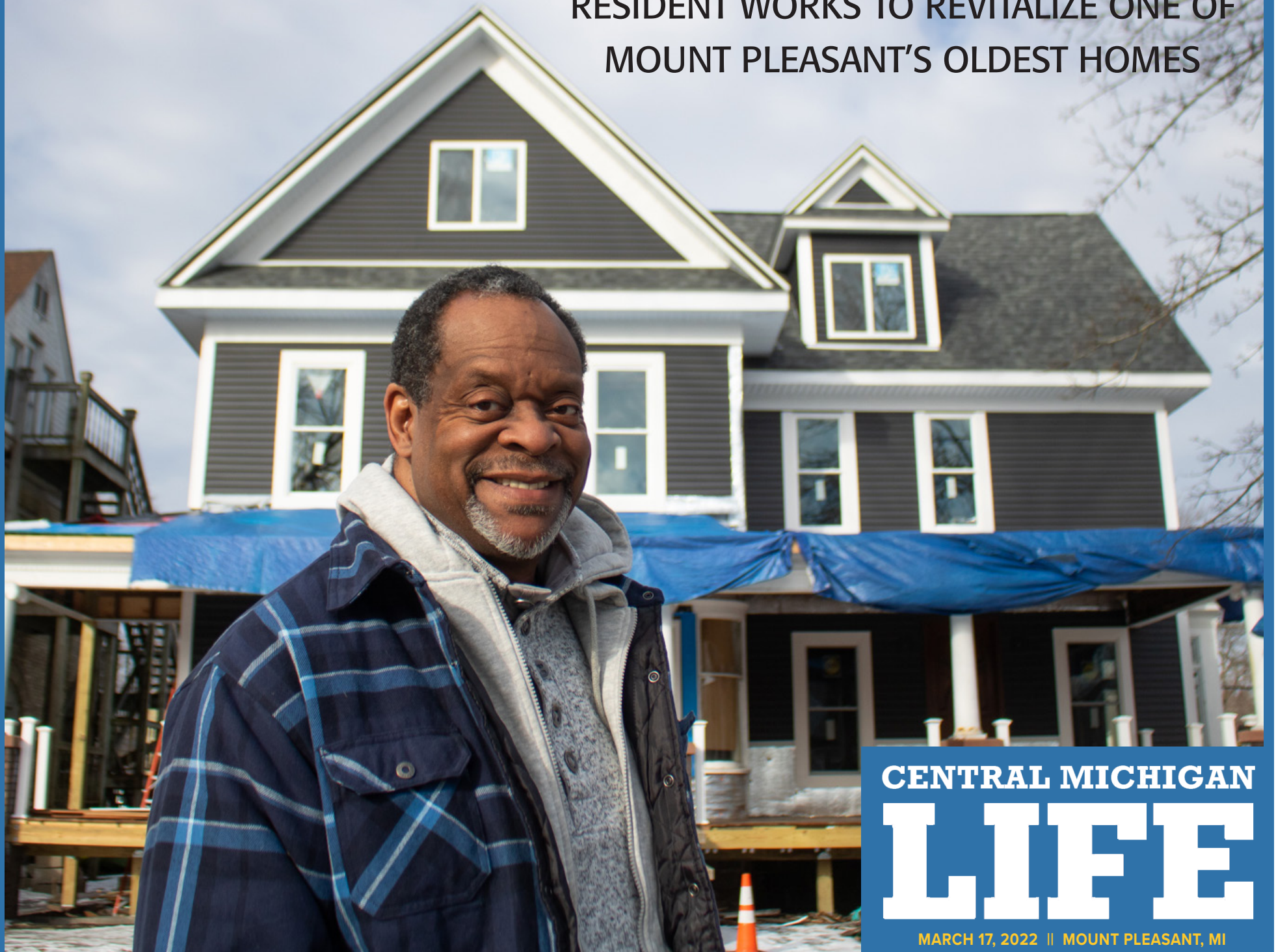


LABOR OF LOVE

RESIDENT WORKS TO REVITALIZE ONE OF
MOUNT PLEASANT'S OLDEST HOMES



CENTRAL MICHIGAN

LIFE

MARCH 17, 2022 || MOUNT PLEASANT, MI

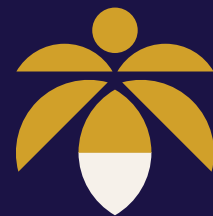
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Addy Wachter | Staff Photographer

Zeta Theta Pi holds a pie-in-the-face fundraiser to raise money for their sorority March 14 in front of the Bovee University Center.

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Ken Williams uses a saw to cut through the wood of his porch on Oct. 11, 2021 in Mount Pleasant, Mich. He and his friend took the majority of the porch apart by hand in four days.

REVIVING HISTORY

Man restores historic home

Breaks squeaked and engines roared as Detroit native Ken Williams pulled his 43-foot RV into the driveway of his new home at 502 S University Avenue on a late September evening.

Having nearly blindly purchased the property only weeks prior, he was about to embark on a massive journey to reconstruct one of Mount Pleasant's most historic homes.

Now, after six months, Williams, with the help of various contractors, have completed most of the work on the exterior of the house including the siding and the roof. Tarps and scaffolding are still scattered around the lawn.

He's finishing up maintenance on the front porch in addition to five major things inside: framing the walls, insulating, installing two HVAC systems, plumbing and electrical.

He said all that is left to do is "fit out the interior of the home" which he hopes to have done by late summer.

To the surrounding community, Williams' is more than just a new neighbor, he's a hard-working man that is helping to revive decades of history.

"It was a labor of love, so to speak," Williams said. "It will be a fun project."

House of History

According to "At Home in Earlier Mt. Pleasant Michigan" by Jack Westbrook found in the Clarke Historical Library, the 13-bedroom home and one-bedroom carriage home has housed families, couples, and organizations since the late 1800s.

It was built by William Richmond around 1875. Richmond was one of 232 men – out of 1100 in his division – to return home from fighting in the American Civil War. He was elected a trustee around the same time Mount Pleasant was organized as a village.

Richmond passed away in the early 1900s – starting a chain of family ownership until the 70s.

First, the house was acquired by Charles J. Meyers and his wife, Amelia. In the 30s, Amelia sold it to Laura Cramer who occupied the home until she died about a decade later.

Cramer's daughter took ownership of the house until her granddaughter, Julia Shirley, became the owner.

By the 1970s, the South University home came under a new type of ownership.

Like many other large homes near Central



(Left) The house at 502 S University Avenue in October 2021 before Ken Williams renovation. (Right) He poses in front of the property on Feb. 12.

Photo Illustration

Michigan University, the property was occupied by fraternities like Pi Kappa Phi, Theta Chi and, most recently, Phi Sigma Phi.

In 2002, then-CMU student Chris Davis, along with a dozen of his PSP brothers, moved into the three-story main house and two-story carriage house they called "the shack."

"We absolutely loved the house," Davis said. "It was a great gathering spot where we could all get together and hang out – play pool, play foosball."

Those fun times did not erase the years of neglect it experienced from the previous tenants and owners.

"There was a lot of damage when we moved into the house," Davis said. "And there wasn't a landlord that you call to fix stuff."

Almost immediately Davis and his fraternity brothers noticed errors originating from its

19th-century construction.

"I know that there were design flaws because the whole second floor was not level," he said. "When they added onto the original house it drew water all down by the upstairs bathroom... you couldn't see it but after years... it caused a lot of rot underneath the floors."

Davis lived there for a year but PSP used the house for about a decade.

By the 2010s, the historic home finally started to receive some much-needed repairs.

Mike Lents and his former wife, Allison Quast, bought the property in 2012 and planned to do a full renovation of both buildings.

In 2014, they moved into the completely re-done carriage house and planned to renovate the main house. Those plans were cut short by

their 2019 divorce.

From there, the fixer-upper was left to weather a few more winters without much maintenance.

Until William's, 64, came along. All it took was one tour of the house before he bought the property.

"On my way home, I decided to stop by this house just take a look at it. That was the very first time (I saw it) in-person," he said. "I met (Lents) and he showed me around and I saw his vision and what he had already done and said this will be a nice project."

Finishing the Fixer-Upper

Now, Williams is following through with Lents' original plan.

Alongside roofers, contractors, and builders, Williams has spent nearly every hour of daylight since his arrival reconstructing all parts of the house.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AURORA RAE

See HOUSE | 6

HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM 5

He started doing carpentry on the exterior and is working his way inside with the help of various contractors he hired from Detroit.

He plans to keep historically significant parts of the house like the glass fixtures that are over 100-years-old along with some columns and woodwork inside the house.

Williams said he learned most of his trade skills at a young age, from his dad and godfather.

“They taught me the fundamentals of building,” he said. “Any projects that they had cooking, I kind of was

“

“I have no doubt his investment will have a positive impact on the immediate surroundings and the community as a whole,”

Jacob Kain
City Planner

”

the labor unit.”

From Chicago, Williams relocated to Mount Pleasant as an ideal point in between his family and other properties in Chicago, Detroit, and Manton.

Upon moving to town, he lived in his RV, until it was winterized. Then, he moved into the carriage home and plans to move into the main house once it is finished. He made the 260-mile trip back and forth to his property in Chicago nearly every weekend in preparation to sell his home there. He finally sold it on Dec. 1.

Two days later, he transferred his belongings to his new Mount Pleasant residence from Chicago in a 53-foot Midwest Moving and Storage trailer. It took them all day, and well into the night, to empty the contents of the trailer into the carriage house and two Mount Pleasant Storage units.

A track record of hard work

Williams’ intense work ethic is nothing new. He said all the work he is putting into the house pales in comparison to his hard work throughout his career.

Williams received a degree in Sport and Recreation Management from Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie before embarking in a variety of jobs in sales and statistics.

In 1985, he “helped start” the now well-known Discover card.

“When I started there was something like, maybe 400 of us there,” he said. “There are now probably 22,000-23,000 people at that facility.”

He rose to be the “number one salesperson in the country.”

In 2004, an unlikely encounter on a plane flight landed him co-ownership of a paper shredding business called Information Protection Services of America.

“We went from basically no clients, to 30 clients and before you know it we were at something like \$2-3million in sales,” he said.

Williams eventually bought out the company in 2006 and named it The Shred Authority. He stayed with it for nearly two decades until he sold it to information management services company, Iron Mountain in 2019.

Now, after Williams made his large impact on the business world throughout his career he’s ready for retirement. Upon arriving in Mount Pleasant, his work is already having a positive impact on the surrounding community.

Mount Pleasant City Planner Jacob Kain said renovations like Williams often boost the value of surrounding real estate.

“I have no doubt his investment will have a positive impact on the immediate surroundings and the community as a whole,” Kain said.

Locals passing by on foot and in cars have stopped to introduce themselves and thank Williams for his efforts. He said the enthusiasm of the neighborhood has been an enjoyable part of renovating 502 S University Avenue.

When renovations are complete, Williams work will not only resurrect history and help the area, but it will also introduce another hardworking resident to the city of Mount Pleasant.

“It was just labor of love, so to speak,” he said.

“Everyone is excited about seeing this home being brought back to life,” he said.



A wooden door in the basement marks the entrance to the former owner’s father’s work room.



Contractors install new windows in Ken Williams house on Feb. 21, 2022.



Ken Williams looks for a screw with his friend on Feb. 21, 2022 at his Mount Pleasant home.



Ken Williams, right, stands on a ladder as his friend hands him a hammer and drill on Feb. 21, 2022 in Mount Pleasant, Mich.



Ken Williams cuts a piece of wood using a hand saw on Feb. 21, 2022 in his Mount Pleasant home

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine began Feb. 24, many Americans found themselves wondering what started the conflict and how to stay updated on the situation—especially a busy college audience.

According to David Jesuit, chairperson of Central Michigan University's Political Science and Public Administration Department, the complicated conflict stretches back hundreds of years and cannot be summarized by the past week's events.

The area that is now modern Ukraine, Jesuit said, has almost always been contested through history by different empires and countries laying claim to parts of its territory. He said Ukraine was part of the former Soviet Union along with Russia. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) stood in opposition to the Soviet Union, Jesuit said.

Jesuit said he believes President Vladimir Putin wishes to restore some of Russia's former Soviet empire, with Ukraine as a part of it. Combined with this and the "insult" of Ukraine's wishes to join NATO, Jesuit said Putin feels entitled to invade Ukraine and regain control of the country. He said the Russian government has likely been planning the invasion for a long time.

After earning his Ph.D. in political science, Jesuit specializes in international relations and comparative politics. He wrote his dissertation on European politics and teaches a class called "Europe and the European Union."

Why has Russia chosen to invade Ukraine now?

(Russia) has been building on this for a while, so I think this is a culmination of what is anticipated as (Putin's) objective. Many experts are saying that Putin was waiting until the Olympics were over. In 2008, when (Putin) invaded the country of Georgia, the Chinese were upset that he upstaged the Olympics. That's one reason. Others were saying the ground had to be sufficiently frozen so all the heavy equipment could roll over the ground, like tanks and heavy trucks.

...Putin was planning this for far longer as part of his objective to restore a Russian Empire and reverse what he has called the greatest catastrophe of the 20th Century: the collapse of the Soviet Union.

How can people stay up to date with quality information?

You need to refer to multiple sources, which includes international sources. That includes the BBC and Deutsche Welle from Germany.

...Don't go to the source that just reinforces your political biases. We know that Fox is going to give you Republican spin. We know that MSNBC is going to give you Democratic spin. Go ahead and read those sources—opinion journalism is important, but go beyond that.

What is the likelihood of the U.S. going to war over this situation?

I don't think it's likely, but there are a couple of scenarios. One would be a successful cyber attack on United States military capabilities that leads to rapid escalation. That's a World War III scenario. Another is the invasion of a NATO country if Putin is irrational enough to think that he could get away with invading Estonia, for example. It's been very clear to me from the beginning that the U.S. cannot allow an attack on another NATO country.

Q&A



David Jesuit

Central Michigan Life spoke with Jesuit to discuss why it is important for Americans to stay informed on the Russia-Ukraine war and why it is relevant, even to a college campus.

Patrick Bouman ■ Staff Reporter

If the U.S. goes to war, should young people be worried about getting drafted into military service?

No, they don't want you. I'm serious, the all-volunteer army is far superior than the conscript or draft army. They're committed, they're well trained and they want to be there, generally speaking. The use of technology, in particular, is much more advanced. They don't really want a drafted army in the modern battlefield. There are possibilities, but I think they're very, very unlikely. Having said that, if you had asked me three years ago if we would have a two-year pandemic, I would have said 'no, that's very unlikely.'

What are sanctions and how will Americans see the effects of them?

Sanctions are a very broad term for the use of economic punishments. In this case, they're targeted. A sanction could be not importing more oil or vodka. These are targeting individuals — part of the ruling elite — and trying to go after Putin's money...We haven't seen the real effect of (American sanctions). I'm not aware of any sanctions yet that cut off any oil or gas exports. It's just the instability—markets don't like instability. It doesn't really have to do with the actual supply of oil, it has to do with fears about the future supply.

What are the best and worst case scenarios coming out of this?

The best-case scenario is Putin loses power and somehow there's a new government in Russia that has willingness and desire to move in a direction of a freer market. Worst case is World War III; an attack on Estonia or Putin being this messianic megalomaniac like people have depicted Hitler, which isn't necessarily true, but that's certainly evil that he can't be deterred.

...It's disturbing that (Putin) has been far too quick to allude to—and not even allude but to specifically reference—the nuclear arsenal that Russia possesses. These are thermo-nuclear fusion bombs. I mean these are like end of the world bombs. You don't mention those things lightly, and he's been far too flippant. You don't need to remind us. Why are we talking about your nukes? Some have said he's doing that to take attention so now we're talking about his nukes and not talking about military difficulties that the conventional Russian military is having in defeating the Ukrainian army.

How can we support people on CMU's campus that are feeling the effects of the war?

Just be very sensitive. (Political Science faculty member) Prakash Adhikari is a great person to talk to because he deals with people who have been forcibly displaced. If you know a person who has family over there, sometimes I think it's almost better to allow them to bring it up, rather than saying, 'oh my gosh is your family okay?' Don't assume they want to talk about it. Allow them to bring it up, at least until there's a little bit more certainty because that could bring up trauma that they might've experienced.

Follow the news and remember that if you're paying higher prices to fill up a tank of gas, that's a minor inconvenience compared to what's happening to people in Ukraine.

What outcome do you hope to see in the near future?

I just hope that any escalation is managed — that there's no invasion of a NATO country. I think Putin is almost certainly going to be able to occupy Ukraine, despite the real heroic activities of Ukrainians. I'm just hopeful that Putin comes to his senses sooner rather than later and sees that this won't work.

LIFE IN BRIEF

City Commission praises local businesses, discusses road reconstruction at meeting

By Collin Periatt
Staff Reporter

At its March 14 meeting, the Mount Pleasant City Commission awarded the 42nd annual Community Improvement Awards, discussed street reconstruction and highlighted Green Tree Cooperative Market's success.

The commission meeting began with the planning commission's presentation of its community improvement awards led by City Planner Jacob Kain.

"These awards have been given out by the planning commission since 1979," Kain said. "They recognize projects, improvement and investment (for Mount Pleasant) and we are really excited about this year's winners."

The commercial category winner was Lume Cannabis Co. with locations on both East Broomfield and North Mission. Lume is one of the first recreational marijuana dispensaries in the area.

For the residential category, Joanne Curtiss was deemed the winner for improvements to her home located on Oak Street.

The mixed-use category winner was

local nonprofit, Michigan Community Capital located on West Broadway.

Commissioners later praised Green Tree Cooperative Market for bringing in new jobs.

Green Tree had pledged to create 10 low to moderate-income jobs. The commission announced the business had doubled that amount after opening its new storefront on Broadway Street.

"(Green Tree) proved to be a wonderful asset for the community around the board and considering the job creation locally, local vendors and producers are brought into the co-op for sales. I just think it's an all-around wonderful thing," Mount Pleasant resident Ray Davies said.

The city then awarded McQuirk Sand and Gravel the contract for the Illinois Street reconstruction project which equates to \$846,365 plus additional expenses. The project includes repaving the street and adding pedestrian lighting.

The city also approved a grant contract with the Michigan Department of Transportation for the reconstruction of Brown Street. MDOT will contribute \$375,000 for this in grant funds.

Greater Lansing Food Bank to provide drive-thru food distribution March 25

By Gabriel Ohnren
Staff Reporter

The Greater Lansing Food Bank will host a drive-thru mobile food distribution at the MidMichigan Medical Center, 4851 E. Pickard Rd., on March 25.

The food bank will distribute a variety of nutritional foods to those in need including canned food, boxed food, meat, dairy and produce.

Registration will open at 9 a.m. where cars can line up and attendees will be asked to provide their name and the amount of people within their household. The distribution of food will begin at 10 a.m. and end at either 12 p.m. or whenever inventory runs out.

The food distribution was originally only open to Isabella County residents, but the food bank decided to open it to anyone in need of food.

The food bank requests that those attending make room in their trunks so that volunteers can place any food in the back of the vehicle. This allows the person driving to not have to leave their car.

They also request attendees take

proper precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a mask or face covering. Those with symptoms of COVID-19 are asked to stay home and arrange for another person to pick the food up for them.

The Greater Lansing Food Bank began hosting drive-thru mobile food distributions as a response to the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the food bank discovered it worked well.

"It was birthed to get food out in the Mount Pleasant area for people in a safe manner," Marketing and Communications Manager Michael Steibel said. "It was kind of a result of the pandemic, but it just ended up being something that people really liked doing, so we kept it going."

The food bank expects the Mount Pleasant drive-thru mobile food distribution to have a large turnout, especially this time of year.

"The turnout varies from mobile to mobile and depending on the day and time, but usually the one in Mount Pleasant is full," Steibel said.

For more information about the drive-thru mobile food distribution, call the Greater Lansing Food Bank at (517) 908-3680

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HAMLET



Written by

William Shakespeare

Adapted by

Robert Richmond

Directed by Guest Artist and Alumna

Kelli Crump



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SENIOR N

DeMarinis, Tong help Chippewa gymnastics clinch

By Ryan Colores
Staff Reporter

In what could be described as an emotional tribute to the pair of senior Chippewas set to depart from the gymnastics team following this season, McQuirk Arena roared its applause as Sierra DeMarinis and Morgan Tong took the floor for one last time in front of the crowd they have called home for the past four years.

And what a senior night it was.

Central Michigan clinched the regular season Mid-American Conference title on Friday night with its win over Ball State. A successful senior night by all accounts, the seniors more than did their part to secure the victory for CMU in its regular-season finale.

DeMarinis has been the epitome of senior leadership for the Chippewas this season. Between a surplus of team-high marks and words of encouragement for teammates, DeMarinis has clearly embraced a leadership role this season, and CMU has benefited greatly.

Friday's meet reflected this notion, as the senior managed to extend her streak of consecutive scores of 9.900+ in the floor routine to five with a score of 9.900 and another event victory to her name. Throw in a pair of 9.800+ marks in the vault and the balance beam, and it's rather clear to see just how much she has meant to the team not only

this year, but throughout her career at Chippewa.

Tong's impact on the team was felt from the start of this season as a reigning national title holder, expected to lead the team. Unfortunately, a majority of the season was lost to injury until late February at the Mid-American Championships. She managed to knock off the rust with a score of 9.850 as the anchor on the floor, which was good for the team's score and top honor.

While Tong has been a leader on the floor with her teammates, DeMarinis, the leader in the air, with injury seemed to have a similar impact on the team.

Indeed, the impact of the seniors was emphasized even when it comes to the future. In a position to compete for a spot as CMU freshman, Kmieciak didn't have a regular-season meet at Ball State and Western Michigan. Pleasant for an inexperienced athlete, a lot on her plate for the championships next Saturday, she isn't worried.

"She's a very a



MARCH 18

11-2



FOOL

LIVELWITH

IGHT SPECIAL

ch share of MAC regular season championship in dazzling home finale

throughout her entire career as a

also cannot be overstated. Coming as the reigning MAC balance beam expectations were high for the senior. An injury sidelined Tong for a season, and she was unable to compete in the meet — just one month shy of the MAC regular season. It did not take her much time to get back, however, as Tong notched a robust performance as the anchor of the balance beam lineup, earning a second-place finish in the meet-high individual beam event.

MacDonald hadn't had as much time sharing the leadership with her teammates in competition this year as she had provided while dealing with injuries. It is hard to have had a significant influence on the team as a senior.

The impact of senior leadership cannot be overstated in NCAA athletics, especially for freshmen who find themselves contributing in their first season, as seen with Lia Kmiecik this season. She will make her debut until Central's fifth meet on Feb. 11th, when Michigan State and Michigan made their way to Mt. Pleasant for a state duel. In having such little experience at the collegiate level, Kmiecik will have to head into the MAC Championship with confidence. Head coach Christine MacDonald said, however,

"She's a accomplished competitor prior to



Nate Pappas | Staff photographer

Junior Ashley Veglucci celebrates with her teammates after a successful floor routine March 11, in McGuirk Arena.

college," MacDonald said. "We really try (to emphasize) just keeping it simple, just do gymnastics. She's a strong junior-olympic competitor, so having her already with that background, she knows how to compete."

Elsewhere, Central Michigan received a healthy dose of top-five finishes up and down the roster. Sophomore Katie Kowalski was the only other Chippewa aside from DeMarinis to post a mark of 9.900+, as she scored 9.900 in the vault rotation, and earned a second-place finish in the only event not won by a Chippewa. Also earning top-five finishes in the rotation were Avah Anthes, Hannah DeMers, Kmiecik and DeMarinis.

The floor lineup continued to impress as the results of the event were littered with maroon and gold. In fact, the top five performances in the event all belonged to Chippewas. Additionally, tonight marked the second consecutive home meet in which CMU entered its final rotation trailing, and ended up winning the meet thanks to its floor lineup. The event has been Central Michigan's bread and butter, particularly in the latter half of the regular season.

CMU will surely be hoping to build upon its achievements on its senior night next weekend in Ypsilanti, Michigan, where Eastern Michigan is slated to host the MAC Championships. A performance similar to that of last season (Chippewas claimed two individual event MAC titles) would put a bow nicely on a season defined by strong leadership and camaraderie. The meet is scheduled for 2 p.m. March 19.

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MARCH
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IRISH DRINK SPECIALS
(9AM-11PM)
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O'Kelly's
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GUNNAR & THE GRIZZLY BOYS

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FEATURING SOLO ACCOUSTIC MITCH REETZ

JEDI MIND TRIP | MUSIC by | GUNNAR & THE GRIZZLY BOYS

FOOD TRUCKS | IRISH DRINK DEALS
TWO STAGES | SILENT DISCO |
BIG FAM BANDS ON INSIDE STAGE



O'KELLY'S PRESENTS
ST. PATRICK'S
BLOCK PARTY

GIANT HEATED BEER TENT

O'Kelly's
 Sports Bar & Grille

THURSDAY MARCH 17

Performing on the inside stage **WAYSIDE NIGHTCLUB**

MA BAKER

SET TIME
 6-7:30 PM &
 9-10 PM

TOP NOTCH

SET TIME
 10-10:30 PM

ABSTRACT GENERATION

SET TIME
 3-4 PM

TRIFOCAL

SET TIME
 7:30-9 PM



REDOLENCE

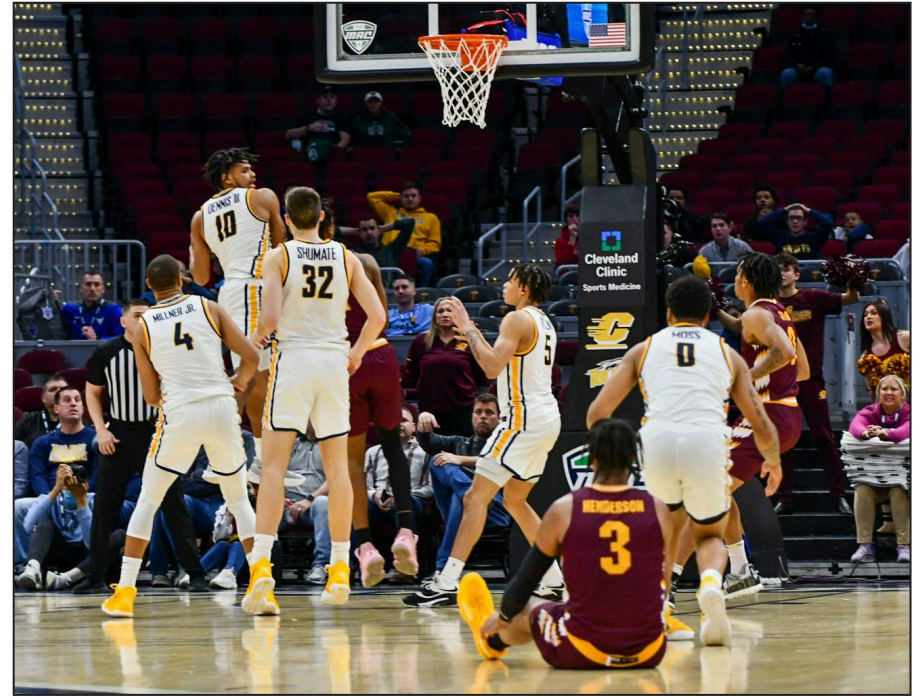
SET TIME
 4-5:30 PM

CMU FALLS JUST SHORT



Abby Jenkins | Staff photographer

Czech Republic junior Miroslav Staff dunks before the game on March 10 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio.



Abby Jenkins | Staff photographer

Dallas, Texas graduate student Harrison Henderson sits at the end of the game March 10 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio.



Abby Jenkins | Staff photographer

Chippewa fans stand in disappointment during the game March 10 at Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse in Cleveland, Ohio. The final score was 71-72.

Cosens Martial Arts invites students to learn self-defense, life-long skills

By Jasmine Smith
Staff Reporter

Building confidence, learning defense skills, developing patience and having fun are just a few of the life skills guaranteed by the coaches at Cosens Martial Arts.

Cosens MMA offers muay thai, kickboxing, taekwondo, western-style boxing, krav maga, karate, wrestling, jiu jitsu and judo. It also offers life skills programs that are martial arts-based for children.

The Mount Pleasant location has occupied the property at 2206 S. Mission St. since last year.

Cosens was started by Charlie Cosens, a cage fighter who turned into a life skills coach. Now there are four other branches across Michigan in Bay City, Midland, Grand Blanc and Saginaw. A location in Flushing is also in the process of being created.

Coach Tom O'Connor from Detroit grew up doing martial arts and now has decades of experience. Over time, he developed a passion for teaching.

"I enjoy working with the next generation. I want to help the next generation get physically fit... get confident (and) I want them to have really good self-discipline," O'Connor said.

There are 180 students attending classes at the Mount Pleasant location. Most are children, but about 50 of those students are adults.

Farmington senior Cameron Johnson said he takes classes to learn self-defense and for the exercise. He said the classes also teach him more about determination and hard work.

"I'm very confident in being able to handle myself. My favorite part of the class is actually the live action portion where we apply what we learn and go up against other students in the class," Johnson said. "I recommend that everyone come and join. You will be in shape, learn self-defense and it's just something exciting to do."

O'Connor offered some entry level self-defense tips for Central Michigan University students. He said it all starts with being aware of your surroundings and being prepared for the worst-case scenario.

Cosens offers techniques such as how to deliver and block a punch in its introductory level class to help students.

While learning to defend themselves, O'Connor said students will also be taught how to focus on accomplishments. The coaches test adult students quarterly and all students once a month



Nate Pappas | Staff Photographer

Black belt student Emily Rummer spars with a coach at Cosens on March 3. on their technique.

"We always tell kids, 'You got to focus,' but to really learn how to focus is a whole different skill set," O'Connor said. "That's what I would say is our biggest advantage for students is that we can show you how to focus and to block out some of the distractions."

He said joining is easy. The program is structured so students can start anytime. Those interested do not need to wait for a new session to begin.

"The lifetime benefit of martial arts is fitness," O'Connor said. "It's self-confidence. It's patience."

| OPINION

Why every student needs to watch 'When they See Us'

A month ago, the Exonerated Five were unfamiliar to me. Now, Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam and Korey Wise are five names I cannot forget.

Some people recognize their story as the "Central Park Five Case" or "Central Park Jogger Case".

For Black History Month, the Office of Multicultural Academic Student Services hosted weekly viewings of the four-part miniseries, "When They See Us," a retelling of the Central Park Five Case.

The mini series colors the black and white lines drawn by police and media, and breathes life into the story of the Exonerated Five who never got the justice they deserved in 1989.

It's a story of American history.

On April 19th, 1989, a white jogger was raped and nearly killed in Central Park. Following the assault, the five boys aged 14-16 were accused and abused by the police, coerced into false confessions and would soon become victims of a relentlessly racist court case.

Despite no physical evidence connecting them to the crime, racism and public fear were enough to convince the



Jill
Harrington
—
Staff
Reporter

jury that the Black and LatinX teenagers were guilty. They were incarcerated for six to 12 years each and were finally exonerated when serial rapist Matias Reyes confessed to the crime in 2002.

Freshman Shreya Abraham said she didn't know all of the details of the case before viewing the film. Now, she encourages others to watch and learn from "When They See Us".

"I feel like a lot of us have had the privilege of not knowing," she said. "People should definitely watch this series so they can understand, and have a better glimpse into what the world is actually like."

The beginning of the series briefly depicts their lives before the conviction

- boys who would hang out with their friends and go on dates. I did the same things when I was 15, but the Exonerated Five never got the chance to have the childhood I did.

They were never given a fair chance to prove their innocence.

To be falsely framed and convicted, to be failed by the justice system, to be thrown back into "normal life" after growing up in the system: these are all real-life obstacles that I could not even consider before watching "When They See Us".

As a journalism major, it was important for me to see how inaccurate media reporting propelled their false conviction. Headlines describe the boys as a "Wolf Pack".

Donald Trump took out full page ads in New York newspapers wanting to bring back the death penalty following the case.

Words can be weapons, and the media can have a major influence over the public view. There is power in a punchy headline and a terrifying one-sided story.

Salaam said after their exoneration, there was no "tsunami of media" like the

one that had emerged when the world thought they were guilty.

"The criminal justice system says that you're innocent until proven guilty," Salaam said. "But if you're Black or brown, you are guilty and have to prove yourself innocent. And I think that is the difference, that two Americas that is often talked about."

"When They See Us" demonstrates the dangers of inaccurate media, but the miniseries itself is an example of how media can be used for good. It amplifies the voices of those who were never heard and retells the true story of the Exonerated Five, who have all been impacted differently by their experience.

The series is eye-opening and at times difficult to watch, but it provides a much-needed glimpse into the racist history of false convictions in America. If you have a Netflix subscription, I highly recommend taking time to watch and reflect on "When They See Us".

"It's something that we could use to grow," sophomore Ajibola Adijun said. "It's something that we shouldn't forget, something that we should keep reminding ourselves."

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LET THE SUN SHINE

Help us hold our public officials accountable all year long

EDITORIAL

This week, *Central Michigan Life* is joined by hundreds of other media outlets, civic groups and engaged citizens around the country in celebrating Sunshine Week.

This special initiative was started 17 years ago by a group of news editors who made it their mission to educate the public about the importance of open government, public records and local journalism.

This year, we challenge the Central Michigan University community to learn right along with us.

As students and employees of this university, our livelihoods often depend on this institution sharing the whole, unedited truth.

Unfortunately, that doesn't always happen.

The First Amendment protects journalistic freedom, but citizens everywhere often depend on laws like the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Open Meetings Act to access government documents to ensure our leaders are being truly transparent.

CM Life uses Michigan's "sunshine laws," in our reporting every single day.

Last semester, we submitted a FOIA request for the contract between CMU and its new food provider, Chartwells. The goal of this request was to understand a complex money exchange

that will impact CMU for years to come.

In 2018, it was a FOIA request that uncovered documents that the Office of Student Conduct used to investigate the allegations against a banned fraternity. The documents revealed instances of hazing, sexual assault and drugging women.

Without these laws, much of what you read and watch in *CM Life* and other news outlets wouldn't exist. Coverage of crime, court proceedings, government meetings and more would only be what leaders choose to share.

It's because of sunshine laws that any student, faculty or staff member at CMU can see how much top-level administrators are paid, how much it costs to conduct their executive searches and how the university spends our tuition dollars every semester.

Despite these valuable laws, public officials still try to withhold information.

Submitting a FOIA request is often a lengthy process that involves paying a hefty fee. Even after waiting and forking over hundreds of dollars, there's no guarantee the information

you seek will be provided.

It's been months since CMU's victory at the Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl, and we still don't know how much the final payout was. *CM Life* continues to search for an answer despite multiple interviews and a FOIA request that provided no useful information.

Despite the shortcomings, our right to dive deeply into the activities of local, county, state and federal officials is protected by the strength of sunshine laws.

Help us remind everyone of that important fact. The importance of open government should be acknowledged year-round.

You can continue to be an advocate for transparency by demanding answers to your questions. The easiest way to do that is by staying engaged with your local media outlets.

Read our stories and share your thoughts. To submit a letter to the editor or guest column for *CM Life* to publish, send it to editor@cm-life.com.

Continue to educate yourself on the importance of government transparency. Follow the News Leaders Association, the founders of Sunshine Week for more information.

Sunshine Week is for everyone — continue to help us hold our leaders accountable.

All letters to the editor or guest columns must include a name, address, affiliation (if any) and phone number for verification. Anonymous letters will not be printed, except under extraordinary circumstances. *CM 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 may be submitted but must remain under 750 words. Published versions may be shorter than the original submission. *CM Life* reserves the right to print any original content as a letter or guest column. Please allow up to five days for a staff response, which will include an expected date of publication. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Central Michigan Life, the independent voice of Central Michigan University, is edited and published by students of Central Michigan University every Thursday during the fall and spring semesters. The newspaper's online edition, cm-life.com, contains all of the material published in print, and is updated on an as-needed basis. *Central Michigan Life* serves the CMU and Mount Pleasant communities, and is under the jurisdiction of the independent Student Media Board of Directors. Dave Clark serves as Director of Student Media at CMU and is the adviser to the newspaper. Articles and opinions do not necessarily reflect the position or opinions of Central Michigan University. *Central Michigan Life* is a member of the Associated Press, the Michigan Press Association, the Michigan Collegiate Press Association, the Associated Collegiate Press, College Newspaper Business & Advertising Managers Association, the Mount Pleasant Area Chamber of Commerce, Central Michigan Home Builders Association, Mount Pleasant Housing Association and the Mount Pleasant Downtown Business Association. The newspaper's online provider is SN Works.

Central Michigan Life is distributed throughout the campus and at numerous locations throughout Mount Pleasant. Non-university subscriptions are \$75 per academic year. Back copies are available at 50 cents per copy, or \$1 if mailed. Photocopies of stories are 25 cents each. Digital copies of photographs published in *Central Michigan Life* are available upon request at specified costs.

Central Michigan Life's editorial and business offices are located at 436 Moore Hall, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48859; telephone (989) 774-3493 or 774-LIFE.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Send to editor@cm-life.com

We call on the CMU community to stand with Ukrainian people

TO THE EDITOR,

We would like to express our heartfelt sorrow and dismay with the Russian government's appalling attack on Ukraine. We call on the CMU community to stand with Ukraine.

- We know that this unjust war is having horrific effects on the lives of Ukrainian citizens. We stand with you. We admire your bravery and wish we could do more to help.

- For our CMU students, faculty and staff who have family or friends in Ukraine, we stand with you.

- For the tens of thousands of Michigan residents who are from Ukraine or whose families have Ukrainian heritage, we stand with you. We are you.

- For members of the CMU community and Michiganders who have connections to Ukraine's neighbors and to residents of the countries who are working to help those fleeing the war in Ukraine and who now fear for the safety of their own countries: we stand with you.

- For residents of Russia who are brave



National flag of Ukraine

enough to take to the streets to oppose your government's actions, we appreciate the risks that you are taking to call for an end to the war on Ukraine.

Our slogan is "We do." So, what can we do? We can show our support for Ukrainians who are fighting against the war and make it known that we are opposed to the war. We can find ways to help the Ukrainians that have been forced to flee their country. Once the fighting ends, we can find ways to help those whose homes and cities have been needlessly destroyed.

Wear yellow and blue, or post sunflowers

on social media. Express your support for Ukraine to your government representatives. Attend rallies against the war. Donate to charities that are helping those forced to leave Ukraine. And if you have friends or family in Ukraine, tell them that we care – that we stand with Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini! Heroiam slava!

Sincerely, CMU faculty, staff and students,
Shasta Sabo, Mallary Greenlee-Wacker, Michael Sceniak, Mark Wacker, Jennifer Schisa, Megi Kourteva, Thomas Gehring, Traci Goldsworthy, Philip Oshel, Kaitlyn Whitefoot, Kirsten Nicholson, Sydney Byrne, Dylan Powell, Travis Rainey, Cynthia Damer, Dustin Brewer, Xantha Karp, Nancy Seefelt, Steve Gorsich, Jessica Lahr, Michael Conway, Jessica Lapp, Mariana Rosca, Steve Juris, Jesse Bakke, Eric Linton, Deb Linton, Daelyn Woolnough, Michelle Steinhilb, Blake Cahill, Yannick Marchalant, Madelyn Offer, Karim Johnson, Shanna Wenzlick, Kevin Park, Julien Rossignol, Liz Alm, and Deric Learman.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

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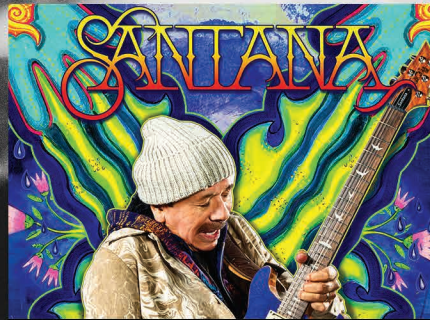
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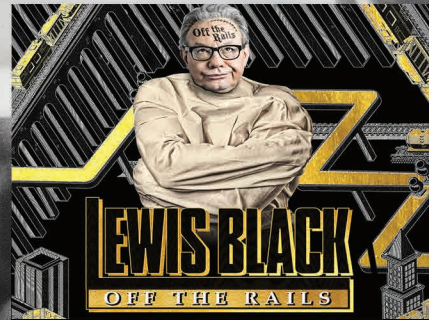
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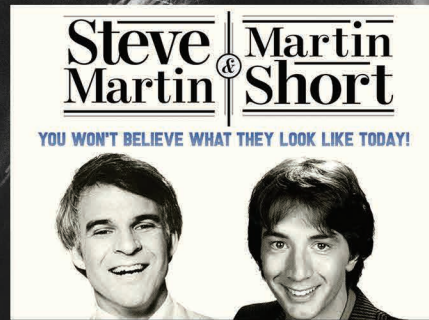
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