

THE OAKLAND POST

OAKLAND UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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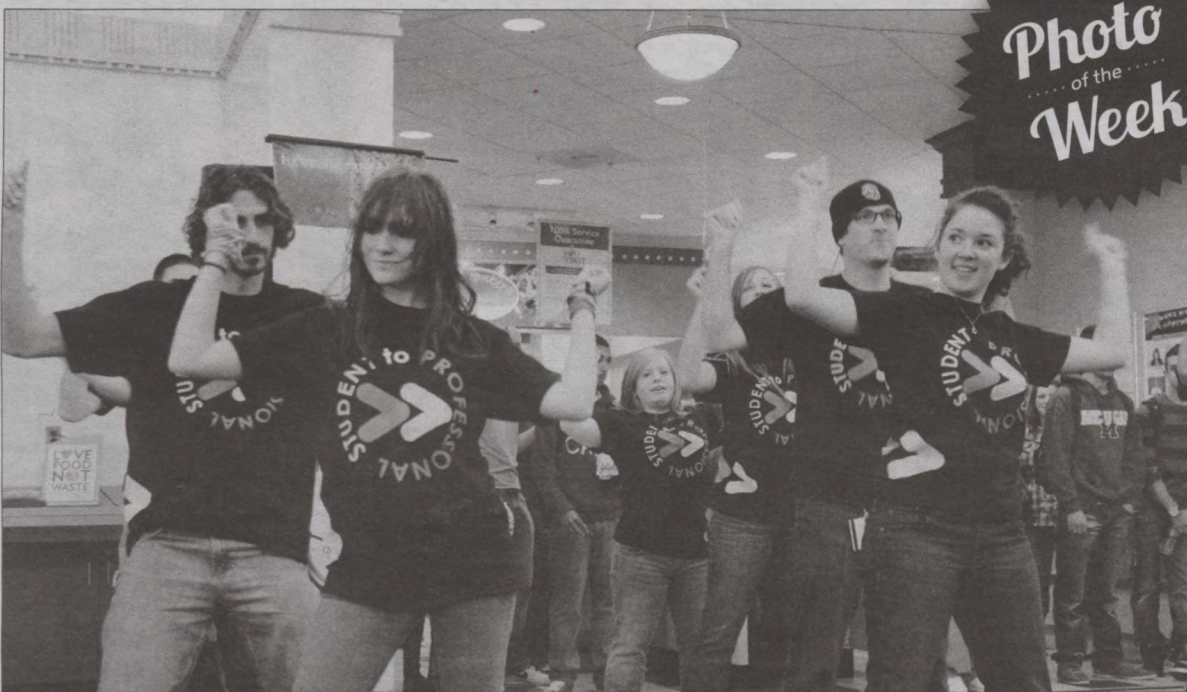
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Hispanic celebration month offers up Zumba, salsa lessons

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Flash mob dance off // Tuesday, Sept. 20

NICHOLE SEGUIN/The Oakland Post

The Student to Professional Association entertained students in the Pioneer Food Court Tuesday as they spontaneously performed a flash mob dance routine during lunch. The routine, which they practiced four times prior to the flash mob, included a visit from Grizz and roughly 40 dancers.



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THE OAKLAND POST

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Cover Illustration by JASON WILLIS/The Oakland Post

STAFF EDITORIAL

Chartwells offers up cuts

Orgs should move focus to more campus events

Recently, Oakland University's primary food service provider, Chartwells, lowered the prices for catering to student organizations by up to 70 percent.

The prices were calculated based off of a retail price survey completed by Oakland University Student Congress members and the Center for Student Activities that compared the prices and portion sizes of food to other local grocery stores and restaurants.

The change only reduced the price of the most commonly purchased items as opposed to the whole menu though, and it doesn't apply to any on campus departments.

While we do commend Chartwells for acknowledging their overpriced goods and cutting their costs, we encourage student organizations to use their extra influx of funds because of these reductions to increase the overall quality of their programming instead of spending more on food.

In an article The Oakland Post published on March 15, it was discovered that most students only attend events because of the added bonus of free food.

Organizations shouldn't use food as the

only tool to draw students in because, as it was also discovered, most of the students who do stop by the events usually eat and then leave shortly after. It somewhat helps foster campus involvement, but organizations should seize new opportunities presented by the lowered catering prices.

According to Brandon Hanna, student activities funding board chair, student organizations spent about \$130,000-\$150,000 of it's allotted \$260,000 yearly budget on food last year, leaving less than half of the budget available for campus events.

Though food may be enticing, it shouldn't be the focal point of an organization, which is partially funded by the activities fee that is taken out of each student's tuition payments.

Since food costs are now lower, at least for hot-ticket items like pizza and chicken tenders, student organizations should remember the main task at hand; student involvement.

Organizations should enhance student life and provide events that enrich in a way that's more than nutritional.

Again, we bring about the common

complaint that is what we've dubbed "the commuter conflict" — the phenomena of a campus of about 20,000 students rarely contributing to the campus community, save for attending classes.

The school is starting to shed that image, but students must contribute to the effort.

The editorial board recently sat down with OU President Gary Russi's cabinet to discuss a myriad of topics, including on campus involvement.

Mentions of a new dorm building because of the increased demand in student housing have brought to our attention a vested interest in living on campus.

People are becoming interested in staying on campus for reasons other than the availability of copious amounts of free food.

We've observed lines that extend past our office for the Student Program Board's trip to Boston, OUSC's Postsecret event and for last year's Meadow Brook Ball, which sold out in record time.

All of these large-scale events are put on by campus organizations and a whole cadre of similar events could be created if money were less frequently spent on food.

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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 clarity, length and grammar.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

Submit an opinion column to
editor@oaklandpostonline.com
and you could see it in print.

Be sure to provide contact information,
class standing and field of study.

CORRECTIONS CORNER

— In last week's article, "Helping Jews in metro Detroit," it was incorrectly reported that Alyssa McMillan was a board member of the Jewish Community Relations Council. She is an administrative assistant for the JCRC. Her Hebrew name was also incorrectly spelled. It is "Bracha." McMillan's mother's occupation is that of journeyman electrician, not a general engineer. She will be competing in the Miss Michigan USA pageant, not the Miss Michigan competition.

The Oakland Post corrects all errors of fact. If you know of an error, please e-mail managing@oaklandpostonline.com or call 248.370.2537. You can also write us at 61 Oakland Center Rochester, MI 48309.

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

Student pushes for fully-staffed Gender and Sexuality Center

GUEST COLUMN

It's time to see some action around here and the students are ready to bring the heat.

On Aug. 2, I spoke at the Board of Trustees meeting about the need for a fully staffed Gender and Sexuality Center.

The Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) is our campus' resource center for women's and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning (LGBTIQ) issues.

It provides programming, advocacy and referrals for these core areas. In addition, the GSC provides literature and programming on healthy sexual well-being.

Most other public Michigan universities have a separate women's center and LGBTIQ center, with at least one full-time employee for each.

Why do they get these resources and the OU students don't? We deserve these. So much for being a competitive university, right?

We currently have one person, who works 20 hours a week, who is supposed to do all of that by herself.

She also has to work on developing relationships with all the other campus offices, restarting the LGBT Peer Mentor program, training 10 to 15 volunteers who can help run the GSC each semester, facilitating S.A.F.E. trainings both on and off campus, heading the schedule for all of Women's History Month, creating trusting relationships with all types of students and also restarting the GSC Advisory Board.

All types of students, but especially survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault and LGBTIQ students, need this affirming, safe space so as to be the most successful as they can.

In order for the GSC to create the most accepting and safe of an atmosphere as possible, we need a full-time coordinator who can fulfill all the demands of both the administration and students.

Student leaders are launching a public campaign to demonstrate to the administration how much the entire community



Alexa Van Vliet
President, Gay/Straight Alliance

supports having a fully staffed GSC.

It's a multi-faceted approach that includes collecting signatures, writing articles in the newspaper, gathering stories from OU students about safety on campus and more.

We're going to present the postcards at the next Board of Trustees meeting on Oct. 31, where the Board will decide the future of GSC.

We've been told "no" enough times from the administration to make a Justin Bieber-like "Baby" song. It just fuels us even more. We need your help.

Here's your opportunity to, legitimately, make OU a better place. Activism has never been so easy to find.

If not to advocate for the safety, education and acceptance of all students, at least help us so as to be part of something bigger that will improve the place you spend so much money on.

It's our duty to be involved since we pay \$20,000 a year to go here. Might as well get your money's worth! And having a full-time coordinator wouldn't even make your tuition go up by a dollar.

Send me an email at apvanvli@oakland.edu, stop by the GSC at room 49 D in the basement of the Oakland Center by the Center for Student Activities service window or find us tabling by the Food Court to sign a postcard. Have your friends sign them too.

You can also write a "letter to the editor" to this newspaper to show your support.

Finally, you can follow our campaign on Facebook (Fully Staffed GSC at OU Campaign), our Twitter and Blogger.

Letters to the Editor

The Oakland Post gladly accepts letter submissions. The views expressed are of their respective writers and do not necessarily reflect those of The Oakland Post.

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

Smoking ban would be 'mean'

Full disclosure: I'm a former smoker.

The staff editorial advocates a complete ban on smoking. I wonder on what grounds. If it's based on public health and air quality, can I suggest that we also ban driving around for 30 minutes looking for a "good" parking space?

I'm not saying second hand smoke isn't harmful. I know it is. However, the often-cited 1993 EPA study involved spouses of smokers and indoors conditions. The results can hardly be applied to smoking outside.

A 2007 study on outdoor second hand smoke by Stanford researchers found that if you sit within less than two feet, downwind from a smoker, for an hour, assuming that smoker smokes two cigarettes during that hour, there could be harmful effects. Quite a few variables, I wonder if these conditions

are ever met. The effect of walking through a group of even three dozen smokers—a trip taking all of 15 seconds—is negligible.

Finally, The Michigan Cigarette Tax, at \$2, is the 10th highest in the nation. It accounts for over 4.5 percent of Michigan's total tax revenue, over \$1 billion dollars annually. Over \$400 million of that goes into the School Aid Fund. Cigarettes fund public education.

If OU's campus were enclosed is some sort of dome where the air were constantly recirculated, then it would be analogous to peeing in a pool. It isn't, so it's not. Considering all these facts, it seems like trying to ban smoking on campus is just plain selfish and mean.

— Corey D. Williams
Junior, Sociology/Anthropology

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Chartwells prices lowered

By KAY NGUYEN
Editor-in-Chief

Food prices have long been an issue at Oakland University, but student organizations will now see lower prices when they order Chartwells catering on campus.

"The idea behind (pushing for lower prices) now was the number of student concerns regarding food prices began to climb at a rate that could not be ignored," said Brett McIsaac, current OU Student Congress student services director. "Also, being in an office with Brandon Hanna, the (Student Activities Funding Board) chair, it was clear to see that too much of our budgets were being spent on food."

SAFB provides funding to more than 200 students organizations on campus.

Food is a mainstay of many events held on campus and Hanna said that almost all food requests from student organizations are for Chartwells catering.

Hanna, based on funding allocation requests he received, estimates that at least \$130,000 was spent on Chartwells food last year by student organizations.

"With a virtual monopoly over the Oakland Center, Chartwells enjoys the freedom of charging student organizations much more

than competing catering businesses," Hanna said.

Hanna and McIsaac collaborated on a report that assessed the cost of foods most commonly ordered by student organizations — sandwiches, pizza, chicken tenders and other staples — and found that most were available at area grocery stores for less than what Chartwells was charging.

"The biggest challenge was compiling all of the information," McIsaac said. "Brandon Hanna and the (Center for Student Activities) did most of that work and did an excellent job doing it."

From there, McIsaac and Hanna met with Dean of Students Glenn McIntosh, Oakland Center Director Richard Fekel and Chartwells Resident District Manager Gerald Gatto to voice their concerns and about how the SAFB budget could be helped.

The process has been ongoing since fall of 2008.

In a column published in The Oakland Post, Dan Evola, former student body president who was then serving as vice president, asked students to bring their "proverbial pitchforks and torches" to an Oakland University student congress meeting where Chartwells representatives would be present.

In February 2009, Andrew

Bashi, then OUSC student services director, began working with students and the campus food service provider to find solutions to complaints about Chartwells.

A focus group comprised of students was created, which spawned changes to the menu offerings and prices offered up by mid-April of that year.

That was the last time price changes were made to the student organizations catering menu.

Three summer meetings with Chartwells resulted in drastic changes, especially for cheaper items like drinks. Gatto, Chartwells' on-campus representative, had to contact Andrew Willows, a district manager for the Compass Group, a company of which Chartwells is a subsidiary.

Because Compass Group is a London-based venture, approval of the new prices had to come from across the pond.

Since Chartwells is the sole provider of all catering in the Oakland Center, a popular venue for student events, the new pricing will give considerable savings to student organizations.

"If I had to give an estimate, I would say that we've saved at least \$5,000 this semester," Hanna said of the new menu prices.

Gay/Straight Alliance treasurer Mark Martinez handles the order-



JASON WILLIS/The Oakland Post

Food prices for Chartwells catering have dropped for student organizations, with some items being offered at a significant discount.

ing of food for the organization and estimates that he's already spent about \$600 on food this semester.

He sees the lowered student organization pricing as a step in a positive direction, but the sophomore linguistics and biology major said that feels like organizations are "against a wall" when it comes to catering options.

"It's just a way to pacify us," said Martinez of the price changes. "We're not content and don't think the food is worth as much as what we're spending."

According to Evola's column, lemonade cost \$12.95 per gallon during the 2008-09 school year. It was lowered to \$9 during the April 2009 price reductions.

The new round of adjustments means that lemonade now costs

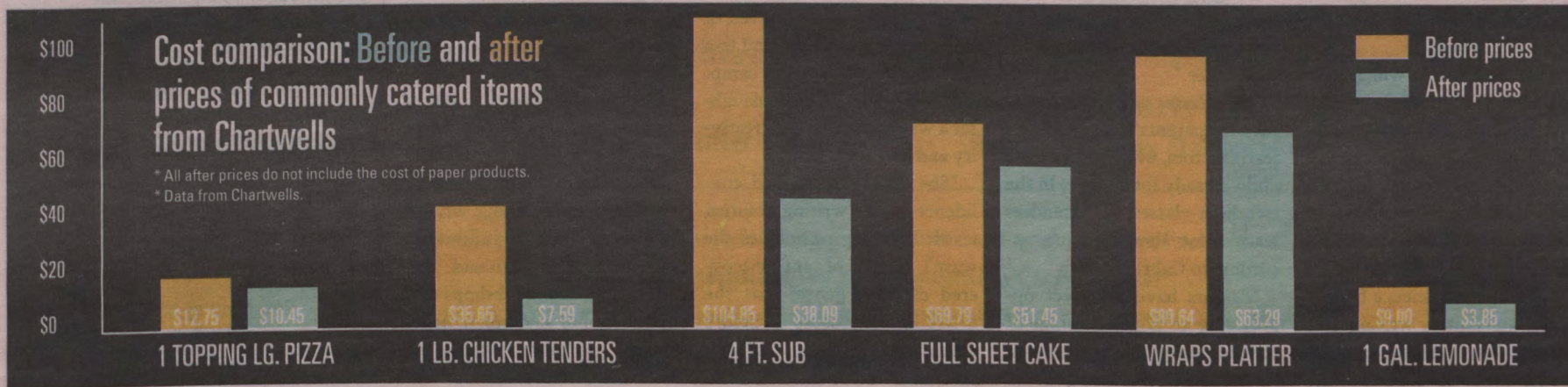
\$3.85 for a gallon. That's a reduction of over 70 percent in less than three years.

As of press time, no response had been received from Chartwells.

The prices and discounts are currently in effect for student organizations that order food and have been since Aug. 6.

There are also different pricing options for organizations that choose to pick up their own food instead of having it delivered and for paper product packages.

"There's no telling exactly how much SAFB has potentially saved," Hanna said. "Our main goal was to be able to give more student organizations funding for food without having to go over our budget, and we were able to accomplish that."



OU promotes diversity

By **RAYMOND ANDRE**
Senior Reporter

The Center for Multicultural Initiatives is hosting its 13th Annual Hispanic Celebration Month, and Oakland University students are celebrating the diversity by indulging in authentic Hispanic foods, crafts, music and dance.

Nicole Luccio, retention coordinator for the CMI, said the event she most anticipated was the Independence Day Celebration, which took place Sept. 15.

That day, Hispanic nations including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua — declared independence from Spain.

"We are trying to establish a tradition with our Independence Day Celebration," Luccio said.

This is the second time the university has celebrated the Hispanic Independence Day.

Luccio, who has organized the Hispanic Celebration Month committee for three years, said that this year the attention will be drawn back from Mexico. The events will focus on celebrating the many other Spanish-speaking states "while still celebrating Mexico."

The Independence Day Celebration brought attention to Peru.

The event began with an art ritual, the Kolla Raymi, in which the four cherished elements — earth, fire, water and wind — of the Andean Cosmovision are utilized channel a connection between nature and spirit.

Students were treated to Peruvian cuisine, like empanada de carne and chicken satay, craft-work items from local producers, an informative slideshow of Peruvian history, and invited to join OU's Spanish Club.

There was also a performance of many different Mexican folk dances, along with performances of the Peruvian dances Mari-nera, Festejo and Huayano.

Lisa Vecchio, a political science major, attended celebration.

"I stopped by to get a taste of other cultures, and the food, of course," she said.

Vecchio, the administrative assistant for OUSC, helped organize the opening ceremony.

Attendees could pick up fair-trade product samples like organic chocolate and hear a speech from professor Alan Epstein about the policies of that economic movement, the shared social and commercial benefits of non-exploitative trade practices between developed and developing nations.

The celebration month also includes community service.

"This year we'll be going to the Hispanic Outreach Center of Pontiac," Luccio said.

The tradition of student charity began last year with work on the center's community garden, which will be continued this year, and will be expanded with tutoring students learning English.

CMI peer mentors, Brandon Lanyon, Cecile Le, Angela Yee and Bani Bordoloi are among the many students and faculty that helped to organize and promote the events.

The work is intensive and comprehensive, the members said.

"There's a lot of Facebook, e-mail banners ... and the website," Lanyon said.

They agreed that the work has generated a successful turnout for the events.

Upcoming events include Salsa dance lessons, an opportunity to paint with the artist Nora Chapa Mendoza, a trip to Mexican-Town and the Detroit Institute of Art.

The celebration will culminate in an event called Cafe Bohemia, Sept. 29, where OU students will gather and share literary work they have composed in Spanish.

"I'm really looking forward to all of the events," Luccio said. "The council really put together a great calendar this year."

Students can find more information and follow events at oakland.edu/hcm

campus briefs

Art exposition: The Many Faces of Nora Mendoza

Continuing with the Hispanic Celebration Month, artist Nora Mendoza will be presenting her artwork on On Sept. 21 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Fireside Lounge. The event is free and open to the public.

Additional pieces by Peruvian artist Enrique Aramburu will be on display.

Trip to Detroit

The Student Program Board is hosting a trip to the Eastern Market, Detroit Institute of Arts and Mexicantown on Sept. 24 as a part of Hispanic Celebration Month. OU students can get free bus transportation to and from OU. The bus will leave at 9 a.m. and return at 6 p.m.

Student to Professional Conference

In order to make the transition to professional life, students are welcome to join a conference that teaches you how to get a job. On Oct. 1, students will be able to participate in interactive session on how to network, negotiate salaries, brand yourself and other skills. The conference will be held in Gold rooms A, B and C from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Leadership Boot Camp

On Oct. 8, students are invited to participate in different sessions to help them build their leadership skills. Skills being taught include team building, interpersonal relationships, trust and understanding.

The event is hosted by the Student Veterans Association and is only open to the first 120 OU students. Lunch will be provided and supplemented with healthy eating tips. The event is will be held in the rec center from 9 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

— Compiled by Megan Semeraz,
Assistant Campus Editor

Meadow Brook hosts writing workshops

By **MEGAN SEMERAZ**
Assistant Campus Editor

Gearing up for the Halloween season, the Meadow Brook Writing Project is offering half day youth writing workshops on topics such as "ghost story writing" and "horror story writing," are held in the Meadow Brook Hall library.

The seminars, which are available for youth in grades 2-12, are taught by actual Oakland University professors like Laura Gabrion and Christina Hall, both special lecturers in the department of writing and rhetoric. Classes offered include historic writing, science fiction, poetry and fantasy writing.

"I teach workshops on various genres and to different age

groups," Hall said. "In our writing workshops, we learn about historical fiction, science fiction, mystery writing, poetry and more. This year I will be working with kids in second through eighth grade on ghost story writing and science fiction. We have a lot of fun using writing prompts and sharing them with each other."

The classes are an opportunity for parents to use OU as a learning tool, even before their child is ready for college. In the two hour classes, the attendees learn a lot about writing, according to Gabrion.

"Parents have a perfect opportunity to take advantage of the university, as well as one of America's most beautiful estates

(Meadow Brook Hall)," Gabrion said. "The expertise and support of the teachers creates a wonderful atmosphere ... in a short period of time — the kids grow as writers."

Sharon Altman is a parent who has sent her eight-year-old daughter, Lena, to seven of the writing workshops and to a Meadow Brook writing camp. She wanted to give her daughter a way to express her creativity and love for writing.

"She (Lena) has gained confidence in her writing abilities, learned writing techniques she wasn't aware of and discovered different genres that she didn't have exposure to before attending the workshops," Altman said. "She also found the

experience of being on a college campus to be enjoyable and has already expressed an interest in OU at age eight."

Altman likes that OU offers these courses because they are a fun learning experience for her daughter.

"As a parent, I truly appreciate that this opportunity exists for my children with ... technology in use today ... the art of writing has faded into the background and these workshops offer a wonderful experience for the kids to learn about writing in way that is fun and entertaining for them," Altman said.

The half-day workshops cost \$20 each. For a complete list of classes and more information, visit oakland.edu/mbwp