

## Student artists sweep competition at “Battle of the Arts 2010”

Art majors from SVSU took home every prize at an art competition Saturday, Feb. 6 among 39 students from five neighboring institutions. The “Battle of the Arts 2010: Olympics College Edition” had SVSU art students compete against their peers from Northwood, Davenport and Central Michigan universities and Delta College on Saturday, Feb. 6 at Creative 360 stage, studio and gallery in Midland.

Working on the Olympics theme “Higher, Stronger, Faster,” competitors had to conceptualize, develop and complete works of art within just three hours and a 6-by-6-foot floor space. Techniques ranged from acrylic painting, photography and sculpture to mixed

media, assemblages, clay and woodcarving. Their pieces were all auctioned off at the end of the evening.

First prize and \$250 went to the team of Corey Gilbert, Caleb Guthrie, Sarah Hoover and Kait Harris. The \$150 second prize was awarded to the trio of Bethany Sharp, Stephanie Janczewski and Stacy Wilson.

The \$100 people’s choice award winner, as voted by the event’s visitors, went to the group comprising Sara Card, Jillian Moody and Angela Lewis; as well as to the duo of Max Najar and Kara Schymanski. A \$100 bonus award was given to Amanda Abraham, whose work earned the highest selling price.

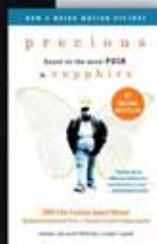
Clockwise, from left: Amanda Abraham; Heather Blanz; David Young; and Kait Harris, Corey Gilbert, Caleb Guthrie and Sarah Hoover.



### Sapphire’s story: how “Push” became “Precious”

Sapphire, the author of the book that inspired the critically-acclaimed film “Precious,” will speak at 6 p.m., Wednesday, March 3 in the Malcolm Field Theatre for Performing Arts. The novel won the Book-of-the-Month Club Stephen Crane award for First Fiction, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association’s First Novelist Award, and was named by “The Village Voice” and “Time Out New York” as one of the top 10 books of 1996. It is based on the story of an illiterate 16-year-old girl from Harlem, pregnant with her father’s child, who meets a determined and radical teacher, leading her on a journey of education and enlightenment.

■ Sapphire



# Matthew Vannette

Assistant Professor of Physics

To Matt Vannette, physics boils down to two questions: Where is it and where is it going to be? His students have many more questions, naturally, and that has made a positive impression on the first-year faculty member.

“They are extremely motivated,” he said. “I tend to set a very high bar for what I expect students to understand and I’ve been impressed with how often students come in for help to meet that bar.”

Many of those students are pre-medicine majors and some don’t always see the value of the course content.

“In principle, you may not need to know anything about physics or mathematics if you’re going to be a surgeon. On the other hand, if you’re going to be a physician, I’d really like to know that you have the problem-solving capabilities that physics brings to you.”

Vannette “absolutely” enjoys teaching both introductory and upper division courses.

“How I explain an electricity concept at both the 100 and the 300 level is tricky, but it’s a lot of fun.”

After completing his Ph.D., Vannette worked at Ames Laboratory in Iowa, but he knew he wanted a job at a university with a teaching emphasis.

“You have to really understand your material in order to teach it. That pushes me.”

While at home in the classroom, Vannette also is pushing to continue his unique research interests into magnetically-ordered materials, and include freshman and sophomore students on projects that will run multiple years.

If you remember the magnets you used as a child with polar ends and the ability to pick up metal objects, you likely don’t know that at high temperatures, these magnets “point in all different” directions.

“My fundamental interest is in what happens in this narrow temperature window where the temperature is enough to make them point in different directions but the interactions that tend to make them line up is beginning to get stronger. It’s analogous to freezing/melting.”

Vannette is among a select few studying this field.

“The technique I use is a custom technique. It detects change on the order of one part per billion. There are 12 to 15 groups in the world that use this technique, and I know of two that study magnetic materials. I’m hoping to set up the third at SVSU.”

If all of this sounds rather ambitious, you’d be in agreement with Vannette’s wife, Jennifer. “She jokes there is no way I could have a mistress — I’m already involved in an affair with physics.”



# J.J. Boehm

Director of Media & Public Relations • February 2010

When J.J. Boehm made his first trip to SVSU to broadcast a football game as a college student in 1992, he never imagined he was visiting a place he'd return every day.

"I vividly remember driving to campus, using the red water tower as a beacon as I'd been told," Boehm said, "but that was a long time ago. Some of the latest football recruits weren't even born yet."

For the past 10 years, Boehm has returned to Wickes Stadium, but now in the home broadcast booth.

"Calling games is truly a labor of love. On fall Saturdays, there's no place I'd rather be. I wake up excited and can't wait to get to the stadium."

Boehm works to bring that same enthusiasm to his primary job directing SVSU's public relations efforts.

"I really enjoy highlighting our outstanding students," he said. "Recently we had a student win a statewide entrepreneur competition, and others performed fitness testing for local fire fighters to improve their health and possibly save their lives. Both received considerable media coverage."

That is more challenging than it used to be, as media outlets have downsized; some newspapers that were daily now print just three days per week.

"In many ways, Michigan is the canary in the coal mine. If the

changes tried here are successful, you'll see these business models replicated elsewhere."

Meanwhile, reporters and editors are frantically adjusting to a new reality.

"I've always placed a high value on relationship building," Boehm said, "but I think that's more important than ever because the pressure is greater. It's not just 'get it first and get it right.' They're fighting for the survival of journalism as we know it."

Boehm recently advanced one of his personal relationships and got engaged. He and Jenn celebrated by taking a self-guided tour of Great Lakes brewpubs — another of Boehm's passions — visiting 10 in five states.

Boehm also enjoys playing a variety of sports, including basketball, golf, tennis and even intramural flag football.

"I love to be active and I love to compete. I think you need both attributes in my job. Compared to when I first stepped foot here, this university has seen tremendous growth and improvement in the campus, the students, the faculty. My charge is to help the public understand that, and since that work is never 'done,' you need to embrace the daily challenge of shaping that perception one story, one quote, one conversation at a time — and hope that you celebrate a few touchdowns along the way."



## Professional Profile

• **M. Patricia Cavanaugh**, professor of English, has been selected for the Michigan Campus Compact's Faculty/Staff Community Service Award. Cavanaugh was chosen because of the success of her many projects, which include a tutoring program that increased high school students' motivation to write and learn; four elementary school partnerships that allowed for one-on-one assistance; a summer institute that involves both learners and teachers; and a collaborative effort with the Public Libraries of Saginaw to offer motivation, weekly homework help and study skills support.

• **Julie Foss**, assistant professor of modern foreign languages-French, has been selected as a finalist for the 2009 Christopher Brumfit Ph.D./Ed.D.Thesis Award. The award, sponsored by Cambridge University Press and the journal *Language Teaching*, recognizes doctoral thesis research that makes a significant and original contribution to the field of second language acquisition and/or foreign language teaching and learning. Foss' thesis is titled "Individual Differences and Text Genre in L2 French Reading Comprehension."

• **Alan Freed**, Clifford H. Spicer Endowed Chair in Engineering, had an article titled "Hypoelastic Soft Tissues. Part I: Theory" accepted for electronic publication in *Acta Mechanica* (springerlink.com).

• **Eric Gardner**, professor of English, and John Ernest (West Virginia University) co-edited a new scholarly edition of *Hearts of Gold* just published by West Virginia University Press. A riveting novel of African American life at the turn into the 20th century, *Hearts of Gold* was penned in 1896 by teacher and activist J. McHenry Jones.

• **Joshua Ode**, assistant professor of kinesiology, was elected Member-at-Large for the Midwest Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine, and will serve a two-year term. Ode also was elected the co-chair of the Epidemiology Interest Group for the American College of Sports Medicine.

• **Christopher Schilling**, C. J. Strosacker Professor and Chair of Engineering, co-authored a publication with **David Karpovich**, professor of chemistry, and Piotr Tomasik (chemistry professor, University of Agriculture, Krakow, Poland), "Biodegradable Plastics from Soy Protein and Polysaccharide Carboxylates," in the *Journal of Biobased Materials and Bioenergy*, Volume 3, pp. 1-10 (2009). This research forms the basis of a U.S. Patent Application by the same authors. Schilling is a contributing editor to the aforementioned journal. Also, Gretchen Roekle, a student of chemistry, published an invited paper, "Vermicomposting with Spent Coffee Grounds," in *Soil and Mulch Producer News* (Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 1-3, 2009). This paper covers research conducted from funding provided by the SVSU Foundation and the Allen Foundation. Co-authors are Schilling; **Edward Meisel**, lecturer of chemistry; **Brian Thomas**, assistant professor of sociology; and **Beth Jorgensen**, assistant professor of English.

• **Scott M. Youngstedt**, professor of sociology, was recently elected as vice president of the West African Research Association, which was founded in 1989 to enhance collaborative research and scholarly exchange between U.S. and West African scholars, educators, and institutions and to increase knowledge about and interest in Africa in the U.S.

## Condolences

• To **Vanessa Brooks Herd**, assistant professor of social work, whose father, Ed Johnson Jr., passed away Feb. 10; also, her stepfather, Barker Harold Louis, passed away Feb. 3.

• To **Eric Gilbertson**, president of SVSU, whose father, Ewald Gilbertson, passed away Feb. 26.

• To **Emmett Mero**, campus facilities-maintenance, whose stepmother passed away Jan. 18.

• To **Bill Portmann**, locksmith, whose mother-in-law, Julia Hanes, passed away Feb. 2.

• To **Renee Zumberg**, catering director, whose father, Arnold Zumberg, passed away Jan. 29.

## New Cardinals

• **Robert Tuttle**, associate professor of mechanical engineering, welcomed the birth of a daughter, Amelia Helen Tuttle (5 lbs., 8 oz., 19.5 in.), Feb. 15.

## Transitions

For new faculty/staff office numbers, phone extensions, e-mail addresses and other information, go to [svsu.edu/lookup](http://svsu.edu/lookup).

### New to SVSU

- Makiba Batten – Assistant Men's & Women's Cross Country/Track & Field Coach
- Jamie Borrello – Financial Aid Advisor
- Karima Kchirid – International Student Advisor
- Nicholas VanAlst – Assistant Baseball Coach
- Larry King – Assistant Controller

### Promoted/Transferred/Title Change

- Jeremy Bockelman – Assistant Director, Career Planning and Placement
- J.J. Boehm – Director, Media & Public Relations
- Michael Major – Director, Career Planning and Placement

### Left/Leaving

- David Branson, Roseline Connelly

## Briefly Speaking

• Faculty are asked to announce the following events to students: University-Wide Employment and Networking Fair; Friday, April 16; noon to 3 p.m.; Ryder Center; professional dress required. Also, Education Employment Fair; Tuesday, April 27; 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.; Curtiss Hall Banquet Rooms. Additional information is available at [svsu.edu/careers](http://svsu.edu/careers).



• **Derek Sapikowski**, support center technology specialist, was a member (seated at left in right image, above) of a team that competed this winter at Snowfest in Frankenmuth; the group took second place in the "World Class" division.

**The Interior is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU.** University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

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### Submission Deadline:

**Noon on Wednesday before the publication date.**

**Please send items by e-mail to: [tmi@svsu.edu](mailto:tmi@svsu.edu).**