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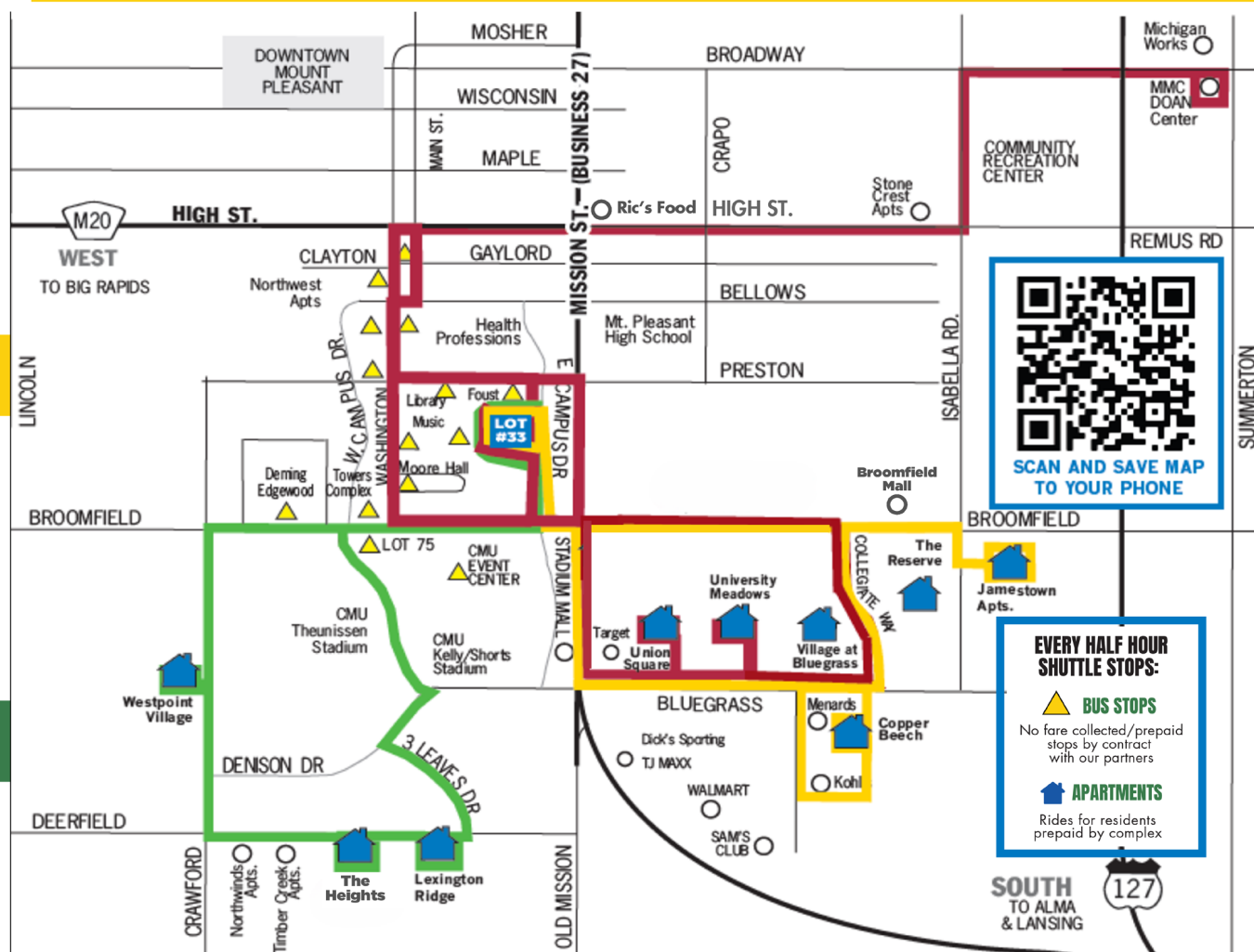
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# A note from the editor-in-chief



By Lauren Rice  
Editor-in-chief

When this paper publishes on Thursday, April 17, there will be 16 weekdays left in the semester.

Some of us are counting down to graduation, others are counting down to the end of the semester, but what I'm seeing is not as much excitement as it is an interest in closing this chapter as quickly as possible.

I'm guilty of it too, believe me, but if this

is the headspace you're currently in, consider trying to break out of it. These are moments that we're not going to get back, experiences that won't be repeated and professors we may not get the chance to learn from again.

No, I won't break into song, but I would be remiss not to share one of the biggest lessons I've learned in my time at Central Michigan University. This is my final editor's note, after all.

The "get through it" mentality will ruin your day, every day. If you can learn to love a challenge, to love thinking critically, to look at the snow and think about how miraculous it is instead of how cold it is outside, the motivation will find you.

That eight-page paper you have to write? It

is not so much about showcasing individual points of knowledge as it is an exercise in critical thinking. The elective course that suddenly got a lot harder than you thought it would be? Been there. Remember that it is a privilege to be able to learn and expand our minds.

If that's not enough for you, consider that anti-intellectualism is a hallmark of fascism. Having a brain that can think critically and handle complex ideas will make you more difficult to manipulate.

No matter how you frame it, being a college student is a unique experience. Be present, be kind and keep an open mind.

Lauren Rice is Central Michigan Life's 2024-25 editor-in-chief.

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On the cover: Illustration by Ben Westerhof with assets from Canva.

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# NEWS

## How to recycle at Central Michigan University

According to Central Sustainability, the CMU community has a few options for recycling. Students living in residence halls can take their recyclables to the maroon bins outside by the dumpsters, and CS regularly schedules recycling drives so that anyone in the community can bring recyclables to the Isabella County Material Recovery Facility.

Here are their steps to recycling:

- Step 1** • **Locate the plastic number**  
They are typically located in the middle of a small triangle somewhere on the item.
- Step 2** • **Check your local county's recycling guidelines**  
The Isabella County MRF has its own recycling guidelines that can be accessed online.
- Step 3** • **Make sure your container is clean**  
Any recycled items need to be thoroughly cleaned before being recycled.
- Step 4** • **Locate a recycling bin and drop it in**  
An easy way to do your part to help our environment.

## Cows and climate change



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

Mike Newman of Clare, Michigan farms around 630 acres of land while tending to his beef cows in Clare on Monday, April 7, 2025. Newman takes care of it all mostly on his own with some help of his family.

By Grace Walker  
Staff Reporter

Among fields of crops and pastures, cows flick their tails as they eat a grass-filled lunch on Newman Farms in Clare, Michigan.

Mike Newman is the owner and raises both cows and crops. The original 630-acre property was bought by Newman's grandparents in 1937. The farm has gone from being a dairy farm to a part-beef and part-crop, where he grows corn, soybeans, wheat and pasture - grass used to feed the cows.

"It keeps evolving," Newman said. "We've changed what we do."

Now, Newman sells beef directly to families, which he said can help households save money.

"There's been quite a push to people that want to buy beef that's closer to a local farm," Newman said. "It saves money, (it's) high quality, they know where their food's coming from."

As Newman's farm has changed, he has also seen a lot of changes in sustainability practices.

In recent decades, there have been growing concerns worldwide about what countries should do about a warming climate. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Earth's surface has seen rising global temperatures for over a century.

"(The) Global average surface temperature has risen

at an average rate of 0.17°F per decade since 1901," according to the EPA.

One leading source of greenhouse gases is the methane produced by cows, according to the University of California, Davis.

"Each year, a single cow will belch about 220 pounds of methane," the UC Davis website reads. "Livestock are responsible for 14.5% of global greenhouse gases."

Many cow farms have found a way to use this methane sustainably.

On March 18, state representatives Jerry Neyer (R-Shepherd) and Joey Andrews (D-38) proposed two bills that would protect and make methane digesters more accessible. These digesters are machines that turn methane produced by cows into a renewable energy source. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy defines methane as toxically neutral by 2050.

"This will provide an opportunity for smaller operations to have ownership in a multi-owner community digester," Neyer said.

He also said this would help reach the goals set in MI Healthy Climate Plan, a plan set by EGLE to help Michigan's goal of reaching full "carbon-neutrality" by 2050.

Despite the climate change concerns, Newman isn't worried.

"There's been a lot of worry about global warming," Newman said. "In my entire career of 40-some years, I can't remember one spring that isn't exactly the same."



Newman said he does not use methane digesters because his farm is small. Despite this, he said he still considers his farm to be a sustainable.

## Methane used on farms

On larger cow farms, farmers have found ways to stay sustainable through methane digesters. Since methane is found in cow manure, farmers use large machines to capture the methane found in the manure and use it as a renewable energy source, according to the EPA. The leftover material, called “digestate”, can then be used as fertilizer on farms.

“We’re capturing (methane) and converting it into a natural gas,” Neyer said. “The organic material leftover is taken back out and put into fields.”

Neyer said he and Andrews would work to clearly define what methane digesters are in the state of Michigan in House Bills 4257 and 4265 after.

“Recent regulatory changes by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) have significantly impacted the viability of the renewable energy facilities, specifically their use by medium to large-sized farming operations,” according to a press release from the Michigan House Republicans on March 18.

Neyer said cow farmers use these digesters to reduce the cost of energy on farms, and reduce the need for applying commercial fertilizers.

According to EPA, these digesters also reduce the amount of methane emitted to the atmosphere. When left to decompose, the methane within the manure is released. When this energy is captured by a digester, less is released into the atmosphere.

“It gives us an opportunity to further lower our carbon footprint,” Neyer said.

## Cow manure and sustainability in farms

Instead of using commercial fertilizer, Newman uses cow manure as fertilizer for his farm. Newman said he will use his cows to help fertilize his crop fields through a process called cell-grazing.

This is where he allows his cows to graze in certain gated-off pastures (or cells) for a certain period of time, or until the grass gets short enough. Then he will move them to the next pasture.

In this process, the pasture that is being grown will never have to be replanted or get too short.

“Healthy soil is the basis for organic agriculture,” according to the United States Department of Agriculture. “Healthy soil can provide an abundant crop of healthy plants, which in turn provide healthy food and feed.”

According to the USDA, the grazing cycle tends to be anywhere from 25 to 35 days.

## Crop dusting seeds

Newman hires a crop duster to fly a plane called an aerial seeder to plant his crops. The aerial seeder will fly above and cover his fields with seeds. Newman said



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

Former Central Michigan University Chippewa and now farmer, Mike Newman, tells his story as a dairy and beef farmer at Newman farm on Monday, April 7, 2025. Newman drives his father’s-side by-side vehicle across all 630 acres of land.

he uses this to prevent erosion and reduce the cost of tractors.

The seeds being planted are never the same. Through the cover crop system, Newman will switch the crops that are planted on an area regularly.

First, soybeans will be planted. As time goes on and the soybeans are growing, the aerial seeder will fly through his field and dump wheat seeds over the already-growing soybeans. This means when it’s time to harvest the soybeans, the wheat will already be growing.

Newman said this system helps prevent soil erosion and allows for healthy soil all of the time.

According to Crop Science, “crop rotation can increase nutrient cycling and nutrient use efficiency, decrease plant diseases and insect pests, assist in managing weeds, reduce soil erosion and increase soil health.”

## Streambank Protections

Located along a small stream connected to the north branch of the Chippewa River, Newman said his farm makes efforts to ensure they do not pollute the water, especially because the water source in Isabella County is the Chippewa River Watershed.

Newman said in three areas of the stream, his cows cross through part of a small branch of the river. If left unmitigated, Newman said, pollutants like manure and silt can enter the stream.

Along the three crossings, he said, bases were bulldozed and filled with fieldstone and tilestone. This way, the river can stay silt and erosion-free as his cows cross the river.

Fences line the river throughout his farm so his cows do not cross the river. The land slopes down a few feet from Newman’s farmland to the stream. To prevent erosion between the fences and the river, tall grass has been planted along the fences.

“This creates a riparian buffer to stop settlement erosion and keeps the water clean,” Newman said.

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# Living legacy

## Mount Pleasant to preserve a living history of Hiroshima

By Cristin Coppess and Mia Kerner  
Staff reporters

Mount Pleasant is currently home to living relics of one of the most notable tragedies of the 20th century. The only of their kind in Michigan, Ginkgo tree saplings descended from those that survived the bombing of Hiroshima may become a cultural fixture of the city, if they can also survive a Michigan winter.

Central Michigan University professor and faculty member Hope May acquired the seeds from a program called Green Legacy Hiroshima. Founded in 2011, Green Legacy Hiroshima's website reads that seeds and saplings have been distributed to over 40 countries with the objective of representing the dangers of nuclear weapons, the character of mankind and the resilience of nature.

Over the course of this project, which spans over a decade, May said that she learned of the significance of peace and reverence for nature in Japanese culture. These values were evidently displayed through the tending to and pruning of the wounded trees that had survived the bombing of Hiroshima.

"The notion of peace culture is something that is part of the DNA of Hiroshima," May said.

Current CMU alum Eric Urbaniak was one of the founders of the Ginkgo tree seed initiative and an integral part of the planning process, May said. As the trees were not approved to be planted on CMU's campus, Urbaniak fostered the connection between Central Sustainability, a student-run office on campus dedicated to increasing sustainability, and the city of Mount Pleasant.

The first round of seeds were cared for in the greenhouse on CMU's campus, monitored both by May and Greenhouse coordinator, Karin Johnson. The initial plan for the seeds consisted of growing them in the greenhouse for one year, then being relocated to Nelson Park as a part of the 2024 Earth Day celebration.

Despite the diligent efforts of May, Johnson and the students they worked with, the first batch of seeds did not germinate, and the process had to begin again.

Taking a different approach to the sapling's care, May has been personally housing the seeds in an attempt to acclimate them to the harsh realities of Michigan's seasons as opposed to raising them in the greenhouse's controlled environment.

"It's just deeply symbolic," May said. "It's rooted in history. It's a multilayered, multidimensional lesson. I go out there on the balcony in my house and I look at them every day to see how they're doing and I see little green buds on the stem."

As the plants emerge from their first winter outdoors, May is cautiously optimistic about their fate. She said that imagining that the trees will live for generations is a fragile thing and systems need to be put in place to ensure that is able to happen.

"Part of the symbolism and the importance of the story is the importance and necessity of care and attention to something of value," she said. "We can't just take for granted that these seeds are going to make it."

"This is a process of caring for stewarding and bringing up a life force, if you will, because that's what a plant is, that has been protected and cared for on the other side of the planet by a people who suffered something truly horrible that we, the United States, did. So there's many, many layers to the story."

While May watches over the saplings' progress, long-time member Tiffany Jurge and her fellow coordinators at Central Sustainability continue to contribute their efforts to the initiative in an administrative role.

Though Jurge's initial reaction to the first batch of Ginkgo trees was fear of radioactivity, she now takes on a leadership role in the project.

"If at some point the seeds are able to germinate and we can get them planted, I envision a role with CS to help with the actual planting in the park, to gather people around and share it with the rest of campus," Jurge said. "That's our role too, outreach, actually doing the project, and doing tours to showcase the saplings to the community."

Jurge and her team coordinate with city officials and CMU faculty on a regular basis to ensure that when the time comes for the saplings to be planted, CS and the city will be ready. Their efforts are supported by Mount Pleasant's recently appointed mayor, Boomer Wingard.

Wingard said that he was first approached about the project in 2023 by May, who was a professor of his during his time as a CMU student.

Wingard said that Nelson Park was chosen as the preferred planting spot for the Ginkgo samplings due to its ties to Mount Pleasant's sister city, Okaya, Japan.

Despite the germination failure of May's first batch of seeds, Wingard remains hopeful that the current saplings will yield results.

"The symbolism of these trees that have survived and are having offspring that are outliving that terrible,



Soli Gordon | Staff photographer

A Hiroshima sapling sprouts next to the Peace Flag ("Pro Concordia Labor" flag) at CMU philosophy professor Hope May's home in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, Thursday, April 10, 2025. They are both symbols of resilience, and the colors in the flag are to illustrate the development of humanity.

terrible time, I think it gives a bit of hope," Wingard said. "There can be these terrible dramatic points in history that we can grow beyond, that we can work to recover from. Having them here in Mount Pleasant would just be an immense cultural resource."

Wingard said that he has not received an official timeline of the saplings' expected planting, yet he understands the patience that the act of yielding new life requires.

"Life takes time," he said. "We'll take it one step at a time."

Recognizing the bombing of Hiroshima as a catalyst for change in the 21st century, Wingard does not take the responsibility of housing its natural remnants lightly.

"To have (the Ginkgo trees) here in Mount Pleasant, at the heart of the state, I think would be a really rich cultural item to bring to the city," he said. "It would be something that I'd be immensely proud to see finally take root at one of our parks."



# Summer at the biostation

## Beaver Island offers students unique academic opportunities

By Cristin Coppess

Staff reporter

Emily Guiles, a Central Michigan University student, wakes up to the calming sound of Lake Michigan waves lapping at the shore, the sun peeking through the windows of her barrack-like dormitory. She rolls out of her bunk bed, pulls on her waterproof boots, and heads to grab a quick breakfast.

Friday means no lecture; it's an excursion day.

Guiles and her fellow students drive to the site, then trek on foot through a gradient of different ecosystems, from a pine forest to dense grassland. Crossing a small moat at the edge of the grassland, their feet land on an expansive floor of sphagnum moss. They've reached the bog.

"Imagine walking on a sponge, that's what it is," Guiles said. "The experience of seeing and being there physically really stuck out because it's unlike a lot of ecosystems that I've seen. We looked at a lot of life that's only really on a bog, like pitcher plants and sundews— they're insectivorous. I was surprised you could find them in Michigan."

Guiles, a biology major, is one of many students who seized the opportunity to study at Central Michigan University's Biological Station on Beaver Island. The station serves as a large-scale environmental research and education facility that offers field-based experience to CMU students and the public.

The CMUBS website reads that in 1942, the university first purchased 45.2 acres of land from the Michigan Conservation Land Division for \$1. In the time since, funding from private donors and the National Science Foundation has enabled the expansion of its facilities to include new libraries, labs, housing and deep-water research vessels.

Kevin Pangle, director of CMUBS, said that the facility stands out from other biological stations across the state because of its unique location in northern Lake Michigan. The diverse ecosystems found on the archipelago are relatively undisturbed, making it a prime location for environmental research.

Pangle said the station is a research epicenter. It conducts ecological studies on invasive species, wetland

health, nesting grounds and other aspects of the island's environment.

Several CMU academic departments collaborate to provide interdisciplinary nature-oriented programming at the station. The summer 2025 class schedule includes service-based projects, photography, game design and music courses.

Pangle said that courses run anywhere from one week to the entire summer, costing the same amount as the average class on campus. Students are able to apply for scholarships and other aid to alleviate these costs.

"What I find just amazing is how you can have these students with different interests and career aspirations come up there and immerse themselves," he said.

Guiles said that the highly tactile learning environment and expert faculty leaves a lasting impact on those who have studied at the station.

"It's an invaluable experience," she said. "I'd recommend it to anyone, especially biology students. Anyone who is inclined towards nature in any way, I think they should go, 100%."



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# Throwing sustainability out the window

*How a local advocate and team of volunteers combat local littering*

By Mia Kerner  
Staff Reporter

The importance of sustainable practices in coastal cities is widely known, as ocean and marine life health is a grave concern for environmentalists. But are these practices necessary in areas without oceans?

A 2021 study on the impact of littering pollution on wildlife revealed that discarded containers can be detrimental to the health and survival of many animal species, regardless of their location.

“Despite its global scope, the problem of the effect of garbage on terrestrial animals is often underestimated or ignored,” the study read. “However, our study shows that discarded containers are deadly traps for animals from small invertebrates to large carnivores and in various habitats including undisturbed wilderness.”

Julie Lyon, the founder of “Bonny’s Clean Up Crew” in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, has years of experience with littering in rural cities. Lyon has gathered a loyal team of volunteers over the years to commit their summers to picking up litter.

Founded in memory of her late mother, Lyon said that Bonny’s Clean Up Crew has grown exponentially over the years, now averaging 17 volunteers per cleanup. Students, churches, volunteer groups and concerned citizens meet every Sunday from April to October to clean up Mount Pleasant’s parks and other various polluted locations.

“We wanted to make sure (the parks) looked nice for people coming in,” Lyon said. “When they come from out of town, that’s how they’ll judge Mount Pleasant, so I want to make sure everything’s clean.”

Though Lyon does not believe all littering is malicious, she said that she has encountered her fair share of intentional trash dumping in the city.

“We don’t have a place to go dump trash,” Lyon said. “There’s some cities that have that. It would be nice if we did, because I see that people just go dump it off the side of the road and by the train tracks.”

On one of her many cleanups, Lyon said that her team pulled tires, an air conditioner, balloons and beer cans out of the Chippewa River. On another, 2,000 cigarette butts were recovered from a park. Lyon’s primary concern was for the wildlife of the area.

“I really don’t want any wildlife to suffer, so we try,” she said.

Lyon hopes that Bonny’s Clean Up Crew will be able to take on more projects in the future, eventually branching out to more polluted rural locations in need of attention.

“I want people to care,” Lyon said.

Dr. Mark Francek, a Central Michigan University Geography and Environmental Studies Professor and the



Jo Kenoshmeg | file

Lauren Dey and others carry trash across train tracks on the campus of Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant in this October 2023 photo. Dey said the train tracks tend to be the most trash-filled area on campus.

advisor of the Geography and Environmental Club, said that the environment suffers from both biodegradable and non-biodegradable litter, regardless of its location.

He said that biodegradable litter, such as paper and kitchen waste, usually gets washed into storm drains, eventually leading to ponds, lakes and rivers. This litter could contain toxic bacteria such as (E-coli), that leads to over-fertilization of local water bodies, or eutrophication.

Non-biodegradable litter, such as plastic and glass, can be broken down into small segments that can be incorporated into the food chain.

“Plastics can just get ingested, clogged in the digestive system and produce a premature death,” Francek said. “And then it gets broken down into smaller and smaller segments so much so that they could be incorporated into the bloodstream. I mean, there’s (microplastics) in us right now.”

Francek also said that littered rural areas not only impact the environment, but the psychology of the area’s residents.

“The danger in rural areas, from a psychological viewpoint, it’s depressing when people see (litter),” He said. “Neighborhoods that are littered give more of an impulse that people say, ‘Oh, it’s okay if I litter too.’ Neighborhoods that are clean, just like when people keep up a green lawn, you want to keep your lawn green as well.”

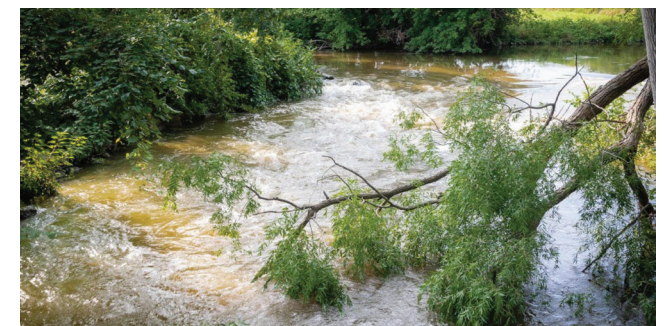
The threat that litter pollution poses to rural cities

may not appear as palpable as that of a coastal city, but its impact on the environment and residents of a rural area is profound.

Though issues as widespread as litter pollution are difficult to address, Francek believes that there are opportunities for rural cities such as Mount Pleasant to increase their sustainability moving forward.

Francek said that by performing a reconnaissance to identify the problem areas in the city, providing more accessible garbage disposals in those areas and providing more education for the residents, rural areas could increase the environmental and psychological health of their cities.

“There’s been progress made but there’s more that can be done,” he said.



Cody Scanlan | file

The Chippewa River flows through Nelson Park.



# How to recycle at Central Michigan University: The Do's and Don'ts

Know what can be recycled in your local community.



Aluminum, cardboard, glass, and paper can generally be recycled.



Plastic recycling depends on their recycling number.



Be sure to clean or rinse any material you want to recycle.



Make sure to sort items into their proper bins.



Don't throw away items that can be recycled.



Don't recycle colored glass at CMU.



Don't recycle plastics #4 or #6 at CMU.



Don't put dirty items in recycling bins.



Don't put recycling in the wrong collection bins.

Ben Westerhof | Staff designer

Source: Central Sustainability

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**THE EDGE AT 1815**  
STUDENT LIVING

# The end of an era?

## Michigan's recreational cannabis industry faces harsh new challenges

By Mia Kerner  
Staff reporter

Michigan is producing nearly 30,000 more pounds of marijuana flower than it did in January of last year. The price of that flower is 28.6% lower. For recreational marijuana users, this is a dream come true.

For recreational growers and retailers, this decrease is a nightmare.

The price of recreational cannabis, specifically marijuana flower, has been declining since its legalization in 2019. This trend is largely due to the significant rise in licensed retailers over the years, resulting in an oversaturated market and increasingly competitive pricing.

John Norkowski, inventory lead of Mint Cannabis in Mount Pleasant, said that these factors are greatly impacting the standards and economy of the industry.

"I think we're very close to hitting a rock bottom pricing, where you can't really go any lower and continue to have any quality," Norkowski said. "There's always gonna be somebody cutting a deal and making something new, but, we're at that threshold where you almost can't pay people that are making the stuff to get it in here."

According to Michigan's Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, there are currently over 900 retailers with adult-use establishment licenses in the state, nearly 11 times the amount in March 2020.

Nick Young, Western Michigan University Professor and CEO of Krystilion Hemp Dispensary said that the approximately five-to-one ratio of growers to retailers is another key contributing factor to the decreasing cannabis prices.

"The retailers control a decent amount (of pricing) because they are the outlet to the consumer," Young said. "So they're going to still make their margins, even though 15% of \$60 is

obviously quite a bit less than 15% of \$100. What ends up happening is each transaction is worth less profit and a lot of these retailers are now zoned in a way where it's heavily competitive."

Lena Granzo, keyholder employee of Levels Cannabis in Mount Pleasant, said that the retail industry has become "a heck of a lot more competitive" over the years, as customers disperse to a variety of dispensaries rather than the previously centralized customer base.

General Manager of High Society, Madisyn Tengdin, had a different perspective on the matter.

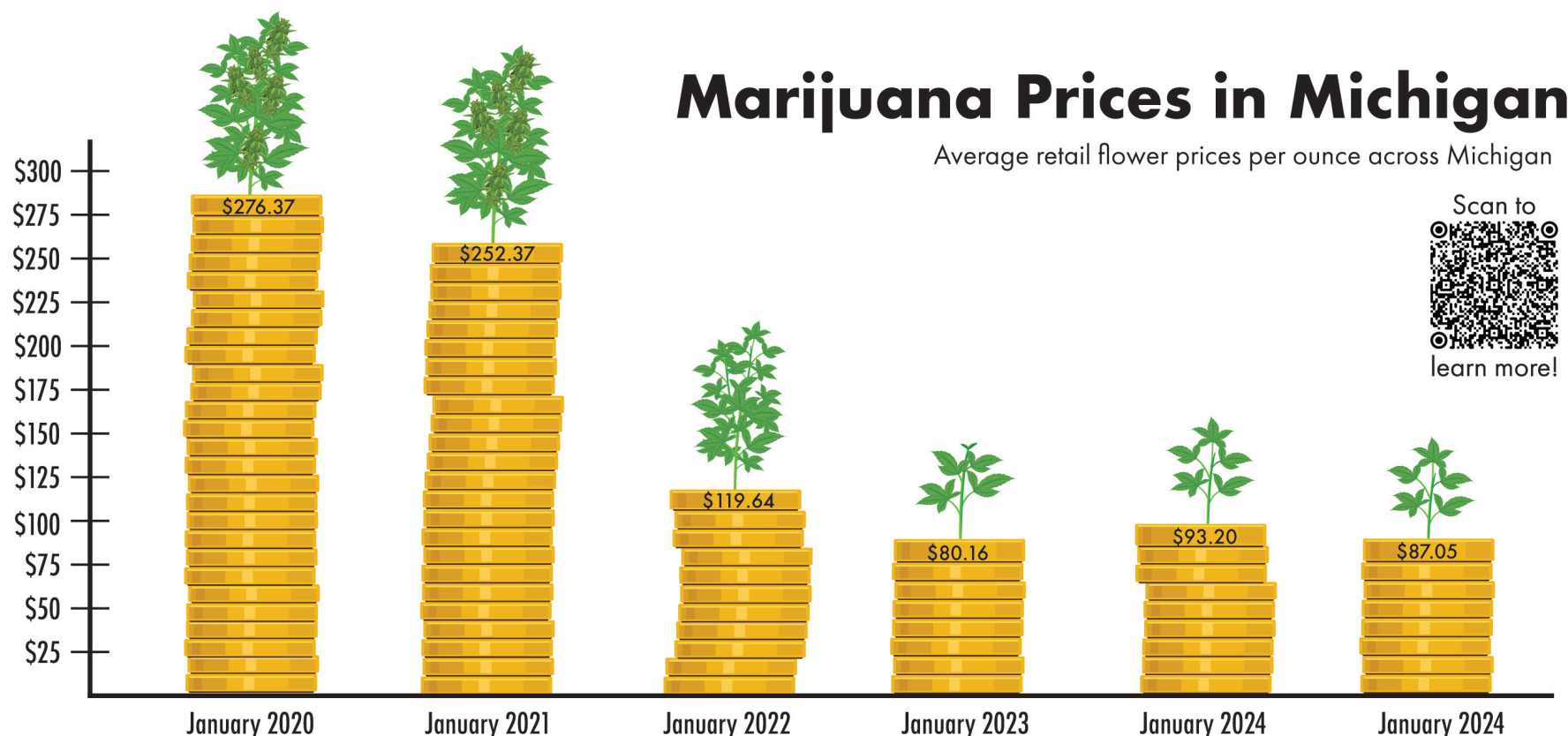
"(The increase in competition) definitely brought us an opportunity to try and be better with our customer service and just give it our all," she said. "I would say it's been more of a motivating factor for us."

The recreational marijuana industry's exemption for wholesale tax in Michigan has allowed hundreds of businesses to thrive in this increasingly competitive market, but that may be about to change.

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer has proposed a long-term "Mi Road Ahead Plan" to "fix the damn roads", which includes a redirection of gas taxes, the contribution of large corporations and a wholesale tax on the marijuana industry.

Whitmer's February press release read that this wholesale tax will add \$470 million to the plan, helping to fix roads across the state.

"The Mi Road Ahead Plan will close a loophole that exempted the marijuana industry from





wholesale tax, which is applied to similar smoking products, like cigarettes and other tobacco items,” the press release stated.

The current tax on non-cigarette tobacco products is 32% of the wholesale rate, which retailers say could be detrimental to businesses if similarly enacted in the recreational marijuana industry.

Young said that although the wholesale tax may help Michigan’s government ensure the collection of retailers’ bills to growers, it could pose a very real threat to the current state of the industry.

“I think (the wholesale tax) is going to cause the entire market to have to completely reset,” Young said. “(Who) it’s really going to hurt are probably a lot of the smaller businesses who just won’t be able to absorb it or won’t be able to really pass it along. They’re going to be in big trouble.”

“I think that this industry is gonna take a pretty decent hit for the next couple of years,” Granzo said. “I don’t think it’s going to completely kill the industry, but I do think it’s going to be a huge hindrance until there’s that adjustment period after (the tax) comes into effect.”

Granzo said that she worries the adjustment period, if the wholesale tax is implemented, would not only impact the recreational businesses, but their less financially-stable customers as well.

“A lot of people are using marijuana to almost self medicate,” she said. “I know a lot of veterans that come (in) that have it a little bit rough, and medical care is out of their reach, but this is always here for them and this works. Those are the people that I worry about the most.”

The continued decline of cannabis prices and the possible introduction of a new tax seem to be posing a threat to the flourishing industry of recreational marijuana.

Some retailers, such as Norkowski, believe that local businesses may begin to close as a result.

“People aren’t going to be able to keep up,” he said. “Maintaining people in the store, paying them. And their rent’s not cheap, products are not cheap, the electricity is not cheap. Everything adds up.”

While the fate of the recreational marijuana industry appears to be currently undecided, retailers are doing what they can to succeed.

“We’re all positive, trying to move forward, do the best we can,” Norkowski said.



## LISTEN UP

CHECK OUT THE MOST RECENT EPISODE OF “BAKED CHIPS,” TO LEARN ABOUT CANNABIS AND CREATIVITY

Nico Mendoza | File



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# SGA Judicial Branch reviews cases between presidential tickets

By **Blace Carpenter**  
Staff Reporter

The Central Michigan University Student Government Association's President-elect Akua Acheampong and Vice President-elect Kathryn House were at the center of three judicial hearings during SGA's meeting on April 14.

The newly elected leaders filed cases against the SGA Elections Committee, outgoing President Carolina Hernandez Ruiz and outgoing Vice President Aashka Barot, alleging they violated campaign rules and that the committee neglected to take proper action against them.

Hernandez Ruiz filed a claim of her own against the Acheampong/House ticket, alleging they violated rules as well and that her campaign endured harassment during the election.

Chief Justice Madison Coleman stated that "a decision won't be out till latest Friday."

## Acheampong and House vs. The Elections Committee

In the first case, Acheampong and House stated they had witness accounts who allegedly saw Hernandez Ruiz, Barot and their pick for treasurer Pratham Agrwal, campaigning in unauthorized spots such as Wayside, residential halls and dining halls.

The two said that despite submitting several claims, the committee had not given the party any penalties.

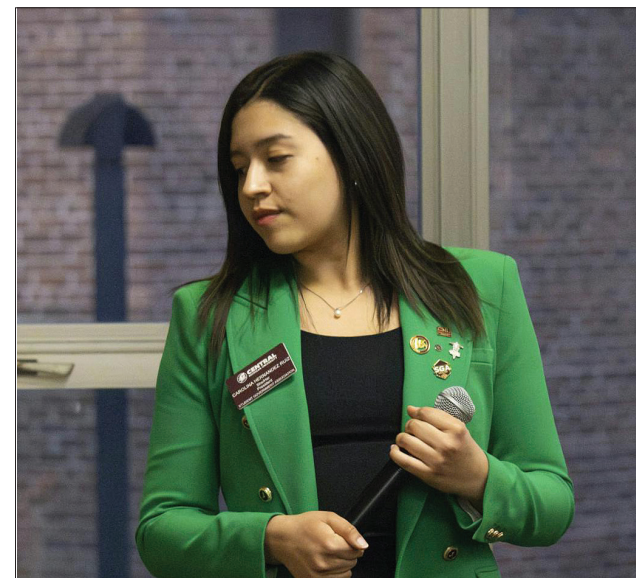
"The elections committee never acknowledged the receipt of this witness statement nor took any action," House said. "Ignoring clear documented violations sends a dangerous message that rules are optional and enforcement is selective."

Elections Director Praise Oyimi said the ticket was only speculating and didn't have any solid evidence to support their claims.

"Our request for evidence shows that you're actually true to your cause and you're not just speculating," he said. "Please take a picture of the act that is taking place."

Acheampong said her ticket had been submitted properly and there was no requirement to get a photo, video or any other media-related evidence when making a claim.

"We have



Carolina Hernandez Ruiz | SGA President

multiple eyewitness accounts," Acheampong said. "Is that enough evidence?"

## Acheampong and House vs. Ruiz, Barot, Agarwal

Similar to the first case, House and Acheampong filed against the Ruiz/Barot ticket, claiming that they had violated campaign rules.

The two repeated the claims made during their hearing against the Elections Committee. "We are here today because we believe that the Spring 2025 Student Government Association Election process has been compromised by repeated violations of the election packet," Acheampong said.

Similar to Oyimi's comments during case one, Hernandez Ruiz stated that their claims lacked evidence.



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Akua Acheampong | SGA Vice President

"Having a witness without evidence is just speculation," Hernandez Ruiz said. "The election committee ... agreed that there was no violation and for that reason, we were never notified."

Hernandez Ruiz also told the justices that Acheampong and House had reached out to them hours before Monday's meeting, stating they were willing to drop the case against her if she was willing to drop her case.

"If (Akua) and Kathryn are so passionate about bringing transparency and bringing truth to the committee, then why five hours before the actual hearing, they were willing to drop the case if we drop ours?" Hernandez Ruiz said.

Acheampong and House said they hoped to have a peace agreement and not have to settle issues publicly. The defendants criticized their actions.

"If she is saying that she was willing to have peace if we drop our case, that

doesn't sound like peace, that sounds like conditioning," Hernandez Ruiz said.

House told Central Michigan Life that she wished the option of peace had been taken.

"I hope that an olive branch will be received better in the future," House said.

### **Ruiz vs. Acheampong, House, (Carnell) Poindexter III and (Jose) Medina**

Hernandez Ruiz filed against the Acheampong/House ticket, claiming that their support towards former SGA Speaker of Christian Dunn helped perpetuate harassment towards her and her campaign, caused by anonymous users on the app YikYak.

On April 3, Dunn had said in his letter of resignation that he and other SGA members had endured harassment and hostility from Hernandez Ruiz over the past year. He didn't provide any evidence of this claim in his letter nor to the public afterwards.

Dunn had sent this letter to the SGA email group, which included over 200 people.

After the email was sent, users on YikYak made several claims against Hernandez Ruiz and attacked both her personal and professional life.

The Acheampong/House ticket asked that the case be

thrown out and said that their party cannot control the actions of others.

"We want to be clear, no one from our campaign has posted, stated or spread anything negative about the opposing candidate," Acheampong said.

Hernandez Ruiz said that she and her campaign's public image have suffered from these claims and that evidence for them still hasn't been presented. "You cannot just damage someone's image and, again, harass them without any real allegations or real proof of those things," she said. "That completely ruined our reputation."

Hernandez Ruiz said she is working with the justices to see how she can file against Dunn.



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# 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.

# Balancing newsworthiness and minimization of harm

The United States is the greatest country in the world by so many characteristics from economy to cultural influence. Other nations look up to the U.S. and follow its examples.

The U.S. is the beacon of the democratic world, the protector of human rights.

In fact, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution establishes that, “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 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

But even the greatest empires face their dark times.

Freedom of speech and freedom of press were supposed to be protected by the First Amendment here in the U.S.,

### BUT:

- Mahmoud Khalil, a green card holder, was detained by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement on March 8 near his student housing for his pro-Palestinian views, according to ABC News.
- Similarly, international student at Tufts University Rumeysa Ozturk was arrested by ICE, with her visa revoked, reportedly based on her opinions expressed in a student newspaper op-ed, according to CNN.
- New York Times reported that nearly 300 international students in the U.S. had their visas revoked. Three current Central Michigan University students had their Student and Exchange Visitor Information System records erased as well without a notice, as *Central Michigan Life* previously reported.



Zoey Lawrence | Staff cartoonist

• In late February, the White House announced that it will now choose what news media outlets are allowed access to the White House.

Today, we are facing unprecedented times. The earlier examples show that the First Amendment freedoms are under threat.

As journalists at *CM Life*, we are guided by the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics. Its principles direct us to seek truth and report it as well as to minimize harm of our reporting.

“Balance the public’s need for information against potential harm or discomfort,” the code read. “Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.”

To protect our sources and people affected by our coverage, CM Life balances newsworthiness with minimizing harm.

Recently, the Student Press Law Center, along with several other student media organizations in the U.S. released a joint warning unlike any we have seen before. Primarily, the concern was about protecting the

personal safety of the individuals who exercise their First Amendment rights on our platforms.

The warning recognized that newsrooms have conflicting interests as sources of community education and protectors of the safety of our sources. It’s a conversation we had as an editorial board recently, too.

As a newsroom, we also value transparency and our audience’s trust. That’s why we want to share our recent policy changes with you, our readers.

We are, for now, choosing to be more open to requests for content to be taken down, or for interviewees to choose to remain anonymous, if the right circumstances apply.

The *Central Michigan Life* editorial board comprises the student editorial leadership of the organization.



In this newsroom, we are not only journalists, but people, too. We recognize that choosing to speak out on a contentious topic is your right, and we also want no part in jeopardizing your safety to make it happen.

So, if you have been a source for us in the past, and are concerned about being targeted for your words, we will be open to considering requests for retroactive anonymity. That can mean replacing your first and last name with a pseudonym or even removing your comments altogether.

In addition, if you are being asked to speak about a contentious topic, but have a genuine safety concern, we will take that into consideration if you request to be anonymous.

Our staffers have been instructed to carefully consider requests based on the seriousness of the safety and well-being concern, as well as consult with their editors if they are uncertain. We take our journalistic responsibility, and your safety, seriously.

A valid request for anonymity would require a concern for your safety or well-being, or a genuine threat to your legal status.

Alternatively, cases could arise in which retroactive anonymity is not enough, and

a story must be taken down. This has already happened once in the past few weeks, and we are prepared to handle any future concerns, questions or requests.

In situations like this, we as an organization have to weigh the value of the article for the community with the level of concern held by a single source.

A valid request for a takedown would require a significant safety concern or threat to your legal status, and the inability for the content to stand on its own without you as a source.

While we do not anticipate a high volume of requests, please know that they will be handled carefully and on a case-by-case basis.

If your request does not meet the qualifications for a valid request, it will be denied. We take our role as watchdogs of this community seriously, and we are not in the business of rewriting history.

As members of the Central Michigan University and Mount Pleasant communities, our heart goes out to our neighbors who are feeling threatened or afraid. You are not powerless, and you are not alone.

If participating in any of our content is a significant personal risk, please reach out to us at [editor@cm-life.com](mailto:editor@cm-life.com).



CM Life Staff photo

The 2024-25 Central Michigan Life editorial team poses for a group photo outside of Moore Hall.

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# Campus gardening for sustainable living

By Sydney Thurston

Special to Central Michigan Life

**S**ustainable living is essential, especially when it comes to food and how we choose to obtain it.

Central Sustainability (CS) is happy to reintroduce the Central Michigan University (CMU) campus garden for this upcoming growing season. While the campus garden was a very popular amenity, it was destroyed by a massive flood in 2017 along with management turnover.

After a collaboration between CS and Facilities Management, a waterline was installed at the garden. Since then, it has been used by students, faculty members and community members during the summer while being managed by the Campus Grows RSO and the CS Garden coordinator.

The campus garden has garden plots that may be reserved by gardeners for a refundable deposit of \$15 with communal tools and seeds available. The campus is located west of Lot 70 by the baseball

stadium off West Campus Drive.

CS is seeking to make fresh produce and sustainable gardening easily accessible to the CMU and Mount Pleasant communities. Community garden spaces have been incredibly successful on a multitude of college campuses, but the our campus garden ensures affordability and free resources for gardeners who reserve a plot.

Financial struggle, location and resources are all common issues that prevent gardening from being a universal opportunity; yet, CMU is seeking to eliminate all of these concerns for the betterment of the CMU and Mount Pleasant communities.

Gardening is a positive, healthy activity to partake in for many reasons. The personal benefits are the physical exercise: Spending time digging, planting, and weeding is great moderate exercise, especially for those who are looking for additional physical activities, or something less straining than traditional physical activities.

Furthermore, there are numerous mental health benefits to gardening, as it is a very calming activity, along with the fact that belonging to a shared garden space creates a sense of community.

There are many environmental benefits to gardening as well: It lowers the environmental impacts that humans leave on the earth. Even planting a small garden contributes to (reducing) the carbon footprint, as plants will recycle that air to produce oxygen and remove various pollutants.

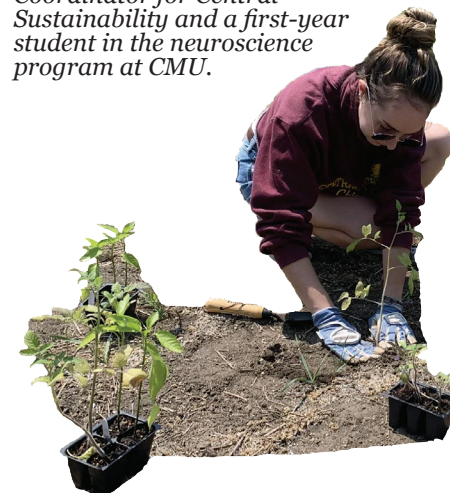
The soil health greatly improves with the presence of gardeners because the plants cycle nutrients through the soil throughout their growing season.

These effects of gardening all promote sustainability — socially and environmentally — by creating more positive environments for the gardeners themselves and the environment that they affect.

CS is seeking to bring these values to the CMU campus and encourage students to live more sustainable lives by

participating in the campus garden this summer. It is incredibly easy to reserve a garden plot, feel free to contact CS with questions at [sustainability@cmich.edu](mailto:sustainability@cmich.edu).

*Sydney Thurston is the Garden Coordinator for Central Sustainability and a first-year student in the neuroscience program at CMU.*



Courtesy photo | Central Sustainability

CMU student Grace Buchholz tends to her plot in this 2023 photo.

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# Smahliuk-Bootz named next editor-in-chief

By Lauren Rice  
Editor-in-chief

The Central Michigan University Student Media Board of Directors interviewed and selected Masha Smahliuk-Bootz to be *Central Michigan Life's* next editor-in-chief for the 2025-26 academic year on Friday, April 11.

Smahliuk, a rising senior set to graduate in spring of 2026, is pursuing a journalism major and three minors: creative writing, political science and advertising.

Throughout her three years at Central Michigan University, she has held various positions at Central Michigan Life, working as a reporter, news editor and managing editor. She is also the current president of the CMU Society of Professional Journalists chapter, set to pass the torch to next year's president in the coming months.

Smahliuk said she has three main goals for her term. The first is to deepen and continue reporting on politics.

"I definitely want to continue the political coverage... because we're going to see the world shifting and changing a lot, and I think it's important to be informing our community," she said.

Smahliuk said she wants reporters to dig into stories about specific contemporary challenges and find ways to localize national and international news.

Her second goal is to meet audiences where they are.

"I want to make sure that the news is accessible for our audience, and our audience is students," she said. "As a student, I know that we consume a lot of news through social media."

Lastly, she said she wants to maintain the safe learning environment in the CM Life office for the staff.

"I want to continue making sure CM Life is like a second home to our staff members by doing activities with team members (and) creating our own traditions," Smahliuk said.

Smahliuk said some of her favorite stories to report have been a feature on Chef Sergey's bakery in Midland, news coverage of housing in Mount Pleasant and a column about her experience spending a day at the Humane Animal Treatment Society (HATS).

When asked what she wants readers to know about her, Smahliuk described herself as a product of people's kindness. She is grateful for the people who helped along the way, from coming to the United States as a foreign exchange student from Kropyvnytskyy, Ukraine, in high school, to receiving support from friends and neighbors



Mark Hoover | Staff Photographer

Spot the dog tries to lick *Central Michigan Life* Managing Editor Masha Smahliuk-Bootz's face at the Humane Animal Treatment Society, in Mount Pleasant, Friday, Feb. 7, 2025. Spot would jump into the air and try to lick people's face even if they were standing.

when the war in Ukraine started.

"So many people have helped me on my way, and I am an example of people's kindness," Smahliuk said. "It has helped me grow and mature and become a better version of myself. That's what I want to do for other people, as well - show empathy to staff and sources."

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# SPORTS

## Upcoming sporting events

It's heating up in Mount Pleasant. Here are some upcoming home games as the spring season plays on.

THURS

17-19

- Baseball vs. Miami (Ohio) series  
Theunissen Stadium

FRI

18

- Softball vs. Bowling Green  
3 p.m., Margo Jonker Stadium

FRI

25-27

- Baseball vs. Ball State series  
Theunissen Stadium

FRI

25-26

- Softball vs. Ohio  
3 p.m., Margo Jonker Stadium

# Showing the LOVE

By Hadlee Peters  
Staff reporter

Central Michigan University gymnastics senior Hannah Appleget has been on the mat since she was 3 years old.

What started as recreational classes bribed by her parents as a potty-training tool, Appleget grew to become a Level 10 gymnast, the highest level in club gymnastics.

"We went from 'Oh wow, I'm potty trained, I'm in rec classes,' to 'I'm going to be in the Olympics one day,'" Appleget said. "Eventually I realized that so few people get to do that, and instead I figured college is a better goal."

A native of Mays Landing, N.J., Appleget competed at Level 10 for four years. According to her biography, the graduate of Atlantic City Institute of Technology was a two-time Level 10 regional qualifier and three-time Level 10 state qualifier, all while maintaining National Honor Society and National Technical Honors Society status.

She competed for Jersey Shore Elite from 2013 to 2020, and Precision Gymnastics from 2020-21, according to her athlete biography.

The top tier of competition, she said, continued to develop her skills for college.

She switched gyms in her senior year of high school, and through connections there landed at Lindenwood University where Appleget spent three years on its gymnastics team.

"I was like 'OK, I'm going to give this school a chance and see what it's all about,'" Appleget said. "Obviously, I ended up going there for three years and I really enjoyed that experience, but then the program was shut down last year."

## Becoming a Chippewa

Appleget found herself in the transfer portal, which ultimately led her to CMU. Mount Pleasant became her landing spot for her senior year.

"It was definitely shocking, but in the grand scheme of things maybe not too surprising," Appleget said.

When she committed to Lindenwood and during her freshman year, it was a Division II university.

"Sometime during that season (freshman year) they announced that the entire university was going Division I, which seemed like a really great thing," Appleget said. "But they had a really big athletic department, which they could sustain at the Division II level. ... It ended up proving not to be sustainable at Division I."

Nonetheless, Appleget has no regrets.

"It was truly a great experience," Appleget said. "The improvements that I had over the



Soli Gordon | Staff photographer

Central Michigan senior Hannah Appleget poses in a split on top of a bookshelf in Park Library, Tuesday, April 15, 2025.



## Sports

years. ... Then (in) junior year, I ended up getting to do all-around a little bit."

In Appleget's sophomore year, the Lions won a national title. During her last year, the team took both conference and national titles.

After entering the transfer portal, Appleget committed to Central Michigan to compete for Christine MacDonald and the Chippewas for her final year.

"I had a couple options toward the end of my experience. I had two or three main (colleges and universities), but then ultimately this is the one I had fallen in love with, and I knew I wasn't going to be able to say no," Appleget said.

She knew she made the right decision through being able to contribute to the history of CMU gymnastics and be a part of that family.

"I love the gymnastics team and the legacy that this program holds and being able to contribute to that," Appleget said. "Even just being able to walk on campus, I'll just be walking to or from class, and I can just look around and say, 'yeah I made the decision by coming here.'"

## Tumbling into the record books

Appleget helped the Chippewas to their third Mid-American Conference title in four years, winning the 2025 title in McGuirk Arena in March.

"When I got here, I was like 'yeah conference is the goal' and that was kind of what the team had," she said. "We had the same vision ... that day."

Appleget was the tournament All-Around champion

and was named to the All-MAC tournament team.

"I absolutely did not think I was going to win an all-around title too," Appleget said. "I'd only won two in college before that day, and there hadn't been a single time all season that I had the highest all-around score in the MAC for that week, and so that was just like completely off my radar."

Appleget scored a career-high 39.250 competing in all four events. She was third on floor, capturing a 9.900 on the event.

"I had actually walked into that meet not even knowing if I was doing all-around or not, because there were a few of us that were challenging for a lineup spot on vault," Appleget said. "I just ended up having a really solid day."

Gymnastics has taught Appleget life lessons that she carries with her outside of the gym.

"The biggest one has been learning how to cherish the journey and embracing the process as well," she said. "Selflessness, learning how to lean on others, but also learning how to support others and being able to build those relationships. Lastly, patience, because I've had to wait a long time to be able to achieve some of my goals, but then I ended up getting them, and it was absolutely worth the wait."

Appleget's journey with CMU gymnastics ended on a high note, and she plans to graduate in December with a degree in biology.

"I've just learned so much," she said, "and grown so much as both an athlete and a person."



Soli Gordon | Staff photographer

Central Michigan senior gymnast Hannah Appleget poses in a stag handstand on top of a bookshelf in Park Library, April 15, 2025.

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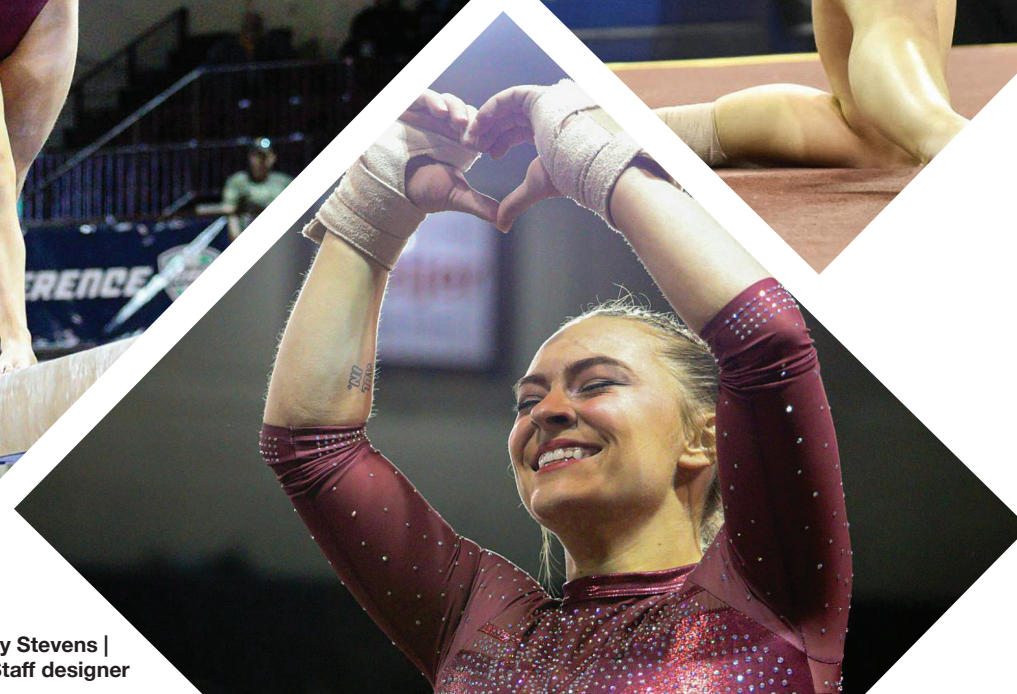
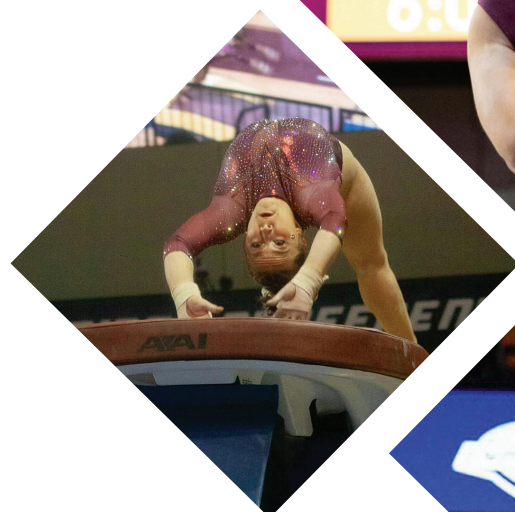
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## Portrait of a champion

Senior gymnast and biology major Hanna Appleget transferred to Central Michigan University for one season, after her previous institution terminated its gymnastics program.

In her one year on the squad, she tumbled her way to the All-Around title at the Mid American Conference championship and a spot on the All-MAC squad.

"I love the gymnastics team and the legacy that this program holds, and being able to contribute to that" she said.

The images on this page showcase some of Appleget's beam, floor and vault competitions from the season, as captured by *Central Michigan Life* staff photographers Mark Hoover, Jasmine Brookins and Mary Nowosacki.

Brittany Stevens |  
Staff designer



## Sports

# CMU men's basketball welcomes 22nd head coach

By Sydney Neal  
Sports editor

The energy inside McGuirk Arena shifted Tuesday afternoon as Central Michigan formally introduced Andy Bronkema as its next men's basketball head coach. The longtime Ferris State leader and Michigan native arrives in Mount Pleasant ready to rebuild, reconnect and rally a program in transition.

Alongside President Neil MacKinnon and Director of Athletics Amy Folan, Bronkema was welcomed by many members of the community, staff and faculty.

"Today is about Central Michigan," Bronkema said, holding back emotion as he acknowledged the bittersweet goodbye from his 18-year tenure at Ferris State. "But my time there will be the first thing that brings a tear to my eye. That's my whole adult life."

Now, Bronkema is turning the page and he's hoping the CMU community will write the next chapter alongside him. "We're not trying to recreate (Ferris)," Bronkema said. "Every place has its own path. ... We're gonna figure it out here. It's not just going to be my experience, it's going to be our staff, the people around here and the people passionate about Central Michigan. Let's do this together."

The job reaches very close to home for Bronkema, who

has deep family ties to the university. His father once commuted from Ferris State to CMU for classes. His great-grandmother, grandmother, father and sister all attended Central Michigan.

"This is just in my family's blood," Bronkema said. "That type of fit just keeps you motivated every day to work for those types of people. That's why this job is perfect for me."

Bronkema made it clear that his culture will be defined by love, discipline and shared purpose, on and off the court.

"One of my best friends used to say, 'The catalyst for our culture is love,'" he said. "That's gonna be part of ours too. You do life together every day. You support each other. Then you go to work."

While he acknowledges that the college basketball landscape has shifted dramatically due to changes in endorsement rules and the transfer portal, Bronkema remains focused on fundamentals.

"You've got to stay fired up. You can't let it drag you down," he said. "We've got to find guys that are like-minded with our vision. Central Michigan's not the right fit for everybody, and that's okay."

Bronkema acknowledged the work ahead, like assembling a staff, building relationships with current players and scouring every level of the basketball landscape for talent.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff photographer

Central Michigan University Men's Basketball coach Andy Bronkema holds up his jersey with pride while flanked by president Neil MacKinnon and director of athletics Amy Folan in the Kulhavi Events Center on Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

"There's talent in Division II. There's talent in the region. There's talent here at Central Michigan," he said. "It's just about finding the right pieces and building something we can all be proud of."



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# Column: What's going on with men's basketball?



By Sydney Neal  
Sports Editor

As the 2024-2025 season came to a close for the Central Michigan University men's basketball team, the chances for making another Mid-American Conference tournament appearance was eliminated after a devastating 83-81 loss to Northern Illinois.

The developments mark a dramatic turn for a program that entered the 2024-25 season with hopes of climbing the Mid-American Conference standings. Instead, CMU finds itself at a crossroads, staring down a critical rebuilding phase amid controversy.

Things only went downhill from there, as once again the transfer portal bug bites the Chippewas. Just weeks after the season ended, ten players from the 15-man roster have entered the transfer portal to pursue new opportunities.

## The exiting

To start, the Chippewas already loose senior guard Anthony Pritchard due to graduation. Also noted on the roster is red-shirt junior DeCorion Temple, a dual-sport athlete also on the football team who was brought on midway through the season.

Among the ten is senior guard/forward Jakobi Heady. As prominent starter for CMU, he averaged 15 points per game seeing a season-high of 35 points against Ohio. Prior to CMU, Heady spent his first two years of college at Wabash Valley College, a two-year university in Illinois.

Following the 2022-2023 season, he would transfer to Bethune-Cookman in Daytona, Florida, where he would spend one season before becoming a Chippewa.

Sophomore guard Cayden Vasko announced his entrance to the portal via Instagram on March 24. Starting in Mount Pleasant as a true freshman, he started 31 out of 32 games played during the 2023-24 season.

This season, Vasko averaged 7.4 points per game. As an avid rebounder, he totaled 154 on the season and 81 assists.

Sophomore forward, Bryan Ndjonga entered the portal on March 20 after only one season as a Chippewa. Transferring in from Cal State Northridge, he played 29 games, with 21 starts. Despite only averaging 5.2 points per game, Ndjonga dominated defensively for the Chippewas with 17 blocks, 14 steals and 23 assists on the season.

Junior guard Kyler VanderJagt, who led the Chippewas in three-point shooting (38%) and averaged 11.2 points per game, entered the portal March 25. He has since committed to conference rival Toledo, delivering a painful blow to CMU's backcourt depth.

Junior forward Ugnius Jarusevicius was a powerhouse for the Chippewas as he averaged 16.2 points a game this season. His career high came in back-to-back games against Kent State and Akron where he had double-doubles in both, scoring 32 points and 10 rebounds.

Since entering the portal, Jarusevicius landed at a high-major program, committing to Nebraska, after a season in which he provided energy and versatility off the bench.

Another familiar name entering the portal is sophomore center Hunter Harding. As a true freshman, he saw action in 22 games with seven starts at center in the 2023-2024 season alongside his brother, Markus Harding.

During the 2024-2025 season, he played in seven games and saw the starting lineup four times before getting injured for the remainder of the season. Hunter announced his entrance to the portal via Instagram on March 24.

Junior center Armani Mighty, who was a new name for the Chippewas, saw no action this season and earned a medical redshirt for the year. After entering the portal on April 7, the Chippewas officially have no centers left on the roster.

The remaining players who have entered the portal are:

Redshirt freshman guard Shaedon Simpson, a two-season player, saw action in 12 games and started two.

Freshman forward Mohammad Habhab, a recruit from Dearborn, saw the court

for two minutes against South Alabama at the start of this season.

Sophomore forward Quentin Heady, the brother to Jakobi Heady, entered the portal following the rest of his teammates.

It's going to be tough to find five dynamic players through recruiting and the portal that can mesh well on the court together.

## Coaching change

Following a disappointing season and growing unrest behind the scenes, CMU officially parted ways with head coach Tony Barbee. Barbee, who compiled a 28-62 record over three seasons in Mount Pleasant, faced criticism for roster instability and underperformance in conference play.

The university has since hired new head coach Andy Bronkema just 11 days after news broke about Barbee. Bronkema was the previous men's basketball head coach of Ferris State since 2013. Prior to being head coach, he was assistant coach of the program from 2007-2013.

Bronkema led the Bulldogs to four consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances, including a 25-9 overall record and a 14-6 record in the GLIAC this past season. His tenure in Big Rapids featured a dominant 2017-2018 campaign, when the Bulldogs went 38-1 en route to capturing the school's first national championship and earning him National Coach of the Year honors.

As a Michigan-native, I could see Bronkema being dedicated to the improvement of this program. However, it would be interesting to see how he handles the pressure of rebuilding said program.

## The remaining

Although the portal took many seasoned veterans, there are still a few names left that could step up in the upcoming seasons.



Jasmine Brookins | Staff Photographer

Central Michigan University Men's Basketball head coach Andy Bronkema holds up a 22 to his daughter in the Kulhavi Events Center on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. The number 22 symbolizes a Taylor Swift song and how he is the 22nd head coach.

Freshman guard Ryan Hatcher, a 6-foot-2 recruit from Detroit, didn't play this season.

Trey Phillips, a sophomore forward, didn't see any action this season at CMU. The -foot-7 Arizona native transferred to CMU from Southern Nazarene College where he did not see any game action.

True freshman guard Gus Salem, saw action in one game vs Central State and earned a redshirt for the 2024-2025 season.

## What's next?

The balance of the transfer portal departures and Barbee's firing leaves CMU facing a pivotal offseason. As CMU welcomes Bronkema as the 22nd men's head basketball coach, all eyes will point to how he handles the rebuild of this program.

With the portal window still open until April 22 for undergraduates, further roster movement remains likely. CMU's offseason is far from over.

CMU and Bronkema must desperately use the off-season to recruit and pull from the transfer portal to build back some sort of team. For now, uncertainty clouds the future of the men's basketball team. But, this will be the most important off-season for the Chippewas to fully rebuild this program.



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T	T	T	I	M	O	M	I	U	H	E	U	K	K
L	C	B	E	D	K	S	U	E	L	K	P	E	A
A	S	E	A	Z	O	P	E	T	K	I	M	E	A
A	P	O	L	L	O	R	A	I	T	C	Z	R	E
S	I	G	M	A	G	I	H	I	D	H	C	G	U
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P	A	N	I	A	W	E	E	K	A	A	N	C	A
S	A	T	H	E	N	A	N	U	A	E	O	M	P
I	S	O	P	A	H	P	L	A	E	M	M	A	P
L	S	A	O	D	A	T	E	H	T	A	U	L	A
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