

THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

December 3, 2008


Volume 35, Number 13



Year In Review

Text messaging mayors, safety threats on campus, a failing economy and the most historical election in history. Take a look at the good and the bad that made the year 2008

*Micah Flalka-Feldman
sues OU for discrimination
page 6*



start law school earlier, rather than later.

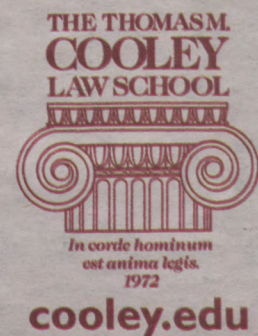
Attend Cooley Law School at its Auburn Hills campus. Classes start in January, May, and September.

Michigan residents interested in a legal career can attend the nation's largest law school right here in Auburn Hills! Cooley Law School offers classes year round across the state of Michigan at its three locations in Auburn Hills, downtown Lansing, and downtown Grand Rapids. Cooley students receive a legal education that provides them with the knowledge, skills, and ethics that Cooley students are known for worldwide.

Cooley - Auburn Hills - the exclusive educational partner law school of Oakland University.

For more information about Cooley and to register for a Cooley Open House, visit cooley.edu.

Thomas M. Cooley Law School is committed to a fair and objective admissions policy. Subject to space limitations, Cooley offers the opportunity for legal education to all qualified applicants. Cooley abides by all federal and state laws against discrimination. In addition, Cooley abides by American Bar Association Standard 211(a), which provides that "a law school shall foster and maintain equality of opportunity in legal education, including employment of faculty and staff, without discrimination or segregation on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability."



THIS WEEK **12.3.08**

THE OAKLAND POST
OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

EDITORIAL

Lindsey Wojcik
Editor in Chief
oakposteditor@gmail.com
(248) 370-4268

Nick Degel
Managing Editor
oakpostmanaging@gmail.com
(248) 370-2537

Dustin Alexander
Photo Editor
oakpostphoto@gmail.com
(248) 370-4266

Tim Rath
Sports Editor
oakpostsports@gmail.com
(248) 370-2848

Stacie Bartman
Web Editor
oakposteditor@gmail.com
(248) 370-4263

COPY EDITORS
Katie Jacob
Colleen Miller
oakposteditor@gmail.com
(248) 370-2849

Sean Garner
Campus Editor
oakposteditor@gmail.com
(248) 370-4263

SENIOR REPORTERS
Shelly Latshaw
Rory McCarty
Tom Murphy Jr.
Masudur Rahman
oakposteditor@gmail.com
(248) 370-2849

Paul Gully
Special Projects
Editor
oakpostfeatures@gmail.com
(248) 370-2849

STAFF INTERNS
Lina Ament
Kathleen Quandt
David Sanders
Wendell Smiley

Amanda Meade
Mix/Scene Editor
oakpostfeatures@gmail.com
(248) 370-2848

John Gardner
Web Master
(248) 370-4266

Jared Purcell
You/Local Editor
oakpostfeatures@gmail.com
(248) 370-4248

ADVERTISING | MARKETING

Sarah Lang
Lead Ads Manager
oaklandpostadvertising@gmail.com
(248) 370-4269

Mallory Lapanowski
Asst. Ads Manager
oaklandpostadvertising@gmail.com
(248) 370-4269

Jillian Field
Asst. Ads Manager
oaklandpostadvertising@gmail.com
(248) 370-4269

Tom Brown
Marketing Director
oaklandpostadvertising@gmail.com
(248) 370-4269

Steve St. Germain
Asst. Ads Manager
oaklandpostadvertising@gmail.com
(248) 370-4269

ADVISOR
Holly Gilbert
Dept. of Journalism
shreve@oakland.edu
(248) 370-4268



Perspectives page 4

The Oakland Post newsroom weighs in on the possible bailout for Detroit's Big Three.



Campus page 6

Student disability organization works with OU to make campus and housing more handicap accessible.



Local page 10

Detroit Red Wings alumni join a community to honor the life of a young man in a memorial hockey game.



The Mix page 13

Students reminisce about the past year's events and what they would like to accomplish in the coming year.



you page 19

Take a look into the life of a student who has been dealing with the effects of being homeless.



Sports page 22

The Oakland Post introduces four new women's basketball players who will be suiting up next year.



the Scene page 26

Bored with the same old concert venues? Check out Rochester's newest addition, The Factory.



MOUTHING OFF page 29

An Oakland Post editor shares his revolutionary, cost-cutting method of writing he is sure will save money and jobs.



Nation | World page 31

Executives from the Big Three share their plans for potential bailout money and offer up a hefty dose of humility.

As a historic year comes to a close, the Oakland Post staff sifted through dozens of archives and compiled the most memorable stories and photos of a memorable year. This was 2008.

Pages 15-18

Perspectives

4

www.oaklandpostonline.com

December 3, 2008

STAFF EDITORIAL

Black Friday behavior was appalling, deadly

For years, Thanksgiving has symbolically protected Americans from the onslaught of consumerism brought on by Christmas like an ever-weakening levee in a mighty rainstorm.

This year, the levee tragically broke as a mob of frenzied "Black Friday" shoppers smashed through a Long Island Wal-Mart's doors, trampling 34 year-old employee Jdimytai Damour to death and injuring four others, including a woman that was eight months pregnant.

The idea of shoppers fighting over bargains is nothing new. Every year, post-Thanksgiving sales turn ordinary people into raving lunatics.

However, this year it seems that a certain line has been crossed. "Black Friday" is no longer the day that businesses attempt to climb out of "the red" by offering bargains; instead, it has been replaced with images of injury and death.

Tough economic times are certainly in part to blame for this particularly chaotic scene. Many stores order their holiday inventory months in advance because some of the items are imported. Retailers did not foresee the current recession and could not plan their purchases around it.

Now, they have a surplus of inventory and not a large demand for it at least at full price. Consumers with less to spend are eager to make large-scale purchases at discount prices.

Retailers also share some of the blame for Damour's death. Placing a warm, well-lit store in front of cold, frenzied shoppers is a recipe for disaster and a breeding ground for chaos.

However, several chain stores have safeguards in place to avoid a catastrophe like this.

For example, CompUSA opened their doors at 9 p.m. Thursday night when it

wouldn't be so crowded and Best Buy only allowed customers with tickets, given hours ahead of time, to make good on discounts offered.

Admittedly, the media is also at fault. "Black Friday" provides media with opportunities for snappy headlines, photographs and stories "from the warfront" — all requisites for a great story. Clearly, the media should have better things to discuss in this time of relaxation and reflection.

However, in breaking down the doors of that Long Island Wal-Mart and the supposed innocence of "Black Friday," blame should fall most on the backs of consumers.

Indeed, it wasn't the media that killed Damour, nor was it Wal-Mart, Santa, Tickle Me Elmo or Ben Bernanke. It was the fault of his fellow citizens, none of whom were arrested or will be prosecuted. People and their actions kill people, whether it is one person with a gun or a mob of shoppers acting as one.

This group of shoppers was not only violent but also uneducated in their frenzy. Due to the large amount of inventory that stores need to get rid of, many are offering deals well into the holiday season. The shoppers that killed Damour over a discount could have found the same deal that Monday.

Especially in these times of economic crisis, it is important to help protect strangers as well as friends and family. The holiday help at your favorite big box chain is as important to someone as our loved ones are to us, even if we do not know them personally. The idea of hurting one person to buy another person a gift is repulsive. Sometimes, it's OK to be disappointed on the holidays if it means safety for those around you.



BRIAN FAIRINGTON/Cagle Cartoons

What do you think? Have a news tip? Send your comments to The Oakland Post.

By e-mail: oakpostmanaging@gmail.com
By mail: Letter to the Editor
The Oakland Post
61 Oakland Center
Rochester, MI 48309
By phone: (248) 370-4268

Letter Policy: Writers must provide full name, class rank, phone number and field of study. Please limit letters to 250 words or less. Letters may be edited for content, length and grammar.

CORRECTIONS CORNER

In "Micah's fight continues," on page 6 of the November 12 issue, the Oakland University Post-Secondary Transitions program was incorrectly referred to as a "fully inclusive" university-based program. This was taken from outdated brochure information. The updated and correct description reads: "An Inclusive University-Based Program for Individuals with Mild Cognitive Disabilities."

The Oakland Post corrects all errors of fact. If you know of an error, please e-mail oakpostmanaging@gmail.com or call (248) 370-4268. You can also write us at 61 Oakland Center Rochester, MI 48309.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

- The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States

Post employees sound off on the Big Three bailout

The topic of the bailout that the auto industry has asked for from Congress is a point of contention across the country. No where is it as relevant as the state of Michigan, where many of us may either work for, have parents who work for, or friends or family who work for one of the Big Three automakers in the Detroit area.

While employees here at The Oakland Post may not be thoroughly educated on the numbers game, the has matter sparked discussion within the office.

Colleen Miller

Copy Editor

Why keep giving a failing industry with a bad business plan a crutch? Newspapers are going down too but sites like **Politico.com** and **Bloomberg.com** are finding new business plans. Companies that can adapt are the ones that should survive. What's going to happen if we bail out every failing industry and they keep operating under the same faulty system and then the times change again? I don't see media giants Gannett and Clear Channel asking for handouts and they are laying people off all over.

Paul Gully

Special Projects Editor

If any of the Big Three go under, there's a good chance that they may not be able to recover. Jobs are going to be lost. A lot of them. And the less people there are with jobs, the harder it may be to for people to attend college. Oakland University President Gary

Russi touched on this last week at the OU Senate meeting. This could work out one of two ways for OU. Either enrollment could decline, which would mean that the university would be making less money (unless there was a tuition hike), or, because OU is more affordable than other schools, its enrollment number may remain stable (which I think is unlikely).

Steve St. Germain

Assistant Ads Manager

My dad works for an auto supplier called TRW, they make seatbelts and airbags for the Big Three and a few other companies but my dad, who has been with the company for over 15 years, may be let go. I think a lot of students and their families are facing the same thing, their families' futures are in jeopardy. These auto companies are just about all Michigan has left, and if we are not careful we may end up ruining our reputation like the city of Detroit has.

Tom Murphy Jr.

Senior Reporter

My father took the buyout a couple months ago from Chrysler. It was a very tough decision for him because he wasn't ready to retire. But with all the turmoil and negative projections for the future, he decided it was the best option. It looks like he was right because things went from bad to worse during that time. It's scary to think about what could happen to this state if the Big Three fold. [Thousands] of jobs will be lost, the unem-

ployment rate will be dramatically high. In a state that already has way too many people out of work, what will happen? It's dangerous to bail out companies and set precedents for more government control, but the truth is, if this bailout doesn't go through, it's impossible to judge how bad things are going to get. But it will be very bad.

Kathleen Quandt

Staff Intern

There are businesses that surround the auto industry that could be affected by the bailout that need to be considered. Not only are there businesses that physically surround the factories that are supported by the workers' business but other businesses and companies that are related to the auto industry and that are involved in the production of cars. Financial trouble for the auto industry can mean financial trouble for many other related businesses.

Nick Degel

Managing Editor

With the arrogance exhibited by the Big Three CEOs, it is very hard for me to side with them. But the truth is this really isn't about three billionaires, it is about the jobs of thousands in Michigan. It is about an already troubled economy that could very well be in critical condition should the automakers fold. In a perfect world, the Big Three would come back to the table with a revised business plan that makes Congress happy.

This is the last issue of The Oakland Post for 2008. From all of us in the newsroom, have a happy and safe holiday season. Look out for the next issue when we return on January 7.

**CHECK OUT THE
BLAZIN' SPECIALS!
AT OUR NEW ROCHESTER LOCATION**

Stop In For Our Weekly Specials!

MONDAY & THURSDAY

60¢ BONELESS WINGS

TUESDAY

40¢ TRADITIONAL WINGS

SUNDAY - THURSDAY

AFTER DINNER DEALS!

10 P.M. - CLOSE

Ask about our food and drink specials!



**BUFFALO WILD WINGS
GRILL & BAR**

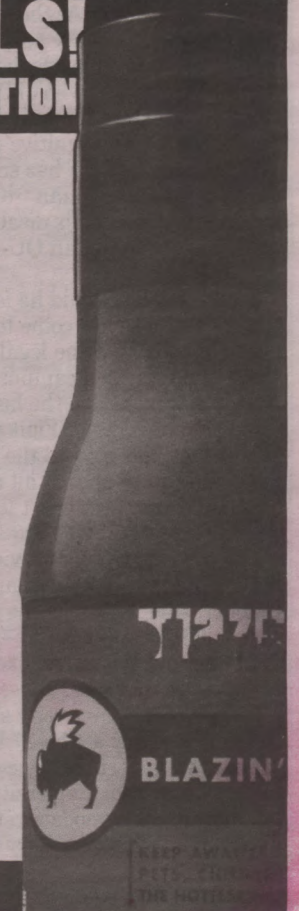
YOU HAVE TO BE HERE™

NOW OPEN!

1234 Walton Rd. - Rochester

Located at the corner of Walton and Livernois,
across from Crittenton Hospital

248.651.3999



Student files lawsuit

Micah Fialka-Feldman launches civil action for equal treatment

By SEAN GARNER
Campus Editor

Oakland University has told him no, but that is not an answer Micah Fialka-Feldman will accept.

On Tuesday, Nov. 25, Fialka-Feldman, a student in the OPTIONS program for students with learning disabilities at OU, filed a lawsuit against the school with the help of The Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service for disability discrimination because the administration will not allow him to live in campus housing.

The lawsuit is just the latest in a series of steps Fialka-Feldman has taken in his effort to live on campus.

Fialka-Feldman has presented his case to the OU board of trustees on three separate occasions. At the latest meeting on Nov. 5, over twenty people showed up on his behalf to lobby the board.

Fialka-Feldman, who did not get in to OU through normal admissions procedures, has a mild cognitive disability.

OU administration has said it is not barring Fialka-Feldman from campus housing because of his disability, but because he is not in an OU-degree seeking program.

Fialka-Feldman said he is disappointed that the case has come to litigation, but is hopeful that the legal process will allow him to live on campus.

"It was kind of like the last thing I could think of doing," Fialka-Feldman said. "I have gone to all the board meetings, and I have shared all my ideas with them, and they still won't let me in the dorms."

MPAS lawyer Chris Davis, who has represented Fialka-Feldman since October, said he thinks the ruling in the case will have an impact — on Fialka-Feldman and the university as a whole.

"I saw, in this case, an issue about full inclusion of the university students into the university as a whole," Davis said. "This is an important issue not just for Micah, but for the university as a whole and how it accommodates students with disabilities, which is a very important issue."

Davis said he believes that current



DUSTIN ALEXANDER/The Oakland Post

Micah Fialka-Feldman studies outside the Oakland Center in between classes Fialka-Feldman has been denied access to campus housing on five separate occasions and is now suing OU so that he and other non degree-seeking students can live on campus.

statutes and case law put Fialka-Feldman in a good position to win the lawsuit.

"We have requested reasonable accommodations through the Fair Housing Act that they modify their policy, and they have not budged from their position," Davis said. "It is my opinion that we are on very solid ground with this case. I am confident the court would rule in our favor if it came down to that."

OU administration declined to comment on the issue, saying it was their policy not to discuss pending legal cases.

However, in a letter to Davis obtained by The Oakland Post through Fialka-Feldman, OU vice president for legal affairs Victor Zambardi refuted claims made by Davis about the discriminatory nature of Fialka-Feldman's situation.

"Despite your repeated and conclusory assertions that Oakland University's applicable housing policy is discriminatory and that your client is a student because he participates in the OPTIONS program, neither is supported by relevant, objective facts," Zambardi said. "If filed, we will vigorously defend the litigation you threaten and seek appropriate sanctions against both your firm and your client pursuant to the applicable

court rules."

Fialka-Feldman's case has attracted the attention of several local media outlets including: The Oakland Press, National Public Radio, local television news stations and others.

Andrew Bashi, the student services director for OU Student Congress and friend of Fialka-Feldman, appeared with Fialka-Feldman on NPR and has vocally campaigned to have him admitted into the dormitories. While OUSC has not taken an official position on Fialka-Feldman's case, Bashi feels that supporting Fialka-Feldman is consistent with OUSC principles.

"In the constitution, it states that our job is to voice the concerns of the students," Bashi said. "It's really been remarkable how many people have been concerned with Micah's case... What worries me is that automatically the university is just shutting [the students] down. Even though there are so many students concerned, their opinions, I don't feel is really being taken into consideration."

Fialka-Feldman collected over 1,000 signatures from students who supported his effort to live on campus, and the turnout at the last board of trustees

meeting was "one of the best ever at a board of trustees meeting," according to Bashi.

Bashi said he thinks the reasons so many students have rallied behind Fialka-Feldman include his personality and outrage over a perceived injustice.

"Micah's a really dynamic guy. He's all over the place, everybody knows him," Bashi said. "But I think there is an even more important thing, which is I think people want to see equality across the campus. They don't want to see people excluded."

Bashi said he has received "a lot of possible solutions" from students including an idea to limit the length of time a student can stay on campus housing so that students in non-degree programs do not look at campus housing as a place of permanent residence.

Kristin Dayag, the multicultural affairs director for OUSC and also a supporter of Fialka-Feldman, reiterated Bashi's point that Fialka-Feldman is an inspiring figure.

"Micah is an extraordinary individual," Dayag said. "He has pushed and challenged himself beyond what most people could possibly have expected."

According to Dayag, the members of OUSC that support Fialka-Feldman reached that decision after weighing the pros and cons of each possible decision.

"After going through all the papers and doing the research, we have so many reasons for why Micah should live in the dorms. Yet, we can't find any solid, concrete reasons for why he can't," Dayag said.

Since the legal process for the case might be quite lengthy, Fialka-Feldman may not even be able to take advantage of a change in policy. However, Fialka-Feldman who has been at OU for over five years said it is more important that the policy eventually gets amended than personally benefiting.

"The thing is that this thing has energized the university [more] than anything else since I remember," Fialka-Feldman said. "It would help me or any other students in the OPTIONS program to have the full college experience."