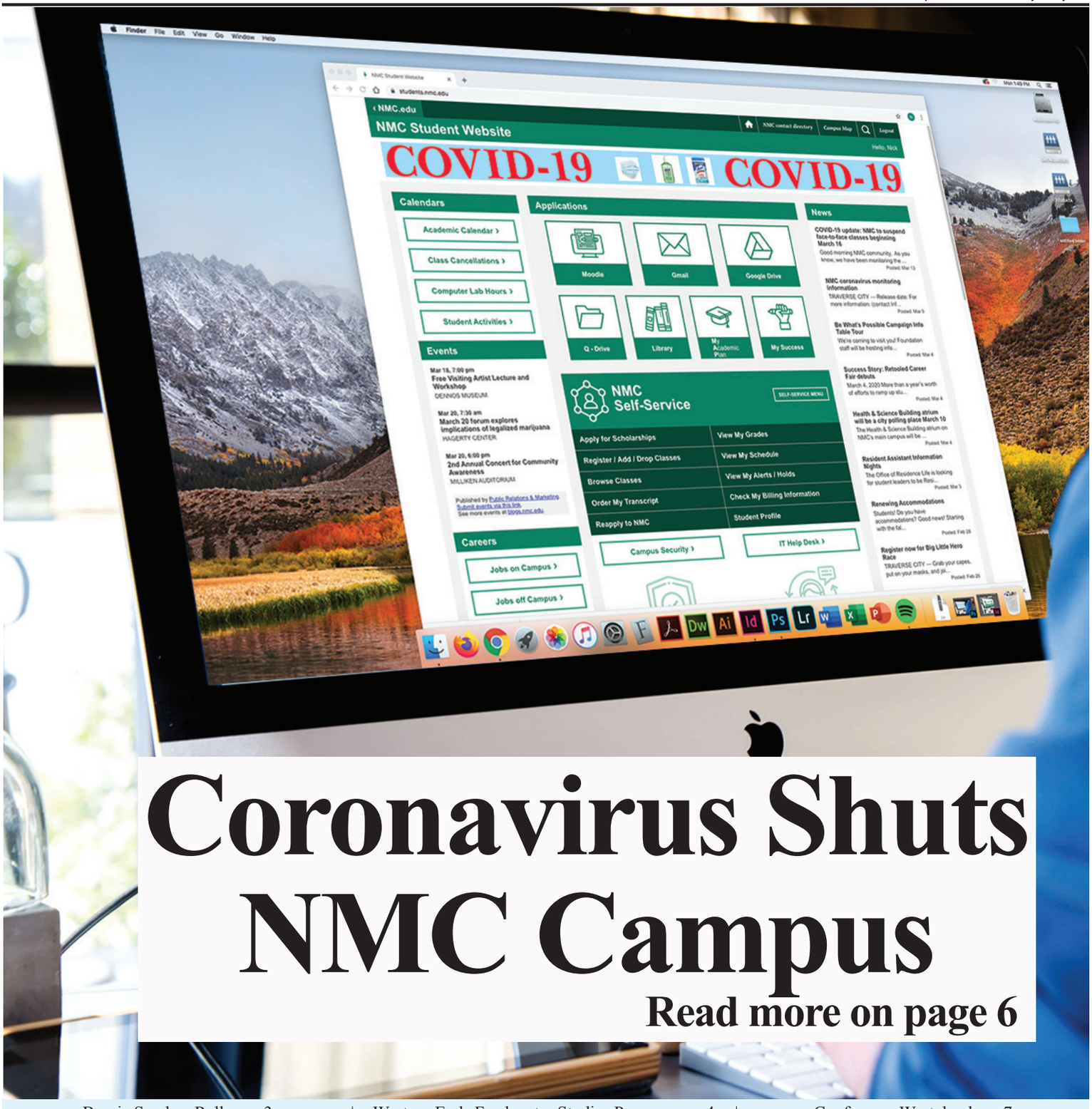
March 20, 2020 Vol. XXXVI No. 11

one copy FREE

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

WHITE PINE PRESS

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



Coronavirus Shuts NMC Campus

Read more on page 6

Courage, Grace, Empathy and Community in the Age of Coronavirus

The last few weeks have been a whiplash of ever-evolving information and societal changes as COVID-19 sweeps not only through our country but across the globe. Our lives are not changing by the week but rather by the day, and often by the hour. Schools and businesses are closing, there is economic turmoil, and people are worried about both their health and their impending financial situations. There's so much information available to us and yet, somehow, not enough. It is a confusing, scary time.

It is tempting to allow fear to creep in and guide our every movement. It is tempting to hoard all of the supplies, to build up our stock, to think solely of the survival of ourselves and our household. Some might even say that this is the smart thing to do. I can't help but think, however, what happens when we say no to fear and strict self-focus, and instead realize how important our connection with each other really is.

Humanity is at its best when we are in community with one another. When we ask, "In what way can I walk through this with you? How can I carry your heavy burden today?" But in a time when it is essential that we practice social distancing (a way to take care of ourselves and one another, in its own right!), how do we meet the needs of our neighbor? How do we comfort when even a simple handshake or shoulder pat are off the table?

Physical distance does not mean emotional distance. We are living in the golden age of technology—reach out to your people. Call, text, WhatsApp, tweet, message, DM. Use your social presence to raise awareness about our situation, yes, but also to encourage and listen and stay involved with the world in a positive manner.

We are in uncharted territory. Don't navigate with fear, but rather with courage, grace, and empathy. The vulnerable in our midst are no less worthy of our time, our energy, and our resources than those who are healthy and physically strong. We all love someone whose age puts them at high risk for this virus. We all care for someone who looks healthy but is carrying the burden of a compromised immune system. Our best societal self comes when we recognize the value in every one of our fellow human beings and then seek to protect them when they cannot protect themselves.

If you are in a position to help—help. Donate blood, pick up groceries for someone who can't, buy gift cards from local businesses to carry them through, Venmo that friend who just got laid off. Our options right now are not limited, only different than what we might normally do. If you need help—please speak up! There is no shame in your need. We are in this together and we are all deserving of love and help.

The *White Pine Press* will move its presence online for a bit. You can find us on Facebook (facebook.com/thewhitepinepress), where we will continue to share news and stories throughout this time of social distancing. Reach out to us, either on social media or through email at whitepinepress@gmail.com. We want to hear about what life is like for you through all of this.

-Emily Slater, *White Pine Press* Editor-in-Chief

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

WHITE PINE PRESS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Emily Slater
PRODUCTION MANAGER Nick Moug
COPY EDITOR Ann Hosler

STAFF WRITERS Mikayla Brady
Kathryn DePauw
Stephanie Jones
Hannah Krohn
Micah Mabey
Randi Upton
Steven Tucker

PAGE DESIGNER Samuel Riddle
PHOTOGRAPHER Logan Schweizer
Courtney Ockert

FACULTY ADVISER Jacob Wheeler
DESIGN ADVISER Kathy Schwartz

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

NEWSROOM 231.995.1173
DISTRIBUTION
ADVERTISING
EMAIL whitepinepress@gmail.com

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

Campus Closed: What to Do While Face-to-Face Classes Are Suspended

- **Do your homework!** We may not be sitting in a classroom, but the semester continues. Pay attention to when your homework assignments, quizzes, and tests are due.
- **Check your student email frequently**: This is going to be a primary method of communication for your instructors and the college administration. Make sure you're up-to-date with what your classes require. Also check out the Student FAQ linked at nmc.edu/coronavirus.
- **Communicate with your instructors**: Whether you have questions, concerns, or just want to check in, your instructors are there to help. Don't wait to reach out.
- **Attend virtual lectures**: If your instructor is hosting a virtual lecture during your normal class time (on Zoom, Discord, or whatever platform they choose), make sure to attend. This isn't a vacation—it's just different.
- **Use NMC's student services**: Though campus is closed to students at this time, some NMC services, such as advising, disability support, library research consultations, and tutoring, are being handled virtually. An updated list is available at bit.ly/NMCServicesCorona. The Writing & Reading Center offers services as well, detailed at nmc.edu/writing-center.
- **Be patient with NMC and your instructors**. This is a drastic change for everyone involved. It won't last forever. Not everyone will adapt quickly or have the perfect response. The best we can do is work through this together.
- **Limit time in public, avoid crowds, and skip that spring break trip**. A few days traveling or attending a non-canceled event is not worth putting yourself or others at risk. Binge watch a show, FaceTime with friends, read some books, pet a cat, stare out a window.
- **Most importantly—stay safe, stay healthy**. Also: please don't hoard toilet paper.

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.

Bernie Sanders Promotes Health Care and Unity in Grand Rapids Rally

Nick Moug
Staff Writer

On March 8, two days before losing the Michigan primary to Joe Biden, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders held a rally in Grand Rapids to a crowd of more than 7,500 people. Sanders focused hostility at Donald Trump and rarely mentioned his Democratic opponent, the former Vice President. "We've got news for Trump," he told the crowd. "We are going to beat him, because we are bringing the American people together."

An unexpected guest arrived when civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, who Sanders called "one of the transformative figures in modern American history," gave his endorsement and voiced his support of Sanders. "I stand with him because he never lost his taste for justice for the people," Jackson said. "His big ideas are appealing, I worked with him. When I ran he endorsed me, so in some sense it's reciprocity." Jackson was one of the first African American candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

"If there was no Jesse Jackson, there would not have been a President Barack Obama," Sanders said after Jackson's endorsement.

The focus of the rally was Sanders' progressive "Medicare for All" proposal. "We will not continue to be the only major country on Earth not to guarantee healthcare to every man, woman, and child," Sanders said. "We will not continue a

cruel and dysfunctional system in which we spend twice as much as the people in other countries, and yet 87 million of us are uninsured or underinsured."

Another key topic was climate change. "We have a president who tells us that he is a great genius. This is a president who thinks that climate change is a hoax. While we believe that Donald Trump is a hoax!" Sanders told the crowd. "You ready for a radical idea? Hold on, I don't want anybody fainting. Our administration will believe in science, not right-wing extremism."

Other guest speakers included 2018 Michigan gubernatorial candidate Abdul El-Sayed, former United Auto Workers president Bob King, and Don Riegle, Jr., a former Michigan senator who also endorsed Sanders in 2016. Later that day, Sanders held a rally in Ann Arbor where New York City Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez spoke.

Joe Biden, who went on to win the Michigan primary on March 10, also held rallies in Michigan. He received the endorsement of Governor Gretchen Whitmer, California Senator Kamala Harris, and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker.

Biden won the Michigan primary by 15%, dealing a crucial blow to the Sanders campaign, which had previously won the state primary in 2016.

After the defeat and with pressure to drop out, Sanders persisted and gave a speech in his Vermont headquarters. "What became even more apparent yesterday is that while we are currently losing the delegate count … we are strongly winning in two enormously important areas which will determine the future of our country," he said, referring to his support from young voters and his progressive agenda.

Sanders addressed the key issues of his campaign as having massive support for his major proposals, such as higher taxes on the wealthy, a $15 per hour minimum wage, and tuition-free public college.

Top photo: Bernie Sanders emerges to take the stage in Grand Rapids. Left-to-right: Jesse Jackson, a Bernie supporter, Abdul El-Sayed, Sanders speaks in Calder Plaza. *Photos by Nick Moug*

Day and Night Lightning Strikes: A Son's Tribute

Stephanie Jones
Staff Writer

Jeremy Flannery wanted to create a heartfelt memorial to honor his father. As 19-year-old Flannery looked toward graduation from NMC's automotive program, he sought to find a big project to both wrap up his education and make his father proud.

Even at a young age, Flannery knew his father loved cars. His dad always had a project car in the garage. His father's love for vehicles made it clear to Flannery what he would do: he decided to rebuild a Chevrolet S10 pickup truck. His father drove an S10 for many years and Jeremy wanted to keep that memory alive.

The pickup truck was originally going to be auctioned off at the Mike McIntosh Memorial Car and Truck Show, an annual event put on by NMC's automotive program. When program coordinator Wayne Moody heard Flannery's story, he stopped all bids and sold the vehicle to him.

Flannery rebuilt an old 5.7-liter engine, which also came from the automotive program, in his engines class for the project. The completed engine is now running. Currently, Flannery is rebuilding a transmission to go with it. He pointed out a correlation with the 5.7 engine and his father. In March 2019, his father would have turned 57—the same year that Flannery started this project..

Flannery plans on having his project vehicle re-painted with a special design that will include the phrase: "Day and Night Lightning Strikes." It will be on both the hood and the tailgate of the truck. The slogan is from his father's Navy squadron logo, which will also be added to the vehicle.

"We never had the chance to do any planning or projects," Flannery explained. "If life would have gone differently, I'm sure we would have. I was too young." Flannery's father tragically passed away two days before Flannery's 10th birthday.

Aaron Flannery served as a pilot in the Navy for 14 years. He was sometimes a flight instructor for various helicopter squadrons, which were for search and rescue operations, as well. When Aaron finished his time in the service, he held the rank as a Lieutenant Commander. "People often said that you would not find a leader like Aaron Flannery anywhere else," Flannery said about his father.

Flannery extends his thanks to all the people that have contributed to this project, including his fellow classmates who helped put the engine together and Wayne Moody. "This wasn't a solo project," Flannery explained. They all had a hand in this inspiring tribute to Flannery's dad.

Western Ends Freshwater Study Program

Kathryn DePauw
Staff Writer

Starting in the Fall 2020 semester, students will no longer be able to acquire a Freshwater Science and Sustainability Bachelor's degree in Traverse City through the NMC University Center. The degree is still available through Western Michigan University (WMU), but in-person courses will not be available in Traverse City. This means that NMC students who enroll in the program will follow the same curriculum as any other student in the state.

Approximately a full year of classes is available online, with the second year requiring students to take classes at the university's main campus in Kalamazoo. WMU is still trying to work out exactly how much of the coursework students can complete online.

WMU points to declining enrollment numbers which, in Fall 2019, led to the cancellation of its introductory class in Traverse City as the motivation for the change. Once the decision was made, Western spoke with NMC administration on Jan. 24 to notify them of the decision.

Dr. Maarten Vonhof, director of the Institute of the Environment & Sustainability at WMU, states that most students won't be affected. "Almost every student we have is graduating at the end of the summer II semester," he explained. Students who recently started have been impacted by this change.

Despite this, the WMU-NMC relationship is strong. "We have a strong partnership that grew out of common goals and shared resources to prepare the next generation of freshwater stewards," said Constanza Hazelwood, the education and outreach coordinator for NMC's Great Lakes Water Studies Institute. "Students can still benefit from our articulation agreement with WMU." This agreement allows the transfer of courses between NMC and WMU, which helps students save money if they are pursuing the Bachelor's program.

News of the change spread quickly through the student community directly connected to the program but has moved much slower outside of this tight circle, leading to confusion. WMU's advisors have reached out to students enrolled or about to enroll in the program, but many others who were not prepared for that step yet are still unaware. Anyone with questions should reach out to their NMC advisor for clarification.

WMU started contacting prospective students the week after the decision. Abbey Hull was ready to enroll in the program starting this fall when she met with her WMU advisor that week. She was told of the changes during a meeting with Kim Stevens, her advisor, and another student. In the meeting, Kim called Vonhof, who explained the situation to the students via speakerphone.

While some students were unsettled by hearing the news from a stranger over the phone, Vonhof says this was not intended. "It was to underline the point that we are doing everything we can. Here's the director on the phone, if you have any questions about why this is happening, he can answer those."

Current students in the WMU program, like Sheyenne Nagy, were told later after news of the change was already circulating among the students. Nagy began the program in 2019 and was planning on graduating in Spring 2021. She heard the news through friends and had to reach out to Stevens. "It really started out as a rumor… there was no official announcement, it was all hearsay until I reached out to someone and got an actual answer," Nagy said.

Vonhof acknowledges that these types of decisions are often difficult. "We truly did our best," he stated. "Student needs were at the forefront of every conversation we had."

Stevens has provided support and helped students create individual academic plans. She worked with Nagy to create a pathway to graduation that includes an accelerated schedule. To help accommodate as many students as possible, and increase the number able to graduate this summer, WMU adjusted its original plan and created one in-person class in Traverse City for the fall semester.

Requiring a year in Kalamazoo offers students some benefits as well, like more access to professors and course options. Hull plans to pursue the degree, despite having just purchased a home in Traverse City. "There are two limnologists on staff at Kalamazoo. I want to be a limnologist, so I will actually get to work with people who are in the exact same field that I want to be in, which is exciting," Hull says. "I wouldn't have gotten to meet them if I didn't ever go to main campus."

Vonhof is hopeful that the future will hold great things for NMC and WMU. "Our program developed as a partnership with NMC. It is something that we have always felt very strongly about and value tremendously, and that hasn't changed from our perspective at all."

What the Tech?!
Become Unplugged

Scott Goethals
Contributing Writer

Editor's note: this article was written prior to COVID-19 cases being confirmed in Michigan, and prior to NMC closing campus and switching to online-only classes.

It was nearly noon and the young wrestlers were taking a break for lunch. As I looked around the school cafeteria, I noticed that the teams shared two things in common: they were all invested in eating their meal before the next match, and most of them were oblivious as to their surroundings. Their eyes were glued to smartphones and hand-held devices. Rather than striking up a conversation with their teammates, they chose to self-indulge in what was most important to them: that potential high score.

It was fascinating how distant everyone was from each other. The lack of social awareness was difficult to comprehend as they remained focused within their own virtual world.

Today this scene is commonplace. As I look around while walking down the street, eating in a local restaurant, or even driving down the road, most everyone tends to be preoccupied with one thing: their phone.

Technology has taken over and we have become a society succumbed by the need to be connected. While this global connectedness has solved many issues and often made us more productive, it is often at the expense of our own inability to socialize and communicate with others. While technology has allowed us to become the most connected generation to date, it has also made us the most disconnected.

I have found situations where my need to be connected has risen above the need to hear others trying to converse with me. I explain to others that I will be with them as soon as I finish this text message or send this email, as if these things are more important than having a conversation with the person that is right there in my presence. When I was growing up this type of behavior was considered rude and subject to discipline from my parents, but today, it is easily dismissed as a customary part of everyday life.

What has happened to us? Why do we place a higher importance on our technology than we do our family and those that are important to us? We can easily dismiss this notion by saying the device allows us to communicate with our family and that we can more easily connect with others. While true, we often neglect the fact that our devices remove the human element of conversation and socialization. I often hear folks justify their actions by stating that texting and other forms of communication make it easy to "send my message" without having to hear "drama" or other conversational nuances that "just aren't important." Our phones have become a filter and allow us to steer the conversation.

There are many studies that indicate our connectedness and that of younger generations is creating social and, in many cases, psychological and physiological issues. All it takes is a simple Google search and you will find countless articles and blogs discussing how our connectedness causes issues not only for us as adults, but it also truncates the creativity and development of many young children. It seems that our phones and other electronic devices are now in control of us, when at one time, we were in control.

Our lives and the lives of today's youth are not the same as they were a few short years ago. As we become more connected, I can't help but wonder where we will be in a few short years. We have become addicted to technology. Like any addiction, it has a stranglehold on us.

Technology will likely always be a part of our lives—however, what we can and should do is find a balance. We need to address what is important (our family and friends) and to interact with them without the use of technology.

With spring break just around the corner, I challenge each of you to spend time with those that are important and to remember that our phones and other devices are simply tools we choose to use, and not tools that should control us. Over spring break limit your screen time, and if possible, go completely unplugged. Take time to socialize with your family and others. You might just find it was the best spring break you ever have had.

Scott Goethals is an instructor in the CIT Infrastructure program at NMC.

NMC Students Face Changes, Uncertainty Following COVID-19 Restrictions

Kathryn DePauw
Staff Writer

The halls of NMC are empty as the entire campus—the entire country—waits for the full impact of "coronavirus disease 2019," or COVID-19. On March 17, NMC closed all campuses, including the University Center. The college is currently expected to resume face-to-face classes on April 27, but the struggle to adapt to the new learning environment is being felt by instructors and students alike.

Instructors have had to move their entire course load online, and given the short timeline, they are still working on restructuring classes. Instructors should have a virtual curriculum in place by Friday, March 20. It is hard to know what any individual course will look like, though they will likely use Moodle and Zoom, a virtual video meeting platform, for lecture and communication.

While there have been some technical issues during the first week, it is not all bad news. "There are some positives—one of our classes had their best attendance ever while on Zoom," said Jason Slade, director of the Technical Division.

Working remotely poses a unique problem for NMC's many degrees and certificate programs that are almost entirely experiential, such as maritime, welding, construction, automotive, nursing, culinary, and most of the sciences. Instructors are still working out creative solutions for this problem. Electronics and RAM classes are utilizing simulation software, and other instructors are performing remote demonstrations instead of labs and then providing data to the students for analysis. It has also changed the timeline for some students in certificate programs like those in Automotive, who are now preparing early for the state exam.

Students are by now aware of the restricted access to learning resources, but most services are available remotely. The Student Success Center and Testing Center are closed. The Tutoring Center and Writing & Reading Center will still have phone and video appointments. Advising, counseling services, academic success coaching, and other student resources are all still currently available by phone call or Zoom, and students should make an appointment if assistance is needed.

Although it does not offer COVID-19 testing, Health Services asks that students reach out to them if they are feeling ill to help them with their response plan and to contact their primary physician.

The Osterlin Library is closed but is offering remote research consultation via phone and Zoom. On March 19 and 20, the library distributed Chromebooks and internet hotspots for students without access to a computer.

Charter Communications is offering free internet service to college students for 60 days and waiving installation fees.

Student group meetings and events have been canceled until the campus reopens for classes. The fitness center has canceled all open recreation activities until further notice. Other events that the campus hosts have also been canceled.

With all this uncertainty, NMC student residents like 19-year-old Teresa Noah are faced with a difficult decision. She resides in East Hall and was given a choice by the school: to either leave and receive a prorated refund for the cost of her dorm and meal plan, or to stay. Those who choose to leave will not be permitted to move back in after the campus closure is over. With the window of opportunity to get out before the outbreak peaks closing, many students are choosing to leave.

Residents were urged to clarify requirements for the rest of the semester with their instructors to ensure that students could fulfill their course requirements before deciding. For Noah, and many other students who committed to leaving the weekend before the closure was announced, this wasn't possible. Many instructors had not yet restructured their classes and were not able to define new course requirements to students.

Those who choose to stay will experience some changes. No visitors have been allowed in the dorms as of March 16. By Monday, March 30, all remaining East Hall students will be moved into North Hall and the cafeteria in East Hall will close for the remainder of the school year. North Hall suites each have a kitchen and all East Hall students will be given $200 to buy groceries. Security will continue to be staffed.

"NMC is committed to making sure our students and employees are safe during the COVID-19 pandemic," said NMC's executive director of public relations, Diana Fairbanks. "For some of our students, that means returning home. For other students, that means being able to stay safe in on-campus housing. While the situation will continue to evolve, and so will our response to it, our commitment to safety will remain constant."

Students like Noah don't want to pay the full cost of housing when the benefits of campus life seem to be getting smaller every day. According to Noah, within four days of the suspension of face-to-face classes, most students were leaving the dorms. "On the other side of the building, on the third floor, there's three people in total staying. And that includes the R.A.," she describes. "There's nobody here. Everybody is leaving."

Fairbanks reports that about 150 students still remain in campus housing at NMC. "We expect that number to drop closer to 130 by Sunday [March 22]. It will likely continue to change as the situation evolves."

With many students evacuating and outside access shrinking, there is a sense that the social support system is thin for campus residents. This is especially true for Noah, whose family is in Illinois. She uses FaceTime with her mother to keep her up-to-date with the changes. "That's the best I can do."

Like many students, Noah is currently taking a course that she plans on transferring to a university, and that raises another concern. One of the requirements for transfer is that tests be proctored. According to Advising Center director Lindsey Dickinson, this is an issue that NMC staff is working to address. Online proctored testing is being considered as a possible solution, but decisions won't be made until next week. With some higher learning institutions ending semesters early or running them pass/fail, Dickinson believes that universities and colleges around the country will be accepting of transfer credits. "I think we're going to see a lot of flexibility surrounding what's happening this spring semester."

That would be one less thing for Noah to worry about. She was hoping to remain in Traverse City and find a long-term hotel room, but once the college announced that it was closing campus, she headed home. Few students decided to stick it out and by Noah's estimation, only about two dozen students still reside in the dorms.

With class requirements not yet decided and in-person courses set to resume in just over a month, leaving is a gamble. But with so many questions unanswered and a future that is so uncertain, it feels like we're all taking this gamble together.

Household Cleaning Tips

You are bumping elbows, covering your cough with your arm, and washing your hands on the regular. You're even participating in social distancing to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Well, there is still more you can do to help prevent the spread within your home.

Cleaning:

- Clean all high-contact surfaces with soap and water, followed by a disinfectant daily.
- Use disposable gloves or dedicated cleaning gloves when possible.
- Launder clothes daily.
- Dry items on high for 30 minutes to disinfect.
- Wash dishes or put in the dishwasher immediately after use. Run dishwashers daily.

If someone in your home is sick:

- Avoid cleaning until they have recovered. This will help minimize exposure and spread of the virus.
- Keep them in one room to minimize contaminated areas, ideally with the door closed.
- Open a window in the room when possible to allow the circulation of fresh air.
- Disinfect the bathroom after each use.
- Use gloves when doing laundry or wash hands afterwards.
- Do not shake laundry, this can spread the virus.
- Laundry from an ill person can be washed with other items.
- Wash dishes immediately after use and have designated dishes to be used for the ill person.

Food Prep:

- Wash all fruits and vegetables that may have been handled by others in the store with soap and water.

COVID-19 Morphs Writing Convention Into Wasteland

Coronavirus drives fear into the writing community

Ann Hosler
Copy Editor

The scent of hand sanitizer wafted through the room. Slightly fruity, tinged with alcohol, a mish-mash bouquet assaulting from every direction.

For the limited number of attendees that participated in the 2020 Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) writer's conference, caution overruled the typical congeniality found in such a gathering. Taking place in downtown San Antonio—where a case of coronavirus hit the news just days before the conference began on March 4—there was an unspoken fear. An awareness among attendees that maybe being in a public gathering wasn't a logical decision.

It was seen in the dozens of canceled panels and the lack of bodies cramming the halls between sessions. It was seen in the chasms between chairs as people settled in for a panel. It was seen in the sea of empty tables spread across AWP's famous book fair. Those gaps were an echo of what no one would say and instead uncomfortably joked about.

That we were afraid to be around *anyone* right now.

The first panel I attended was about humor in writing. While waiting for it to begin, AWP employees covered up canceled panels on the room sign, leaving just one panel each on Friday and Saturday.

The panelists joked about the one no-show among them, who didn't come because she was concerned she'd be quarantined returning home from city with a confirmed Coronavirus case. Nervous titters spread across the audience. If they were anything like me, "Can they do that?" flashed across their mind.

One panelist dubbed the conference "AWP Apocalypse." Another read a tweet from earlier that week, a commentary on the small percentage of people who decided to attend regardless of the pandemic: "I feel like this is poised to be AWP: Chaos People Only."

These moments of levity briefly cut through our concern in deciding to attend AWP. An estimated 10,000 writers were expected to attend, but according to the *San Antonio Express News*, at least 40% of that number did not. Based on the quiet hallways and uncrowded book fair, it's possible that the percentage is much higher.

Lisa Lucas, the executive director of the National Book Foundation, joked that the event was "AWEmpty."

AWP debated canceling the conference, but ultimately chose to hold it and offered for writers to defer their registration to the 2021 conference or get a refund if they chose not to attend. Disagreeing with the decision to not cancel, AWP executive co-director Diane Zinna resigned. "I am broken-hearted," Zinna tweeted on March 3. "I will always love this community and ask that you please be kind to the board and tiny staff, people who are working so hard and believe in you."

Those that did attend the conference seemed to be healthier than your average conference-goer. Typically someone who pays non refundable registrations and plane tickets is going to attend—colds and flus be damned. It was rare to hear a cough, sniffle, or sneeze this year. People were fastidious about hand washing and using the motion-activated hand sanitizer dispensers spread around the convention center. Restaurants and shops kept sanitizer openly available at counters. Maintenance crews frequently disinfected railings and handles, and most simply avoided touching surfaces with their hands. My elbow is slightly bruised from activating crosswalks.

Between my layovers in Chicago O'Hare airport and the days spent in Texas, I saw around 10–15 people wearing face masks. And one fool trying to use her lacy scarf as a face mask. No one reacted negatively to those with masks on, though scarf-lady got quite a few double-takes. Most travelers kept their distance from others, both in airports and on partially-filled planes.

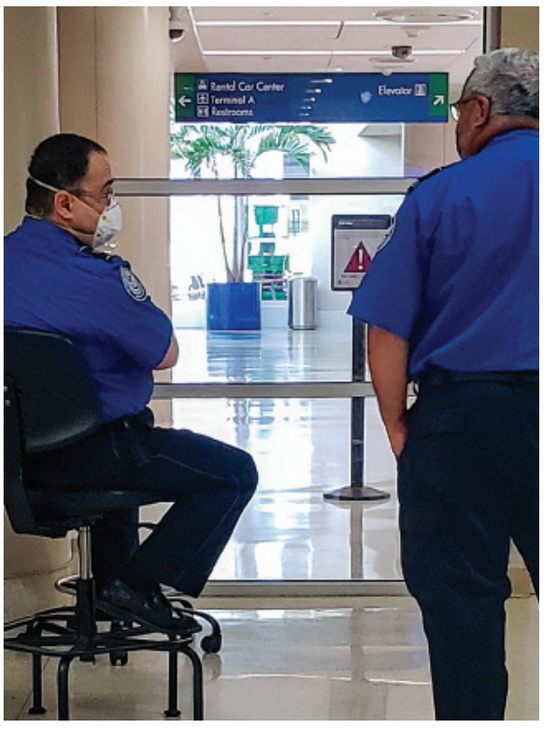
The problem with fear is that it sucks the enjoyment out of life—though enjoying life does not mean to be reckless with it, either. I knew the risks in attending and I've taken that assumption of risk seriously in regards to other people. Since returning home, I've avoided events and kept my distance from others as a precautionary measure, and I'm upfront about my recent travel whenever someone gets too close.

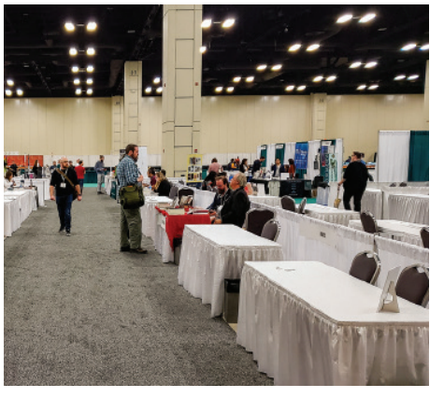
The amount of caution, cleanliness, and distance demonstrated by other conference attendees and the city of San Antonio itself was reassuring. An aware community is a safer one.

Though the majority of the panels I wanted to attend were canceled, I made up for it in other ways: eating at a steakhouse that served cuts of meat by shaving them off of a katana, visiting The Alamo during its commemoration week, discovering the best nachos ever made, and scoring a one-on-one session with an editor who gave awesome feedback on my book's first chapter.

If this is how the apocalypse begins, at least I tasted those nachos first. #AWYum.

Photos, left-to-right: A room panel board at AWP, with several canceled panels covered up; a TSA agent wears a mask in the San Antonio airport on March 8; sit-down and fast food restaurants everywhere carried bottles of hand sanitizer for customers to use; an empty AWP book fair. Photos by Ann Hosler





Campus Quotes

What is your favorite thing about NMC?

Anne-Marie Kabat, Pre-physician Assistant

"The squirrels are my favorite. They each have their own little personality and I enjoy getting to watch them as I walk to classes."

Megan DeSchepper, Nursing

"The people I've met. I really enjoy the people in the nursing program and the friendships and relationships I've made, as well as the professors. All of them have been really accommodating and helpful."

Mateo Ingle, Dual-Enrolled

"The nice environment of the library, where you're able to study and have quiet moments away from everything."

Kaleb Carlson, Nursing

"The openness with all of the teachers. It's kind of a small school and it makes it easier to learn and have one-on-one time and there are a lot of other options to get help."

Joseph Geranen, Electrical Engineering

"What I like about NMC is the quality of the classes as well as how cost effective it is. I wouldn't be going to college currently if it wasn't as affordable here."

Rachel Bryan, Biology

"I like that the classes are smaller. I think it makes it easier to get to know people and your professors."

Nick Saffell, Undeclared

"The caring community and the time and effort that all the professors and all the faculty take to ensure that every student is successful and learns."

Vaping: The Trendy Killer

Stephanie Jones
Staff Writer

Our nation does its best to keep up with the latest trends. We wear the hottest fashion, drink out of expensive water bottles, and say the newest lingo. Trends hold their place in society for a period, then die out as the next best thing comes along. There is one trend that lingers: vaping.

Vaping has been around since 1963, but it grew in popularity over the last couple of years. At first, vaping was viewed as a substitute to quit smoking. However, recent social media evidence has revealed otherwise. Young people are posting selfies and videos with vapes. There is a focus on the individual's possession of vaping products as if they want it known to their followers, they take part in the activity, which provokes questions.

Has vaping lost its original purpose? Has it become another trend?

In recent reports, there have been four vaping-related deaths and 73 lung injuries in the state of Michigan. "When I was vaping, I had a lot of coughing and chest congestion," says Richard, a Northwestern Michigan College alumni and former vape user. "I quit because it was affecting my health negatively."

The state and federal government are putting forth effort to combat the use of vaping. In September 2019, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer banned flavored vapes in hopes the product becomes less appealing to the user and to prevent future vape-related lung injuries from occurring. On Dec. 20, 2019, Congress passed a law raising the federal minimum age to purchase tobacco products—including vaping products—from 18 to 21. This can be a boost to help a younger crowd that struggles with addiction to quit.

One of the most recent moves on vaping laws was from the Trump Administration. In 2020, the administration announced plans to ban most vape flavors nationwide.

"What the Trump Administration announced is a good choice," NMC student Nick First says. "I ended up in the hospital from vaping two years ago. It was a nicotine-free vaping liquid. I was in the hospital for four days unable to breathe and was put on oxygen."

The government will need to gear up and prepare for an increase in black markets. "I think people are going to have a problem with the bans. People are going to find loopholes to purchase. It's like any drug—it's addicting," First says.

First has observed that many people he knows vape socially. "It isn't something they do in private."

Hopefully as new laws are put into place and the vape injuries and deaths are highlighted in the news, there will be a raised awareness on the effects of vaping.

Measuring Flicks' Quill and Filmies: an Award Show for the Locals


Photos by Micah Mabey

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

Karl Hartley and Max Petersons have spent well over 200 hours now screaming at each other about movies for their podcast "Measuring Flicks."

And they've been honest-to-god loving every second of it.

Over the March 9 weekend, the duo got some of their friends together for a different reason to scream. No, not an orgy: the second annual Quill and Filmies, Traverse City's tiniest award show.

As a celebration of season two of their podcast, Hartley and Peterson screened movies from 10am to midnight. The award show was live recorded from 2–4pm.

Last year, the gang consisted of Hartley and Petersons, joined by their spouses sitting around a kitchen table reading off categories and winners with nothing but the microphones to listen to them. This year, it was a grand ceremony with anywhere from 10–15 people wandering in and out, all listening and watching short clips for each film nominated in a category (much like the Oscars have their edits, but these are edited together by the duo themselves). There were 22 categories in total. Everyone had their own ballot to fill for wild categories like "Sexiest Cigarette" and down to the not-so-wild "Best Actor."

I didn't get to catch the whole thing that day, but what I did hear was an absolute riot. Hartley and Peterson's banter together is so quick witted that you'd think they've known each other for their whole lives, when in reality they met when they worked together at the now defunct Bistro Fu-Fu just three years ago.

"I feel like our show is almost like a little micro film festival every month because the movies we're doing aren't like current run movies," Hartley said. "They're like, 'Creature from the Black Lagoon,' and stuff that came out years ago. A lot of it is sort of more obscure too."

If you're interested in catching the third annual "Quill and Filmies" next year, and keeping up to date on all things "Measuring Flicks," make sure that you follow their podcast on Spotify and visit their website at quillandfilmproductions.com/measuring-flicks.

Gothic Cowboy, Spencer McQueen, and a Can of Spray Paint

Micah Mabey
Staff Writer

Some artists go digital, some use a pallet of paint, and others sketch with pencil.

Spencer McQueen, on the other hand, only needs three basic, but out of the box, materials: a pallet knife, a tub of plaster, and a can of spray paint.

When I met with him, he had just gotten over the bronchitis that he'd had for a week after his 30th birthday party, and spending a few days in Detroit.

It's safe to say that if you're doing art in Traverse City, you've probably run into McQueen. Standing over 6'0" with the stature of a powerlifter, a head of long black hair, and a bushy black beard, you can find him brewing up some of the best coffee in town at BLK MRKT.

"It's how I met people, how I got social skills," McQueen said of the coffee industry that he's been a part of for the past 16 years. "I'm incredibly grateful for it."

He has a passion for his work. In every cup of coffee, every cappuccino, every shot of espresso he puts time and precision in. It's an art for him.

"I've traveled to coffee competitions across the United States. As I got older I realized, as much as I needed to continue doing that, I needed something that was uniquely mine."

That's when McQueen's art started to kick in again. It was 2014 and he decided that it was time to do some more work for himself; where he could set his own schedule, his own goals, and not be in the bubble that Northern Michigan has for coffee culture.

"It was nothing that I ever thought that I'd have anything profitable off of. I needed an outlet that I created for myself," he explained.

He started calling himself an artist about a year later. People started taking his art seriously. "That's what happens," he said. "As soon as you take yourself seriously, others do too."

McQueen's story of art isn't the normal one, especially when it comes to selling his art.

"The first time I ever showed [art] anywhere was [BLK MRKT] about five years ago, so I'd only been in it for about a year seriously," he explained. McQueen described the show as a cohesive unit called "About Today," inspired from a song with the same name by the National. "It was very much rooted in what was going on in my life at the time. A decent amount of heartbreak made this 15-piece show that was very dark, a lotta black. Which has never changed."

The first piece he sold was the biggest and most expensive of the show. McQueen pointed at the wall next to us where it once lived. "It was the first time I made more than 50 bucks from a piece," he said. "As soon as one person sees value in that way, others start to see it too."

"Selling the work doesn't matter," McQueen continued. "It matters for the career, but there are people who have never bought a single piece that are the greatest supporters of my entire career. Somebody could see the value of every single piece but not being able to afford it, but they'll still be able to resonate. Those are my biggest supporters."

If you're looking for McQueen's work, you can find it all around town at places like Little Fleet, as well as at the next art walk in Traverse City showing at Paige Lee Interiors. In October, he'll have a full showing of currently unreleased works at BLK MRKT. An Iowa show is also currently scheduled at Studio 1280 Showroom for April. It'll be online as well as at a brick and mortar gallery showroom.

"I keep making, refining, and finding inspiration," McQueen said.

Shady Lady Book Review

"Sworn to the Shadow God"

Ann Hosler
Copy Editor

The Anticipation has arrived.

It's been hundreds of years since the last, and now believed to be myth. But as the Twelve—gods cast out of their realms by the High Father as punishment for their sins—appear in Aos, its people are overwhelmed by the presence of their gods. Each god, split into the Aspects of four personalities: Apathy, Arrogance, Hedonism, and Lies. Each Aspect, burdened with a mortal anchor, a person intended to improve those undesirable facets, to purge it from their very essence, before the god can ascend again to their realm.

Rhagos the Undying, Lord of the Dead, has returned to his place in the Underworld. He discovered that this time, the High Father decreed that one anchor will remain with each god until the next Anticipation. The god known as Death is displeased with the snivelling fool anchored to him—and he'll do anything to get what he really wants.

An illicit bargain with the Fates returns Rhagos to the beginning of the recent Anticipation. Death is not above cheating, after all.

Maxine (Max) Chavez, a corporate assistant and gamer from Earth, stumbles upon a portal to Aos. What at first seems like an adventure turns into a waking nightmare as Max finds that in order to return home, she must be anchored to Death. She must survive attempts on her own life to help Rhagos overcome his other three Aspects by slaying their anchors. And when they're the last ones standing? Max must convince Rhagos to return her to Earth.

"Sworn to the Shadow God" is Ruby Dixon's second entry in her "Aspect and Anchor" epic fantasy romance series. Reading the first book isn't necessary (though I recommend it as well), as this book does a great job in introducing the reader to the strange circumstances of the Anticipation. "Sworn to the Shadow God" clocks in around 645 pages, which fly by as you're transported to the eclectic world of Aos.

On the surface, Max is a naive and at-times annoying character, simply because you, as the reader, catch onto things that she misses until much later in the book. Most of her growth happens in the various ways she causes Rhagos to change and become a better god. Rhagos starts out as a selfish prick in the prologue, and while he's still imperfect by the end, Max's influence is seen through his awareness of how he can make a difference to the souls living in the Underworld. It's an exciting journey to watch the pair overcome the many obstacles thrown against them, from hostile humans to angry magicians to poop ropes to the tattoos scrawled across Rhagos's back and arms. (Yes, poop ropes. I highly suggest reading the author's note at the end. It's hilarious.)

Even Death gets lonely sometimes. Do him a favor and read his story.

Music that is Sometimes Good but also Sometimes Not Good

"Not My God" (2020)

Liam Strong
Contributing Writer

Darkly atmospheric electronic music rectifies a kind of dance music that, well, I would never dance to, but I like to sway with it in the car sometimes. Darkwave, or more particularly, industrial music, haunts my inclinations for the self-titled debut Crosses album (of Deftones' Chino Moreno fame). I can never seem to find enough of it, or perhaps I'm not digging enough. Either way, atmospheric electronic music can make for the perfect mood setting (but, let's be honest, I mostly use it to read and write).

Contrasting the shattered romanticism of Crosses is the debut self-titled album by Not My God, an industrial/electronic project from Los Angeles, California. Somewhere between a tortured rant and edgelord collaboration, "Not My God" intersects the border of exhaustion. I want to say I *think* I made it through this record, but realistically I attempted listening to it multiple times. Regardless of fortitude and open-mindedness, Not My God is objectively aggravating; their music ceases to be laughably bad when the obsessively long playtime is put into account (i.e., if you love the same exact whiney song for an hour, then I guess this is for you?). Moreover, if repetition didn't already cause me a migraine, then the lazily shallow production and samples—mind you, from people who are supposed to be well-known producers—surely did.

Granted, as someone who has never actively sought out much industrial music (I love drone, though), I've always appreciated sprinkles of it in other genres. Not My God, however, makes me want to avoid the genre completely. Obviously, not all industrial is as slurred or vapid as Not My God's self titled debut, but they've also proven how ancillary they are to their Marilyn Manson fame. For some, this might spark interest, but, really, I sincerely hope it doesn't. Usually, I'm prone to recommending a wide variety of music to people. But I'm telling everyone that you shouldn't waste your time or energy on "Not My God." Now, I'm going to repeat myself saying this for an hour.

Lemony Spring Pasta

Mikayla Brady
Staff Writer

Brighten up your home with a fresh spring pasta. Enjoy this as a side dish or a full meal. It's quick and easy to make. Add a protein of your choice if desired or keep it simple.

Ingredients

- 8 oz box rigatoni pasta
- 1/2 cup feta
- 1 large zucchini, cut into half moons
- 1 bunch of asparagus, cut into pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/3 cup toasted pine nuts
- 1 1/2 cups arugula
- salt and pepper to taste

Lemon Vinaigrette

- juice and zest of one small lemon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons honey or cane sugar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Allow to cool.
2. In a salad dressing shaker or jar, add all the vinaigrette ingredients and shake or stir vigorously until well-combined.
3. In a large skillet, heat 1/2 tbsp olive oil. Cook asparagus for 3–5 minutes, or until cooked through but still crisp.
4. Heat the additional 1/2 tbsp of olive oil and cook zucchini until both sides are caramelized but the zucchini is still crisp—about two minutes per side. Do not overcook it or it will become soggy.
5. Allow veggies to cool.
6. Combine cooked pasta, cooked veggies, arugula, feta, and desired amount of dressing. Toss until all the noodles are well-coated. Top with toasted pine nuts.