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FINDING LOVE, IDENTITY

Alumni couple share story of meeting and falling in love at CMU

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PHOTO HIGHLIGHT

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Nate Pappas | Staff Photographer
Jackson senior Victoria Teachout gives students their textbooks on Jan 11, in the Bovee University Center. Due to the rise in COVID-19 cases, students had to place orders for their books online.

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A week of events are scheduled starting Jan. 17. The Tunnel of Oppression has been rescheduled for February.

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WE'RE BACK!



FIRST WEEKEND BACK TO CLASSES WITH OKELLY'S



Aurora Rae | News Editor
Victoria Sorensen, right, and Dawn, left,
pose for a portrait with their children, Olivia,
back left, and Jacob, back right, at the
clubhouse of their apartment complex in
Natick, MA on Nov. 27, 2021.

Fighting hate for a lifetime of love

Alumni couple reflect on overcoming discrimination while at CMU and their 26 years of marriage to one another

By **Gina Hofbauer**
Staff Reporter

Victoria and Dawn Sorensen say that love works in mysterious ways.

It was the beginning of the Fall 1991 semester. Dawn was looking for new roommates in Robinson Hall, she approached Room 229.

“I’m looking for a room and you have a space,” Dawn said to her fellow CMU freshman, then Victoria Grandy. “I’m going to move in with you.”

It took a few months to get out of that awkward first phase.

“We didn’t talk a whole lot that first semester,” Victoria said. “It was not until the (spring) semester that we started hanging out more and just doing more things together.”

Neither of them knew that they would go from roommates to life partners.

Today, the couple has been happily married for 26 years. They share two children and a home in Massachusetts. They look back on their time at Central Michigan University fondly and recall the by-chance meeting that started it all.

Victoria and Dawn remember attending on-campus events like theatre performances and art shows. Victoria recalls visiting a yogurt shop in downtown Mount Pleasant.

With more time came a greater bond.

That following fall, a year after Dawn made her surprise entrance, they began dating.

The two women came to CMU for different reasons. From Crystal Valley, Dawn was studying history and Victoria, who is from West Branch, was studying psychology.

Coming to college meant finally being able to explore their identities.

“For Dawn, it all made sense. It kind of clicked and she was good,” Victoria said. “For me, it was a lot more confusing – eventually identifying as bisexual and trying to figure out what that meant.”

At the time, the early 90s were a transformative period for gay rights. In 1993, it was estimated that up to one million people marched on Washington protesting for legal rights for the LGBTQ+ community.

This was partly caused by the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy enforced by the U.S. military which allowed gay people to serve, but they were banned from speaking about their homosexuality which led to thousands of men and women being discharged from the military.

CMU was where the couple found family and support through their friends. The pair were members of the Gay-Lesbian Association for Student Support (GLASS) and involved with the Wesley Foundation which still stands on the corner of Preston and Washington streets.

“We supported each other,” Jon Humiston, a former GLASS member from 1992 to 1997 said. “We helped each other navigate our complexities of the campus climate and dealing with roommates and negative situations across campus.”

Victoria and Dawn received a mix of responses from their friends and family when they started dating.

“Most of my close friends were fine with it but I think there are definitely people we lost as friends,” Victoria said. “The world was just a really different place. There were a lot of people that didn’t know we were a couple.”

Victoria recalls their first date to a theater in Alma. The reason for going out of town was that they were less likely to be seen by their peers at CMU.

Despite any adversity, Victoria said marriage just felt like the natural next step in their relationship.

“My thought was that just because it wasn’t legal doesn’t mean we don’t deserve to have that,” Victoria said.

There was no grand gesture or proposal. Just a simple question from Victoria; “Do you wanna get married?”

The couple attempted to post a wedding announcement in *The Morning Sun* newspaper, as engaged couples often did at the time. They were denied publication.

They instead turned to *Central Michigan Life* who published a full article “Lesbian couple to be married” in the Oct. 23, 1995 print edition.

See **LOVE** | 6

Courtesy Photo | Victoria Sorensen
Victoria and Dawn Sorensen pose on their wedding day. They were married in 1995 at the Wesley Foundation.



LOVE | CONTINUED FROM 5

In the story, Victoria and Dawn describe their wedding as no different than the union of a man and woman. They were also asked about their parent's reaction to the news.

"The couple sent out 80 invitations to the wedding and expect approximately 50 to 60 people to attend," the story read. "But both Grandy's and Sorensen's fathers are not planning to attend the wedding."

Twenty-six years and two children later, Dawn's father has grown to accept their relationship. Victoria's father died, but she says some extended family came around to acceptance.

At the time things were much more difficult.

After the *CM Life* article was published the community began to express its opinions.

"There were threats of people protesting," Victoria said. "There were letters sent to the editor concerned for the paper after the article came out."

The day before the ceremony, they got a call from their pastor at the Wesley Foundation which is run by the United Methodist Church. The church received lots of pressure to call off the wedding.

Even with the criticism, the pastor, Rev. Steven Michael Smith – who the couple were close with – wanted to go through with the

wedding – even suggesting they move the ceremony to his own house.

Victoria and Dawn recall receiving a great majority of their support from their friends made at GLASS and the Wesley Foundation.

It was that support from their friends that helped the couple through their whole wed-

“
My thought was that just because it wasn't legal doesn't mean we don't deserve to have (a wedding)
”

Victoria Sorensen

ding planning process. They didn't have much money. The big day had to be budgeted.

Yet again, they overcame the obstacles.

Even without legal recognition, the wedding went on as planned at the Wesley Foundation.

Shortly after, the couple signed power of attorney documents which granted them the

power to make medical and financial decisions for one another.

"I don't think it was our dream wedding or anything," Victoria said. "For a long time, we talked about doing a renewal or celebration, like a redo, but I think there was a lot of special things about it."

The couple moved from Michigan to Massachusetts in 1999 for Dawn to attend grad school. During this time, the couple decided they wanted to grow a family of their own. Victoria carried both of the couple's children, Jacob and Olivia, by having a friend who was also a CMU graduate be the donor.

With the coming and going of all these milestones – Victoria and Dawn were still not a federally recognized married couple.

It wasn't until Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage in 2004, that the life-long partners had the opportunity to be officially wed in the eyes of the state.

The couple laughed saying the only thing that changed for them was filing their taxes together. They had committed, loved and stood by each other for decades, the only change was it finally being accepted by others.

As the couple reflects on their time at CMU, they agree on one thing – it gets better.

CMU now has many resources dedicated to support those in the LGBTQ+ community. The Office of LGBTQ+ Services is in the Bovee

University Center in room 110A.

Spectrum is a student organization centered around education and socializing with other members of the queer community. The group meets at 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays via WebEx.

"Find a trusted friend, don't feel like you have to label yourself," Victoria said. "Do what

“
There is a whole big life out there beyond CMU just waiting. You are loved, even if you don't know it,
”

Dawn Sorensen

feel right and that's OK if that changes."

Victoria and Dawn never expected to find love and identity at CMU, but 26 years later they're grateful for the time spent in Mount Pleasant.

"There is a whole big life out there beyond CMU just waiting. You are loved, even if you don't know it," Dawn said. "You are loved."



Courtesy Photo | Victoria Sorensen

Victoria (left) and Dawn (right) Sorensen pose in front of their dorm room in Robinson Hall.

Aurora Rae | News Editor

Victoria and Dawn Sorensen pose for a portrait at the clubhouse of their apartment complex in Natick, MA on Nov. 27, 2021.

LIFE IN BRIEF

Public ice rink opens in Island Park, parks department releases guidelines

By Staff Reports

Central Michigan University students were welcomed back to Mount Pleasant for the Spring 2022 semester with snow on the ground and near-freezing temperatures – but Michigan winters aren't all bad.

The city parks department opened its public ice rink Monday. It's located on the south softball field in Island Park. The rink is 54 feet by 95 feet and is open daily during the months of January and February from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

The rink is free to use and maintained by the parks department.

Director of Parks and Public Spaces Phil Biscorner said the city is excited to debut the ice rink for the first time.

"I think the biggest thing is this will provide another outdoor activity over the winter months," Biscorner said. "It partners really well with our sledding hill and just adds extra flare."

In a Monday morning press release the city listed the rules and regulations for using the rink.

Code of Conduct:

All ice rink participants, including skaters and bystanders, will be required to follow the general rules of conduct established in the city's parks and recreation ordinance (Section 97.01 – 97.21 of the City Code of Ordinances) while at the Ice Rink.

Further, all ice rink participants will be required to adhere to the following Ice Rink specific rules and regulations:

1. Skaters shall be courteous and cautious of other skaters and bystanders while using the skating area. Skaters shall not push, shove or otherwise engage in raucous behavior while using the skating area.
2. Skaters shall not dig, spray, chip, throw, or otherwise expel ice or snow within the skating area.
3. Food and beverage items, tobacco products, hockey equipment, including hockey sticks, pucks and nets; street shoes, and animals are prohibited.
4. Skaters under 5 shall be under adult supervision while in the skating area. The ice rink does not have designated supervisors. Skaters shall skate at their own risk.

City Commission elects Perschbacher, Cyman for mayor, vice mayor positions

By Staff Reports

The Mount Pleasant City Commission elected Amy Perschbacher as mayor of Mount Pleasant and Olivia Cyman as vice mayor at its Jan. 10 meeting.

Perschbacher found her start with the city commission in 2019. She has since held the position of the city's vice mayor for the past two years.

Perschbacher believes this role has given her "the understanding of what is needed to be mayor."

After running for reelection in 2021, Perschbacher expressed one top concern for the city is to help Mount Pleasant businesses recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. She aims to support both these businesses and residents within the city with her work as mayor.

"I am hopeful that I will be able to lead the city commission in a reasonable way that will help everyone feel included in the decisions being made," Perschbacher said.

Cyman started her position in the commission in 2021.

Although she was not at the meeting because she had COVID-19, Cyman feels

prepared for this new role within the city commission.

"I think my first year on the commission I spent learning as much as I could," Cyman said. "My second year on the commission and in this new role, I feel that I am ready to start speaking up more... (and) to make a bigger difference than I have been able to in the past."

She set some priorities for 2022 that she hopes to accomplish such as expanding low and middle-income housing, increasing sustainable employment and helping local business owners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm looking forward to holding a larger role, and I think I have been working towards making a bigger difference whether that be as vice mayor or just on the commission," Cyman said.

Newly elected commissioners Brian Assmann, Elizabeth Busch and Maureen Eke also took their oath of office during the meeting.

The city commission meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of the month at 7 p.m. These meetings can be streamed on the city's YouTube channel.

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Mitch Vosburg | File photo

Muskegon junior wide receiver Kalil Pimpleton runs back a punt for a touchdown against Western Michigan on Wednesday, Nov. 3 at Waldo Stadium.

Pimpleton

Electric receiver goes pro after four years at CMU

By Christian Booher
Sports Editor

Central Michigan will have to replace one of its most electric players in recent memory heading into the 2022 season.

Redshirt junior wide receiver Kalil Pimpleton is entering the NFL Draft, forgoing his final year of collegiate eligibility to pursue a professional career. The Muskegon native announced his decision in a tweet Sunday.

Pimpleton was a two-time first-team All-Mid-American Conference selection during his three years with the Chippewas. He was first-team as a wideout in both 2019 and 2021, while he earned first-team honors as a punt returner this season. He was named the MAC Special Teams Player of the Year in 2021.

His name is all over the Chippewas' record book, as he sits in eighth place all-time in career receptions. His 2019 season, in which he caught 82 passes, ranks sixth all-time. He has twice finished a season leading CMU in receptions.

"He's the heart and soul of this football team," said Head Coach Jim McElwain following the team's 30-27 win over Ohio on Oct. 9. "I tell you what, I just love him."

He finishes his time as a Chippewas with 166 receptions for 2,100 yards.

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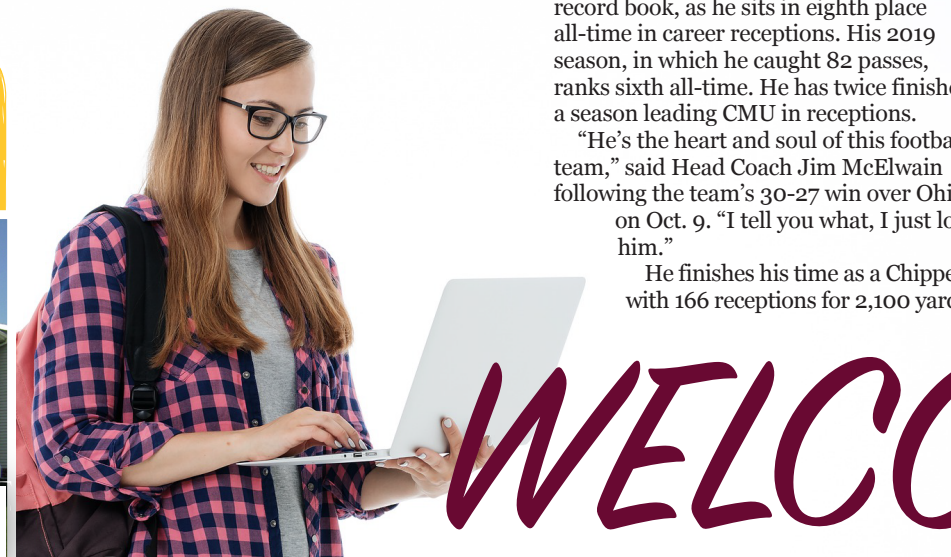
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Pimpleton declares for NFL Draft



Kalil Pimpleton announces his entry into the NFL draft on Jan. 2

Nov. 3 matchup with Western Michigan, including a program-record 97-yard runback late in the second quarter to give the Chippewas a lead they would never relinquish.

In all, his time as a Chippe-wa ends with 2,574 total yards of offense. Additionally, he totaled 532 yards as a return man.

Several members of the CMU community took to Twitter to express their appreciation for the Muskegon native and his impact on the university.

Pimpleton leaves the program alongside high school teammate JaCorey Sullivan, who finished his career with 1,741 yards and 15 touchdowns. With the duo gone, junior Dallas Dixon is set to return as CMU's top target. Dixon finished with 45 catches for 701 yards and eight touchdowns in 2021.

Pimpleton began his career at Virginia Tech, where he spent one season before transferring to CMU in 2018. After sitting out the 2018 season, he began his historic career with the Chippewas as part of the MAC

West winning squad in 2019.

The next step for the speedster will be the Collegiate Bowl in Pasadena, California on Jan. 29.

CMU finished its season 9-4 with five straight victories, including a 24-21 win over Washington State in the Sun Bowl.

and 12 touchdowns. Pimpleton also carried the ball 38 times for 293 yards and five scores, while also completing 7-of-12 passes for 181 yards and a touchdown.

The Muskegon native also had a prolific career as a returner. He returned two punts for scores in the first half of CMU's

Brown, Reed among other Chippewas to depart program at conclusion of season

Kalil Pimpleton is one of several Chip-pewas who have left the program despite having eligibility remaining. One teammate has also entered the NFL Draft, while several have elected to find new places to play via the transfer portal.

These departures include:

Zahir Swann

After providing depth as a true freshman in 2020, Swann didn't play in 2021 and entered the transfer portal in November. With the free year of eligibility due to COVID, Swann still has four years of eligibility.

Amir Siddiq

The defensive end from Detroit elected to enter the transfer portal immediately following the regular season. He has one season of eligibility remaining and has visited Kansas but remains uncommitted.

Jacob Sirmon

After starting the season as CMU's top QB, Sirmon lost the role with the emergence of Daniel Richardson. He entered the portal days after the regular season finale and signed with Northern Colorado during the NCAA early signing period.

Tico Brown

Brown, a sophomore defensive tackle with two years of eligibility, didn't play in CMU's final six games of the season and entered

the portal on Dec. 2. He signed with Missouri State during the early signing period, joining former Chippewas Tyrone Scott and Montrae Braswell.

Dishon McNary

McNary came to CMU after two seasons at Independence Community College. After sitting out 2019, he emerged as a starter at cornerback in 2020. He started the first four games in 2021, but his season was cut short due to an ankle injury. McNary entered the NFL Draft on Dec. 22.

Devonni Reed

A four-year starter, Reed entered the transfer portal Jan. 3 as a graduate transfer with one year remaining. He was immediately targeted by high-profile programs and eventually committed to South Carolina.

Troy Brown

The three-time All-Mid-American Conference linebacker announced his decision to leave Jan. 6. He will have one year of eligibility remaining and is ranked 18th on The Athletic's Top-25 available transfers list.

George Douglas

Brown wasn't the only linebacker to announce their decision to leave, as Douglas did the same just hours after his teammate. He, too, is a graduate transfer with one year of eligibility remaining.

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WEST CAMPUS

POLO VILLAGE

Faculty, students share mixed feelings about COVID-19 guidelines

By Zach Kortge
Staff Reporter

Some Central Michigan University students and faculty are worried as the semester starts in person among record numbers of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Michigan.

Michigan State University and Oakland University moved forward in an online format. Others have elected to stay in person while having a vaccine mandate.

Amanda Garrison, president of the Faculty Association, is one concerned faculty member.

“We can’t deliver the best teaching (and) we can’t be present with you if we’re worried about (COVID-19),” Garrison said.

Prior to cases rising across the coun-

try the Faculty Association had made an agreement with university administration that any meetings affecting faculty working conditions would have a Faculty Association member present.

Garrison said that there was no meeting that occurred during the winter break where faculty were able to voice concerns.

Garrison expressed concern for absences that will occur during the semester as cases rise.

“I’ve had four or five COVID-19 cases and class has not even started,” Garrison said. “If you’ve got a class online and a class (in person), you’re working for two classes at the same time. I can’t do that.”

Garrison has taken extra steps in her classes in an attempt to mitigate spreading the virus, where people who

do not live together must sit apart.

Other faculty members have not encountered such issues. Biology faculty member Shasta Sabo said she has not had any absent students. She does, however, record lectures in case students are absent.

“In my experience, the students are doing well, the faculty are doing well and we’ve adapted to it,” Sabo said.

Farmington junior Sammy Garza started a petition asking the administration to start classes in an online format.

The petition, titled “A Call for CMU to Prioritize Students Academic Well-Being,” gained over 800 signatures.

Garza’s concerns surround how students will do if they are forced to be quarantined during the first week as cases rise.

“Students will be missing the first

week of classes and this will cause them to fall behind before we even get started,” Garza said.

Other students are less concerned.

Clarkston freshman Hailey Hibberd was confident that “higher-ups knew what they were doing.”

“We wouldn’t be here without a plan,” She said.

Hibberd hoped that keeping up vaccination rates among students would keep people safe. She said she has noticed an increase in absences.

Garza sent the petition via email directly to President Bob Davies after posting the petition online. The reply indicated that the administration had been considering CMU’s protocol since last semester.

It also stressed the use of guidance from local, state and national experts

while “following the data closely.”

Michigan saw record numbers of COVID-19 cases on Monday with 49,011 cases being reported by *The New York Times*. This is the highest rate of infection for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic.

Shaun Holtgreive, interim associate vice president for student affairs, said he’s confident that current safety measure will keep students safe.

Holtgreive said discussions have happened considering online learning, but CMU is “one of the safest places to be in the state.”

“The President is continually evaluating the data as it comes through weekly,” he said.

He said discussions will continue throughout the semester as cases are monitored.

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RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME



Aurora Rae | News Editor

Lew Nichols III wins the 2021 Sun Bowl Most Valuable Player award after the Chippewas conquered Washington State 24-21 on Dec. 31 at Sun Bowl Stadium in El Paso, Texas.

With Arizona Bowl canceled, Chippewas find a way to victory in El Paso

By Christian Booher
Sports Editor

A unique journey ended with a massive reward for Central Michigan football.

The Chippewas boarded a plane on Dec. 26, departing cold Mount Pleasant for the warm sun of Tucson, Arizona in preparation for the Arizona Bowl. The game, against Boise State, was set for Dec. 31.

Despite best laid plans, CMU would be spending New Year's Eve playing in a different bowl game, traveling to an entirely different state. The Chippewas wound up beating Washington State 24-21 in the Sun Bowl, played in El Paso, Texas.

With the win, CMU finishes 9-4 with its first bowl victory since 2012.

After Boise State was forced to withdraw from the Arizona Bowl due to issues with COVID-19, the Chippewas were granted a release from the bowl game and were paired up with Washington State, who was in search of an opponent

after Miami (Florida) was forced to withdraw from the Sun Bowl due to COVID-19 issues of its own.

The Chippewas made the five hour trip to El Paso and squared off against the Cougars on just four days of preparation. A late rally from Washington State made things interesting, but CMU won the game with a defensive stand in the fourth quarter.

Early on, it was the Chippewa offense who reigned supreme. A pair of field goals from Eaton Rapids freshman Marshall Meeder made it 6-0, with the second coming from 52 yards out and setting a new Sun Bowl record.

After Loganville, Georgia freshman Fernando Sanchez III forced a fumble on a kickoff, the Chippewas recovered and were set up with great field position. Detroit redshirt freshman Lew Nichols III, the nation's leading rusher, scored from 1 yard out to give CMU a 13-0 lead.

The Chippewas added to their lead when Miami, Florida redshirt freshman Daniel Richardson found Petoskey sophomore Joel Wilson for a score late in the first half. After a successful two-point conversion, CMU took a 21-0 lead into the halftime break.

Missed opportunities plagued the Chippewas in the third quarter, allowing Washington State to mount a furious rally. A drive deep into Cougar territory stalled out when Richardson and Nichols could connect on a handoff, resulting in a fumble.

Meeder missed a field goal on CMU's second drive of the third quarter, and the Cougars capitalized by finally scoring. Travell Harris put Washington State on the board with a 5-yard score.

Richardson was intercepted by Cougar defender Travion Brown on the next play from scrimmage, which led to a touchdown pass from Victor Gabalis to De'Zauhn Stribling. Meeder connected on a field goal to increase the Chippewa lead to 24-14, but another Gabalis touchdown pass set up a dramatic finish.

The Chippewa defense stood tall when it needed to. After a first down completion, Gabalis threw two straight incompletions to set up a make-or-break fourth down.

Gabalis hit Joey Hobert on the final down, but Flint junior Troy Brown stopped him a yard short of the first down marker to seal the win for the Chippewas.



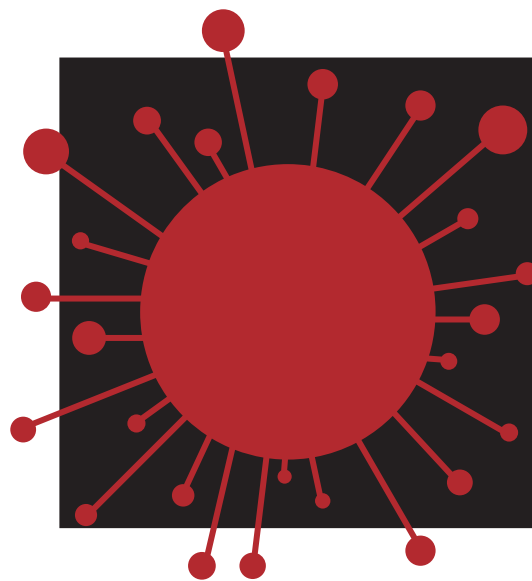
Photos by Aurora Rae | News Editor
Kellogg's mascot Tony the Tiger cheers with the Central Michigan University Marching Band during the 2021 Sun Bowl in which the Chippewas faced Washington State on Dec. 31 in El Paso, Texas.



Wide receiver JaCorey Sullivan runs with the football during the Chippewas' victory over Washington State in the Tony the Tiger Sun Bowl played Dec. 31, 2021 at Sun Bowl Stadium in El Paso, Texas.



The Central Michigan University Cheerleading team cheers on the Chippewas football team during the 2021 Sun Bowl Dec. 31 in El Paso, Texas.



Let's End Omicron

Fighting pandemic fatigue will be critical this semester

We're all tired of it. So are you

As Central Michigan University begins another semester, we're still dealing with COVID-19

We've suffered through this pandemic for almost two years. We've watched the case numbers rise and fall like a roller coaster.

Even though vaccines and treatments promise that someday life will return to normal, the road to get there is much longer than we anticipated.

Let's be honest; all this bad news just feels normal.

Pandemic fatigue is real, if you feel it, you're not alone.

Last semester, the counseling center was overwhelmed by the number of students seeking individual appointments proving the immense toll the pandemic has had on our mental health.

Nobody expected the emotional toll of switching back to in-person after a year of isolation. That back and forth is exhausting. Now, the Omicron variant makes it feel like we're right back where we started.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it was all about survival. We were motivated by fear but over time that fear began to subside. Now, it's a lot easier to think, "maybe I don't need to get tested," or

EDITORIAL

"If I'm not symptomatic, a positive test doesn't count."

The danger of the Omicron variant cannot be understated. Tens of thousands of cases are reported every day and our state-wide death toll is inching toward two million.

Many of us students are living in that hell. It's getting harder to find a person that doesn't know at least one person who's been hospitalized or killed by the virus.

Experts say hope is on the horizon.

They're telling us this variant's shelf life is short.

In South Africa, where the Omicron was first detected, case numbers peaked within four weeks and saw a rapid decline to manageable numbers according to *The New York Times*.

Some universities have gone back to online classes and require students to be vaccinated. At CMU, in-person classes are still offered while the vaccine and booster shot are still not required for enrollment.

Thankfully, the booster shot is now required for fully vaccinated status while

those who are unvaccinated will still submit to weekly testing. The university will continue to enforce masks in its academic buildings along with isolation and quarantine guidelines.

None of it matters unless we take initiative.

It's up to us to keep not just the campus healthy but also the city of Mount Pleasant, the greater Mid-Michigan region and the entire state.

You already know the drill. Continue to wear a mask in public and get vaccinated if you haven't already. If you are vaccinated, be sure to get your booster shot.

At the same time, don't let the COVID-19 fatigue drag this pandemic out any longer. You must find the strength within yourself to continue to stay safe.

Fear may not be your motivation to fight COVID-19 anymore but what about your parents, friends or roommates? What about the other members of the CMU and Mount Pleasant community? What about the healthcare workers, small business owners and teachers that face the brunt of the damage?

Last semester, we got some of our college experiences back. We could gather with our RSOs, go out to restaurants and bars, travel and experience new things.

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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.

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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.

Classes need to be virtual for the first few weeks

On the first three days back for the Spring 2022 semester, Central Michigan University reported 63 new COVID-19 cases.

With students traveling back to Mount Pleasant from all over, there is no telling how many students are returning from COVID-19 hotspots.

How many are bringing the contagious virus with them?

CMU has us attending in-person classes. To make matters worse, most of these courses no longer allow students the ability to socially distance themselves from one another.

During my first in-person course of the semester, I was in a small classroom with about 20 students and a faculty member. The desks were two person tables and there was no way to socially distance and every other student was no more than 10 feet away from me in the small rectangles.

In addition, the classrooms no longer have disinfectant and hand sanitizer for students to use while entering class.

A vast majority of courses are only offered face to face this semester with no HyFlex options.

Several other universities across Michigan decided to go virtual for the first week or two



Courtney Pedersen
Investigative Reporter

of the semester, including Michigan State University, Oakland University and Wayne State University.

CMU has 41 cases already this semester. By comparison, OU has only four cases so far.

During the first week of classes during the Spring 2021 semester, CMU had all students attend classes virtually and had only four positive COVID-19 cases.

I understand that the Omicron variant of COVID-19 is less severe than the other variants were in years past. However, it happens to be much more contagious, regardless of vaccination status.

In addition, several counties in Michigan happen to be hotspots for the virus. Specifically, Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties

are current COVID-19 hotspots. Out of the 11,707 students enrolled at CMU during the Fall 2020 semester, 3,856 were from those three counties, according to the CMU Fall 2020 enrollment report.

Several faculty members canceling class periods or moving virtual for the first day or week due to either them contracting COVID-19 or the high rates in the state.

As a student, I don't feel safe in my classes. I sit in classes next to strangers who may have been in California or New York last week not following any COVID-19 protocols.

Two weeks ago, a CMU student wrote the Change.org petition "A Call for CMU to Prioritize Students Academic Well-Being" to ask President Bob Davies and the Board of Trustees to go virtual for at least the first week.

This week is already a loss, but the university can make up for its mistake.

CMU should have all courses virtual next week to allow students who may be infected and asymptomatic by COVID-19 the ability to stay home and not infect others.

I will admit, I absolutely hate online classes. I struggle learning in them. However, I would prefer virtual classes to being exposed to and contracting COVID-19.

I deserve to feel as safe as possible attending my classes.

Right now, I do not feel safe.

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University Meadows	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Union Square	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Target			UPON REQUEST
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Washington/Ojibway	:44	:14	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Anspach/Pearce	:45	:15	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Ronan/Grawn	:47	:17	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Main St./Gaylord	:48	:18	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
MMC/DOAN CENTER	:55	:25	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Washington/Clayton	:05	:35	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Larzalere	:06	:36	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Wightman	:07	:37	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Park Library	:08	:38	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	:12	:42	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

GOLD

SAC/McGuirk	:13	:43	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Stadium Mall			UPON REQUEST
TJ Maxx			UPON REQUEST
Walmart			UPON REQUEST
Copper Beech	:26	:56	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
The Reserve	:28	:58	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Jamestown	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Yorkshire Commons	:33	:03	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

DEERFIELD

TOWERS @7/11	:15	:45	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Westpoint Village	:18	:48	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Deerfield Village	:20	:50	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Lexington Ridge	:25	:55	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Theunissen Stadium Lot#70	:27	:57	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Kewadin Village	:29	:59	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
SAC/McGuirk	:30	:00	EVERY 1/2 HOUR
Music Bldg. - Lot#33	:42	:12	EVERY 1/2 HOUR

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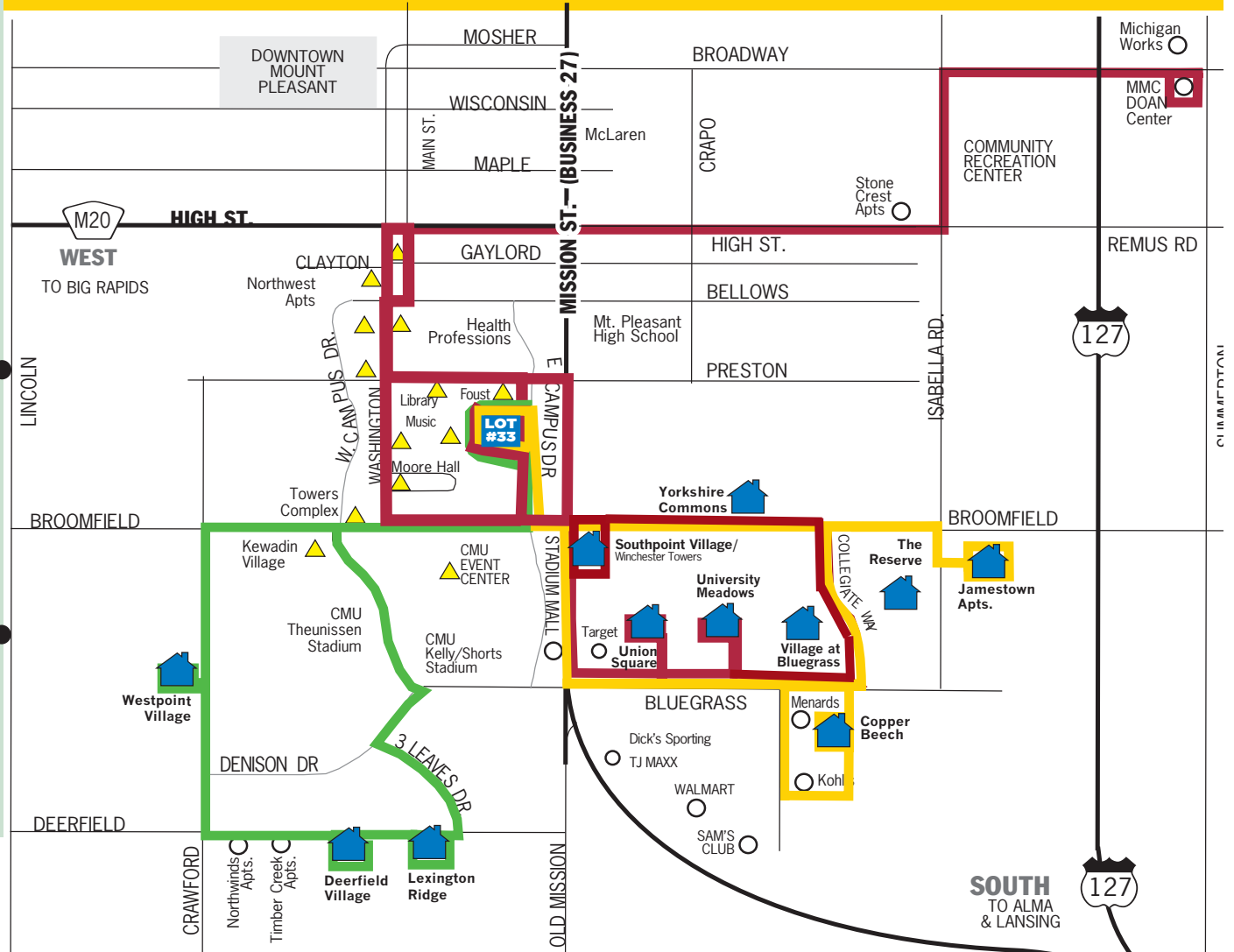
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