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He currently is an associate professor of geography there and has interests in higher education administration, economic geography, rural development and regional planning.

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“Students here are very aggressive,” he says. “We have a lot of unrest in the university. You don’t seem to be having that in this university. Students are more engaged in their studies and they have a very peaceful environment in which to concentrate.”

Gunadasa says the student agitation stems from outside politics or from student affairs like proposals to decrease financial aid and increase prices in the cafeteria. He says the students jealously guard any efforts to make them pay for their college education.

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(Continued on page four)

Did you know?

• Some 963 people participated in University computing services workshops during fall 1995: 537 students, 108 faculty members and 318 staff members. Three-quarters of the participants take the classes to improve personal productivity. A total of 84 percent of the participants would recommend UCS workshops to others.

• Student Recreation Center users participated in drop-in recreation 48,065 times during fall 1995. A total of 201 faculty, staff, retirees and spouses were members of the SRC during that semester. The peak time for use of the facility is 7:30 p.m.

• The 1994-95 academic year, the residence hall staff coordinated 3,086 programs in such categories as diversity, academic enhancement, community service, alcohol education, environmental concerns, social and recreation.

Board of Trustees Room named for trustee emeritus Alfred Connable

The Board of Trustees Room in the Bernhard Center was named for Alfred B. Connable of Kalamazoo in ceremonies Feb. 19.

The room has been used regularly for meetings of the WMU board since the independent governing body was created in 1964 with Connable as a charter member. He was the first to serve as the board’s vice chairperson. While he left the board in 1967, he has continued to provide volunteer service to the University as a trustee emeritus.

“Al Connable has served as a trusted counsel to three presidents of our University over a period of more than three decades. As a trustee and trustee emeritus, he has given valued advice to me and to my predecessors, John Bernhard and Jim Miller,” said President Haenicke.

According to Haenicke, Connable was honored in recognition of both his long volunteer service to the University and his generous financial support. Among other gifts, Connable and his wife, Tenho, recently pledged $250,000 toward their estate to support the President’s Unrestricted Endowment.

CONNABLE HONORED — Alfred B. Connable of Kalamazoo addressed guests during ceremonies Feb. 19 naming the Board of Trustees Room for him. Connable was a charter member of the governing body and has continued to provide volunteer service to the University as a trustee emeritus.

The dedication ceremony was planned in conjunction with Connable’s 82nd birthday, which was the following day. Several members of his family attended. Principal participants included Haenicke, Connable, trustee emerita Gayl F. Werme of Portage, trustee emeritus Julius Franks Jr. of Grand Rapids and trustee Richard Y. St. John of Kalamazoo.

Although semi-retired, Connable serves as a consultant to a private trustee’s firm established in 1894 by his grandfather. The Cannbales are charter members of WMU’s President’s Circle, which was founded in 1976 to honor major donors. He was previously recognized by WMU with an honorary doctor of humanities degree in 1962.

Haeinckie to testify before Senate subcommittee Feb. 23

President Haenicke will make the University’s case for increased state funding at a public hearing Feb. 23 in Kalamazoo of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education.

Haenicke is scheduled to speak at 3:15 p.m. in the Olmsted Room of Mandelle Hall at Kalamazoo College. The subcommittee is chaired by State Sen. Joe Schwartz of Battle Creek.

WMU is seeking recognition of its status as one of the state’s four largest, statewide universities and its only public Doctoral university. Gov. John Engler has recommended that WMU receive an increase of 4 percent for 1996-97, the amount he proposed for all state universities.

Some other schools have been slated for additional funds to put them on a par with comparable institutions.

300 collegiate dancers here for festival Feb. 29-March 2

More than 300 dancers and teachers from five states will be on campus Thurs.-Sat. for the Great Lakes Regional Festival of the American College Dance Festival Association.

The WMU Department of Dance is playing host to the event that will feature 42 dances judged by three experts in dance and choreography. WMU has entered two dances in the competition.

Other events will include master classes and three dance concerts, which will take place in Shaw Theatre. At 8 p.m. Thursday, there will be a faculty concert featuring performances by faculty dancers from several institutions, including WMU. At 8:10 p.m. Friday, a Michigan dance company showcase concert will include performances by several groups from around the state. The festival will conclude at 8 p.m. Saturday, featuring the judges’ choices of the best dances from the region.

Tickets for the concerts are $10 for adults and $8 for students and senior citizens and will be available at the door beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The WMU draws international scholars for teaching, research

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(Continued on page four)
APA plans luncheon for 25th anniversary

The Administrative Professional Association will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a Thursday, March 28, luncheon at the Fetzer Center. "Silver Threads Among the Brown and Gold" will be the theme of the event as current and retired members are invited to attend from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to reflect on a quarter of a century of accomplishments and share insights about the organization's future.

We hope to have a majority of our memberships participate in this event," Diane M. Snyder, Haworth College of Business, who is co-chairperson of the event. "Any current or retired member is welcome to attend. We promise lots of laughter and a few surprises.

Entertainment for the celebration will be provided by "Pieces of Dreams," a four-piece Kalamazoo band with a vocalist. Robert J. Ricci, music, is the group leader, which will perform a variety of musical favorites.

The cost of attending the event is $10 per person. Reservation forms have been mailed to all current APA members and must be returned with payment by March 15 to Linda J. Dorensus, Bernhard Center. Retired members wishing to attend or persons with questions about the event should contact Snyder at 7-5088 or her co-chairperson Betty D. Dennis, Center for Academic Support Programs, at 7-3330.

Admissions candidate here

Robert S. Magee, a candidate for WMU's director of admissions and orientation, will make a presentation on "Admissions Issues for 2000 and Beyond" at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, in 157 Bernhard Center.

The University community is invited to attend the event, as well as the reception following it, Magee currently is assistant to the chancellor for enrollment services and director of admissions at Indiana University, where he has worked since 1979. He also was the admissions candidate being brought to campus for interviews, according to Carol L. Stamm, associate vice president for academic affairs and chairperson of the search committee. The first candidate, Troy Johnson, director of graduate admissions and enrollment management at Texas Tech University, visited last week.

Volume explores the underground economy

Tax evasion, illegal drugs, youth and crime, and other illegal activities and economic phenomena - or too few copies - are asked to call 387-4100.

On the same day, participants could go next door in Ellesworth and sample an ethnic food feast of African and African American favorites, from the African American Student Union, sponsored by Martin Luther King Jr. Program; Brenda C. Mansfield, King! Chavez/Parks Program; Jimmy Stacy, a junior from Chicago; and Tamara Y. Venaline, a junior from Detroit.

Beech hopes to unravel medieval mystery with new book

A new book by a retired WMU faculty member could provide the key to a mystery that has baffled literary scholars for many years. George T. Beech, emeritus in history, is the author of "Le Conventum (vers 1030); un precurseur acquisition des premi`eres epoques" ("The Conventum: An Aquitanian Precursor of the Earliest Epics From Around 1030"). The 190-page volume was published in French by Librairie Droz in Geneva, Switzerland.

The book focuses on a document called "The Conventum" that was written in about 1030 A.D. in Aquitaine, now southwestern France. Beech first ran across the document 30 years ago while conducting research for his dissertation and completing his doctoral degree in medieval history.

Although the document had been known in historical circles since the 17th century, Beech was the first scholar to write on it and bring it to the attention of modern medievalists. Most viewed it as a curious form of convention or political-legal agreement or treaty, although many were perplexed by its unique features.

Beech first went along with this theory. But four years ago, he came back to the document with a new hypothesis.

"The idea had been developing in my mind that I was dissatisfied with all of the works that had been done on it," he says. "In the past 10 years, a lot of historians had seen it and a lot had been written about it. I was convinced that they had all failed to see what it was. So I decided to go back to it and test the hypothesis that it was a literary document that told a story."

In his book, Beech claims that "The Conventum" is a previously unrecognized precursor of the earliest medieval epics. They were written in languages native to their particular regions.

"At the time of their first appearance in written form in early 12th century France, these long narrative poems enjoyed an immediate success and spread rapidly throughout Europe. By the end of the Middle Ages, they are found in every country in the world," Beech explains. "Yet, the origins of the epics has been one of the most puzzling problems in medieval literary history."

Beech says that the oldest known epics, such as the "Song of Roland," show a high degree of literary elegance and sophistication.

"This presupposes a long period of gestation from simple, oral origins to more complex forms," he says. "Yet, no specimens of earlier stages of development appeared to survive. So just how, when and where the earliest epics developed remained an unsolved question."

Beech maintains that "The Conventum," a much shorter prose composition, is a missing link. It retains traces of its origins and predates the earliest fully developed verse epics by at least 75 years. In addition, it comes from the same region where several other forms of vernacular writing - the earliest known in the French language - also first appeared at about the same time.

What has previously been thought to be a treaty is a story," Beech says. "This is a story with a plot that begins with the development of a conflict between two men. One man is a lord and the other is a vassal. The lord takes advantage of the vassal and "does him dirt" in various ways, which leads to a war.

The conflict comes to a peak when the vassal revolts, and he's in a position such that the conflict is resolved in his favor.

"This sounds like the plot of many of the medieval epics," Beech continues. "There is a dispute between people, the conflict grows to the point where there's a crisis and then it is resolved. This is a classic pattern all through the medieval epics. What I am arguing is that this document is in fact a story and, in embryonic form, a kind of epic."

In addition to its classic plotline, "The Conventum" uses dialogue, which is another characteristic of epic poems, Beech says.

Because the document was thought to be a treaty, it was studied mostly in historical circles rather than literary circles. Beech hopes his book draws the attention of literary historians to the work and promotes discussion of his theory.

Beech conducted most of his research for the book during a 1991-92 sabbatical leave in France, working on a manuscript of "The Conventum" housed in the National Library in Paris. Two of his French colleagues, Yves Chauner and Georges Pon of the University of Poitiers, contributed to the book by preparing the editing of the original vernacular text and furnishing a French translation of it.

Originally written in English, the book was translated into French so that it could be published in what is the leading series of monographs on medieval French literature. A copy is available in Waldo Library.

Beech is the author of two other books and some 30 articles for scholarly journals. A faculty member at WMU for 32 years, he retired in 1992.

Cultural celebrations

The Division of Minority Affairs has had reason to celebrate this month. February is designated as AFFIC, Mexican American Italian Program; Brenda Mansfield, Black History Month and Black History Month. The following is a list of events for the month of February.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on Feb. 21. Many events are planned to honor his legacy, including a Martin Luther King Jr. Program; Brenda C. Mansfield, Martin Luther King Jr. Program; Brenda C. Mansfield, King! Chavez/Parks Program; Jimmy Stacy, junior from Chicago; and Tamara Y. Venaline, a junior from Detroit.
Nearly 100 students depart Feb. 23 for week of service through Alternative Spring Break

Instead of working on their tans, nearly 100 WMU students will be working on their volunteer skills during this year's spring break. The contingent will depart from campus Friday, Feb. 23, to participate in "Alternative Spring Break movement," with the goal of helping people in need and addressing social problems.

Alternative Spring Break is a service-oriented initiative that provides students an opportunity to participate in a positive volunteer experience while learning the skills necessary to address social problems. Sponsoring WMU's student volunteer services, the program encourages students to learn more about issues, to broaden their perspectives, to discover some very different experiences.

"College students can become so separated from the rest of the world's problems, the program encourages students to learn more about social issues, to broaden their perspectives, to discover some very different experiences," said Rolland Elliott, co-chairperson of the program and a senior from Lapeer.

Elliott and Marietta selected the sites by contacting BreakAway, a nationwide network of alternative break resources. They used a combination of recommendations by students and faculty, as well as information about sites that seemed most appropriate to the mission of the program.

"The goal is to have students make the connections between the distant and the immediate community and bring the spirit of their work back to Kalamazoo," Elliott said.

The Alternative Spring Break program, now in its fifth year at WMU, continues to draw more student volunteers each year. The first program in 1992 consisted of only 12 site participants. Elliott and Marietta selected the sites by using information from last year's Alternative Spring Break program. The program is designed to build community and provide opportunities for students to build skills and enjoy new experiences.

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The sites are located in Big Talbot Island, Florida; City, Texas; and Havana, Va.

Changing campus culture subject of videoconference

"Copying with Changing Campus Culture" will be held 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 5, in the Clock Tower Conference Room of the library. The program will focus on pressures affecting faculty members, including increasing financial constraints; new competition for funds among colleagues; changing and challenging student populations; academic arguments over political correctness; and the rapidly growing role of technology in teaching and learning.

The videoconference is intended to help faculty identify and understand these pressures, to examine possible additional changes, and to identify new skills to deal effectively with new realities. A discussion among campus participants will follow.

The event is being sponsored on campus by the Office of Faculty Development. For more information, call 7-2370 or e-mail te: maryann.bowman@wmich.edu.

Media

Two faculty members will be guests in the coming weeks on "Focus," a five-minute interview produced by news services. "Focus" is scheduled to run 6:30 a.m. on WKTR-AM (1420) with the following speakers and topics: Robert A. Weir, social work, on the social service system; Feb. 24; and Susan L. Caffey, sociology, on the status of the women's movement; March 2. "Focus" is also scheduled on a regular basis by WWKZ-AM (590), WKMI-AM (1360) and several other radio stations around Michigan.

On campus

GET YOUR ANSWERS HERE — Imagine seeing 25 students a day — almost all of whom need a second look at a different question. That's the job of Diane M. Snyder, an academic advising and admissions officer at the University of Iowa. She's one of four people in the office who sees every incoming student. For that reason, she has developed a system to help freshmen make the transition to college. She meets with students one-on-one to help them navigate the complex web of coursework and majoring, and to help students make the decision of which classes to take the first semester of their first year.

Her approach is based on the idea that students need to be given the tools to help themselves succeed. "The first thing I do is talk to them about their goals," she says. "I want them to understand where they are and where they want to be. Then I talk to them about the resources available to them. I help them understand that they are not alone in this process."

She also helps students understand the importance of choosing classes that align with their interests and goals. "The key is to help them understand that they are not alone in this process," she says. "I want them to understand that they are not alone in this process."

Gross chronicles experiences at spiritual retreat in diary

"Days With Uncle God-Momma" by Francis L. Gross Jr., comparative religion, is a personal diary of his spiritual retreats at the house of prayer located in the southeast desert near Corpus Christi. The place is called Lebh Shomea, which is Hebrew for listening heart.

"I've always been interested in diaries, just writing down things that are happening. For years, I've been keeping a diary. I've been writing for as long as I can remember," he says. "I just wrote in the way I was thinking the day I was writing it."

Gross convinced his wife Toni to join him for a month-long stay at Lebh Shomea. The couple was combined with 25 students a day — only visiting nightly during a four-mile walk. Most of the day was spent quiet and alone — reading and meditating. The couple believes that most people understand the importance of solitude and how it can help them find peace.

In fact, the book came from a dream he had about a large African American religious figure who contributed to his God. "There was a sense of being loved and held, " he says. "I thought if I told people about my experiences, they would understand the importance of solitude and how it can help them find peace."

For Gross, some of these things emerged in dreams and helped shape his understanding of God and spirituality. He believes that the book is a sacred text that can help others understand the importance of solitude and how it can help them find peace.

"Days With Uncle God-Momma" is available for $13.95 on the Job Opportunity Program and Vacancies available to external applicants.

Exchange

FREE TO A LOVING HOME — Beautiful tabby cat. One and a half years old. She is spayed and current on shots. Very affectionate and playful. Needs home with a feeling of hope.

Mail: 103, Commercial Law, 95/96-408, 2/20-2/26/96.

For Sale — Professional competition quality women's ice skates, size 7-1/2, $250. Call 7-4336.

For Sale — Professional competition quality women's ice skates, size 7-1/2, worn two times, $350 new — asking $250 blue fox fur coat, swing length, excellent condition, $1,000 new — asking $650; china, five-piece settings for dinner, serving pieces, $700. Call 7-4336.


Thursday, February 22
Exhibition, pastel drawings and prints by Yvonne Leonard, Chicago, Space Gallery, Knuss Hall, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (through March 21) (and 23) 13th annual Kalamazoo Invitational Goal Ball Tournament, Student Recreation Center, 3-5 p.m.; for registration information, call 7-3625.

Wednesday, February 21
* Exhibition, (Continued from page one) "A Gathering of Women," Faculty Dining Room, Bernhard Center Public Cafeteria, noon-1 p.m.

Tuesday, February 20
* Presentation by candidate for director of admissions and orientation, "Admissions Issues through Gopher on the VMS cluster. Currently, there are three calendars available:

1. Campus Calendar. You will find this Month's Events, Next Month's Events and Future Events.
2. Western News will not be published during spring break week. The next issue will be published Thursday, March 7. The deadline for that issue is noon Tuesday, March 5.