

THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

September 7, 2011

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Volume 38 // Issue 5

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due to housing overbooking



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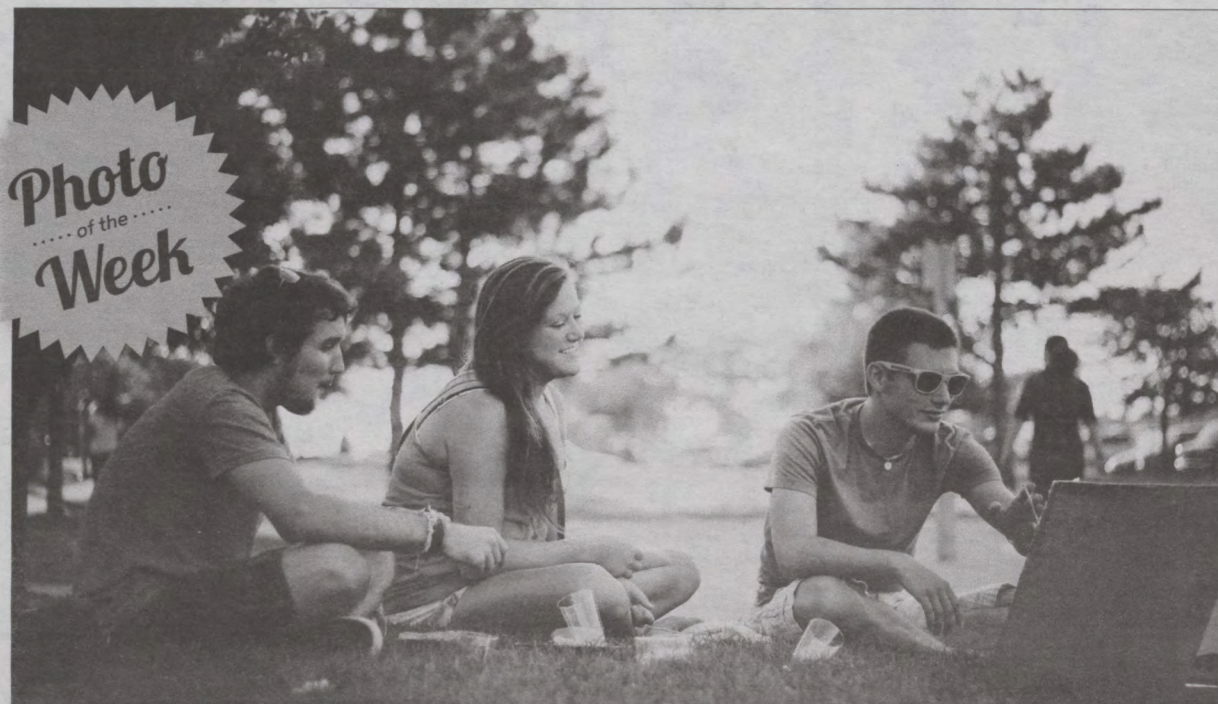


Photo
... of the ...
Week

Barbecue Bonanza // September 1

SIERRA SOLEIMANI/The Oakland Post

Oakland students Adam Suddon, Ashley Navalta and Tom Heinrich enjoy music and a barbecue during one of the many festivities of Welcome Week. The Welcome BBQ was hosted by the Association of Black Students and the Center for Multicultural Initiatives.



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THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

editorial & media

Kay Nguyen

Editor-in-Chief
editor@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-4268

Kaitlyn Chornoby

Managing Visual Editor
visual@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2537

Nichole Seguin

Managing Content Editor
managing@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2537

Jason Willis

Design Editor
design@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-4266

section editors

Andy Craig
Campus Editor
campus@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-4263

Megan Semeraz
Assistant Campus Editor
campus@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-4263

Mike Horan
Sports Editor
sports@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2848

Ali Armstrong
Local Editor
local@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2848

Sarah Wojcik
Features Editor
features@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2848

Kevin Romanchik
Scene Editor
scene@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2848

Mouthing Off Editor
mouthingoff@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-2848

web
Bryan Culver
web@oaklandpostonline.com

copy editors

Justin Colman
Clare La Torre

photographers

Sierra Soleimani
Jessika Carmichael

senior reporters

Ray Andre

staff reporters

Emma Claucherty
Brian Figurski
Kevin Graham
Sarah Hunton
Haley Jonna
Jomar Maborang
Don Rochon
Seth Walker

staff interns

Damien Dennis
Brittany Haney
Tyrell Johnson
Sonia Litynskij
Sheza Mansoor
Misha Mayhand
Ramsin Odisho
Stephanie Preweda
Isabella Shaya

advisors

Holly Gilbert
Don Ritenburgh
(248) 370-2848

distribution manager
Sylvia Marburger

advertising & marketing

Devon Thomas
Lead Ads Manager
ads@oaklandpostonline.com
(248) 370-4269

Krystal Harris
Assistant Ads Manager
ads@oaklandpostonline.com

Litsa Didaskalos
Assistant Ads Manager
ads@oaklandpostonline.com

Tiania Paul
Assistant Ads Manager
ads@oaklandpostonline.com

Sarah Hunton
Ads Intern
ads@oaklandpostonline.com

STAFF EDITORIAL

Move focus to housing

As illustrated by the approximately 100 Oakland University students displaced last week from their promised on-campus housing spaces, the overcrowding of campus housing is an issue.

Instead of moving into dorms on campus as planned, they were assigned to an area hotel.

Since the start of the semester, OU Housing Director Jim Zentmeyer said fifteen students have moved from the temporary Homewood Suites hotel digs on University Drive to an on-campus location.

Zentmeyer and the staff of the OU housing department swiftly and effectively handled the situation, but on-campus housing is an issue.

The office saw a 16 percent increase in the number of housing contracts this year, but there hasn't been a 16 percent increase in the number of beds on campus.

New housing options must be created in order to create a real solution to a real, growing issue.

It's an issue that has been escalating. Oakland University experienced its 13th straight year of enrollment growth last fall as the student population reached an all-time high of 19,053 students.

As more students come to campus,

there has been a similar increase in the demand for housing. Oakland University's residence halls have had more than a 100 percent occupancy rate over the last five years.

New housing options must be created in order to create a real solution to a real, growing issue.

A November 2009 Oakland Post article by reporter Mike Sandula reported that Mary Beth Snyder, vice president of student affairs and enrollment management, had a proposal prepared that would have doubled the amount of beds available on campus over the next three decades.

Bravo. But.

The proposal was never presented to the board of trustees because Snyder and the board agreed at the time that the Human Health Building should be the sole focus of attention ahead of beginning another construction project.

A solution should have been pursued immediately after plans for the Human Health Building were finalized.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the

building took place last April.

Zentmeyer said he has a plan ready that will add 440 beds to campus housing next year, which he hopes will be approved by the board of trustees. But it won't alleviate the problem in time for students seeking campus housing next fall and definitely won't help the students still currently living at the Auburn Hills Homewood Suites hotel.

The board may not want to absorb the debt incurred because of the high cost — Snyder's 2009 proposal had a projected cost of \$28 million — of constructing new housing options, but it will create the long-term solution needed to resolve the issue at hand.

As Oakland University strives to be a national university and shed its commuter school image, the board of trustees needs to remember that accommodating the influx of students is also of paramount importance.

Zentmeyer said in an interview with The Oakland Post that he has "trust and faith in the university to tell when it will be most beneficial to build" additional housing.

It's time to match student demand and begin the discussion on adding campus housing again.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Kay Nguyen, Nichole Seguin
and Kaitlyn Chornoby
managing@oaklandpostonline.com



CONTACT US

In person:
61 Oakland Center, in the basement

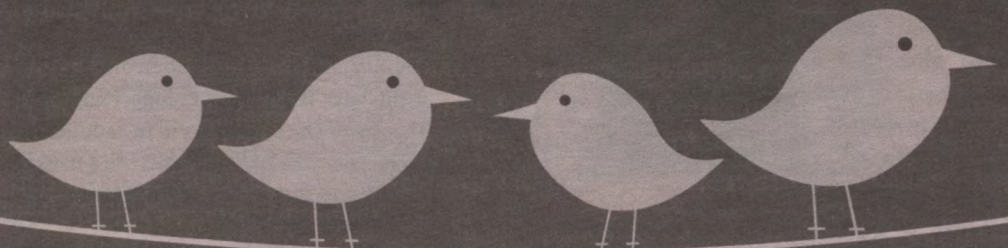
By e-mail:
editor@oaklandpostonline.com

By phone:
248-370-4268

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If you are interested in writing a guest column for the Perspectives section, e-mail editor@oaklandpostonline.com or call 248.370.4268.

Controlled substance laws “hazy”

I cast my vote for the 2008 presidential election as an absentee. That year, I voted for Nader and both Michigan ballot initiatives (medical marijuana and stem-cell research). I must be the liberal scum that's threatening “American values” (“U.S. values,” more accurately, if you wish to respect Canada and Mexico — which I do).

I was among the 63 percent majority of Michiganders that approved the ballot initiative legalizing marijuana to treat the chronically ill in our state. This law permits licensed patients with illnesses like cancer, H.I.V. and multiple sclerosis — and their caregivers — to acquire or grow medicinal cannabis to ease the pain of those and other diseases. But political meddling has eroded civil liberties granted by what was a straight-forward law with a simple goal: to lessen suffering.

Recently, an appeals court interpreted the sale of medicinal marijuana at the Compassionate Apothecary, a Mount Pleasant dispensary which took a 20 percent share of the profits of marijuana which patients paid for, on the grounds it created a “public nuisance” in granting services to approved med-marijuana card holders.

The ruling that the apothecary was in violation of state controlled substances laws set a precedence which police across



Raymond Andre
Senior Reporter

the state have used as an impetus to raid and close it and numerous other dispensaries. The non-existence of transactions for marijuana leaves card holders in a paradoxical state where it is legal to have and use medical marijuana, but illegal to obtain it through commerce.

The controlled substances laws in the state of Michigan do not bar the sale of marijuana, just the transfer or delivery of the substance, and sale is not included in the Michigan medical marijuana legislation. Transfer and delivery are, however. This is a main point of confusion.

The medicine itself, the three appellate judge panel said, cannot be sold, though the law voters passed in 2008 granted that services provided by caregivers, dispensaries in this case, can be compensated. If not by cash, then what? Perhaps medical marijua-

na cooperative programs are the solution, or a new model of licensed treatment facility with new legislation for allowable locations where patients could receive care.

Zoning rules might help to alleviate some of the rancor towards dispensaries, allowing them to be naturally incorporated into the society in ways that communities can independently approve. This would also allow those within the margin that did not approve the medical marijuana law their moral victory.

As of yet, lawmakers offer no suggestions to the confusion, only denigration to the sick simply for wanting to ease their pain.

Remember when I said I voted absentee? Well, my travel plans fell through that week.

There is a point to my satirical self-deprecation, though, and it is this: my civil disobedience — voting absentee by choice — it harmed no one.

But this civil-servant “civil disobedience” is denying thousands their legal right to medicine to treat symptoms such as chronic pain, nausea and seizures.

Michigan Attorney General William Schuette championed the recent appellate ruling. He, like most Michigan elected officials, does not like even the possibility of medical marijuana. He has stated this many

times, in many ways, throughout his political career. That is fine. But when two-thirds of a state votes something into law and you quibble and distort a debate, characterizing medical dispensaries as “pot shops” and “drug houses,” that is irresponsible political grandstanding. It is sanctimony.

With this column, I almost assuredly re-use myself from future reporting upon the issue, but I think and hope that this address might be able to demonstrate the fact that your very human rights are being stripped away by cranky, aging hypocrites.

When this issue is published, Sept. 7, you can join the Michigan Medical Marijuana Association (<http://michiganmedicalmarijuana.org>) at the state Capitol in Lansing. We can show legislators that the rights voted into law by 63 percent of the state will not be violated.

You may also be interested in contacting your state representatives with your concerns over this obstruction of civil liberties, or send your regards to Mr. Schuette, whom can be reached in the following ways.

Phone: (517) 373-1110

E-mail: miag@michigan.gov

Mail: G. Mennen Williams Building, seventh floor, 525 W. Ottawa St., P.O. Box 30212, Lansing, MI 48909

Coffee brings about a sense of community

While college brings new opportunities, friends and independence, it also brings sleep deprivation. And while most of us cannot seem to schedule in sleep, we often turn to caffeine. As a die hard Starbucks addict, I am ashamed to admit that I will travel through rain, sleet, snow, even Hurricane Irene, to get my morning fix.

I am currently a regular at five different Starbucks locations at which the majority of the baristas knows me by name and order.

Similarly, many people share the same dependence on other “brand name” coffee companies including Caribou Coffee, Biggby and Dunkin Donuts. Their devotion to their coffee cannot be shifted by taste, atmosphere, or even price. Their coffee companies win their hearts as the most

delectable every time.

But, when did this coffee craze begin? What made my Starbucks coffee so special to me that I wouldn't dare cheat with another brew?

No longer can independent cafes stand a chance in succeeding with corporate companies at their necks. Coffee companies have designed their stores to give that same independent, café feel, while pleasing executives with huge corporate profits.

I have concluded that this trend of brand name coffee has been designed to make people feel as if they belong to something. That is what everyone searches for in the long run, is it not? People crave to feel as if they belong to a community, and while I do not know the names of most of my neighbors whom I've been living near for most of



Haley Jonna
Staff Reporter

my life, I do know the names of the people who serve my coffee, the man who sits in the same corner each day reading his paper, and the working mother who drags in her son each morning purchasing a caramel latte and a chocolate milk.

Business people, students, parents, people from different cultures and creeds all drink coffee. It's sort of a common religion that

bonds America together. Visiting the same café each day reminds me that in this fast paced world there is such a thing as community. Each time I see someone carrying a cup with the Starbucks logo, I know that he or she too shares in my addiction. Whenever the barista leaves me a message on my cup, it reminds me that I am apart of something.

Truly, the brand name coffee craze has become a tad bit absurd, and I do not take pride in being one who has fallen victim to their tactics. However, for those of you who have no clue what I'm talking about, visit a Starbucks — yes I'm playing favorites. You will soon realize your addiction developing, not to the coffee, but to the friendly environment and the homey feel. Corporate America, you got us again.

Student housing overload

Housing capacity comes up short, plans for new building drafted

By **NICHOLE SEGUIN**
and **KEVIN GRAHAM**
Managing Content Editor
and Staff Reporter

When students leave home for the collegial atmosphere of a university dormitory, they don't expect to end up at a nearby hotel. But that's exactly what happened to approximately 25 male Oakland University students.

At the start of the school year, there was a 16 percent increase over last year's already overbooked occupancy, according to housing director Jim Zentmeyer.

Due to on-campus housing demands, a block of 30 rooms at Homestead Studio Suites — located on University Drive, down the street from the university — have been reserved for OU students displaced because of overcrowded residence halls. These students expressed a need to live on or close to campus because for various reasons, including location.

Zentmeyer said that OUs dorm population is usually comprised of more males. Conversely, the composite campus student population has more females. In 2010, there were 3,164 more females enrolled in the university than males, according to reports from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Currently the hotel rooms are booked for three weeks, but Zentmeyer said that he is confident that the students will be in the university by then, as students (mostly women) remove themselves from student housing at various times for different reasons.

"We will be bringing them back onto campus as quickly as space occurs," he said. "I'm confident that we will be able to handle the individuals that are in the Home-

stead location before then ... our aim is to have this taken care of in three weeks or less. If not, we will revisit that on a case by case basis to see what their desire is ... our department is firm to support those students."

Of the 100 students initially living in hotels, 15 have been placed on campus since Thursday.

The students who are staying in the hotels are not paying for the hotels directly. The costs are coming from the housing fee they've already paid over the summer.

Students have access to the regular amenities from the hotel and senior resident assistants are staying overnight with the students to make sure they're monitored. The Bear Bus is also available for transportation to the university.

In addition to the 25 students in the hotel, 60 more male students are currently on a wait list to get into housing. However, housing options for women who'd like to live on campus are more available due to vacancy on women's floors in the dorms.

"Oakland is a place where more and more people are being drawn to. With the growth of the new medical school, health and human services building and the engineering building, Oakland is making that a priority."

— Jim Zentmeyer,
Director of University Housing

Zentmeyer attributes the high increase in campus housing is due to an increased interest in the campus community.

"With the activity on campus, people want to live here and that's wonderful. We're moving toward that community-feel at OU," Zent-



BRYAN CULVER/The Oakland Post

Approximately 25 male students are currently living in hotel rooms at Homestead Studio Suites on University Dr. The students were put in the hotel after an unexpected increase in on-campus housing demand for the 2011-12 school year.

meyer said. "Oakland is a place where more and more people are being drawn to. With the growth of the new medical school, health and human services building and the engineering building, Oakland is making that a priority."

Though it usually costs upwards of \$300 to cancel a housing contract, the students on the wait list will not be charged if they decide they no longer want to live on campus.

The inaugural class of the William Beaumont School of Housing has hardly contributed to the issue. Only five medical school students chose to live on campus, and most of them are living in the George Matthews apartments.

Despite of the increase in students, single rooms were not an option again this year for students

who wished to live alone.

Christine Aranda, a transfer student, was upset when the room she applied for through Disability Support Services didn't work out.

"At first I was worried because I thought they were going to put me into a dorm room with four or five other people, but I was given an apartment instead," she said. "We all applied for a single room through the DSS office, and were enraged when we found out we were put into a three bedroom apartment ... we had anxiety attacks about it ... I know I personally had a whole week where I was freaking out and went to two therapy sessions rather than one that week. I ended up liking my suitemates, though."

Zentmeyer said he's drafted a plan — different from his 2009

proposal — for a new housing unit to go out to the board of trustees that he hopes would add 440 beds to the university for the 2012-13 year.

"We want to make sure that it runs parallel with everyone else's programs," he said. "We want to make sure there is a buy in from BOT and that everyone that ought to be a part of the project can be."

He explained that the housing costs for a new building are fiscally separate from the ones the school endures from new academic buildings.

"We (at university housing) are purely auxiliary," he said. "We do not see a single dollar from the government. The debt of a new residence hall is a debt the department will take on, as far as that's concerned."

New smoking ban in effect

By SARAH WOJCIK
Features Editor

Oakland University is implementing a new smoking ban in order to promote public health and comply with the Michigan Indoor Clean Air Act.

Smoking at OU has always been a controversial issue.

The debate boils down to a battle of wills: propagation of free will versus the general advocacy of health.

Addressing a health risk

According to Policy #475 of OU's Administrative Policies and Procedures, the university recognizes that tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke are significant health hazards, citing that, "tobacco smoke has been identified as a Group A carcinogen (cancer-causing agent) and studies have shown that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke."

Oakland's previous policy established a distance of 25 feet from any campus building, however, the new policy extends the ban's limitations to 50 feet from campus buildings as well as within vehicles on OU property.

"Tobacco smoke has been identified as a Group A carcinogen (cancer-causing agent) and studies have shown that there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke."

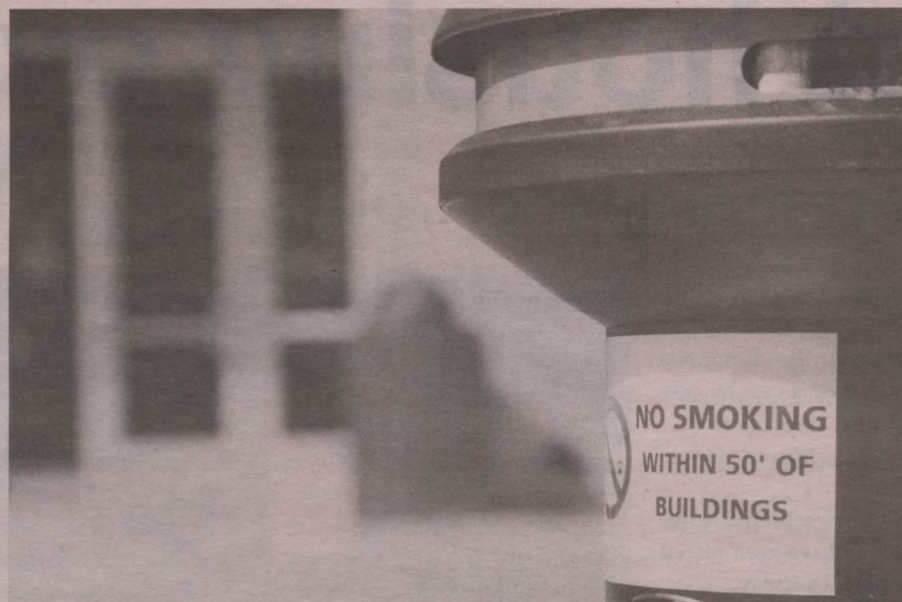
— University Policy #475

The only exceptions to the new policy, according to university policy, are specifically zoned locations, such as Meadow Brook Hall and both of the university's golf courses.

These areas are permitted to adopt separate smoking policies from the university, provided they are made in accordance with state law.

Revisions to the smoking ban were considered by a committee composed of many members of the campus community.

"The committee considered whether (25 feet) was really enough to ensure that students, faculty and staff who wish to, could



ANDREW CRAIG/ The Oakland Post

Smoking urns like this one, outside of the Oakland Center near Cafe O Bears, help identify designated smoking areas and help keep campus clean.

avoid exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke," Cora Hanson, OU's environmental health and life safety manager, said. "Committee consensus was that extending the perimeter to 50 feet was a more effective way to achieve this."

Smoking areas will be marked by urns in which smokers may discard their butts. However, some who smoke have a problem with the placement of the urns.

One staff member, who wished to remain anonymous, mentioned that there are no urns located near seating locations, so littering becomes a factor.

Another staff member pointed out that since the urns have been moved further from the doors of buildings, shelter should also be provided for when inclement weather strikes.

A growing trend

However, many smokers and non-smokers agree that smoking a distance away from the entrances and exits of buildings is respectful of the community at large.

The revision of the smoking ban is a step that reinforces the policies already implemented at other universities, such as the University of Michigan.

As of July 1, the ban at U of M prohibits smoking anywhere on any of the univer-

sity's three campuses except on sidewalks adjacent to public roads on the campuses and in vehicles on campus, according to The Michigan Daily.

Smokers and non-smokers alike feel that students at OU should be allowed to smoke in their cars because it is their own personal space.

As for the likelihood of a campus-wide ban, Hanson said: "The committee continues to receive feedback on the current situation and is reviewing the possibility of a campus-wide ban."

Enforcing the smoking ban will be a group effort, although existing disciplinary policies may be used as appropriate.

According to Hanson, the policy states that "all employees share in the responsibility of adhering to this policy and should ask individuals smoking in violation of this act to refrain from smoking and, if the individual continues to smoke in violation of the policy, ask him or her to leave the public place."

Complaints involving smoking by a student may be made to the supervisor of the area or the Dean of Students Office, 144 Oakland Center, 248-370-3352.

For assistance in interpreting the policy, contact the Office of Environmental Health and safety at 248-370-4196.

campus briefs

Rec Fest 2011

On Sept. 23 from 10 p.m. - midnight, the Rec Center will be hosting their annual food and fun night. The first 500 people will receive T-shirts.

There will also be a wing eating contest sponsored by Buffalo Wild Wings, games, a Photobooth and various prizes.

OU Students with an ID are free, and \$5 for each guest.

Hispanic Celebration Month

The Center for Multicultural Initiatives is hosting Hispanic Celebration Month events from Sept. 12 - 29.

Events include an Independence Day Celebration, Zumba classes and salsa dance lessons

Artist Nora Chapa Mendoza will be presenting her artwork with additional work from with additional pieces by Peruvian artist Enrique Aramburu.

Mendoza will also be conducting a still life painting class for OU students. Students do not need previous experience to attend. To learn more, visit oakland.edu/hcm

Car Talk with OU SAE and Chrysler

OU's Society of Automotive Engineers will be in Hamlin Circle Sept. 9 from noon to 4 p.m.w, providing vehicle maintenance tips, tricks and information.

Representatives from Chrysler will be present to talk about their new vehicles and product lines.

Post Secret Live at OU

Frank Warren, founder of Post Secret, will be speaking a free event sponsored by OU Student Congress on Sept. 21 from 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Students and guests who plan on attending the event need to get tickets from the CSA ticket window.

— Compiled by Megan Semeraz,
Assistant Campus Editor

Check out this week's police files at
www.oaklandpostonline.com