

Faculty and staff join the Battle of the Valleys

Bragging rights and a trophy are at stake during a battle within the Battle of the Valleys.

The 15th annual fundraising competition between SVSU and Grand Valley State University — which kicked off Sunday and concludes Saturday, Sept. 30 — features a donation contest between individual SVSU departments and offices. Faculty and staff can donate to the overall fundraising effort while simultaneously bettering the odds of victory for their respective department or office by contributing in one of the following ways:

- Placing funds in donation containers located in participating departments and offices, or
- Designating their department or office when purchasing Battle of the Valleys-related tickets or merchandise.

Regardless of which

department or office wins the inter-office competition, all funds collected will benefit the Mustard Seed Shelter. Boosting the Saginaw-based organization is a worthy cause, said Caitlin Coulter, a pre-medicine major from Clio and this year's Battle of the Valleys chairperson.

"We chose the Mustard Seed because they're a

***"What's great about SVSU is ...
how everyone comes together
for a purpose."***

— Caitlin Coulter
2017 BoV Chairperson

grass-roots organization that helps women and children in Saginaw who are dealing with homelessness," she said.

The Battle of the Valleys intake will help Mustard Seed Shelter officials who are planning to build a housing

addition that would double the shelter's capacity. SVSU already has cultivated a strong relationship with the organization, particularly through the social work initiative where the Mustard Seed Shelter provides field placement opportunities for students in the program.

The 2017 Battle of the Valleys calendar includes a

bowling event at Stardust Lanes in Saginaw Township on Friday, Sept. 29 from 9 p.m. to midnight. The cost is \$15 per ticket, which will include shoe rental fees.

All funds collected by GVSU, meanwhile, will benefit

The Laker Children's Fund, an organization that supports nonprofits that promote childhood health and wellness.

Both universities have raised a combined total of \$552,150 since the competition started in 2003. SVSU has contributed \$357,329 — or about 65 percent — of that total.

During the inaugural year, SVSU collected \$6,208 for West Michigan Big Brothers Big Sisters. Five years later, SVSU students increased that intake more than sevenfold by raising \$47,278 for Habitat for Humanity. The university has collected no less than \$24,000 yearly for its Battle of the Valleys charity and nonprofit partners since then.

SVSU out-fundraised its competitor during all but three of 14 competitions. Among the charities and nonprofits benefiting from SVSU's Battle of the Valleys collections were Hidden Harvest, the Special Olympics, Great Lakes Bay Miracle League, Underground Railroad of Saginaw County, Salvation Army of Saginaw County, Child and Family Services of Saginaw County, and United Way of Saginaw County.

The winner of the 2017 Battle of the Valleys contest will be announced during halftime of the football game between SVSU and GVSU Saturday at 7 p.m. at the rival university's Lubbers Stadium.

Along with bragging rights, the victorious university takes home a 3-foot-tall trophy known as "Victoria" — which has remained on SVSU's campus since 2008.

For more information, visit svsu.edu/battleofthevalleys/.



The renovation of the Melvin J. Zahnow Library is complete. It now is a "learning commons" with study spaces, meeting rooms, areas for peer and professional support, and open flexible spaces. President Donald Bachand officially "re-opened" the library at a dedication ceremony Thursday, Sept. 14. Guests were given tours of the library, including the Gerstacker Learning Commons, Cardinal Commons, the Cardinal Cafe and Starbucks. (UComm photo by Tim Inman)

David Peruski

Associate Professor of Nursing

As the first person in his family to attend college, David Peruski understands the importance of teachers carefully guiding students through their studies.

More specifically, Peruski appreciates how that one-on-one interaction between educator and student is a bedrock SVSU value. It's part of the reason why the two-time SVSU graduate returned to his alma mater earlier this year as a member of its faculty.

"I love working closely with students and watching them grow," said the associate professor of nursing and acting assistant dean of the College of Health & Human Services. "I love seeing students get excited about something they're learning."

The Huron County native first walked SVSU's halls in the 1980s when he was an undergraduate living in Great Lakes Hall. "I was young and it was fun to live on campus," Peruski said of his first student experience. "I looked at it as a new experience and opportunity to meet new people and view the world differently."

Among those people were educators such as the late Crystal M. Lange. Peruski, who graduated in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in nursing, also was a student of Professor of Nursing Sally Decker, the lone full-time nursing faculty member from his undergraduate years who still teaches at SVSU.

Peruski said the attention given by educators such as Lange, Decker and their colleagues prepared him for a career in nursing and, later, higher education. After graduating in 1984, he joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. He attained the rank of captain while

in the Army and worked in the clinical areas of neurology, neonatal intensive care, and cardiothoracic intensive care for four years at Washington D.C.-based Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the military's flagship hospital.

After his service, Peruski returned to Saginaw to work at Covenant HealthCare as a nurse manager. His responsibilities included serving on the planning committee that created an open-heart surgery program at the hospital. In 1998, he joined Delta College as an adjunct instructor and became a full-time faculty member there in 2002.

That same year, he returned to SVSU as a graduate student. The institution physically had significantly changed since his first stint here, before many of its modern buildings were constructed. Still, in the two-year period he spent earning his master's degree in nursing, he recognized the culture of one-on-one interaction between professors and students remained intact from his undergraduate experience.

After earning his Ed.D. in 2016, Peruski decided to pursue a new challenge in higher education beyond Delta. That pursuit led him back again to SVSU, where he joined the faculty in January 2017 with the same spirit of exploration he possessed when he arrived as an undergraduate three decades earlier.

"If you're open to exploring new opportunities, you learn things all the time," Peruski said. "I'm enjoying it. I have really enjoyed being here and seeing the way Saginaw Valley has grown through the years as a university."



Renee Zumberg

Catering Director, Dining Services • August Staff Member of the Month

Preparing SVSU's Welcome Back picnic is no picnic. Just ask Renee Zumberg, the catering director charged with overseeing the massive outdoor dinner.

"It's our biggest event," she said. "And, for a lot of our staff, it's their first day at work."

With a staff of new student employees to train and 1,200 mouths to feed at the picnic, Zumberg enjoys rolling out the welcome mat for a university community that first rolled one out for her nine years ago.

The event allows Zumberg to extend her department's hospitality to the campus community and it allows her to expose her first-time student employees to the hospitality industry.

The East Lansing native remembers her first experience in the field. As a 15-year-old, she was hired by a family member to work at a catering company. She was immediately hooked. "There's something about the hospitality field and making people feel welcomed," she said. "And seeing an event through, from start to finish — it's just in my blood."

She spent time off and on at that job throughout the next two decades before being hired to work special events in the Detroit area, at venues including Comerica Park and The Detroit Zoo. After a stint later in the Lansing-area hotel industry, she saw an advertisement for a job position in Saginaw in 2008.

"I had not even been to Saginaw at that time, so I was not really sure what to think," Zumberg said. "As soon as I came to campus

and saw SVSU, though, I fell in love with it. It was not even a question. The faculty and staff were so welcoming."

Ever since, she has worked hard to return that welcoming gesture to the campus community. While, technically, Zumberg is not an employee of the institution — she works for Aramark, the food service company contracted by SVSU — such details don't cool her warm feelings for the university. "I don't feel like a contractor here," she said. "I feel like part of the family."

Some of that family includes the staff and student employees who help her host events across campus. The work can turn especially busy near the end of the semester, when her student employees already are juggling final exams. Still, many remain working for her until they graduate, she said. It's the ultimate compliment for someone whose job involves making others feel welcomed.

"The experience that the students get working in the catering department is like none other on campus, providing amazing connections," she said. "It's an incredible thing to witness. I love working with students and young people, giving them the skills to do well. It keeps me young and on my toes."

While Zumberg thrives helping others feel at home, it wasn't until recently when she finally settled into a house of her own. She purchased a house this summer in Saginaw Township, where she enjoys spending time with her family.

"I'm pretty much moved in now," Zumberg said. "This is home."



Professional Profile

- **Jennifer Chaytor**, associate professor of chemistry, published a paper titled "Development and Use of Online Pre-Laboratory Activities in Organic Chemistry to Improve Students' Laboratory Experience" in the *Journal of Chemical Education*. She presented this work in April 2017 at the 253rd American Chemical Society National Meeting in San Francisco.
- **Cynthia Essex**, administrative secretary in The Conference Center at SVSU, authored and published a book titled "Learning to Stand Tall (In the Face of Life's Adversities)."
- **Jeffrey Koperski**, professor of philosophy, published two articles and two encyclopedia entries: "Theism, Naturalism, and Scientific Realism," in the Russian journal *Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* and "Breaking Laws of Nature," in *Philosophia Chris*.
- **Peggy Mead-Finizio**, assistant professor of theatre, served as co-production manager and lighting designer in June and July 2017 for Hollins University M.F.A. Summer Dance in Roanoke, Virginia. She designed lights for 12 Hollins Dance Master of Fine Arts thesis works including Keith Saunders, Ballet Master for Dance Theatre of Harlem. She also designed for the Hollins Summer Dance Faculty Concert for 12 choreographers including K.J. Holmes, Peiling Kao and Marcus White. She was the lighting consultant for Summer Dance guest artists *American Realness* and was the on-stage assistant to dance artist Keith Hennessy for his work, *Crotch*. She acted as a mentor and supervisor to five production interns throughout her time at Hollins.
- The paper "The Equilibrium Point Hypothesis: An Analysis of Firm Performance and Renewable Energy Deployment in the Publicly-Held, U.S. Electrical Utility Industry" has been accepted for the proceedings of the 48th Annual Meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute, Washington, D.C., November 2017. The paper is adapted from the 2017 Honors thesis of Cameron Pratt, supervised by **Mark W. McCartney**, professor of accounting, and co-authored by **Hong Y. Park**, professor of economics.
- **Thomas Renna**, professor emeritus of history, presented papers at three conferences: "Translation of Empire in French and German Humanism, 1500-30" at the 52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 11 at Western Michigan University; "Translatio imperii et studii: How the Humanists Transformed the Empire into Deutschland" at the 5th Medieval & Renaissance Symposium, June 21 at St. Louis University; and "Johann Gottlieb Fichte and the German Empire, 1871-1914" at the Annual Meeting of the German History Society, Aug. 31 at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

New Cardinals

- **Prashanth Anekal**, assistant professor of management, announced the birth of a son, Aarav Anekal, Aug. 27.
- **Emily Beard-Bohn**, associate professor of English, announced the birth of a daughter, Elowyn Sage Bohn, Sept. 15.
- **Emilee Bruner**, resident director, announced the birth of a daughter, Katherine Teena Coleman, Sept. 9.
- **Chelsea Miller**, administrative assistant to the executive vice president for Administration & Business Affairs, announced the birth of a daughter, Audrina Michele Miller (7 lbs., 13 oz., 20 in.), Aug. 25.

Condolences

- To **Jaime Ayala**, logistics manager, whose mother-in-law, Barbara Becmer, passed away.
- To **Betsy Diegel**, STEM Mobile Lab support specialist, whose father, Robert John Drury, passed away Sept. 16.

Detroit author wins SVSU literature award

SVSU has awarded the 2017-18 Stuart D. and Vernice M. Gross Award for Literature to author Drew Philp for his book, "A \$500 House in Detroit: Rebuilding an Abandoned Home and an American City." The award is part of SVSU's community-minded commitment to recognize exceptional writing within Michigan.

The book describes the story of Philp moving to Detroit with no friends, job or home, with the hopes of making a difference in the run-down, almost abandoned city. There, he purchased a house for \$500, tore out almost everything inside — leaving only the framework — and began remodeling.

Set in Detroit, this true story intimately portrays the current growth of this once-thriving American city. The book guides the reader through Detroit's rich history and addresses many of the city's current issues, including gentrification and the battles among the social classes.

Philp is expected to visit SVSU in early 2018, when he will accept this award as well as visit classes on campus to share his experiences with SVSU students. The University of Michigan graduate also will receive a \$1,000 prize.

Established by the late Stuart D. Gross and his wife, Vernice, the Gross Award for Literature is administered by SVSU. Winners are selected by a panel of judges from SVSU's staff and faculty. Judges this year were Ashley Blinstrub, research and assessment librarian; M. Patricia Cavanaugh, professor of English; Catherine Curtis, reference librarian; Jules Gehrke, associate professor of history; and Carlos Ramet, associate dean of the College of Arts & Behavioral Sciences.

Employed for many years as a journalist with *The Saginaw News*, Gross joined the SVSU staff in the school's early years and served in a variety of public affairs roles. He published several books, including "Saginaw: A History of the Land and City," "When Timber was King," and "Where There is a Will." Following his retirement from SVSU, Gross wrote and produced a play, "Let's Have Lunch Sometime." He died in 1996; Mrs. Gross, in 2001.



Drew Philp

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.

J.J. Boehm

Director of Media &
Community Relations
jjboehm@svsu.edu • 964-4055

Tim Inman

Director of Marketing Support
tmi@svsu.edu • 964-4086

Submission Deadline:

Noon on Wednesday before the publication date
Please email submissions to: jjboehm@svsu.edu