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Andrew Travis | Staff Photographer

Orange, California junior Justin Simpson and team celebrate scoring a run against Northern Illinois University, April 10 at Theunissen Stadium.

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Nate Pappas | Staff Photographer

Megan (front) and Lauren Lasceski listen to one of their teammates after practice on April 5 in the Jack Skoogs Indoor Track.

BEATING THE ODDS

Given bleak diagnosis at birth, Lasceski twins grow to thrive as Chippewa runners

By Sean Chase
Staff Reporter

As members of the Central Michigan cross country and track teams, Lauren and Megan Lasceski's bond has grown closer through athletics.

But there was a time in their lives when running, let alone walking, seemed to be out of the question.

Just eight weeks into her first pregnancy, Erin Lasceski found out she was having twins. Once she hit 18-weeks, Erin and her husband Mark visited a doctor, excited to determine the gender of their children.

"(The nurse) told us they were girls, but then she got really....," Erin said, trailing off.

"Quiet," Mark said, finishing her sentence.

"She called in the doctor and they were scanning," Erin said. "They finally said, 'We think you have Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS).'"

TTTS is a rare disease that can occur when a mother is pregnant with identical twins. It leads to uneven blood flow causing one twin to receive too much blood and the other to receive too little, according to NORD's Rare Disease Database. TTTS occurs in 5-15% of identical twin pregnancies.

'You've gone from bad to worse'

With a prospective diagnosis in hand and their next appointment two days away, Erin's mother began searching the internet for TTTS. But in 2000, the returns didn't match today's expectations.

"There was one website at the time when you typed in TTTS," Erin said. "So I always tell my students when we talk about it, like, think about anything you type in now and all the different sites that come up, there was one ... There were two doctors at the time in the United States that performed surgeries on this condition."

Erin reached out to Lisa Arthur who had experience with one of the doctors listed on the TTTS website. After some discussion with Arthur, Erin and her husband gained some clarity about the disease.

However, at their next appointment, Erin said her doctor recommended an abortion.

"We went to our doctor's appointment and (our doctor) scanned us and all he said was, 'You've gone from bad to worse.'" Erin said. "During this pregnancy, he gave us a 6% chance, and he said, 'If they survive, they will never walk, talk, eat on their own, they will never function as a healthy human being.' He

painted the direst future for us, and we just sat there."

Erin proposed an experimental surgery that only two doctors could perform in the United States. Her doctor initially opposed the surgery, but soon sent her information to Dr. Ruben Quintero.

'A hard decision to make'

The Lasceskis soon heard their phone ringing. It was Quintero. After hearing the situation, the doctor offered his input.

"Well, I am currently formulating a staging process for this rare disease and you're in stage three," Quintero said. "Stage four is death."

Quintero asked the Lasceski's if they could get to Florida by the next day. However, due to the cost of the procedure, Quintero recommended bringing "every credit card they owned."

"We called all our family members, all our parents, my dad, his parents, everybody was sending us their credit card numbers," Erin said. "When we were backing out, our neighbor was outside and we kind of filled her in real quick. Well, she worked for (Michigan Education Special Services Association), which is our insurance, and (said), 'Let me see what I can do.'"

After arriving in Florida, Quintero met with the Lasceski's. He wasn't happy that they allowed their doctor to poke holes in the membrane, but decided the holes were small enough to continue.

As Erin began to succumb to anesthesia, a woman entered the room with a stack of receipts from a credit card imprinter. Erin later found out MESSA was covering the entire procedure.

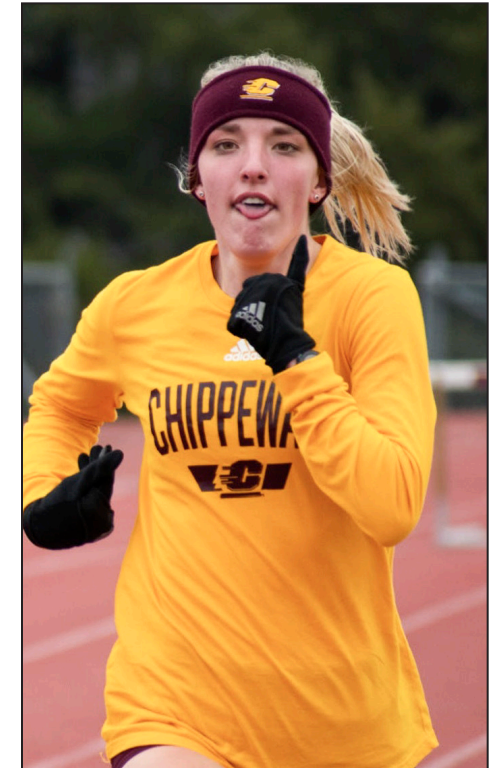
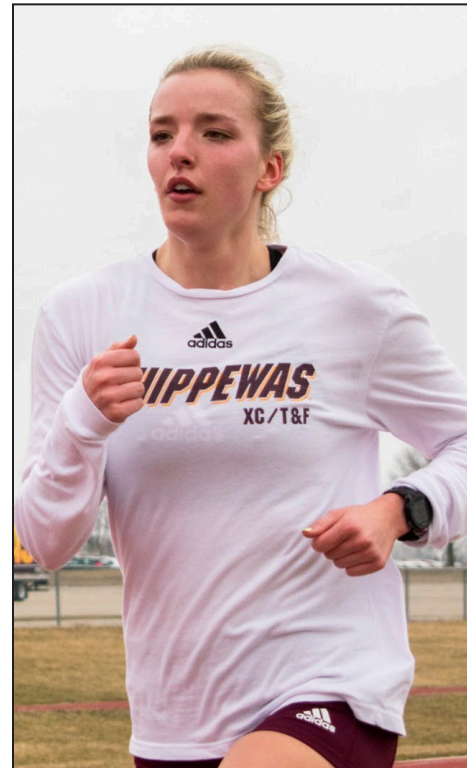
During the procedure, Quintero found five veins running from Megan to Lauren that caused an imbalance of fluids.

The day after the surgery, Quintero warned Erin that one or both of the babies could have died. Despite the procedure's severity, both girls were still alive.

On July 26, abnormal readings forced Erin's doctor to request an emergency C-Section, three months ahead of her original due date.

"When they delivered them, Lauren came out first, and then I heard them say Baby B has an amniotic band," Erin said. "But I didn't process it."

Due to the holes poked into the membrane, when Lauren and Megan grew in the placenta, it created fibrous strands. One of which had wrapped around Megan's right wrist and was cutting off circulation.



Nate Pappas | Staff Photographer

Megan and Lauren Lasceski run during practice on April 7 at the Lyle Bennett Outdoor Track.

"Had they gone full term, she would not have had a hand," Erin said.

Weighing 3.1 and 2.5 pounds respectively, Lauren and Megan spent five weeks in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing before leaving the hospital with their parents.

Erin was told Megan and Lauren would be in the hospital until their due date which was mid-October, but they instead were sent home nearly five weeks after birth.

"The hospital gave us anything and everything they could, but the girls went to their baby showers because they were there. After that, it was relatively smooth," Erin said.

Since they were premature, Lauren and Megan couldn't go to regular daycare. As they continued to grow, so did Megan's amniotic band, and no lasting effects of TTTS remained.

'Grateful and thankful'

The girls went about their lives and involved themselves in multiple sports and eventually found a love for running in the seventh grade.

"We both played volleyball and our mom was coaching us. I did not like it. So I wanted

to quit, but my mom was like, 'Well, you're not going home after school you have to find something to do,' and the only two options were either cross country or fall ball softball," Lauren said. "I almost played softball until I met someone with a black eye from softball, and at that moment, I decided I wanted to run."

Megan started her running career on the track, competing in the 800-meter but after some convincing, she gave cross country a try.

"The summer after my sophomore year, I decided I wanted to run because all of our, Lauren and my mutual friends, were running cross country," Megan said.

After their running careers at St. John's High School, the twins started to hear from college running coaches.

Lauren and Megan's college decisions came down to attending Ferris State or CMU. Although they made the decision independently of each other, the twins both chose to come to

TWINS

CONTINUED FROM 5

Mount Pleasant.

“(Director of Track and Field/Cross Country Jenny Swieton) gave us a lot of confidence going into a division one program,” Megan said. “She knew the potential that we had, and she believed in us more than we believed in ourselves. (Swieton) was a big reason why we felt so comfortable and confident coming in.”

Lauren immediately began running for the Chippewas in cross country, indoor and outdoor track, while Megan faced setbacks recovering from an ACL injury.

“When I was here at (CMU,) I found out that I had a torn labrum with a bone spur, so they had to do surgery on it,” Megan said.

As a result, Megan wasn’t in the race. Lauren, meanwhile, recorded a personal best 5K time of 19:19.7 at the Chippewa Invitational. For her efforts, she was named Mid-American Conference Runner of the Week on Oct. 27, 2021.

“It was super muddy, and we were running through where we could see her,” Megan said. “When I saw her coming down the straight-away to the finish line, I was like oh my gosh, like I want both my teammates to do so well, but the twin side of me, I was so excited to see her because I know how hard she’s worked.”

Megan overcame her injuries and returned to track for the 2021 indoor season. Once

again, minor setbacks shut her season down early. However, she made her return to the outdoor track in the 1500-meter at the MSU Open on April 2.

Although they ran in different heats, it was the first time Lauren and Megan ran in the same outdoor meet in five years.

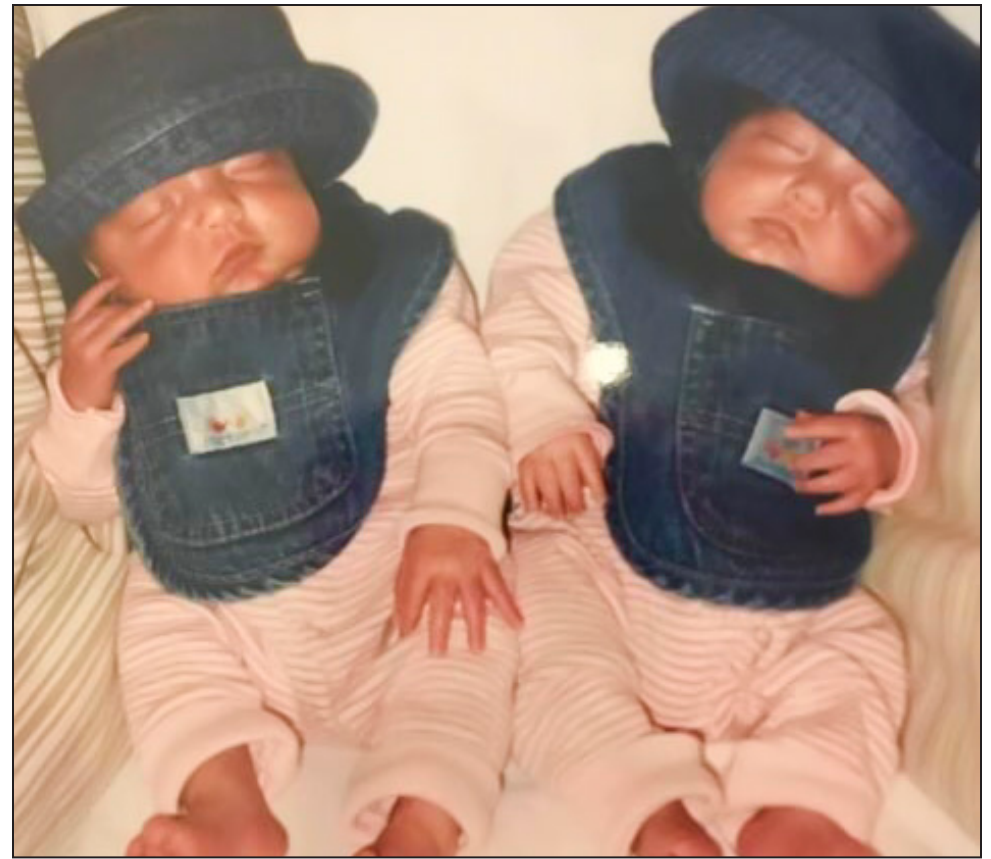
Regardless of where life takes them, Lauren and Megan are appreciative for the life they almost didn’t get to have.

“I’m grateful and thankful for the life that we have,” Lauren said. “We are so incredibly lucky to be here.”

One of the symbols that provided Erin and Mark hope when their children were in the NICU was a corkboard laden with pictures, notes and cards from families who spent time in the same wing of the hospital at some point and were living to tell the tale.

Due to Lauren’s memories of her mother talking about staring at that board for hours and finding hope as doctors conducted their rounds, she has made it her mission to be that light for others.

“We write a letter every year, and we attach pictures from when we were babies and then what we’re doing now, basically to give those families some hope because my parents understand firsthand how difficult it was,” Lauren said. “My parents were like, ‘You had a 6 percent chance of living, 1 percent chance of being able-bodied’. It started to resonate with me in my senior year of high school. I had this moment where I was like, I’m lucky to be alive, let alone being able to do all these things.”



Courtesy Photo

Twins Lauren and Megan Lasceski rest together months after being born.



Courtesy Photo

From left Erin, Lauren, Megan and Mark Lasceski pose for a photo following the 2021 MAC Championships in Ypsilanti.

Krysta Carabelli joins the Mount Pleasant Division of Public Safety's new position as the social crisis advocate.

The position is the result of an expanded partnership between Mount Pleasant and RISE Advocacy Inc., an agency that provides free support services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

A one-year pilot program agreement with RISE Advocacy Inc. and the city was approved in November 2021 which created this position. The goal of this agreement is to offer networking services to those suffering from mental health, temporary crisis issues as well as substance abuse and drug overdose situations.

Carabelli is a two-time graduate from Central Michigan University where she earned her master's degree in clinical professional counseling. She has experience as a social worker, domestic violence counselor and sexual assault counselor.

She also worked with RISE Advocacy Inc. this past year specializing in trauma and crisis counseling.

Can you explain this new pilot program and what being a social crisis advocate means?

We are kind of building it from the ground up. We are getting systems in place so that I can set up contact notes with people and be able to say I spoke with this person, this many times, this year and this is the progress they made and this is the help they got. For me, it's mostly about trying to meet people where they are and get them the resources that they need. That might mean someone (might be) having a traumatic situation that they are struggling with, such as sexual assault, domestic abuse, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), addiction or a mental illness. (Being a social crisis advocate means) just being there for them and handling that crisis with them. (It's about) helping them cope with that crisis in that moment by letting them feel what they need to feel and not being judgmental of it.

What is it like working alongside the Mount Pleasant Police Department?

The police are there to provide the safety aspect of things ... To take on the mental capacity for these events as well is such an overwhelming task for anybody. So, if we can collaborate and the police can do their work, I can do mine. Then that's a whole well-rounded response to somebody who's experiencing a crisis. It will also reduce interactions with police, which may be scary to some, and allows the police to handle more calls and tasks ... We created a space if there are victims of a crime, they can come into my office and talk. It's not an interrogation room. Sometimes it's helpful to be able to discuss that in a way that just feels nonjudgmental. The other portion of that is training. If I notice something going on, I'm like, 'Hey, why don't we do things this way?' They can inform me of their culture, and I can make suggestions. We can collaborate, which is very progressive for a law enforcement agency.

What is it like serving the community as a CMU alumna?

It's almost weird in a way because in my undergraduate,

Q&A



Krysta Carabelli

Central Michigan Life sat down with the Mount Pleasant Division of Public Safety's new social crisis advocate. She discussed the new partnership with RISE Advocacy Inc. and the purpose of her work for the community.

Gina Hofbauer ■ Staff Reporter

I was looking at people who did this kind of stuff ... I never imagined myself in this realm. I'm originally from a very small town ... I moved up here for my undergraduate and I love the community and decided to stay. I've lived here for 11 years now. I really wanted to get out and help people and do what I could so I moved up this way and never left.

What made you interested in this line of work?

I had my undergraduate in psychology with my minor in gerontology. I always thought I would work with older adults like at a nursing home. I ended up going back to school for my graduate counseling degree. I did an interview with a therapist for domestic violence that worked for RISE She talked about how passionate she was and how much she loved her job. She was excited to go to work and she'd been doing it for 20 years, and it never changed for her ... I contacted them for my internship in my graduate program. When I started, I could see how this job helps people in a very boots on the ground type of way. The change was right before your eyes. I have people come and talk to me and meet again in the course of a few months, or the course of a year, and their lives were completely different and for the better.

How common is it for someone to be assaulted or have violence committed against them?

One of every three people on a college campus experience sexual assault. Sexual assault of women is one in five nationwide. It's one in 33 for men. We only know what is reported too. When it comes to domestic violence, one in three families are impacted ... If you see five families at the grocery store, at least one has been impacted by this, and that's a very large number and a sad reality. We are doing everything we can to provide as much services as we can to our community.

What are the kinds of resources that you offer to people in need of your services?

We do have a shelter if anybody is seeking shelter or needs help in that way. We've also helped get homeless individuals into apartments, helped families locate food pantries and access to clothing. We work with a wide range of people and we connect them to any resources or services they might need. When we do help them get these resources, we could see the relief on their faces. You don't get that in other places. You don't get that in other jobs and that was just so rewarding and so uplifting. The work we're doing is hard, but it is so worth it.

How do you stay positive when you are having to support people through some of the biggest challenges in their lives?

One of the biggest things to remember is that you're a human being ... I go to a scene and tell myself I'm going to help that person get through it and I'm going to do what I need to in that moment. Then I'm going to go home and I'm going to need to ... decompress from that. I can take my husky for a walk or play with my fiercely independent two-year-old daughter. I'm going to do things for myself to maintain my mental health. I think the biggest thing is being authentic and realizing that you're human, and that there are going to be moments ... because even though it sucks, it makes a difference.



Rachel Goniea hangs grocery bags as a background for the "It Doesn't Matter" section of the exhibit March 29 in the University Art Gallery.

Graphic design seniors create interactive exhibit highlighting climate change

The Central Michigan University Art Gallery currently features a cow made out of recycled fast-food containers, jackets made from fast-fashion packaging and a representation of the Earth's potential future.

With those projects and many more set up in a maze, the exhibition takes you through five key sections related to climate change. These sections include Code Blue,

Unforeseen Circumstances, It Doesn't Matter, No Place Like Home and the Doom Room.

This exhibition, entitled "5°F," is the culmination of an academic year full of climate change research, individual ideas and continuous teamwork of the 19 graphic design senior capstone students.

"The meaning behind the exhibition's name (5°F) is the global temperature's 'point of no return,'" the exhibit's "About" reads. "Our goal is to educate as many people as we can about the harm humans are inflicting on

our environment, the changes we are already seeing, experiencing and how people can help now."

The capstone students used facts, garbage and their imaginations to create a representation of society's treatment of the environment to educate their audience.

Perry senior Symantha Taylor said the reason her class chose to focus on climate change and sustainability is because of the large role the environment plays in everyday life.

"There are still a lot of people out there that still think climate change is a joke," Taylor said. "We wanted to break it down for people to understand that ... climate change is all around us."

In addition to consistent teamwork between classmates, the exhibit features partnerships with the Museum of Cultural and Natural History and Mount Pleasant Elementary School. Visitors can interact with the art by making a plant to take home,

writing on sticky notes and following QR codes throughout the gallery.

In order to leave a legacy, the students worked with University Landscaping to donate 30 trees to CMU in order to create a carbon sink, a natural environment that absorbs more carbon dioxide than it releases, on campus. The class received funding for the trees from Tractor Supply Co. and a few individuals with ties to members of the group.

Saginaw senior Jasmine Southward said all of the collaborations and interactive exhibit displays help illustrate how everyone can play a role in making a difference.

"It's not like a regular gallery show when you come, you just look around and then you leave," Southward said. "We wanted to create an experience for people and us trying to do that created extra work for us. Though, I felt it was definitely worth it."

Graphic design faculty member David Stairs said the goal of these group capstone

exhibits, which have been created annually since 2008, is to have students use their "skills as designers to raise attention to critical subjects."

Stairs said the gallery is "choked full of stuff" due to the amount of research the class did. He said students kept coming up with more ideas after the exhibit was planned out.

"When I say it's the most complex exhibition that the gallery's ever put on, it's not an overstatement," Stairs said. "That's one indication of how much work was done and how hard they worked."

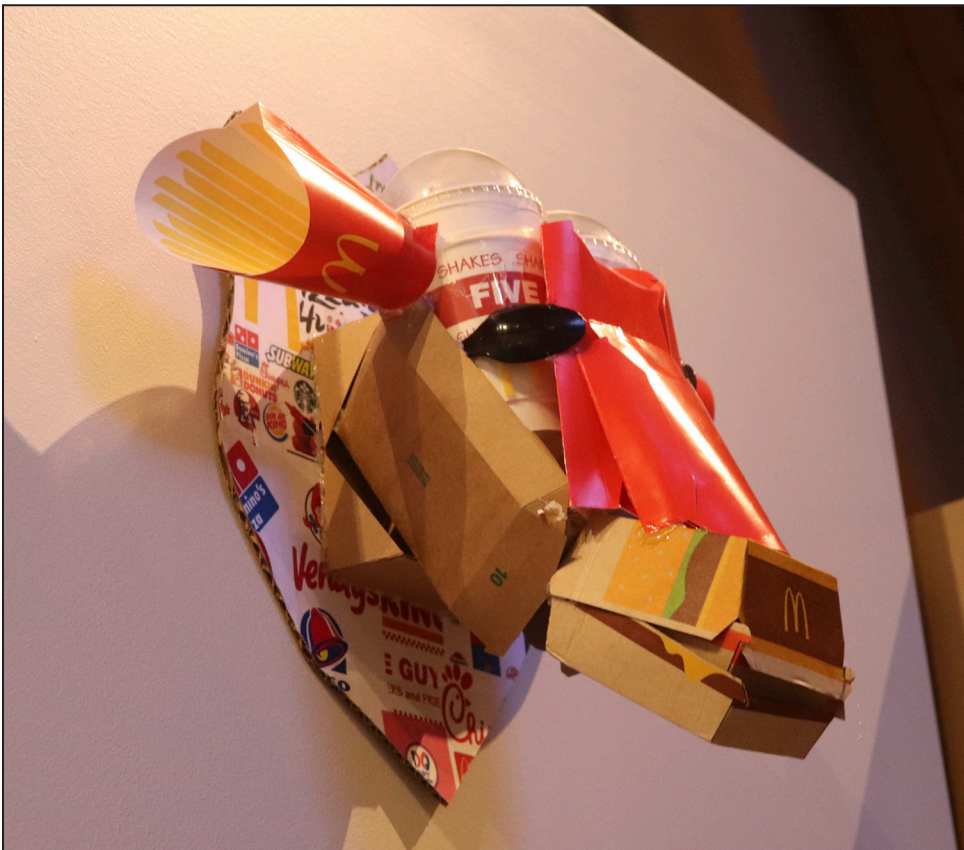
The exhibit, which opened on April 2, will stay up in the University Art Gallery until April 16. The University Art Gallery is open Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"(I hope) people go in and think, 'Oh my gosh, this is so great! I didn't know this information,'" Taylor said. "It's a great takeaway for them to go through."

STORY AND PHOTOS BY COURTNEY PEDERSEN



Symantha Taylor hangs syran wrap from the ciling of the Doom Room on March 29 in the University Art Gallery.



A cow head made out of fast-food packaging hangs on an exhibition wall April 11 in the University Art Gallery.



The Doom Room stands empty right after the University Art Gallery opens on April 12.

'Get your studs the b

New CMU football offensive coordinator Paul Petrino speaks on talent during spring fo

By Christian Booher
Sports Editor

Sometimes, football is as simple as getting the best player the ball and letting them go to work.

For Central Michigan University, this strategy worked in 2021. With stars like Lew Nichols III, Kalil Pimpleton and JaCorey Sullivan, it put up a whopping 32 points per game on an average of 444.5 yards of offense.

The 2022 season has seen turnover, as Pimpleton, Sullivan and offensive coordinator Kevin Barbay are all gone. Nichols is back, however, and Paul Petrino has stepped into Barbay's role.

Despite the changes, expectations remain high for this Chippewa unit. For the losses, there are plenty of returning pieces who will be factors. Perhaps the biggest is junior running back Kobe Lewis, a 2019 1,000-yard rusher who missed all of 2021 with a knee

injury. He's currently rehabbing in Georgia but should be full-go by summer.

In his absence, all Nichols did was lead the country in rushing. Now, both are back with sights set on being one of the top running back duos in the country. Throw in sophomores Myles Bailey and Marion Lukes and the Chippewas have a formidable foursome.

"They're your four biggest studs, you know?" Petrino said. "You try to get your studs the ball, and so we'll definitely come up with all different ways to feature them all and get them the ball."

With so much talent at one position, however, it can be a challenge to get all parties involved. After all, there's only one ball.

The Chippewas have a plan, though.

"We're gonna have to do some things to get multiple running backs on the field," said head coach Jim McElwain. "So you may see us in some personnel groupings, you know, with more than two backs on the field but creating

one back formations because, again, these are all guys that need to touch the ball."

Who's next at receiver?

The Chippewas have immense shoes to fill at receiver with Sullivan and Pimpleton off to the pros. The cupboard isn't bare, though, as Dallas Dixon is back for his third year. Petrino said it's been Dixon who has stepped up to lead the room.

Carlos Carriere, a Maryland transfer, will provide an immediate boost at the position when he arrives on campus in June. He enjoyed the best season of his career with the Terrapins in 2021. His brother, Matteo, will join Jordan Kelly and Langston Lewis as members of the 2022 recruiting class to join the team in the summer.

Until then, it's on the returning pieces to step up. In Petrino's eyes, two standouts have been redshirt freshman Finn Hogan and sophomore Alec Ward.

"Finn Hogan has jumped in there and done

some good things for us," Petrino said. "He's probably made the next most plays (behind Dixon) out there, and Alec Ward, those two have made a lot of plays for us."

The Chippewas' new offensive coordinator also said Kenny Brewer and Levar Gumms have impressed throughout camp.

Offensive line notes

Much like the wide receivers, CMU has two players leaving its offensive line for the professional ranks. Both tackles, Bernhard Raimann and Luke Goedeke, are projected NFL Draft picks and leave large footprints for youngsters to fill.

Raimann is considered a fringe-first round pick, while Goedeke has risen as high as a second-or-third round pick in the eyes of some draft pundits. Despite this, there's still some experience coming back in 2022.

Three starters return up front, with Jamezz Kimbrough at center and Tyden Ferris and Deiyantei Powell-Woods at guard. The latter

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Football

Football workouts

en splitting time in the spring between and tackle, with Hillsdale transfer Cole on also getting reps at guard. an Smith suffered an injury in the season finale against Eastern Michigan compete for reps at guard along with up Kimbrough at center when healthy. n Powell-Woods isn't manning a tackle sophomore Brayden Swartout and t freshman Davis Heinzen have been g down the fort. Additionally, 2022 ing class signee Martin Koivisto is on s as an early-enrollee. a so much youth, the spring has been ted to finding an identity for the unit. 've got to kind of find, 'What is our ality?' Petrino said. 'What are our go- here are we gonna hang our coat? What coat hanger that we're going to put, this lay that we know we're going to execute well, this is the next best play we're o execute really well.'



Andrew Travis | Staff Photographer

Charlestown, Indiana freshman Marion Lukes returns a kickoff for a 90+ yard touchdown against Eastern Michigan University on Nov. 26.

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CMU Herbarium director discusses museum with 30,000 plant species

By Brea Lennox
Staff Reporter

Museums offer a plethora of information but visitors often do not realize the work done behind the scenes to create it.

Anna Monfils, director of the Central Michigan University Herbarium, has made a career out of preserving plant fossils. She said very few people on campus understand how the museum she works in came to life.

“You guys hear of museums,” Monfils said. “You see what they put on display, but what’s in the basement and ancillary buildings are specimens that have been collected for hundreds of years.”

An herbarium organizes and

preserves plant species to aid in research about climate change and viruses, according to Monfils.

“We take really complex stuff, and we make it seem really obvious in the end,” she said.

The herbarium has existed at CMU for over 90 years. Created by Faith Johnston, it started as a single cabinet and has since grown into a lab with over 26,000 specimens – located in Biosciences 1010.

Monfils said there are over 1,000 herbaria worldwide that help with research on a global scale. In the past, Monfils has worked on preservation projects in Africa.

In the herbarium, Monfils has had help from undergraduate and graduate student volunteers and employees, such as Midland



Layla Blahnik-Thoune | Visual Editor

Anna Monfils, director of the Central Michigan University Herbarium poses for a portrait March 24, 2021 in the Biosciences Building.

graduate student Sara Hansen, in the Earth and ecosystem science program.

“Some of the employees that have worked out really well have not been bio majors,” Monfils said.

While assisting in the herbarium alongside Monfils for the past two years, Hansen has analyzed data and worked hands-on with the plant collection.

Monfils said several graduate and undergraduate students volunteer and work in the herbarium. She said many things learned in her lab can be used in students careers.

“It has given me a lot of chances to connect with people internationally,” Hansen said.

The herbarium is opened to visitors upon request. Monfils said

she has given tours to interested visitors and Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) have utilized the space for meetings.

Hansen said the images of all the specimen can also be found online.

“They’re all fully accessible for anyone to look at and download,” Hansen said.

Monfils and Hansen are currently preparing for a trip to Scotland to attend the Society for Preservation of Natural History Collections annual meeting to talk about the next initiatives.

“If we could get more people involved, maybe some of that hiccup people have with science can be overcome,” Monfils said. “They realize, I don’t have to be someone else’s definition of a scientist.”

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(Check our Facebook for more info @URecCMU)

April 15th - April 17:
-Easter Weekend

May 6th - May 8th: CLOSED
-Commencement Weekend

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Fitness Center	6am-10pm	12pm-8pm	12pm-10pm
Pool*	6am-9am/ 11am-1pm/ 4pm-9pm	2pm-8pm	2pm-8pm
Weight Training Center	11am-1pm/ 4pm-10pm	2pm-8pm	2pm-8pm

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“WE INSPIRE ENGAGEMENT”

LOVE 101: Faculty members discuss building lives and careers together

By Brea Lennox
Staff Reporter

Central Michigan University is known to bring couples together from all sorts of backgrounds and passions. For these three faculty couples, CMU is not only the place of their employment, but also where they continue to grow their love.

Study buddies to married

In August 2003, a young Michigan State University student sat in front of her classmate. Both pursuing biology, they decided to do homework together. Little did they know, what started as study buddies would become life-long partners. Now married, Kevin and Wiline Pangle are professors in the

biology department.

They wed one year before they completed graduate school in 2008. Soon after, Wiline gave birth to two girls that are now 10 and 13.

Wiline said competition does not exist in their relationship because they are each other's biggest supporters.

"Instead of divide and conquer, we believe in this together, stronger kind of feel," Wiline said.

The Pangles not only work on the same campus, but within close proximity of one another. In the Biosciences Building, they are two doors down from one another. Wiline said she is extremely lucky to have a relationship with someone that understands her line of work.

Distance doesn't matter

Jack Day and Amanda Suchy, originally from Utah and Wisconsin, respectively, moved around the United States for 13 years until settling in Michigan. Now, with a 2-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter, Day is an assistant professor in the education and human sciences department and Suchy is a post-doctoral researcher in the biology department.

The couple met through OkCupid in 2009 when they were both 27 years old. Nonetheless, they were in different places in their lives. Day was half-way through his master's degree while Suchy was applying to graduate schools.

"Indian food and a walk by the river," Day said, recalling their first date.

Suchy decided on Arizona for

graduate school and Day followed.

They bounced around the country for over a decade and even did a long-distance relationship for two years.

The couple said their differing interests, similar sense of humor and unique personalities keep their relationship alive.

Suchy said she and her husband work in adjacent buildings and often grab coffee together or run into each other unexpectedly.

Wolverines turned Chippewas

Michelle Steinhilb was an undergraduate student at Wayne State University when her future husband, Steve Juris, was enrolled at Boston College. As they started at the University of Michigan for graduate school, the two met in a class

of 11 students.

Their friendship progressed into an over 20-year marriage. Juris and Steinhilb now work together in the biology department.

Steinhilb said they bonded quickly after meeting, but that did not stop her from initially rejecting Juris.

"It was hard to determine if we should go into a romantic direction or maintain friendship," Steinhilb said.

He finally convinced her to go on a date. Now, they have two sons, ages 10 and 13.

Being in the same profession, they said they value understanding each other's struggles. Juris said they also "spring-board ideas off of each other" and eat lunch together almost every day.

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NEW CHAPTER FOR BOOKWORMS

Sleepy Dog Books is set to join community May 6 as only bookstore in town

By Zipporah Abarca
Staff Reporter

Mount Pleasant will welcome Sleepy Dog Books as the only locally owned bookstore within the community on May 6 at its location at 120 E. Broadway St.

Jennifer and Riley Justis, owners of Sleepy Dog Books, aim to have the business be more than just a place for people to read.

The bookstore expects to have local authors and artists visit, writing and reading workshops, book clubs and poetry nights sometime in the near future once they have officially opened.

Jennifer and Riley hand pick each new, hardcover book in the store to hopefully appeal to different audiences.

"We have everything," Jennifer said. "Everything from preschool board books all the way up to adult. We have fiction and non-fiction for both kids and adults. So every genre, from action, western to mystery to just general fiction."

Besides books, Sleepy Dog Books offers different products such as eco-friendly stuffed animals, candles, bags, signs, bookmarks and journals from small businesses in Michigan or from women owned businesses.

The story behind the books

Jennifer and Riley both originally came to Central Michigan University to study education. The two met working at the restaurant, Italian Oven, in 2006 and have been together ever since.

The two grew up in households where reading and books were valued. The couple decided to keep this love for literature with their own children, Mason and Sophie.

The name for Sleepy Dog Books actually came as the result of the Justis family's love for reading to their two golden retrievers, Cooper and Rosie. The children read to the dogs as a way to build their reading skills and confidence.

"We've always had the kids do that and practice their fluency and their reading skills. They just curl up with the dogs and lay on them, and the dogs sleep while they read," Jennifer said. "It's just always been that way, and that's what I grew up doing, too."

Mason and Sophie even assist their parents as the bookstore's grand opening approaches. The two have been crucial in picking out certain books and toys targeted towards children.

"They are definitely involved and they'll be here a lot of the time, especially in the summer, and so will the dogs on occasion," Jennifer said.



Zipporah Abarca | Staff Reporter

Sleepy Dog Books is being stocked for its May 6 opening on March 23 at 120 E. Broadway St.

Being the only bookstore in Mount Pleasant is a challenge the Justis family is ready to take on. Riley sees Mount Pleasant as a "book desert," due to its lack of bookstores that specialize in having a wide variety of ever-changing books.

"It just seems like such a void in mid-Michigan and it's not only the bookstore side of it. What I've always liked about bookstores is the community side of it, like the author events, the live music events and the opportunity to just hang out and do those type of things," Riley said. "That's what we didn't have or didn't feel like was downtown."

Despite there being a lack of locally owned bookstores in the city, the Justis couple hopes to understand the community and reflect its needs accurately.

"A lot of research is the biggest component to really understanding the market of the community, what people are interested in and what people are reading. (This applies to) not only in your specific town but in your region ... (and) really understanding how the community and the store play together," Riley said.

What sets Sleepy Dog Books apart from other stores that sell books is the ability to change and adapt on a whim, Jennifer said. The store can make decisions on products and what it offers without having to wait to get approval.

"We are able to support who we want and bring in who we want. (We get to) do the book clubs, the workshops, the author events and other events that we want to be able to do," Jennifer said. "We can support the small businesses where Barnes and Noble isn't going to get a mom from Holland who does watercol-

ors. That's what I love about it, we can support those different small businesses."

Make It Mount Pleasant subsidy grant program

The family owned business was selected by Make It Mount Pleasant's rental subsidy program, which selects business owners for a monthly grant to help support small businesses.

The subsidy grant totals to \$4,200 for one year. Each month, recipients of the grant are given a specific sum of money, starting at \$500 for the first three months. As each increment of three months goes by, the money received decreases by \$100.

The Justis couple applied for this grant to assist in getting the bookstore prepared for opening day.

"I think (the Make It Mount Pleasant Program) is great for new businesses, specifically

because for us it was great since we weren't open right away," Riley said. "We started paying rent prior to us making any revenue."

Make It Mount Pleasant began in 2020 when Michelle Sponseller, downtown development director, examined challenges small businesses face when first opening.

Sponseller noted that new businesses do not have a lot of funding for marketing or buying merchandise when first opening.

"I look at it as anything that we can do to make our downtown small business owners more successful, the better we all are," Sponseller said.

One of the reasons Sleepy Dog Books was chosen for the grant was because of the downtown's need for a bookstore.

However, what made it "just a little sweeter" is that Sleepy Dog Books offers an online platform for people to purchase books without having to leave the comforts of their home, Sponseller said.

Sleepy Dog Books' use of the space has already impressed Sponseller.

"They have maximized that space in a way that is really creative," Sponseller said. "They plan on having a really great community partnership. They want to do things not just in the store, but outside of the store as well."

With the grant and all of the work so far, the Justis family is excited to see the future of Sleepy Dog Books within the community.

"It is not just a bookstore. A bookstore is some place to come and shop, but it's also a community area where we have community events and bring authors in or speakers in or different activities," Jennifer said. "I'm excited to kind of explore that more and get the community involved too."

Sleepy Dog Books will be open weekly 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and 12-5 p.m. on Sunday.



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Sun shines over Warriner Hall in Sept. 2021.

Andrew Travis | Staff Photographer

CMU, DO YOUR JOB

Start listening to students if you want to be heard

EDITORIAL

Throughout the past two years, Central Michigan University administrators have reminded the campus community that eliminating COVID-19 is a matter of everyone's commitment.

The creation of the "We Do" campaign and subsequent videos has emphasized the "hands-on, real-world experience students gain" on campus.

The same language was echoed recently in an email to faculty as part of a series from the Office of the President.

"It will take all of us to turn the enrollment around," said Jennifer Dehaemers, vice president of student recruitment and retention, in the email.

We, as students, would be more than happy to oblige by partaking in maroon and gold events, making calls to prospective students or mentoring freshmen— if the respect was reciprocated.

While the pandemic, of course, caused a decline in enrollment, it's not the reason that CMU has the fastest declining enrollment in

Michigan.

Yes, COVID-19 contributed. But dining halls closed and faculty members were fired as the university hired countless administrators and students watched their CMU experience deteriorate.

This week CMU is holding three open forums to welcome three finalists to campus for the newest administrator position: Vice President of Student Affairs.

How many more administrators will replace faculty positions before you realize students are not being listened to?

When the campus community got wind of Washington Commons, town hall meetings were held for administration to hear opinions from the public.

Countless criticisms were voiced at two town

hall meetings, but little has since been done to humor audience members.

If you are only going to pretend to listen, do not expect us to spend time helping you.

The public forums only led students to the conclusion that all the university has done is find solutions for future students. CMU is promising students that don't exist, housing that doesn't exist.

Meanwhile, students paying to attend CMU remain ignored.

We're doing our job. We go to class, attend events and get involved with clubs. Faculty are doing their jobs. They teach classes, develop departments and mentor students.

But CMU we cannot say the same for. Administration, when are you going to start doing your job by caring about the students that are here now, instead of the ones that could be in the future?

You flaunt the words "We Do" – on campus and on television – but when are you actually going to do your job?

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LIFE IN BRIEF

Judge Janes sentences Deerfield Village shooter to minimum of 10 years in prison

By Christian Booher
Sports Editor

Detroit resident Kenneth Thomas was sentenced to a minimum of 10 years in prison and ordered to pay over \$7,500 in restitutions for his role in the April 24, 2021 shooting at Deerfield Village Apartments in which he shot Central Michigan University students Jonathan Keller and Tyler Bunting.

The shooting occurred after a fight broke out at a Deerfield Village apartment. Thomas left the party, retrieved a firearm and fired into the building. Both Keller and Bunting suffered gunshot wounds.

Thomas received a minimum of eight years (maximum of 20) for shooting a firearm into a building causing serious injury and two years for using a firearm while committing a felony. The two sentences will be served consecutively. He received 349 days credited to his sentence, as he has been incarcerated since April 27, 2021.

Thomas pleaded guilty in February to one count felony firearm and one count

of firing a weapon at a building causing serious harm. On Monday, he was officially sentenced to a minimum of 10 years in prison with a maximum of 22 years.

Isabella County Trial Court Judge Eric Janes called the shooting, "a senseless act." "It's a wonder that no one was killed," Janes said.

Keller made an impact statement at the sentencing, where he recalled his injuries and the effect the incident had on both his academic and athletic career. Bunting was not present for the hearing.

Keller suffered damage to his pulmonary artery and both of his lungs collapsed. It is unclear what Bunting's injuries were, though he was considered in stable condition at the time of the shooting.

"All of this has taught me something ... I think that we don't realize how our actions or words can affect other people, and there's a time where what we do or say can leave a lasting effect," Keller said. "I think that we need to be able to think about others before we make a decision. That decision that was made that night, not only changed your life, but changed mine as well."

City commission addresses marijuana reciprocity plan, chance of removing cap

By Collin Perriat
Staff Reporter

Mount Pleasant City Commission held a hearing for the proposed reciprocity plan for local marijuana dispensaries at its April 11 meeting.

Reciprocity would allow for all five local dispensary retail stores to have the ability to distribute both medical and recreational marijuana with proper licensing.

Mayor Amy Perschbacher began discussion by asking all those in attendance who were pro-reciprocity to stand and raise their hand. Twenty-four people threw their hands up in response. Only one person stood against the plan.

Consano is a local, medical marijuana dispensary that has publicly spoken out that it needs recreational licensing to keep up with other dispensaries in town.

Alex Ludwiczak, a Consano employee, shared his worries for the future of the business.

"Consano is not failing because of the products we offer ... the prices we offer those products at ... (or) due to a lack of demand," Ludwiczak said. "We're not

failing ... we're being choked out."

Gerald Griffin, resident of Mount Pleasant and president of GMG Public Affairs Consulting, suggested an alternative to reciprocity.

Griffin is not opposed to the idea, but fears legal issues will result for awarding recreational licenses to existing businesses without a competitive process.

Under Michigan Regulation and Taxation of Marijuana Act (MRTMA) a municipality may limit the number of marijuana establishment licenses. If the municipality chooses to do this then it must decide who receives the licensing through a competitive process.

Griffin recommends removing the cap on the number of licenses altogether.

"If you seem to think that there's going to be 15 or 20 dispensaries, this is not going to be the case," Griffin said. "We're going to look at the market to see if it would support it."

City Manager Aaron Desentz recommended not moving forward with the idea due to possible legal issues.

The commission decided to postpone the vote until it receives more information on removing licensing restrictions.

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It's time to start listening to local business owners

Now, more than ever, it's important to listen to local business owners.

My time at *Central Michigan Life* has given me the opportunity to understand the Mount Pleasant community. I get to hear what community members have to say and see firsthand the struggles some businesses face.

COVID-19 was a hard battle for businesses, and some are still struggling to navigate this pandemic. These businesses need all the help they can get as they continue to operate.

Not only that, but Central Michigan University's declining enrollment adds yet another issue that some local businesses have to deal with. While some businesses are adjusting and planning accordingly, others are nervous about what their future might hold.

As I prepare for graduation, I notice more closed storefronts. It is a tough time for local businesses in this city, and I think it is time we all start protecting the ones that are here before we are left with nothing but big corporations.

When I say this, I mean I want to see support from everyone — including CMU students.



Makayla Coffee
—
Community News Editor

If we, as students, are going to spend four years in this town it is important to support it, especially when businesses are begging for assistance.

These businesses need the community's help if they want to survive more than a couple of years in this city. It's time to start listening to local businesses and standing up for them when harmful ordinances are passed.

I was blown away at the community support I saw when I covered Taco Boy's drive-thru closure. Community members came together in favor of the local Mexican restaurant after the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) denied a variance for the restaurant's drive-thru in December 2021.

Many community members banded together to help the business not only

financially, but by speaking out as well through a change.org petition with nearly 3,000 signatures.

It was refreshing to see so many people listen to Taco Boy's frustrations and actually do something about it.

Why aren't we advocating for all local businesses the same as Taco Boy?

Other businesses, like Consano, continue to speak out at city commission meetings and receive little support.

Consano is a medical marijuana dispensary that has publicly spoken out about needing a recreational license to continue to find success within the city.

This business has been begging the city to grant it a recreational marijuana license since the city's decision to select JARS Cannabis and two Lume Cannabis Co. locations for recreational licensing.

At this week's city commission meeting, the topic of reciprocity for marijuana in the city was discussed. This reciprocity plan would allow all five retail marijuana dispensaries to distribute both medical and recreational marijuana with proper licensing.

I was stunned at how packed the room was with those in favor of the

plan. Despite the support and Consano once again pleading for a change, nothing was decided.

It was yet another meeting where I heard Consano beg the commission to take action. While I appreciate the support of those who showed up to the meeting, I want to see even more done for all of these local businesses. I want to see more conversation from those within this city.

Reach out to these business owners directly and follow public meetings, like city commission meetings. I want community members to not only understand what is going on within Mount Pleasant, but to also advocate for when decisions do not seem right.

At the end of the day, local businesses keep the community exciting and help the city grow. Isn't that what we want for Mount Pleasant?

I want to return to this city and see the restaurants, retail stores and other businesses that have made these past four years worth my time at CMU. It's time to start listening to the local businesses we love and advocating on their behalf before it is too late.

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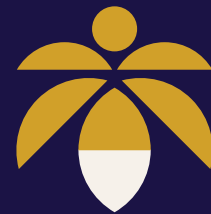
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