

Poetry alive and well at Macomb

One alumnus brought not only his considerable talent to the stage but some of his friends and more than a few kind words for his alma mater as well when Macomb's South and Center campuses hosted a *Day of Poetry* last semester.

"Macomb Community College was the epicenter of poetry, art and film in the metro Detroit area in the late 60s and early 70s when I attended," notes M.L. Liebler, a Detroit-area poet and Macomb alumnus who recruited fellow poets and musicians for the event. "We were very fortunate to be exposed to film, literature, performance art, progressive education and the fine arts in ways that even students at larger universities would envy now."

A collaborative effort of Macomb's English Department, two student writing clubs and the president's office, Macomb's first *Day of Poetry* made good on its promise to bring both student and published/performing poets together to inspire and learn from each other. And Liebler's participation added a certain cachet to the event.

An English professor at Wayne State University, Liebler is well known in Detroit-area poetry circles with several written anthologies, audio recordings and poetry events to his credit—including many abroad. He was joined on stage in the student center at Center Campus and the library at South Campus by The Whistlin' Pigs Poetry Band, featuring Peter Lewis, from the 1960s-era San Francisco rock band Moby Grape, on lead guitar.

"I thought it was one of the best and most successful poetry programs I have been involved with in a long time," relates Liebler. "Word of our success with a *Day of Poetry* at Macomb has already reached Wayne State, and I hear they now want to get onboard with a program like this in the near future."

Jenifer DeBellis, president of the Center Campus Writing Club, returned to college after starting her family and now intends to earn a bachelor's degree in creative writing and rhetoric. One of the student organizers of the event, which drew about 150 at Center and nearly 100 at South, she thought the contributions of Liebler



M.L. Liebler, a major figure in Detroit-area poetry circles and a Macomb alumnus, helped plan Macomb's Day of Poetry, as well as being a featured poet. Here he is backed on stage by the Whistlin' Pigs Poetry Band, with Peter Lewis, of the 1960s rock band Moby Grape, on lead guitar.

and the other professional poets and musicians added a defining element to Macomb's *Day of Poetry*, giving students much insight into the art.

But the ultimate thrill for her was less personal and more profound.

"It was great," says DeBellis, "to see poetry alive and well."

Alumni invited to spring job fair

Macomb's Career Services is hosting a job fair for students and alumni on Tuesday, April 26, 4 to 7 p.m., at the Macomb Sports & Expo Center on South Campus.

Representatives from local employers will be on hand to discuss full- and part-time employment opportunities with their organizations. Attendees should dress in business attire and bring several copies of their resume.

For a listing of employers who will be participating, visit www.macomb.edu and use the search words "Career Services Job Fair." For more information, contact Career Services at 586.445.7321 or careerservices@macomb.edu.

MACA classes and scholarship help former New Yorker recharge career



Jodi Paige-Lee, shown with her children Alex and Lucie, is a recent recipient of the Donna Healy Memorial Endowed Childcare Scholarship.

Don't let the fact that Jodi Paige-Lee is finishing up the media and commercial arts program she began in the 1980s at Macomb give you the wrong idea. She already has a bachelor of fine arts in illustration from the Parsons School of Design, a master of fine arts degree from the School of Visual Arts and a design career that includes stints at Time Warner and NBC.

That would certainly make her former Macomb advisor proud.

"I loved art but considered becoming a lawyer," recalls Paige-Lee. "I can still hear Mrs. Healy saying, 'I don't think that will be creative enough for you.' She was right."

Donna Healy, Paige-Lee's advisor at Macomb, died in 2007. Friends and family established a scholarship in her memory that helps students who are also parents (a population that Healy frequently worked with) pay for childcare so that they may attend college. Paige-Lee is one of those students.

"This feels especially poignant to me," says Paige-Lee, of receiving the Donna Healy

Memorial Endowed Childcare Scholarship, "because Mrs. Healy was my first and only academic advisor...she continued to advise me until I left Macomb three years later to go to art school in New York City."

Paige-Lee, who earned a general studies degree from Macomb with an emphasis in graphic and commercial art before transferring to Parson's, lived in New York for 18 years. It is there that she met and married her husband, Lenny, a pharmacist. The couple decided to move to Michigan in 2002 to escape New York's rising cost of living. Paige-Lee also decided to put her successful career on hold when her first child was born; she is now mom to Alex, 11, and Lucie, 7.

"I've been at home with the kids for 11 years, and I came back to Macomb to upgrade my skills," offers Paige-Lee, who intends to recharge her freelancing career in the near future. "If I didn't get this scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to do it."

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Dr. King would have approved—



The college's Unity of Community event on Jan. 17, commemorating the national observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, drew more than 400 students and staff. They volunteered their time in honor of the late civil rights leader at Salvation Army stores, Habitat for Humanity building sites and shelters and soup kitchens across the county. "There is no question that the tasks each of you are about to undertake are important," Jim Jacobs, Macomb president, told the volunteers. "And I have no doubt that each of you will perform them in a way that would have earned Dr. King's approval and gratitude."



Macomb alumnus Tim Wiley, New Baltimore police chief, outside the bank operations center that will become his department's new home sometime this summer. Wiley is the youngest ever to be appointed a police chief in Michigan.

If not for the hours he spent as a teenager patrolling a stretch of beach in New Baltimore, Tim Wiley, 33, might not be surveying the site of his hometown's future police station from the vantage point of being its newest chief.

"I was working as a lifeguard in the summer, and the chief, back then, asked if I wanted another part-time job as a police officer," relates the Macomb alumnus. "Once I got in, there was no turning back. It only affirmed the passion I have always had for public service."

Wiley was New Baltimore's first police cadet and was also the youngest elected to its school board, running for the position shortly after graduating from high school. After serving on the force for 13 years, he was appointed chief last April and is the youngest ever to hold that rank in Michigan. Not surprisingly, he counts Mark Hackel, Macomb County's former sheriff and newest county executive, among his mentors.

"Mark was one of my instructors at the Macomb Basic Police Academy. All the people associated with that

"Once I got in, there was no turning back. It only affirmed the passion I have always had for public service."

Michigan's youngest police chief finds a niche in his hometown

program are top-notch leaders in their field," says Wiley, who graduated from the academy in 1998. "It's not luck that you have so many grads from that program assuming leadership roles in their departments."

A committed multi-tasker

But Wiley's ascension to chief also came by way of a bachelor's degree in education and a short career teaching high school English/literature and earth science as well as mentoring at-risk students.

"I was actually teaching in New Haven while I was a police officer in New Baltimore," acknowledges Wiley, an admitted multi-tasker who juggles his job with a part-time instructor's position in Macomb's criminal justice program and the active family life of a father with young children.

Wiley and wife Keri were high school sweethearts, and both took classes at Macomb together while working on their bachelor degrees. They have been married for 12 years and live in St. Clair with their children: 11-year-old Brendan, whose travel soccer team Wiley coaches, and six-year-old Reagan, whose own extracurricular schedule includes soccer and ballet.

"My wife has a bachelor's degree in human resources and what she specializes in now is managing the human resources at home," offers Wiley, "That's the reason it all works. She keeps everything organized."

Wiley credits his Droid (soon to be replaced by an iPhone) and his secretary, Denise Schultz, for keeping his office life similarly well-organized. That's becoming increasingly important as he oversees

the renovation of a former bank operations center into a 15,000-square-foot municipal site that will house not only New Baltimore's police station but city council proceedings and community outreach programs as well. "Unsafe" is how Wiley describes the 900-square-foot space the current station now occupies in a building across the street from where Wiley once was a lifeguard.

Shining a light in the dark

"Multi-tasking" is a term that also applies to Wiley's career. While a New Baltimore police officer, he earned a mas-

ter's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University, was an investigator with the regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, ran for St. Clair County Sheriff and served as a marine deputy with that department. With other members of the New Baltimore force, Wiley also worked on a case that drew national attention—the murder of Christine and Ronald Jabalee Sr.—for which their son, Ronald Jr., was recently acquitted.

"That was definitely challenging," acknowledges Wiley, who, fortunately, has far more happy endings to share from his years on the force.

"I was driving down the street one day, and these people waved me over to look at their daughter," recalls Wiley. "She was having an asthma attack. I performed CPR and brought her back to life. That was quite a rewarding experience." And one for which the former lifeguard received a lifesaving award.

But it's not site plans for a new station, headline-grabbing investigations or departmental commendations that lights the fire under the new police chief's passion for public service.

"We help people," relates Wiley, "when they are facing their darkest hour."

Macomb president attends White House summit

James Jacobs, Macomb president, was one of more than 100 participants and the only community college president from Michigan to attend the first-ever White House Summit on Community Colleges, held in Washington, D.C., last October.

Held in the East Room of the White House and chaired by Second Lady Jill Biden, the summit was accompanied by the announcement of a five-year initiative to increase community college graduation rates through a competitive grant program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The summit was opened by President Barack Obama, who called community colleges "the unsung heroes of America's education system" and discussed his "Skills for America's Future," which encourages job training via business/community college partnerships.

From chemical reactions to 'batter's up,' Macomb alumnus focuses on research

Something happened to Herm Krabbenhoft between graduating cum laude in 1963 from Notre Dame High School and starting college that fall at the University of Detroit. He had the book smarts to attend college, but his first attempt could be considered nothing less than "crashing and burning."

"I did abysmally at U of D," Krabbenhoft remembers. "I was required to withdraw after my first semester. Looking back, I don't think I could handle the freedom that college offers. I could choose to go to class or not to go. I chose not to go."

So, instead of hitting the books, Krabbenhoft began punching a time clock at a local paint company. It was a good fit actually, because the work required Krabbenhoft to apply the chemistry he learned in high school. It didn't take long, though, to realize he needed college courses to advance.

A change of plans

"I was accepted on a provisional basis at Macomb," Krabbenhoft says. "That's how bad my grade point average was. But I wanted to better myself."

Krabbenhoft remembers with appreciation that his Macomb instructors altered lab schedules to accommodate his work schedule, and his boss let him flex his work hours.

"I was working in River Rouge and taking night classes, but the chemistry lectures and labs were during the day," he recalls. "I left work midday to attend my lecture class. My instructor allowed me to do the lab work at home."

Krabbenhoft relates that he wasn't the only student who benefited from the instructors' flexibility.

"Students in another class agreed that a Friday night lecture and all-day Saturday lab would work better," Krabbenhoft says. "The college changed the scheduled times to accommodate the students. I'm still grateful for the willingness of Macomb and the instructors to work with us."

He's also appreciative of the sage advice an instructor gave him.

"Bill Allor told me I needed a degree," Krabbenhoft says. "I was sure I didn't. I just thought I needed some college courses. He told me not to have such a narrow focus."

Discovering his passion

Krabbenhoft took the advice to heart and earned a bachelor degree from Wayne State, a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and did post-doctorate work at California-Berkeley. Research became his passion, and he spent his career as a research chemist for General Electric at its R&D Center in New York. Following his retirement in 2001, Krabbenhoft turned his research passion to a new field—baseball.

"My first book, *Leadoff Batters of Major League Baseball*, was published in 2006," says Krabbenhoft. "I've always loved the numbers part of baseball."

Work on a second book, however, halted following his wife Patti's cancer diagnosis. Resuming his research following Patti's death last year has been bittersweet.

"Research has been a welcomed diversion, but there are times I would find an interesting fact that I want to share with her," he says. I miss sharing with her."



Macomb left a lasting impression on alumnus Herm Krabbenhoft, who is retired from a successful career as a research chemist.

Krabbenhoft's attentions are being diverted, too, by the antics of his 17-month-old grandson, Patrick. Krabbenhoft's daughters, Mary Anne Todgham and Jeanie, moved from California to be near their mom during her illness. Mary Anne is nearing the completion of her Ph.D., and, with her husband already relocated back to California awaiting her return, grandpa has stepped in to watch Patrick.

"Both Mary Anne and Jeanie plan to move to California," Krabbenhoft says. "When they settle, I'll move there as well."

Moving from one coast to another, though, will not deter the affection Krabbenhoft has for Michigan and the start he got at Macomb.

"Macomb was beneficial to helping me move forward," he says. "The college has left an indelible impression on me."

Closer than Hollywood



Last fall, a professional film crew transformed the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts and the Lorenzo Cultural Center, both on Center Campus, into a variety of backdrops for seven commercials for Ford Motor Co.

Federally funded program is shot in the arm for HIT careers

Susan Zielke has an MBA in the management of information systems from the University of Houston and 25 years experience in information technology. But, what she lacked were the skills necessary to enter the growing health information technology field. Then she heard about a new program at Macomb Community College.

"I didn't have any background in health care before coming to Macomb," says Zielke, who is a student in the federally funded Health Information Technology (HIT) certification program offered at Macomb as well as 85 other community colleges across the nation. "The program allows students like myself to be introduced to (health care) concepts. The student population is made up of both health care and IT students, which is a great atmosphere for sharing knowledge."

The program, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is designed to prepare both health care and information technology professionals for certification in health information technology (HIT).

But, ultimately, it's the patient who will benefit.

"The overarching goal of this federal initiative is to streamline the sharing of patient information," notes Carol Hall, project administrator for the program at Macomb, "so that no matter where you are when you need health care, your records can be accessed."

EMT grad passes ultimate test

Andrew Peace, who completed Macomb's Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program in December, had an unforeseen test of his CPR skills Dec. 3 at a grocery store in Roseville. To say he passed would be more than an understatement.

"He responded to a call on the loudspeaker asking for anyone who knew CPR to go to the frozen foods section, because a woman needed help," relayed Mike Holland, chief of the Roseville Fire Department, who presented Peace with a lifesaving award Dec. 15 following his real EMT finals at Center Campus. "People in the emergency room said if he had not been there and started CPR, she would not have made it."

"When I got there, she was unconscious, and a lady was holding her head. She was pulse-less. I checked it twice to be sure," relates Peace. "I started CPR, and then the store pharmacist came and we took turns. It was maybe about two minutes before the paramedics arrived."

A paramedic/firefighter, in fact, is what Peace, 41, intends to become. A laid-off auto worker, he began taking classes at Macomb two years ago and is supplementing his EMT training with classes in Macomb's paramedic/firefighter program that began in January.

And, now, he has an idea of some of the emotional hazards that will accompany the job.

"I spent the whole weekend (after Dec. 3) worrying about her and how she was doing," relates Peace of the heart attack victim whose life he saved but name he will likely never know. "I was relieved when I heard a few days (after the incident) that she was up and talking and doing okay."



Andrew Peace, a recent graduate of Macomb's EMT program, receives a lifesaving award from Mike Holland, chief of the Roseville Fire Department.

Alumni notes

Lawrence Suchocki, 1967, earned a bachelor of science degree in invertebrate zoology from Wayne State University and has been a certified histologic technician since 1984. He has worked as a lab technician at Gulf Coast Research in Mississippi and at Damon Clinical Laboratories in Arizona, an autopsy technician at St. John Hospital in Detroit, and as a histologic technician at Arizona's Barrows Neurological Institute, John C. Lincoln Hospital and Mayo Clinic branch. He is currently a senior research assistant at Midwestern University in Glendale, Ariz., where he assists students in learning proper histologic laboratory procedures and techniques.

Maggie Szymanek, 1970, earned a bachelor of science and a master's degree in urban planning from Wayne State University. She worked at United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, was head of the Livingston County United Way and worked at United Way in Palm Beach County, Fla., and Westchester County, N.Y. After moving to the Washington, D.C., area, she has worked as a fundraising and strategic planning consultant for nonprofit organizations and independent schools, and is a professional photographer.

Joanie Faddol Gruber, 1978, earned a bachelor of science degree in education from Wayne State University, a master of arts degree in counseling from Eastern Michigan University and a master of social work degree from the University of Cincinnati. She is a licensed independent social worker/supervisor in

Ohio and an assistant professor of social work at the Cincinnati satellite site of Mount Vernon Nazarene University, where she also works as a graduate and degree completion specialist.

Patricia Sdao, 1982, earned a bachelor of science degree in elementary education from Wayne State University, a master of education degree in educational administration and supervision from Arizona State University (ASU) and was in the doctoral program at ASU, majoring in leadership and policy studies. She taught for several years before becoming an assistant principal and a principal. After retiring from Phoenix's public school system, she accepted a job as the founding principal of a new private school, from which she retired in 2003. She currently volunteers in public and private education.

David Joenks, 1984, earned an associate degree in broadcast business management from Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, Calif. He is a producer at KNBR 680, a sports talk radio station.

Catherine Fruth, 2003, graduated with high distinction from the University of Michigan-Dearborn with a bachelor's degree in general studies with a concentration in health care administration last year. She is a pharmacy technician for Health Plan of Michigan after working as a pharmacy technician with Costco Pharmacy for seven years.

News about alumni

Send us a note, and let us know what you've been doing since you graduated from Macomb. Please include the year you graduated (or last year attended), advanced degrees earned, job history since leaving Macomb and any other items of professional or personal interest.

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The power of the wind

In January, the landscape on Macomb Community College's South Campus was altered with the installation of wind spire next to the solar panels outside of M Building.

The addition supports the college's growing renewable energy curriculum. Students in renewable energy classes use the power generated by the wind spire and the solar panels in the laboratory portion of their classes.

"Students plot wind speeds and sustainable winds and document the power output of the turbine," explains Lisa Richert, Macomb professor. "They're able to see the correlation between the wind speeds and the amount of energy generated."

One observation students quickly make is that a wind spire alone is not enough to adequately power a home. A hybrid system that incorporates the wind spire, solar panels and a storage system—a battery—that stores excess energy, has possibilities, Richert notes.

The addition of the wind spire also has generated an unexpected opportunity for the college to help educate the public about wind energy, Richert says. When the college sought a city permit for installing the wind spire, community members expressed concern about noise levels.

"Our wind spire has become a community awareness opportunity for residents to actually see one in action," Richert says. "They learn that the noise of a wind spire is actually no louder than the wind that is generating its movement."



Workers install a wind spire on South Campus, which supports student studies in renewable energy.

Hot rods bring technology to life

Widgets are all fine and good when it comes to computer toolbars and hypothetical manufacturing operations, but Gary Walters, of Macomb's applied technology advanced processes faculty, wanted his students to work on something that would make both their hearts and minds race.

And what he came up with was 1923 Ford T-bucket hot rod fueled by 85 percent ethanol gas, a renewable agricultural resource that is a "green" substitute for fossil fuel.

"I wanted students to become more engaged, because they need more than what the classroom has to offer," explains Walters of what he refers to as the Green T project. "We had to build something that was real, and it had to be cool and exciting."

The Green T is now finished, but the project is far from over. What was a volunteer effort has grown into a four-credit capstone class, with 16 students and six faculty from seven disciplines—as well as a recent Macomb graduate now attending Lawrence Technological University—working on the Green T's successor: a 1927, battery-operated, Ford T-bucket.

"This," notes Walters, "is more than just a car."



Gary Walters (third from left) of Macomb's applied technology advanced processes faculty with the Green T, powered by 85 percent ethanol and built by Macomb students, which he plans to display at cruise events this summer. Next up is a battery electric vehicle based on the same body design, which 16 students, including, from left to right: Chris Kendzier, Eric Schulte and Josh Cole, are building during the winter and spring/summer semesters.

Fire and Ice wins first place at Plymouth Ice Show



At the Plymouth Ice Festival, held in January, students Brad Groszkiewicz (left) and Al Brock, pictured with Macomb instructor Jeff Wolf (center), braved cold temperatures and flying ice chips to carve three ice blocks into the first-place sculpture, Fire and Ice. Macomb's ice carving team participated in ice shows and festivals throughout January and February, finishing fourth overall in the national championship held in Frankenmuth.

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