WMU experts help millions to get clean water

Paper technology with the potential to provide clean drinking water to millions at a cost of just pennies a day has been successfully produced on a pilot scale at WMU this fall and may be on its way to becoming an international tool to prevent disease.

Paper filtering technology developed in university research labs was brought to WMU by Folia Water of Pittsburgh to test the feasibility of scaling the technology to major production. The technology is based on centuries-old knowledge about the antimicrobial properties of silver, and it involves the production of paper with silver nanoparticles embedded in it.

The paper will be packaged in “Safe Water Books,” with instructions in the local language. Each “page” is a recyclable, biodegradable water filter capable of killing viruses and bacteria in the water that passes through it. After the successful trial run in WMU’s celebrated paper pilot plants, the paper rolls produced are being converted into books and readied for distribution.

“Those rolls are already sold, and we’ll be shipping books as soon as they are converted,” says Cantwell Carson, Folia’s chief technical officer, who attended the WMU trials. “The WMU

Long celebration of Dunn presidency starts in January

A spring season filled with events designed to celebrate the successful tenure of WMU President John M. Dunn will begin in January and provide the entire WMU community opportunities to say thank you and farewell to the University’s eighth president.

Dunn, whose trademarks have been his accessibility and focus on student success, has agreed to a series of activities that will put him in close contact with people around the state and nation as well as raise funds to solidify the future for some signature causes important to him and his wife, Linda.

Starting Jan. 17, Dunn will visit alumni gathering in Colorado, Arizona, California, Florida and Washington, D.C.; embark on a Feb. 27 through March 3 Farewell Bus Tour of Michigan that will take him to more than a dozen cities around the state; and be feted at an April 7 Miller Auditorium celebration for the campus and community.

Farewell activities to celebrate the Denns also will include a May gala at the WMU Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine; visits to legislators and editorial boards; and a special

WMU saluted again in rankings of veteran-friendly institutions

The University has again been singled out as being among the best institutions in the nation for military veterans pursuing higher education.

In a pre-Veterans Day announcement, Military Times placed WMU on its 2017 “Best for Vets” list of colleges and universities, coming in at 108 on its list of the top 130 institutions. WMU is the only Michigan school to have appeared on all eight years of the publication’s annual list of top colleges in the United States considered “the best fit for service members, military veterans and their families.” The only other public university in Michigan to make the 2017 list was Central Michigan University.

Best for Vets Colleges 2017 is an editorially independent news project that evaluates the many factors that help make colleges and universities a good fit for service members, military veterans and their families. More than 500 colleges took part in this year’s detailed survey.

The rankings are published in full in the issues of Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times and Marine Corps Times on newsstands this month, as well as on each of the magazines’ websites and at militarytimes.com.

This is the second accolade WMU has received this month for its services to vets. WMU and the WMU Thomas M. Cooley Law School received “gold-level status” from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency based on their commitment to providing on-campus, veteran-centric services to student veterans.
Community forum focuses on public trust in state government

A post-election, community conversation on the topic “Where Do We Go From Here?” will be hosted by WMU and the Center for Michigan at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30, in the Fetzer Center.

John M. Dunn, WMU president, and John Beowell, Center for Michigan president, will give introductory remarks at the 90-minute event related to China Friday, Nov. 18; India Wednesday, Nov. 23; and the American Thanksgiving Thursday, Dec. 1. Visit wmich.edu/news/2016/11/36352.

FEDERAL OFFICIAL TO GIVE SICHEL LECTURE

Pia M. Orrenius, vice president and senior economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, will speak on “The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Immigration: Implications for Policy” at noon Wednesday, Nov. 30, in 2028 Brown Hall. A free, light lunch reception will follow.

APA holiday gathering scheduled

Administrative Professional Association members and nonmembers and Professional Support Staff Organization members as well as their guests have until Wednesday, Nov. 30, to register for the APA holiday gathering from 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, in the Bell’s Brewery Eccentric Café. For costs and other details, visit mywmcm.com/apaparty.

Engineering students strut their stuff

Engineering students will show off their senior projects at the 59th Conference on Senior Engineering and Design from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6, in Floyd Hall. For more information, visit wmich.edu/engineer/about/seniors.

Meals with Santa return for 2016

The Fetzer Center is offering two chances to enjoy its food while children meet with Santa. Reservations are required and can be made between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, for breakfast and 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, for lunch. For costs and other details, visit wmich.edu/fetzer/santa.

Retirement reception

C. Richard Spates, psychology, will be honored for his 29 years of service during a retirement reception from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 7, at the Oaklands.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources website at wmich.edu/hr/jobs. Please note that applications must be submitted online through the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.
Researcher finds little connection between violence, video games

Everybody “knows” violent video games desensitize youths to violence, increasing their violent tendencies.

But a WMU researcher has found that’s not really the case. In fact, three studies he has conducted over the past several years show very little connection between the two. Whitney DeCamp, sociology and Kercher Center for Social Research, set out to answer a question that has clouded the picture of violent video games for decades. Do violent video games really make people violent, or do young people just gravitate toward violent video games? His research shows it’s the latter.

DeCamp conducted his most recent study with psychologist Christopher Ferguson from Stetson University in Florida. He also has worked with Rebecca Sevin, a WMU sociology doctoral student, on research examining beneficial effects of video games. Their findings have been published in a number of leading scientific journals and online, including in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence and Sociological Research Online. DeCamp says it seems nearly every highly publicized shooting comes with another claim against violent video games, and those claims are often perpetuated by the newspaper politicians and other scholars. But these criticisms are vastly overstated.

“The young males in my research—they were in grades eight and 11—I found that just by itself, even without any controls, violent video games were a poor predictor of violent behavior,” DeCamp says. “Even in the best model it only explained about 3 percent of the variation in violent behavior.”

DeCamp found that while youth who played violent video games were more likely to commit violent acts, these acts were often perpetuated by the news media, “Youths who play these games,” he says, “often are more interested in computer science or more comfortable with technology and computers.”

Forty-one long-time employees to be inducted this month into 25 Year Club

A total of 41 people will be inducted into the 25 Year Club during a gala honoring WMU’s long-time employees. The by-invitation event includes dinner and begins at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29, in the Bernhard Center. An annual gala, it honors employees who have built their careers at WMU.

In addition to the induction ceremony, WMU will honor two faculty members for 50 years of service to the University. They are Richard W. Malott, psychology, and James M. Davis, building custodial and support services; Janice Evans, building custodial and support services; David J. Wyman, landscape services.

Political science professors field election calls

As Election Day approached, WMU political science professors were busy fielding calls both locally and from other parts of the world from media outlets interested in their perspectives on the presidential race. Jim Butterfield was on television in Vietnam, while Mahendra Lawoti, who is from Nepal, was interviewed by Nepali media. Professors were especially busy providing comment for local news media on election night. John Clark did analysis for Channel 3, and Peter Wielhouwer for FOX11. Clark also has been interviewed via email about the election by the Singapore Straits Times. All of that comes in addition to the many interviews the department’s faculty members did on local radio stations both before and after the election.

Setta Scholars initiative showcased at national event

WMU’s Setta Scholars Program was featured Nov. 13 in Austin, Texas, during the annual national meeting of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

Chris Harris-Wimsatt, Setta program director, co-presented during a “Turning Points: From Setback to Success” session sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Harris-Wimsatt and two others presented TED-like talks that focused on initiatives that led to student academic success—but only after serious initial problems. The speakers were chosen through a national competitive video application process.

Harris-Wimsatt helped an audience of about 350 higher education leaders understand both the challenges and ultimate success of the nationally acclaimed Setta program.

Elizabeth DeYoung, a former custodian, died July 4. She was 100. DeYoung joined the staff in 1967 and retired in 1981 after 14 years of service.
Laura Weber, a risk analyst for WMU’s business services, has a long tradition at the University, starting as a student employee in what is now Facilities Management more than 30 years ago and moving into her current role in the early 1990s. She works with risk management and insurance, identifying the sources of risk as well as safety practices and solutions. This includes involvement in insurance for WMU buildings and property, claims, and training programs for employees across campus. Weber also works with budget and administrative issues in her office, and she meets with a property insurance inspector once a year to go through campus buildings and addresses the recommendations made.

“The favorite part of my job is the variety. I’m never bored. I get to work with a great boss every day, as well as work with many people and groups on and off campus,” she says, adding that the fall and spring are busier because policies are renewed at those times. Weber is a liaison for WMU with companies and the community, answering questions, completing insurance applications, and assisting with contracts and agreements regarding campus policies and safety.

She also acts as one of WMU’s representatives with MUSIC—Michigan Universities Self-Insurance Corporation—of which WMU is a member. This group includes other Michigan public institutions that identify loss trends and safety solutions unique to the university setting. Weber is vice chair for MUSIC’s claims and loss control committee and also is on a subcommittee that puts together a yearly symposium for the corporation. She says she initially wanted to be a special education teacher, but changed her major to organizational communication at WMU and eventually earned her bachelor’s degree with a minor in psychology. Many of her family members also are Broncos, including her husband, mother and a brother, all of whom are graduates, and her father, who attended the University. Her husband, Don, is director of information technology for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Weber has two children, a daughter, Lauren, and son, Jason. Born in Pontiac, Michigan, she and her family now live in Portage, Michigan. She enjoys walking and spending time with friends and family, including Friday movie nights at home with her husband, children, dog and two cats. Weber played sports in high school and college and enjoys watching sports to this day.

Two evaluation researchers receive $1.6 million grant renewal from NSF

Lori A. Wingate, director of research for the Evaluation Center, and Arlen Gullickson, emeritus researcher in the center, were recently awarded a $1.6 million grant from the National Science Foundation to operate an evaluation support center for NSF’s Advanced Technological Education—ATE—Program. Wingate serves as principal investigator for the project and Gullickson as co-principal investigator.

This new award follows a $2.2 million grant made in 2012 and $2.1 million grant in 2008. The support center, called EvaluATE, offers webinars, tools and resource materials, and workshops on evaluation. The center’s offerings are designed for ATE project personnel and evaluators, but are available to the general public.

In fact, the center’s webinars have attracted participants from far beyond the ATE program, including individuals from federal agencies; state, county, tribal and municipal governments; international consulting firms; ivy league universities; and various organizations from different countries and states.

The ATE program was created by NSF in response to the Scientific and Advanced- Technology Act of 1992, which called for establishing “a national advanced technician training program, utilizing the resources of the nation’s two-year associate-degree-granting colleges.” The program focuses on high-technology fields such as advanced manufacturing technologies, biotechnology, energy and environmental technologies, engineering technologies, information technologies, and nanotechnology.