

Travis McKenna
Elizabeth Foreal
Mark P. Work
TRAVIS McKenna
Jamie Horvath
Bill Mulvaney
"Airborne"
Matthew Miller
James "Bones" Bowersox
Brian To
"Giant Thanks"

Sarah Switzerland
"Going for the Gold"
SFO Broncos
Jamie Horvath
Good bless you!
Mark D. Anderson
"Take the message to Garrison"
James P. Conn
Off to work
Danny W. Deming
"It only took one, to change the lives of many."
God Bless You!
Will Hunt
GOOD LUCK!
Highlanders

James "Bill Frog"
Good Luck
Brian S. Kelly
Duty, Honor, Country!
Rocked Winks
Corey Kent

Best of luck!!
Jamie McHardy
Good luck in all endeavors
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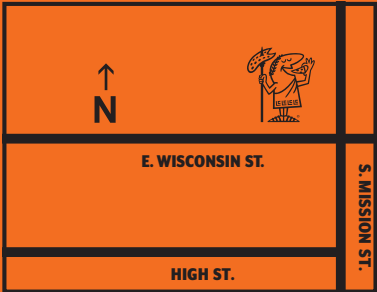


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A note from the editor-in-chief



By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz
Editor-in-Chief

As you're turning the pages of your syllabuses and getting ready to listen to the lecture at your first class this fall, I encourage you to enjoy every single moment of this back-to-school, or first year as a college student, experience.

You're beginning a special year that will present exciting opportunities, bring exceptional people and expand your horizons.

But while you're

diving into an exciting world of possibilities, I also encourage you to remember these two important things: keep your heart open and take care of yourself.

Our mind and body have limitless potential, but so does our humanity. In a world where so many cruel things happen, staying kind to others, empathetic and ethical in everything you do creates a brighter and a better place for everyone.

Join a local donation drive, volunteer at a shelter or just offer a helping hand to your friend. Remember that we're all humans, wonderful and powerful-but sometimes we all need just some kindness and love.

Sometimes, love is all you'll need too. When navigating the fast-paced schedule of classes and struggles of others,

remember to take care of yourself as well. It's okay to slow down. It's okay to say no to homework when you need to and rest. Make a cup of your favorite tea and read a good book – or do what recharges you.

Here at *Central Michigan Life*, we're also excited to start the new year of classes and we're so proud to present you with this back-to-school edition that you're holding in your hands.

In our work, we're also guided by empathy, ethics and care. In this edition, you'll find a story of a dying man, health advice to keep in mind this fall season, football season preview and many other stories.

We hope you'll also find that we have so much love and care for you, our reader.

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On the cover: Photo illustration by Zoey Lawrence

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Find out behind the scenes of Central Michigan Life's reporting of Michael Brewer's story who claims CMU's rifle range gave him lead poisoning.

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NEWS

Lead exposure symptoms

An unsafe lead level in your blood is above 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, according to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But CDC says that lead poisoning can often be undetected and overlooked by doctors because its symptoms are similar to other illnesses.

CDCs names the lead exposure to have the following symptoms:

- **Over long periods of time**

You may experience stomach pain, nausea, constipation, depression, irritability, altered moods, distraction, forgetfulness and increased blood pressure.

- **High levels over a short period of time**

You may experience metallic taste, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, headache, weakness, appetite loss, memory loss, pain in hands or feet and other.

- **Other symptoms of lead exposure**

Bone or tooth loss, decreased lung function, increased infections and fertility issues.

Contact your doctor if you suspect lead poisoning.



Lead to ruin

CMLife | Blace Carpenter

Former CMU instructor and rifle range manager Michael Brewer sits for a photo on May 21, 2025.

Former instructor says CMU rifle range was source of poison

By Masha Smahliuk-Bootz & Blace Carpenter
Editor-in-Chief & Managing Editor

Seizures, memory loss, a feeding tube — these are the results of U.S. Army Sgt 1st Class Michael Brewer's lead poisoning that he claims he received during his work at Central Michigan University's Kulhavi Rifle Range that's in the basement of Finch Fieldhouse in the 1990s.

Brewer instructed classes at the range from 1996 through 1998. Shortly after he arrived on campus, Brewer began to feel ill and had to medically retire. Almost 10 years later, he learned about lead poisoning and sued CMU in 2011.

But Brewer said he doesn't want any compensation from CMU. His biggest worry is his students. There are about 2,500 who took classes at the gun range in the 1990s and Brewer claims it might have exposed them to lead as well.

"I'm requesting that each one of them be found and notified about the contamination," Brewer said. "What they do with it is up to them. ... I'm not stopping. This is my mission in life."

CMU provided *Central Michigan Life* with a statement that they're aware of Brewer's claims, and that there were no findings against CMU and the lawsuit was dismissed.

"The indoor rifle range is still in use by CMU's Military Science and ROTC programs," CMU's spokesperson wrote in an email. "CMU Environmental Health and Safety works with the Military Science program to monitor lead levels and to provide cleaning for the range."

Instructing military classes at CMU

Brewer started at CMU in 1996 by teaching a course on survival skills and rappelling, but the course was eventually closed. He later took on the role of manager of the university's rifle range, which served as a location for marksmanship training for ROTC students.

He joined the U.S. Military in 1981 and served in several positions in the Army, such as a special weapons operator, gunnery sergeant, drill sergeant and more. During his time in duty, he was deployed to parts of Central America and Europe. He was also stationed in different bases around the United States.

At CMU, Brewer said he had to clean the piles of lead accumulated from spent .22-caliber bullets. He said he was never told how to clean it properly and he wasn't aware of the dangers of lead when he oversaw the rifle range.

"At that time, it was like cleaning anything else," Brewer said. "I didn't know. The Army didn't train me, no one told me that the stuff was hazardous."

Brewer said he quickly fell ill, but would continue to sweep and mop the range. From June to December 1997, Brewer was traveling back and forth from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington D.C., and CMU to find a diagnosis for his ongoing seizures.

"Imagine ..., all you've gone through," Brewer said. "I was getting ready to retire from the Army. I had 17 years in. I went to college every night when I was in the Army so that I don't have to do it when I got out. So I come out to a career. (It all was) gone."

In 2012, CMU's former General Counsel, Manuel Rupe, told CM Life the university denied having any knowledge of contamination.

Symptoms and diagnosis of lead poisoning

When Brewer left CMU in 1998, he continued to have seizures, memory loss, severe stomach pains, loss of weight and migraines, he said.

"I chewed out all my teeth in the range (during seizures)," Brewer said. "I woke up (with) teeth laying on the floor. ... I lost the ability to swallow."

Brewer had an oral prosthesis and a feeding tube. Within five years, he wasn't able to walk and had to be in a wheelchair, he said.

For many years, doctors didn't know what was happening. Brewer said he received several misdiagnoses.

Ultimately, doctors gave him the worst news imaginable: "There's nothing to be done," Brewer said they told him. "Go and die."

It wasn't until 2011 that Brewer learned about the lead poisoning. He went to doctor Abid Khan in Clare, who was from Afghanistan and knew what heavy metal contamination looked like because of the war there.

"What I didn't know at that time (about) heavy metals (is) once you leave the contaminated area, it goes to your bones, and it doesn't show up in your bloodstream, only in small amounts," Brewer said. "It leaches out to your bones, so your bones are a reservoir of the heavy metal."

According to Brewer's medical records, his lead level at the time of diagnosis was 25 micrograms per deciliter. The safe level of lead in a human body is below 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"The patient is under my care, and has recently been diagnosed with lead poisoning with residual problems," Khan wrote in an August 2011 letter to the Gratiot County Department of Veteran Affairs. "After reviewing his lead exposure history, he has confirmed that there was excessive lead in the firing range at CMU in 1995 to 1998 where he was stationed at the Central Michigan University ROTC Detachment. He has chronic symptoms that are disabling including multiple neurological symptoms."

Brewer underwent treatment to remove the lead from his body. But even now, he said, he still feels it.

"I can only be awake about four hours, and my brain shuts down," Brewer said. "If it was sunshine shining out right now, I would have to have these (specialized sunglasses) on. These are made for that, because the lead on my eyes causes severe migraines."

Legal battles

In 2011, Brewer filed a lawsuit against CMU, claiming lead poisoning. The case moved from Isabella County to Lansing within a month and was rejected because it was filed past the statute of limitations.

In 2015, Brewer, with the help of a law firm from Grand Rapids, filed another lawsuit. This time, he sued the U.S. Army.

The Army investigated the potential workplaces where

I'm requesting that each (student who used the rifle range in the late 1990s) be found and notified. ... This is my mission in life.

— U.S. Army (ret) Sgt. 1st Class Michael Brewer

Brewer could have gotten the lead poisoning, and on March 30, 2017, the Army Review Boards Agency — the highest military court — ruled that Brewer was indeed poisoned by lead.

"During the investigation, it was discovered that lead contamination in 1998 where he was working was concealed from him by the Army," the board's ruling on March 30, 2017 read. "The doctors at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center were so perplexed about how sick he was and could not find a diagnosis. They gave him a diagnosis that is given to just about anyone who they give up on. The lead went to his bones, not in his bloodstream for detection."

Brewer was permanently retired and received 100% disability and special monthly compensation from the Army. The benefit, he said, is enough to keep him homed and to cover his medical bills; however, it doesn't mitigate the damage done.

After years of fighting, Brewer felt he was, "left for dead."

In 2023, Brewer said he wanted to talk with CMU officials once again. But after they refused to see him, he sent a text message to his ex-wife that CMU claimed was threatening in nature. He was criminally charged and spent five months in jail.

"They want nothing to do with me," Brewer said of the university. "They want me to shut up. Let's put it this way, ... I was falsely charged and thrown in jail."

To CMU and the Army, Brewer's message is clear.

"Be accountable," he said. "It's not too late."

The history of CMU's rifle range

Known today as the Brigadier General John G. Kulhavi Rifle Range, it still serves as a place for marksmanship training for the ROTC and police academy. Brewer said that during his time as an instructor, students from Ferris State University and members of the public would utilize the facility.

CMU Military Science Department Chair Lt. Col. Ryan Greening said that it is still the case.

"It started off as a range for all," Greening said. "For multiple departments, not just ROTC."

He said that the range meets OSHA standards and is tested annually for lead contamination. He said no one from the university cleans the lead and that it was contracted to a cleaning company based in Texas. Inspectors come around April and May to inspect for



Courtesy photo | Michael Brewer

Pvt. Michael Brewer smiles upon his enlistment in the U.S. Army in this circa-August 1981 photo.

lead contamination and clean the facility.

Central Michigan Life filed a Freedom of Information Act request with CMU requesting the OSHA evaluations from 2025, 1992 and 1998, and is still waiting on the documents.

In July 1997, former Assistant Professor of Military Science Gail Koch sent a letter to CMU asking for funding to clean up the lead in the gun range. A couple of months prior, different companies put forward their bids to clean up the lead.

"The Military Science Department was recently informed that there was no money available for removing the lead from spent ammunition and cleaning the rifle range located in the basement of Finch," the letter read.

In September 2004, the Rifle Range was renovated after former CMU Board Trustee John G. Kulhavi, who retired from the U.S. Army as a Brigadier General, donated \$26,000 to renovate the gun range.

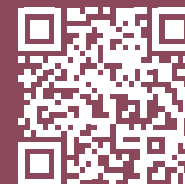
Kulhavi told CM Life at the time that the facility needed to be upgraded and lacked proper funds to operate.

"I decided to sponsor the project because the old facility wasn't safe, there was a lack of equipment and the program receives no funding from the university," Kulhavi told CM Life reporters in 2004.

Today, a sign that reads "Warning: Poison lead dust area" and a large ventilation system hang at the rifle range entrance.

LISTEN UP

SCAN THE QR CODE TO HEAR A "PAST DEADLINE" EPISODE ABOUT MICHAEL BREWER AND THE RANGE.



Who is running for the U.S. Senate seat in Michigan?

By Grace Walker & Blace Carpenter
News editor & Managing editor

Since Michigan’s U.S. Sen. Gary Peters (D-Bloomfield Township) stated that he would not run for re-election in January, a number of candidates have thrown their bid for the seat in the 2026 Midterm Election.

Senate Republicans are hoping to remain as the majority party throughout the midterm election, while democrats try to regain control. Michigan has been seen as a key state to win by both parties. Here are the top candidates so far:

Republican Candidates

Former Michigan U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (R-White Lake) has declared that he would be running again for Michigan’s U.S. Senate seat. During the 2024 election,

Rogers was narrowly defeated by Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-Holly).

Rogers is now returning with a similar message to the one he brought to the 2024 Election. The Republican is focusing on issues similar to the Trump Administration, such as immigration, job growth in the United States and cutting “wasteful spending.”

Recently, President Donald Trump endorsed Roger’s in a post on his social media platform, Truth Social.

“It’s time for a voice in the Senate that represents real Michigan values,” Rogers wrote in a press release. “Together, President Trump and I will unleash a great revival in the state of Michigan—one that helps families get back up on their feet, strengthens our schools, reduces violent crime, and sparks a renaissance of manufacturing.”

Rogers couldn’t be reached for comment.

Democratic Candidates

The top two contenders for the Democratic seat are state Sen. Mallory McMorrow (D-Royal Oak), who has been serving Michigan’s 8th District, and U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens (D-Birmingham). Other Democratic candidates include Abdul El-Sayed and Rachel Howard.

In her campaign video, McMorrow said that her party needs “new leadership” and that the “same old crap in Washington” isn’t the right move for Democrats.

In 2022, McMorrow gained national attention after delivering a fiery speech on the Michigan Senate floor after being accused of wanting to “sexualize” kindergartners and “teach that 8-year-olds are responsible for slavery” by fellow State Sen. Lana Theis (R-Brighton Township).

While on the campaign trail, McMorrow has told voters she wants to see a “new American Dream”

Michigan’s Race for Senate

THE
ISSUES



MIKE
ROGERS
REPUBLICAN



MALLORY
MCMORROW
DEMOCRAT

ECONOMY

Recently, in an Interview with Politico, Rogers cautiously supported President Trump’s tariff policy, stating, “certainty is always better,” with tariffs, but that “the shoe is going to pinch every once in a while.” The former U.S representative stated in his campaign video that he wants to “cut wasteful spending” and increase jobs alongside Trump and his administration.

According to her campaign page, McMorrow says she wants to “make big corporations and the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share in taxes.” The democratic state senator stated she wants to implement a better trade policy to bring jobs to Michigan and disagrees with the Trump Administration’s use of tariffs.

HIGHER
EDUCATION

During his debate against U.S. Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-Holly) in the 2024 election, Rogers acknowledged that the cost of higher education is increasing for newer generations and that debt relief should be included with employment, not from the federal government.

McMorrow’s campaign page said she wants to reform student loans so students are not overwhelmed by interest rates while paying off their debt. She hopes to also make college and trade programs more affordable.

by looking at issues such as health care access, affordable housing and improving public and higher education systems.

“We’re generations behind,” McMorrow said in a recent speech in Hillsdale County. “That’s not the America we believe in, is it? That’s not the country we want to leave our children one where we pass on our debt to them, and their debt to their grandchildren, where no one can dig out of their hole.

Another candidate, Stevens, represents Michigan’s 11th District and has served in the role since 2019. Prior to her time as representative, Stevens served as the Chief of Staff for former President Barack Obama’s auto rescue to improve the auto industry during the Great Recession, according to her campaign website.

Through her time as representative, Stevens said, she has helped pass the “Building Blocks of STEM Act” in March of this year, which is designed for the National Science Foundation to support STEM education in early childhood education.

In her campaign, Stevens said she will work to reduce costs, create more jobs and grow and support Michigan’s manufacturing sector and auto industry.

“I’ve never shied away from doing the right thing for our state in the toughest moments,” Stevens said. “I am looking forward to continuing to fight for our economy, our workers and our families throughout the rest of my time in Congress and in the U.S. Senate.”

El-Sayed remains in the top three candidates and raised around \$1.1 million in July, according to a Michigan Chronicle article. El-Sayed said all funding that goes toward the campaign is from individual funding.

El-Sayed has a background in medicine and said he originally wanted to be a doctor. He was the public health director for Detroit in 2013 and has experience as the director of the Department of Health, Human and Veterans Services in Wayne County, according to his campaign website.

“As I learned to ask and answer the two main questions that every doctor should be able to ask and answer, ‘what’s wrong and how can I help’, too often, the answers have more to do with what was wrong in our society and not just what was wrong in people’s bodies,” El-Sayed said.

El-Sayed said he wants to work to “take money out of politics” by passing laws that prohibit corporations from spending money to elect candidates, reduce taxes on small businesses and guarantee health care for all Michigan citizens.

“We want to be talking about issues all Michigan citizens face] and talking about solutions that we bring to bear on those problems,” he said. “We’re going to build a movement that brings people back into our politics.”

Rachel Howard, another candidate stated she was not supposed to be a politician.

According to her campaign website, Howard served in

the U.S. military for 14 years, worked as an emergency medical technician in metro Detroit and has published her research that advocates for change in the healthcare system for veterans. As time went by, Howard said she became disappointed in U.S. politics.

“I felt that politicians had become a class, as opposed to a general representation of the public,” Howard said. “So this past year I finally said, ‘I can’t do this anymore. I can’t vote for the lesser of two evils as candidates, and if I don’t see the candidates that I want to vote for, then it’s up to me to be the candidate that I want to vote for.’”

As a U.S. Senator, Howard said she wants to reduce childcare costs, make the housing market more affordable for families and revitalize rural areas.

Paige Jaczkowski | Staff designer



HALEY
STEVENS
DEMOCRAT

Stevens said in an interview on Detroit Public Radio, “We need to have investment in manufacturing jobs, in job training, that goes back to our schools.”

According to a press release by Stevens in May, she led a “Special Order Hour” that called out the budget cuts President Trump made to federal science agencies and the National Science Foundation. Stevens said the cuts “attacked STEM education programs.” “Trump’s anti-science agenda...threatens Michigan’s future in advanced manufacturing, environmental protection, and next-generation mobility technologies,” Stevens said.



ABDUL
EL-SAYED
DEMOCRAT

In an interview with CM-Life, El-Sayed said he wants to reduce taxes for small businesses. “We need to make it easier to build and scale small businesses, rather than giving big corporations tax cuts. I want to think about how we reduce taxes on small businesses who produce the most of our jobs,” El-Sayed said.

On his campaign website, El-Sayed listed education as one of his priorities. “America’s colleges and universities are among its most critical research institutions. They deserve more funding, not less, focused on high-risk, high-impact science that has the potential to change the world.”



RACHEL
HOWARD
DEMOCRAT

In her campaign, Howard said she wants to revitalize rural areas by supporting small businesses and independent farms throughout Michigan. “(I’m) focused on job opportunities and revitalization of industry here in Michigan, with a focus, especially on the rural areas that have in many ways been left behind.”

In an interview with CM-Life, Howard said she is in support of quality education in Michigan. “If we want to have a thriving state, you have to be able to educate children in quality environments to ensure that they are ready for the workforce and for life in general,” Howard said.

Staying healthy when returning to classes

By Masha Smahliuk
Editor-in-chief

As students are returning to Central Michigan University, a measles outbreak continues across the United States and Michigan, with at least three cases recently reported in Osceola county, a neighbor to Isabella County.

Dr. Jennifer Morse, medical director of Central Michigan District Health Department, said the outbreak was caused by the low vaccination rates this year, and spread to Michigan when people travelled outside the state and brought in the infection.

"For your situation at the university, you have a lot of people coming into an area from all over the country and all over the world, and you hope that everyone's immune, but you don't know," Morse said. "It's always a concerning time for any infectious disease, but particularly measles, which is really contagious."

Measles is an airborne disease that begins with high fever, cough, runny nose, rash and can lead to different complications, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Children under the age of 5, adults older than 20 and people with weakened immune systems are the most at risk.

There has been a total of 1,356 cases of measles in the United States and up to 49 cases in Michigan so far this



CMLife | File Photo

Kathleen Fromm administers the flu vaccine on in the Bovee University Center in this October 2022..

year, according to CDC data.

"Measles is the most contagious infectious disease that we have in existence," Morse said. "If someone in a room has measles, once they leave that room, the air stays contagious with measles for two hours after they leave."

"If you have multiple individuals that are not immune,

Measels is the most contagious infectious disease that we have in existence. If you have multiple individuals that are not immune, whether they've had the disease in the past or they've not been vaccinated, nine out of 10 of them will become infected if they get exposed.

— Dr. Jennifer Morse

Central Michigan District Health Department

whether they've not had the disease in the past or they've not been vaccinated, nine out of 10 of them will become infected if they get exposed, and then if they go on to expose others."



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But measles isn't the only disease that students returning to school are at risk of. Fall is the season when colds and flus begin, Morse said. Whooping cough is another concern doctors have for returning college students, according to Morse.

Whooping cough, or pertussis, is a respiratory illness that leads to severe coughing with a loud "whooping sound." It's especially severe for babies, according to Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services website.

Whooping cough cases have been on the rise this year in Michigan, reaching 497 cases in April, HHS data showed.

Michigan's Chief Medical Executive Natasha Bagdasarian said that's a large number, according to WCMU's reporting.

"The prevalence of diseases like pertussis, and these are vaccine-preventable diseases, these are on the rise," Bagdasarian said in the article. "We're seeing this not only with pertussis. ... We're seeing these communicable diseases make a big comeback."

But what can help students protect themselves from measles or whooping cough is vaccination, Morse said.

"There's just many different infectious diseases that can be prevented by vaccination," she said. "It's really important for students to make sure they're up to date."

If the vaccines aren't up to date, students can schedule an appointment with CMDHD or CMU's Student Health Services.

Besides vaccination, Morse had other advice on how to stay healthy during the beginning of the school year. She said it's important to keep a regular sleep schedule, get some exercise, eat healthier foods, drink enough water and avoid alcohol or smoking.

Morse also recommended wearing a mask if you're sick, or if you're going to a place where other people are sick, as well as keeping the air clean and opening windows when possible.

CMLife Designer | Paige Jaczkowski

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Vaccine to protect against	Vaccine name	Doses
Measels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)• MMRV (measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children need two doses of MMR: first one when they're 12 to 15 months old and second dose when they're four to six years old.• If you weren't vaccinated as a child, adults also need two doses of MMR, taken 28 days apart.• Children from 12 months to 12 years old can be given two doses of MMRV.
Whooping Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DTaP• Tdap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children under 7 years old need three doses of DTaP and two boosters.• Teens and adults need 1 shot of Tdap.
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderna• Pfizer-BioNTech• Novavax	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People can choose a vaccine brand based on their preference and undergo a series of multi doses.
Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are different egg-based, cell-based and trivalent flu vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDC recommends a single dose for a 2025-2026 flu season



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Building trust, ensuring safety

New CMUPD chief takes the reins

By Jo Kenoshmeg
Visuals editor

The eighth chief of police started at Central Michigan University on July 1. Cameron Wassman gained his new title over a month ago, but this is not his first job with the CMU Police Department.

Wassman has held four positions, now, at CMU. He began his career 25 years ago as a patrol officer and served in that role for five years. He then moved to being a sergeant for five years, before becoming a lieutenant for 15 years.

Becoming Chief of Police at CMU was the biggest step in Wassman's career, and he said he was excited for the new position and its importance.

"Each chief has left it in a better place than when they started. People ask about legacy, and ultimately, I want to leave this place better than when I found it," Wassman said.

Plans as Chief

Wassman said he does not have any big plans for change at the moment, as he believes, "we as a department are already on a great path."

According to Wassman, his biggest priority is ensuring the safety of the students, faculty, staff and visitors on campus. Wassman breaks safety into three terms:

Planning: Being prepared for bad things that may happen, and how the university and police department will respond.

Education: Making sure every community member knows how to keep themselves safe. The run, hide, fight concept is a good example of this.

Enforcement: Ensuring people who are breaking the law or harming the community are handled correctly to protect the community.

As for education, the police department and other groups on campus have taken a more active role in emergency management, according to Wassman.

"We've been part of developing a university-wide emergency management team that now meets frequently and does exercises a few times a year, so we definitely want to build upon that," Wassman said. "I also want to continue to increase the amount of outreach and education that we do."

Another priority for Wassman is building trust within the community.

"Trust is a major thing when it comes to law



Jo Kenoshmeg | Visuals editor

Central Michigan University Chief of Police Cameron Wassman poses for a portrait next to a police car outside of the Central Michigan University Police Station Monday, August 11, 2025. Wassman is the CMU Police Department's eighth chief of police.

enforcement. The community needs to trust us, which means we need to act professionally and be prepared to do the things we need to do in order to help build that trust," Wassman said. "Transparency is part of that too, and I'm happy to talk with anybody about why we do what we do."

CMU Career

While at CMU, Wassman said each of his positions he has held has its perks.

"There are pluses and minuses to every position ... certainly the most fun positions are working as a patrol officer or patrol sergeant, boots on the ground if you will. You're out there patrolling and responding to calls," Wassman said.

He said most of the action happens for patrol officers, but he also likes the responsibility and importance of his leadership roles.

"In the different leadership positions, I like being able to manage people and manage the department in the direction you want it; that has some enjoyable pieces as well," he said.

Chief of Police, he said is a big shift from his previous positions. Wassman compared his new position to that of a conductor of an orchestra.

"It is the top position of the department, so ultimately I am responsible for everything that happens in the police

department and parking services," he said. "To my benefit, I've got a great group of people that work here, a great team, and I have great confidence in what they can do, so it's not like I'm doing everything, but ultimately I am responsible for everything."

Beginning law Enforcement

Wassman did not always know he wanted to be involved in law enforcement. But he was sure that he wanted a career that would help people and leave a positive impact on others.

"A lot of people have family members who were in law enforcement, or maybe they knew since they were little kids they wanted to be a cop," he said. "That wasn't necessarily my case; it was really in my high school years, and I am not sure what made that click."

Wassman completed his undergraduate degree at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie. There, he was a resident assistant for three years and worked in the college's security department.

"Working in that kind of environment, I thought that would be an interesting take on law enforcement, versus working for a city or working for a county, so really that's what drew me to apply here [CMU] and get hired," he said.

Weeks of Welcome 2025

Aug 11 - Sept 12
MINDFULNESS TRAIL
CMU CARES

AROUND CAMPUS

Follow the QR codes signs around campus for a mindfulness walk focused on movement, nutrition, and stress relief.

Aug 22 | 8PM

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON (LIVE ACTION)

PROGRAM BOARD

MOORE CIRCLE

Join Program Board and SA for the viewing of How To Train Your Dragon, Live Action and free popcorn!

Aug 22 | 2:30PM
Aug 23 | 3:30PM

NO ZERRAS NO EXCUSES

SEXUAL AGGRESSION SERVICES

PLACHTA AUDITORIUM

Join us for an engaging program for first-year students on preventing violence and promoting consent.

Aug 24 | 4-7PM
MAINSTAGE

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT
FRANKLIN STREET

CMU's biggest welcome event! Find your place on campus at MainStage!

Aug 25 | 8:30-11AM
1ST DAY OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT

BOVEE VC ROTUNDA

Fuel up, meet friends, and kick off the semester together!

Aug 25 | 8:30AM-12PM

1ST DAY OF SCHOOL PHOTOS

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT

BOVEE VC FRONT LAWN

Snap your first day memories in the giant CMU inflatable chair!

Aug 25-28 | 9-11:30AM

FUEL YOUR PASSION

ISABELLA BANK INSTITUTE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP
GRANN 166

Join us for donuts, coffee and inspiration. All majors invited!

Aug 26 | 11AM-2PM

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT JOB FAIR

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

BOVEE VC ROTUNDA

Connect with campus employers and check your Work-Study eligibility!

Aug 27 | 4-7PM

GET ACQUAINTED DAY

MULTICULTURAL ACADEMIC STUDENT SERVICES (MASS)
WARRINER MALL

Your chance to connect with multicultural organizations, new friends, enjoy food and fun, and kick off the year together!

Aug 27 | 6-7:30PM

CSE STUDENT WELCOME

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & ENGINEERING
BIOSCIENCES 1015

Kick off your semester with CSE—meet reps, join orgs, grab swag, and get involved!

Sep 2 | 2-5PM

CBA INVOLVEMENT FAIR

The HUB/ CBA

WARRINER MALL

Discover CBA orgs, study abroad, grad programs, advisors, free snacks, and t-shirts (first 200)!

Sep 2-5

RE OFEST

UNIVERSITY RECREATION
VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Join University Recreation as they host several programs throughout the week that engage students in meaningful and fun ways! From glow dodgeball to video game tournaments, to rock climbing, there's lots to be a part of!

Sep 6 | 6AM

SAI ON THE ROAD: MACKINAW ISLAND

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT

DEPARTING FROM BOVEE VC

Grab your ticket and join us for fun and a semester kickoff like no other!

Sep 8 | 3:30-4:15PM

YOGA AND YOGURT

CMU CARES
BIOSCIENCE LAWN

Relax with outdoor yoga, enjoy a yogurt parfait, and learn how movement boosts mental health!

Sep 10 | 4-6PM

FIRST GEN MIXER & RESOURCE FAIR

FIRST GEN CENTRAL
SAC NIRSA ROOM

First Gen students, find support, make connections, and build your CMU community!

Sep 11 | 10AM-2PM

9/11 DAY OF SERVICE

MARY ELLEN BRANDELL VOLUNTEER CENTER

BOVEE VC 106

Join the Volunteer Center for drop-in Day of Service and Remembrance! Service projects in recognition of 9/11

Sep 11 | 4PM

WOMEN'S SOCCER GAME
CMU ATHLETICS
SOCCER/LACROSSE COMPLEX

Come support and cheer on your CMU Chippewas as they take on the Wright State University!

Sep 15 - Oct 15

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

MULTICULTURAL ACADEMIC STUDENT SERVICES (MASS)

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Celebrate HHM by joining events that honor the rich traditions, history, and contributions of Hispanic and Latinx communities!

Sep 16 | 10AM-3PM

FIRE UP THE VOTE

MARY ELLEN BRANDELL VOLUNTEER CENTER

PARK LIBRARY LAWN

Join Central Votes for National Voter Registration Day! Get registered and explore civic engagement with Fire Up the Vote!

Sep 16 | 4-6PM

STUDY ABROAD FAIR

OFFICE OF GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT/STUDY ABROAD

BOVEE VC ROTUNDA

Explore programs, meet advisors and alumni, and see where CMU can take you!

Sep | 18-26

CPG RECRUITMENT

FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Kickoff your journey in Greek life by participating in CPG Recruitment and finding the sisterhood that will last a lifetime!

Sep 19 | 5-9PM

FIRE UP FEST

OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES & INVOLVEMENT
DOWNTOWN MT. PLEASANT

Kickoff the 2025 school year with food, live music, games, volunteering, and giveaways!

Sep 20 | 1PM

CMU VS. WAGNER

FOOTBALL GAME

CMU ATHLETICS
KELLY/SHORTS STADIUM

Show your school spirit and pack the stands as CMU takes on Wagner in the exciting football home opener!

Sep | 21-26

IFC RECRUITMENT

FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Discover lifelong brotherhood and leadership opportunities by taking part in IFC Recruitment this season!

Sep | 22-28

NPFC WEEK

FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Celebrate unity, culture, and tradition by engaging in NPFC Week and connecting with the legacy of the Divine Nine!

FIRE UP **meijer**

ENGAGE CENTRAL



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Visit the Division of University Engagement & Student Affairs Website for all Weeks of Welcome programs:



CMU, an AA/EQ institution, strongly and actively strives to increase diversity and provide equal opportunity within its community. CMU does not discriminate against persons based on age, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religion, sex, sex-based stereotypes, sexual orientation, transgender status, veteran status, or weight.

OPINION

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

— *The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States*

YOUR TURN

We welcome letters to the editor and guest columns. All submissions columns must include a name, address, organization university affiliation (if any) and phone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed. *Central Michigan Life* reserves the right to edit all letters and columns for style, length, libel, redundancy, clarity, civility and accuracy. Letters should be no more than 450 words in length. Longer guest columns must remain under 750 words. CM Life reserves the right to print any original content as a letter or guest column. Submission does not guarantee publication.

New year, timeless values



The Fall 2025 Editorial Team, including, from left to right, Managing Editor Blace Carpenter, Visual Editor Jo Kenoshmeg, News Editor Grace Walker, Editor-in-Chief Masha Smahliuk-Bootz, Podcast Editor Christian Valk and Sports Editor Sydney Neal, pose for a portrait in the CM Life Conference room, Tuesday, Aug. 19, 2025. (Not pictured: Visual Editor Ella Miller and Visual Editor in Training Mark Hoover)

A new notebook with an inspirational quote on the cover, an updated calendar of classes and three roommates who you just met – the beginning of the school year is full of exciting and undiscovered experiences. You’ve been preparing for it and you’ve just entered an overwhelming, but wonderful new world.

But we also understand that this beautiful college life doesn’t exist in a bubble.

On top of your busy college and personal life, the world around keeps moving, often to unprecedented directions, and it often demands your attention and takes you away from the simple and beautiful worries of a test grade or a party dress.

World conflicts, National Guard in Washington D.C., measles outbreak in the state, Michigan Senate race, smoke from Canadian wildfires -- there are so many things that happen outside of our college life, but still impact us as students.

Similarly, there has been a lot of news happening on campus that we care about – from the first class of nursing students to the safety questions about the gun range in the Finch Fieldhouse.

That’s when we come in. It is our job as student journalists at *Central Michigan Life* to watchdog the events that are taking place at Central Michigan University or in Mount Pleasant, as well as to localize the national or state news.

We’re here to question things, to research them and to translate the news for you.

We understand the need of the community to be informed in order to govern itself and maintain a

healthy democracy. Every single word that we write is out of care and love for you, our reader.

You have the right to know what’s going on in your university, and you have the responsibility to be informed about the events around you as younger generations have historically been the driver of change.

We’re also here to serve the Mount Pleasant community. According to a news deserts map, Isabella County has only one newspaper and is surrounded by a majority of at-risk counties.

CM Life is a professional newspaper with over 100 years of experience that cares about the voice of our community members and alumni, too.

Back at campus, where CM Life staff is already writing stories, taking photos and recording podcasts, we’re also excited to be back as students. Just like you, we’re dreaming of the special year ahead of us.

And of course, at our staff meetings, we have already shared the goals for this academic year. The most important one always stays the same.

At CM Life, we aim to produce quality, accurate and ethical journalism that matters for our community. We value truth, independence and humanity.

Our goal is to continue to inform you the best we can and to grow every single day as journalists. Amidst all the big and small fires around the world, we hope to bring kindness, empathy and educated decisions through our stories.

And we can’t wait to see what this new academic year will bring and what we can do to serve our audience.

If you have a story to tell or if there’s something you think CM Life should cover, email editor@cm-life.com.

Let's make the most of a new year together



By Neil MacKinnon
CMU President

The excitement is building as we head toward the start of a new academic year at Central Michigan University, and there is so much to be excited about.

Like most of life, you'll get out of your college experience what you're willing to put into it. To make the most of your time at CMU, you should take full advantage of everything life at Central has to offer.

Your professors and instructors can be so much more than simply teachers – they can be mentors and the first members of your professional networks. Make sure to actively participate in class discussions, ask questions and take advantage of office hours. Get to know your faculty members and let them get to know you. I'll be giving some guest lectures this fall so you may even see me in your class!

Your classmates will be one of the most amazing things about your campus experience. Get to know them in class and consider forming study groups. At CMU, we're a community that lifts each other up, and that means helping each other succeed in class, too!

Your time in the classroom and in labs is fundamental, of course, but your education extends far beyond those walls. I strongly encourage you to participate in the many events planned for the months ahead, and to explore our many registered student organizations. There's a community for every interest, whether you're passionate about gaming, environmental causes, theater or volunteering. Joining a student organization is one of the best ways to build lasting friendships, develop leadership skills and create memories that will last a lifetime.



Central Michigan University President Neil MacKinnon raises a finger while he explains all of the joys on campus that he has experienced during his time as president in the Plachta Auditorium, Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025. MacKinnon says he and his wife eat at Dine & Connect about three times a week and he also works out at the Student Activity Center on campus.

Staff photographer | Alivia Cranick

CMU puts great emphasis on ensuring you get a hands-on education that prepares you for great careers, and you don't need to take my word on that. Carnegie has classified CMU as the best "Opportunity University" in Michigan. To earn the designation, we demonstrated tremendous access to a quality education and that our graduates earn competitive wages in their careers.

This summer, we invested in several positive changes on campus. Our Student Food Pantry relocated to Robinson Hall. Our team at University Recreation made significant upgrades to the weight training and fitness equipment at the Student Activity Center. The transformation of Merrill Dining Hall continues, with CMU's most popular Grab n' Go food service location opening on August 25. And all-new initiatives, funded

by Go Grants, have begun and are gaining momentum in progress toward meeting the goals of our strategic plan.

We know there's much more that goes into student success, and we have invested in dedicated resources to ensure you have access to what you need. For those who need academic assistance, the Office of Student Success offers incredible resources, from tutoring to study skills workshops. Student mental health and well-being are a top priority, and the CMU Counseling Center is ready to help with any challenges students may encounter.

For me, this year holds a special significance. This is my first chance to kick off a new academic year as CMU president, and my family (including First Lady Leanne and First Dog Bentley) and I are tremendously proud to be part of this incredible community. The energy of

our students is what really makes CMU a vibrant and inspiring place.

One thing I've learned is that your college years fly by incredibly fast. Let's make this year one to remember. From the first day of class to graduation day, let's be grateful for our time together and make every moment count.

Welcome to another great year at CMU, and FIRE UP CHIPS!



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Honoring the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe

Celebrate your CMU Chippewa pride while respecting the area's culture and history

By Cristin Coppess
Staff Reporter

Central Michigan University has a long-standing partnership with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, which is what allows the university to use "Chippewa" as its nickname. As part of the agreement that the university has with the Tribe, there are practices in place to honor both the Tribal history of the land and the preservation of the Tribe's culture.

The university rests on part of the Saginaw Indian Chippewa Tribe's reservation. When attending events around campus, students will often hear a land acknowledgement. The acknowledgement recognizes the land the event is hosted on as the ancestral land of the Council of Three Fires, otherwise known as the Anishinaabe peoples.

The land acknowledgement highlights the collaborative relationship between the Tribe and CMU, and serves as a reminder of the challenges the Tribe has faced because of colonization.

The university's Office of Indigenous Affairs also provides students with resources to help educate themselves about the Tribe CMU represents.

Among these resources are guidelines for the usage of the Chippewa name and related symbols. For example, it's

inappropriate to shorten the name Chippewa unless saying "Fire Up Chips!"

Sporting events are a common space where the nickname is put to use, but on the playing field as elsewhere on campus and in the community, there are ways of honoring the Chippewa Tribe and ways of disrespecting it.

CMU Office of Indigenous Affairs' website reads that students shouldn't attempt to recreate war paint patterns with face paint, chant phrases with Native American origin, or make the "tomahawk chop" motion while cheering on CMU teams. Doing so misrepresents the culture of the tribe and sends a demeaning message about the Tribe's heritage.

According to the site, the Saginaw Indian Chippewa Tribe are a peaceful people that were primarily hunters and gatherers. Donning war paint or feathered accessories is considered incredibly disrespectful and inaccurately represents the Tribe.

As CMU students, we have a responsibility to educate ourselves about the land we live and learn on, and about the Tribe it belongs to. I encourage incoming students to step outside of their comfort zones and learn about this culture that may be unfamiliar to them.

If you want to learn more about the Tribe while on campus, visit the



CMLife | Mary Nowosacki

Indigenous performer watches others dance at CMU's Annual "Celebrating Life" at McGuirk Arena, Sunday, March 30, 2025.

Office of Indigenous Affairs in Bovee University Center, Room 110C. For a more in-depth experience, take a trip to Mount Pleasant's Ziibiwing Center of Anishinaabe Culture and Lifeways, 6650 E. Broadway St., which enlightens visitors to the rich culture, heritage and

history of the Great Lakes' Anishinaabe People.

Staff Reporter Cristin Coppess is a rising sophomore majoring in photojournalism.

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Empty halls and quiet classrooms



Central Michigan University’s campus has come alive as students returned to classes this week. However, summer in Mount Pleasant was empty and still, allowing the campus’ green landscapes to shine. VIsuals Editor Jo Kenoshmeg and Staff Photographer Mary Nowosacki explored a quiet campus to capture what students have missed during their time away.

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FALL 2025
SPORTS
PREVIEW

Football is back baby!

By Sydney Neal
Sports Editor

The turf at Kelly/Shorts Stadium is quiet now, but before you know it, the stands will be filled again. As Central Michigan gears up for the 2025 season, the Chippewas step into a new era — one defined by change, renewal and the unknown.

The most visible change stands on the sideline. After six seasons, Jim McElwain retired following a 4-8 overall finish in 2024. In his place arrives Matt Drinkall, a coach known for his offensive creativity and blunt intensity during his time at Army. He brings with him a new staff — offensive coordinator Jim Chapin and defensive coordinator Sean Cronin — each charged with reshaping a program hungry for stability.

“This is one of the best teams I have ever been around for internal leadership,” Drinkall said back in April. “One thing about our team is ... they’ve been exposed to a lot, and they are really affective at communicating. There are no egos, they’re looking for authenticity, they want to get better.”

For Central Michigan, 2025 is less about chasing perfection and more about rediscovering identity.

Defense leads the way

If CMU is going to climb back toward Mid-American Conference relevance, it will start on defense. Few position groups in the conference can match the Chippewas’ experience at linebacker.

Senior linebacker Jordan Kwiatkowski, who earned All-MAC second team honors last fall, returns as the heart of the defense. Flanking him are seasoned teammates Dakota Cochran, Lawai’a Brown and Fernando Sanchez III—all seniors with game reps and leadership roles already established. Together, they form the kind of unit coaches dream about: veterans who can communicate without words and set the tone in practice.

The secondary is also expected to be a strength. The Chippewas lost Donte Kent, who is now a cornerback for the Pittsburgh Steelers, but they’re not empty-handed. Returners Marcus Badgett, Brenden Deasfernandes, Jaion Jackson and Aakeem Snell bring valuable experience. They’re joined by Cincinnati transfer Kalen Carroll, who saw action in the spring game back in April.

Behind them sits a safety duo including Caleb Spann, the team’s second-leading tackler last season, is known for his ability to sniff out plays before they develop. His



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

The Central Michigan University football team plays in a spring game that they host for the first time since 2018 in Kelly/Shorts Stadium on Saturday, April 12, 2025. The team is divided into team Deromedi and team Kramer for the game.

See **FOOTBALL** | 20



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FOOTBALL

CONTINUED FROM 19

partner, Elijah Rikard, added 56 tackles of his own and provides a steadying presence in the back end. Together, they give CMU a hard-hitting safety net that fans should grow to appreciate.

Offense searching for an identity

Running back Trey Cornist, who transferred from Tulane, may be the most intriguing newcomer. Once a highly touted recruit, Cornist rushed for 149 yards in limited opportunities last season, but brings a bruising running style that could translate well to the MAC. Alongside him in the running back room is Nahree Biggins, Mekhi Jenkins, Brock Townsend and Jakivion Calip, who all return this year. Wide receiver Tyson Davis should see the field again this year after an injury took him out of the 2024 season. As a player who has seen the field and is a vet on the team, Davis will look to lead a young wide receiver room.

A brutal start

The 2025 schedule does the Chippewas no favors. They open with three straight road games at San Jose State, Pittsburgh and a Big Ten matchup against the University of Michigan. Despite a tough start for CMU, the odds could be in CMU's favor in the opener. San Jose State lost its starting quarterback and is in transition. Pitt has talent but is coming off a down year. And while Michigan will be a challenge, surviving that stretch with confidence and health would be a win in itself. CMU finally returns home in week four against Wagner, a game that could serve as a reset before the grind of conference play. Matchups with Buffalo, UMass and Kent State could be easy winnable moments. Preseason polls slotted Central Michigan ninth in the conference, while oddsmakers set the Chippewas' win total at 5.5. This placement gives CMU a lot of room to work, but in the unpredictable world of MAC football, that number could swing dramatically in either direction.

Things to watch this season

The first storyline begins under center. Quarterback play has often been a deciding factor for CMU, and this year is no different. With a fresh competition for the starting job, the Chippewas are searching for a steady hand who can not only manage the game, but also push the offense to new heights. On the other side of the ball, the defense will be tasked with forging a new identity. Returning leaders bring valuable experience, but several positions will rely on younger players adjusting to the speed of Division I football. If the Chippewas can re-establish themselves as a disciplined, hard-hitting unit, it will give them a fighting chance in a conference where physical defenses often separate contenders from the rest of the pack.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer
Central Michigan University freshman linebacker Victor Earl and senior defensive back Elijah Rikard work together to bring down sophomore running back Trey Cornist in McGuirk Arena on Saturday, April 12, 2025.

Offensively, balance has been difficult in recent years. The run game has long been a strength in Mount Pleasant, but too often the passing attack has lagged behind, forcing the offense to become predictable. This fall, the ability to spread the field and keep defenses honest will be a focal point. Then come the rivalry games. Matchups with Western Michigan, Eastern Michigan and Toledo have a way of defining seasons, regardless of records. A win in either

rivalry could spark momentum, a loss could deepen the growing pains. Finally, all eyes will be on the new faces. From promising freshmen to transfers eager for a second chance, this roster is filled with players looking to carve out their role. Fans should expect at least a handful of newcomers to emerge as key contributors by midseason. How quickly they adapt will determine whether this is a rebuilding year or the start of a resurgence.

WEEK 1

@ SAN JOSE

10:30 P.M. AUG. 29

WEEK 3

@ MICHIGAN

NOON SEPT. 13

WEEK 5

VS. EASTERN MICHIGAN

SEPT. 27, TIME TBA

WEEK 7

@ BOWLING GREEN

OCT. 18, TIME TBA

WEEK 9

@ WESTERN MICHIGAN

NOV. 1, TIME TBA

WEEK 11

@ KENT

7 P.M. NOV. 19

CMU FOOTBALL

2025 SCHEDULE

@ PITTSBURGH

NOON SEPT. 6

WEEK 2

VS. WAGNER

1 P.M. SEPT. 20

WEEK 4

@ AKRON

OCT. 4, TIME TBA

WEEK 6

VS. MASS

OCT. 25, TIME TBA

WEEK 8

VS. BUFFALO

7 P.M. NOV. 12

WEEK 10

VS. TOLEDO

NOV. 29, TIME TBA

WEEK 12

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Are you fired up???

Our football freaks share their pigskin picks. How do your predictions compare?

By Sydney Neal, Noah Henson & David Powell
Sports Editor & Sports Reporters

With the 2025 football season less than two weeks away from its start, our resident football fanatics predict how they think the Chippewas will fare this year.

Week 1 @ San Jose State

Henson: CMU 17, SJSU 31

CMU starts the season on the road against San Jose State, and while the Spartans notably lost triple-crown winning wide receiver Nick Nash to the draft, the squad otherwise retains 57% of its production from last season. I see CMU finding early offensive success, as the Chippewa offense should be able to pick apart a secondary that only returns one player from last season. But, the talent that returns to SJSU will get the edge over Central Michigan.

Powell: CMU 31, SJSU 24

The Chippewas will look to get their run game going early, in an attempt to take control of the game. While traveling to the West Coast could have an adverse affect on the team, in the end, I expect a Chippewas win from a team eager to prove themselves not only to other teams but also to their new coach.

Week 2 @ Pittsburgh

Henson: CMU 13, Pitt 41

Pittsburgh comes into the season following a disastrous six-game losing streak to end the 2024 season. Still, with quarterback Eli Holstein recovering



Mark Hoover | Staff photographer | file

The Central Michigan football team holds the Victory Cannon Trophy after beating Western Michigan 16-14 on Tuesday, Nov. 19, at Kelly/Shorts Stadium.

from the injury he sustained to his leg against Clemson last season and the Panthers returning so many young players on an already-solid defense. I see it being hard for the Chippewas to find much success on either side of the ball.

Neal: CMU 17, Pitt 34

Pitt's offense is significantly more explosive in its passing game. CMU's rushing advantage is slim and may not offset the quarterback-driven Pitt attack. Given the significant edge Pitt holds in both offensive and rushing defense, plus Pitt's home-field advantage and CMU's coaching transition, I can see Pitt taking this game early on.

Week 3 @ Michigan

Henson: CMU 3, U of M 38

Michigan enters the season riddled with question marks as a new offensive system, and more-notably a new quarterback will take the field. I see the running back tandem of Jordan Marshall and Alabama transfer Justice Haynes, as well as the defense, doing most of the heavy lifting for the maize and blue as presumed starting quarterback Bryce Underwood settles into his role in the offense.

Powell: CMU 10, U of M 48

The Chippewas finish their season-opening gauntlet on the road against in-state foe Michigan University. The Chippewas are 0-4 in matchups

against the Wolverines, and I don't expect this time to be any different. Michigan kept its opponents to an average of just 91 rushing yards per-game last year, which I think will be a game-changer for a Central Michigan squad that will try to make its run game its identity this season.

Week 4 vs. Wagner

Neal: CMU 31, Wagner 14

With the long-anticipated home opener four weeks into the season, the Chippewas will be hungry to secure the win. If Joe Labas and the front line can establish rhythm, expect a confident offensive display.

Powell: CMU 45, Wagner 13

Coming off of two straight losses and with the excitement of the home crowd behind it, I expect CMU to make short work of the Seahawks. This game is important for the team to establish both a run and pass game to build off of for the rest of the season.

Week 5 vs. Eastern Michigan

Henson: CMU 20, EMU 10

Central Michigan hosts EMU to start Mid-American Conference play. With the Eagles losing a majority of their defensive production, I think the Chippewas could pull away late to start MAC play 1-0.



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PREDICTIONS

CONTINUED FROM 22

Powell: CMU 33, EMU 30

Last year's matchup ended in crushing defeat for CMU, as Eastern Michigan mounted a furious fourth-quarter comeback. Rivalry games are hard to predict, but I am expecting the memory of last year's loss, coupled with home-field advantage to propel the Chippewas to a narrow win.

Week 6 @ Akron

Henson: CMU 27, Akron 3

While last year's 4-8 record was a step in the right direction for Akron, the Zips' momentum was killed by an offseason that saw the teams top three leading rushers and top two leading receivers transfer out. I think it will be hard for the Zips to find any momentum on offense, allowing CMU's second MAC win.

Neal: CMU 24, Akron 20

Given both teams had comparable struggles last season, the matchup will likely come down to which squad can execute more efficiently and minimize

mistakes. If the Chippewas can contain the turnover bug, I see them coming out on top.

Week 7 @ Bowling Green

Henson: CMU 17, BGSU 27

While quarterback Connor Bazalak has moved on to the National Football League, BGSU brought in sixth-year Missouri transfer Drew Pyne to lead the squad. I see these new Falcons being just a step ahead of the Chippewas offensively in what turns out to be a close game.

Powell: CMU 21, BGSU 28

Bowling Green ended last season ranked in the top five of the MAC in both offensive and defensive scoring. In last year's rainy matchup, the Chippewas struggled to get their passing game going and finished the game with only 63 yards through the air. I think the trick for CMU will be to keep its offense from becoming one-dimensional. Expect a Falcons victory in a close game.

Week 8 vs. Massachusetts

Neal: CMU 31, UMass 20

Despite similar offensive production, UMass's defensive vulnerabilities tilt the prediction toward CMU. UMass's defense has struggled, conceding 35.5

PPG (points per game) and opening a potential scoring opportunity for CMU. Given Central's ability to exploit defensive weaknesses in high-scoring scenarios and the Homecoming energy filling the stadium, I think the Chippewas will slide by.

Powell: CMU 34, UMass 10

The University of Massachusetts is heading into its inaugural season in the MAC after going 2-10 as an independent team last season. The Minutemen went 0-5 against MAC teams last year, so I don't expect their first in-conference season in the conference to be stellar. I am giving the win to the Chippewas.

Week 9 @ Western Michigan

Henson: CMU 30, WMU 23

I think this game ends up being a statement victory for Drinkall. Western Michigan retains an immense amount of talent on defense from last year's team, while the offense remains a mystery. The Broncos will be coming off of a rough two-game stretch, which I see the maroon and gold using to its advantage to secure the Victory Canon.

Powell: CMU 28, WMU 27

As it was last year, I expect this game to be a back-and-forth battle that will come down to the wire. Last year the Chippewas squeaked out the win. Although it will be close, I am taking the Chippewas, who I think



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will not only win the Victory Canon Trophy but also complete the sweep of Michigan MAC schools.

Week 10 vs. Buffalo

Henson: CMU 14, Buffalo 44

In 2024, Buffalo had an explosive offense, and I feel like this team has continued to improve in the offseason. I see the Ta'Quan Roberson to Victor Snow connection being too strong for the Chippewas to handle, as the Bulls continue to be the most offensively dynamic team in the MAC.

Neal: CMU 17, Buffalo 30

Buffalo, which is projected as one of the MAC's top contenders, relies on explosive scoring. With the Chippewas coming off a bye-week, I believe CMU's defense can hold firm for most of it, but offensive trouble proves costly, and Buffalo breaks ahead late.

Week 11 @ Kent State

Henson: CMU 38, Kent 12

Kent ended the 2024 season with an 0-12 overall record and 0-8 in MAC play, while averaging just 13.9 points per game and ranking last in the FBS. Its offense managed only 233.3 yards per game, again the lowest nationally. With these complications, this game strongly favors CMU. If the Chippewas can stay balanced on offense, they should take this game.

Powell: CMU 24, Kent 13

Kent State had an abysmal 2024 season in which it went 0-12 overall. I don't expect a huge turnaround for the team that was outscored by an average of 30 points-per-game last season and has lost 21 consecutive games dating back to 2023. I think the Chippewas will handle business against the Flashes.

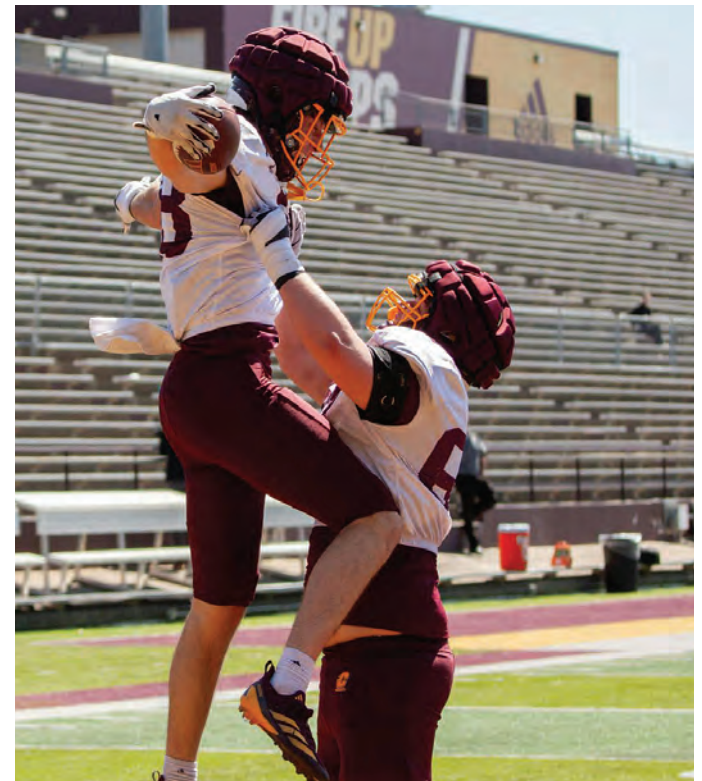
Week 12 vs. Toledo

Henson: CMU 7, Toledo 31

Even though Toledo struggled in the MAC last year, it is hard to ignore when a team maintains 75% of its offensive production while simultaneously bringing in the best recruiting class in the conference. With the return of quarterback Tucker Gleason and wide receiver Junior Vandeross III, I see the Rockets taking a big step to become one of the better teams in the MAC.

Powell: CMU 6, Toledo 27

The Chippewas finish the regular season going up against the reigning MAC champions. Toledo is at the top of the 2025 MAC preseason poll and I expect them to have another solid year. While I expect the Chippewas to put up a fight, I think the Rockets will finish their season with a convincing win against Central Michigan.



Jasmine Brookins | staff photographer | file

Central Michigan University sophomore running back Mekhi Jenkins and freshman wide receiver Isaiah Atchison celebrate in Kelly/Shorts Stadium during the 2025 Spring Game.

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