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Hispanic
NMC
 Students
 Prepare
 for **Threat** of
 On-Campus
Immigration
Arrest

NMC ID's - All the Perks

Megan Thoreson While having a student ID at Northwestern Michigan College isn't necessary to attend classes, getting one from Campus Security is worth the effort.

Carrying an ID for both faculty and students offers a multitude of benefits, from discounts to convenience. They are not issued to new students upon application for admission to the college, as it is the student's responsibility to acquire one. Because of this, many students may not be aware of the potential perks, or how to navigate the process of acquiring an ID.

An NMC ID gives one discounts at many local businesses, including: BATA, Bubba's, Denno's Museum, Firefly, Mancino's, and the State Theatre. The full list can be found online on the Campus Safety page.

"Since 2018, BATA has offered a free route called the Bayline that stops along Front Street near the Denno's Museum and goes downtown, to East Bay Beach District, and to the Grand Traverse Commons and Munson. No ID is necessary for anyone and this has been our most successful route," Bill Clark, Outreach and Planning Coordinator at BATA, explained.

"Being a tax supported transit authority, we offer other discounts to support the community who use our fare routes. Seniors, individuals with disabilities, all students, veterans, and active military with ID receive a 50% discount on ride fare."

Bubba's Burgers & Bar downtown offers

10% off regularly priced menu items to students who show a valid NMC ID.

"Bubba's has been offering this discount for a long time, 16 or 17 years in fact," said Melissa, a long time bartender and supervisor. It started initially because a group of Maritime students came in regularly back then and the business wanted to help those students afford their lunches. It isn't used very often anymore. We also offer the same discount to downtown employees and active military."

The process is simple. First, take a picture of yourself from the shoulders up. Upload the photo to NMC's eAccounts page (a link is available: nmc.edu > student services > campus safety > services > NMC ID cards), and wait three days to pick up your ID at the NMC Security Desk in the Innovation Center.

Additionally, carrying an ID is important to the safety and security of the NMC Campus. "Every student should have an ID for security reasons. Students on campus can be stopped at any time by security and can be asked to leave if they cannot prove their attendance at the college. It is also required at the testing center, and dorm students need them to get in and out of the residential buildings," said Tait Ricks, a Student Life Office Assistant.

Editor's Note: Since NMC is a public college most of the campus is open to the public with notable exceptions (such as The Fitness Center).

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With Egg Prices On The Rise, Can Local Breakfast Business Keep Up?

Minnie Bardenhagen
Staff Writer

With ingredients like eggs rising in price, local food businesses have had to come up with ways to accommodate for financial burden. While every business in the Campus Plaza next to NMC can be impacted by the rising cost of eggs, the Omelette Shop and Bubbie's Bagels, both breakfast stops, may be particularly vulnerable.

The avian flu, or the "bird flu", has decreased the national egg supply. As the number of birds producing eggs decreases, the price goes up. This, coupled with rising inflation since the COVID pandemic and the implementation of Michigan's cage-free egg law, has caused the ingredient to be a bigger strain on restaurants and bakeries.

The Omelet Shoppe's general manager, Melanie Whitten, said that every factor contributing to the rise in egg prices has impacted them.

"Our case of eggs has increased nearly double of what we once were paying. We used to use different sizing for cracked eggs to shell eggs and now we are only able to get one size due to lack of availability," she explained, "It has caused our food cost budget to increase, leaving us with no other option but to raise some menu prices to offset the balance of our budget, and make labor."

Sam Brickman, the owner of Bubbie's Bagels, explained how inflation since the beginning of the COVID pandemic has affected their business.

"We go through a lot of eggs. We go through probably, in the winter time right now, around 60 dozen eggs a week. Maybe a little bit more," Brickman explained, "In the summertime, it's like double that."

"Five years ago, when we first opened, a case of eggs, which is 15 dozen, cost us about \$18 to \$19," he continued, "And when we just got them this week they were \$86... It's a very, very big difference. And it puts the small business owner in a tough position ... It's like, 'what do we do? Do we increase our prices?'"

Brickman stressed the desire to keep items that are currently affordable at a low price for the college community, "That has always been important to us, to always have that differentiation of price points where if you are on a budget you can still come in and get a filling, tasty food item."

"Especially having NMC next door. Having Central High School. We still offer a 10% discount to all students. We try our best to still cater to a whole range of different people," Brickman continued, "Our college and high school students are definitely an important part of what we do ... it's fun to cater to the people who are here year round, or are here in the winter, who help us get through that slower season."

Many businesses tackle a challenge when the price of one ingredient goes up, which is something that Brickman expressed.

"We're not gonna add less eggs to the sandwich, or omit eggs from the recipe. That's where it gets tough ... when you start actually diminishing how much of an ingredient goes into a sandwich, the sandwich isn't quite the same. People will start to notice that," he explained, "It's hard. It's hard to get creative. You kind of have to bite the bullet a little bit and know that your profit margin is gonna go down slightly for a little while, and hope that, in time, the market will rebound and egg prices will go back down."

The Michigan cage-free egg law was passed in 2009 and signed into law in 2019. However, egg suppliers were given five more years to adjust their practices, and the law officially went into effect on Dec. 31, 2024. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Development (MDARD) states that egg suppliers must house their hens in a "cage-free housing system," and businesses must not sell eggs that violate this. If a business is found to violate the regulatory measure, MDARD says it will first try to educate the business, and then further violations will result in fines or unspecified regulatory action.

Across the country, there has been a call for more ethical egg production, as factory farms have sparked controversy over their use of cages with limited space and poor hygiene, battery-cages being the most common. With the rise in states signing cage-free egg laws, expenses have come to light, such as the need for more labor, feed, and a slower production of eggs.

Opponents of the law say that the regulation is contributing to the rise in egg prices, while advocates point to how the five-year adjustment period would have prevented that from occurring.

On top of that, concerns over bird flu have been rising as more animals become impacted and more human cases are reported. According to Feb. 18 Center for Disease Control (CDC) data, there have been over 162.5 million national cases in poultry, and the majority of those birds have been slaughtered.

While the bulk of human cases have been in the California area, Michigan has seen two confirmed cases. The disease has not yet learned how to jump from human to human, and the CDC's current assessment is that the public health risk is low.



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International Affairs Forum Guest Jake Johnson Discusses Haitian Humanitarian Crisis

Anna Wildman
Staff Writer

On Feb. 21, the International Affairs Forum hosted speaker Jake Johnston for a private student session and *White Pine Press* interview. Johnston, Director of International Research at the Center for Economic and Policy Research, authored a book about the ongoing crisis in Haiti. The book, titled *Aid State: Elite Panic, Disaster Capitalism, and the Battle to Control Haiti*, explores how much of the humanitarian crisis in Haiti is actually caused by the relationship the Caribbean country has with western powers, such as the United States. In an exclusive interview, Johnston provided insight into the complexities of Haiti's condition.

"Haiti's history is an important part of the story," explained Johnston. Most people have heard of the Haitian revolution, as it was the first successful rebellion of enslaved people in history, but this came at a cost. Haiti was forced to pay an independence debt to France, and the nation's economy had been reliant on the slave labor of people who were now free. So in order to pay this debt, Haiti had to take out loans from the United States, starting a centuries-long reliance on money from foreign nations.

"So you're having a 120-year period where massive resources, the majority of Haitian resources, are going to pay external debt, all to compensate the French for the loss of their property in Haiti, which was the enslaved population," said Johnston.

"How did [the U.S.] make sure that they could get that money? The U.S. militarily occupied Haiti. In fact, even before they occupied the country, they went to Haiti in 1914, and they took all of the gold from the central bank, they put it on a boat and they brought it to Citibank in New York."

Johnston argues that this is a result of the U.S.' and France's desire to penalize Haiti's rejection of the western hemisphere's reliance on the international slave trade. "I think it's really important to set that context because this is a country that was punished for what it did, and what it did is an unambiguously good thing for the world."

Since then, Haiti's economy has not had a chance to recover. This is largely due to the fact that the country's government has relied on aid, mainly from the U.S. "We don't actually give money to other countries. We give it to U.S. companies to do work in other countries," Johnston said. U.S. companies often

don't have the best interests of Haiti in mind. "We subsidize U.S. farmers to provide surplus goods to Haiti. That's a benefit to U.S. farmers, right?"

"We know what would make aid more effective and there are reasons why we don't implement those changes, and it's because implementing those changes would hurt these special interests that are benefiting from the status quo, and frankly, they have more sway over the U.S. political system than Haiti."

"Certainly the framing of everything is that it's about our interest, not theirs. and so it's not terribly surprising that it's not working out great for [Haiti]."

Aid is not the only way the U.S. attempts to dominate Haiti. There are multiple instances of interference (and even complete fraud) in Haitian elections by the U.S.

"Haiti's never really had an opportunity to have a sovereign democracy. Its first free and fair election was in 1990." Johnston referred to the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the first democratically elected president in Haiti after a long period of dictatorships.

But in 2015, it was found that a U.S.-funded election in Haiti was fraudulent. "Nobody participated and it was all a big fraud," says Johnston. The results caused thousands of Haitians to protest, pressuring the international community to stop the electoral process from being recognized. "For so long the international community had sort of gotten their way in Haiti. And this was the time where they didn't. They couldn't force that result on people."

Intense poverty and the lack of a stable government are just some of the issues Haiti is facing. Another crucial part of the crisis is gang violence. In 2024, over 5,600 Haitians were killed in gang violence, and heavily armed gangs control up to 90% of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince. This statistic is even more shocking considering the fact that between 30% to 50% of Haiti's gang members are under the age of 18. This has caused a lot of concern and debate over what should be done to mitigate the violence.

"It's something that can't happen strictly through force, then" argued Johnston. "The rhetoric you're hearing from some of these gang leaders is a more accurate analysis of the reality in Haiti than anything from the political class or foreign leaders." Despite this, there are still many gang members who aren't necessarily politically motivated. The poverty and lack of

a real government in Haiti is a large reason why gangs form.

"We have to understand the context that these people exist in and why they might pick up a gun, right?" said Johnston. "One of the big gang leaders [in Haiti] as a child, [...] his life was picking through trash for scraps to try and sell and make ends meet and find meals. So, when somebody hands you a gun and says 'here you can have power over your life, you can have food, you can have agency', is anyone surprised by the choices people are making?"

"If you threw everybody in jail, and you don't change that, it's just gonna happen again."

"Nothing has been done to stop the underlying dynamics that caused this. The status quo in Haiti is inherently unsustainable. You can't maintain the level of inequality and poverty that exists in Haiti without force."

Haitians' distrust of their government and the lack of a social contract accelerates the prevalence of gangs. Because the government relies on foreign aid, it lacks power to protect or provide for its people. "[There was] a 13-year UN peacekeeping operation. Now that didn't allow the government to undertake reforms or extend their reach or provide services, it allowed them not to. They could stay in power against a really angry population because there were 13,000 foreign troops to protect them," Johnston explained.

"This is where foreign intervention comes into play because you don't need [Haitian] support to keep your power, all you need is the support of the national community. And if you keep that, you can continue to neglect the population."

It's worth noting that the overwhelming majority of the arms used by Haitian gangs are supplied by the U.S. According to Johnston, "Probably 90% of the guns in Haiti are coming from the United States. Part of the issue is that it's really easy to buy guns in this country." There is somewhat of an effort from U.S. officials to manage this, but it is clearly not effective. "When the U.S. [investigates] arms trafficking cases, they go after straw buyers. It's whack-a-mole. You take them out and find a thousand more people the next day who would be willing to do that for some extra cash. But those cases never go beyond that. We know a lot more, and we could do a lot more to actually enforce those laws."

"I think arms trafficking is like the number one thing ... the U.S. can do about security in Haiti."

The Trump administration has recently declared a 90-day freeze on all foreign assistance, so what does this mean for Haiti? It's hard to know if this means the U.S. will stop giving aid to Haiti entirely, but Johnston argues that a decrease in funding may actually be beneficial to Haiti in the long term. "In the very short term, the reduction of U.S. assistance is going to cause harm. I mean, 40% of the health budget comes from donors. Now of course, that whole system is not sustainable for Haiti and it is not terribly effective for Haiti. So, in the long run, the opportunity is that it will force the kinds of reforms and the kinds of initiatives that are necessary to actually build a public system, to actually generate that revenue and take care of its population."

"My guess on if that happens or what the timeline is for something like that happening ... I'm not terribly optimistic. But it is an important opportunity and it has to happen," said Johnston.

Ultimately, the crisis in Haiti cannot end unless a lot of things change in the United States. "What we can do," in Johnston's opinion, "is demand our government be better, have a better foreign policy, and understand that what happens here matters to the rest of the world."

Photo by Jacob Dodson



Hispanic NMC Students Prepare for Threat of On-Campus Immigration Arrests

Emma Marion Staff Writer After his inauguration on Jan. 20, President Donald Trump signed a flurry of executive orders on immigration, border security, and citizenship. Moving to unconstitutionally end birthright citizenship, designating the Mexican cartels as “foreign terrorist organizations,” and reviving plans to finish the border wall, a few pieces of his border and migration plan. Then, on Jan. 22, he declared a national emergency at the southern border, and allowed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to perform arrests in schools and hospitals, previous no-go zones. While Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is considered a “Sensitive Location” under new ICE policy, on-campus arrests are still possible.

“There’s definitely been more talking, especially [in] the Latino community and stuff here. Like you hear people talking about it, you know, it’s a topic on everybody’s conversations,” 19-year old Hispanic NMC student Jessica Gomez said.

Twenty-one-year-old Hispanic NMC student Emma Gullian added, “I was absolutely terrified coming into school after that happened just because it brought back a lot of memories.”

“I grew up with the mentality of ‘for the kids, take care of the kids,’ for the betterment of the community ... That was also brought to me by my culture, but also it was a very U.S. thing to learn that like, we have all these laws protecting kids. We have all these standards for how we want education, and then for some reason suddenly, where they came from, means they don’t get that safety net anymore,” Gullian said.

Gomez’s dad migrated to the United States (U.S.) from Mexico in the early 1990s, with her mom following in the early 2000s. After working in Florida for a while, her dad got a temporary job in Northern Michigan. After seeing the beauty of the area, he ended up scoring a year-round job at the Kolarik Farm in Suttons Bay picking apples and cherries six months of the year. This gave her parents the opportunity to settle down in Suttons Bay.

“I just think it really shows, like, my parents’ efforts to be in this country and work and afford things for my brother and I,” said Gomez, “When you think of migrate, like that’s like working the full year.”

During his campaign, Trump made the promise to execute the largest mass deportation of immigrants in history. However, multiple challenges have emerged, including countries refusing to accept deportees. “I wanna say it’s not possible for him to accomplish what he’s

saying he’s gonna do, but, you know, there’s always the possibility,” Gomez explained.

“I feel like I’m not even an adult still, and, like, if something were to happen to my parents, I’d have to be left with a teenage boy, and I’m in college, I would have to, you know, quit college and work to, like, raise my brother. Just, crazy concept, but, you know, I’d do it because it’s my only option,” Gomez added, “We’ve already prepared paperwork in case anything happens.”

Gullian explained how schools are “supposed to call Children’s Protective Services (CPS) because, you know, a child cannot be detained without their parents, a guardian, or someone else that’s in it for the kids who’s going to defend the kids. And now they’re telling teachers to forget every training, every instinct in them, telling them that they have to protect the kids.”

Gullian grew up a five-minute drive away from the Mexican border in Las Milpas, Texas. “It was known as, which honestly just sounds really horrible ... the ghetto of the ghetto,” said Gullian.

However, the closest border was not the safest. “It was controlled by the cartels. So it was dangerous to use it during the day, but especially after sundown, because they would switch out the U.S. Border Patrol agents with some cartel members, so you would have your vehicle stolen, [and] some women would get kidnapped and held for ransom,” Gullian said.

Regardless, she still visited her family across the border by driving farther away to cross. “I loved visiting Mexico. It was very much a part of my childhood and seeing my grandparents and great aunts and uncles,” Gullian said.

To justify his executive orders and mass deportation plan, Trump has used rhetoric characterizing immigrants as violent criminals. He has repeatedly accused them of “poisoning the blood” of America, a phrase that echoes the language of Adolf Hitler and other white supremacists.

“There is gonna be, like, bad immigrants and stuff, but to group everyone into that based on that is totally crazy. Like, you could say that about anybody,” said Gomez.

“I think it’s a really cruel way to generalize people because of circumstances. And if we want to look at it that way, then we can look at it as the Border Patrol agents, the ICE agents, the police in the neighborhoods that let themselves get bribed into letting a lot of these things get away,” added Gullian.



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Evolution Versus Creationism Debate Arrives On NMC's Campus

Minnie Bardenhagen
Staff Writer

Anna Wildman
Staff Writer

On Feb. 18, the student group Ratio Christi, a chapter of the larger national Christian organization, hosted speaker Bruce Malone in NMC's Innovation Center for an event called "Censored Science and the Bible." Malone, the director of Search for the Truth Ministries and a former research leader for the Dow Chemical Corporation, has published multiple books and given numerous presentations at universities, colleges, and Christian organizations.

In the presentation, Malone argued in favor of creationism in terms of Christianity as the origin of life, and against naturalistic evolution and theistic evolution. Using a PowerPoint and video examples, he argued that the scientific theories and consensus on evolution, star creation and death, creation of the universe, and biological functions of humans and animals were too complex to be explained by anything but a higher power.

"This isn't a talk of religion versus established absolute scientific fact, it's a discussion of two philosophical beliefs," said Malone, who believes that the theory of evolution is just as much of a "faith" as creationism. "The word evolution is used to mean animals can adapt and modify in order to adapt better in an environment. But that doesn't prove that a bacteria, given enough time in the past, has turned into a human being. That is being considered an absolute fact and it's not. It's a belief system."

Equating his creationist beliefs with those of the scientific community, he claimed that creation theories outside of the scientific consensus are being censored, and called upon science curriculums to expose students to creationist ideas.

"There's nothing to fear from different viewpoints," Malone explained, "What is to fear is when one viewpoint is made totally inaccessible to the vast majority of people, and that's exactly what's happening. I have nothing to fear about evolution being taught, as long as the alternative is acknowledged."

Robb Houston, a professor of geology at NMC, disputed the claim that alternative viewpoints are being "censored."

"Any scientific principle or idea, hypotheses, has to be potentially testable and/or falsifiable. And we don't make use of supernatural power, beings," Houston explained, "We don't blur the two. One [question] that I often use to illustrate this point in my class is I'll say, you know, 'what's the meaning of life?' And then it's like, are you going to answer that with scientific principles? No. And, if you go around the room, everybody might have a slightly different answer... but your answer is right for you."

"And that's not something we deal with in science class. It comes up in a theology class, a philosophy class," Houston continued, "Humans have debated questions like that for thousands of years, and no scientist would say 'well, you've wasted your time. That's not worth considering.' That's a great problem. That's a great question to contemplate. But it's not a question that we delve into in science."

Malone used multiple examples of biological, astronomical, and geological phenomena to justify his argument, claiming throughout the speech that they disproved both the theory of evolution and the Big Bang theory. Much of Malone's evidence

directly challenged proven scientific principles, employing rhetoric to create an argument that appeared scientific, when in reality it was almost entirely based in opinion. For example, he repeatedly claimed that evolution was "impossible," simply because many things in nature have "perfect design." He also described the process of evolution as "junk from a junkyard [...] blindfoldedly put together," (in an analogy comparing an insect's anatomy to an electric motor) which frames the process of evolution as if it occurs randomly without influence from an organism's environment.

It is debated whether the ability of scientific principles to prove religious beliefs is a relevant argument. Science is typically defined as objective, and the scientific community has agreed that factual information must be testable. While creationist advocates like Malone tend to cherry pick scientific information to prove their belief can be validated by science, the science itself does not usually attempt to prove or disprove supernatural forces of religious beliefs, as they are not testable ideas.

"Personally, I don't like it when we have these kind of, not really valuable conflicts between religion and science. There doesn't have to be this debate," Houston expressed, "I think religion has a certain value, place, and purpose for many. Not for everybody, but for many people it provides a sense of belonging, community, purpose. And I don't think it should be, realistically, the stated goal of religion to explain exactly how nature works and operates."

The title of Malone's event, "Censored Science and the Bible," is a misleading statement about how science operates, according to Houston.

"We don't operate on a censorship basis. There isn't like some big thing, you know, a committee that says 'okay, it has to meet somebody else's predetermined standard,'" Houston explained, "The proper term is 'rejected hypothesis.' So, we don't censor science. So, anybody, I mean anybody, who wants to write an article... you know, if you want to do testing and you've got your ideas... you're free to write articles and publish them, etc. But like any reasonable source, you know, most all scientific journals... they're peer reviewed."

According to Malone, "looking for evidence that shows you're wrong [is] never acceptable" when it comes to the field of science, but Houston argues that this is not an accurate statement.

"I could submit [a] paper to any scientific journal. Anyone can do that, it doesn't matter who you are," says Houston. "But it does have to pass through a peer review process. But, if you do come up with an idea, hypothesis, etc, and it's not defensible... there's no proof, you haven't constructed an experiment correctly, you haven't evaluated your data correctly, you're not taking account of various things... you know, things are rejected."

"Science is not censored, but we do reject failed hypotheses, disproven hypotheses... they don't get published."

Ultimately, science is meant to operate independently from religion because its goal is not to "disprove" God, rather, it only aims to help humanity gain a better understanding of the world around it.



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Artificial Intelligence in NMC's Art Program

Jacob Dodson
Staff Writer

Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology has seen an explosion in recent years. First with chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT, which is a text-based AI that can do anything from providing a recipe, explaining the history of pre-bronze China, or even just entertaining by role-playing as headmaster Dumbledore over text. It legitimized the idea of AI as a serious technology with both practical uses and limitless potential.

Then, came StableDiffusion, a text-to-image program created by the company StabilityAI. Though these programs weren't the first in this domain, they represented a stark contrast, a clear before-and-after, and if one was paying attention, it was obvious there would be consequences never seen before. And that is where much of the push-back against these programs have come from - technology always has consequences.

Northwestern Michigan College (NMC), home to a large number of artists, is one of those weird places where it is both being used by students and faculty, as well as being disavowed and criticized by the same.

"There's the blatant exploitation of workers, there's the environmental concerns. And then, it comes down to the artists. There's a lot of artists who do not consent to their art being used," said NMC student Thursday Maurer.

This is an issue that has come up a lot, and has yet to be resolved. In order for these models to be trained, they must consume the art of thousands of artists, and in almost all cases, this has happened without their consent.

"The technology is developing faster than we can make laws for. We're only just starting to get laws for AI," said Maurer.

And as it stands, every AI model that generates art is going to require art created by humans in order to train, and from what we've seen so far, these Silicon Valley tech companies don't seem interested in respecting artists' consent, nor compensating them for their work being used in their programs.

Randolph Mellick, a technical instructor of drawing at NMC, shared that he too was also concerned about the ethical dilemma of whose art the program was trained, but he had even greater concerns with the way the programs "understood" art to begin with.

"Art teaches us to see. We were first taught to see by painting and drawing, and then we were taught to see by photographs, and AI is being taught to see by photographs, and I think photographic-type seeing is an impoverishment. So, I think about it as an evil force. It's essentially a mechanical force that's hobbling us to use our own eyes," said Mellick.

Though he worries about the potential for people's work to be stolen, he is even more worried about art itself being hurt by the very nature of the product that these models produce, and he's not wrong. Stable Diffusion was trained on 2.3 billion images, mostly photographs of real things. Only a subset of these images were actual drawings.

"I think AI encodes photographic modes of seeing. People don't think of photography as interpretive, and they're more willing to grant drawing something more interpretive," said Mellick.

Because of that, AI art programs often have more utility for photographic uses than drawings or paintings.

Another issue artists often take issue with is the ease of creation that art allows. Even if AI art is capable of creating something as good as a human with a simple prompt, it begs the question of what determines the quality of a piece of art.

"Yeah ... Jackson Pollack's famous drip painting, he made it in a day. I think lightning can strike; I think there's lead-up time, and there's effort that just goes into the whole thing. But I think that's pretty hard to explain ... But that's pretty hard to sustain, because some people spend their whole lives to produce something, and it's garbage, so there's some standard other than just how hard someone worked to make it," said Mellick.

However, Maurer has another perspective, "That effort you put in is part of your humanity. As people, as humans, we only have so much time, and what we decide to use that time on - it matters. Not only to us, but the people in our lives, the people we care about. I think that time is valuable, and that effort is valuable, you are quite literally giving a piece of yourself away, every time you put time into something."

With the rise of AI, the word "product" is more commonly used as a synonym for "art."

"Like, what are you looking for? Are you looking to create something to give this idea or thought meaning? Or are you just looking to make a product? Are you looking for consumerism?" Questioned Maurer.

In a consumerist-based economy, artists often create to produce something that can be sold. AI art can be seen as an extension of that consumerist drive within the "art marketplace".

With these criticisms in mind, it is also important to understand that neither Randy, nor Thursday have ever used AI in any of their art work, and that they do not plan to. On the other

hand, Caroline Schaefer-Hills, a faculty instructor for various Visual Communications classes, as well as the design advisor of the NMC student magazine, thinks it can be both useful, and dangerous.

"I'm afraid to embrace AI art, because I'm worried that the more trust we give it, the more potential there is for humanity to be exploited in a way. I think I put up a barrier, and am afraid to appreciate it, because I don't want it to take away what humans do, and what we are capable of, in humanity, especially in the Humanities, which is the field we're in," explained Schaefer-Hills.

She is not an outward observer though, along with the students at the NMC magazine, published an issue in 2023 about future technologies fittingly named "FUTUROLOGY." In it, they experimented heavily with AI art using a wide range of AI programs such as Midjourney, DALL-E, Lensa, and Wombo. The staff experimented with crafting prompts and employing visual metaphors in order to get the looks they wanted, and they even employed AI programs to create synthetic self-portraits.

As for the dangers this technology posed, Caroline explains in FUTUROLOGY that "Our progress in the 21st century suggests that we rush toward technology with open arms, even though our life with ever-accelerating technology takes unexpected tolls on us. For years, we have worried as a collective society that our tech usage patterns might get out of control, and that the very advancements that were meant to make our lives easier might be doing the opposite."

But not all of the magazine's staff use AI. August Newell, a student and NMC magazine staff member said "I never want to use AI art programs. I'm afraid of what it can do to artists. I'm afraid that it will devalue or take away from artists' jobs."

Art is arguably Humanity's most defining trait - that, and technology. And never before in human history have the two merged, and yet been at odds, to such a degree. And this is likely no coincidence: the word technology originally comes from the ancient Greek word *Techné*, which means both craft, and art. To the Greeks, fire was both a technology, and an art form. The same is true today, and these two are probably inexorably linked, and one will always affect the other. Since this is a new technology, and a new art form, the consequences of it long-term remain unclear, and the question remains: will artists use AI technology to create more art? Or will AI use the artists? This is something artists must answer themselves.



AI generated photo of Caroline Schaefer-Hills

Local Band SosoHiFi Jams at The Little Fleet

Jacob Dodson
Staff Writer

The band SosoHiFi played at The Little Fleet on Jan 25, wowing the crowd with rock, roll, and soul. While SosoHiFi ripped the air with guitar riffs, drums, and singing, Super Nuclear, the projectionist known for his astonishing real-time liquid projections, filled the room with bright neon lights and patterns that honestly, have to be seen to be believed.

The Little Fleet is located downtown on Front Street. Outside was a firepit and relaxed, chilled conversations in the cold, while inside was a frenzy of people enjoying the show - but there was no anxiety or confusion. It was about as classy as a rock concert can get, without losing its punk edge.

Composed of Peter on bass, Will Thomas on drums, Peter Lepczyk on bass, Tom Allerton with his kamele ngoni, a harp-like instrument of West African origins, and both Christopher Stefanciw and Michel Burrows on guitar.

How long have you guys been together?

Michael Burrows: SosoHiFi have been playing together for three years but I've been playing with Peter off and on for 15 and Tom five years or so.

What made you guys want to start a band together?

Michael Burrows: Tom and I had been playing together as a duo but we knew we needed to be playing with bass and drums. Chris, Pete, and Will had been playing together and we all got together and jammed and it clicked immediately. The first improv'd jam we did lasted 45 minutes.

How much experience does each person have, respectively?

Peter Lepczyk: I picked up bass in college. Studied piano as a kid.

Will Thomas: I started playing drums in 6th grade and



started my first band in junior high. Since then I've played in various bands and projects.

Tom Allerton: I learned to play and build the kamele ngoni between 1996-97 in the west African country of Burkina Faso.

Michael Burrows: I've been playing guitar and bass since I was 17.

Christopher Stefanciw: 33 years at this point, of guitar playing, actually probably 34. Music life started way before guitar with piano and trumpet though. If there's a little inspiration bit to add, my grandfather played piano, improvised every time he played, didn't know how to read music, but played so beautifully and that was very magical and inspiring for me.

Do you guys ever travel for shows?

Peter Lepczyk: We've mostly played locally, but we did do a show out near Higgins Lake last summer. We would definitely entertain traveling more if the situation were right.

What songs or albums have you released?

Will Thomas: We haven't released any proper recordings yet but there's a few live things floating around on YouTube. We plan on working on a recording project this year.

Photos by Jacob Dodson



Any plans for the future?

Michael Burrows: I'm looking forward to recording and would love to play some festivals.

Where do you want to take the band artistically/musically?

Michael Burrows: I would really like to see us take more of the weird practice space improv into the live setting

Tom, how did you start playing the Kamele ngoni?

Tom Allerton:

I learned to play and build this style of harp in Burkina Faso, the country that borders Mali to the southeast in 1996-97. The harps I play now I have built over the past five years.

I was originally trained on the hunter's harp, the donso ngoni. The music of both harps originates in the hunters musical traditions of the Mande speaking peoples of Mali, and the countries surrounding it. These are very old musical cultures dating back to at least the 13th century and the time of the Empire of Mali.

From 1987 to 1990 I was a teacher in the Peace Corps, in Niger, to the east of Mali. I recorded lots of traditional music there and studied talking drums and flute with musicians in the village where I lived. All those field recordings are in the National Sound Archive of the British Library, a part of the British Museum in London, England. All of it is available to online library users worldwide.

I have co-hosted the "Africa Beyond" show at 7pm on Wednesday nights, on WNMC since 2000.

Truly awesome stuff. If you were at the show and want to catch more, or if you missed it and don't want to miss it again, follow them on Instagram at @sosohifi for updates on their shows, travels, and more.

