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Grand Valley State University

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FORUM

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Published by News & Information Services



Seidman report: employment, consumer confidence up

Hari Singh, professor of economics, said the business confidence index in West Michigan is poised to approach 60 percent for the first time in five years.

Singh revealed the findings of his anticipated survey of the regional economy at the Colliers Annual Economic and Real Estate Forecast January 18. The survey of the greater Grand Rapids economy (Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon, and Allegan counties) was conducted in November 2011.

The confidence index measures overall subjective business confidence and uses a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 100 (complete confidence). Singh said for the last 17 years the confidence index was around 80 percent. Since the 2001 recession, the index hovered around 60 percent; Singh said the index in 2008 and 2009 fell below the 50 percent benchmark. "Given this historical context, the rise to 60 percent is significant," he said.

Singh said employment is expected to grow by 1.5 to 2 percent in 2012. More than half the respondents in his survey expect to hire in 2012

and 70 percent of them expect to hire permanent workers. Overall, average sales in all the economic sectors are expected to increase by 2.5 percent.

Singh called exports "a bright spot" because 7 percent growth is expected.

"West Michigan will continue to find a foothold by diversifying into specialized services such as health care, professional services, education and high-tech precision manufacturing," said Singh.

He said Michigan needs to ensure it will create a highly qualified workforce. "State resources need to be leveraged to position ourselves strategically in growth sectors of the future," he said. "Besides

health care and high-tech manufacturing, state policies need to promote more renewable/alternative energy options within the state."



Photo by Adam Bird

Hari Singh, professor of economics, discusses a survey of regional business confidence and employment in the DeVos Center on January 18.

King week speakers inspire, encourage campus



Photo by Adam Bird

Michelle Alexander takes a question from an audience member following her January 18 presentation in the Kirkhof Center. She was one of two nationally known speakers to address the campus community during Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Week.

Keynote speakers during Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration Week urged the campus community to continue to work for human rights and be inspired by King's messages. They said there is much work left to do.

Attorney, professor and civil rights advocate Michelle Alexander gave two presentations that stemmed from her book, *The New Jim Crow*, in which she likened America's criminal justice system to the Jim Crow laws that regulated blacks in the South to second-class citizens.

"The system of mass incarceration today functions like the systems we supposedly left behind years ago," she said.

She projected that the nation's war on drugs, formalized during the Reagan administration, led to the dramatic rise in the prison population. Over a 30-year period, she said, the number of prisoners quintupled to more than 2 million today, the most of any country in the world.

Alexander said only a national social movement, similar to the civil rights movement of the King era, will remedy mass incarceration.

Alexander recognized that attempting to overhaul America's criminal justice system is a daunting task.

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Across Campus

Changes to retirement plans detailed

Changes have been made to Grand Valley's 403(b) and 457(b) retirement plan investments.

These changes, prompted in part by recent IRS regulatory guidance, reduce overall fund expenses, introduce new investment options, and streamline the overall menu of choices into Core Fund Menus. All of these changes are intended to help make the plans easier to use, with the ultimate goal of improving the ability of faculty and staff members to appropriately save for retirement.

- Effective February 1, the new funds and new share classes will be available for new contributions and transfers.
- Beginning March 1, certain funds will be closed to new deposits (contributions and transfers). There will be an option to transfer balances out of these funds at any time. If nothing is done, current fund balances will remain where they are. The affected funds will be identified in communications to faculty and staff members from Fidelity and TIAA-CREF.

For more information visit www.gvsu.edu/healthwellness, click on the retirement fund headline in the "News" section. The link also details upcoming meetings to learn more about the changes.

Recyclemania kicks off

For the fifth straight year, Grand Valley is competing in Recyclemania, a national competition among colleges and universities. Grand Valley will compete in different contests over a 10-week period, ending March 31, to collect the largest amount of recyclables and produce the least amount of trash.

Grand Valley placed in the top 100 last year and recycled nearly 200,000 pounds of compost, a 107 percent increase from 2010, and reduced the waste stream by more than 40 percent.

Steve Leeser, operations supervisor for Facilities Services, said he hopes additional composting programs on campus will help Grand Valley place first overall in the state this year. "We have a strong composting program at Grand Valley and it's what sets us apart from other universities," he said. "This year we started composting paper towels from all campus

bathrooms and some non-food buildings began composting as well. Our food service areas began composting two years ago."

For a list of compostable and recycleable items, visit www.gvsu.edu/facilitieservices.

Nominations sought for WGS award

Nominations for the Barbara Jordan Award, presented to a longtime advocate of women's issues, are sought by the Women and Gender Studies program.

Nominations are due January 31 and must include a letter of support, current curriculum vitae and other relevant materials. Materials can be sent to the Women's Center, 1201 Kirkhof Center.

The award will be presented during the Celebrating Women Awards ceremony, set for March 13.

Padnos College exchange



Pictured are, from left, Paul Leidig, Mark Schaub, Paul Plotkowski and Joe Iannelli at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences. The Padnos College of Engineering and Computing is pursuing more faculty member and student exchange opportunities.

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The GVSU Forum is published by the News and Information Services Office. The submission deadline is Tuesday noon. Send publication items to Michele Coffill, editor, c/o_forum@gvsu.edu. Telephone: 616-331-2221. Fax: 616-331-2250. Web: www.gvsu.edu/forum.

Faculty and staff members can find an online "Sketches" submission form on the Web at www.gvsu.edu/forum.

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Other publications by the News and Information Services Office include:

Grand Valley Magazine, which is published quarterly for the university community. Visit its website at www.gvsu.edu/gvmagazine.

Visit Grand Valley's online publication, GVNnow, at www.gvsu.edu/gvnow, for daily news updates and video features.

Grand Valley State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

GVFaces

Nate Bliton, Music and Dance

When Nate Bliton composes pieces, he names his computer as a key instrument in his process.

"I play the laptop," Bliton says. "I manipulate electronics and create custom interfaces for use on stage."

Earlier this month, Bliton began his job as the equipment manager for Grand Valley's Music Department and Dance Program. His responsibilities include organizing and maintaining the equipment, as well as coordinating the use of practice and performance spaces in the Performing Arts Center.

Bliton is also present behind stage during events to ensure that performers and crews have all the technology and supplies they need, a job that was previously juggled between multiple staff members. "I get to be a consistent, friendly face," Bliton says.

Bliton earned a master's degree in music composition from Michigan State University. He said West Michigan offers a number of venues and opportunities available to local musicians. "The level of reception to new ideas here is exciting,"

he said. "Grand Rapids is full of musicians in a growing community."

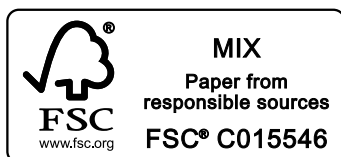
One of Bliton's goals while working at Grand Valley is to expand the role recording technology plays for music and dance. He also hopes to start a system of recording teaching demonstrations and other tools for students and faculty members to access.

Bliton has played in a number of bands ranging in genre from alternative country to salsa to an "early '70s Genesis style progressive rock group" called Ruberdus. Although he focuses on the viola, Bliton also regularly plays the piano and the accordion.

In his free time, Bliton co-manages a set of three podcasts called "SoundNotion.tv," including a talk show that features contemporary composers and conductors from across the U.S.



Nate Bliton



What's Ahead

New Yorker to share Occupy Wall Street stories

Author and activist Sherry Wolf will share her stories about being on the front lines of the Occupy Wall Street movement at an event that will kick off Grand Valley's Campus Leadership Week.

Wolf will discuss the origins of OWS, how it is evolving and how it impacts economic, political and social issues.

The event is sponsored by the LGBT Resource Center and is set for Monday, January 23, at 7 p.m. in the Pere Marquette Room of the Kirkhof Center. For more information, contact the center at x12530.

Center offers Riverbank Run training

The Fitness and Wellness Center is hosting a training program to help interested students, faculty and staff members prepare for the Fifth Third Riverbank Run on May 12.

Through May, participants will receive monthly training schedules that suggest workout routines to prepare for each of the three race distances: 5K, 10K, and 25K.

A group workout is held each Tuesday from 4-6 p.m. in the Kelly Family Sports Center. Registration for the training program is still open; contact the center at x13659 or visit www.gvsu.edu/rec and click on the Riverbank Run button.

Events will celebrate rich heritage of Asian Pacific Islanders

Wide-ranging events that showcase the rich cultural heritage of Asians will be highlighted during the Asian Pacific American Islander Celebration.

Events, detailed below, are free and open to the public and sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, with support from many campus departments. For information, call OMA at x12177 or visit www.gvsu.edu/oma.

• **Asian Pacific Islanders in Michigan; Wednesday, January 25, 4-5 p.m., Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room**

Attorney Rona M. Lum will lead an informative presentation that focuses on how, by 2050, Asian Pacific Islanders are projected to be the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S., expanding from 10.7 million in 2000 to 33.4 million in 2050, a 213 percent increase.

• **Asian New Year Festival; Thursday, January 26, 6-9 p.m., Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room**

A spectacular festival that will showcase the traditional Asian New Year celebration. Enjoy

a dragon dance, Chinese martial arts, national dances and a cultural fashion show.

• **"First Person Plural"; January 30, noon-1 p.m., Kirkhof Center, room 1240**

In 1966, Deann Borshay Liem was adopted by an American family and moved from Korea to California. Recurring dreams lead her to investigate her own past, and she discovers that her Korean mother is alive. Borshay Liem embarks on a heartfelt journey in this acclaimed documentary.

• **"In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee"; January 31, noon-1 p.m., Kirkhof Center, room 1240**

Filmmaker Deann Borshay Liem (First Person Plural) returns to her native Korea to find her "double," the mysterious girl whose place she took in America. Told to keep her true identity secret from her new American family, the girl quickly forgot she had ever been anyone else. But why had her identity been switched? And who was the real Cha Jung Hee?

• **Aesthetic and Moral Ideals in Chinese Calligraphy; February 8, 1-2:30 p.m., Kirkhof Center, Pere Marquette Room**

Peimin Ni, professor of philosophy, will lead participants through the evolution of Chinese written characters and show how it parallels the history of Chinese calligraphy art.

• **Rising Voices of Asian Pacific Islanders in the 2012 Election; February 9, 5-6 p.m., Kirkhof Center, room 2270**

In an interactive presentation, Stephanie Chang, president of Asian Pacific Islander American Vote - Michigan, will discuss why the younger generation of Asian Pacific Islanders should get involved in the 2012 presidential election.

• **Human Rights, Civil Rights and Islam; February 15, 4-6 p.m., Kirkhof Center, room 2250**

Lena Masri, staff attorney for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, is a nationally noted presenter on issues related to human rights, civil rights and Islam.

Jeweler, art critic to speak on campus

Bruce Metcalf has long been regarded as a leading jeweler in the art field. He is also one of the pioneers of contemporary craft criticism. Metcalf's artwork is characterized by his interest in architecture, comics and the narrative voice. The work also examines the same social,



Bruce Metcalf

moral and political issues raised in his essays.

Metcalf will give a lecture, "The Semiotics of Jewelry," on Wednesday, January 25, 7:30 p.m., DeVos Center, Loosemore Auditorium. His lecture is sponsored by the Department of Art and Design Visiting Artist Committee.

Metcalf has exhibited nationally and internationally. His work is found in the collections of major museums around the world. He has received a Visual Artists Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Pew Fellowship in the Arts.

Writers Series continues with faculty readings

The GVSU Writers Series resumes with Writing Department faculty readings by three assistant professors — Caitlin Horrocks, Amorak Huey and Oindrila Mukherjee — on Thursday, January 26, at 7 p.m. in the Cook-DeWitt Center.

Horrocks is author of the story collection *This Is Not Your City*. Her fiction appears in *The Best American Short Stories 2011*, *The Pushcart Prize XXXV*, the *PEN/O. Henry Prize Stories 2009*, *The Paris Review* and elsewhere.

Huey worked for 15 years in Florida, Kentucky and Michigan as a reporter and editor before leaving the newspaper business. He earned an MFA in creative writing from Western Michigan University and is managing editor of the new online journal *Wake: Great Lakes Thought & Culture*.

Mukherjee was born in Kolkata, India. She has worked as a journalist for the *Statesman*, India's oldest English language newspaper, and served as fiction editor and review editor for *Gulf Coast Magazine*.

Upcoming in the series are talks and readings by playwright Randy Wyatt, February 13; poet L.S. Klatt, February 20; and creative nonfiction and poetry by Joe Wilkins, March 13. For more information, visit www.gvsu.edu/artscalendar, or contact Horrocks at x18022.

Volunteers sought for Sibs & Kids Weekend

Student volunteers are needed for Grand Valley's annual Sibs & Kids Weekend, January 27-28.

Organized by the student organization Spotlight Productions, the circus-themed weekend will include activities such as crafts, games and performances in the Kirkhof Center and Fieldhouse Arena. Volunteers are specifically needed on Friday, January 27, from 4-10 p.m. and Saturday, January 28, from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Contact sibsnkids@gvsu.edu for volunteer information.

Register online for Sibs & Kids Weekend 2012 at www.gvsu.edu/sibsnkids; the registration fee is \$20 for the first guest and \$15 per each additional guest.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Art Gallery

Jan. 16-March 23

Gallery Hours: "Regionalism and the Art of the WPA," Art Gallery, PAC. Call x12563 for more information.

General Events

Mon., Jan. 23

Noon: ADC Lunch Lecture Series: "Black Skin, White Mask?" by Steeve Buckridge. 2215/2216 KC. Call x18110 for more information.

Noon: Health and Wellness hosts Healthy Mondays. FH. Call x12215 for more information.

1:30 p.m.: Excellence Series: "Time Mastery for Excellence & Professional Growth," by Jerry Conrad. 2270 KC. Visit www.gvsu.edu/semnar to register.

6 p.m.: Seidman Business Ethics Center presents, "Women, Ethics, and Business," by Janet Knaus, Christina Keller and JoAnne Perkins. Loosemore Auditorium, DEV. Call

x17100 for more information.

7 p.m.: LGBT Resource Center hosts "Occupy Wall Street: Lessons from the Front Lines," by Sherry Wolf. Call x12530 for more information.

Tues., Jan. 24

10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Pew Campus Blood Drive. 145C DEV.

Wed., Jan. 25

Noon: Arts at Noon Series: "Grand Valley Winds." CDC. Call x13484 for more information.

Noon: Allendale Toastmasters. 2259 KC. Visit www.gvsu.edu/toastmasters for information.

4 p.m.: Asian Pacific American Islander Heritage Celebration: "Asian Pacific Islander in Michigan," by Rona M. Lum. 2250 KC. Call x12177 for more information.

6 p.m.: Psychology hosts Projection Film Series, "Safe." 114 LMH. Call x16230 for more information.

Thurs., Jan. 26

7:30 a.m.: Downtown Toastmasters. University Club Room, DEV. Visit www.gvsu.edu/toastmasters for information.

Noon: Women's Center hosts "What Mommies Do Best: Green Parenting." 1201 KC. Call x12748 for more information.

1-4 p.m.: CSCL hosts Nonprofit Volunteer and Internship Fair. Atrium, HRY. Call x12468 for more information.

6 p.m.: Asian Pacific American Islander Heritage Celebration: "Asian New Year Festival." 2250 KC. Call x12177 for more information.

Fri., Jan. 27

9 a.m.: Excellence Series: "Respect in the Global Workplace," by Sean Huddleston. 340 BIK. Visit www.gvsu.edu/seminar to register.

Noon-5 p.m.: Writing Center hosts Faculty and Staff Friday (quiet writing time). 120 LOH. Call x12922 for more information.

Faculty and Staff Sketches

Sketches

Michael DeWilde, director of the Business Ethics Center, wrote a book chapter, "Introspection as Moral Courage: Entrepreneurs, Leaders and Social Responsibility," published in *Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship and the Common Good*. He also gave a presentation, "An American Perspective on the Common Good," in Rennes, France.

Brandon DeHaan, police captain, received a grant from the Michigan Office of Highway

Safety Planning for a youth alcohol enforcement project.

Craig Benjamin, associate professor of history and honors, was elected vice president (president-elect) of the World History Association.

Mark Schaub, executive director of the Padnos International Center, wrote an article, "Beyond These Shores: An Argument for Internationalizing Composition," that was reprinted for a book, *The American-Style University at Large: Transplants, Outposts, and*

the Globalization of Higher Education.

Paul Murphy, associate professor of history, wrote a book, *The New Era: American Thought and Culture in the 1920s*, published by Rowman and Littlefield.

John Hewitt, professor of criminal justice, co-wrote a book, *Exploring Criminal Justice: The Essentials*, published by Jones and Bartlett.

Michael P. Lombardo, professor of biology, wrote an article, "On the Evolution of Sport," published in *Evolutionary Psychology*.

Speakers during King week send call to action

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"We are so rooted in our political and social structures that this will not fade away without a radical shift," she said. "We need to go back and pick up where people like Dr. King left off."

In a presentation on January 16, Bakari Kitwana, author of *Hip-Hop Activism in the Obama Era*, drew connections between activists from the civil rights era and activists from the hip-hop era.

Kitwana said the 2008 election of President Obama was the first political victory for young people. He projected that political apathy and unrest occurred because the young voters who helped elect Obama into office stopped being political activists,

although there is a resurgence in activism with Occupy Wall Street.

"The issues surrounding Occupy Wall Street have been channeled by young people and brought them back into activism," he said.

He suggested to students in the audience that they do not need to wait for an invitation to be an activist. "Just jump in," Kitwana said. "To be inspiring to others, the most important thing is to be engaged yourself."



Photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker

Bakari Kitwana gives a presentation in the Kirkhof Center on January 16.