

OBSERVER

a voice for the students of mount wachusett community college

MWCC Catches Idol Fever

By Stacy M. Salo

Stand back Kelly Clarkson. Watch out Paula and Simon. MWCC is here to take over the idol scene on April 7 to benefit the United Way.

Fifty plus hopefuls gathered inside the theater for the first ever Mount Idol auditions on February 25, each wearing a number, anxiously waiting for Gail Steele to give the instructions on how the audition process was going to be done. Those that were auditioning were going to be taken in groups of five to a separate room and placed in front of a panel of judges to sing their music selection.

As soon as she left for the judging room, the theater erupted in nervous chatter and some got up, began to pace and warm up their voices.

“A couple of friends told me about

Lights! Camera! Action!



Gretchen Wilson gives it her all at the tryouts to crown the first ever Mount Idol on Saturday February 25

this...I've never sang before...I'm just trying it,” Josh Millet said as he waited for his number to be called.

As each group of five was called out, instructions were given to the group as
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One Mount Student Competes for Idol

The 12 finalists, including one MWCC student, include: Ethan Caouette, a marketing/event planner at TechTarget, from Westminster; David DeCoff, a retired barber, from East Templeton; Fatima Elmi, a Head Start teacher in Worcester, from Holden; Angela Hwang, a student at Mount Wachusett Community College, from Hardwick; Ira Leighton, a singer, actor and dancer, from Holliston; Karissa Mahoney, a musical theatre major at Keene State College, from Salem NH; Gary Martin, a teacher at New England Center for Children, from Worcester; John McWilliams, a realtor and restaurant manager from Westminster; Julie Smith, a teacher aide and coach at Mahar Regional High School from New Salem; Joan Syriopoulos, a finance specialist at Juniper Networks and grandmother of 3, from Fitchburg; Eric Wefald, a minister at Church of the Good Shepherd in Westboro, from Boylston; and, Jonathan Wright, a team leader at AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, from Leominster.

MWCC student Angela Hwang was born in Seoul, Korea and immigrated to the United States in 1998. Based on her academic qualifications and vocal audition, she was admitted to the Seoul Arts High School where students study musical performance, dance, painting and sculpture and she graduated in 1974. In her native country, Inja sang with the National Chorus under conductor Na, Young Soo. This elite 40-member chorus

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Earth Day Celebrated, Science Fair Held

by Krista Traffie

For the very first time, Mount Wachusett Community College will officially observe Earth Day this year.

On April 10, MWCC will host a science fair for middle school students from the surrounding towns and will feature two environmental speakers.

“I’ve always thought Earth Day was a good way to recognize our earth, where we

live,” said Prof. Tom Montagno, advisor to the Green Society. “This is the perfect way to raise awareness.”

The two speakers are Congressman John Olver and Alan Noguee of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Both of these speakers have knowledge on greenhouse gases, climate protection, and renewable energy, said Rob Rizzo,
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You Can Win A \$10 Gas Card.....

Yes, that's right! All you have to do is submit a review to The Mount Observer and have it published in the April issue!

Do you eat at local restaurants? Do you play video games? Do you attend concerts and listen to CD's? Do you cruise the web? Been to a movie or play lately?

We want to hear about it! Write a critique (positive, negative or a little of both), no longer than 300 words, and submit it to the Mount Observer by Friday, March 24. The winner, chosen by the editors, gets it all: publication and \$10 in gas!

Send your review to: mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu or visit our office in Room 191. Good luck!

A new advice column is here at The Observer! See page 5!

Are you worried? Confused? Feeling overwhelmed by your problems?

We've got the answers right here in The Observer! Send your problems to "Help Me Heidi" through e-mail at mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu or at the office, Room 191. Deadline for the April issue is Friday, March. 24.

Earth Day Celebration

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director of Facilities Administration and chairman of the committee organizing the event.

According to his web site, Olver is on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, and one of his chief priorities is to protect the environment. Nogee's web site reported that he has had 20 years of experience in energy analysis and is a respected authority on renewable energy.

"This is an opportunity to teach students how we use energy and the effects of that on the environment, health and economy," said Rizzo. He said the event is focused on helping students, faculty and staff understand the importance of being environmentally friendly.

"I'd encourage students to come," Montagno said, explaining that one day this earth is going to be the responsibility of the young-

er generation and that learning about preserving it now would be "advantageous."

The event will open on April 10 with the middle school science fair at 4 p.m. Olver, retired congressman Robert Wetmore, and MWCC faculty will serve as judges of the presentations. Cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners, and Barnes & Noble gift certificates will be presented to student sponsors.

After the fair, around 5:30 according to Rizzo, Olver and Nogee will speak.

Rizzo said both the commons area and the North Cafeteria have been reserved, and which will be used depends on the size of the science fair. Signs will be posted closer to the event to clarify the location.

The Bottom Line

by Jack Wilson

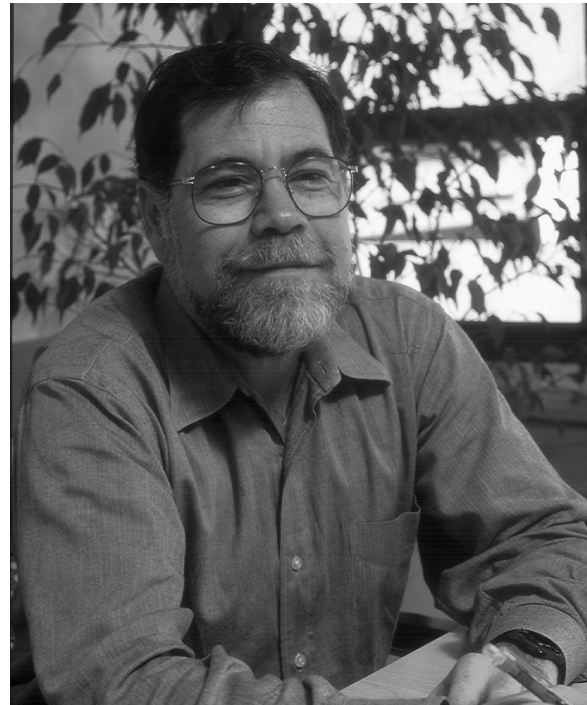
A business career is one of the best ways to make cents but unfortunately business doesn't always make sense. That's why the Mount Observer has created "The Bottom Line". Every month I will write an article pertaining to the latest news in business. Each one of my columns will be geared directly toward you, the reader, tying in the important issues of today with how they affect you.

In February CNN reported the top ten most lucrative careers in 2006. Four out of the top ten were careers in business. Accounting was highest on the list coming in fifth followed shortly by economics and finance related professions. These two fields were also the fastest growing, not in popularity but in the dollar amount of initial salary. Accounting jobs have increased in salary 6.2 percent to \$45,723 and Economics and Finance grew at a higher rate of 11 percent to \$45,191. The remaining two business careers in the top ten were Business Administration and Marketing which were 8th and 9th earning \$39,850 and \$36,260 respectively.

The same report also wielded more valuable information, including the fact that employers have hired 14.5 percent more college grads already in 2006 than they had in 2004 or 2005. Terri LaMarco, the associate director of the University of Michigan's career center, said that "Recruiting activity is up and job fair attendance (by employers) has certainly increased".

How can you cash in on these opportunities? Well, if you're a student at Mount Wachusett Community College you're starting in the right place. One of the most important factors in earning a generous salary is holding an important document. That document is an MBA. According to another survey by CNN and the General Management Admissions Council (GMAC), MBA graduates increased their signing bonuses to a record \$106,000. Signing bonuses of that size, combined with the starting salaries of the professions listed earlier, lead to what most people consider financial stability.

After reviewing the facts my advice to business students is to keep these figures in mind when planning your future. Where will you go after MWCC? Hopefully the answer is some place where you can earn an MBA!



Alan Nogee, a member of the Union of Concerned Scientists and authority on renewable energy, will be one of the speakers at Earth Day events, scheduled for April 10.

Correction:

The Gardner Relay for Life raised over \$760,000 last year, not \$760 million as reported in the February Observer.

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Student Review: Tim Wise Lecture

by Joe Mungo

I was not very impressed by Tim Wise, so called National Lecturer on Racism and author of the book *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. As a matter of fact, I was quite offended when his wagon came through town February 17, and he wowed the audience with the oratory skill reminiscent of the snake oil salesman of the old west.

I take offense to Mr. Wise's assertion that being born white equates to being born privileged in America. I guess being white and poor or white and disadvantaged for a plethora of other reasons is a contradiction in terms in the world of Mr. Wise. I had no idea that being born white and disadvantaged at the same time was so rare and uncommon that for some people this condition is virtually non-existent. After attending the lecture by Mr. Wise, I certainly must be a minority. I always wondered why I had to work so hard, all those odd and extra hours, all those crappy low paying jobs. I never realized that all I had to do was flaunt my white skin and collect my privilege.

Being white and having to work your way out of poverty is obviously not a predicament or condition Mr. Wise is even remotely familiar with, because after all, being white to Mr. Wise only means being advantaged. As he indicated in his amusing banter, if it were not for his advantageous whiteness, he would never have been able to attain the loan for the prestigious college that began the succession of advantages that brought him to the financial success and position he holds today.

I find it very interesting, although somewhat disturbing, that Mr. Wise was able to perpetrate the privilege stereotype based on skin color and be cheered on by the same crowd who denounce and fiercely condemn any other stereotype based on skin color. I recall an individual who became famous when he said "people should not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Why is it that Mr. Wise, being born with obvious advantages and privileges, can only be attributed to his skin color? Is it even remotely possible it could be something else? Did Mr. Wise also mention that he was born

Jewish? Using the same racist logic that Mr. Wise uses so expressively, could you imagine the outrage and offensiveness if his book was titled: "Jew Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son"!! How quickly and certain will I now be labeled Anti-Semitic, White Supremacy, Nazi Racist Bigot, for even the most fleeting notion of this idea!

Mr. Wise's assertion of his whiteness being the reason for his "privilege" is as racist, offensive, and unacceptable as the assertion of Mr. Wise's Jewishness being the reason for his "privilege." But why is one so acceptable and the other so repulsive?

Whites condemned to the stereotype of privilege because of their skin color are no better off than blacks condemned to the stereotype of hopeless disadvantaged victims because of their skin color. Stereotypes based on skin color are always offensive and always destructive. Both of those groups contain a collection of individuals who expect and deserve to be treated and respected as individuals and should not allow themselves to be placed into compartmentalized groups for the benefit of anyone.

To stand there and condemn a young generation of people to the responsibility of righting the wrongs of the past because they happen to be born with white skin is not only a ridiculously simplistic and unattainable suggestion; it's an incitement and a stimulus for more resentment.

To stand there and send the message to a young generation of people who happen to be born with dark skin that for them, merit and hard work has little value because their skin color condemns them right out of the gate and will always limit their hard earned achievements is not only a travesty of truth, honesty, and decent intentions, but a very irresponsible and depraved message with dangerous implications especially to the young non-white students that were in the audience from local high schools.

To categorize a group of people based on skin color for the benefit of another group is not the solution to the persistent tensions and disparities between the races. I believe it is the root cause.

Idol Fever (continued from page 1)

to what to do upon entering the judging room.

"I perform at the Mount. I'm a little bit nervous, excited. I do better when I'm nervous. I have some anxiety, I don't know the judges, they are looking for something in your voice," Julie Capone Smith said as a judge called numbers one through five to begin the elimination process.

One thing that was a huge relief to most of those auditioning was there was not going to be a judge like Simon.

"I don't think there could be a judge quiet like Simon," Steele said during an interview.

At the end of the auditions, the judges narrowed it down to only twelve performers for the April 7 show.

According to Steele, at the end of the show on the 7th, the audience will vote for their favorite singer. The top three will sing again to determine who will be the first ever, Mount Idol.



Patty Demarest gives her best performance possible while auditioning for the Idol contest at The Mount on Saturday February 25.

Student Idol (continued from page 1)

performed a wide range of music including early music, Korean art songs and classics. In America, she sang with the Boston Evangelical Church in Bedford, a mainly Korean congregation. Angela is enrolled in her first semester here as a Liberal Arts and Science major and enjoys walking, swimming and tennis. She lives in Hardwick with her husband who is a high school math teacher.

photos by Stephen Jahl



Nationally well known speaker Tim Wise spoke to a full auditorium about the controversial topic of racism recently. (left) The audience included students faculty and staff as well as students from Massachusetts high schools and colleges. (right)

Gearing up for Summer Driving

by Tony Fusaro

Although there are a few things that are the same between getting your vehicle ready for winter and getting it ready for summer, there are, however, many differences.

First, check the cooling system. If you live in an area where it gets really hot, you want your cooling system in good working order. The cooling system of an engine has to work harder in hot weather to prevent the engine from overheating than in cold weather. Some of the main components that should be checked are the radiator, water pump, thermostat, and hoses. If your car overheats, serious engine damage can occur. Not only that but chances are you will also probably be stranded. In the event that you notice your car is starting to overheat, turn off your air conditioning and turn the heat up full blast. This will remove some of the heat from the engine but if the temperature still rises, get to the nearest service station or garage.

The next thing on the list is tires. When getting into warmer weather, take off your snow tires. They are not necessary. Plus, because the rubber compound of snow tires is usually softer, they tend to wear much faster on dry pavement than a regular tire. A good tip is to have two sets of wheels: one set with snow tires and one with summer tires. This way, when you get to the end of a season, you can just swap the wheels. This will also save you money. Most tire shops charge around \$50 to have one set of tires removed and another set put on. This is also a good time to check tire pressure. Proper tire pressure is very important. Having the right tire pressure enables the best possible contact between the road and tire. Plus, properly inflated tires will last longer and improve fuel economy.

Here is a small list of things to check before starting your summer driving:

- Change the oil. When you change the oil, there are a few things to remember. Oil tends to get thinner as its temperature increases and the thinner oil gets, the less it lubricates. So in general, thicker oil should be used during the summer. This ensures good lubrication of the internal engine components.
- Next on the list are windshield wipers. The life expectancy of a wiper is about one year. If your wipers are not making full contact with the windshield, they might be dried out and should be replaced. Well, that's if you would like to see during a thunderstorm! Another good tip is to pick up a bottle of Rain-X. This stuff makes it so water beads up and rolls off the windshield much easier. This is only a few dollars.
- Belts and hoses. The belts operate different components of the engine, such as the alternator, water pump, air conditioning, power steering pump, etc. If the belts fail, many things could happen, such as a breakdown or possibly a loss of steering. Have them checked for cracking, grayed edges, dry rot, glazing, and uneven wear.
- Have a wheel alignment done. This makes long trips easier because the steering wheel stays straight when you are driving in a straight line and it helps prevent uneven tire wear.

These are just a few things to consider when getting ready for those long summer road trips. When doing these things, think of it as a little insurance just in case. And don't forget...buckle up!

Library More Student Centered

The library redesign will begin in May once classes have ended, according to Linda Oldach, Assistant Dean/Library and Information Services. Oldach said the redesign project, funded by the college's first-ever capital campaign, aims to maintain the unique aspects of the library (such as the location and the knowledgeable staff) while creating an "Information Commons" -- a student-centered learning space characterized by physical and technological features, with content and staff that will serve the information needs of the extended college community in the 21st century.

What are the characteristics of an "Information Commons" or "Learning Commons?" In addition to the current library collections and services, it might include additional multimedia workstations, networked electronic classrooms, individual and group study space, general use computers, and an Internet cafe. It would be a place for

students to research, interact, get technology support and research assistance, attend workshops or classes, and work in groups together or individually on course assignments. The facility would be available to the public as long as the needs of the college community were met. If you are willing to take a road trip, visit the UMass Amherst or Bridgewater State College libraries to see examples of "Information Commons."

During the summer of 2005 the college established a cross-institutional library redesign steering committee that included student representation. The committee was charged with helping to select an architect/planner to head up the project. At the recommendation of the committee the college retained the architectural firm of Beacon Associates which conducted focus groups of students, faculty, staff, and the Greater Gardner community during fall 2005 to determine present and future needs of the

library's patrons.

What common issues arose in the focus groups?

The need to create an aesthetically appealing library entrance; provide additional space for activities and storage; upgrade computers and printers; provide an inviting atmosphere that includes comfortable seats and furniture; improve the functionality of work areas; add a media room; improve signage; take advantage of windows; provide additional quiet areas; create flexible spaces which can be used by different groups; add electrical outlets for laptops; and improve heating and lighting.

Once the architectural drawings are complete, the college will hire a contractor to begin work in May. The project may be completed by September or possibly continued into the next year.

Summer, Fall Registration Begins

The schedule will be available for “view only” on WebConnect prior to the start of registration. Students can pick up the Schedule Booklet in the Enrollment Services Office outlining the course schedule and descriptions on April 3rd.

Registration Day for day students is Thursday, April 6; there will be no day classes. Students can meet with their advisor and register.

Richard Pastor, Associate Vice President of Student Services and Enrollment Man-

agement, said, “In addition to the courses being offered in Gardner and Leominster, over 60 web-based courses are being offered. By taking a web course students can complete the coursework at a time that is convenient to them without interrupting summer work schedules.”

Dr. Pastor also encouraged students to apply for financial assistance as soon as possible because this year the college will implement new fiscal procedures that will require payment or payment arrangements (approved

financial aid, joining the college Payment Plan, or other approved third party payment) prior to the start of classes.

On-line registration using WebConnect has been in place for the past 4 years, and this past semester over 1150 students took advantage of this system that allows registration at any time of the day. Pastor, however, cautioned students that they should consult with their advisor or a staff member at the Advising and Counseling Center before registering for courses.

Help Me Heidi

Dear Heidi~

My brother “Steve” and I were very close. He is 5 years younger than me but my friends and I have always treated him like “one of the guys” because he is very mature for his age. He’s 14. I just started college this year and he feels like I’m abandoning him because I am always at school, at work, or working on schoolwork. Whenever he wants to do something I almost always have to tell him “no” because I am just too busy. Just recently I found out that he is getting into some trouble at school and he is hanging out with a tough crowd. When I ask him what’s wrong, he ignores me or just snaps at me to leave him alone. He has never acted like this before. What do I do?

Worried Big brother

Dear Worried Big Brother,

While you definitely have a right to be worried about your little brother, you also have to respect that he is growing up now. There is a thin line between interfering in order to make sure your loved one is safe and invading his privacy. At his age he is likely to take any attempt at your trying to find out what is going on with him as a snooping attempt. This is probably why he is ignoring you or snapping at you. If his recent changes in behavior are only small things and not situations that are going to become dangerous or unsafe then I would try not to push him too hard. Let him know that you’re here for him and that you care but don’t try to lecture or preach to him because he will probably just drain you out.

As far as his feelings about you being too busy for him, it sounds like even you yourself agree with that. It is going to take both of you some time to get use to the changes in your lives. You need time to adjust to your busy schedule and once you get more organized I think you’ll find time to do some enjoying activities. Your brother also needs time to adjust to not having you around as much as before. He won’t like it very much at first but he will eventually get use to it and find other people to fill his time with. Life only ends up getting more busy and complicated as people grow up but the bond that you and your brother share sounds like it is strong enough to withstand any changes that may come.

Sincerely,

Help Me Heidi

Dear Heidi,

My best friend “Lindsay” keeps blowing me off and it’s starting to bother me. We used to hang out almost everyday but now it’s like I have been placed on the back burner. I call her a couple of times a week to talk and plan to do things with her, but she always tells me that she is too busy with other friends or with her boyfriend or with work. She never calls me anymore. I always have to be the one to call her and when she does have a free day, she calls the rest of our friends to hang out but doesn’t bother to call me because she thinks that I am too busy. Then she has the decency to talk about her plans when she has a chance to talk and when I ask if I’m included, I am told no because my boyfriend “Charles” will be home and that I will be too busy with him to hang out. It seems like she is basically telling me all I care about is my boyfriend and not my friends, when really I have been so miserable without her and the rest of them. Charles tells me to find new friends but it is so hard for me because I can be so shy in social situations. Whenever I do get a chance to sit and talk to Lindsay it seems like everything is all right and I am still her best friend, but once I try to say let’s do something she flat out tells me she can’t. What should I do?

Missing her Best Friend

Dear Missing her Best Friend,

While I am sorry to hear about the distance that seems to have developed between you and “Lindsay” this might be a blessing in disguise. It is always painful when relationships feel like they are falling apart but it is part of growing up. If I were you I would sit Lindsay down, face to face and not on the phone, and tell her exactly how you feel. Let her know how much her and her friendship means to you and let her know that you miss spending time with her. Tell her that, while your boyfriend and other responsibilities are important to you, so is she. Maybe suggest that you guys make a once a week or once a month (depending on your schedules) set time where you go out just the two of you to a movie or for coffee or something.

If this still doesn’t seem to make any difference in your relationship than you might have to consider cutting your loses. The sad reality of relationships is that they will eventually change. Some times these changes will bring the two people closer together while other times the changes will draw them apart. You cannot make someone care and if she is still refusing to give you the emotional reassurance that you need than you will have to move on. If your time and attention is tied up in a friend who is continually upsetting and avoiding you than you might just miss the opportunity to make your new best friend.

Sincerely

Help Me Heidi

Got a problem? Send your questions to “Help Me Heidi” care of the mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu.

Massages Available on Campus

The MWCC Student Massage Clinic is now open and is taking appointments by calling the Fitness Center at (978) 630-9212. The clinic is open limited hours Mon. – Sat. Rates for a one-hour full body Swedish massage are as follows:

General Public	\$30
Fitness Center Members	\$25
MWCC Faculty and Staff	\$20
MWCC Full time students	\$15

Writer's Wednesday Returns

By Dennis Carney

Last semester, Writer's Wednesday happened late in the afternoon with a group of students who met once a week to read their works to each other. The group would then discuss the work and give advice to the writer. The group fell to the wayside after a few students behind the program graduated.

The new idea for the club this semester is to meet every other Wednesday, with anyone who wants to get involved, during lunch in the cafeteria and to read the works they have prepared. The one rule is simple: writers must write about the same subject.

The next meeting date is Wednesday, March 15 and the topic is "Sweet Peas." For more information, contact Saul Torres at s_torres@mwcc.mass.edu or Maryann Stoy at m_stoy@mwcc.mass.edu.

iPod Winner

photo by Sandy Arsenault



Rebekah White (left) a 4th semester student at the Mount, was the winner of the iPod Shuffle that the Mount Observer was giving away. Presenting the iPod is Mount Observer Editor Danielle Reeder.

Student Life Calendar of Events

March

Mutlu: Guitarist and Drummer, Wed., March 8, 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., south cafeteria. Sponsored by CARS (Committee for Activities and Recreation for Students) and the Student Life Office.

"It's Your Birthday" Celebration! If your birthday is in March—come celebrate with us in the Student Center, room 153, Fri., March 31 between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Present identification that has your birth date on it and receive a gift and a piece of birthday cake (while supplies last). Open to MWCC students, faculty, and staff. Sponsored by the Student Life Office.

Ray Hendricks with his band, Wed., March 29, 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., south cafeteria. Sponsored by CARS (Committee for Activities and Recreation for Students) and the Student Life Office.

Save the date: April 12, Spring Fling—BBQ, novelties, acoustic performer, John Rush, and more.

Get a Career in Criminal Justice

By Dennis Carney

The Career Services Department is organizing a Career Panel for anyone interested in a career in criminal justice on March 27 at 11:30 a.m. in the North cafeteria. The panel will consist of five speakers and will run until 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.

According to Michelle Contey of Career Services the following speakers will attend: Mitchel Kupferman, of the Boston Police, a Crime Scene Investigator with a bachelor's degree in both Chemistry and Forensics; Lieutenant Michael Haly, the Worcester House of Correction, with an Associates Degree in Criminal Justice. He also has sixteen years with the Sheriff's Department; Dr. Henry Culver, Director and Chief Probation Officer at Massachusetts Trial Court, Gardner, who holds a doctorate degree in Organizational Development and a master's degree in Counseling Psychology.

Also on the panel is Chief Karen Kolimaga, MWCC Campus Police, with one year as a Probation Officer, ten years as a Patrol Officer, achieving the rank of Lieutenant with the Athol Massachusetts Police Department before joining the Campus police in January 2006; Lois Gilbert, a SAFEPLAN Advocate for Battered Woman's Resources. with an associates degree in Human Services and Criminal Justice and a bachelor's degree in Human Services. She also has nine years experience with the Battered Woman's Resources.

There will be an opportunity for questions. For more information, contact Michelle Contey at 978-630-9482.

The Importance of Getting Involved

By Krista Traffie

Greg Clement, Director of Student Life, recently spoke to the Journalism 101 class on the importance of students involving themselves in their school.

“You have a greater chance of achieving your academic potential if you engage in your school,” Clement said.

During his 45-minute speech Clement, 47, emphasized interaction with fellow students and professors. Casual conversation, he said, can give a student much more information on the school, textbooks, classes, and professors.

“My biggest goal is to somehow convince students that it’s worth the risk to get involved,” Clement said. Sharing resources can help a student go a long way, he said.

“There’s a whole plan and theory to (having events on campus),” said Clement.

The Mardi Gras jewelry event held recently was not just about making jewelry. It was about interacting with others-something Clement repeatedly emphasized.

Clement has realized that he cannot force people to become friends. So instead he views himself as a “community builder” by organizing events to create an environment where making acquaintances is possible. Clement said that even waiting in line in the cafeteria could get students to interact.

Clement’s life-long passion has been to engage himself socially and help others to do the same. As an extrovert who grew up in rural Canada, Clement said that as a child he enjoyed getting together with friends and family. In college, Clement, the first traditional college student in his family, threw himself into being involved and was the president of almost every organization he belonged to.

School File Photo



Greg Clement (center) at a recent Student Leadership Conference.

Basket Winners Announced

The winners of the Spectrum Club Baskets include:

- Cram-For-Finals Basket:** Brandon Harrison
- Graduation Basket:** Louise Hallgren
- Fun-in-the-Sun Basket:** Katie Forgues

Poetry Corner

A Restful Day
By Dennis Carney

Today all be done
Full of joy
Christmas morn
My life full, grand
In memory
You beside me
All becomes done

Nature

By Sarah Dingelhoff

A terrible rainstorm pours down on a late hot summer afternoon.
When the rain stops, the sun peeks out from behind the grey clouds.
The beautiful rainbow in the sky appears as a splendid display of colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple.
The rainbow forms into a double arc above the gentle running stream in the valley.



Prepare For Tomorrow, Today!

JOB FAIR

JOB FAIR

On-Campus

Wednesday

March 29th


Commons

10:00 - 1:00

If you have a disability and may require accommodations to participate fully in the program, please contact Pat Brewerton to discuss your specific needs. p_brewerton@www.mwcc.edu

Ginny's Thrift Store

Ginny's Thrift Store



A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out

Ginny's Thrift Store

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Food Pantry

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Profiting off the War and the Poor

By Danielle Reeder

President Bush submitted his newest budget recently and cut programs like Medicare and Medicaid, while there is over \$8.8 billion missing in government contract payouts from the war in Iraq. His budget would cut \$35.9 billion from Medicare, \$4.5 billion from Medicaid, \$14.7 billion on programs like food stamps and housing for the elderly, as well as \$6.7 billion in educational programs like the Pell Grants.

Adding insult to injury, CBS News recently aired a report on the highway robbery of the American taxpayers. According to their report, there are billions of dollars unaccounted for in contract payouts over in Iraq. There are two companies in particular that are among the worst.

One of these companies is called Custer Battles. Custer Battles scammed over \$50 million from the American government for services they never provided. The only punishment for their fraud was a one-year

suspension on government contracts, which has since expired. Why is it that this company got away with this? Well, the owner of the company, Scott Custer, just so happens to be a Republican who did fundraising work for President Bush.

The other company mentioned in this report was Halliburton. Halliburton has been awarded over half of all of the contracts of the entire Iraq war! Not only that but according to the Department of Defense auditors, Halliburton over billed the American taxpayers by over \$1 billion! When this was discovered Democratic Senator Byron Dorgan called for immediate congressional inquiries into where the missing money was but the Republican majority voted not to allow any inquiries at all.

This is the biggest slap in the face to the American people that I can think of. In times of war people expect and deal with hard times. We understand that sacrifices

sometimes need to be made but this is not the situation here. Why has nothing happened to Halliburton? Well, the fact that Vice President Dick Cheney was once Vice President of Halliburton and is currently a majority shareholder doesn't have anything to do with it, does it?

Some people feel as though social services such as Medicare and Grants for education are unimportant and shouldn't be paid for with their taxes but would you rather the money go to a poor elderly person just trying to survive or a massive corporate giant like Halliburton?

Not only are these massive companies getting richer and richer off this war and us but then these same wealthy people are given tax breaks on things like capital gains. This is absolutely incomprehensible to me. President Bush has no care or consideration for the poor and working class in this country. He continues to take from the weakest and neediest in order to keep giving to the richest.

I am a registered voter who pays my taxes and I am sick and tired of hearing people claim that we have to cut these social services in order to financially survive. The amount of money that Custer Battles and Halliburton have defrauded from the American government would pay for the cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and educational grant programs.

These companies and the politicians who continue to support them are nothing but war profiteers. While they slash the funding to the weakest among us, they continue to line their own pockets. So when will people get angry and say enough is enough? Will it be when your elderly grandmother can't get the medical care she desperately needs? Or will it be when you have to give up on your educational dreams because you can no longer get a grant? Or maybe when your children cannot get the proper medical care because there is nothing left of the Medicaid program?

Maybe the reason things like this continue to go on with out anyone screaming out in outrage is because the poor and weak usually have no voice. It is the rich and the powerful that run our country and make decisions based on what is best for them. Unless you have had to be there yourself and struggle for the most basic things, then you have no idea how desperate the situation is. These are not just more cuts to unimportant services- these are vital programs that hard working, good taxpaying American citizens count on and deserve in their times of need.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Education or Big Business?

Dear Editor,

I remember, in 2003, that some of the faculty stopped doing any extra curricular activities in a protest action. I understood the reason behind it was a contract dispute about pay increases. In retrospect, it was the students that ultimately got hurt from this action. Certain clubs and plans were stalled without the support of the professors; also, lots of faculty would leave as soon as their day was over, even if a student needed help. It fell upon some of us to do what we could, and we provided peer tutoring a few hours a week; however, it was not enough and we didn't always have the answers. It was a tough semester for everyone.

The contracted payments were granted this year; according to a faculty member, I was told that President Asquino was blaming the Governor for his lack of funds, while at the same time, he was giving up funds the government was distributing at the time and he was quoted as saying, "There are other schools that need this money more than we do." I say that maybe he should have taken the money and used it to quell some of the disgruntled employees on campus, then maybe we could have had a good semester. It only seems logical that if you are having money problems, you wouldn't want to turn down funds. Something stinks, and it isn't coming from the dumpster. When students need something, they need to know they can count on their professors.

I'm not saying it is all this way; in fact, there are many faculty members who didn't shirk their responsibilities to the students. I just want people to see that education has become big business, and it is becoming more and more about the paycheck rather than the students and their needs. The longer this trend continues, and the more this philosophy takes hold, the sooner a student will have nowhere to turn outside the classroom, unless the instructor gets paid extra for it. The philosophy of the administrative staff is rubbing off on the professors and other personnel in the school systems and it has to stop. Education expenses are growing by leaps and bounds; average people can't afford college any more. Soon even state colleges will be beyond the realm of the average person, then where will the world be?

Dennis Carney

The editorial staff does not necessarily share the opinions expressed on the Opinion page of the Mount Observer. All letters to the editor must be limited to 300 words or less and must include a name and a contact number or email address. Send letters to: mountobserver@mwcc.mass.edu. All letters submitted to the paper become the property of the Observer and the editors reserve the right to condense any submissions without prior approval of the submitter.

Sincerely, One from the Right

The following is part one of a student's two part response to an opinion piece written by Danielle Reeder entitled Separation of Church and State Needed that was published in the Observer's December 2005 issue:

Dear Editor,

Separation of Church and State is a fundamental cornerstone in American society. Any reasonable person, Right wing or Left wing doesn't dispute this principle, because under this concept Americans avoid the tyranny of Theocracy, as seen directly in Iran or indirectly in Saudi Arabia. Ms. Reeder asserts that this idea has been abandoned of late quite the contrary! Woefully, Americans have separated themselves from any sort of public connection with religion. Take the suppression of students exercising their rights to religious displays and prayer in schools. Personally, I'm not a pious individual, but I do recognize the vital roles that religion play in our cultural beliefs and the establishment of moral obligations. The Left's war for separation is more about the exclusion of Christianity from society than it is about separation of powers.

The First Amendment covers our basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly and religion. Most often overlooked is the line, "...or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;" concerning religion. Constitutionally, children bear the right to display their crucifix, their star, or their crescent in school. It is their right to carry Bibles, Torahs, and Qurans. They have the right to prayer and to assembly on school property. Not only is it their right, but these are the ideas that enrich our culture. This is all protected by the First Amendment, but is unfortunately denied to them in public schools and institutions across the country. What had been called the "War on Christmas" cites perfect examples in the attempt by the Left for the secularization of America. No one should want Christmas songs that include Christ excluded from their Holiday festivities. I have a better suggestion: Instead of banishing Christian songs, let's include songs from all of the major religions that share holidays with that time of year. Some have said that Diversity is our greatest strength, I respectfully disagree. What I see as not only our greatest strength, but also our most unique

asset, is Unity. Let's strive for integration, not segregation!

Your question: "How can one group of people preach to the rest of us as to what is right and good?" I couldn't agree more. How can a small minority of individuals in this country, namely secularists and Atheists, dictate what is right and good to a super majority of Americans. Christianity alone is the religion of 84% of Americans.

The most sickening of Ms. Reeder arguments, is the comparison of Islamic-fascism to perceived evangelical radicalism, thus exemplifying the lunacy of America's Left. To compare preachers to terrorists is disgusting. It's one thing for a person in a suit and tie to knock on your door and try to convince you of a zealous concept, whether warped or not. It is quite another for that same person to fly a plane into your work, or behead your brother with a saw for the world to watch! Preaching fire and brimstone is entirely different than actually raining it down on the innocent people of New York City!

J.M.Wilson

Fighting Crime on MWCC Campus

by Scott Gallant

The campus police chief, Sergeant Jeff Lefrenier, lectured to the Journalism 101 class recently about the college's law enforcement practices, its beginnings, what criminal elements may typically occur on school grounds, and what measures have been taken to maintain relative peace and order throughout the campus.

Sgt. Lefrenier began his speech by providing the roomful of students his credentials and the training required for campus police licensing, which involves an extensive 16-week academy physical fitness training course with license allotment under the scrutiny and supervision of the Massachusetts State Police Department.

Sgt. Lefrenier informed the class that the campus police are compiled of a staff of 9 personnel on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He said that the MWCC campus police have been able to maintain the best community college campus police force in the state, for reasons of both their efficiency as well as diversity, with members from various ethnic backgrounds.

Sgt. Lefrenier stressed the importance

of professionalism to perform the required duties as the school's security officer by remaining "pro-active" instead of "reactive."

"As a police officer, I am obligated to enforce the laws as they are currently enacted, but I am willing to comply so long as I receive full cooperation with the perpetrator," said Sgt. Lefrenier.

Sgt. Lefrenier continued to explain that he tries to include the ability to remain compassionate to all parties involved in whatever situations need to be addressed, and to take into consideration those with no criminal record.

Sgt. Lefrenier said that in most cases, students could easily settle their differences through an in-house student judicial board. However, if matters remain largely unsettled or the offending student fails to cooperate, then such cases will quickly become a court decision.

According to Sgt. Lefrenier, the crimes typically occurring on campus range from the more nominal, such as motor vehicle parking and traffic violations, to the more potentially serious, such as escorting re-

straining order recipients and monitoring registered sex offender students.

"The most commonly occurring crime would be larceny," said Sgt. Lefrenier. "This could easily be avoided if students would simply lock-up valuables out of their immediate supervision. To prevent the opportunity to steal would greatly reduce the number of reported incidents."

Towards the end of his speech, one student expressed concern for his apparent enthusiasm with his position and the power he wields. Admittedly, Sgt. Lefrenier acknowledged the possibility for corruption and injustice to occur from those within the field without the proper discipline and ethics. Out of consolation, he concluded that the power he possesses can be rewarding, but only when applied to helping others in need. Power is always accompanied with responsibility, and to prevent abuse from within is as crucial as to prevent crime elsewhere; failure to do so will only demean the very duty he had dedicated his life to perform.

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Ethan Stone Rocks the Mount

By Patrick Culkeen

While students were busy enjoying their mid-semester break, the theatre in the Raymond D. Lafontaine Performing Arts Center took on the look of a rock club for the evening, as local artist Ethan Stone rocked for relief in a special benefit show to raise money for the hurricane ravaged regions desperately in need of care after the devastating hurricanes that so greatly affected our neighbors to the south last fall.

Stone, who is no stranger to using his music for charitable causes, said he was honored to even be asked to participate in the event. For years he had dreamed of playing a show in the theatre, and was honored to be asked to play. "It's really a golden opportunity for me to do something meaningful with my music," he said.

The evening was sponsored by the Hurricane Relief Committee, the MWCC Alumni Association, C.A.R.S., and 99.9 The Eagle, and all proceeds from the show went directly to a group of 12 health care clinics in Mississippi providing medical care to many people affected by Hurricane Katrina. According to MWCC employee Kim Caisse, the event raised over \$2,000.

In addition to being a fundraiser, the concert doubled as a CD release party for Stone, who dropped his brand new single "Too Late" at the show, making it available publicly for the first time and even donating a portion of all sales to hurricane relief. "Too late" is the first single off Stone's debut full-length album titled "A Different Way," scheduled to be released this spring. "I tried to take the best music I had, and put it together with the best people I know," he said of the album.

While the large theatre was half-full at best, there is no doubt that those who were in attendance experienced an evening of exceptional performances from two of the area's most talented young musicians.

When Stone finally took the stage, which was adorned with professional concert lighting and sound systems, he opened with a cover of Stevie Wonder's classic, "Superstition," which set the tone for a set full of fun, classic rock covers mixed in with new tracks from Stone's album.

By the middle of the set, Stone's band of talented musicians exited, leaving Stone to perform solo piano-standards such as Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind" and Elton John's "Tiny Dancer," which spurred an audience sing along and mid-set standing ovations for the young piano man.

While this may have been Stone's first time performing in the theatre at MWCC, using his music for a cause is what he has built his career around.

After years of being a popular band and nightclub performer, Stone got fed up with what he called getting paid to sell beer. He also lost a close friend in a drunk driving accident who was driving under the influence while departing one of show's gigs. This prompted Stone to promise to only play venues where alcohol is not served, a promise he still honors today.

"I decided that every show I did I wanted to have a direct impact on making the world a better place," he said. So he went to work.

"I look up to a guy like Bono," Stone said. "He's out there doing great things, and I might not have the capitol to go out there and make that kind of an impact, but I'd

love to be able to do that and do it through music."

Currently, Stone is the chair of the Athol Memorial Hall Revitalization Fund Committee and is currently organizing a monthly series of concerts called Rock-A-Thon, which will feature local bands and raise money to renovate town hall in Athol, with the eventual goal of being able to purchase a professional sound and light system that Stone believes will be instrumental in attract national acts to Athol's historic hall.

Over the past few summers, Stone has organized free outdoor concert series in Athol, Orange, and Templeton, and invited non-profit organizations such as Athol Public Library, Athol-Royalston Education Foundation, and Family Services of North Quabbin to sell refreshments at the free shows. He is currently in the planning stages of a tour to be named "State of the Arts" that will bring him to high school gymnasiums across Massachusetts. Each gymnasium show will be a benefit for that school's music and arts department.

His work hasn't gone unnoticed. In September 2004 he received the North Quabbin Community Coalition Spotlight Award in recognition of his efforts to offer positive community events.

Stone says in the future he wants to continue to use his music as a means of bringing positive change but hopes someday he will be able to do it on a bigger level. "I'll go anywhere, all of the country or world," he said.

Hope at MWCC by Lauren Auli'i Denton

Are the basic necessities of child care, housing, transportation, food, and even clothing holding you back from completing your academic goal at MWCC?

Imagine if these resources were offered for either a reduced rate or entirely free. Students can find out more about these services at the College Success Seminar on March 22 from 10 to 2 p.m. in the south cafeteria.

This event was organized by Gail Kaddy, Associate Director of Academic Success Services, and set up by the Spectrum Club, Americorps S.C.H.O.L.A.R.S., and the students of the College Success class. These individuals decided on everything from what non-profit agencies will attend to the location, date, and time. The emphasis, as student Anne Ramsey stated, is that "nothing is out of the question." These College Success students said the event is not just for students, but also for faculty and staff, who might better understand the problems that MWCC students face on an everyday basis.



Photo by Lauren Auli'i Denton

Students from Spectrum Club, Americorps S.C.H.O.L.A.R.S., and the College Success class met recently to plan upcoming seminar.

Attending the seminar will be 25 nonprofit agencies, all offering either free or reduced rate services. Some of these agencies include: WIC, Child Care Resources, Spanish

American Center, Catholic Charities, Veteran housing, Mass Rides, Community Action Centers, and M.O.C.

Rough Road Ahead for Red Sox

By J.D. Potvin

This upcoming season should be a very exciting one for the Red Sox. With many fresh faces and returning stars they should be looking forward to an interesting season. It will not be a walk in the park for our Sox, however. This season may prove to be one of the most competitive ever. With the former beloved center fielder Johnny Damon traded to the evil empire, Manny continuing to be Manny, and 5 new starters in the field, the chemistry may be a little off. However, they perhaps have the best infield in the league and their hitting is more than likely going to be solid. The only wild card will be the rotation. With the unpredictability of Keith Foulke after his surgery last year and with Curt Schilling continuing to grow older, some of the burden will fall on the young pitchers, Papelbaun and DiNardo, to step up to the plate. This may not be all that unreasonable, considering how effective they were towards the end of the season last year. The rest of the burden will fall on the rotation, which last season was 70-42, and the bullpen, which last season had a combined 3.38 ERA.

The Red Sox, however, may still have quite a season if they can recover from their internal problems. This season the American League East is perhaps stronger than it has ever been. There has always been a tight rivalry between the Red Sox and the dreaded pinstripes, but this season it seems that the Toronto Blue Jays want to get in on the action. After making more moves than any other team during the off-season, they seem ready to make a playoff run. The Yankees also have made many moves during the off-season, but I believe they will have more trouble than most. Despite having what will more likely be the best batting lineup in the league, they will end up with their fair share of pitching problems this upcoming season. With Randy Johnson over the hill and a few other pitchers not too far behind, it will be tough for them to remain strong and healthy over the long season especially with the hitters that are around in the East. No matter who wins the East there are still the Indians, who are still very young and very eager to prove themselves, and the 2005 World Series Champion Chicago White Sox, who were also very aggressive this off-season.

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Hendricks Has Gentle, Soulful Style

by Patrick Culkeen

(Editor's note: The Ray Hendricks Band will perform at MWCC again in March. See the Student Life Calendar in this issue for more info!)

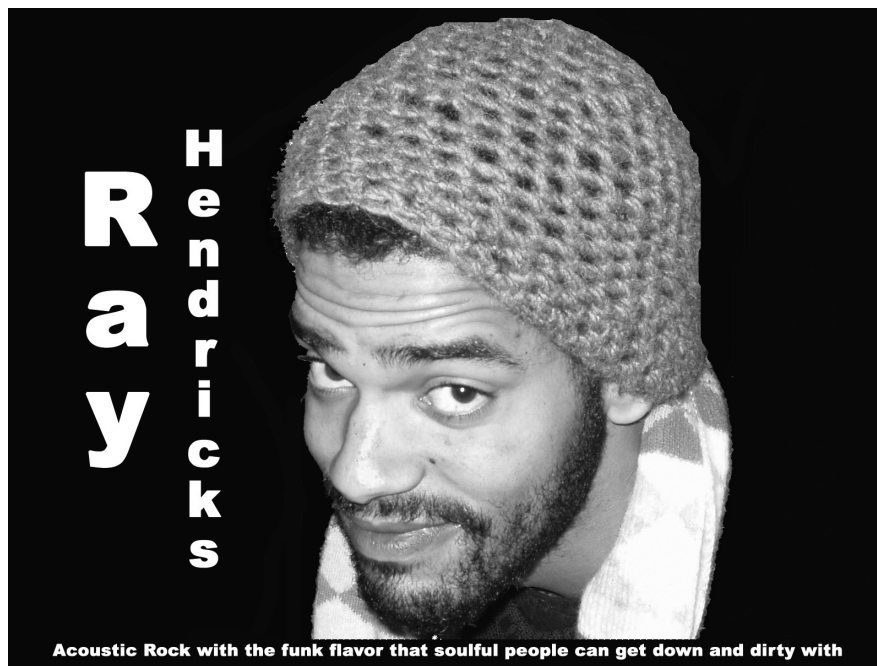
The Ray Hendricks band, a band hailing from Athol who have only been playing as a group for a few months, opened the Ethan Stone concert, performed at MWCC in January. Anyone in attendance who expected to sleep through the opening while awaiting Stone's performance must have been disappointed, as it was impossible to not be pulled in by front man Ray Hendricks' towering stage presence.

Hendricks' gentle yet rhythmic acoustic style and soulful voice evoked thoughts of Ben Harper, but it was obvious that the Ray

Hendricks Band was on a mission to stand out well above the "singer songwriter, boy-with-guitar" stereotype.

Lead guitarist Pat Patterson's lines complemented Hendricks well, and his soulful electric riffs cut through Hendricks's rootsy voice made it nearly impossible for anyone to not dance in their seat.

One of the highlights of the entire evening came when Ethan Stone sat in with the Hendricks band, playing keyboards on one of the band's original tunes. The interplay between the musicians — all taking long improvised solos -- was reminiscent of a jam band and showed the musicians tremendous command of their respective instruments.



The Ray Hendricks band will perform in the south cafeteria on Wednesday, March 29 at 11:30 a.m.

Film Review:



Date Movie: Box Office Bust

By Stacy M. Salo

Looking for a good new comedy movie? I wouldn't recommend spending the 7 or so dollars on Date Movie (rated PG 13 for content and language), a spoof of several romantic comedies. It starts with laughter and ends with the viewer feeling disappointed at how it falls flat. If not that, the viewer will get up and leave after the first 20 to 30 minutes. If you really want to see the movie, I would highly recommend renting it, and save the extra money for candy and soda because those are the only two good things you are going to get out of watching this movie.

In the opening scene, Julia Jones (Alyson Hanning) has a horrible nightmare that nobody, not even Napoleon Dynamite, will marry her because she is overweight. She writes in her Diary (Bridget Jones' Diary) then firmly decides that she will find true love no matter what. She heads out into the street and dances to the song "Milkshake" to try and gain the attention of the guys on the street. When her attempts fail

her, she goes to see Hitch (Tony Cox), who gives her a "Pimp My Chick" makeover consisting of liposuction and a complete makeover.

Now with a new sense of confidence she goes on the show "The Extreme Bachelor: Desperate Edition" where she comes face to face with the man of her dreams Grant Funkyerdoder (Adam Campbell, whom she actually meets earlier when she is overweight). The two go on a date at "A Restaurant", and the movie goes downhill in a whirlwind explosion of spoofs of "Meet the Parents", "Meet the Fockers," "Kill Bill," "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" and several other movies. The disappointment here is that instead of poking fun at these romantic comedies, it's almost as if they re-enact the movies with very dry humor and bad jokes leading to the end, which for a comedy is too cute and way too predictable.

My rating: 1 and 1/2 stars out of 5.