

GVSU backpacking club offers trips, rafting, friends

■ **GVSU's Backpacking and outdoor club offers a variety of experiences and trips**

ANGELA HARRIS
Grand Valley Lanthorn

College life can be stressful and sometimes students simply need to escape the hustle and bustle of campus and simply enjoy the beauty of nature.

Grand Valley State University's Backpacking and Outdoors Club offers this escape to students through various trips throughout the year.

The club is designed as an opportunity for students to gather together and enjoy the outdoors and to educate students about low-impact hiking and protecting the environment.

Mark Bryson, a sophomore and the president of the club, said the club is a great way to participate in new experiences and to get away from the fast pace of campus and to enjoy the outdoors.

David Bry, senior computer science major, added the club is an excellent way to reduce the stress of college classes.

"Backpacking, white-water rafting and camping are always great ways to get away from all my books and term papers," Bry said. "The outings definitely are not all about just being a nature lover or enjoying the serenity of trees and grass fields.

"Camping is just another of the many ways that people can

really get to know one another, and that is what student organizations should do for us," he added.

Bryson said he joined the club because he had always been interested in camping and being outdoors.

Bry also said he joined because he has always enjoyed camping and being able to survive in the outdoors and brag about it to his friends.

Bryson said the club has taken three trips so far this year including a visit to Manistee National Forest, white-water rafting on the Gully River in West Virginia and most recently, to Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Munising, Mich., in the upper peninsula.

Nine club members visited Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore from Oct. 22 through Oct. 24.

Bryson said the group hiked from the Little Beaver Lake campground to the Mosquito Campground and for most of the 11 miles, the trail was along Lake Superior where there were 100-200 foot cliffs.

The group also saw Chapel Rock and Spray Falls, which empties into the lake.

"Honestly, the best part of the trip was eating nice warm food for dinner and getting into dry clothes because of the rain, but also seeing all the great rock formations and hiking along the cliffs," Bryson said.

The club also went white-water rafting at New River Gorge, W.Va. on Oct. 15, 16 and 17.

Bryson said the group rafted



Photo courtesy of Mark Bryson

Into the woods: David Bry, a computer science major, leads a group from the Backpacking and Outdoor Club on a trail along the Manistee River.

for about six hours on the Gully River. The group rafted half way, stopped for lunch, continued to the end and then traveled back to the starting location by bus.

He added the only thing that members of the group have to pay for is food and gas and the club takes care of everything else. The group plans the trips and takes care of obtaining the permits for backpacking and the parks that they visit.

Also, the group provides some of the basic backpacking equipment for its members to use on the trips which it stores in

the fieldhouse so that the members do not have to go out and buy it. The equipment managers, Nick Johnson and Carl Jelts, are in charge of all of the equipment.

The club is also planning a Christmas party to take place during their meeting on Dec. 9, during which they will show an outdoor themed movie such as "Escanaba in da Moonlight" or "The Great Outdoors."

The club's meetings are held on Thursdays at 9 p.m. in Manitou 102.

Cleaning the ravines

By Christen Oliveto
GVL Staff Writer

The Student Environmental Coalition will take a stand this Earth Day to improve the Grand Valley State University campus by hosting its third and largest clean-up of the GVSU ravines.

In response to the accumulating garbage in GVSU's ravines, SEC is hosting Earth Day Cleanup, with volunteers meeting on Saturday in Parking Lot R at 10 a.m.

Some workers will be focusing on the southern-most ravines on the Allendale Campus to remove metal pieces from an old municipal scrap metal dump. The garbage includes objects ranging from plastic and glass bottles to cars and refrigerators.

GVSU senior and SEC Vice President Jordan DeVries said there are about 25 to 30 tons of scrap in the ravine, including a dozen cars, 30 washing machines, a handful of refrigerators and nearly 50 tires.

It is important to clean up this part of the ravine mainly because the garbage is not supposed to be located there, GVSU senior and SEC Adviser, Shawn Lewis, said.

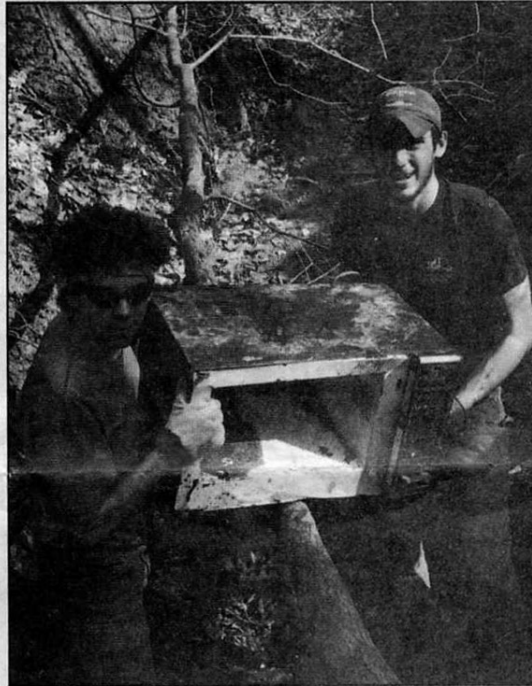
"It's an environmental eyesore for people who hike, bike and run through the trails surrounding the ravines," Lewis added.

Lending additional hands, the Backpacking Club, Biology Club, Geology Club and Soil and Water Conservation Society will be among the participants walking through the remainder of the ravines with trash bags, removing general litter that was dumped or blown into the ravines throughout the year.

GVSU senior and SEC President Kevin Donner said part of this opportunity is to remove participants from the ordinary college experience.

"Seeing trash, plastic bags and bottles simply reminds you of the responsibilities and stress that you have to return to," he added.

The event will serve as a



Courtesy of Shawn Lewis

Helping out: GVSU students Dave Faling (left) and Mark Bryson carry a microwave they found in the ravines earlier this month during one of the Student Environmental Coalition's initial clean-ups.

clear announcement that GVSU students care for their surrounding environment and are willing to work to maintain a clean campus by fixing the mistakes of the past and the present, Donner said. He added he hopes it will give students pride in their campus and prevent such frequent littering in the future.

"I do not believe throwing things from the Little Mac bridge would be quite as popular if students were required to remove those objects weeks later," he said.

Faculty, students and community volunteers are also welcome and encouraged to participate in the cleanup. Lewis said GVSU will send volunteers with heavy machinery to help remove larger objects from the south ravine area.

"Our university has an

obligation to be a leader within our community and set an example for other universities out there," DeVries said. "This is why a clean-up of the ravines is a joint effort between the administration and the student body."

According to the SEC's Web site, Earth Day Cleanup is a part of the group's mission to spread awareness of the environmental issues faced in today's society.

"Bring a pair of hiking boots, some old clothes you don't mind getting dirty and a hug for some of the trees, DeVries said. "After all, this is your campus."

Berrien Springs

Weather linked to fatal car-bus crash

BERTA McKNIGHT
reporter

BERRIEN SPRINGS — The weather seemed to go from freezing drizzle to snow in the blink of an eye, likely didn't faze the 11 Buchanan High School and 10th-graders who climbed onto a school bus outside their school to make a daily trip to the Math and Science Center at Andrews University in Berrien Springs for advanced studies.

As quickly as the weather changed, road conditions were challenging. And Tuesday's trip turned into one of the worst for the high school students probably won't forget.

Fritz, a bus driver with 25 years of experience at the time, was traveling north on Old 31 toward St. Joseph's when a southbound metallic grey-colored sedan car went out of control on the icy rain-slick road and careened into the bus.

By Keigley, of the Berrien Springs-Oronoko Township Department, said the car driver, Nathaniel D. Conrad, 19, an Andrews University student from Fitchburg, Mass., died instantly in the crash.

The crash, it was difficult to discern the front of the car from the wreckage, it appeared the front of the car slammed into the front of the bus first and then went underneath it.

The force was great enough to pop out the two windshield sections of the bus. The middle of the car was almost gone and what was left was primarily mangled steel. A Jaws of Life tool had to be used to free Conrad's body.

None of the high school students nor the bus driver sustained physical injuries but police and school personnel said many were visibly shaken.

"They were all very upset and different ones will show it differently," said Sharon Steinke, a counselor at Buchanan High School who talked with all 11 students after the crash. "They're all old enough to know how they're feeling. And they'll tell us. When that happens, we'll be here for them. But they need to work this out in their own way without anyone pushing them."

Steinke said classes at the Math and Science Center would not be postponed in the wake of the smashup. And another school bus would make the same trip, with students, today.

As far as Tuesday's crash goes, Buchanan Schools Superintendent David Casey said Fritz was traveling about 30 mph. It is not known how fast Conrad was going, but Keigley said speed could have been a factor in the severity of the impact. He certainly felt winter weather conditions played a role.

See FATAL, page 2B



FATAL CRASH: Nathaniel D. Conrad, 19, an Andrews University student from Fitchburg, Mass., died instantly Tuesday when his car crashed into a Buchanan school bus on the U.S. 31 overpass north of Berrien Springs. The driver of the bus and its high school passengers were unharmed.

14-P photo by John Madala

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Golf column visits Brookwood Golf Course/Page 5

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Laid to rest

Hundreds pay tribute to Kessler

By ROBERT BABLER
Niles Daily Star

NILES — About 400 people were packed into St. Mary's Catholic Church to pay their last respects to a young man who touched many people's lives.

Jason M. Kessler, 17, was laid to rest Thursday in Calvary Cemetery following a Mass of Christian burial, which started at 11 a.m. at the church.

Approximately 20 altar servers were robed for the service, a sign of respect to Jason, who served faithfully as an altar server himself.

In addition, several boy scouts and scouts leaders participated in the procession into the church, again a representation of the deceased, who had the rank of Eagle scout, the highest rank attainable by a scout.

In addition to those in the procession, boy and cub scouts in full uniform were scattered throughout the congregation.

Jason, who would have been a senior at Niles High School, died from injuries sustained in an auto accident which occurred Sunday evening at M-60 and Hospital Road.

Rev. Canon Marian M. Kencik, pastor of St. Mary's, delivered the eulogy during the mass.

After giving a brief history of Jason's life and activities, he talked about the gospel reading.

"Jason's mother Bridget selected the gospel, because she said it exactly describes him," Kencik said.

The gospel reading was from the

book of Matthew, and included Jesus speaking to the disciples about when they do good works to the least of His brothers, they do those works to Him.

"He was active in many ways, doing for others, knowing he was doing Christ's work," Kencik said about Jason.

After speaking about the gospel reading, Kencik mentioned a poem written by Barbara Jones as a tribute to John F. Kennedy just after his assassination entitled "Special Delivery from Heaven."

The poem portrays a message Kennedy sends to his family from Heaven, and ends with "I will always be with you."

Kencik said with a few name changes, the poem could apply to Jason Kessler and his family.

Kencik ended by asking those in Jason's family and in the church not just to remember Jason for the things he did, but to also remember him in prayer.

When the funeral ended, a procession led by several scouts made its way along with the casket of the family members and the hearse to the graveside in Calvary Cemetery.

On its way from the vehicle to the graveside, the casket passed through scouts lined on either side of the casket, while another laid his neckerchief slide at the casket's base.

In a final goodbye to Jason, one scout laid his neckerchief at the side of the casket, while another laid his neckerchief slide at the casket's base.

Niles Daily Star photographer Elizabeth Conley contributed to this article.



Daily Star photos by Elizabeth Conley

Above: Members of Scout Troop 579 salute as Jason Kessler's casket passes by at Calvary Cemetery, following Thursday's funeral mass for the Niles boy, who died from injuries resulting from an automobile accident Sunday.

Left: A scout, while cooling off, peers in at the funeral mass for Kessler, through the doors of St. Mary's Church. Over 400 people attended the ceremony. Kessler was an altar boy at the church, and was also a scout.

