At a forum sponsored by the UWSP College Democrats Tuesday night, Stevens Point Area Senior High teacher Glen Reindl talked about the collective bargaining bill passed by the GOP last week and its effects on local teachers.

Reindl's 72-page agreement contract signed with the SPASH school district is now at the complete discretion of the SPASH school board with the exception of base wages.

"We are now at the mercy of the school board," said Reindl.

Last week Wednesday, the Wisconsin Republican Party pushed through their agenda without the presence of the Democratic Senators who fled the state to postpone the controversial finance bill.

"Ween now at the complete discretion of the school board," said Reindl.

Last week, the Republican-controlled Senate pushed the collective bargaining bill through without the presence of at least 20 Democratic senators. Protesters continued their strike on the Capitol, and opponents claim the passage was a violation of open meeting laws.

"Clearly what you just observed was not a violation of the rules, but a violation of the California Constitution," said Democratic Senator Mark Miller.

People succeed at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

"The focus that has been placed on racial and ethnic diversity, while clearly very significant, has been too narrow and that some other kinds of diverse groups of people have not been included in initiatives and projects," said Kuzmanovic. "Diversity can include any individual differences that can be engaged in the process of learning."

These differences could include sexual orientation, gender expression, disabilities, and age.

Kuzmanovic notes that diversity is not only about having many diverse people on campus. What must be asked, he said, is whether these students that come from diverse backgrounds can actually succeed on campus. That is where the process of inclusive excellence comes in.

"Inclusion is the active, intentional, on-going engagement with diversity in ways that increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of the ways people engage with the institution," said Kuzmanovic. This not only applies to the ways that students interact with professors but other administrators.

Professor Kuzmanovic currently serves as the faculty advisor to UWSP's Gay-Straight Alliance, and was chosen by the university to attend the UW System Feedback Group on Inclusive Excellence in 2008, as well as serve on the UWSP Inclusive Excellence Team in 2009.

As UWSP undergoes its general education requirement transformation, Kuzmanovic stressed it was important to create an institutional philosophy that conceives diversity as a multi-layered process through which excellence is achieved not only in academics but also research, teaching, student development and institutional functions.

Diversity is often seen as a "problem" that needs to be "solved," but...
WIST ready to solve sustainability solutions

AARON OSOWSKI
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You might not know it, but many of common, everyday products used by all of us are in some way made with petroleum. Aspirin, bubble gum, dishwashing soap, toothpaste and shaving cream, among scores of other products, all contain petroleum to some extent.

With a worldwide energy crisis and the knowledge that petroleum is a finite resource, trying to find alternative materials to produce products such as these is crucial.

This goal is one of many for the Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology (WIST), an institution at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point that seeks to deliver sustainability solutions by combining research, education and laboratory services.

At a recent colloquium lecture for Phi Kappa Phi, Paul Fowler, the executive director of WIST, laid out his organization’s plans for helping Wisconsin become a leader in sustainable development.

Noting three pillars of sustainable development, (1) social, (2) economic and (3) environmental, Fowler spoke chiefly of the benefits of the non-traditional uses of Wisconsin’s agricultural and forest products.

He especially referred to materials such as whey and methane in the dairy industry, and potato peelings in the potato industry, which are often produced in excess and disposed of, usually at a high cost.

“We’re really looking to explore within WIST the opportunities to say, let’s take some of this waste material which currently is disposed at a cost, it actually costs money to dispose of that material, or, at best, it’s a low-value feed supplement for the agriculture industry, and build some really substantial fuels,” Fowler stated.

For example, whey contains a type of alcohol called a polyol that, in combination with other compounds, can produce a bio-derived polymer of a thin foam that is naturally fire-retardant.

With potatoes, it is estimated that in Wisconsin within a 20-mile radius in a three-month period, an excess of 600,000 tons of potato peelings are produced.

“So, if companies are generating these stocks of volume, their first thought is: ‘How do I get rid of this?”’ Fowler said. “So they look to feed it to cattle, spread it on the land, just as quickly as they possibly can. But in my view, they’re throwing the baby out with the bathwater.”

This is because potato peelings contain that vital carbohydrate, starch. Potato starch is particularly useful for the paper industry, which uses it for certain stages in the manufacturing process. It can also be used to make adhesives, such as those used for wallpaper.

When commonly disposed agricultural materials are utilized in these ways, the advantages are not only environmental, but also economical. Through contact with both primary and secondary processors, WIST hopes to help businesses get the maximum potential out of their excess materials.

Initiatives at UWSP

As a UWSP institution, WIST is especially concerned with enacting sustainability initiatives on campus. Fowler noted the introduction of corn-derived bioplastics cups in the Dreyfus University Center’s dining hall as a step in the right direction for UWSP. These cups are biodegradable and can be composted.

However, Fowler sees that this plan has not lived up to its potential. As a compostable material, the cups are often just discarded in the same waste bins as all other trash. Thus, they inevitably end up in a landfill with common petroleum-derived cups.

What is not being instituted, says Fowler, is a segregation of waste products. In other words, there is not a special bin for compostable materials in the dining center and students rarely take the cups home to compost them.

“The segregation of waste products is primarily a communication problem,” said Fowler.

WIST hopes to utilize the power of UWSP’s Student Government Association to spread the word to students about the incentives of composting bioplastics as well as communicating the costs of sending waste to landfills.

Another goal in the near future for WIST at UWSP is producing energy from excess food waste.

Anaerobic digestion, a process by which biodegradable material is broken down in the absence of oxygen, is a method used in the dairy industry to convert the methane in animal waste to energy. Such a process could be used on campus food waste, but the quantity and quality of methane produced would have to be analyzed.

“What we have to ask is: Are there feasible amounts of waste to produce an anaerobic digester?” said Fowler.

If there is enough waste, the energy created could be enough to produce electricity or power a vehicle.

WIST’s future goals for sustainability at UWSP are looking even brighter, as SGA recently decided to allocate to WIST the entirety of its previous funding. Naturewise, a Wisconsin Public Service Program, for more information on WIST, go to www.uwsp.edu/WIST.

Bill/Passage may have violated open meeting laws

continued from page 1

violation of the law,” said Miller.

The Wisconsin open meetings law requires that, before any new motion, a minimum of 24 hours notice to all parties must be given for there to be an observance of the constitutional right to free and open exchange of information and ideas. The only legal alternative is if there is a state of emergency, which is explicitly reserved for times of terrorist attacks, or natural disasters.

The Republicans posted their modified bill at 4:10 p.m. on Wednesday and started the meeting at 6 p.m. the same day, passing the bill 18 minutes later.

“As you could see, I wanted the Chairman to explain what good cause even existed to have this meeting in under 24 hours,” said Miller. “Clearly there is none, there is no emergency, nothing will change in the next 24 hours.”

The Chairman offered no comment.

The law ends collective bargaining for public workers over everything except salary increases no higher than inflation. It also forces state workers to make benefit concessions that amount to an 8 percent pay cut on average.

The Stevens Point School District sees an average of 25 to 30 teachers retire each year. This year there will be 57 teachers retiring because of the upcoming budget cuts our schools face.

“Next year, there won’t be any pensions,” said Reindl.

Walker is proposing a nearly $1 billion cut in aid to schools in his two-year budget plan that would take effect in July. The bill will also include a local tax levy freeze, which will limit the ability of schools and local governments to pay for cuts with local property taxes.

Now Wisconsin school boards and unions are rushing to make deals before the new bill takes effect on May 26.

Secretary of State Doug La Follette said Monday he decided to delay publication of the law until the latest possible, which was contrary to Walker’s request to publish it immediately in attempts to squash bargains being struck before March 25.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor can be mailed or delivered to The Pointer, 104 CAC, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481, or sent by e-mail to pointer@uwsp.edu. We reserve the right to deny publication of any letter for any reason. We also reserve the right to edit letters for inappropriate length or content. Names will be withheld from publication if it an appropriate reason is given.

Letters to the editor and all other material submitted to The Pointer becomes the property of The Pointer.
we should see it as an opportunity for excellence.

"Different individuals require different forms of support. It is not sufficient to 'treat everyone equally.' Excellence can only be achieved if real attention is paid to the significant differences, concerns and strengths of various people," said Kuzmanovic.

He claims that infusing inclusive excellence into the general education requirements will lead to more equity in educational outcomes.

The Community Lecture Series is sponsored by the College of Letters and Science and is currently in its third year of programming. The lectures are geared towards giving the public an opportunity to experience the professors have been doing ongoing research in. Professor John Blakeman from the political science department will present the next lecture at the SGA Senate meeting on March 10 telling students to make sure their voices are heard.

"Keep pounding away until you get what you want; until you get what's right," Decker said.


Student Senator Patrick Testin of the College of Professional Studies and former Rep. Marlin Schneider (D-Wisconsin Rapids).

Several state legislators have recently taken a stand and pledged their support for a financial reform package the Student Government Association passed that makes the SGA Finance Committee the sole body that can allocate non-academic student fees. Among them is former Democratic State Senator Russ Decker, who spoke at the SGA Senate meeting on March 10 telling students to make sure their voices are heard.

"Enough is enough," Testin said, "It's time that the university administrators acknowledge that students have a right to review the budgets that have become incredibly bloated."

Steven Ward, spokesman for Patterson, said Testin's allegations aren't accurate and that Patterson is taking his time to review the document. He said SGA President Mike Wilson gave Patterson 30 days from Feb. 25 to review the legislation and decide if he was going to accept it. He said that by the deadline of March 27, Patterson will have a more detailed response to how administration is going to handle the legislation.

The chancellor is responsible for administration of all the funds for the University," Ward said.

This legislation restructures authority from the University Centers Advisory and Policy Board and the Student Health Advisory Committee to be UWSP's SUFAC. Testin said that UWSP's administration needs to only work with one SUFAC on the campus.

In a follow up letter written on March 10, Hintz states that UWSP's administration needs to only work with one SUFAC on the campus.

"Any discussions with campus staff and student government leaders attempting to have final authority of allocation of student Segregated Fees without the involvement of the recognized SUFAC would not be in compliance with UW Regents Policy," Hintz said in the letter.
Let the March Madness Begin

As you sit quietly in your own corner of the world and steadily sip your iced mocha latte and read this fine publication, you subconsciously are living in the middle of the most exciting time of the year. Unbeknownst to you there are agents of the sports world that are running rampant across the nation. They're at work with you, they're in your school, and they're in your home. They lay dormant for eleven months out of the year waiting to ravage the country and as soon as the NCAA conference tournaments are done they do just that. The brackets are here.

ESPN is saturated with coverage and speculation on Selection Sunday. Each college analyst rakes their brain in order to predict what team will fall where, which bubble teams will be in and which will be out, but ultimately everything is up to the selection committee. They seed the teams, and you have to consider when you're picking a winning bracket, the four number one seeds are Ohio State, Duke, Pitt and Kansas. Three of these teams were ranked number one seeds all the regular season but all three were upset while at the top spot. Kansas was the number one overall seed last season entering the tournament and was lost in the first round. Seven different teams have repeated as National Champions, one of them being Duke. But there's been a lot of talk of other teams such as Richmond, Syracuse and San Diego State. Connecticut has maybe the player of the year in Kemba Walker who certainly has proven that he can take down any team, anytime. These are all things you have to consider when you're filling out your bracket.

Sorting through all the stats, players and teams is all part of the beautiful mess that is Bracketology. Whether you're a serious March Madness aficionado, or a recreational five dollar pooler, filling out a bracket has become a religious practice. So religious in fact that Americans fill out 40 million brackets a year in hopes that theirs will be the one. The chances of filling out a perfect bracket are nearly impossible, but the beauty of nearly impossible is: that one can be anyone.

Not only do you have a chance to win bragging rights and maybe a little cash, but you also get to watch March Madness, the most beautiful dance you've ever seen. Whether you're a serious March Madness aficionado, or a recreational five dollar pooler, filling out a bracket has become a religious practice. So religious in fact that Americans fill out 40 million brackets a year in hopes that theirs will be the one. The chances of filling out a perfect bracket are nearly impossible, but the beauty of nearly impossible is: that one can be anyone.

So gather your group of buddies and throw down a couple bucks. Not only do you have a chance to win bragging rights and maybe a little cash, but you also get to watch March Madness, the most beautiful dance you've ever seen. If you do a little bit of homework, think through a few things, make a couple guesses, and pray every night before bed, maybe you can be the one that fills out the perfecto. Or you can tear your eyes out watching everything fall apart. Either way it should be fun.
The Point Men's Basketball team saw its successful season come to a close last Friday at the hands of the University of St. Thomas. Senior forward Lou Hurd nearly forced an overtime in the final seconds; however the Point defense couldn't prevent a game-winner by the Tommies and fell 64-66.

The first half was controlled mostly by St. Thomas as they ate up over seven minutes during a 19-6 run. Sophomore guard Jerrel Harris knocked down two big jumpers and Hurd added another that helped cut the Point deficit to five at the half. Harris opened the second half with a three but the Tommies regained control, going on a 14-6 run that increased their lead to 10. However Point was able to claw back again after senior forward Scott Hoelzel connected on a jumper, closing the gap to three with under three minutes to play.

The next two minutes were a back and forth battle of who would get the ball last. Both teams were held scoreless until the 17 second mark. Hurd nailed a clutch three-pointer against the Tommies to add 16 points. His baskets were critical in UWSP's Men's Basketball history.

Hoelzel went a perfect 8-8 shooting the Tommies to add 16 points. He also ended in double digits, scoring 15.

The Pointers compiled a record of 26-4 this season; beating out UW-River Falls for both the number one spot in the WIAC and for the WIAC Tournament Championship. This Sweet Sixteen appearance was Point's second consecutive.

The team will bid farewell to a very successful class of seniors. Over the past four years, this class has posted an 82-25 record, highlighted by their National Championship a season ago. Replacing seniors Hurd, Hoelzel, forward Nick Knoll, and guard Vinny Ritchay, will prove to be a daunting task. The players charged with filling their shoes will have a tradition of excellence to uphold.

Harris will be looked upon next season to continue scoring for the Pointers. With the departure of Hurd, someone else will need to step up and be the second scorer. The Tillena brothers are likely candidates as junior Dan and sophomore Tyler finished third and fourth respectively in season scoring average. Sophomore guard Jordan Giordana will also look to have continued success. Giordana finished the season second in three-point percentage, behind Ritchay, and second in three made, behind Harris. Giordana also led the Pointers at the free-throw line where he shot 94 percent for the season.

Following the win over Point, St. Thomas beat Augustana to advance to the teams first Final Four in 17 seasons.

All good things must come to an end, and for the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Women's Basketball team, that good thing was a school record 20-game winning streak and a 27-3 record for the season.

The Pointers saw the end of their successful season March 11 in the Berg Gymnasium against the George Fox University Bruins, who won 71-63. In the NCAA Sweet 16 game, the Bruins managed to get a lead early on in the game, something the Pointers couldn't overcome in time to advance to the Elite 8.

In the game's first couple minutes, the Bruins were ahead 14-6. Despite an eight-point deficit early on, the Pointers continued to show why they are one of the best teams in the Division, and why they are a force to be reckoned with. With 1:05 left in the first half, the Pointers tied it up at 36-36. They weren't able to hang onto the lead going into halftime; the Bruins scored four before the clock ran out, giving the Edge the edge starting the second half. The Bruins kept their momentum going, holding onto the lead for the rest of the game. This still didn't stop the Pointers.

With only 1:34 remaining in the game, the Pointers managed to overcome the Bruins' lead, which was nine points, a few times during the second half, and come within four points of victory.

As the clock was ticking down, the score being 67-63 and advancement to the Elite 8 on the line, the Bruins nailed four free throws and prevented the Pointers from scoring again. The Pointers lost 71-63 and saw the end of their season, but what a season it was.

Not only did they finish 27-3, have a school record 20-game winning streak, but they won their fourth straight WIAC Championship, becoming the sixth team ever to go 16-0 in the WIAC.

While there will be many seasons of Pointer excellence to come for the women's basketball team, this game marks the end of a college career of domination for three seniors, who have been a part of the last four WIAC Championship teams whose total record is a remarkable 101-19.

Andrea Flease, Christin Coles and Britta Peterson have a lot to be proud of in their four years wearing purple and yellow. In addition to being a part of a four-year powerhouse team, Peterson was named Player of the Year in the Central Region by D3hoops.com, the highest honor for the All-Region Women's Basketball Team that she also made last year.

Flease was named to the All-Central Third Team for the second year in a row. One thing is for sure: the Pointer Women's Basketball team is a powerhouse season, and while they won't be advancing to the Elite 8, we can look forward to next year's team. After all, history tends to repeat itself.

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Shock and Thaw, Springtime is Upon Us in Wisconsin

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Commentary

Springtime is upon us in Wisconsin. The snow is melting, the sun is coming out, and the thermometer is rising above 32 degrees. You know what that means, get out your sandals and put on some shorts because there's less snow on the ground than usual. Whether the groundhog sees his shadow or not, you can always count on the people of Wisconsin having an early spring. This reporter's 2011 sandal watch saw a peak in people wearing sandals the week of Valentine's Day, but snow showers and single digit weather deterred that, slightly.

Now for those of us who have spent a winter or two or twenty in the Northwoods, we know that we can still count on that late April snowstorm, the colder months, is in the middle of the vast playground in the more tolerable months. The first thing my mind jumps to when there is even a patch of exposed grass is Frisbee Golfing. It might be the best sport there is. It combines walking around, usually in a scenic wooded area, with throwing stuff at other stuff, and it's usually not very physically exhausting.

A day on the Frolf course is a day well used. While it is a bit snowy and muddy out, and will be for a while, a spot disk and cold hand can be countered by bringing along a towel for the journey. Even if you're trying to get ready for the serious Frolf season, at this time the real reward in a day on the course is watching the rest of the residents of Central Wisconsin come alive. Plants are popping up, buds are growing on bushes, and critters of all shapes and sizes are experiencing the same wake-up we are.

If it's a walk in the woods you seek, there are plenty of places to go around here. When in doubt, just go a few miles in any direction and you will find yourself in the out of doors.

If you're looking for more direction, then we all know Schmeeckle is a natural paradise at any time of year. While I wouldn't recommend ice fishing at this time of year, there is still a lot to do in the confines of our campus nature reserve. Adventure is on campus awaiting you. You can go for a walk and take a close look at the awakening, go for a run and work off those pounds that accumulated during the hibernation tournaments of Call of Duty, or my personal favorite, try and get lost.

Schmeeckle isn't quite big enough to get lost, but if you're looking for more of an adventure, the Green Circle trail that circles the city, runs right through it. It makes for a great bike ride. If you're like me, your bike chain has a nice orange hue to it, but that's nothing some WD-40 and some elbow grease can't fix. And if it actually can't fix it, there's a bike shop kitty corner from the CCC that would more than certainly set you up for an adventure through the woods, or at least equip you to get from point a to point b making this spring time opportunity both fun and functional.

You don't need to go far to enjoy the weather, though. By walking outside you can see long boards, skateboards, Ultimate Frisbees flying, Frisbee golf flailing, and just about every pick up game imaginable being played in the fields of Stevens Point, with the exception of Ice Hockey. I've got that itch to get outside, and I wager you do too. Midterms are almost over and spring break is upon us. Let us get outside and enjoy the good things. Even if you're exhausted from the semester (I know I am), you can always look forward to a warm spring afternoon sitting on the front porch with some good friends drinking some Point Root Beer. Ah, spring, it's good to see you again.

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Tattoo parlors are usually common in college towns and Stevens Point is no exception. In Downtown Stevens Point alone, there are three tattoo parlors.

One such parlor is Downtown Tattoos. "There used to be a real crappy shop... I wanted to make it better," said Rocky Neuman, the owner. Neuman taught himself how to be a tattoo artist and has been practicing his craft for 22 years.

"I knew from a young age I wanted tattoos. It's a unique expression of art," said sophomore Drama and Arts Management major Jourdyn Claman. Claman got her first when she was 18 years old and has a total of eight tattoos at the moment she plans on getting many more because each tattoo expresses something different.

"Three different people can get the same tattoo and wear it in a completely different manner," said Claman.

Claman thinks that there are definite ups and downs of getting a tattoo. One such down is negative stigmas can sometimes be attached to them. "Especially against women with tattoos," said Claman. "They're not seen as responsible."

Claman hopes to disprove this stereotype and looks to Kat Von D, the reality star of LA Ink. "She's giving a face for women with tattoos and expressing them in a different light."

When you're getting a tattoo for the first time, both Neuman and Claman strongly iterated the need to do your research. "Look at artist's photo album. Make sure artist knows how to tattoo. What you pick you have to live with for the rest of your life," said Neuman.

She recommends using Aquaphor cream to heal tattoos and to stray away from anything fragranced or containing alcohol. "Always keep in mind that the tattoo you get will be on your body forever."

"I don't think I'm going to regret them. You have that memory that lingers that's really important," said Claman. And the most dangerous type of tattoo?

"Never get a guy or girl's name," said Neuman. "It's bad luck."

Whether getting your first or tenth tattoo, always make sure you do your research and trust the tattoo artist, then let your art be expressed on your body forever.
Where are Pointers going for spring break?

Madison Heid
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Laura Vandenberg: Senior
Communication Major
Location: Tennessee
“I am going to Dover, TN. I am visiting some of my boyfriends family. I’m looking forward to going to Nashville for a day to sightsee.”

Andy Whaley: Junior Forest Management major, with Geographical informations systems (GIS) minor.
Location: Wisconsin
“I am going back to my hometown, Black River Falls, WI. I’ll be working for the Black River Falls Fire Department and Ambulance. I will be working on fire/EMS. I’ll be around the best group of people in the world, doing something constructive. And making money of course.”

Skyler Valk: Senior / Psychology-Human services emphasis
Location: St. Lucia
“I will be doing a volcano and jungle tour and chillin’ at the all-inclusive resort. I’m most looking forward to the jungle tour. Animal Planet and Discovery Channel are my favorite channels, so I’m excited to check out what a real jungle is like.”

Top 10 party spring break destinations!
1) Las Vegas, Nevada
2) Miami, Florida
3) Key West, Florida
4) Panama City, Florida
5) New York City, New York
6) San Diego, California
7) Honolulu, Hawaii
8) Puerto Vallarta, Mexico
9) Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
10) Cancun, Mexico

From StudentUniverse.com
Quartet performs with acclaimed UWSP professor

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On Tuesday night, the North Shore String Quartet brought beautiful music to @1800 Theater with one of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point’s finest music professors. This performance was part of UWSP’s Performing Arts Series.

Dr. Raffi Besalyan is an acclaimed Yamaha sponsored artist and an associate professor of piano at UWSP. He has played in Carnegie Hall in New York City, as well as across the United States and Europe.

In the concert, pieces played were written by Franck, Haydn, and Shostakovich.

“The music is very passionate and very intense,” Besalyan said. “We keep our audiences on edge with beautiful harmonies and beautiful melodies.”

Segawa, violist Matthew Michelic, and cellist Laura Kenney. They are based out of Green Bay, and most of them are from the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra.

Our audiences on edge with beautiful harmonies and beautiful melodies.”

Autumn Sutherland, senior piano performance major, was one of the people in attendance at the concert, and has had Besalyan as a professor for three years.

“Dr. Besalyan has brought me to a level of playing that I never thought achievable, and he brings out the potential in each of his students,” said Besalyan.

Annella Kochanowski, a senior piano emphasis major, was also in attendance at the concert. “Dr. Besalyan is an acclaimed concert pianist as well as a collegiate professor.”

If you were unable to attend the concert Tuesday night, there is another opportunity to hear the quartet and Dr. Besalyan. They will be playing on Sunday, March 20, from 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Leprechaun-approved recipes

Corned Beef and Cabbage

Ingredients:
• One 3-pound corned beef brisket (uncooked), in brine
• 16 cups cold water
• 2 bay leaves
• 2 teaspoons black peppercorns
• 4 whole allspice berries

Directions:
Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F. Place the corned beef in a colander in the sink and rinse well under cold running water.

Place the corned beef in a large Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid, add the water, bay leaves, peppercorns, allspice and cloves. Bring to a boil, uncovered, and skim off any scum that rises to the surface. Cover and transfer pan to the oven, and braise until very tender, about 3 hours and 45 minutes.

Transfer the corned beef to a cutting board and cut into thick wedges. Lay the slices over the corned beef and season with pepper. Serve immediately with the mustard or horseradish sauce.

Irish Soda Bread

Ingredients:
• 4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for currants
• 1 extra-large egg, lightly beaten
• 1 teaspoon grated orange zest
• 1 cup dried currants

Directions:
Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

Combine the flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the butter and mix on low speed until the butter is mixed into the flour.

With a fork, lightly beat the buttermilk, egg, and orange zest together in a measuring cup. With the mixer on low speed, slowly add the buttermilk mixture to the flour mixture. Combine the currants with 1 tablespoon of flour and mix into the dough. It will be very wet.

Damp the dough onto a well-floured board and knead at a few turns into a round loaf. Place the loaf on the prepared sheet pan and lightly cut an X into the top of the bread with a serrated knife. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean. When you tap the loaf, it will have a hollow sound.

Cool on a baking rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Irish Soda Bread

Ingredients:
• 4 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for currants
• 1 teaspoon baking soda
• 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
• 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch dice
• 3/4 cups cold butter milk, shaken

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The genius of Rebecca Black

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Last week, a music video has been introduced that has shaken the world. Of course, I'm talking about "Friday" by Rebecca Black.

This video might be the most ridiculous in the history of bad music videos. Let's look at it piece by piece, shall we?

The video starts off with her in an animated form in some sort of daily planner. The animation is the most horrifying thing I've ever seen; it seriously might give me nightmares.

Then, the song starts. Everything's auto-tuned, and yet Black still manages to be out of tune. That's when you know that you shouldn't be singing, when auto-tune doesn't even work.

She talks about how she's waking up in the morning and has "gotta have my bowl, have my cereal." Grammatically this would imply that she is eating the bowl and then eating the cereal. But grammar isn't one of Black's strong suits. Later in the song she sings "we we we we we excited" in which it wouldn't change the song at all if she were to say we're.

After she eats her bowl, Black goes down to the bus stop, where a car full of friends comes to pick her up. She then proceeds to make the biggest decision of her life: "Which seat can I take?" There are four people in the five-seated car and therefore there is only one more seat open. Doesn't sound like much of a decision to me.

Of course, then the chorus starts, where Black sounds like she is trying to sing from her nose. The noise hurts. Then it's Friday night at 7:45 (scandalous time) and she's partying with her friend on the right. But there's another girl on the left that she doesn't even acknowledge. Poor girl.

The next part is my personal favorite of the song. The lyrics are deep: "Yesterday was Thursday, today it is Friday...Tomorrow is Saturday, and Sunday comes afterwards." That was a nice lesson on the days of the week, we really needed that.

Then there's this 30-some year old guy who thinks he's Usher that is following these thirteen year olds around the city. Are we glorifying pedophiles now?

Needless to say, this video is some work of art.

However, there is genius at play here. The music video has nine million hits and by the time you read this it will probably have 15 million and this thirteen year old is raking in the money. And besides all that, it will definitely be the first thing that I listen to Friday morning.

Fun Fun Fun.

Letter to the editor

When I decided I was going to be a teacher, I went into the profession knowing that I'd be treated poorly and blamed for many of the problems the future would deal with, but I never expected anything like Scott Walker's attack on public employees.

With his illegal passing of the repeal of collective bargaining, he has made it perfectly clear that quality education is not important to him. In this climate of injustice, how can anyone expect education to flourish? Teaching in the public schools today is filled with issues related to standardized tests, standards, and a lack of control over the classroom. With the necessary changes Scott Walker's budget will require of schools, teaching will get much more difficult, if not impossible. And doing it well, you might as well forget about it. Class size will skyrocket, quality teachers will find jobs outside the public sector, and students with special needs will not receive the supports they need.

And, since the focus on standardized tests will only get stronger, the things teachers are forced to teach will be less and less valuable. I find it hard to believe that Scott Walker really cares about keeping quality educators in the state when he is doing everything in his power to handicap us.

As a result of this budget repair bill, the repeal of collective bargaining, and the 2011-2013 budget, I have been forced to rethink my entire career plan. I wanted to teach language arts in a middle school, and then go on to grad school for library science in the schools. But now, I'm reconsidering going into a career where I'll be trampled on, spit upon, ground up, and basically destroyed, not by the people of the state, or even the will of the state, but by the politicians bought and sold by big business. It is very hard to stay dedicated to helping people learn and become better when the government is telling you that what you do doesn't matter, that people don't need to be educated.

While I hope that Walker and his GOP cronies will be recalled and brought up on charges, I am still realistic about what I may need to do in order to be an effective teacher, and that may mean leaving the state where I was born and raised, the state I love, the state known for being a progressive leader in a country that is slowly deteriorating under the force of big business corruption.

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Is cell phone photography art?

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Photography's sole purpose is communication, and unlike the spoken or written word, it is a form of communication that can be internationally understood, and holds the power to capture movements and tensions within society.

Photography is a rapidly changing medium, and contemporary photography seems to be entrenched in a 'megapixelmania', where every aspect of the image can be technically controlled.

As a film camera junkie, I get the chills when I see my images coming up in the developer, and love the fact that you cannot control every aspect of your image, like you can with rigorously controlled digital photography. This more uncontrolled aspect to art: composition, color, framing etc.

Though SLR cameras cost more, they lack the intentional controlled digital photography results in a more relaxed atmosphere. The picture it delivers is just a recording of the everyday. Cell phone cameras allow you to always be looking for a photo, and have the ability to encompass the same roles of digital SLRs, or point and shoot cameras.

Photography doesn't solely depend on the equipment, but on the intention and the core elements of art: composition, color, framing etc. I believe art is meant to be accessible to everyone, and cell phone photography allows people to express themselves without walls.