

Art Show story

Missouri Western's Griffon Arts Society will be hosting their first annual art show from April 1 to May 3. Submitted pieces will be shown on Remington's second floor, above Einstein Bro.'s Bagels from 6pm to 9pm. The show is not restricted merely to Society members. Any Western student may create a piece and submit it, and community members and students alike are welcome to attend the showing.

Behind the scenes of this event is Alexandra Dalsing. Dalsing is a print making major in her junior year here at Western. She is a member of the Arts Society, and the exhibition was her idea.

"If you volunteer to do something," said Dalsing, "they give it to you to do, all by yourself."

Each entrant must pay a \$5 fee, but can enter up to three pieces with this payment. "I wanted to do something to earn money so students can enter other exhibitions or buy art supplies," said Dalsing.

Pieces will be judged and winners will be picked by three faculty members, and Western's President and Provost will name the best in show. There are six different categories to be judged – painting, drawing, digital media, 2D mixed media, sculpture, and photography. The first place winners of each category will receive financial assistance.

Drawing and 2D Design instructor Eric Fuson is also working with the Society for this event. He is the Arts Society's faculty sponsor.

"We're hoping to give the art students a chance to get some exposure," said Fuson, "to get them out of Potter and into the community."

Fuson commends Dalsing and all the other GAS members on their hard work toward making this event great.

Art students are hurriedly finishing their projects and preparing them for the show by the March 28 deadline. Digital animation major Sarah Gordon will be entering a piece she just recently decided to put in.

"It's a great way for us to show off our art work," Gordon said. She thinks the show will be a good experience for students in their field.

Once the show ends, Dalsing would like to keep a few of the pieces on display in Remington. She wants the show and art in general to be something the whole community can enjoy.

"Hopefully it will expand to others, even non-Art majors," Dalsing said.

Finals Week story

Hold on, Western students! Don't sell those textbooks yet, and keep those notebooks out! Classes may be over but we still have one week left of school. The most dreaded week of all – finals week. Beginning May 4 students must take a final exam in each class they attended this semester. But don't freak out yet. Even if you're not ready today, there are lots of things you can do to prepare yourself for the upcoming tests.

Among the many resources available to students here on campus is the Center for Academic Support, or CAS. The CAS is located right beside the library, and is open to students Monday thru Thursday from 8am to 9pm, and Friday from 8am to 3pm. The center is run by student tutors who provide free sessions and workshops in subjects including reading, writing, math, study skills, and a variety of specific courses listed on their website. Students seeking help at the CAS can study one-on-one with a tutor, or in a group with other students learning the same subject. Don't forget to bring your Western ID when attending a session.

Cathy Gann, the CAS' reading and study skills coordinator, has some helpful hints for students during these trying times of final reviews.

"Studying should be continuous," Gann said. "Always go back and look over your notes, at least once a week."

Gann also promotes the Cornell Method of note-taking. By writing down what they hear in class, students are able to create sort of a self study guide, and are therefore better able to retain the subject matter.

"You remember more of what you hear than what you read," Gann said.

Another tip Gann has for students is to always try. Even if you don't know the answer to a question, take a guess. It's better to get some points than none at all.

Also available for student support is Western's Counseling Center. This center is located in Eder room 203, and open Monday thru Friday from 8am to 4:30pm. Although faculty advisers are more suited for career and course advice, the counselors here are excellent at helping students relieve stress. And during finals week, there's a lot of that going around.

One thing that students struggle with above all during finals is 'test anxiety'. Steve Potter, one of Western's counselors, was able to give some great advice about test taking. Using a technique called biofeedback, Potter can help students learn to control their fight or flight response. This is the instinct that arises when we perceive a threat. Quite often, this is what students feel when taking a test. To decrease stress using biofeedback, Potter trains students to increase the temperature of their hands. That's right. As the temperature in your hands increases, your stress level goes down. All you have to do is focus on remaining calm.

"It's important to relax as much as possible," Potter said. "When people are calm, they do better on tests."

So how are students preparing for finals? English Education major Sarah McClure says her most successful study technique is to make notecards and rewrite her notes, then compare them to the textbook or lessons to see how accurate they are.

"I like to test how well I remember things," McClure said.

McClure also says that as the semester comes to an end, she is much more worried about papers to write and presentations to give than tests she has to take.

Another lesson Potter wants students to learn is not to overdramatize things. So many students use words and phrases like "always" and "never" and "terrible". Often we are just blowing things out of proportion due to stress. And try to avoid misconceptions like "having a tutor means I'm dumb" or "failing a test makes me a failure". Finals aren't designed to make you look stupid or to embarrass you. They're simply a learning experience. And there are always people at the CAS and counseling center that are here to help you succeed.

Poetry Reading story

April is National Poetry Month in the United States. To kick off this month of creativity, Dr. William Church, Missouri Western's assistant professor of English, along with creative writing instructor Dana Andrews and poetry instructor Megan Thompson brought St. Joseph the Lit Out Loud annual poetry reading.

Church is a graduate of Western, and wanted to give back an experience he got as a student. "We used to have readings when I was in school," said Church, "I feel that I should have them for my students."

Lit Out Loud took place at 7pm March 31, at Whiskey Mansion Bed and Breakfast located at 1723 Francis in downtown St. Joe. Students and community members alike were invited to attend. Anyone who came could read their own creative works or simply be an audience for those sharing their pieces.

This turned out to be a great experience for poets and writers of all kinds. And it was not just limited to St. Joseph residents – Thompson says students from Lawrence have made the trip in the past. "I'm always impressed with the diversity," Thompson said. Thompson also read a work aloud at the performance, but she said this night was mainly about the students.

Readers were hesitant at first, but as more people read, others wanted to read too. English Lit major Jes Baltezor enjoyed the event as an audience member and as a participant.

"This was my first time coming to a reading," Baltezor said, "I enjoyed every piece, and found the variety interesting."

Baltezor's stories included *An Open Letter to Frank Capra* and *Real Dolls*, both original works. *An Open Letter* was inspired by an out-of-season viewing of *It's A Wonderful Life*. Seeing it without the Christmas context seemed to take the innocence and magic out of it, according to Baltezor.

Real Dolls told the story of a man who ordered a lifelike female doll off the internet because he could find love nowhere else. The most interesting – or perhaps scariest – aspect of this story is that Baltezor's details were based on fact. She researched such a website to get her inspiration.

Events like this help to promote writing as well as build writers' confidence. The audience is not there to judge. It also gives these young poets a sense of belonging. Like the Writer's Circle here on campus run by Andrews and Thompson. It is a place for student writers to get together and receive input on their work.

"A big part of writing is being part of a community," Thompson said, "We try to create that."

Phantom of the Opera story

Missouri Western's Department of Music will be teaming up with the Department of Communication Studies and Theater and the Department of Art to bring *Phantom* to campus this week. Performances will be 7:30 pm March 3 through 5, and 3 pm March 6 in Potter Hall Theater. Based on the novel by Gaston Leroux, *Phantom* is Arthur Kopit and Maury Yeston's new take on the hit musical *The Phantom of the Opera* made famous by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

In this tale, young farm girl Christine Daae journeys to Paris to fulfill her dream of performing at the Paris Opera House. She is given lessons by Erik, the mysterious Phantom who lives in the catacombs beneath the opera house. Her voice is so beautiful that the Phantom falls in love with her. This may seem to follow the traditional *Phantom of the Opera* plot, but there are several key differences.

Dr. Susan Carter, director of vocal studies and associate professor of music, said that although the main idea is the same, Kopit and Yeston have added some changes. "They're both based on the same book," Carter said, "There's some difference in the characters. Webber's Christine is a ballet dancer, and in [*Phantom*] she's a composer. She's bringing her songs to Paris and she's singing them."

In addition to Christine's variation, characters like the Phantom's mother have been added in certain scenes. Although the romance and mystery remain, the story seems to unfold differently than before.

Dr. Carter believes this production will appeal to Western students and residents of St. Joseph alike.

"[The students] will find the same things they find in Transformers and Twilight," Carter said, "There's the young romantic couple. There's that teen angst. The community will see true life in it. And older people will remember the first love they see in Christine."

Because the role is so big and requires so much work, Christine will be performed by two different students. Freshman Adrienne Collins and sophomore Morgan Breckenridge will each play the part two nights.

Collins has worked with the theater department here at Western even before she started attending as a student. She was already familiar with Webber's version of the musical, and was excited to work on Kopit and Yeston's adaptation.

"I thought it was beautiful, and something I'd like to be a part of," Collins said, "Seeing so many people come together and work so hard is really inspiring."

Breckenridge was asked to audition by Dr. Carter. As a vocal student, she saw a great opportunity to put her hard work to the test and has continued to work hard on this role. "[The role] is very challenging vocally," Breckenridge said, "There are lots of difficult things you have to learn how to do and be comfortable doing in front of a crowd."

Phantom of the Opera story

Breckenridge said working with the cast has been the most enjoyable experience. “It’s helped me find my place,” Breckenridge said, “It’s reassured me that music is what I really want to do.”

Tickets are on sale now at www.missouriwestern.edu/tickets/phantom/. Adults pay \$10, seniors and Western employees pay \$8, and Western students get in for \$5. For more information, email questions to tickets@missouriwestern.edu or call 816-271-5923.

Polar Plunge story

Which fundraiser has snow and swimsuits at the same time? You guessed it! It's St. Joseph's annual Polar Plunge! This fun and frigid event is hosted by Missouri law enforcement to benefit the Special Olympics. This year it's sponsored by the Maryville Treatment Center, the Buchanan County Sheriff's Department, and our own St. Joseph Police Department.

The party starts at noon on February 12, 2011, and participants "take the plunge" at 2pm sharp. This charitable celebration will take place at Lake Contrary here in St. Joe. All potential plunge-takers are asked to fill out a registration form online and raise at least \$75 dollars for the charity by the date of the event. You can create your own page online to help raise funds, and email friends and family to invite them to donate and attend. Everyone planning to join the party must wear a swimsuit and shoes, and many choose to show up in hilarious costumes.

Since this is a citywide event, and most college students can't resist a party (no matter how chilly), many of Missouri Western's students are planning to attend. Some will be participating, and some will serve as spectators. Sophomore friends Ceasera Robinson, Stacey Weidemann, and Sarah Gordon had this to say about the upcoming event.

"It gets people together," Ceasera says, "They help each other for one cause."

When asked if they planned on joining in on the frosty festivities, Sarah said, "I will if you guys will."

"Yeah," Ceasera agreed, "I'll do it."

"I will not." Stacey laughed.

Even though Stacey's not planning to swim this year, she does intend to donate to Ceasera's and Sarah's team.

In addition to the crazy costumes and shivering swimmers, Polar Plunge offers music, dancing, talking, and laughter – just like any great party! After the event, awards will be given to participants. Awards are presented for Top Fundraising College, Top Fundraising School, Top Fundraising Team, Top Fundraising Law Enforcement Agency, and Top Fundraising Individual. In addition to these honors, one person or team will be bestowed with the Golden Plunger for having the best costumes.

Even if you don't find yourself in possession of one of these icy awards, every participant receives a gift. Remember that \$75 you must earn before Saturday? That guarantees you a Polar Plunge 2011 t-shirt! Plungers who raise \$250 will receive their choice of a Travel gift card, music and media pack, or a Polar Plunge 2011 beach towel. \$500 gives you the choice of a Polar Plunge sweatshirt blanket, Polar Plunge fleece jacket, Polar Plunge duffel bag, or Polar Plunge hoodie. And \$1000 lets you choose a Polar Plunge Columbia jacket, Polar Plunge Men's/Women's jacket, or Polar Plunge Travel backpack.

This year the goal is set at \$45,000. So far, Plungers across the state have raised \$15,876.58. Even if you don't plan on taking the plunge, you can always donate toward the cause and help the other Plungers reach their goal.

Dr. Edwin Taylor story

All-star athletes come from all walks of life. At Missouri Western, they can even be found in the form of our professors. Dr. Edwin Taylor, Assistant Professor of Political Science since August of 2010, will be participating in an upcoming marathon.

“Actually, I ran my first [marathon] in November,” Taylor said, “I never intended to run a marathon. The thing about running is you start, and it’s an ongoing challenge.”

The marathon will take place April 30 in Eugene, Oregon. He said he is really geared up for this one, because it is in the town where he did his graduate work. A friend of his from Oregon will also be participating.

Another avid runner from right here at Western is Dr. Jimmy Albright, Professor of Archaeology. Albright could not be interviewed, as he is out of the country doing some community work, another passion of his. But according to his website, www.iran26.com, he has run 23 marathons, and daily runs about 5 miles.

Taylor got his start at a gym in Portland, Oregon, back in 2009.

“It just sort of built upon itself,” Taylor said, “I was to the point where I was running a mile, and then it was two miles, and then I thought well maybe I can run a 5k, which is 3 miles. Then I ran a 10k, which is six miles. And if I can run six miles, maybe I can run ten miles. It just creeps up on you.”

As for training, Taylor said he uses Nike’s six month marathon training course on his iPhone. With this app, he can train whenever and wherever he wants.

“It consists of essentially building up endurance for long runs,” Taylor said.

Taylor has even spoken to his students about his imminent departure for the Oregon marathon. Some of them are excited for him. One such student was Lauren Crabtree. She takes Taylor’s American national government course. Crabtree said he talks about the training in class, and she thinks it is really cool.

“I’d do it too if I was in shape,” Crabtree said.

For students looking to take up running, Taylor had some advice to give.

“Start slow, and pay attention to your form,” Taylor said, “Running is a sport with a high injury rate.”

Despite this warning, Taylor does encourage students, indeed everyone, to try out running. He said there are several rewards in it along with the challenges.

“One is rediscovering the joy of movement,” Taylor said, “and thinking about what we can do, pushing ourselves, taking on new challenges. Talk about it, tell people what you’re doing. And of course eat healthy and get lots of sleep. Those would be my words of wisdom.”