.

Earlier this semester, the team won its first two games of the year in convincing fashion. MCC beat Gateway Community College 95-25 with sophomore and 2nd Team All American, Shanika Hines leading the way with 20 points. That was followed by a 97-63 victory over Essex Community College. Sophomore and 1st Team All New England, Amanda Morales stole the show in that game, going six for six from three point range in the second half to lead the Cougars with 29 points.

"We have some awesome guards, Shanika, Jhenel [Franklin], Little Q [Maquachera Holder], draw my defender and get me my shot," Morales said. "When they drive and you don't guard them, they are going to score on you, so the defender has to pull in. It's kind of lose-lose."

Despite the scoring outburst in the first two games, the Cougars will have to work hard this year as they lack size in the front court. This year's team is very small. The team is basically an all guard team, but so far the lack of size hasn't fazed the Cougars one bit. The Cougars rely heavily on their speed to make up for their small size.

"We're just looking to win," Morales said. "We'd like to win the conference and then make it to nationals."



Sophomore Amanda Morales drives the ball for the MCC Lady Cougars

Photo courtesy of MCC Athletics

2008-2009 Women's Basketball Schedule

DECEMBER

TUES.	2	SPRINGFIELD TECH. C.C.^
Thu.	4	Quinsigamond Community College^
SAT.	6	DEAN COLLEGE
Tue.	9	Bristol Community College^
Sun.	14	New Hampshire Tech. Inst.^
Tue.	16	UCONN - Avery Point^

MANCHESTER, CT	8PM
Worcester, MA	6pm
MANCHESTER, CT	1PM
Fall River, MA	7PM
Concord, NH	1PM
Groton, Ct	7PM

JANUARY

SAT.	3	QUINSIGAMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE^
Sat.	10	Northern Essex Community College^
TUE.	13	HOLYKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE^
SAT.	17	MASS BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE^
TUE.	20	BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE^
Thu.	22	Gateway Community College^
SUN.	25	BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE^
Thu.	29	Springfield Tech. C. C.^
SAT	31	ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE^

MANCHESTER, CT	1PM
Haverhill, MA	12PM
MANCHESTER, CT	6PM
MANCHESTER, CT	1PM
MANCHESTER, CT	8PM
New Haven, CT	6PM
MANCHESTER, CT	1PM
Springfield, MA	5pm
MANCHESTER, CT	1PM

FEBRUARY

Sat.	7	Massasoit Community College^
WED.	11	UCONN - AVERY POINT^
SUN.	15	SUFFOLK COUNTY C.C.
Sun.	22	Dean College
Wed.	25	NJCAA REGION 21 PLAYDOWN
Sat-Sun	28-3/1	NJCAA REGIONAL TOURNAMENT

Brockton, MA	1PM
MANCHESTER, CT	8PM
MANCHESTER, CT	2PM
Franklin, MA	1PM
TBD	TBD

MARCH

Thu.-Sat.	12-14	NJCAA NATIONAL TOURNAMENT
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Rochester, MN	TBD
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ALL HOME GAMES (BOLD CAPS) ARE PLAYED AT EAST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL UNLESS NOTED
^ Division III Region XXI game



By Tom Sullivan
Live Wire Staff Writer

Entering the home stretch of what has been one of the wildest and most competitive NFL seasons in my lifetime, I'm fortunate to preview this season's playoffs after week 12 because this is the last Live Wire to be released before the playoffs begin.

The great thing about this NFL season is that when I look at the standings, 21 of the 32 teams all have a legitimate shot at obtaining one of the coveted 12 playoff spots. As I write this, only one team has actually secured a spot, and I never thought I would say this, but that team is the Arizona Cardinals who have run away with the NFC west division, or as I like to call it, the NFC worst.

Eleven spots to go and two of them clearly belong to the N.Y. Giants and the Tennessee Titans. These two teams have solidified themselves as the top contenders in each of their conferences and to this point each have only lost one game. Most people see the Giants as the team to beat, but it is my sincere belief that the Titans, on a neutral field, could outlast the Giants for 60 minutes. I know, these teams are very similar, but I think the Titans have one of the best defenses I've ever seen, comparable to the 2000 Baltimore Ravens, and the 2002 Tampa Bay Buccaneers; and the Giants are much more susceptible to turning the ball over.

Looking at the next tier of teams, just below the Giants and Titans, are the teams that are fighting for a division title. The NFC right now is the most competitive, with three viable teams in the North, the Chicago Bears, the Green Bay Packers and the Minnesota Vikings; and four viable teams in the South; the Carolina Panthers, Tampa Bay, the Atlanta Falcons, and even the New Orleans Saints. After week 11 it looked like the Packers were hot and ready to run away with the North, but their Monday Night loss to New Orleans in week 12 seems to have taken them out of it. They'll have chances to pass Chicago and Minnesota, but those will be must-win games for the Cheeseheads if they want to play football in January. Right now, I'd say the Bears are best poised to win the North, because of the high quality play of running back Matt Forte and quarterback Kyle Orton. The Vikings probably don't have the passing game to

win consistently down the stretch and the Packers defense is crumbling, so let's pencil the Bears in for the North.

The South is much closer with the Panthers and Bucs at 8-3, the Falcons at 7-4 and the Saints at 6-5. It's probably too late for the Saints, even with their convincing win over the Packers, so count them out. The Falcons are the least talented of the bunch, with a no-name defense and a rookie quarterback. I've loved watching the Falcons this year, but I don't think they have what it takes. It comes down to Carolina and Tampa Bay for the division crown, and I like the Panthers running game and defense better than Tampa's, so I'll give Carolina the nod but keep Tampa in the running for a Wild Card spot. So, in the NFC my four division champions are the Giants, Chicago, Carolina, and the Arizona Cardinals.

The AFC is a little easier. The Titans have sewn up the South, and the Indianapolis Colts have all but secured their Wild Card spot with a number of convincing conference wins. The Pittsburgh Steelers and the Baltimore Ravens have battled all year for the North, but the Steelers have more experience and own the head-to-head tiebreaker against Baltimore, so I think they'll stay consistent and hold on for the North title. The Denver Broncos sprinted out to an early lead in the West, but the disappointing San Diego Chargers still have a shot at catching them, even with seven losses through 11 games. I think Denver holds on, but even Norv Turner, one of the most inept head coaches in history, could surprise us in a crazy season like this.

The East is the closest division in the league right now, which scares me to death as a New England Patriots fan. The only team going in the wrong direction right now is the Buffalo Bills, so they're out. But the Miami Dolphins, Patriots and the N.Y. Jets all have realistic shots at winning the division. The Jets still have tough home games with Miami and Denver, but they own several tiebreakers against the Pats, so as much as it kills me, I'll be objective and give the Jets the division even though I think both teams will finish 12-4. So the Jets, Denver, Pittsburgh and Tennessee are my picks for division champs in the AFC.

Only the Wild Card spots left to fill, and I've already awarded one in the AFC to the Colts who own tiebreakers against the Pats and Ravens. The NFC Wild Cards are most likely going to be the Dallas Cowboys and Tampa Bay, but I need to throw some type of wrinkle in the mix here. The Buccaneers have three more division games and a tough home game against San Diego, whereas the Washington Redskins finish up their slate with easy games against the Cincinnati Bengals, the Philadelphia Eagles (who will have already mailed in their season), and the San Francisco 49ers. So I think the 'Skins sneak into that sixth playoff spot in the NFC.

With only one spot left in the AFC, the Patriots WILL outlast the Ravens because the Ravens finish the season with four brutal games against Washington, Pittsburgh, Dallas, and the Jacksonville Jaguars. The Patriots have cupcakes like the Seattle Seahawks, the Oakland Raiders, Buffalo, and Arizona, who will be resting for the playoffs.

So the seeding for the playoffs, according to me, in order from one to six are, in the NFC: Giants, Cardinals, Panthers, Bears, Cowboys, and Redskins; in the AFC: Titans, Steelers, Jets, Broncos, Colts, and Patriots.

In the Wild Card round, I think the Cowboys defeat the Panthers, the Bears beat the Redskins, the Colts beat the Broncos, and the Patriots, of course, outlast the Jets in a rematch of the best game of the season so far. In the Divisional Round, I like the Cowboys to beat the Cardinals, the Giants to beat the Bears, the Steelers to best the Colts in a close one in Pittsburgh, and there's no way I can honestly say Matt Cassel can win in Tennessee, so Titans over my Patriots.

In the Championships, it's Titans over the Steelers and I think the Cowboys have the fire power to beat the Giants. Call it sour grapes, but I like the Cowboys. The way I see it, Super Bowl XLIII in Tampa will feature the Cowboys and Titans will end with the Titans victorious 26-21.

You heard it here first, because nobody else predicts the NFL playoffs before Thanksgiving!

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“If you could get any gift for the holidays, what would it be and why?”



Latifeh Black
Graphic Design

“I would want to get a mansion. I would have parties every day.”



Dwayne Samuels
Engineering

“I would want a motorcycle... I would do tricks on it.”



Amber Quintana
Disability Specialist

“A brand new car, ‘cause I need one.”



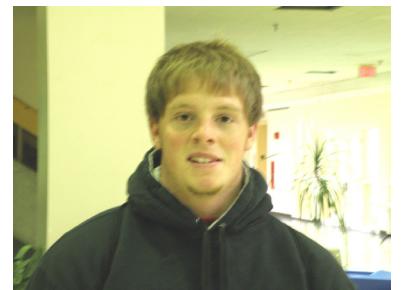
Josh Gordon
Graphic Design/
Multimedia

“An apartment so I can live on my own.”



Sheneka Cummings
Child Psychology

“More money for financial aid.”



Brandon Howes
General Studies

“I would want Santa to pay for my school.”

Happy Holidays from the Live Wire!

