Freezin’ for a reason – S Cec takes Polar Plunge

Jeremy Larsen
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Would you plunge into a freezing cold pond in the middle of winter? You would if you had a good enough reason. And that’s exactly why a group of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students decided to get a little crazy and dive in – for a good cause. That cause was the Special Olympics, and its annual event, the Polar Plunge.

On Saturday, Feb. 6, a group of 11 University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students took the Polar Plunge, which was held at the Grand Lions Club in Wisconsin Rapids. Besides being frozen like popsicles lost deep in a freezer, this group of students has something else in common, they are all members of UWSP’s Student Council for Exceptional Children.

This year, the S Cec raised over $1,400 by taking advance donations and then diving in with the Polar Plunge. It was the second year in a row that the group had been involved in the event. The combined group raised the second largest amount of money out of any group that attended the event. It was something that to jump, but she did raise money so there were 12 of us who raised money and 11 of us who jumped!”

Individuals who raised enough money in donations received prizes with the Polar Plunge logo on them. Beth Lovison, S Cec Vice President and UWSP junior, was proudly wearing her Polar Plunge t-shirt the week after the event. “I raised $150 so I got this t-shirt, and a towel!” said Lovison.

In past years the Polar Plunge had been held at Rusty’s Backwater Saloon, but was moved to the Lions Club to accommodate a larger group of people. With over 3,000 people in attendance, this year’s event was considered by many to be another huge success. This year 280 people took the polar plunge, and they raised a total of over $40,000 in donations for the Special Olympics Wisconsin.

“We had a lot of first-time jumpers, and they all had a lot of fun.” – Hoffman

Stacey Hoffman is the Co-President of S Cec. She is a UWSP senior and exceptional education major. “There was a group of about 12 of us from S Cec. We all raised money to jump into an icy cold lake in Wisconsin Rapids for Special Olympics. This is my second year.

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News

US Bank contract for ATM and Pointcard services expiring

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s contract with US Bank for banking services on the Pointcard and the ATM in the Dreyfus University Center will be coming to an end this month. The contract can be renewed if agreed upon by both parties.

The law in Wisconsin requires that contracts only last for a specific period of time to encourage competition among vendors. The contract will need to be renewed before the end of the year, either with US Bank or another financial institution.

"Since our contract is not expiring for the branch bank located in the DUC we are not bidding for that service."

- Dedeker

Bo Dedeker, UWSP Controller, explained the reasoning behind the contractual situation.

"Currently the contract with the ATM and Point Card is expiring in February of 2010. State law requires that contracts entered into by a State agency cannot exceed five years unless economic costs of entering into the contract by the vendors allow an exception. For example if the cost to the contractor could not be recouped in a five-year period, the contract would be extended past that time period. The cost recovery for a branch bank is less than five years so as a matter of law we cannot exceed a contract past five years," said Dedeker.

"Since our contract is not expiring for the branch bank located in the DUC we are not bidding for that service. As a result, the only service that is being bid is the PointCard program and the ATM service located at the University."

Dedeker made it clear that the US Bank that occupies the area on the first floor of the DUC would not be replaced, even if the ATM and Pointcard services were. The contract for the branch bank located in the DUC is in the second year of a six-year agreement.

A banking survey was created by the UWSP administration in conjunction with the Student Government Association. It was meant to help create a proposal that could better identify the financial service needs of UWSP students. The survey was sent out to a specific percentage of the student body.

The banking survey was two pages long and considered questions about how often students use on-campus financial services, and what types of services they were most likely to use – from free ATM service to free personal financial management classes.

Jodi Hall, US Bank Manager at the DUC location, was unable to comment on the situation due to the policies set forth by US Bank concerning media relations. Employees of the bank are also instructed not to comment on any of the bank’s current contracts.

Steve Dale, Media Relations Manager for US Bank, was also not able to comment on US Bank contracts with UWSP. He was able to comment on the bank’s relationship with UWSP, however. "We enjoy our relationship there. We enjoy having students, faculty and staff as customers and we try to do the best we possibly can there," said Dale.

When asked if any jobs would be lost if a new vendor won the contract, Dedeker answered, "At this time the University is not looking to cancel the contract with US Bank for the branch-banking contract, so therefore none of the positions in the branch bank will be dislocated. Additionally the part of the banking service that will be bid - the PointCard and ATM, have UWSP employees and they would not be dislocated as they will be working with whichever vendor wins the contract."

"Since our contract is not expiring for the branch bank located in the DUC we are not bidding for that service."

- Dedeker

The US Bank ATM in the DUC is one of the first things students see when entering the building.

*$900: average cost of textbooks
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$900: average cost of textbooks

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From "Plunge" pg. 1

Melissa S. Dyszelski, Morgan A. Panczak and Robyn A. Barman, Alyssa M. Kolb also contributed to the fundraising efforts.

The Polar Plunge is not the only event that the SCEC is involved in as far as the Special Olympics, according to Co-President Hoffman.

"It's not the only thing we do with Special Olympics because this spring...we are going to be sponsoring their events here, which are weightlifting and basketball. So we are looking for lots of volunteers for that," said Hoffman. She indicated that anyone could volunteer, and it was something students of all backgrounds and majors should consider trying at least once. "It's a lot of fun," said Hoffman.

Students interested in volunteering opportunities with Special Olympics can contact the SCEC, or go directly to www.specialolympicswisconsin.org. For a full photo gallery of the Polar Plunge, visit www.wglx.com.

From "Budget" pg. 1

students downtown and not have to worry about driving back," said UWSP student, Steve Landrath.

SGA has the only Environmental and Sustainability Issues Director and Committee in the UW System. UWSP is at the forefront when it comes to being green.

SGA is also involved in Focus The Nation, whose mission is to accelerate our transformation to a clean energy future by fostering connections between generations, and empowering young people through education, civic engagement and action.

Earth Week is another campaign which focuses on being environmentally friendly and is held in April. The week is dedicated to encouraging behaviors such as recycling and reducing or reusing items.

SGA has a couple of goals set that they feel will help better UWSP.

SGA wants to run advertisements and commercials so that more students become aware of The Late Night Bus program.

The most prominent issue at hand is that SGA is being much more methodical in the planning of student elections this year. "We want the new transition for next year to go smoothly," said Schultz.

SGA seems very determined this year to keep things going in the right direction. So determined Schultz said, "Scott Asbach and myself will shave our legs if we can get a full senate this year."
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Loveall has been unmotivated for writing, love for the game and the athletic ability of a cow make me ideal for this contest. Pick me,” Loveall wrote. These 24 words landed him a spot as one of the finalists in the sixth Fan Blogger Contest. Each of the finalists was invited to the Bucks’ game against the Miami Heat where they had a chance to showcase their blogging skills against one another. Loveall decided to appeal to the families in attendance with his blog. “I knew that families would be less interested in the statistical part of a blog post and more about sharing a great experience together, but it was a different story with the people that actually voted,” said Loveall.

The winner of the contest would be receiving a seat on press row and actually voted,” said Loveall. Although Loveall did not win the contest, he said, "This experience has certainly increased my passion for blogging and opened my eyes into how I can be a more effective writer. Blog writing is anything but predictable so you have to leave the people always wanting more.” Loveall has been blogging for about a year. He started blogging for WFRV-TV in Green Bay about the experiences of being in the newsmroom during his time as an intern there. Loveall’s involvement with Twitter has led him to develop a new blog, which focuses on Generation Y and the challenges facing the generation.

Loveall is currently a member of PRSSA, a social media intern for the College of Fine Arts and Communication and works as a barista at Starbucks. He has dreams of pursuing a career in social media public relations for an NBA team.

His interest in social media sparked about two years ago when he got involved with Twitter in his first internship. Social media offers benefits such as networking with professionals, finding internships and having a chance to enhance your writing skills.

“I’d like to see the passion I have for social media rub off on my counterparts and professors through the implementation of social media public relations classes for students,” states Loveall.

Employers are looking at social media platforms before they even think about interviewing someone. Students today have to think about if a post on Facebook would have their mother’s approval.

Loveall has shown that social media can be a powerful tool in today’s society and is the future of Communication. "Those on social media Web sites are hearing about trends before they occur," states Loveall.

Phi Kappa Phi honors UWSP’s top students

With all the pressure placed on students to excel in their academic standings, it can be hard to find public recognition for those who achieve the status they strive for. The Phi Kappa Phi is an interdisciplinary honor society that acknowledges students with the attention they deserve by helping them find scholarships as well as career and graduate school opportunities. The organization also offers them discounts on consumer products like computers, books, car rentals and telephone service.

The society is the oldest of its kind, reaching out to students of all disciplines and majors to give them benefits and recognition that is out of reach for most students. Admission is by invitation only and must be approved by the local chapter. The eligibility requirements demand that students are of good character and academic standing. Juniors must be in the top 7.5 percent of their class, while seniors must be in the top 10 percent, while enrolled in a university or college that has a Phi Kappa Phi chapter.

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is the host to chapter 245 and initiates its members in their spring ceremony. UWSP Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Chapter President of Phi Kappa Phi Bob Tomlinson said that their demanding requirements help them find the best UWSP has to offer.

“We’re looking for students that have high standards ethically and morally, have high academic standards, are responsible citizens and model students,” said Tomlinson.

Tomlinson said that while the university provides students with many chances to succeed, it does not always recognize their academic success, especially in the time before they graduate.

“One of the things I think we don’t do a lot of at UWSP is publicly recognize our students for high academic achievement until they’re ready to graduate,” said Tomlinson.

“When you make the Dean’s list, all you do is get your name in your hometown newspaper. When you graduate, you may be cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude. Never during the course of your studies do we recognize your academic achievement,” said Tomlinson.

Phi Kappa Phi Co-Student Vice President Emily Ertel said that the acknowledgment of being accepted is a great way to stand out after graduation.

“It is recognized well by students, faculty and the community. It is an acknowledgment of your hard work, said Ertel.”
The Student Involvement and Employment Office and the BloodCenter of Wisconsin are sponsoring a blood drive from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Feb. 15 and 16 in the Melvin Laird room of the Dreyfus University Center.

BloodCenter Account Representative Vicki Bohman said the BloodCenter has been sponsoring blood drives with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point for about 10 years. Students, staff and community members are all encouraged to donate.

"Blood is something that is needed every single day," said Bohman.

For about an hour of one's time, a blood donation is a significant help to cancer and leukemia patients, those with clotting or bleeding disorders, burn patients, accident victims, transplant patients, premature babies and others.

"When someone gives blood, it can save up to three lives," said Bohman.

All blood types are needed, but especially type O positive and O negative, which is a universal donor type and can usually be given to anybody in need of blood, said Bohman.

"When someone gives blood, it can save up to three lives,” said Bohman.

"When someone gives blood, it can save up to three lives”

- Bohman

Requirements to donate include being in good health, 17 years of age or older and at least 110 pounds.

A form of photo identification is needed at time of donation. A driver’s license or UWSP student ID will work, said Bohman. She also recommends those planning to donate to have a full, nutritious meal beforehand, be well hydrated and in good health.

The BloodCenter of Wisconsin has been providing life-saving blood products to community hospitals throughout the state since 1947. The BloodCenter currently provides blood for patients in 55 hospitals in 28 counties in Wisconsin and is the sole provider of blood to St. Michael’s Hospital in Stevens Point.

The BloodCenter toll free at 1-888-310-7555 or by e-mailing Perry Heyn at sieodrive@uwsp.edu. Walk-ins are also welcome.

The goal of the blood drive sponsored by SIEO and the American Red Cross on April 26 and 27. A bone marrow drive will be held March 10 as well.

According to the American Red Cross Web site, "Currently only three out of every 100 people in America donate blood."

So, what better thing is there to do after Valentine’s Day than to change those statistics and keep showing some love by taking an hour to make a life-saving donation of blood.

"It’s a really small, non time-consuming way to give to someone. It can save a life,” said Heyn. Those wishing to donate can set up an appointment by calling the BloodCenter toll free at 1-888-310-7555 or by e-mailing Perry Heyn at sieodrive@uwsp.edu. Walk-ins are also welcome.

You burn more calories sleeping than you do watching TV.

Police dogs are trained to react to commands in a foreign language; commonly German but more recently Hungarian.

There are twice as many kangaroos in Australia as there are people. The kangaroo population is estimated at about 40 million.

American car horns beep in the tone of F.

The human heart creates enough pressure to squirt blood 30 feet.

The three best-known western names in China: Jesus Christ, Richard Nixon and Elvis Presley.

Mario, of Super Mario Bros. fame, appeared in the 1981 arcade game, Donkey Kong. His original name was Jumpman, but was changed to Mario to honor Nintendo of America’s landlord, Mario Segalli.

The king of hearts is the only king without a moustache.

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On Monday, Feb. 8 and Tuesday, Feb. 9, Ben Creagh, director of development at Camp Manito-wish YMCA, gave presentations on adventure education courses to promote leadership and recruit University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point students for trip leadership positions.

Creagh’s seven years of trip leading and administrative experience at the camp livened up an 8 a.m. lecture in a stifling hot pool. His presentation acted as a great precursor to a kayaking crash course in Professor Alan Boelk’s water skills class.

“Guiding and trip leading is a form of teaching,” said Creagh. For students pursuing education, trips offered at Camp Manito-wish combine the awe of beautiful remote locations with teaching experience.

Creagh walked students through various leadership exercises which forced them to break out of their comfort zone. The activities made students aware of the various roles they take on as leaders. Through basic connections and decision making, students were able to gauge their leadership abilities.

A progression exists as an individual becomes aware of his or her role as a leader. Creagh’s presentations were meant to wet the appetites of UWSP students and to prompt future trip leaders to make that journey.

“You can think of trip leading as going down to whitewater and doing some gnarly stuff... but your primary responsibility is to lead,” said Creagh.

With secured permits in various locations including Shoshone National Forest, Apostle Island National Lakeshore and Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Camp Manito-wish offers experiences around the world.

Canoeing, backpacking and sea kayaking are offered at introductory through expeditionary levels.

“A great way to become a better leader is to experience,” said Creagh.

The wilderness and leadership training offered by Camp Manito-wish allows leaders to grow based on this principle. Their Outdoor Leaders School will provide students with the necessary training and certification to lead various programs and age groups in the great outdoors.

As Creagh has learned, sometimes leading adults is more difficult than leading children. Extensive training equips leaders to handle even the most dangerous situations brought on term trip, concentrate on what you’re doing in the present,” said Creagh.

Camp Manito-wish is located in Boulder Junction, approximately two hours north of Stevens Point. It could be the site of a summer job or the location that will provide the necessary experience to land that dream job down the road.

For more information or to apply online, visit their Web site at www.manitowish.org.

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Humane Society asks students to help fight animal cruelty

Wildlife may make it through winter in the United States with the help of students at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in cooperation with the Humane Society of the United States.

Harsh conditions including drastically low temperatures and ice make for a difficult time as a human, but even more so as a wild animal. Raccoons, dogs, rabbits, foxes, mink and chinchillas especially are in danger of trappers and fur traders during the winter months.

"Winter is the perfect time to think about wild animals in need and to take action," said Heidi O'Brien, youth outreach director for the HSUS.

"There are many things college students can do to help the wildlife around them as well as countless animals around the world who suffer for fur and fur-trim."

There are many options for wildlife advocates on or around campus. Creating a wildlife sanctuary is a simple approach that requires maintaining a birdfeeder or shelter out of brush or rocks.

Many animals are sentenced to death with hunting seasons as a result of disturbances they create in towns and cities. Taking photos of wildlife can be the first step to raising awareness and offering alternative solutions.

A fur collection drive can be an effective response to fur trading. Coats for Cubs is one program sponsored by the HSUS that encourages students to make fur coat donations as a way of speaking out against this animal cruelty. The program is made possible with help from the Buffalo Exchange, a family-owned resale clothing business with locations throughout the state.

The donated fur goes to wildlife rehabilitation centers where it is used to comfort orphaned or wounded animals.

Many retailers defy fur trading with fur-free policies. Choosing to shop at these locations can make a difference in the war against animal cruelty.

Even setting up a table on behalf of wildlife can lead to strength in numbers. Expressing your opinions with fact sheets and handouts can be a successful tactic. The HSUS suggests expressing your opinion with crafty sayings and downloadable handouts such as "Go Wild for Wildlife," "Field Guide to Telling Animal Fur from Fake Fur" and "Fur-Free Retailers and Designers Pocketguide."

The HSUS is the nation’s largest animal protection organization. Through hands-on programs, education and advocacy, they testify to the protection of all animals. Wildlife advocates are not alone. Rather, they are backed by nearly 11 million Americans who support HSUS.

For more information, visit their Web site at http://www.humanesociety.org.
Air quality: do costs outweigh the benefits?

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Air quality is becoming more and more of a concern in Wisconsin and around the world. The cost of keeping the air clean is starting to rise and climate change mitigation policies are questioned with concerns about the cost to enforce these guidelines, especially since the cost is not cheap.

UW-Madison released the fact that improved air quality from climate change policies dually outweighs the cost of enforcing the policies. From this statement, researchers have been utilizing the term co-benefits which means that there is improved public health due to better air quality.

The cost of these policies is being debated. Many focus on using a less expensive policy which in turn brings about less effective air quality and control. Therefore, researchers enforce decisions where the benefits have been weighed.

“At least in the near term—about 10 years in climate change policy—you can actually offset all the costs of climate policy by the benefits you get to human health, including reduced health care costs and improved quality of life from people being healthier and living longer,” said Gregory Nemeth, UW-Madison researcher and assistant professor of public affairs and environmental studies at the La Follette School of Public Affairs.

Countries around the world are focusing on this issue and discussing the impacts. Though the benefits are focused more towards the future, making the decision today will lead to better air quality in the future.

There is a way to improve air quality every day. Car pooling, using city transport and riding bikes are easy ways to cut back on the gasses that make their way into the atmosphere. Not only does biking to work or school help the environment, but it also helps the economy and peoples’ health.

Recreational bicycling in Wisconsin is responsible for the economic impact of over $924 million, according to the Change program of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. This popular sport in Wisconsin helps the economy grow by encouraging people to get involved and saving gas emissions each day.

“According to the Wisconsin Outdoor Recreation Plan, 49 percent of Wisconsin residents enjoy bicycling for recreation, making it among the most popular outdoor activities in the state. State residents generate approximately $388 million in economic activity while enjoying Wisconsin’s extensive network of bike trails and scenic country roads and participating in bicycle races, rides for charity and tours,” write Maggie Grabow, Micah Hahn and Melissa Whittd, graduate students from the Nelson Institute.

Recreational bicycling is not only beneficial from an economic standpoint, but from a health perspective as well. When biking to work, less air pollution would occur, thereby resulting in a decrease in particles in the ozone. This, in turn, reduces diseases like asthma and chronic bronchitis and further reduces health care costs. Plus, biking to work helps physical stamina and weight control.

Air pollution is a serious issue that countries all over the world are facing head on. Take your spot in this subject and breathe fresh air by walking or biking to classes, work or wherever it is possible.

Forestry banquet expected to be a great networking opportunity

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The upcoming forestry banquet, which will be held on Feb. 18 in the Dreyfus University Center’s Alumni room, is a great networking opportunity for students.

This annual event is hosted by the Society of American Foresters, the Fire Crew, the Society of Agriculture and the Society of Ecological Restoration.

The banquet will begin with a social hour, allowing students to talk with faculty and professionals from different fields about current projects. Then Bernie Hubbard, national president of SAF will speak during dinner.

“This is a good opportunity for students to make job connections, talk to people and get advice from people in the fields.” — Fischer

Each other and see what’s going on,” said Phillip Hoffmann, agriculture vice chair of recreation advisory council.

SAF hosts many events including tree planting and timber sports as well as Klondike Days in Eagle River. In the spring they also host Woodchuck Days. They give back to the community by helping landowners form management plans.

Student Society of Agriculture also gets involved by taking on small jobs in the community to raise money for their organization. The money goes towards funding conference trips. They also assist the Society of Ecology Restoration by pruning trees and developing management plans.

Fire Crew will travel up to 70 miles from Stevens Point for volunteering and jobs to receive funding for their organization.

“Organizations are a part of the college experience. Without them students won’t get the experience or a good job. Its easy being involved when in an organization and students should get involved right away and get more out of just class room experience,” said Hoffmann.

“I’m looking forward to seeing everyone and listening to the speakers and seeing a lot of other people from forestry connection that I know,” said Fischer who anticipates the forestry banquet with much excitement and optimism.
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Wood-based heat a possibility for UWSP

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Woody biomass, an up-and-coming sustainable power source, may provide the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with affordable, renewable energy. “It’s a conceptual item right now,” said Robert Oehler, UWSP director of facility services. UWSP is currently looking at a 20-ton wood burning boiler, running at 600 horsepower and 150 psi to meet the campus heating needs. The boiler would conceptually be located directly south of the current heating plant on Maria Drive.

UWSP is currently being heated by two 45-year-old, 45-ton boilers. These boilers need to be replaced in the next 10-15 years. According to Oehler, they are unique because they can be taken down and converted to wood.

“We’re one of the few campuses... that could literally be on wood if the cost calculations line up and if the fuel source is actually there,” said Oehler.

The replacement of the boilers and conversion to wood fuel could cost from $3-4 million, but according to Oehler, would pay for itself in savings in as little as 15-20 years.

According to the National Association of State Foresters, woody biomass as an energy source can come from many sources including sawmill residue, forest harvesting residue, forest thinning, land clearing and dedicated energy crops. “You could be going out after a harvest and taking tops and limbs, that could be woody biomass,” said Bob Govett, UWSP professor of resource management.

“Cull trees, the whole tree, lesser desirable species and also manufacturing residue.”

The harvested woody biomass can be manufactured as pellets for stoves, or dried for use in boilers. According to Govett, there are also some companies in the state, including Flambeau River Paper, that are looking to use wood biomass to produce an oil that can be refined into a diesel product.

While fuel cost is economically feasible, other costs can make its independence as a fuel source an unrealistic goal. John DuPlissis, a forestry outreach specialist at UWSP, said that analysis shows that woody biomass could supply about two percent of Wisconsin’s energy needs.

An overuse of some woody biomass products has already caused problems in Wisconsin. DuPlissis uses wood pellet mills as an example. “The mills in operation five to 10 years ago were making a superior pellet using sawdust from sawmills... however, over the last few years the number of pellet mills tripled and the demand went beyond supply so these mills started to compete with the forest industry for wood. Wood that would have normally gone to a paper mill was now going to a pellet mill.”

An interest in the sustainability and renewability of wood has sparked the push for more wood based fuel systems. According to DuPlissis, woody biomass can be a solution to some of our energy needs. “[Woody biomass] is valuable in that it is renewable and essentially carbon neutral.” said DuPlissis.

However, the carbon release of woody biomass is instantaneous while the recapturing by trees can take years, according to DuPlissis.
UWSP swim team off to WIAC championships

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The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point swim team will be attending the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships Feb. 11 through Saturday, Feb. 13, fighting for two more titles.

They will be taking 17 of their fastest swimmers and three of their best divers in hopes of scoring the most points possible. Both men and women will be swimming for a total of 20 events in the three days of competition.

Preliminaries will be held in the morning with finals being held at night. The swim team must prepare for this long weekend ahead of them. "You basically have to be jacked up for six swim meets in three days," said Alan Boelk, UWSP swim team head coach.

This will be Boelk's 13th trip to the WIAC championships and of the last 12 years of coaching he claims they have been the best. Some of the events at the WIAC championships will include five relays along with various medley events and only two diving boards. Because of the limit of events, the team had to cut down swimmers from about 40 to 20 in order to participate.

Lindsey Lukes, senior and swim team captain, will be going to the WIAC meet for the third time in her four years on the Pointer women's swim team. This year she will be swimming the 200 and 300 meter free-style, both of which she won last year at the WIAC championships. She will also be participating in the 100 meter freestyle and possibly the mile.

"They are going to put me where ever they need me," said Lukes. With an intense meet ahead of her, Lukes said, "This is one of the best experiences of my life."

The UWSP women's swim team

"The biggest thing is we're going to have fun this weekend."

—Lukes

Over 1,200 Pointers have received notification that they are eligible for a large grant to study abroad. Are you one of them?

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The Bucks: Still hanging around the playoff picture

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There was a time, somewhere over winter break, when I thought the Milwaukee Bucks might have fallen into the abyss that is the bottom of the Eastern Conference. Not that there is much difference between that and the eighth and final playoff spot in the East, but still. After going 1-5 on a mid-January road trip out west where they experienced everything from being blown out, to getting blown out early only to come back and eventually lose to seemingly having a game sealed away only to, yes, blow it, the Bucks had fallen to 16-23 and away from the playoffs.

Heading into the All-Star break this weekend, we're only a few weeks away from that time of the year where if, as an NBA team, you still find yourself in the eleven-twelve-thirteen area of the standings, you're probably staying there and hoping for more ping-pong balls in the NBA Draft Lottery. This was the point that may have seemed all too familiar in Milwaukee in mid-January.

But the Bucks, continuing to prove they are not the Bucks of recent years, not only avoided basketball purgatory for the time being, but are actually playing pretty well in these past few weeks, to the point where they are now on the cusp of a playoff spot at the season's halfway marker. I mean, it's not quite earth-shattering yet, but hopefully it's an indication of meaningful basketball being played in Milwaukee for a whole season, maybe more. That would work for me.

Entering Wednesday, the Bucks have won six of their last ten games, bringing their record closer to the .500 mark at 23-27. The climb, as I assume the rest of the season will be, was not an easy one; sometimes it seems as though the Bucks have to fight their own bad habits more so than their opponent's strengths. This has had the annoying tendency of showing up in close games; Milwaukee is 4-10 in games decided by three points or less. It seems like they are still searching for that consistent late-game playmaker to replace volume-shooter Michael Redd. I am ready to see Brandon Jennings in pick-and-roll situations in every possession in the last four minutes of every game and, as long as every shot attempt
Men's hockey fighting to finish season on high note

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Following two difficult road losses last weekend to UW-Superior and the College of St. Scholastica, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point men's hockey team is gearing up for a pair of important home games before the upcoming Northern Collegiate Hockey Association playoffs.

This weekend, the Pointers will face two teams at the K.B. Willett Arena that they very well may see again in the playoffs: UW-Stout and UW-River Falls. The Pointers have yet to play either at home; all four of the games they've played against the two teams this year have been closely contested away games.

The game against UW-Stout on Sunday, Feb. 14 will be especially notable when the team hosts its annual "White Out" event, which recognizes UWSP's dedicated fans by celebrating the end of the regular season and encouraging them to wear white to the game. There will be white T-shirts given out to the first 1,000 fans at the door.

"It's going to be a good game," head coach Wil Nichol said. "We have the best crowd in the world, and this is one of our ways to say thank you."

"The Pointer's season has been anything but easy, with a record of 10-12 overall and 5-11 in conference play. Nichol said that with the playoffs ahead of them, there is only time to focus on the upcoming opportunities. "The season has been like a play, the best of times and the worst of times," said Nichol.

"At times, we've looked young and made mistakes. It's been frustrating because of how talented our group is. The bottom line is that we need to win four playoff games to make it into the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament, and that's been our focus all season," said Nichol. "I do feel that we're battle tested and battle ready, and we're excited about that time of our season coming up."

Fans can expect an exciting finish to the Pointers' regular season when UWSP faces UW-River Falls on Saturday, Feb. 13 and UW-Stout on Sunday at the K.B. Willett Arena. Both games begin at 7:30 p.m.

"I do feel that we're battle tested and battle ready." -- Nichol

Qualifying times the focus for track and field

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With the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament fast approaching, the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point men's and women's track and field teams are working to hit their stride in the upcoming weeks.

So far the season has produced various team and individual achievements and long-time head coach Rick Witt likes the progress he has seen while understanding that in track and field, patience is key.

"I'm happy with where we are. The kids are working hard," Witt said. "From a coaching standpoint, I always use the saying, it's like an escalator; I know we're going to get to the second floor; I just don't know how long it's going to take'."

Next week, the teams will travel to UW-Platteville for the Platteville Invitational, where Witt believes the attention must be shifted to the WIAC Indoor Championships on Feb. 28.

"We need to start to focus on that. Unlike other sports, our conference performance is based on one day," Witt said. "Our goal is to get our kids into the top 24 so they qualify for the conference tournament. The more we have qualify, the better chance we have in the tournament."

At the Pointer Invite last weekend, Witt said he saw a lot of good things happen for his teams, particularly in individual performances, which on a track and field team can become contagious.

"People see one person make strides and think if I work hard, it could be me," Witt said.

"I do feel that we're battle tested and battle ready." -- Nichol
Arts Bash returns better than ever

90FM Reviews:
Past Lives

Past Lives is a relatively new band full of seasoned art-rock veterans that seem out to prove that the music scene is still plenty of art left to be created.

Over the past eight years, these four dudes have recorded and toured with the likes of Shoplifting, The Chromatics and the now infamous Blood Brothers. Fans of any of those groups would appreciate what this particular arrangement has written since the inception of Past Lives roughly one year ago. The group released an EP on Suicide Squeeze Records this past summer called "Strange Symmetry." This band could only be labeled as art-rock due to the wide array of influences heard on each track. Past Lives represents full-length album "Tapestry of Webs," also on Suicide Squeeze, is a logical progression from "Strange Symmetry" in the sense that I cannot easily label this band's sound.

The most notable member of Past Lives is the vocal stylings of Jordan Blille (he was the Blood Brother with the lower pitched croon). "Tapestry of Webs" is a real artistic statement for Blille as he trades in the screaming and howling of his past works for a more controlled, confident approach. Meanwhile, guitarist Devin Welsh puts forth the most refreshing surf guitar undertones that you would never expect after listening to the band's early material. The complexity of moods on this album is thanks to drummer Mark Gajadhar and multi-instrumentalist Morgan Henderson. These guys are not afraid to change tempos, or even time signatures, in the middle of any one musical thought. Henderson adds layer after layer of horns, woodwinds, synths,

See "Reviews" pg.13

Summer festival lineups begin to take shape

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Winter is beginning to make its frigid last stand and summer seems more like a pipe dream everyday. That doesn't mean we can't look at the small light at the end of the tunnel and make some big plans for when we get there. Some music festival organizers are giving us our first glimpse of what summer will be like by releasing their lineups.

Tennessee's Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival made its lineup announcement Tuesday into an all day event, letting the bands announce their place on the Bonnaroo lineup via their Web sites and social media outlets. Looking at the rather dense full list of bands on Bonnaroo's Web site I was at first disappointed. But once I worked my way through the list, I realized that more than that, I was confused.

This year the main stage will feature the likes of Jack Z, Stevie Wonder, Dave Matthews Band and Kings of Leon. If you skip down the list you find the bands that are actually worth seeing mixed in with bands that absolutely don't belong here. Dan Deacon Ensemble, Neon Indian, Blitzen Trapper and not to mention GWAR all make appearances towards the bottom of the list.

The trouble is they show up between the likes of Blues Traveler and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. I understand inviting the commercial success of Jay Z and the Kings of Leon to the festival's lineup, but I don't see how the diverse audience possible, but the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band? I feel sorry for the guy who decides to take the rest of his mushrooms on the night the Dirt Band is on the stage. Who wants to trip with fishing in the dark in the background? Also, don't get too excited about seeing the Flaming Lips on the list, they'll be playing their seriously drugged out version of Dark Side of the Moon in its entirety. If you go, check out: Dan Deacon Ensemble, The xx and Here We Go Magic.

Pitchfork media has also announced part of the lineup for its summer festival, taking place in Chicago's Union Park July 16-18. The few bands they named already make this show a more cohesive music experience than Bonnaroo. Friday night will feature Modest Mouse who, regardless of your stance on their later albums, put on an outstanding show.

See "Festivals" pg.14
ACORN extravaganza brings the 1920s back to life

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The AC/ORN's Chance to Read in Company book club brings people together once a year to commemorate its chosen book of the year and to celebrate its history, theme and likability.

This year's book, "The Maltese Falcon" by Dashiell Hammett, brought groups of book lovers to the Alumni Room of the Dreyfus University Center on Feb. 5. In order to celebrate "The Maltese Falcon" properly, book readers dressed up in 1920s garb, danced to the Lindy hop and Charleston, and chewed gleefully on Lucky Lights Candy Cigarettes.

When first entering the Alumni Room, I felt myself being taken back in time. Many members and volunteers were wearing beautiful dresses and suave suits and enviable hairstyles. I was surprised by how many people were actually dressed for the time period, as the invitation said it was optional. I could tell from here on out that these book club members meant business.

The inviting music, played by the Leonard Zelig Quintet members, was outstanding and really made the night more exciting. The brassy notes clung to the air as people milled about with each other and munched on tasty food - including a beautifully decorated cake and cookies with "The Maltese Falcon" as the center theme.

Speakers began to welcome ACORN and its members to their annual extravaganza and started off the night with some book remarks about "The Maltese Falcon." Members began to open up to their favorite, or least favorite parts of the book. It was fun entertaining noticing how the remarks began to become more frank and blunt as the time passed. The remarks started off as timid and vague. Before long, some members were stating how the book was poorly written, even quoting lines from the book, such as, "His eyes burned yellowly." Those members who spoke up seemed to be disappointed with the book at hand, other members seemed whole-heartedly disagree with shakes of the head and rolling of the eyes. Though different members had their own opinions, all seemed to agree that books are something to be celebrated.

Michael Williams, head of the English department, started the parody portion of the evening mocking the novel "Peru/sion," by Jane Austen. Participants had the opportunity to translate or transform a specific passage from "Peru/sion" and write their own witty parody in the style and language of "The Maltese Falcon." Williams began with the actual reading of the passage of "Peru/sion" and then turned the microphone over to the parody writers themselves. Reading the passages brought countless chuckles to the group as they each read their own parodies. All participants received prizes for their attempts and successes.

A trivia contest about the novel was then lead by Robert Sirabian, professor of English, with vigor and concentration. Each team, with the help of the Leonard Zelig Quintet members, had the opportunity to answer trivia questions about "The Maltese Falcon" in the time span of 10 minutes. Groups happily began the competition, but then had their dreams crushed a bit when Sirabian stated that they could not use their books. Their groans were uncharacteristic of those of students when the teacher states that the quiz is not open book.

After time was up, Sirabian read the correct answers to much glee. The prizes were, appropriately enough, detective and mystery novels for the taking.

Following these hands-on activities, members sat back and watched the performance of "If They Hang You," a dramatic performance from "The Maltese Falcon." Performed by UWSP theatre students, Peter Hargarten and Megan DeGuels, and under the direction of Steve Smith, these students created a life-like portrayal of the characters from head to toe. Audience members were enraptured by this piece, as the book came alive right before their eyes.

James and Toni Sage, Stevens Point dance instructors and faculty advisors to UWSP's "Any Swing Goes" dance club enthusiastically began their presentation of the dance of the 1920s. Dressed impecbably, these two stated how important dance became to be as a form of expression to the people of the 20s. Coming offstage, they showcased their dancing skills and performing with precision and skill. Some UWSP students relaxed and took in this experience as it reached the end.

The ACORN extravaganza brought many book lovers together and showed their true colors in the 1920s and on the dance floor. ACORN members and volunteers put all their time and effort towards bringing books and the love of reading to as many people as they can reach out to.

Photo by Kim Shankland

From "Reviews" pg.12

e tc. to many of the songs without you ever noticing it until the third or fourth listen but take him out and this album wouldn't make sense. In fact, all the members of this band should be given credit for creating music that is as fresh and more mature than their past projects while still maintaining the same youthful enthusiasm they have been accredited with over the years.

Every song on "Tapestry of Webs" has memorable elements, but this is an album that requires multiple honest listen for the memories to sink in. I'm talking about some quality headphone time here (ear buds don't count, grow up). The hidden subtleties lie in the band's ability to create their own song structures rather than beat the dead horse of popular music. This is a genre bending adventure that incorporates equal parts relaxation and tension.

There are some tracks that fall into that classic 60's pop format off the bat, but this band has too many awesome ideas to just stick with one hook and a couple of verses. Half the time it is hard to figure out whether the music is happy, sad or mildly schizophrenic; a true breath of humanity. When stacked up against the rest of the 90FM library, I would say "Tapestry of Webs" is like Bradford Cox (Deerhunter, Atlas Sound) fronting progressive newcomers Cymbals Eat Guitars. Of course, if you've listened to as much Blood Brothers as I have, you'll probably spend the first half of the album reminiscing over the vocals before you accept that Fast Lives is an equally talented and enjoyable band.

Summer 2010 is coming, REALLY!
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Valentines day is this weekend. Do you know what? I don't. On the list of entirely worthless Hallmark holidays, it ranks 2nd. The rankings are as follows from most worthless to slightly less worthless:

1. Friendship Day
2. Valentine's Day
3. National Boss's Day
4. Administrative Professionals Day
5. Grandparent's Day
6. Father's Day
7. Sisters' Day
8. Groundhog's Day

Some of you may be asking, "Why didn't you include Mother's Day?" I'll tell you why. Moms are awesome. But anyway, for those of you who seem to think that Valentine's Day matters and affects the status of your relationship, a super expensive dinner in a restaurant too crowded for its production abilities, I have prepared a lovely menu to cook at home.

Guys, for those of you who think cooking is lame, trust me, girls think it's sexy. Girls, the quickest way to any man's heart is through his stomach. Regardless of what anyone else says, keep him fed and you will keep him forever, that is if you want him.

Consistent readers of my weekly ramblings will know my love for pork products. For those of you who don't know, I love pork. I believe it to be a gift to all mankind.

Pork products. For those of you who don't know, I love pork. I believe it to be a gift to all mankind.

Anyway, I stole this recipe from a friend of mine, but it is super delicious and must be shared. For your Valentine's dinner, you will be preparing roast pork with mustard sauce, pan-seared asparagus and roasted red potatoes.

For the pork you will need:
A small pork roast (12-16 oz.)
Seasoned salt to taste
Preheat oven to 400°. Rub pork with salt and place on a rack in a roasting pan. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. Then, add one cup of water to the pan and roast for another 30 minutes. Pull the pork out of the oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes before slicing. Otherwise, the hot juices will drain out and you'll be eating shoe leather. Slice the pork about 1/4 inch thick and drizzle with mustard sauce.

Mustard Sauce:
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
1 cup whole cream
1 tsp. thyme
Wisk all ingredients together and heat slowly until hot. Ladle onto pork.

Asparagus blanched in salt water and pan seared with olive oil is quick and delicious. Try quartering red potatoes and tossing with olive oil, kosher salt and black pepper. Then roast at 375° for 35 minutes. Serve all of these together for a delicious, simple and possibly romantic evening. Let's be honest, what's more romantic than roast pork?

Have a happy Valentine's Day and remember to live to eat.
From "Festivals" pg.12

live show. Saturday has LCD Soundsystem and Raekwon on the lineup. Sunday will put a reunion of Pavement on the main stage as well as Here We Go Magic and Sleigh Bells! Check out Sleigh Bells "A/B Machines" and you'll realize the reason for the exclamation point. These bands alone are worth the $40 a day pass costs. The cost for all three days is only $90 and many bands are yet to be added to this lineup. If you go, don't miss the Pavement reunion, you'll hate yourself if you do.

Summer Camp Festival is coming through again with exactly what its regular campers want: jam bands galore. Moe and Umphreys McGee will both play all three days of the festival. Yonder Mountain String Band, Keller Williams, Family Groove Company, Commeal and the Avett Brothers also appear on the lineup. Mr. Goldberg knows how to pack them in at Three Sisters Park in Chillicothe, Ill and this year is no different.

What is different is a contest going on right now on Facebook that will put an unsigned band on the Summer Camp lineup. The bands will be competing for votes on facebook and the bands with the most votes, as of March 15 will compete in a final round to see who gets the spot. Right now Wisconsin's own Elf Lettuce is in the running. If you go, check out My Dear Disco and Keller Williams, you won't be sorry.

Two disappointments this summer are the financial woes of the 10,000 Lakes and Rothbury festivals. Both festivals have been canceled by promoters who have given a number of reasons for the festivals' cancelations. Money and scheduling conflicts seem to be the front-runners with everything essentially coming back to money.

Rothbury, Michigan first hosted the festival in 2008 and quickly earned a reputation for its environmentally friendly practices and its diverse and ahead of the curve lineup selection. The promoters have vowed to bring it back in 2011, but like most festivals that slip up in the finance department, I doubt we will see the resurgence of Rothbury.

The future of the 10,000 Lakes festival looks even worse. The festival, featuring mainly jam bands is taking a hiatus and the promoters seem to be showing no signs of even wanting to bring it back. The announcement on the festival Web site reads more like an obituary than a vacation notice. You have it folks, a glimpse at the summer fun in the distance.
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