3-25-2015

Banner News

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Recommended Citation
Olson, Megan; Barfield, Kevin; Betz, Amanda; Vest, Matthew; and Person, Bailey, "Banner News" (2015). Banner News. 10. https://openspace.dmacc.edu/banner_news/10

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Bears finish fourth

The DMACC men’s basketball team suffered back-to-back losses to John Wood Community College (JWCC) and Phoenix Community College (PCC) and finished fourth in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division II National Championship at Danville, Ill.

The Bears dropped a 72-61 decision to JWCC in the semifinals on March 20 and fell to PCC 82-73 in the consolation game on March 21 to close the season at 28-7. Sophomore Jon Fuqua of Maywood, Ill., scored 27 points and grabbed nine rebounds and sophomore Aarias Austin of Gurnee, Ill., had 17 points and four assists to lead DMACC in the loss to JWCC. The Bears, who had defeated the Trail Blazers twice during the regular season, led 32-28 at halftime, but fell behind early in the second half and trailed the rest of the way.

DMACC shot 45 percent for the game, hitting 25 of 56 field goal attempts while JWCC made 44 percent of its field goal attempts. The Trail Blazers went 15-of-28 in the second half when they took the lead, and were 7-of-12 from three-point range during the last 10 minutes.

JWCC had a 38-31 advantage on the boards, including 11 offensive rebounds. Fuqua’s nine rebounds led DMACC.

Austin scored 19 points, sophomore Jamar Hurdle had a double-double with 15 points and 11 rebounds and Fuqua scored 12 points in DMACC’s loss to PCC.

PCC led at the half, 43-36, and pushed its advantage to as many as 14 points in the second half. DMACC came away with a 43-28 advantage in rebounding with Hurdle’s 11 rebounds leading the way.

Think outside the box

Display case sparks comment area on death penalty

By Megan Olson

Staff Writer

More than three dozen hand-written notes have turned a display case in the main hallway into a life-size comment box.

The comments are the result of a display for the book Dead Man Walking, which was selected for the One Book One College One Community project for 2014-15. The project involves using a single book among all campuses for study and discussion. Dead Man Walking is an eyewitness account by a Roman Catholic nun, Sister Helen Prejean, of a man condemned to die in an electric chair, his family, and those whose job it was to execute him. The book gives an inside, spiritual, and intimate look at the system of capital punishment in the United States.

At the Boone campus library staff put up a display case for the book in the hallway right outside of the auditorium.

Michelle Tedrow, DMACC’s librarian, was informed one day that there was a note posted on the front of the display disagreeing with its meaning. Many wanted her to take it down because it went against the display, but instead she decided to move the note to the side to allow others to comment their thoughts as well. The note said:

And I sincerely hope that the need for such devices would cease to exist. However, wishing that these tools of execution don’t exist or hoping that the very memory of such devices will vanish into the recesses of human history accomplishes nothing...except to greatly distort the truth, it is because of these devices that you have freedom. The freedom to live in a world fueled by ethics and morals, in a world embraced by reason and love, in a world in which justice and equality prevails over all, in life from death.

Since the original comment was posted, dozens of other notes have been added.

Tedrow says, “I like the discussion, the only concern I have is that students think that is the library’s particular agenda. The display was made that way to simply go along with the book.”

Tedrow wishes things like this would happen more often. “This is a place you talk about issues that impact you.” She was thrilled this comment happened spontaneously.

Tedrow states people may disagree with her for allowing the comment to be used to encourage others to get involved but she thought it really demonstrated what college is really about.

The comment on the display case allowed others to voice their opinion and stands for freedom of speech, she said.

“I think the library stands for free speech and intelligent discussion.”
Income tax help on campus

Free income tax help will continue through April 10 each Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the DMACC Boone Campus. DMACC has been offering this service since 2008. DMACC accounting students who have been certified by the Internal Revenue Service will help prepare federal and Iowa individual income tax returns for qualified residency. This service is for accounting students process and file approximately 150 federal and state income tax returns.

This service, called the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, offers free tax assistance to those with low-to-moderate income levels (less than $53,000 in annual personal income). VITA is particularly interested in identifying those taxpayers who are eligible for earned income tax credits (EITC), which is a refundable tax credit to those who are low wage earners.

All returns will be prepared on-site at the DMACC Boone Campus by trained and certified DMACC student volunteers using software provided by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Each return will be signed by the site coordinator and, after approval and signature of the taxpayer, will be filed electronically with the IRS and the Iowa Department of Revenue. There is no cost to eligible taxpayers for this service.

Persons interested in receiving this service should bring their W-2 forms, interest statements from banks (1099 forms), copies of last year’s (2013) federal and Iowa tax returns, Forms 1095-A, B or C (Affordable Health Care Statements) and social security cards for all family members. Any other pertinent information regarding personal income and expenses for tax year 2014 should be included.

Individuals may call 515-433-5029 to schedule an appointment. Parking is available on the north side of the building, and people may enter through the northeast doorway. Service is by appointment only.

Help stock campus pantry
As the semester begins, please consider helping restock the campus food pantry. Current needs include:

- Canned chicken
- Spinach/mix
- Canned fruit/Dried fruit/Applesauce
- Rice
- Peanut butter
- Jam/Jelly
- Dried beans
- Oatmeal/Hot cereal mix/Boxed cereal
- Bread/Muffin mix
- Oils (vegetable, olive, etc.)
- Toilet paper

Please drop off donations to Erin Neumann (Room 124) or Jane Martinos’s office (Room 122). All donations are greatly appreciated. The food pantry is available to any student who might need assistance. If a student has a more significant need for food/resources than a visit to our campus food pantry can assist, please contact Erin Neumann, eanneumann@dmacc.edu.

Gallery Bibliothèque

Artist Reception
Meet artist Batista Simpson and learn about her painting process. Event takes place in the DMACC Boone Campus library Friday, March 27 from 2 to 4PM.

A Celebration of Life for former DMACC President Joe Borgen
Celebration will be held Thursday, March 26th from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at the Lake View in Building 7 on the Ankeny campus of DMACC. Several of Joe’s friends and colleagues will make remarks and refreshments will be served. Memorial contributions may be directed to DMACC Foundation, Dr. Joseph A. Borgen Endowment Fund, 2006 S. Ankeny Blvd. Building 22, Ankeny, Iowa 50023.

Free money for school
Have you done farm work in the last two years? If so, contact Carrie at Proteus Inc. 515-271-5306 ext. 129

Phi Theta Kappa
Phi Theta Kappa is the International Honor Society for two-year colleges. PTK will host several informational meetings on the Boone campus. Students are invited to attend to find out more about joining PTK. For more information, contact Nancy Wood, naswood@dmacc.edu, 515-433-5061. Or Stacy Amling, slamling@dmacc.edu, 515-433-5089.

Honors seeks applicants
The DMACC Honors Program is seeking highly motivated students to apply for honors. There are openings for current and future college-level math classes, as well as college-level class math or are currently enrolled, will have completed at least one course (9) college credits and fewer than 50 credits at the end of summer with a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher, you are eligible to become a DMACC Honors Student.

To read more about Honors and submit an application, go to dmacc.edu/honors. Honors started on its way to a rewarding, challenging educational opportunity.

Writing Center open
Writing Center consultants are available to help with any writing assignment, during any part of the writing process. With their experience in different types of writing (technical to creative writing) and a broad range of life experience (journalism, firefighting, novel writing, Hawaiian culture, literature, and veterans affairs), you’re sure to find someone that “gets you” stop by any time during our hours. No appointment are necessary for this free service. For more information, contact Lorie Herden, WJC coordinator, lkherden@dmacc.edu or visit http://go.dmacc.edu/writingcenter.

DMACC Boone Campus, Room 170, Monday–Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. (Look for signs for our location), Monday–Thursday 4:30–6 p.m.

DMACC offers Spring Europe trip
EF College Study Tour is offering a 20-day trip to London, Normandy, Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Krakow, Prague, and Munich in May 2015.

This trip is an extraordinary chance to see so many of the sites and museums of the Second World War, the Holocaust with a very interesting group of travelers.

Any adult DMACC student, other college student, or community member can sign up, and please consider traveling with a friend or family member.

DMACC History Professor and WWII Author Dr. Lisa Ossian will lead and coordinate this unique tour.

The travelers leave Des Moines on Sun., May 10th and return on Fri., May 29th or Sat., May 30th. (depending on return flight schedules) 2015. Payment arrangements are made with EF College Study Tours and these may be monthly or periodic installment payments.

This is an all inclusive tour: roundtrip international airfare, hotels, half the meals, tour buses, night ferry excursion, train fares, tour guides, museum entrance fees, and travel insurance.

For more information, contact Lisa Ossian at (515) 964-6488.

Childcare and Transportation help
A program called Iowa New Choices offers assistance with childcare and transportation for qualifying single parents and displaced homemakers (separated, divorced, widowed or spouse disabled.) For information, contact Erin Neumann, Room 124, eanneumann@dmacc.edu. Or call 515-433-5037.

Netherlands contest
As part of DMACC’s celebration of the Netherlands during the 2014-2015 academic year, there is a contest in which three persons will win two tickets to the Netherlands’ Gouden Dorren Dinner on Thursday, April 25. Go to the Netherlands Year site for details.

Transfer Program
Have you heard about the University-College Transfer Program at DMACC? If not, check out the following website at https://go.dmacc.edu/uct/Pages/ for more information. The goal is to guide you through your two-year degree and to prepare you for the four-year college of your choice.

Foundation Scholarships available
DMACC students who are enrolled in 6 credit hours or more and have a 2.00 grade point average are eligible for DMACC Foundation Scholarships.

The following DMACC Foundation Scholarship applications are now available on the DMACC Website:

Summer 2015: Application Deadline is 3/15/15 at 4 p.m.

Fall 2015: Application Deadline is 4/24/15 at 4 p.m.

If you would like to apply for a Summer and a Fall scholarship, please complete one application and make sure to mark both the “Summer” and the “Fall” boxes to indicate which semester you are applying for.

These scholarships may be applied toward charges for tuition, fees, and or book charges at DMACC for the semester for which the award is given.

To learn about the specific award criteria and to apply online, visit: https://go.dmacc.edu/foundation/Pages/district-wide-scholarship.aspx

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Rardin, Financial Aid Specialist-Scholarships at 515-965-7179 or via email at sgrardin@dmacc.edu.

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Summer & Fall 2015

* JOU122, 3 credits
* Workstudy positions
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bannernews@dmacc.edu
Iowa. He participated in football, basketball, baseball, and student council at Clinton High School. After he graduated, he went on to receive his associate degree at Clinton Community College, then his bachelor's in math at UNI. After UNI he went to Iowa State University where he received his master's in math.

Outside of DMACC, Dose enjoys spending time with his family and watching his grandchildren. He has been married to Becky Dose for 33 years now. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Dose’s hobbies are golfing, spectator sports, and reading. He enjoys suspenseful books or mysteries. He does not like when Iowa State and UNI play each other because he does not want one to win over the other.

If you need any help in the math department you can find help from Jim Dose in the AAC.

If you have ideas to be featured, you can send your ideas to bannervc@dmacc.edu.

This section will feature a student, staff member, or instructor from the Boone campus. Do you have a suggestion for someone we should feature? Send your ideas to bannervc@dmacc.edu.

Meet Jim Dose

Jim Dose is DMACC’s women’s cross-country coach. He has been coaching cross-country here at DMACC for 5 years. He has also been a math tutor in the Academic Achievement Center for 8 years now.

“I like working with the students one on one and tutoring them,” says Dose. He decided to start coaching cross-country because in his prior years he coached high school football and track.

There was an opening here at DMACC so he decided to pursue it.

“If you know of anyone fast here at DMACC send them my way,” says Dose with a smile.


In My Boots 5k Run, Walk, Ruck is now open for registration
$25 for Individuals
$100 for a 4 person team
$80 for a 4 person military ruck

To register visit https://go.dmacc.edu/boone/inmyboots5k/Pages/welcome

DMACC’S CELEBRATION OF THE LITERARY ARTS

DMACC’s 13th annual Celebration of the Literary Arts will be held April 6-8 with classroom visits to all six DMACC campuses by area writers and literary instructors.

Author Bret Anthony Johnston and Poet Rebecca Hazelton will read from their works in the DMACC Boone Campus Auditorium from 9:40 to 11:05 a.m., Tues., April 7.

Johnston is the author of the best-selling novel, Remember Me Like This, which was a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers selection and an Editor’s Choice in the New York Times Book Review, and the award-winning Corpus Christi: Stories, which was named a Best Book of the Year by The Independent. He is also the editor of Naming the World and Other Exercises for the Creative Writer. His work appears in multiple publications. His awards include the Pushcart Prize, the Glasgow Prize for Emerging Writers, the Stephen Turner Award, the Cohen Prize, a James Michener Fellowship, and the Kay Cattarulla Prize for short fiction. His nonfiction has also appeared in prestigious publications, and on NPR’s All Things Considered. A graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, he’s the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship and a 5 Under 35 honor from the National Book Foundation.


Additional authors and schedules will be announced and updated at dmacc.edu/news/celebrationofliteraryarts.
Eight miles south and west of our DMACC Boone campus lies a hidden gem. Ledges State Park was opened to the public in 1924. I stumbled upon it and was amazed that such a beautiful part of Iowa was not well advertised to the general public. From the beautiful stone trails and bridges to the tall mountainous hills on both sides, the 1,200 acres of park feel like a valley set apart from society.

TRAILS. With more than 13 miles of trails, it took me most of the day to experience the whole park. Although most of the trees are dormant, their sheer number made me feel lost in nature. I felt at peace sitting on a rock ledge above the river with only the sounds of ice breaking below. Most of the paths were flooded with rushing water from melting ice, but they were still traversable and made it feel more like an outdoor adventure.

PHOTOGRAPHY. If you are into natural photography, some amazing picture opportunities are found along the trails. Wildlife, plants, and the dancing shadows along the hiking paths make the perfect subject for your viewfinder.

CAMPING. For those who want to plan a day-into-night adventure, the park has 95 campsites, some with electrical outlets, available along with several picnic areas and a playground for kids.

RIVER. The Des Moines River also runs on the west side of the park and is open for canoeing and fishing with a license. The Canyon Road road leads further into the park and camping grounds. The road however was closed due to flooding. The hiking trails however were open for exploring.

VISIT. Ledges State Park is a great place for those who want to hike or just get away for a while. I recommend bringing hiking boots, lots of water, and change of socks since there is a lot of wet areas this time of the year. Keep in mind that some of the trails can be slippery and steep. Get out there and enjoy an Iowa gem hidden in our own backyard.

For a map and more information, visit www.iowadnr.gov and search for Ledges State Park.
DMACC Softball pushes streak to 9-8

The DMACC softball team swept two games from Ellsworth CC on March 21 and took part of a pair of games from NIACC on March 22 to push its current winning streak to nine games.

The Bears, ranked seventh in the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division II poll, beat ECC by scores of 13-0 and 9-1 and defeated NIACC 15-1 and 9-0. Three of the four games were called after five innings because of the mercy rule.

During the nine-game winning streak, DMACC outscored the opposition 104-6. The Bears improved to 18-5 overall and 4-0 in the Iowa Community College Athletic Conference (ICCAC).

Freshman Sydney Weldon hit a pair of doubles and a single and drove in four runs in the games to lead the Bears against ECC. Aristotle Jr., of Morovis, Puerto Rico, Mickey Leius of Plymouth, Minn., and Chris Kelly of Boone and freshman Anthony Mrosla of Coon Rapids, Minn., hits apiece in the game and sophomores Mathiowetz of Rochester, Minn., had three on March 14. Adams and freshman Brad also on March 15.

DMACC Baseball improves to 9-8

The DMACC baseball team improved to 9-8 for the season with three victories March 14 and 15 at Enid, Okla.

DMACC went on to open Iowa Community College Athletic Conference (ICCAC) play March 21 and 22 with doubleheaders against Kirkwood Community College (KCCC) at Cedar Rapids. The Bears recorded 2-8 loss, and a win, 9-2.

In the early games at Oklahoma, the Bears defeated Northeast Oklahoma-Enid (NOE) 11-4 on March 14, took a 6-1 decision from Dakota County Technical College (DCTC) on March 15 and ended the series with a 12-5 win against NOE, also on March 15.

Freshman Jacob Adams of Brandon, S.D., hit a pair of home runs and drove in five runs to lead DMACC past NOE on March 14. Adams and freshman Brad Mathiowetz of Racine, Minn., had three hits apiece in the game and sophomore Anthony Mriska of Coon Rapids, Minn., and Chris Kelly of Boone and freshman Mickey Letus of Plymouth, Minn., and Edwin Collazo of Morovis, Puerto Rico, had two hits apiece. Freshman Robert Hansen of Des Moines hit a solo home run for the Bears.

Freshman Cole Jackson of Polk City pitched all nine innings for DMACC and evened his record at 1-1 with the win. Jackson allowed four runs on nine hits, struck out two and walked one.

Methowtse homered and doubled and drove in two runs to lead the Bears to their win over DCTC on March 14. Freshman Levi Schreiner of Waukee also drove in a pair of runs for the Bears.

Freshman Christian Mchencer of Seminole, Fla., threw all seven innings for DMACC and improved to 1-2 with the win. He allowed one run on six hits, struck out eight and walked five.

Schreiner drove in six runs with a pair of home runs to lead DMACC past NOE on March 15. Freshman Eric Weisbrod of Racine, Wis., also homered in the game and drove three runs for the Bears. Freshman Zach Repinski of Prior Lake, Minn., accounted for three of the Bears’ nine hits with a double and two singles and Collazo drove in two DMACC runs.

MEN’S GOLF WINS OTTAWA SPRING INVITATIONAL

The DMACC men’s golf team opened the spring season on a successful note by winning the team championship in the Ottawa Spring Invitational March 16 and 17 at Lawrence, Kan.

The Bears completed the 36-hole tournament with 660 strokes and a one-stroke win over Southwestern College (SWC). Lindenwood-Bellevue University (LBV) finished third with 607 strokes. DMACC shot 300 on the opening day of the tournament and came back with a 305 on the second day.

Sophomores Hunter Van Veen of Monroe and freshman Braxton Risetter of Jewell led DMACC with 36-hole scores of 146. Both tied Steve Sites of Kansas City (Kan.) Community College (KCCC) for tournament medalist honors.

WOMEN’S GOLF TEAM FINISHES FIFTH IN OTTAWA

The DMACC women’s golf team opened the spring season with a fifth-place finish in the Ottawa Spring Invitational March 16 and 17 at Lawrence, Kan.

Kansas Wesleyan University (KWW) won the team championship with a 36-hole score of 680 and DMACC placed fifth with a score of 722. The Bears shot 369 on the first day of the tournament and turned in a 353 on the second day.

Hannah Stradling of Lindenwood-Bellevue University took tournament medalist honors with a score of 153.

Freshmen Marla Masching of Carroll and Ashley Dumler of Dike led DMACC with scores of 171 and 175 respectively. Masching turned in rounds of 90 and 81 to tie for eighth place in the individual competition and Dumler tied for 12th.

DMACC Sports Calendar

March 25: Softball vs. Southwestern, Creston, IA 2PM
March 26: Softball vs. Lake Region State, Rosemount, MN 11AM
March 27: Men’s Golf vs. Graceland Univ., Maryville, MO 12PM
March 27: Women’s Golf vs. Graceland Univ., Maryville, MO 12PM
March 27: Softball vs. Dakota County, Rosemount, MN 1PM
March 27: Men’s Golf vs. Graceland Univ., Maryville, MO 9AM
March 28: Baseball vs Iowa Lakes, Estherville, IA 1PM
March 29: Softball vs Iowa Lakes 2PM
March 31: Softball vs Iowa Central* 2PM
April 1: Softball vs. Kirkwood* 2PM
April 1: Baseball vs Grand View* JV 2PM
April 3: Softball vs. Southeastern * 2PM

*denotes home game at Boone

DMACC Volleyball League Boone Campus

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3.25.2015 Page 5
The social stigma against community college

by Matthew Vest

Guest Columnist

Many believe there is a negative stigma related to attending a community college; various current students are reluctant to associate themselves with their community college. I believe attending a community college is not only an advantage but also a terrific decision.

First and foremost, the financial affordability is undeniable. The American Association of Community Colleges states that on average, community college tuition is approximately 50% lower than that of a 4-year university. For example, tuition at Des Moines Area Community College for an in-town Resident is $139 per credit hour, which is $1,668 for 12 credits, compared to $3,324 for 12 credits of more at Iowa State University. That tuition difference is slightly more than 50%, and that’s not including the university’s additional fees and charges. Not only is the tuition affordable, but the cross enrollment program also offers even more opportunity for students to benefit.

The cross enrollment program is a partnership with Iowa State University, Drake University, and Grandview University in which any student who is full-time at DMACC can apply through an academic advisor for an eligible course at the institution of their choice fully paid for by DMACC. As a current student of the cross enrollment program, I highly recommend every student to consider transferring to one of these 4-year institutions applies for at least one cross enrollment course for the chance to experience the college campus before transferring.

A few more of the advantages of a community college include, but are not limited to:

- smaller class sizes, student-teacher interaction and course credit transferability to 4-year institutions.
- One benefit in particular is that the student has the option to seek certifications. The overall advantages of attending a community college, such as DMACC, far outweigh the unreasonable negative stigma. A critical action you could do to change this unfair stigma is being someone of the immense positive advantages of attending a community college.

After graduating from DMACC in May, Matthew Vest plans to attend Iowa State University in Fall 2015.

Amanda Retz, Editor in Chief
albretz@dmacc.edu

Welcome back from spring break. I hope you all had a great time away from classes, and your time to refresh and refuel. While I was putting together the activities calendar for this issue I noticed that we have about a month and a half left in the semester. Where has the time gone?

We have a couple more honors opinion pieces in this issue on this page, as well as the spot light by Megan on page 3. Also, over on page 7 I talk about why Americans don’t take vacations or travel very often. Can you identify with any of my reasons? Megan covers the display case by the library featuring discussion about the death penalty. Are you for or against the death penalty? Send us an opinion piece about what you feel.

The In my Boots 5k run is quickly coming up, and I encourage you all to sign up and get some exercise while supporting a great cause. Professor Sean Taylor presents you with an opportunity to run for a cause by the library featuring discussions about “the science” indicating “anthropogenic global warming,” our technology could not survive. Thanks to technology, superfluous and books. In fact, a large sum of community college faculty were originally university professors who chose to become instructors at a community college because of their enjoyment and passion of teaching.

Amanda Retz, Editor in Chief
albretz@dmacc.edu

On April 8.

Tell us what you think! Submit a letter to the editor or your own opinion column to bannernews@ dmacc.edu

Submissions must be:
- DMACC student or locally related
- Well informed (sourced cited)
- Approximately 500-700 words

Is history really boring? by Bailey Person

Guest Columnist

Is history really that boring? My answer is no. I think sitting in history class for an hour, three or four days a week can be a bit drab but there is so much more to history than what is learned in the classroom. As a young generation, we need to put ourselves out there and dig deep into the past because to understand the present, one must understand the past. History is so beautiful but it takes your effort to clearly see what lies in the past. It really takes your own willingness to know where you come from or the history of the country we live in. There is a huge importance of personal conversation that I think society is lacking in due to technology. How often do you sit down and just talk to someone? Have a conversation not behind your fingers and actually learn something instead of your times are always changing but we can’t forget about interpersonal communication along the way.

A few more of the advantages of a community college include, but are not limited to:

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Is history really boring? by Bailey Person

Guest Columnist

Is history really that boring? My answer is no. I think sitting in history class for an hour, three or four days a week can be a bit drab but there is so much more to history than what is learned in the classroom. As a young generation, we need to put ourselves out there and dig deep into the past because to understand the present, one must understand the past. History is so beautiful but it takes your effort to clearly see what lies in the past. It really takes your own willingness to know where you come from or the history of the country we live in. There is a huge importance of personal conversation that I think society is lacking in due to technology. How often do you sit down and just talk to someone? Have a conversation not behind your fingers and actually learn something instead of your times are always changing but we can’t forget about interpersonal communication along the way.

A few more of the advantages of a community college include, but are not limited to:

- smaller class sizes, student-teacher interaction and course credit transferability to 4-year institutions.
- One benefit in particular is that the student has the option to seek certifications. The overall advantages of attending a community college, such as DMACC, far outweigh the unreasonable negative stigma. A critical action you could do to change this unfair stigma is being someone of the immense positive advantages of attending a community college.

After graduating from DMACC in May, Matthew Vest plans to attend Iowa State University in Fall 2015.
by Amanda Betz  
Staff Writer

The world nowadays has gotten smaller than ever. American living rooms have become part of the Amazon rainforest, Thailand’s floating markets, and the Alps. Traveling outside of the country has become a luxury, something only a few lucky souls achieve during their lifetimes. In 2012, only 20% of leisure travelers from the US were ages 25-34, and only 8% were ages 18-24 (Travel Facts). Why don’t more young and middle age Americans leave the comfort of their daily routines more often? What holds people back from going on an adventure; leaving the comfort of home behind?

Debt

In an economy where jobs for college graduates are hard to come by, our student loan system has set younger generation up for failure from the beginning. This debt holds people back from spending time travelling and enjoying their well-earned freedom from a classroom.

Young Americans carry a lot of debt. Student loan debt is the largest debt—Americans hold. It totaled more than $1 trillion last year, making it count for 6% of national public debt (Denthart). According to The Institute of College Access and Success (TICAS) the average student borrower in 2013 will graduate with an average of $26,600 in debt. In 2012, the average student loan debt was $29,000 for an undergraduate degree. These numbers are staggering, and a substantial cause of stress and anxiety. When graduates start life after college, they are starting in the red, and this is a large burden for young people to harbor. These are the prime years to wander and travel the world, meet and learn about other people, and their cultures. Instead, time is spent sitting at desks staring at a computer screen, praying endlessly to meet a specified deadline, and tediously planning for a monthly $100 grocery budget after numerous monthly debt payments.

American students are not the only students in the world who carry copious amounts of student debt. The average graduate debt of a student from England was £20,000, or about $33,500 USD. However, the student repayment system in the United Kingdom (UK) is notably different than that of the US. Students in the UK are exempt from starting to repay their loans until they make £21,000 (about $35,200) in yearly salary. After this 9% deduction is automatically taken from their paycheck and applied to the debt. As annual salary rises, so does the amount paid. For example, if you had a monthly salary of £2,083 (about $3,500 or $42,000 a year) you would have £30 (about $50) deducted from your paycheck for student loan repayment. This is much more affordable for people just starting out than a $600 monthly lump sum payment.

The theory behind this method is that it allows students to graduate and make a salary high enough to sustain living and still be able to pay their debt. In the US, students graduate and within six months are required to pay hundreds of dollars a month in student loan payments regardless of their yearly salary.

Many European countries don’t charge students for their higher education. These countries include Scotland, Finland, Turkey, Denmark, France, Norway, and Germany. In these countries debt is incurred due to payment of living expenses and school related expenses, but their loans are not used to pay for tuition directly.

Cost

Tied directly to debt, the cost of travel outside of the US is very high. First, you need a passport. This is an expensive and timely process. It can take up to 4-6 weeks to receive a passport, and for someone who is applying for a passport for the first time the cost is $135. Depending on what country someone is flying to, a travel visa might be pruned. The cost of these can vary. We haven’t even gotten to the cost of flights and accommodation yet, and already our cost is nearly a few hundred dollars.

Flight prices can vary from day to day, but visiting a large discount airline website, like Cheapoair, shows that a round trip flight in August from Chicago O’Hare to London Heathrow will cost around $1,300. It will also cost 7-8 hours in the air, not including transfer time, and jet lag from a 6-hour time difference. Accommodation cost can vary depending on the traveler’s needs and wants. It’s safe to assume travel costs for an American travelling to London can cost a couple thousand dollars without adding in the cost of expenses while in the country.

Compare this with someone living in London travelling to Paris. Round trip flights are about $150 and are only about an hour long. The Eurostar train is available as well. Round trip tickets on the Eurostar cost around $300 from Paris to London (Eurostar train travel may cost more than a flight, but travel times are very flexible with up to 18 different trains leaving for the same destination a day. The Eurostar makes stops in multiple European countries in which you can transfer to other trains to get to your destination. The extensive train system around Europe makes travel much cheaper and easier for those wanting to take a short week holiday. As not much time is needed to get from one country to another, and it is much cheaper than having to fly over an ocean. The United States itself is a large country. According to the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) World Factbook, the US landmass is 9,161,923 sq. km. The UK (not just England itself) has a landmass of 241,590 sq. km. By those numbers the UK would fit inside of the US 38 times! Being such a large country, it is easy to stay within the borders of the US and experience different cultures right in our own backyard.

Travel within the US is also expensive though. Domestic flights can be very expensive, and traveling by car is very tiring as well as expensive too. The US does not have an extensive train and bus system spanning multiple states as Europe does. This makes train and bus travel an unfavorable, and an expensive, form of transportation in the US.

Work Culture

As a nation, we “live to work” instead of “working to live.” The United States is the only advanced economy in the world that does not require paid vacation time for its citizens. In the chart shown below, a study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in May of 2013 shows the number of days 21 rich countries (16 from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Canada, and the United States) require for paid vacation days. Some countries even have extra paid days for their citizens depending upon their age, shift differential, or for doing community service. This analysis does not cover sick leave, parental leave, or leave to care for sick relatives. In this research, paid holidays “are organized by particular fixed dates in the calendar”.

According to a nation wide poll in 2007 conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), three-quarters of Americans listed work as a major stressor in their lives. Half of those polled also stated that they did not take their allotted vacation time for the year. Prolonged stress can lead to long-term serious health issues, including hypertension (high blood pressure), depression, smoking, and comfort-eating. Some of these issues lead to the use of prescription drugs, such as metoprolol tartrate (generic Lopressor), which is used to treat hypertension, to help counteract the side effects of stress. These medications themselves have other side effects, which are sometimes treated with other prescription medications, causing the cycle to be repeated over and over again.

In Conclusion

Travelling throughout the world is one of the greatest forms of diplomacy there is. We are able to show others that we are interested and care about them. We show that we are all humans, similar in many ways, but we have a plethora of cultures filling our world. Taking time from our everyday lives and spending it with someone of a different culture and belief system is a form of respect, and an exercise in our patience of others. Showing others we are willing to embrace their way of life, even if for only a vacation, shows others our deference and tolerance for cultures and lifestyles other than our own.

As a country we need to slow down and take time to appreciate the beauties and wonders our world holds. We should all take time to stop and smell the roses, or maybe, take time to smell the begonias of The Flower Carpet at the Grand Palace in Brussels, Belgium.
Your Horoscope this Week

**Aries** (March 21-April 19)

You become even more practical. Inspire others to participate and the job gets done with more ease and velocity. Focus on the message. Appeal to the heart. Listen for what others want and address that. Utilize private connections.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20)

Keep a job on budget and on time. Provide a pleasant surprise and get rewarded. Your efforts are in demand. Get coaching from an expert. Don’t get stuck. Imagine the perfect moment. Use your secret power.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 20)


**Cancer** (June 21-July 22)

The pressure eases. Take time to recharge. Hold on to what you have. Postpone financial discussion. Peaceful introspection soothes, like harmony and hot tea. A group dream can become reality. A practical friend comes up with a radical idea.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22)

Many hands make light work. Take differing tastes into account. Unexpected benefits arise in a collaborative effort. Apply some elbow grease to a practical task. Take care of a bit of business in private. Ignore practical task. Take care of a bit of business in private. Ignore

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A beneficial development arises from an unexpected direction.


Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) An unexpected development could lead to extra fun. Your project takes an interesting twist. Stop and consider. Figure out the next steps before taking them. Buy only necessary supplies. Push to finish work and go play early.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) Be careful not to lose things now. Put your back into a domestic project. Accept a challenge. Upgrade for efficiency, and save money and time. Eclectic ideas provide innovative solutions. Draw up solid plans. Share your insights.

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