Register now for assessment event

Faculty and staff are invited to the third annual Assessment in Action Day Friday, March 23, in the Fetzer Center. The conference is free, but registration is required by Tuesday, March 20. Write to Karen Stokes Chapo at karen.stokeschapo@wmich.edu to register. Visit wmich.edu/poapa then click Assessment and scroll down to the Assessment Calendar to locate a link to the Assessment in Action Day website.

ROTC event to memorialize alumnus

The ROTC program has established an endowed scholarship in the name of Capt. Drew Russell, a WMU graduate who was killed in Afghanistan. A fallen soldier ceremony for Russell is planned for 2 p.m. Tuesday, March 20, in the Activity Therapy Building, which houses the ROTC program. The ceremony will include a final roll call and playing of taps. In addition, the recipient of the new endowed scholarship established in Russell’s name is expected to be announced.

TIAA-CREF reps to be on campus

TIAA-CREF representatives will be on campus Tuesday through Thursday, April 17-19. To schedule a private consultation for investment or retirement planning, visit tiaa-cref.org and click Consultations and Seminars under Services. Call (800) 732-8353 if you are unable to register online.

Senior citizen prom scheduled

Area senior citizens will celebrate prom night when they gather Thursday, March 22, in the Bernhard Center Ballroom for a free evening of Big Band music and swing and ballroom dancing. Pre-entertainment begins at 5 p.m. and dancing runs from 7 to 10 p.m. All senior citizens are welcome to attend the free, semi-formal event.

WMU participating in RecycleMania

WMU is participating in RecycleMania 2012, a nationwide recycling competition among more than 600 colleges and universities. The eight-week competition runs through March 31, with the goal of increasing awareness of and participation in campus recycling and waste reduction programs. Visit wmich.edu/wmnu/news/2012/03/08 for more information.

WMU hosting visiting KPS students

For the third year, WMU is opening its residence halls, classrooms and dining halls to all Kalamazoo Public Schools sixth-graders in March and April so they can get a firsthand look at college life and the opportunities available through a college education. The goal of the WMU/KPS partnership, called Bronco BUDS—Building Unique Dynamic Students—is to encourage early middle school students to set their sights on college and take advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise tuition scholarship program.

Johnston, Carlson to lead governing board

William D. Johnston of Portage, Mich., and Jeanne Carlson of Novi, Mich., have been elected to serve for 2012 as chair and vice chair, respectively, of the WMU Board of Trustees. The election took place at the Feb. 29 meeting of the trustees. All officers serve one-year terms.

Johnston replaces Trustee Dennis Archer of Detroit, who remains on the governing board. Johnston, who was appointed to the Board of Trustees by then-Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, has served as a trustee since 2007. He is president and chairman of Greenleaf Companies, which includes Greenleaf Trust, Greenleaf Holdings, Greenleaf Ventures, Greenleaf Hospitality Group and Greenleaf Capital.

Chairman of Southwest Michigan First, Johnston also serves on several corporate and community boards as well as the WMU Foundation board. He received the WMU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award in 2010 and earned a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree from WMU.

Carlson was appointed to the board by Granholm in 2007, as well. She retired as president and chief executive officer of Blue Care Network of Michigan in 2010 after a 33-year career that included positions at Blue Care Network and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

Carlson earned a bachelor’s degree from WMU and was a member of the WMU Alumni Association Board of Directors from 1995 to 2001, serving as its president in 2000-01. She has been active in a number of professional and community organizations. The other individuals elected to serve as officers of the WMU Board of Trustees are all University employees. They, along with their board positions, are: Betty A. Kocher, secretary; Janice Van Der Kley, treasurer and assistant secretary; and Sandra Steinbach, assistant treasurer.

WMU has best campus EV infrastructure in nation

Sixteen charging stations that have just come online make WMU the new national leader for campuses boasting electric vehicle charging resources.

After activating its first four EV charging stations just last year, the University recently installed a fifth station near Welborn Hall and 15 more near Miller Auditorium. The new stations mean 20 EVs can be charged on campus simultaneously, giving WMU the largest number of charging stations of any college or university campus in the United States.

The WMU network of stations has been linked to the Charge Point America system, which is helping to build a much-needed national infrastructure for electric cars by providing some 5,000 networked stations free of charge to organizational and residential applicants in 10 U.S. regions, including Michigan’s Lower Peninsula.

Michigan now has more public charging stations than most other states in the Midwest. WMU’s 20 charging stations in Kalamazoo represent 20 percent of such stations in West Michigan.

In addition to funding installation of the solar array and new charging stations, the Clean Energy Coalition funding allowed WMU to acquire five all-electric Ford Transit Connect service vehicles as well as a large electric hybrid-hydraulic bucket truck to be used in campus facilities operations.

The new electric vehicles also put WMU among the nation’s leaders in the number of such vehicles on a single campus.
University measures avoid $120 million in energy expenditures

Actions taken during the last 17 years have allowed WMU to avoid $120 million in energy-related expenditures, members of the WMU Board of Trustees heard at their Feb. 29 meeting. Peter J. Strazdas, associate vice president and dean of Facilities Management, said labor and management have worked together so WMU could avoid spending $46 million by producing its own energy, $44 million by conserving energy and $30 million by not having to expand the power plant.

“This story is special. I hope that you understand how special it is,” Strazdas said. “We’re very proud of what we’ve done. This is an incredible story that many universities cannot tell today.”

Retirement reception

Jack Luderer is resigning from his position as associate dean for research in the WMU School of Medicine and is retiring from the University. Luderer will be honored for his 12 years of service during a retirement reception from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, March 16, in the Fetzer Center. A brief program is scheduled for 5:15 p.m.

Exchange

Wanted—Furnished housing rental for a visiting Fullbright professor during the fall 2012 semester. Could be a great opportunity for a WMU faculty member who will be on sabbatical this fall. Contact Carla Koreskys at carla.koreskys@wmich.edu or (269) 387-5317.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources Website at 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.

NSF awards grant to plant biologist

Todd Barkman, biological sciences, has been awarded a grant from the National Science Foundation for a project that will investigate the properties of a synthesized enzyme replicating one that has been extinct for at least 200 million years. The $264,000, three-year project began in November and will study the biological ancestors of plant proteins to create an understanding of their evolutionary processes. This research being done by Barkman, a WMU faculty member since 2000, could ultimately allow the resurrection of ancient plants.

Reconstructing ancient plant proteins reveals opportunities to test how they survived, evolved and created defense systems. Barkman has taught at WMU since 1996 and comparing them with present-day specimens may enable scientists to predict changes in plant evolution and their abilities to adapt to alterations in climate or environment.

Talented author earns new accolade

Jaimy Gordon, English, continues to garner the attention of judges in the world’s top literary prize competitions for fiction. His novel, "Lord of Misrule," earned her the 2010 National Book Award and has just made the 20-book longlist for the United Kingdom’s Orange Prize for Fiction.

The Orange Prize is the United Kingdom’s most prestigious annual book award for fiction written by women. It covers English-language books published worldwide. This year’s winner will be announced May 30.

Gordon has taught at WMU since 1991 and is a member of the celebrated creative writing faculty. "Lord of Misrule" was published in Great Britain last year and in the United States in 2010. It was named a finalist for the 2011 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the nation’s largest peer-juried fiction prize.

Attorney honored for accomplishments

Carol J.L. Hustoles, vice president for legal affairs and general counsel, was among seven area business women honored March 6 for their professional accomplishments by Inforum, Michigan’s business forum for women.

Inforum seeks to strengthen the state’s business environment by creating opportunities for women to lead and succeed. Founded in 1962 in Detroit as the Women’s Economic Club, it has affiliates in Grand Rapids, Lansing and Kalamazoo.

Hustoles came to the University in 1991. She was named general counsel eight years later and appointed vice president in 2002. She is a past president of the Kalamazoo County Bar Association and the southwest region of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan.

A 2001 Fulbright award recipient, she has served as a board member of the National Association of College and University Attorneys and on the Michigan Board of Ethics.
Science Olympiad is Saturday
More than 400 middle and high school students from a five-county area will flock to WMU this month for the Region 10 Science Olympiad competition.

The competition will run from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, March 17, in various campus locations, culminating in an awards ceremony from 4 to 5 p.m. in the Bernhard Center Ballroom.

Competitive events will take place in Wood Hall, Reed Hall, and the Chemistry Building, Dalton Center, Bernhard Center and Student Recreation Center. About 150 WMU students, faculty and staff volunteers will be involved in some aspect of the Olympiad.

Obituaries
Leo Niemi, professor emeritus of business information systems, died at home in Kalamazoo March 2. He was 92.

Niemi joined the faculty in 1955 and retired in 1985 after 30 years of service. He was a former assistant to the business school dean, started computer courses at WMU, and was department chair from 1977 to 1983 as business education and administrative services transitioned into business information systems.

Memorial donations may be made to Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan.

Visit langelands.com to make a memorial guestbook entry.

Robert W. Thomas, a retired staff member, died Feb. 11 in Tarpon Springs, Fla. He was 93.

Thomas joined the staff in 1966 and retired in 1986 after 20 years of service. At the time of his retirement, he was manager of trade services in what is now maintenance services.

Brush to be burned at Asylum Lake Preserve

Prescribed burns in WMU’s Asylum Lake Preserve are being planned this spring to improve the aesthetics and ecology of the natural area.

The burns may take place this month or in early April, depending on weather conditions. They will be done by Wildtype Ltd., a professional ecological restoration firm.

Cari DeLong, natural areas manager, says WMU hired Wildtype last spring to start removing invasive vegetation in a 15-acre section of the preserve. Since then, numerous brush piles have been lined up around the north and south edges of Asylum Lake.

An experienced Wildtype crew will administer the burns after obtaining the necessary permit. Burnings will take place on weekdays and only when weather conditions are favorable.

“Normally, we’d let the brush decay naturally. We’re having Wildtype do a prescribed burn because the sheer size and abundance of the brush piles may have unintended consequences on the surrounding habitat,” DeLong explains. “Burning is an effective and natural tool for removing the piles from the landscape. Riddling the lake’s edge of this biomass will increase the amount of space for native vegetation to colonize, while also opening up more views of the lake.”

The brush piles are the remains of once-thriving invasive vegetation that was wreaking havoc on the preserve’s ecosystem. They are made up of woody shrubs such as honeysuckle, common buckthorn and glossy buckthorn.

“This is an exciting step in the right direction for Asylum Lake Preserve as well as community members who enjoy this natural area,” DeLong says. “The removal of invasive vegetation has not only improved the ecology of the area, but also opened up beautiful views of the lake that were previously screened due to the dense undergrowth surrounding the lake’s edge.”

DeBlecourt, Fetzer Center; Joyann L. Gosa, WMU Bookstore; Pamela Motley, English; Rob Pennock, Miller Auditorium; and Kristi L. Schugter, university budgets.

10 Years—Daniel J. Chapo, associate vice president for finance office; Erik Conover, information technology; Patricia Hollahan, Medieval Institute; and Shawna Rane Smith, Haworth College of Business.

Five Years—Steven C. Duran, power plant; Kristin Everett, Mallinson Institute; Nicholas A. Gauthiers, College of Arts and Sciences advising; Daniel Kelsh, maintenance services; Bruce Allen Kirkendall, maintenance services; Mark W. St. Martin, Sindecuse Health Center; and Joseph A. Wilson, Grand Rapids regional location.
St. Patrick’s Day plunge to benefit Special Olympics

The WMU community is invited to plunge into the icy waters of a makeshift glacial pool in Lawson Ice Arena on St. Patrick’s Day Saturday, March 17, to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics Michigan.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge benefits Special Olympics Michigan, which provides year-round sports training and athletic competition for more than 20,600 children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

This will be the fifth Polar Plunge held at WMU. Members of the University and Kalamazoo communities have been securing donations to participate in the event. WMU President John M. Dunn also is expected to participate.

Last year’s event raised $16,000 for Special Olympics, and this year’s goal is $20,000.

The schedule of events for this year includes registration starting at 10 a.m., a parade of costumes and plunging starting at 11:15 a.m., an award ceremony at 12:15 p.m., and lunch at 12:30 p.m.

Visit semi.org to pre-register, make a donation or obtain more information.

Student employer, employee of year feted at reception

The winners of the 2012 student and supervisor of the year awards were honored during a Feb. 23 reception in the Bernhard Center. Lt. Jeffrey Lillard, an officer in public safety’s police division, received the Supervisor of the Year award. Sydney Small, a senior working in University Libraries, received the Gary L. Bellveille Student Employee of the Year award.

Sixty-two student employees and 25 supervisors were nominated for the two campuswide awards this year. The awards are bestowed in conjunction with the annual Student Employee Appreciation Week, which is sponsored by Career and Student Employment Services.

Kalamazoo Marathon is topic of next Keystone breakfast talk

“The Making of a Kalamazoo Marathon” will be the featured topic at this month’s Keystone Community Bank Breakfast.

Blaine Lam, the marathon’s race director, will discuss the business and economic impact of bringing a marathon to Kalamazoo when he speaks Friday, March 30. He also will share his insights on improving the quality of life in the Kalamazoo community.

The free, public talk begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in the Dean’s Conference Room of Schneider Hall followed by Lam’s presentation at 8 a.m. Reservations are required and may be made by calling (269) 387-5050.

Lam, co-founder of Lam & Associates, has been involved in the running community for more than 35 years. He assisted in establishing the first local road race and has been involved in the Borgess Run for the Health of It since its inception 33 years ago.