

The Mount Observer

“Voices of the students of Mount Wachusett Community College”

This Story Sucks!

Doctor cautions against deadly virus

By Ryan Lyesiuk

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) is an often deadly virus, but with the right knowledge and precautionary measures, the chances of obtaining this disease are slim.

According to Dr. Charlotte Newell, adjunct faculty in the Vet Tech program, the chances of acquiring EEE significantly decrease as the temperatures drop. Newell stated, “Everyone is at risk until there is a hard frost.” Hard frost (28 degrees or lower) often does not occur in Massachusetts until late October or early November, according to the National Weather Service.

Trapping and testing mosquitoes and birds for EEE is conducted by the Department of Public Health (DPH). “Although data collection is less critical this time of year, because of the



Photo from Unsplash

EEE can be transmitted via the bite of mosquitoes.

reduction in mosquito activity, it is always good to gather data,” said Newell.

When Newell was asked what her thoughts on aerial spraying in hopes of reducing the mosquito population,

she replied, “Spraying is not indicated at this point because of the negative impact it can have on beneficial insects.”

According to Newell, allowing the remainder of living mosquitoes to die off from

natural causes (a hard freeze) is the best course of action, saying “The goal should be to limit spraying to target certain areas during specific time periods.”

Active Shooter Training

Campus police discuss active shooting survival tips



Photo by Betsy Torres

Officer Jim Halkola of Campus Police

Maya Douglas

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

In the event of an active shooting, teachers are trained to lock the doors, close the blinds, and call 911, but campus police have some other tactics in mind.

Campus police officer Jim Halkola said police response must change, and traditional lockdown procedures have failed us. He argued that in the amount of time it takes to lockdown and call 911, evacuation could have already occurred.

During a lecture Halkola said, “Staying huddled in a corner is exactly what an active killer wants.” It’s referred to as “sitting duck syndrome.” He

said there is nothing proactive about waiting for the killer to come to you.

The key is to make yourself a hard target. There are two responses the body experiences in an emergency: fight or flight. Halkola explained the difference between being a hard target and a soft, or passive, target. A soft target waits in the corner like a sitting duck. A hard target will barricade the door, utilize the room for items to use as weapons, cause distractions, and mentally prepare themselves for anything.

In the event the active shooter makes it past the barricade and

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PREVIEWS



Farm Fresh Feast

Shelly Nicholson, the director at the Brewer Center for Civic and Community Engagement, helped organize a farmer’s market on campus to provide fresh, locally grown, organic ingredients to students.

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MWCC Student Profiles

Get to know some of your fellow MWCC students.

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Civil Discourse

Government and the rights and roles of citizens are some of the topics covered in the all-new, student run Civics Club.

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Gallery Talk

Richard Michelson, artist, author, and owner of the R. Michelson Gallery in Northampton, MA, stated that western Massachusetts is the center of children’s book illustrations in the United States.

For the full photo spread, see page 10



A Space to Grow

Preview of the upcoming teaching garden

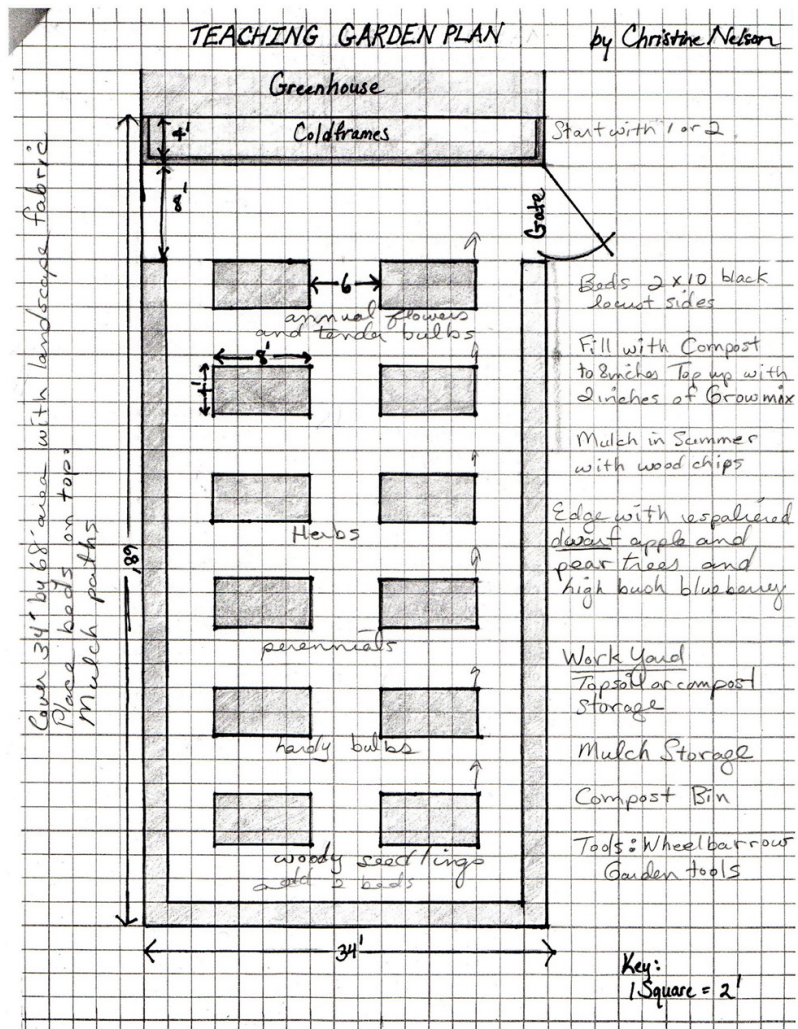


Image courtesy of Christine Nelson

The proposed plans for the new teaching garden

By Nicholas Papini
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

A new teaching garden, opening soon on the Gardner campus, will help students broaden their experience and make them more desirable to prospective employers. Thomas Montagno, Professor of Biology and Chair of the Natural Resources Program, described the proposal.

Students in horticulture and greenhouse management programs will interact with and learn to manage a greater variety of plants. Currently, the only plants that these students interact with are planted in pots. The teaching garden will give them the opportunity to learn to prune plants and how plants interact with their environments.

According to Montagno, plans

for planting the beds include herb gardens, woody seedlings, perennials, annuals, pollinators, annual flowers, and hardy bulbs. The annual plants planned will include petunias, zinnias, marigolds, and snapdragons. Planned perennials include Rudbeckia (also known as black-eyed Susans), hollyhocks, delphinium, day lilies, and poppies. The herb garden will include lavender, oregano, basil, parsley, mint and more. Some of the trees currently planned will include apple trees, pear trees, and grape vines.

The teaching garden will be on the south side of the greenhouse, facing Green street.

The garden will measure 34 by 89 feet and contain 12 raised beds that will measure 4 by 8 feet each.

The attached greenhouse will also have a state-of-the-art fence, which will have woody plants affixed to it using a horticultural method known as espalier. This means that the plants will be grown flat up against the fence and then formed into patterns along the fence as they grow.

When asked about the relatively unknown nature of this new expansion, Montagno said, "There's always changes happening in all the programs a lot of the time." He remarked that it is difficult to know what a given department is working on when you are not a member of it. The materials have been gathered and he and his co-leader Professor Pomeroy are waiting for convenient day to begin building.

Active Shooter Training

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students find themselves one on one with the shooter, it is best to team up. Throw objects at the face to distract them. It should be noted that the bad guy is not usually a highly skilled shooter. Halkola pointed out that even trained police officers miss 70%-80% of their target shots in dynamic events.

It's important to be flexible in a situation such as this. Prepare yourself for anything, and if given an opportunity, get as far away from the area as possible. Halkola said that the moment the shooter looks away or is distracted, run.

Law enforcement who respond to the emergency are trained to have primary goals. They must locate, stop, or contain the shooter.

The police will not immediately aid victims, as the safety of the school takes priority - paramedics will tend to the victims. "Be prepared for chaos in these situations," warned Halkola.

Halkola mentioned that active shootings date back to the 1800's, but the shooting at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999 (twelve students and a teacher were killed) opened eyes to the rapidly changing world. In 1999, shootings were almost unheard of. Twenty years later, it has become common.

Although some things are out of our control, Halkola offered some tips to prevent putting yourself in a dangerous situation.

- Always know three exits when you walk into a room.

- Be aware of your surroundings, the people around you, alternate routes and stairwells, and emergency exits. Most college students probably aren't even aware of the quickest emergency exit routes.

- Call 911 and give the dispatcher the best and most accurate information possible. Never hang up the phone, even if you leave the room, because advanced dispatch technology can listen through rooms.

- Don't believe common myths such as, "It won't happen here." Another myth is that if law enforcement is present, the shooter will not attack the school. A shooting can happen anywhere at any time.

- Be prepared for chaos. Make yourself a hard target.

EEE Virus

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According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), symptoms of EEE in humans include chills, fever, malaise, and myalgia. The CDC states on their website, "Approximately one third of all people with EEE die from the disease. Death usually occurs 2 to 10 days after the onset of symptoms but can occur much later." Those who do survive suffer life-long mental and physical impairment, according to the CDC. Newell said, "I can't speak too much about the human side, but horses sometimes suffer sudden death." Symptoms of EEE in horses include high fever, unsteadiness, and being unaware of their surroundings.

Newell has not dealt with horses affected with EEE on a personal level because, "EEE is not as prevalent in this area." Most horses are vaccinated for EEE, especially when outbreaks

occur, according to Newell.

"There is a 90% mortality rate in horses, the other 10% survive but are significantly impaired for life," stated Newell. The majority of the 10% that manage to survive the initial symptoms are later euthanized because of their poor health caused by the disease.

According to Newell, the DPH does a "fabulous job" prioritizing information to the public. She said "awareness of EEE is key both on and off the campus."

Dr. Newell received her Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University in Massachusetts. She is working towards earning a second bachelor's degree in Sustainable Food and Farming at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Courses taught by Dr. Newell include Anatomy and Physiology of Domestic Animals, Farm Animal Medicine, and Animal Nutrition.

Let Your Voice be Heard!

Send your stories, poetry, artwork, photography,
or other content to
mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

A Farm Fresh Feast

Farmer's market provides fresh food for all

By Marissa Shea
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The Brewer Center runs the Food for Thought food pantry - a widely used resource on campus that helps provide students in need with meals.

Shelly Nicholson, the director at the Brewer Center for Civic and Community Engagement, helped organize a farmer's market on campus to provide fresh, locally grown, organic ingredients to students. She is

on the board of Growing Places, a Leominster company whose mission is to "...inspire and connect the North Central, MA community to create equitable access to healthy food and environmental sustainability through education, collaboration and advocacy."

"We provide the space and they bring in the vendors," said Nicholson. Market vendors accept SNAP, which allows all students and faculty to eat fresh,

locally grown ingredients.

According to Nicholson, students and faculty are often unable to attend local farmer's markets because of timing. There are several farmer's markets that run in the middle of the afternoon while students are in class or at work.

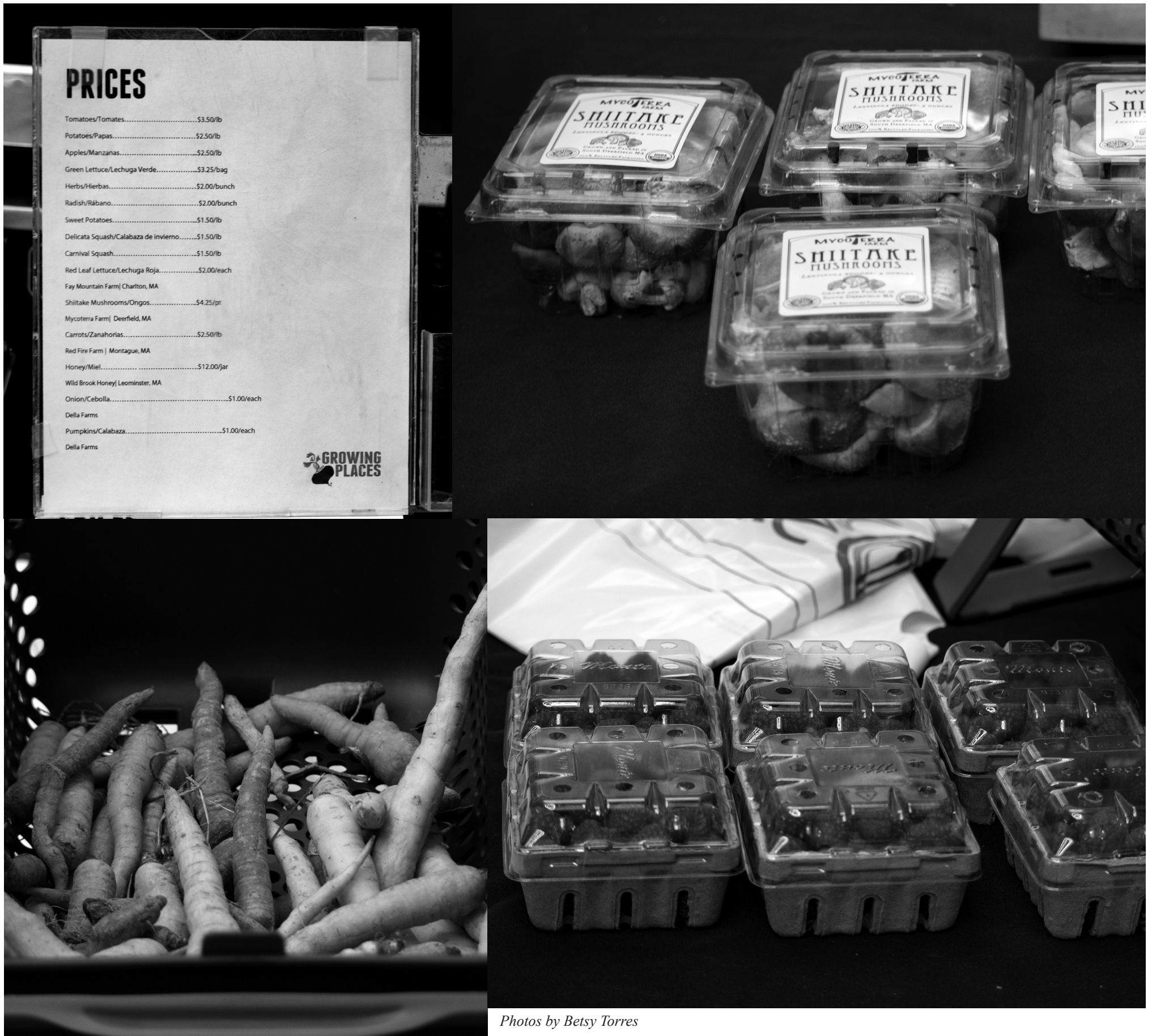
Transportation is another issue. "The problem for a lot of our students is lack of transportation and timing, so it only seemed logical to have the

farmer's market on campus," said Nicholson. Consumers are excited about the new market. "It was one of those things where I don't know if people knew they wanted it until it happened," said Nicholson. The market's current fall harvest includes fresh tomatoes, peaches, and onions.

The mobile market can be found in the south cafe, commons center, or, weather permitting, in the parking lot. They are usually up and running by 11

a.m. and close around 1-2 p.m. if they have produce to sell. The market has had a very successful year and plans to continue if the growing season allows.

Due to winter, they are planning to take a break in January and February and start back up in March. If you are a student or faculty member with a green thumb and would like to sell your produce at a future farmer's market, see Nicholson in room 152.



Photos by Betsy Torres

Opportunity Knocks

Transitions to College program prepares adults for higher education



Image by Karen Arnold from PublicDomainPictures

By Maya Douglas

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The Transitions to College program is a grant funded program which supports non-traditional students to ease their way into the college lifestyle.

The program is led by Kim Kayser, program advisor and coordinator. Kayser's goal for the program is to be able to accept more students in the future, since the program has a limited number of slots and there is a waiting list. Her role is to help students prepare and complete the accuplacer test, complete the application process, and help students determine a study program.

Kayser works closely with the students in the program and helps them transition into campus life. "The relationship between advisor and student is a crucial part of the Transitions experience, and is part of the reason why my students do so well," Kayser commented.

Kayser has worked closely enough with her students to

know their work schedules, lifestyles, academic goals, as well as personal aspirations.

Forming a personal relationship with an advisor, Kayser argued, is beneficial to students and is a major factor in student's success. Another goal is for her students to graduate or

the campus considers itself lucky to have this program, and in addition to funding from the Department of Education, the college donates to the program so that it may thrive.

The two semester program assists those who come from DESE (Department of

tuition to books, Transitions pays for every penny of the student's education. During this semester alone, Kayser noted, the program retained 32 students, of which 80% earned a GED or HiSet through a partner agency or ESOL program.

Kayser is in charge of budget management and program recruitment. MyTurn, an agency in Fitchburg which aids homeless young adults and teen moms, is one of the partner programs used to recruit students. She also does outreach work in local prison programs in an effort to help rehabilitate ex-criminals by bringing them into her program.

Kayser is studying for her Masters in education leadership. Her hope is that, with her degree, she will have more influence over decisions affecting her program.

"The relationship between advisor and student is a crucial part of the Transitions experience, and is part of the reason why my students do so well."

- Kim Kayser, Transitions to College Program Advisor

obtain a college certificate, but more importantly, that students try their best.

The Transitions program is one of fifteen transition programs in Massachusetts. Kayser said

Elementary and Secondary Education) or ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) programs to ease their transition back into school. The cost of the program is fully covered. From

Civil Discourse

Students discuss politics in new Civics Club



By Ryan Lyesiuk

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Government and the rights and roles of citizens are some of the topics covered in the all-new, student run Civics Club.

According to Professor James Korman, who will provide guidance and support for the club members, students will "meet face-to-face with elected advisors (fellow students) - not teachers - when organizing these meetings."

Understanding United States civics is a key factor in understanding how the economic and political systems are closely connected. "Grasping knowledge in both areas is essential in order to be successful upon graduation," Korman noted.

Current events including the possible impeachment of President Donald Trump, the electoral college versus the

popular vote, and how the news is delivered throughout the media are a few talking points covered by the club.

Traveling to different cultural sites throughout the area will also have a role in the Civics Club. "This is the best way to learn about the history of our government," said Korman. Possible destinations include local and state courthouses, the Massachusetts State House, and downtown Boston.

"These trips will hopefully provide education outside the classroom in a fun and relaxed setting that students often don't receive in the classroom," Korman added.

Fundraising is key in order for the club to organize trips. "Free trips to all involved in the Civics Club is the goal," said Korman. Ideas for fundraising campaigns are still being discussed.

Civics Club officials were elected in September and include: Dylan Hatch, President; Hannah Normile, Vice President; Hannah Mulcahy, Treasurer; and Lauren Sousa, Secretary.

Meetings are held every Wednesday from 12:30-1:30 p.m. in room 257. The long-term goal is to move the class to a larger room with more opportunity for students to interact with each other. Room 257 is a lecture setting, and as the club grows, there will be more room to collaborate as a group, according to Korman.

Korman added that if the Civics Club sounds interesting to students, they should reach out to either him, an elected official, or any member of the club. Students are also encouraged to freely show up at one of the meetings.

Photo courtesy of Professor James Korman

Professor James Korman

PROFILE

Getting Down to Business

Business society prepares students for the corporate world

By Alyssa Gammel

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

The Alpha Beta Gamma Business Honors Society is a selective group of exclusively business majors.

“Students must keep their GPA at 3.0 or higher with 15 credited hours within the school,” said club president Alicia Hatch. ABG is also connected to the Chamber of Commerce which means that members can go to different networking expos.

The induction process includes a lunch with a guest speaker, certificates and pins being handed out, and each new member must recite a quote. According to Hatch, members will always have a connection to ABG, even after they graduate. Past, present, and future members are always invited to events held by the group.



Image courtesy of MWCC

The ABG as of their induction ceremony in April, 2018

Some of the business-type majors that make a student eligible for ABG include

Business Administration,
Business Economics,
Business Journalism, Business

Management, and Business
Statistics.

ABG hosts most of their

dinners and events for members at outside venues so they can have more freedom for planning. Certain events, like bake sales, are held on campus. They have annual fundraisers to award scholarships to club members and to give back to the school.

Member benefits include discounts on car rentals and exchanging ideas at local chapter functions and at Annual Leadership Conferences. Scholarships for individual four-year degree students can get up to over \$500,000.

There are also benefits to the community, including inviting people from local businesses to speak to the students about the business world and the best ways to succeed.

ABG meets every other week on Tuesdays from 12:30-1:30 in room 253 in the main building.

High School Just Got Easier

Student talks about attending high school and college simultaneously



By Hannah Bennett

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Reducing mental stress is one reason why more students are choosing to pursue dual enrollment programs.

First-year transfer student, Maddie Faneuf, found the prospect of receiving her high school diploma and Associate's degree at the same time appealing. Faneuf said her two years in high school pushed her towards the dual enrollment program as a way to escape the “drama” at school and neglect of student needs by the administration. “I wanted a fresh start,” said Faneuf.

Faneuf enjoyed her transition to MWCC. Her favorite class is College Writing I with Professor Michael Pecora. She enjoys both the material and how helpful and approachable her professor is when she has questions. Faneuf

noted that counseling and tutoring provided “comfort and assurance” that the school cared about her success.

When asked how she would improve the dual enrollment program, Faneuf suggested a group or club for new students to help integrate them into the community. Students who have been in the program for a year or two could help introduce new students to college life and any student services.

“They’re so welcoming,” Faneuf said of the faculty and staff. “And the school makes you want to get involved.” She said this is why she decided to join the Student Government Association.

While the allure of MWCC caught Faneuf’s attention, the negative environment of her high school gave her just as much of

a desire to switch schools. Her high school’s setting triggered stress which took its toll on her academics and mental health.

The relaxed environment of college helped her de-stress and focus on her classwork.

“The best decision I’ve ever made, academically, was to transfer here,” said Faneuf. Should other students follow in her footsteps? According to Faneuf - yes. “I would 100% recommend coming here to anyone wondering about dual enrollment.”

Faneuf’s career goal is to help others. After she gets her Associates degree, she might consider transferring to a four-year college. But for now, she is content in her new school environment.

Photo by Hannah Bennett

Madison Faneuf

Become Your Own Boss

Business professor shares tips for aspiring entrepreneurs



Photo courtesy of Nicholas Cochrane

Assistant Professor of Business and Management, Nicholas Cochrane

By Ryan Lyesiuk

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Many students dream of becoming entrepreneurs someday, but for numerous reasons they choose not to

follow this dream. Whether it's from fear or lack of confidence, the decision not to follow your passion and become an entrepreneur is a mistake students make, according to Nicholas Cochrane, Assistant Professor of Business and Management.

There are many excellent benefits to being an entrepreneur, according to Cochrane. "It's great to be your own boss," and "It allows you to create your own schedule," he said. Cochrane says building your own schedule is an enormous benefit to working for yourself, especially as a busy college student.

Cochrane says that unfortunately there are some risks to being an entrepreneur as well.

There's "the possibility of losing money; after all, nobody likes to lose their hard-earned money from one job while pursuing a

dream in another." Cochrane says this may be the number one reason individuals choose not to become entrepreneurs. Financially speaking, the upside of owning your own business is enormous, but the downside can be difficult to handle as well.

"Being willing to fail, at least in the first attempt, is something aspiring entrepreneurs at MWCC need to prepare for," said Cochrane. "Most don't succeed, at least in the start. Sometimes a little luck is needed to get established."

Cochrane added that hard work and persistence are important in any career, but for an inspiring entrepreneur, they are a must.

For students contemplating becoming entrepreneurs while pursuing their associates degrees, a few things need to

be considered first, according to Cochrane. Joining clubs, making friends, working with your professors, and networking on and off the campus will assist in your success as an entrepreneur.

"It is essential to receive as much education from school and beyond as possible. This learning experience will make a significant difference in the overall success in your endeavor," Cochrane said.

Cochrane also says that if you have the qualities to become an entrepreneur, including passion, motivation, the ability to challenge yourself, and the willingness to take risks, then owning your own business may be in your future.

If you have a hard time accepting failure, taking risks, being a leader, and risking your finances, then maybe becoming

an entrepreneur isn't the right fit for you.

Professor Cochrane, who joined MWCC faculty in the fall of 2019, brings a supply of experience with him. His experience includes teaching Organizational Behavior and Leadership at the University of Massachusetts, and the Robert J. Manning School of Business in Lowell. Cochrane received his Master's in Business Administration with concentrations in Management and Marketing from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. His past business roles include Director of Operations, General Manager, and Human Resources Supervisor. He has worked with Fortune 500 companies, family-owned businesses, union environments, and as a successful entrepreneur.

Home Alone

Student compares homeschooling and college



Image from Open Clip Art Library

By Marissa Shea

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Sarah (last name withheld) is nineteen and is physically attending school for the first time.

Sarah was enrolled in

Connections Academy, a Commonwealth Virtual School that offers online schooling from pre-K to 12th grade. The school was founded in 2002 and has since provided "personalized learning" for students online.

She was enrolled in this program for the entirety of her grade school education and was not very fond of it.

"I didn't like it - I like being taught by a teacher and it makes school feel twice as hard when you're self-taught," said Sarah. As a child, Sarah's parents helped to teach what she couldn't teach to herself, but as she grew older they became less involved in helping with schoolwork.

All the work for the Academy is done online on a website Sarah said is "similar to BlackBoard." Students are required to have access to a computer and a website login, and the academy supplied the textbooks. Sarah stated the system was "easy to use" but she would not recommend it.

Had it been Sarah's choice, she would have attended a public school. For her, the workload was difficult to manage. "You

usually had one week to complete assignments," said Sarah. "This usually meant that I procrastinated until the last day."

Since enrolling at MWCC, Sarah has appreciated having more deadlines, professors to answer her questions, and having to show up to the classroom. Although Sarah considers herself a very social person, she finds that it is harder to create relationships with other students due to her homeschooling.

"People often make assumptions about you when you have been homeschooled; they tend to think you are antisocial or odd," said Sarah. She never walked at graduation, attended prom, or went on any school field trips.

Something Sarah enjoys about college is that nobody asks about her homeschooling. "At first I expected people to ask me questions, but they didn't," said

Sarah. This made her transition easier. Sarah graduated with a high school diploma like most students, but it was a completely different experience that she "doesn't recommend."

She thinks that it is important for people to create "long lasting relationships with people in their communities" and homeschooling made it more difficult to do so. "When you are younger, you need to be social. I feel like I missed out on important school related events that people remember for the rest of their lives," Sarah noted.

Sarah is majoring in Early Childhood Education with hopes to one day become a preschool or kindergarten teacher and "make a difference" in children's lives. Sarah believes she has adjusted well to her new environment, considering there were no classrooms or classmates at her previous school.

PROFILE

The Drive to Succeed

Profile: Eric Howell

By *Kristopher Madden*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Working at Speedway in New Ipswich, Eric Howell has a lot of time to think about his passion -- cars. He's not sure what he wants to do with them, but Howell knows his future is in the automotive industry.

"I'm not really sure what I want to do, but I love working with cars," said Howell. "I have a really good eye for design."

Howell is pursuing his Liberal Arts degree so that he can transfer to a four year school, most likely Fitchburg State University. He comes from a long line of college graduates and feels the desire to follow in his older sister's footsteps and go to The Mount.

One of his favorite parts of The Mount is the student body.

"Everyone is really friendly and I feel like I know my

teachers and they know me," said Howell. "It's really nice that the campus is so small and it's not so easy to get lost, like a lot of other college campuses. Some places it's like crossing town to get to your next class. Not here though."

Some of his favorite classes are Functions & Modeling and Music theory, mostly because he likes the teachers so much.

Howell especially enjoys the short commute to school in the morning, less than 25 minutes from home to campus with regular traffic. While climbing New Ipswich Mountain near his home, he was surprised to see the famous windmills outside the school.

"It really put into perspective for me how close I am to the school," said Howell. "I can almost see it from my house!"



Photo by Vanessa Roberto

Eric Howell

Lights, Camera, Action

Profile: Hannah Bennett

By *Maya Douglas*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Hannah Bennett, 18, of Phillipston, works as a media assistant at Templeton Community TV (TCTV). Bennett's dream is to become a professional screenwriter. Working for TCTV is good hands on experience towards her goal.

"The best way to get into the industry is to already be in it," Bennet said.

The role of Media Assistant encompasses every aspect of working for a cable channel: editor, creator, and filmer. Bennett also assists in keeping the YouTube channel active. Bennett works as a camera person

and she also edits film. She's in charge of cutting out mistakes and putting in transitions to ensure the smoothness of the broadcast. She has also interviewed people from town officials to civil war reenactors.

The channel has covered many events in the Templeton area, such as the annual Arts and Craft Fairs, the November fair at Narragansett Regional High School, and the annual Mac & Cheese festival. Local residents also request to have events filmed, such as town meetings or a tour of the new school. Their broadcast can be found on channel 8.



Photo by Vanessa Roberto

Hannah Bennett

Running Down a Dream

Profile: Ryan Lyesiuk

By *Brandon Feliz*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Ryan Lyesiuk, 40, is an avid marathon runner. Rather than running for better health, Lyesiuk runs for pure enjoyment. It all started at a young age, he says, running in the summer with his brother as his brother trained for the upcoming football season. From then on it slowly became a major part of his life.

After a break during the college years from age 20 to 25, Lyesiuk started running competitively at the age of 30. The 2011 Manchester City Marathon was his first

marathon.

"Besides being exhausted, I felt really accomplished," said Lyesiuk.

In 2014, he completed the Baystate Marathon, finishing 26.2 miles in 2 hours and 54 minutes.

Lyesiuk is running the Baystate Marathon again in Lowell on Oct. 20, his first full marathon in 5 years. He is hoping to beat his time but he said he will just be happy to finish his 5th marathon race.



Photo by Vanessa Roberto

Ryan Lyesiuk

The Triple Play

Juggling life as a student, a parent, and an employee

By *Hannah Bennett*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

How difficult is it to take care of yourself during college?

There's getting up on time, getting ready, eating breakfast, and the rest of the "morning routine" before school.

Setting time for any homework or projects is also a must and isn't always easy. On top of that, a job to support yourself takes up time, energy, and focus. Together, a job and college classes are enough to fill the day, leaving little room to take care of yourself.

So what would caring for a child do to that schedule? Being a parent is a full-time job on its own. How hard must it be to be a student, employee, and a parent all at the same time?

Vanessa Roberto, an MRT major with a focus on Photography, is a student parent involved in several organizations on and off campus. She works in the Food Pantry on work study, she is the president of the Parent

Support Group (PSO), and she is organizing the upcoming Dobby Sock Drive.

Life as a student parent is "rewarding but very challenging," she said.

Work and academics on top of daily life and childcare take up a lot of time.

"I just feel like there's not enough time in the day," said Roberto. "I drop [my kid] off at daycare, go to school or work study, pick her up from daycare, and I barely have time to do any work."

Because being a parent comes with responsibilities and obligations to her child, Roberto's academics often suffer from other demands in her life. Group projects are common in college classes but are not always the best for students, especially student parents.

"Group work isn't always an option," said Roberto. "It's an unrealistic expectation for student parents. We're different from kids who come here right

out of high school. I'm not staying up late because they want to push it off. I put my phone down when I'm putting my daughter to bed."

Being a student parent is also incredibly stressful. Costs of food, housing, clothing, and childcare are high.

"Daycare is a huge issue for all student parents," said Roberto. "Single parents especially need daycare."

"Daycare can cost up to \$300 a week," Roberto added. "Some parents have to work all week just to pay off daycare."

The cost of school expenses is also an issue. "Many [student parents] may be living paycheck to paycheck. So buying a textbook I hardly ever use is irritating," said Roberto. "The PDF versions cost way less than the books, so those would be better for classes."

If a parent gets sick, their child gets sick, their car breaks down, or something worse, it interferes with what little free time they

have. "Issues in life like [car troubles] become even worse," said Roberto.

So how can student parents get assistance with any issues they're experiencing? As Roberto mentioned, MWCC has a Food Pantry located in room 192 (to the left of Financial Aid on the opposite side of the hallway just after the Advising Center). The Food for Thought Food Pantry is run by the Brewer Center for Civic Learning and Community Engagement.

The Brewer Center promotes programs involving service learning, volunteering, internships and civic outreach. The Food Pantry provides food for any student in need and does not require proof of income.

"If you're hungry, you're in need," said Roberto.

Any and all students are welcome to use the food pantry on campus. In partnership with Food For Thought, the Serving Our Students (SOS) program also helps students in

need of foodstuffs, along with transportation, baby supplies, and school supplies.

Roberto is also the president of the PSO, a support group for student parents that meets once a month at 12:30 in Room 345.

The group was established to help parents in both academic and personal areas, such as tutoring or advice on how to manage life as a student parent. The group holds charity events such as toy drives and clothing drives.

From her experiences, Roberto's advice to student parents is, "Don't be afraid of the stigma surrounding needing help. It's okay to get help."

"Don't be afraid to talk to your teachers," she added. "You need to let teachers know at least a little bit of what's going on so they can try to help you."

"It's obviously hard to be a part time student," said Roberto. "But you don't have to rush. Do things at your own pace."

The Write Way to Research

Librarian offers tips on writing research papers



Photo by *Nicholas Papini*

Ellen Pratt

By *Nicholas Papini*

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

One research librarian believes that one of the greatest mistakes students make in writing a research paper is not asking for help.

Ellen Pratt, a distance education and outreach librarian, mentioned how the library has numerous resources available for students, but that many students do not use them.

"Reaching out for help is an underdeveloped skill in a lot of students," said Pratt. When students are utilizing a database and not getting any results, they blame the database for the issue. They may even decide that the database is not a helpful tool. However, Pratt stressed that there are tools available to help them. Library assistants are one, but there are resources on the MWCC website, as well. The MOOC video tutorials contain numerous tips and tricks. There are also research guides on the website under the Start Your Research tab.

Pratt doesn't feel that research is a straightforward process. Often, a person will loop back reading and searching for sources midway through their paper. She stressed that, no matter the circumstance, reading about the chosen topic is necessary. A person may know their topic well, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they know what questions should be asked about it. Likewise, open-mindedness and curiosity lead to better, more well-rounded papers. Most topics have multiple answers and knowing the counter argument to a stance is important.

Pratt noted that when searching for sources, "always evaluate for relevance and quality."

Pratt said that she feels that EBSCO is the ideal database available to students. EBSCO

has more options, gives detailed citations, and contains more subject filters.

Pratt argued that Google and its variants produce biased results on account of it being primarily a marketing company; they place ad revenue over the academic integrity of their engine. Pratt doesn't believe in bad sources, but that doesn't mean that every source is ideal for a research paper.

According to Pratt, students typically set up appointments with her for help with both the research and writing portions of their papers. Many students who see her have no memory of writing a research paper. It may have been years since they've written one and they need a refresher. Pratt said that it's important not to judge students

who simply want help and she enjoys supporting them no matter their past writing experiences.

Pratt usually refers students to a writing tutor. She believes that writing tutors are good at going over the process without overwhelming students. They also address the need of each student and help manage the fear that some experience when contemplating research assignments.

Pratt is available for assistance by appointment at 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. She is on the Leominster campus from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Tuesdays and from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Wednesdays. Her email is e_pratt@mwcc.mass.edu.

Growing Up With Disney

Early Childhood Education major discusses the impact of children's films

By Hannah Bennett
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Allyssa Johnson, first year Early Childhood Education major, has yet to interact with many of the children who go to the Garrison Center for daycare, but she is learning about fostering healthy childhood learning and development. At the Garrison Center, she learns what factors have the greatest impact on early childhood development.

Currently, Johnson is learning about the importance of parental involvement in the early stages of childhood development. This fosters "family engagement", which is crucial to the healthy development of children. One assignment on this subject was a half hour movie that parents

watched with their children. Then they created a project based on how the movie made them feel.

"Mainly, it's bonding time, sitting down with the parents," said Johnson.

This is a function of many kids' movies. Parents sit down with their children and watch a movie like *Toy Story* for fun. The parents enjoy it for the adult humor hidden within the script and animation. The kids focus on the adventure and the fact that "toys are alive" in that movie. Johnson said that 2010 sequel, *Toy Story 3*, teaches the people who were kids when the first *Toy Story* came out the importance of maturing and becoming an adult.

"Andy went to college and

gave his toys to someone else," said Johnson. "He grew up, and it made me sad, but [growing up] is a part of life."

Several movies have had this effect on Johnson and others like her. Personal connections to specific movies keep them

introduced her to *The Wizard of Oz* through their own childhood memories, and that is why she loves that movie too.

What kids see movie characters do also influences their actions.

"Disney movies are meant to teach good," says Johnson.

"Saying [toys are alive] teaches kids to take responsibility for their toys. And movies like [Toy Story] teach kids right and wrong."

- Allyssa Johnson

in mind even after growing up and going off to college like Andy. *The Incredibles* is also important to Johnson because of her interest in the characters and the family dynamic at the heart of the film. Johnson's family

"Saying [toys are alive] teaches kids to take responsibility for their toys. And movies like [Toy Story] teach kids right and wrong." She says that the main characters in Disney movies are rarely mean or selfish. Even if

they are, they make up for it and apologize before the end of the movie.

"Kids dress up [on Halloween] to be like certain characters," said Johnson. "A little girl might say, 'I wanna dress up like Anna. I saw her in [Frozen] doing good.'"

The messages these movies send to children are influential towards their development and behavior in the future. While proper parenting and moral lessons are important to early childhood development on their own, Johnson is learning how to combine the two to promote more involved relationships between the parent and their child as well as more appropriate media for children.

Down the Rabbit Hole

Doctor uses stories to explore Alzheimer's disease

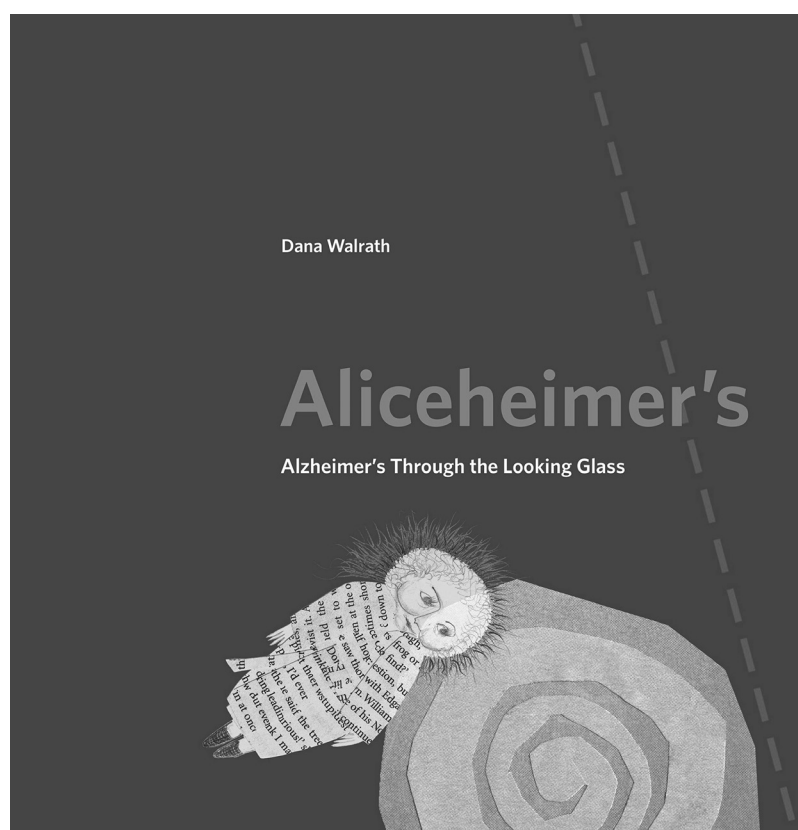


Image from Amazon.com

The cover of Dr. Dana Walrath's graphic novel, *Aliceheimer's: Alzheimer's Through the Looking Glass*

By Maya Douglas
OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. Dana Walrath is the author of the graphic novel *Aliceheimer's: Alzheimer's*

Through The Looking Glass - a collection of stories about her mother's battle with dementia.

Aliceheimer's: Alzheimer's Through the Looking Glass is

laid out as a collection of short stories. Each page has a new story and a new drawing so that if a person with Alzheimer's or dementia loses their place or forgets what they have read, it doesn't matter. They can still enjoy it without confusion. "Telling stories restores humanity," said Walrath.

Walrath described the book as funny, sad, imaginative, and truthful. The entire novel is illustrated by her as well, with actual text from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* integrated into her drawings.

During her "Comics, Medicine, and Memory" lecture, sponsored by The Humanities Project, Walrath referred to her time taking care of her mother as a "dementia journey" filled with laughs and forgiveness.

The two saw sides of each other they had never seen before. Walrath said she learned to understand hallucination as a language and as a form of

longing. She considered it the only way her mother knew how to communicate.

Alzheimer's is a disease with no cure and it has resisted modern medicine. Alice fiercely believed in science and Walrath said her mother secretly always wanted to attend medical school. But medicine is only preventative. Walrath said it was difficult to search for alternatives to cope with the loss of her mother's memory.

Walrath views dementia not as a loss of or self, but as a withdrawal to a more pure self. People with dementia regress to a simpler state; a focus on senses such as taste and touch. Never say no to dementia, just simply go along with it.

"Don't fight it, and you are able to go on this adventure with them," said Walrath. "People with dementia have a system going on in their heads that we do not have access to." Instead, she encourages letting a couple

of realities coexist.

In the graphic novel, Walrath portrays her mother, Alice, as a beautiful and dignified eighty-year old woman, but also, as a result of dementia, a child. During this time, Alice shared things with her daughter that she might not ever have before, and Walrath cherishes this and considers it a gift. She hopes for others who are struggling with caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's to do the same.

Walrath also expressed a need to create peace during a time of death. "In a world of medicine, we are not taught that the end of life is about peace and forgiveness," she said. "We are taught to fight it." She explained this as the reason why dementia is so difficult. When it comes to Alzheimer's, there is nothing to fight.

Walrath described Alice's passage as transcendent and

continued on page 11
"Aliceheimer's" >>>

The Richard Michelson Picture Show

Artist recalls early days and inspiration



Photo by Nicholas Papini

Richard Michelson held a gallery talk in the East Wing Gallery and discussed children's book illustrations

By Nicholas Papini

OBSERVER CONTRIBUTOR

Richard Michelson, artist, author, and owner of the R. Michelson Gallery in Northampton, MA, stated that western Massachusetts is the center of children's book illustrations in the United States.

Michelson is an award-winning children's book author and acclaimed poet and his gallery features 240 artists. He held a gallery talk in the East Wing Gallery which featured work from several of the artists under his banner, including Jules Feiffer, Mordicai Gerstein, Jarrett J. Krosoczka, and Mo Willems.

Michelson stated that within the western MA sphere are several other locations important to the industry of children's books, including The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum in Springfield, and The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst.

Michelson may be an accomplished artist today, but when he was just starting out he sold art out of the back of a van. His first gallery was an 8-by-16 foot space which he walled off with a shower curtain.

Michelson largely fell into doing children's book illustrations, but he assumed at the time that it may be good for sales. "It came as a revelation to me that the very best of children's books came from a combination of great poetry and great art," recalled Michelson.

Michelson's gallery was the first in the country to show the original illustrations that went into children's books. Previously, the art was discarded after its use.

Michelson's two greatest interests at the time, about five years after his first gallery opening, were poetry and illustrations, which effectively changed the direction of both his personal career and his gallery.

Michelson said that when his gallery features an artist they are with that artist for the rest of his or her life. Style changes happen, and one of Michelson's more popular artists, Rebecca Guay of *Magic: The Gathering* fame, is one such example. She changed her style from a more feminine offshoot of the *Magic: The Gathering* style to something more sexually explicit and evocative.

"Artists are artists," Michelson said, "you can't control them."

Michelson advised aspiring artists to be open to showing their work at smaller venues, such as local coffee shops and libraries. He said he believes that new artists have to work hard to get off the ground and that it's not an easy life. Kicking in doors and being persistent are beneficial when it comes to getting your foot in the door.

The R. Michelson Gallery will host an event on November 10 honoring its 40th anniversary. The event is also covering the gallery's 30th Annual Illustration Show.

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Graphic Novel & Children's Book Illustrations

from R. Michelson Gallery

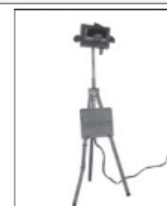
October 2 - 31

Gallery Talk by Rich Michelson

Wednesday, October 23 at 3:00 p.m.

< Jarrett Krosoczka, *All Through the Town* from "Punk Farm"

Thanks to the generous support from the National Endowment for Humanities grant.



Waking wonders the multimedia work of

Nancy Sepe

November 12- December 8

Reception: Friday, November 22

4:30 -6:30 p.m.

< *Rock, Scissors, Paper*, 2018, metal, wood, paint, digital video, 15 x 8 x 5 inches



Exhibition of Student Work

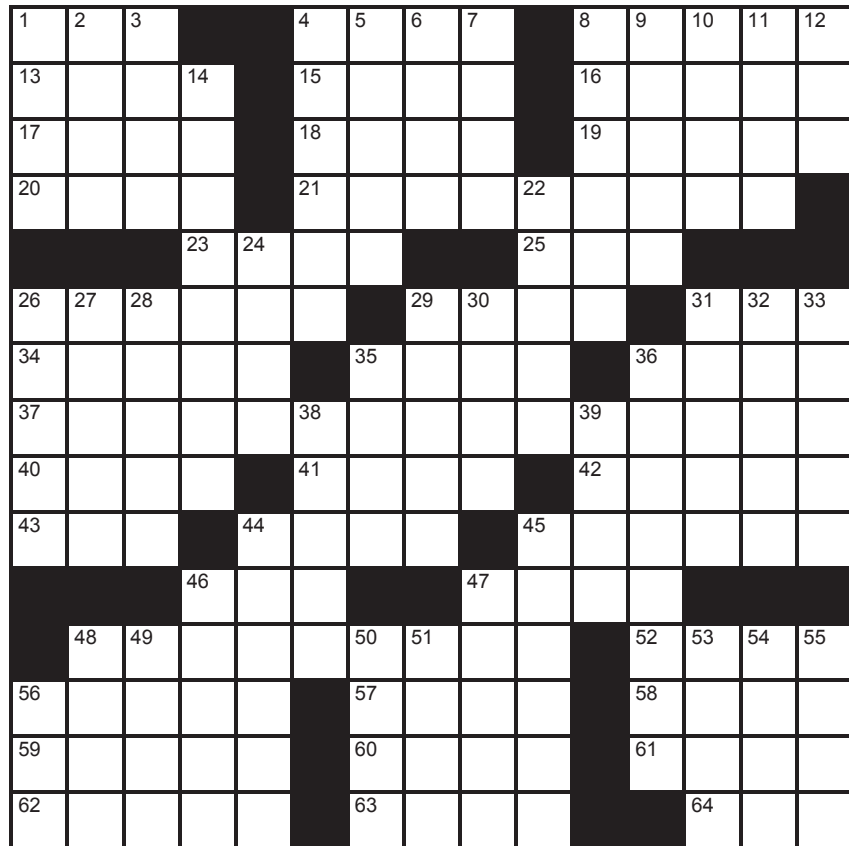
from *Drawing III and Painting II & III*

December 18, 2019 - January 25, 2020

Reception: Wednesday, December 18

3:00-5:30 p.m.

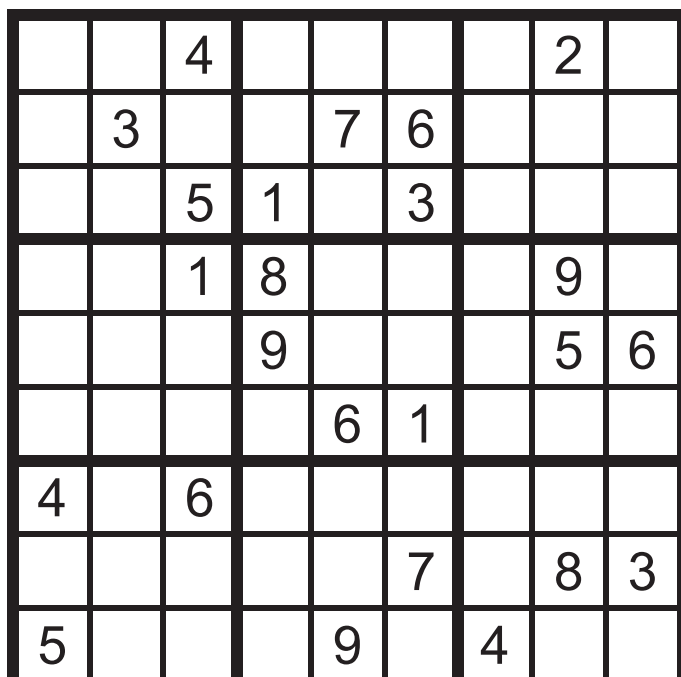
< Nick Lutz, *Imminent Something*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 24 inches



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- | | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Across | 37 Of unsound mind, legally | 64 Right away | 30 Closed hand |
| 1 Poetic contraction | 40 Keystone State city | Down | 31 Mishandle |
| 4 Footwear | 41 Formerly | 1 Burial chamber | 32 Eastern Christian member |
| 8 Disney character | 42 Translucent minerals | 2 Fan favorite | 33 Impertinent |
| 13 Norse deity, ruler of the Aesir | 43 Japanese coin | 3 Storage unit | 35 Months (Abbr.) |
| 15 Area unit | 44 Other | 4 C. Amer. trees | 36 Ennobled |
| 16 Distant | 45 Powerful | 5 Body of water | 38 Noisy fight |
| 17 Skin defect | 46 Pub feature | 6 Viva voce | 39 Expel |
| 18 Jet name | 47 <i>Crimes of the Heart</i> playwright | 7 Actress Garr | 44 Arm joints |
| 19 Satellites | 48 Clan member | 8 Woody tropical plant | 45 Threat |
| 20 Coalition | 49 Bell sound | 9 See 6 Down | 46 Helped |
| 21 Steak type | 50 Doctrine | 10 Berth | 47 Washstand |
| 23 Genghis, for one | 51 Actress Sorvino | 11 Emaciated | 48 Bonsai |
| 25 Fishcake ingredient | 52 Actor Bonnet | 12 Conditional words | 49 Actress Russo |
| 26 Tx. city | 53 Lendl or Pavlov | 14 String of pearls | 50 Toboggan |
| 29 Hair style | 54 Roman Emperor | 22 Buzz off | 51 Increased |
| 31 Coach | 55 Accounting entries (Abbr.) | 24 Nimbus | |
| 34 Utopian | | 26 Has breakfast | |
| 35 Opera | | 27 Worship | |
| 36 Hawaii's ___ Coast | | 28 Bolsheviks founder | |
| | | 29 Emerged | |

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9. There is only one possible solution.



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Aliceheimer's

>>> continued from page 9

beautiful. She wishes she could give that to everyone. Fifty percent of people with dementia die in the hospital, and Walrath said it is usually because the family is struggling with death and/or the medical system is failing them. She proposes that we end life with less invasion; that we become a society comfortable with death.

Walrath found comics late in life, and it was Alice that inspired her to begin tinkering with graphics. She said Alice loved comics during her dementia journey and read many during the time she stayed with her. She wants to use comics to rewrite all

sorts of stories. "Comics bring us back in time," Walrath said. "Back to a time when we were comfortable with each other. A time when we understood each other just by looking into their eyes, through facial expressions and actions."

Walrath began as a visual artist, then decided to get her doctorate in anthropology. She also has an MFA in writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. She has spoken on TedTalks and written articles for newspapers such as *The New York Times*. She lives in Dublin, Ireland as an Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute.

Want to see your art in print?

Send scans or photos of your best pieces to
 mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu

OR




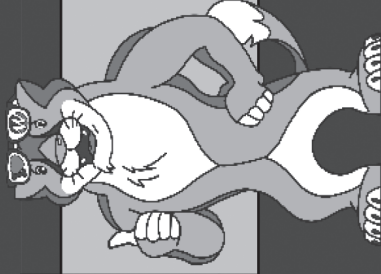
Come visit us in person in room 344

STUDENTS

Scary Karaoke



Photos by Vanessa Roberto

11/4 SGA Meeting 12:30pm Murphy Room	11/4 Student IDs Room 151 2pm-4pm	11/5 CATS Programming Meeting 12:30pm W11	11/5 Club Officer/ Advisor 101 3:30pm-6pm W11	11/6 Film: A Place at the Table 12:30pm North Café
<p>November/December 2019 Student Life Calendar of Events</p>				
11/12 CATS Programming Meeting 12:30pm W11	11/12 MWCC Goes Bowling 4pm-6pm Gardner Ten Pins	11/11 Veterans Day No Classes		11/6 Student IDs Room 151 9am-11am
11/13 Leadership for Life Bystander Training 12:30pm Murphy Room		11/18 SGA Meeting 12:30pm Murphy Room	11/19 International Opportunities Fair South Café 11:30am-1:30pm	11/19 CATS Programming Meeting 12:30pm W11
<p>Please see the reverse side for detailed information.</p> <p>For further information or to inquire about an event, please contact the Student Life Office at studentlife@mwcc.mass.edu or 978-630-9148.</p>				
12/3 CATS Programming Meeting 12:30pm W11	12/2 SGA Meeting 12:30pm Murphy Room		11/21 Great American Smokeout 12:30am-1:30pm Student Center	11/20 Film: V for Vendetta 12:30pm North Café
12/3 World AIDS Day Student Center 12:30pm-1:30pm	12/4 Winterfest Fair Commons Area 9am-6pm	12/5 Winterfest Fair Commons Area 9am-3pm		12/9 Ping Pong Tournament 12:30pm Student Center
<p>Intramurals</p> <p><i>Open Gym</i> – Come try out all that Mount Fitness has to offer. Use the equipment, try a class, or swim in the pool, student ID required. November Dates: 11/4, 11/19, December Dates: 12/5, 12/11</p> <p>Pick-up Basketball—Join us for pick-up basketball at Mount Fitness every Tuesday from 3-4pm. Student ID required.</p>				
			12/12 May the Force Be with You Destress Day 11:30am-1:30pm South Café	12/11 Leadership for Life Get Out of Your Head 12:30pm Murphy Room

