Open enrollment period about to end
Employees have options for saving for retirement while reducing their taxable income. Visit www.wmich.edu/hr/benefits/tax-deferred-savings-letter.html for information on tax-deferred savings plans and how to schedule a meeting with investment advisor Jane Brady-Ertz.

Fall commencement exercises slated
President John M. Dunn will preside over three commencement ceremonies Saturday, Dec. 18, in Miller Auditorium. Visit www.wmich.edu/commencement for ticket information and full details.

The ceremonies will take place at 9 a.m. for the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Aviation and Fine Arts; noon for the Haworth College of Business, College of Health and Human Services, and Extended University Programs; and 3 p.m. for the colleges of Education and Human Development and Engineering and Applied Sciences

ACE seeks presentation proposals
WMU is hosting the 2011 conference of the Michigan ACE Network for Women Leaders in Higher Education, which will be held in Lansing June 6-7. The deadline for presentation proposals is Friday, Jan. 28. Visit www.wmich.edu/ace for details.

United Way campaign is a success
WMU has surpassed its $275,000 campus United Way goal. According to campaign directors, a total of $280,600 in gifts and pledges was received from more than 1,500 WMU donors. Those donating included 293 people who had not participated in the campus campaign before and 402 people who increased the amount of their gifts compared to one year ago.

Last Western News for fall semester
Today's issue of Western News is the last issue for fall. Western News will resume its regular publication schedule Thursday, Jan. 13. Publication dates are posted in the Western News masthead that appears in every issue at the bottom of page 2. During the hiatus, go to www.wmich.edu/news to keep up with news and announcements.

Gordon wins National Book Award for fiction
Jaimy Gordon, English, was announced Nov. 17 as the 2010 National Book Award winner in fiction for her new novel, “Lord of Misrule.”

USA Today calls the book’s program “publishing’s version of the Academy Awards.” WMU will celebrate Gordon’s achievement from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13.

The free public event will begin with a reading at 3:30 p.m. in 2008 Richmond Center. Featured guests are Bruce McPherson, publisher of Gordon’s award-winning novel, and several WMU graduates who have won prestigious writing awards, including Bonnie Jo Campbell, Liesel Litzenburger and Melinda Mountakis. A reception will follow at 4:30 p.m. in Richmond’s lobby.

Applications sought for MLK activity proposals
University community members interested in staging events as part of activities celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King’s life and legacy are asked to submit an application to have their events become a sponsored MLK program. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10. WMU departments, offices, individuals and organizations are invited to apply for funding as well as publicity assistance.

WMU departments, offices, individuals and organizations are invited to apply for funding as well as publicity assistance. Whether seeking funding or not, those planning to hold MLK-related events during spring semester are asked to submit proposals for each event so these activities can be included in WMU’s publicity for the 2011 MLK celebration.

Applications are due Jan. 28. For more information on submitting a proposal, call the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at (269) 387-6131.
Saturday, Dec. 4, the University Chorale, Cantus Femina and Collegiate Singers will present “Choral Christmas” at 4 and 7:30 p.m. in the First Presbyterian Church, 321 W. South St., Kalamazoo.<br> <br>Sunday, Dec. 5, the University Symphony Orchestra, Gold Company and GCO II will present a joint “Christmas Pops” concert at 3 p.m. in Harvey Auditorium, 714 S. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo.<br> <br>Sunday, Dec. 19, the Western Brass Quintet will present “A Brass Celebration of Christmas” at 3 p.m. on campus in the Dalton Center Recital Hall.<br> <br>Immigration, race topics of talk<br> <br>Arlene Torres, a cultural anthropologist from the City University of New York, is the final presenter in the RACE Speaker Series. The WUMU-scheduled series coincides with the “RACE: Why Are We So Different?” exhibit, which will be at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum through Jan. 2.<br> <br>Torres will speak on “Latino Settlements and Immigration Debates: What Do Race and Culture Have To Do With It?” at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, in the museum. She also will speak on “Blanqueamiento” (Whitening) and the (Im)Migrant Trek North: Its Implications for the Afro-Latino Diaspora” at noon Monday, Dec. 6, on campus in 1115 Moore.<br> <br>Exchange<br> <br>Home, estate sale—Brick home in the Kalamazoo Public Schools district priced for quick sale. Three bedrooms, two baths, 1,800 square feet. Available for show by appointment. Estate sale to be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4. Sale includes dining room table and buffet, kitchen items, yard equipment, ladies plus-size garments, and some 800 New York Times best-selling hardcovers. Contact Paige Warner at (269) 290-9246.<br> <br>For rent—Two-bedroom mid-century home in quiet neighborhood close to WMU and Kalamazoo College (readers of Dwell and Atomic Ranch magazines take note). Furnished or unfurnished. Home and estate sale is located at 3127 Tampa Ave., between East Main Street and Gull Road. Contact Paige Warner at (269) 290-9246.<br> <br>Proposals sought for WUMU writing centers conference<br> <br>The East Central Writing Centers Association, the nation’s oldest writing centers organization, will hold its annual conference Thursday through Saturday, March 5-7, at WUMU.<br> <br>The theme is “Centering Assessment: Roles, Relationships, Resistance, Respect,” but organizers invite proposals about all aspects of writing center work and scholarship. Visit the conference website at www.wcw.ca2011atwmu.com/index.html to submit your proposal, which is due by Friday, Dec. 10. Visit the conference website at www.wcw.ca2011atwmu.com/index.html to submit your proposal, which is due by Friday, Dec. 10.<br> <br>In addition, WUMU’s Eileen Evans, vice provost for institutional effectiveness, a former director of the University’s Writing Center, will present a lunch-time talk. For more information, visit the conference website or contact Kim Ballard, WUMU/Writing Center director, at kim.ballard@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4446.<br> <br>Jobs<br> <br>Current job opportunities at WUMU are announced daily on the Human Resources Web site at www.wmich.edu/hr/careers-at-wmu.html. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.
Professor earns NEA poetry fellowship

Daneen Wardrop, English, was selected for one of the NEA’s coveted Creative Writing Fellowships in poetry. The fellowships alternate annually between poetry and prose. This year, the NEA received 1,063 eligible applications, and granted $25,000 fellowships to 42 poets.

The fellowships are selected through an anonymous review process and encourage the production of new works of literature by allowing writers the time and means to write.

Wardrop has written a book of poems, “The Odds of Being,” which was published by Silverfish Review Press in 2008. Her poetry and scholarly articles have appeared in several journals, and she has received numerous honors for her creative writing. Those honors include the 2006 Poetry Society of America Robert H. Winner Award, judged by Jean Valentine; the 2005 Bentley Prize for Poetry from Seattle Review; two Pushcart prize nominations; and the 2007 Gerald Cable Book Award.

Emeriti set December program

The Emeriti Council’s next Wednesday II meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 8, in Widows’ Emeriti Lounge.

The program will be a performance of an excerpt from last year’s play “Good Death” and a discussion of the play’s topic by Joan Herrington, theatre chair.

“Good Death” is an original collaboration, created entirely by WMU theatre students. It explores the questions and emotional conflict behind euthanasia, terminal illness, aging, medical ethics and controversial topics. The script is compiled from verbatim interviews and incorporates transcripts from the Dr. Kevorkian trial.

Older adults encouraged to save the date for learning academy info session

Older adults in the Kalamazoo area will have a new opportunity to stay intellectually active and socially engaged when WMU launches its Lifelong Learning Academy this spring.

The program will be similar to academies already established at other universities here and abroad to provide learning initiatives for older adults. An open house to introduce WMU’s academy and upcoming spring session has been set for 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, in the west lobby of Widwood. Refreshments will be served.

The local academy will have a diverserepertoire of non-credit educational programs specifically designed to address the interests of the adult learner. The courses will be designed to provide intellectual and cultural stimulation, promote personal growth, and foster social engagement in an informal and lively learning atmosphere.

Ongoing programming will encompass the arts and humanities, current events, the environment, health, history, international and enrichment topics, and science and technology. There also will be a rich, evolving array of other courses as well as interest groups, lectures, special events and presentations, and travel programs and classes.

Plans call for the WMU Lifelong Learning Academy to start with an initial session that will begin March 14. The session will feature two-hour daytime classes offered weekly for two to four weeks, depending on the subject. Instructors will be drawn from current and former WMU faculty as well as local community members who are experts in particular fields or have strong interests in selected areas.

The academy is membership based, but membership is open to anyone with a passion for learning. There are no membership requirements, such as needing previous college experience, and no tests or grading—just learning for the joy of it.

Courses are geared toward those age 50 and up. Attendees pay a nominal annual fee, which is being waived for the inaugural spring session, as well as a modest tuition fee for the courses that they sign up to attend. However, additional fees may be required for class materials, texts and travel.

A volunteer advisory board has been formed to lead the academy. The board operates under the auspices of WMU’s Extended University Programs, and meets in concert with educational and community organizations in the Kalamazoo area.

Co-chairing the advisory board are D. Terry Williams, WMU professor emeritus and former chair of theatre, and Ruth Heing, WMU professor emerita of communication.

The board’s membership includes community residents, retired college and university faculty members, and WMU staff members. A curriculum committee has been working since early fall to develop and schedule the initial classes. Other committees to be formed will focus on areas such as membership, events and resource development.

Visit www.wmich.edu/offcampus/lifelong for additional details. More information also may be obtained by calling Extended University Programs at (269) 387-4250. Questions may be directed to George Fiorenza, director of outreach and special programs, or Cheri Lay, director of the Office of Lifelong Learning and Education.

WMU is being recognized for its successful innovative use of 3-D computer-aided design software in the classroom by the internationa lcompany that created the software.

California-based Autodesk, a leading 3-D design, engineering and entertainment software company, is featuring WMU as a “customer success story” in its promotional materials for the software that allows students to model campus buildings for energy analysis and retrofitting. The software is used in concert with software to take this innovative approach.

The Autodesk promotion highlights WMU as the only owner of the software to take this innovative approach. In addition to that recognition, Peter Strazdas, associate vice president of Facilities Management, co-presented a workshop on building information models during the Construction Owners Association of America’s fall leadership conference Nov. 17-19 in Tampa, Fla.

He joined other presenters from Texas A&M, Walt Disney Engineering, Georgia Tech, the University of Florida, the University of Colorado, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and many national construction and architectural firms.
Among the Chemistry Building’s many storage rooms is one filled with shelves of bottled and powdered chemicals, countertops lined with scales and other measuring equipment, and rows of glass beakers hung on pegs to dry. Sarah Hamilton is in her element working in rooms like that.

Hamilton came to WMU two years ago as chemistry lab coordinator. She manages the stock rooms and conducts lab demonstrations for teaching assistants. In addition, part of her job entails making sure all the right items are available and placed on carts for the chemical labs that are associated with various classes, including general chemistry and organic chemistry.

Hamilton has an educational background and deep interest in chemistry, but working with students and staff members is her favorite part of her position at the University.

“Students have an energy; they get excited about their future. It’s refreshing to work with them,” she says. “There’s always something different to do, and I can work independently to get my job done.”

A native of Darr, Mich., Hamilton grew up and went to college in West Michigan. She earned her bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Ferris State University. Initially, her academic interest was in forensic science, and she worked as an intern at the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division in Lansing, Mich.

Despite the numerous television shows on forensic science that wrap up complex cases in an hour, Hamilton says the real-life science is detailed and time consuming, with backlogs for test results sometimes taking a year to clear up.

“It is fascinating, but it’s not like what you see in the shows. If you’re not going to get your answers right away and, sometimes, not at all,” she says. Hamilton is married to Michael, a physical therapist at Borgess Medical Center. Opportunities for him to continue his education are what led the couple to locate to Kalamazoo.

Before landing her WMU job, Sarah worked at Avtech Corp. as a laboratory quality assurance professional. She enjoys reading and football, especially cheering on the Broncos and the Detroit Lions. The couple has a pug, Diesel, and a cat, Tessa.

Deadline for faculty award nominations approaching

Nominations are due Friday, Jan. 21, for the 2011 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award. Up to three recipients will be selected.

The recipients will be honored during the 2011 Academic Convocation and receive a $2,000 honorarium that becomes part of the recipient’s salary. They will be delivered with Gordon about her award-winning book. Judges and to read an extended interview with Gordon to learn more about the competition and forms.

Questions should be directed to Ernst A. Breisach, emeritus in history, at ebreisach@sbcglobal.net or (269) 344-1734.

Gordon award

Gordon, who has taught at WMU since 1981, based the novel on a world she learned about fresh out of college in the late 1960s when she took a series of jobs intended to boost her life experience.

She worked for a period as a groomsman and hot-walker at Charles Town Race Track in West Virginia. That experience served as background, as well, for her short story about horse racing, “A Night’s Work.” The story was chosen for “Best American Short Stories” in 1995.

This is the second time in as many years an author with WMU connections has been among the National Book Award finalists. Alumna Bonnie Jo Campbell, a student of Gordon’s in the 1990s, was named a finalist last fall for her book of short stories, “American Salvage.”

In addition, Deneen Wardrop has received a coveted Creative Writing Fellowship in poetry this year from the National Endowment of the Arts (see related story on page 3). Gordon has published three other novels: “Bogeywoman,” “Shamp of the City-Solo” and “She Drove Without Stopping.” The latter, often described as a woman’s road novel, was an American Library Association Notable Book for 1990.

In 1991, Gordon won an Academy-Institute Award for her fiction from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. “Bogeywoman” made the Los Angeles Times list of the Best Fiction of 2000. Gordon also has earned numerous other awards for her work, which includes a novella, poetry, masques, short stories and essays.

Visit the National Book Foundation site at www.nationalbook.org/nba2010.html to learn more about the competition and judges and to read an extended interview with Gordon about her award-winning book.

Apps keep WMU fans connected

WMU sports fans can now keep up with their favorite Bronco teams on the go, thanks to three new smart phone applications.

Intercollegiate athletics and Smartphones Technologies recently released the WMU Broncos College SuperFans App for the iPhone and Android, as well as a clock widget and live wallpaper for Bronco fans using Android devices.

SuperFans provides instant access to college football and basketball scores, schedules, stories, Associated Press and BCS polls, conference standings, and game previews and recaps. It’s available for $2.99 in Apple’s iTunes App Store and the Android Market. The other two Bronco apps also cost $2.99 and are available in the Android Market.

The WMU Broncos Clock Widget XL allows users to replace their standard clock with a custom Broncos clock and also displays Mid-American Conference and top-25 scores when games are in progress.

WMU Broncos Live Wallpaper features a 3-D Broncos logo and background animation that fades from “WMU” to “Broncos.” Visit www.smartphonestech.com/csf to download the applications.