

April 4, 1997

*Happy families are
all alike; every
unhappy family
is unhappy
in its own way.*

—Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy

Vol. XXIX, No. 28

Senate to tackle semester v. quarter issue again

The University Senate will soon be asking faculty whether they prefer semesters or quarters.

Senator **Robert Keen** (biological sciences) presented a survey to the senate April 3 asking faculty how they'd rank three alternative academic calendars: the current early-quarter system, the late-quarter system MTU had before 1972, or a semester system. They will also be asked what calendar they'd prefer if a change would involve "significant amounts of time and money" to implement.

Some senators suggested including a 4-1-4 semester system on the ballot. Keen said the primary purpose of the survey was to determine if "a strong sentiment for change" exists among the faculty. If there is a groundswell of support for semesters, then the senate could tackle the details.

Because faculty have the responsibility for approving the academic calendar, the survey will not be distributed to staff, Keen said. However, staff could conduct their own survey.

A report from the Academic Policy Committee on weather advisories showed unhappiness with the procedure but stopped short of recommending eliminating advisories all together. "The Committee strongly believes that the preferred situation in dealing with weather problems is to close Michigan Tech," the report said. Nevertheless, it made two specific recommended changes to the weather advisory. One, the policy should apply equally to students living on and off campus, since instructors don't know which is which. And two, faculty should include in their syllabi how they intend to handle weather advisories.

The committee also came down on the side of courtesy and common sense. "Faculty can expect students to exercise responsibility when unable to

get to class; students can expect some assistance from faculty in making up missed material. No one rule or answer will suffice, however."

Committee chair **Bruce Seely** (social sciences) said the committee was "looking for the sense of the senate" on the issue before finalizing its recommendations. The senate took no action, however, and made no specific recommendations. The impact of advisories seems to vary. Senator **Les Leifer** (chemistry) said the University should be either open or closed, noting that attendance in one 40-student class dropped to 10 during an advisory. Senate Vice President **Janice Glime** (biological sciences) said her experience was that attendance during an advisory was virtually the same as during the rest of the term. However, she said, labs missed during University closures are extremely difficult to make up.

In other business, the senate

- amended a proposed Academic Freedom Policy submitted by Provost **Fred Dobney** to reinstate a clause from an older, senate version saying the system of tenure should be compatible with academic freedom; delete language saying faculty "have the responsibility to avoid introducing controversial material which has no relation to classroom subject matter; and delete a second portion stating that, when they speak as citizens and not University employees, that they should "at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution." The senate is expected to act on the policy at a future meeting. Any policy proposals on academic freedom are subject to approval by the Board of Control.

Tompkins attends innovation summit

President **Curt Tompkins** was invited to attend the regional meeting of the Council on Competitiveness National Dialogue on Innovation, held April 1 at Purdue University.

Tompkins was one of three university presidents—and the only one from Michigan—attending the Midwest Summit on the Future of American Innovation: Challenges for Universities, Industry, and National Laboratories. Tompkins was one of forty participants; sixty observers also attended.

"There was much discussion around the table throughout the day. I learned much," Tompkins said. "The primary theme was R&D Partnerships involving universities, corporations, and government, with attention to small and medium-sized companies as well as large corporations."

"This fits well with MTU's Initiative for Manufacturing." Indiana Governor Frank O'Bannon opened the meeting. Congressman Vernon Ehlers (R-Michigan)

spoke on "Optimizing Resources: Federal Priority Setting on R&D." Other speakers were the CEOs of Motorola, Battelle, Argonne National Laboratories, Eli Lilly, Gerber Products, and PSI Energy.

Regional summits have already been held in California and Georgia. A national summit, set for early next year in Washington, DC, will wrap up the work begun in the three regional meetings.

For more information on the Council on Competitiveness, see its home page: <http://nii.nist.gov/coc.html> A copy of the report "Endless Frontier, Limited Resources," which served as a partial basis for the three regional summits, is available via that URL.

The Council on Competitiveness is a nonpartisan, nonprofit forum of chief executives established in 1986 to set a national agenda for U.S. leadership in global markets, technological innovation, and education and training to raise the standard of living for all Americans.

IT Operations now offering night (test) deposit

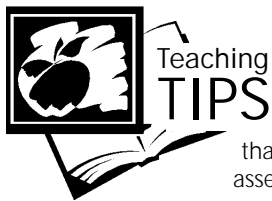
Faculty: if IT Operations scores your tests, you don't have to worry any more about getting the paperwork up to the second floor of the Ad Building before their office closes.

IT Operations has installed a secure drop box inside the Ad Building lobby, across from the emergency telephone. If you can't get the tests to IT Operations during their work hours, just fill out one of the large envelopes provided, put the tests in, and slide it in the box. The IT

crew will pick up your tests first thing in the morning, with the goal of having them scored by 8:00 a.m.

"Some professors give tests late in the day, and some find it difficult to get here before we close," Systems Specialist **Tom Butler** said. "This should make it easier for them to use our services and return tests to students quickly."

For more information on this and IT Operations' other great services, call 487-2265.



EXERCISING POWER IN THE CLASSROOM

By William Kennedy, director

As a lifelong student of the art of persuasion, I have long been aware of how the representation of power can literally destroy the potential for meaningful communication within a social system. Over 2,000 years ago, Aristotle observed that effective communicators used artistic appeals rather than assertions of power (threats or coercion) to successfully get their messages across to diverse audiences. By "artistic appeals," Aristotle meant developing messages that carefully took into account the varying needs of a given individual or group. Developing such messages requires that we discern the listener's preconceived notions about the topic, their level of desire to learn more, their state of mind, and even the physical and emotional environment within which the communication will take place.

Aristotle also observed that ignoring these factors and basing communication upon an implied or overt threat or a coercive power relationship is a markedly less-successful strategy that may generate compliance and the appearance of success, but has little lasting effect. In studying various social groups, modern social scientists concur that the rightful exercise of power is a primary determinant of successful communication.

By its very nature, the classroom is an environment in which properly characterizing the power relationship between teacher and student is a critically important issue. Professors assert their power in various ways. For example, we may choose to emphasize and remind students that we, indeed, have the power to reward, punish, or coercively influence their behavior and academic success. Educational researchers conclude that intentionally or unintentionally asserting power in this manner may result in compliance, but also increases the students' resistance to learning, resulting in little internalization of, or appreciation for, the subject matter (or the professor).

On the other hand, professors may choose to act in ways that emphasize the fact that their power in the classroom is based upon their ability to build a relationship of earned mutual respect with their students in addition to demonstrating their knowledge of the subject. Power in this instance derives from the students' appreciation of the professor's knowledge of the subject combined with the professor's demonstrated sensitivity to the students' learning needs, level of understanding, and course expectations.

In a recent article,* psychology professor Aubrey Immelman suggests that the sort of power that facilitates internalization of the subject matter while increasing student interest in the discipline is earned by the professor as he/she 1) actively encourages faculty-student interaction, 2) uses active learning techniques, 3) emphasizes cooperation among students, 4) provides prompt feedback on student progress, 5) sets high, but realistic, standards, and 6) demonstrates sensitivity for different learning styles and ways of learning.

It appears that students really don't benefit from being reminded that we have the power to reward or punish them with grades and workloads. Rather, we should strive to engage them in the passion that we feel for the subjects that we teach and cherish. The power to effect lasting learning appears to be a function of our ability to engage students not as empty vessels needing to be filled with our knowledge, but as complex, sensitive human beings needing our recognition and concern, as well as a share of our expertise.

As always, feel free to call if you have questions or comments at 487-2046.

* "Understanding Power in the College Classroom," in *The National Teaching & Learning Forum*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1997, pp. 5-7.

TECH TOPICS

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- By e-mail to ttopics@mtu.edu
- By campus mail, send typed copies to *Tech Topics*, University Relations.

Each week, the deadline for submitting information is **Friday at 5:00 p.m.** or publication the following Friday.

Our URL is <http://www.sas.it.mtu.edu/urel/ttopics/index.html>

New staff

JoAnn Coplan has joined the Information Technology staff as a telecommunications installer. She previously worked for Johnson Controls N/S as a fiber tech.

Donna Francek has joined the biological sciences department staff as a secretary II. She was previously employed by Flint Fire as an emergency dispatcher. Francek has a BS in Business Administration from Central Michigan University and an associate degree in business administration from St. Clair County Community College. She is married to Kevin Mackey and lives in Atlantic Mine.

More about Earth Week on the Web

The MTU Earth Week Web site is now open, with a schedule of events and an interactive discussion board. Check it out at <http://chmac2.chem.mtu.edu/earth/default.ssi>

in print

Michigan Tech students who are members of the Copper County Habitat for Humanity chapter were featured in an article in the March 7 edition of the *Fulton, Missouri Sun Gazette*. Fifteen MTU students worked on two Habitat projects in Fulton over spring break. "We have so much, and here's a chance for us to give back to others," graduate student **Colleen Tallman** (electrical engineering), chapter president, said in the article.

Assistant Professor **Mary Durfee** (social sciences) coauthored an article with James Rosenau (George Washington University), "Playing Catch-Up: International Relations Theory and Poverty," published in the Winter 1996 edition of *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*.

Graduate student **Donald Woodraska** and Assistant Professor **John Jaszczak** (physics) published a paper, "A Monte Carlo Simulation Method for {111} Surfaces of Silicon and Other Diamond-Cubic Materials," in *Surface Science* (1907), Vol. 374.

Associate Professor **Ashok Goel** (electrical engineering) has published a paper, "Modeling of Transverse Propagation Delays in a GaAs MESFET," coauthored by recent graduate student **Vamsi Mohun** (electrical engineering), in the *Microwave and Optical Technology Letters*, Vol. 14, No. 5.

Assistant Professor **Richard Honrath** (civil and environmental engineering) published "Surface Exchange and Transport Processes Governing Atmospheric PCB Levels over Lake Superior," coauthored by Clyde Sweet (Illinois State Water Survey) and MS graduate **Christopher Plouff** (civil and environmental engineering) in *Environmental Science and Technology*, Vol. 31.

Associate Professor **Bruce Seely** (social sciences) has published a chapter, "Teaching the History of Technology," in the book *Studies in History of Sciences*.

Workshop April 16 on new Telcom billing, ordering system

IT/Telcom is instituting a new telemanagement system that will be used for all its billing and work orders. To explain the new system and procedures, Telcom is holding a workshop on Wednesday, April 16, at 10:00 a.m. in Memorial Union B1.

Anyone who is involved in ordering Telcom services or paying Telcom bills is encouraged to come.

Seating is limited, so please reserve your seat by sending an e-mail note to telcom-request@mtu.edu

The meeting will last about an hour and refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Chuck LaPointe, 487-2800.

Companies coming

Representatives from the following employers will be recruiting on campus next week. If you'd like to meet with any of them, contact the Career Center at 487-2313.

- Monday, April 7: Ansul, Inc., Crested Butte
- Tuesday, April 8: Ansul, Inc., Great Lakes Dredge & Dock
- Wednesday, April 9: Davey Tree
- Thursday, April 10: Franklin Life Insurance

Alumni award winner announced

The MTU Alumni Association has announced the award winners who will be honored at the 1997 Annual Alumni Homecoming in August.

René Adams will receive the Outstanding Service Award. Adams, of Fort Worth, Texas, was Michigan Tech's first sports information director. He lettered in football at MTU in 1946 and 1947, and in 1948 joined the staff as equipment manager. He assumed the sports information director's post in 1953, a position he held until his retirement in 1964. Adams was named to the MTU Sports Hall of Fame in 1991 for his efforts on behalf of MTU sports. He chaired the Class of 1950 Homecoming Reunion in 1990, is president of the Dallas/Fort MTU Alumni Chapter, and is a long-time contributor to the University's sports programs.

Gerald Ziarno '59, of Midland, will receive the Distinguished Alumni Award. Ziarno graduated from Michigan Tech with a BS in Electrical Engineering and earned an MA in International Business from Sophia University, in Tokyo. He retired in 1996 as corporate vice president for global marketing at Dow Corning Corporation. Ziarno has been active at Michigan Tech, helping the University in its efforts to fund the Process Simulation and Control Center and serving on the Michigan Tech Fund Board of Trustees.

Russell Hoyer, of Hancock, will receive the Honorary Alumni Award. Hoyer is retired chairman and chief executive officer of the Upper Peninsula Power Company. He served eight years on the Board of Control and received the University's Distinguished Service Award in 1978. Hoyer has also served on the governing boards of United Way of Michigan, Lake Superior and Ishpeming Railroad, Suomi College, and D&N Bank.

Receiving Outstanding Young Alumni awards are **Gregory Besse '83**, **JoAnn Brinser '85**, **Tyler Kearly '84**, and **Adil Shafi '86**, '93.

Besse, of Gladstone, received a BS in Wood and Fiber Utilization and is now executive vice president of Besse Forest Products Group. Since he joined the family-owned business after his graduation, the company has purchased several wood-products companies, and its annual sales have grown from \$4 million to \$65 million.

Brinser, of Washington, Michigan, earned a BS in Economics and is now manager of Southeast Asia Business Affairs for Chrysler International Corporation. Since joining Chrysler in 1987, she has received the company's Chairman's Award and Quality Improvement Outstanding Contribution Award. Brinser has actively supported the arts at MTU.

Kearly, of Middleburg, Florida, is a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy. An FA-18 pilot, he flew twenty-three missions over Iraq in Desert Storm and, in 1996, served in Operation Deny Flight. He has received numerous campaign medals and honors, including four Navy Commendation Medals, three of which were for combat valor.

Shafi, of Brighton, earned BS degrees in both computer science and electrical engineering, and went on to receive an MS in Computer Science at Michigan Tech. After completing his master's studies, he founded SHAFI, Inc. The firm, which is wholly owned by Shafi, provides software and systems consulting, and specializes in products and services for robots and machine-vision systems in manufacturing.

Alumnae council induction ceremony April 17

All MTU employees are invited to attend the Presidential Council of Alumnae Induction Ceremony, on Thursday, April 17, from noon to 2:00 p.m. in the Memorial Union Alumni Lounge. This ceremony recognizes distinguished alumnae from Michigan Tech. Because lunch will be included in the ceremony, please RSVP to Sandy Henkel at 487-3539.

Scholarships available for MTU sons and daughters

Eighteen \$100 MTU Employee Sons and Daughters Scholarships will be available for the 1997-98 academic year.

Applicants must be full-time MTU undergraduates in their first four years of study or high school students planning to enroll in fall 1997, and the sons or daughters of Michigan Tech employees. Applications are available in the Financial Aid Office, Administration/Student Services 160. Deadline for application is May 1.

Seminar: how the world really feels about better mousetraps

Sigma Xi is sponsoring a lecture by Paul Seybold, from Wright State University, "Better Mousetraps, Expert Advice, and the Lessons of History," on Friday, April 25, at noon in Memorial Union 105B.

Seybold will talk about the receptions afforded new scientific ideas throughout history, and everyone's invited. For more information, contact Sarah Green, 487-3419.



Don't miss a single issue!!

Driven by powerful economic forces beyond our control (not unlike those buffeting the White

House, the Medicare system, and whoever is in charge of filling the potholes around here), the *Tech Topics* staff is cutting back on the number of issues it prints. D-Day is next Friday, April 11.

Most areas will see a big drop—50 percent or more—in the number of copies they receive. Areas where few people work on computers will continue to get approximately the same amount.

But wait! There's more! You can now get *Tech Topics* on e-mail! Lots of your friends and co-workers have already sighed up! For exactly the same price as the printed *Tech Topics*, you get

- Faster service! *Tech Topics* will be on your computer screen up to four days sooner.
- Convenience! Use your e-mail program's search function and see if your name appears, or look for your favorite feature ("Positions at MTU"?)
- Even more convenience! If you like, you can save your *Tech Topics* in an e-mail folder, which takes up lots less space than a binder or stack of paper *Tech Topics*.
- Warm and fuzzy feelings! The e-mail *Tech Topics* is pretty much pulp-free and environmentally benign, both to produce and to trash.

Don't hesitate! Order today (or by 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, April 9, if you want to be sure to get the April 11 edition)!

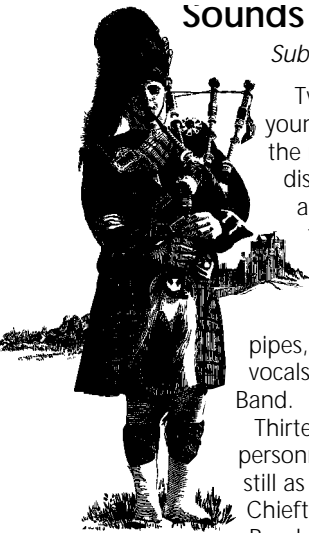
Here's how.

Send an e-mail message to majordomo@mtu.edu. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the letter, type **SUBSCRIBE TECH-TOPICS-L**

That's all there is to it. You'll begin receiving *Tech Topics* via e-mail next week. If you have any questions, contact Tech Topics Editor Marcia Goodrich, 487-3509, ttopics@mtu.edu

Sounds of Scotland at Michigan Tech

Submitted by University Cultural Enrichment



Twenty-five years ago, four young musical wizards found the magic formula for distilling the true Celtic spirit and bottling it on disc. As the experiment took place in the Glasgow suburb called Battlefield, the unique blend of bagpipes, synthesizer, fiddle, and vocals was named Battlefield Band.

Thirteen recordings and a few personnel changes later, they're still as strong as ever. Ireland's Chieftains aside, the Battlefield Band is probably the best Celtic band in existence, and they're coming to Michigan Tech on Saturday, April 12, for an 8:00 p.m. concert in Fisher 135. Tickets are on sale at the Memorial Union Box Office (487-3200, Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.) and the SDC Central Ticket Office (487-2073, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.).

The Battlefield Band plays with good-humored spirit, as well as inspired and at times awe-inspiring musicianship. Combining the Scottish musical tradition with the best of technology, they play instruments rarely seen outside the world of Celtic music. To the bagpipes, the cittern (a cousin of the guitar dating from medieval times), the bodhran (Irish drum), the flute, and the penny whistle, they

add electric guitar and keyboards. Alan Reid, a founding member, does much of the band's singing and songwriting, especially on contemporary Scottish themes. Much of the fun in this event is from Reid's offbeat humorous story telling as he introduces the songs, not to mention the band's banter. John McCusker is an extraordinary fiddle player, whose brilliant performances and compositions leave reviewers struggling for superlatives, and audiences breathless at his skill and musicianship.

The music is varied, including reels, ancient and new, Irish drinking songs, and sad tales of emigration. And just when you're immersed in the sound of Scotland, the mountains, the lochs, the myths and legends, the Band might include songs by such artists as Chuck Berry, the Beatles, or Dire Straits, all performed with Gaelic flair.

This year is Battlefield Band's silver anniversary. Their slogan is "Forward with Scotland's Past," and if the rave reviews they've earned all over the British Isles, Europe, and the U.S. are anything to go by, this wild and wonderful music will take them on for another twenty-five years.

Funding for the visit of the Battlefield Band to Michigan Tech, part of the Great Events Series, is from the Committee for Campus Enrichment and the Michigan Tech Fund. The event is coordinated by the University Cultural Enrichment Department with production assistance from the MTU Student Entertainment Board. For more information, call 487-2844.

On the road

Associate Professor **Young Huang** (ME-EM) has given several invited presentations recently: the lecture "Strain Gradient Plasticity and Its Role in Fracture," at the Workshop on Multiscale Modeling in Fracture, held at the University of California at Santa Barbara in February; "Dynamic Fracture in Strain Gradient Materials" at California Institute of Technology and UC Santa Barbara; "Fracture of Materials with Strain Gradient Effects," at Johns Hopkins University in February; and "Mechanics Modeling of Trabecula and Cortical Bones" at Columbia University in March.

Assistant Professor **Pat Heiden** (chemistry) delivered a seminar, "Preparation and Evaluation of Oligomers as Non-Volatile Reaction Media," at the Michigan Molecular Institute on February 27 in Midland.

Assistant Professor **Mary Durfee** (social sciences) and Associate Professor **Susan Bagley** (biological sciences) delivered a paper, "Bacteriology and Diplomacy in the Great Lakes, 1912-1920," at the biennial meeting of the American Society for Environmental History in Baltimore on March 7. The presentation was during the session Indicating Change: Water and Air Quality Indicators in Government Planning, which was organized by Durfee.

Associate Professor **David Hand**, Presidential Professor **John Crittenden**, Research Engineer **David Hokanson**, and Graduate Research Assistant **Anisa Ali** (civil and environmental engineering) presented a two-day seminar January 27-28

Continued on page 5

Proposals in progress

Researchers, their proposals, and their potential sponsors are

- **David Hand** (civil and environmental engineering), **John Gierke** (geological engineering and sciences), and **Charles Kerfoot** (biological sciences), "Instrumentation for the Development of Sustainable Freshwater Resources," NSF
- **Glen Simula** (KRC), "Bushing Tests," New Venture Gear
- **Chris Anderson** (educational opportunity), **Joseph Fass**, and **David Odde** (chemical engineering), "Information Processing in Neural Networks," Michigan Space Grant Consortium
- **Jacqueline Popko** (IWR), "Determination of Syringyl-Guaiacyl Ratio," Lockheed Energy Systems
- **Douglas Gardner** and **John Forsman** (IWR), "Pressing Fiber-glass Overlays on Hardboard," Schuler International Corporation
- **Leonard Bohmann**, **Bruce Mork**, **Noel Schulz**, and **Dennis Wiitanen** (electrical engineering), "A Multimedia Introductory Course in Electric Energy, Part II," Electric Power Research Institute
- **Gardner**, "IWR Personnel Will Perform Testing to Determine Field Failure of Table Tops Manufactured by Woodsmiths Company," Woodsmiths Company
- **Craig Friedrich**, **Michele Miller**, **Mahesh Gupta**, **John Sutherland**, **Larry Evers**, **William Predebon**, **Donna Michalek** (ME-EM), **Douglas Swenson**, **Walter Milligan**, **Bruce Pletka**, **Stephen Hackney**, **Mohan Krishnamurthy** (MME), **Kirk Schulz**, **Michael Mullins** (chemical engineering), **Steven Seidel** (computer science), **Edward Nadgorny** (physics), and **Anand Kulkarni** (electrical engineering), "Acquisition of Micromechanical Fabrication System," NSF
- **Gopi Podila** (biological sciences) and **David Karnosky** (SFWP), "Interaction of Rising O₃ and CO₂: Molecular and Biochemical Processes Controlling Foliar Response to Altered Climatic Conditions," DOE
- **Patrick Martin**, **Susan Martin**, and **David Landon** (social sciences), "Proposal for Cooperative Archaeological Training and Research on State Lands, 1997-99," Michigan Historical Center

Sneak preview of wildlife films at next Tech Tea

Submitted by University Cultural Enrichment

Wildlife in the Antarctic, hummingbirds, lemurs, chameleons, and the mythic arkelope will be the guests at Tech Tea Time on Wednesday, April 9, at 4:00 p.m., offering a sneak preview of the First Annual Copper Country Wildlife Film Festival.

Tea Time, which is in the Memorial Union Alumni Lounge, will show film highlights, from hummingbird flights to the environmental plight of Madagascar. Light refreshments will be served, and the public is welcome.

The films come to us from the International Wildlife Film Festival and are judged on their scientific and educational merit and technical production quality. The MTU Regional Groundwater Education in Michigan (GEM) Center has selected the award-winning films to be shown at MTU, for both the Tea Time sneak preview and for the Film Festival, which is free and open to the public.

Held in conjunction with Earth Week on MTU's campus, the Film Festival is scheduled for April 22-24 and is coordinated by the GEM Center with assistance from the departments of Humanities, Educational Opportunity, and Physics; the Initiative for the Environment; and the Student Biology Club.

The GEM Center has also arranged a separate film festival for area schools on April 21-23 at Houghton High School auditorium. For more information, contact the GEM Center at 487-3341. Tech Tea Time is coordinated by the University Cultural Enrichment Department. If you have any questions, call 487-2844.



April

Fair Housing Month

- 3 Thursday**
10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.—
Friends of the Library Book
Sale—Memorial Union
Ballroom
- 4 Friday**
2:00 p.m.—Katherine
Rowan, "Communicating
Controversial, Complex
Science"—Walker 134
3:00 p.m.—James Chickos,
"Sublimation Enthalpies:
Their Measurement and
Estimation"—Chemical
Sciences and Engg 102
- 5 Saturday**
1:00 p.m.—Women's
tennis, MTU vs. St.
Scholastica—Gates Tennis
Center
- 6 Sunday**
1:00 p.m.—Women's
tennis, MTU vs. NMU—Gates
Tennis Center
- 7 Monday**
8:00 p.m.—Mel Gibson in
Hamlet—Fisher 135
- 8 Tuesday**
8:00 p.m.—Tom Stoppard's
*Rosencrantz and
Guildenstern*—Fisher 135
- 9 Wednesday**
4:00 p.m.—Tech Tea Time:
Wildlife Film Festival
preview—Memorial Union
Alumni Lounge
- 11 Friday**
8:00 p.m.—Wind Symphony
and the Troupe: Cabaret,
Spike Jones Style—Dee
Stadium
6:00, 8:30, 11:00 p.m.—
Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and
Juliet*—Fisher 135

Shakespeare Film Fest at Tech Arts Festival

By Valerie Pegg, director, University Cultural Enrichment

The Bard is certainly hot in Hollywood these days, with studios turning out a record number of movies based on Shakespeare's plays. His popularity hasn't waned on the Tech campus either. Three movies—Mel Gibson's *Hamlet* (Monday, April 7, at 8:00 p.m.), Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* (Tuesday, April 8, at 8:00 p.m.), and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* (Friday and Saturday, April 11–12, at 6:00, 8:30, and 11:00 p.m.)—are scheduled for the first week of Tech Arts Festival. All will be in Fisher 135.

Admission is free for the first two. *Romeo and Juliet*, the Film Board's contribution to Tech Arts Festival, is \$1.50. All movies are open to members of the campus community and their guests only.

How the Australian star of *Road Warrior* movies and *Lethal Weapon* could possibly play Hamlet was a frequent query before the first showings of director Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. Would Mel Gibson, following in the hallowed footsteps of Laurence Olivier and Richard Burton, fall on his face and embarrass us all? The skeptics were pleasantly surprised. Gibson had trained in Shakespearean theater in Australia and delivered his lines with unpretentious ease. Gibson's particular physical intensity, seen in his suicidal *Lethal Weapon* cop, translates well into his portrayal of the tortured prince. *Hamlet*, a tale of sex, incest, murder, and betrayal, is after all a very violent one, and Gibson does violence well. Alan Bates is superb as Claudius, the usurping king; Paul Scofield is a suitably anguished ghost; and Ophelia is played by Helena Bonham Carter. Glenn Close is terrific as Gertrude, and in the famous mother/son scene, her terror of her crazed son who forces her to confront her sins is shattering. Zeffirelli has cut and pasted the original script to make it as accessible as possible for a broad audience and sets the action in a gloomy and foreboding castle.

Tom Stoppard, the Czech-born British playwright, made his name in the early 1960s with his mercilessly funny stage play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. Twenty-some years later he directed the equally successful, and even funnier, movie version. The story follows the adventures of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor characters in *Hamlet*. Old school friends of the prince, the two are invited to Elsinore by Queen Gertrude and King Claudius to learn what is

making Hamlet so melancholy. British actors Gary Oldman and Tim Roth are hilarious as R and G as they stumble through the movie in a comic state of complete bewilderment. Brief snatches of the original dialog of *Hamlet* run throughout the movie, providing them with obvious clues as to what's going on, but the two can never quite get it. Even when the travelling players, led by Richard Dreyfus (one of his best-ever roles), put on a show that clearly foreshadows their eventual death by hanging, their ineptitude renders them incapable of helping themselves.

Romeo and Juliet's Australian director Luhrmann offers an explanation for the current proliferation of Shakespeare movies: "When you get to a time of change—moving toward the millennium—people start to interpret classic texts again. They start to look for those things that have a universal center. And they say 'What does it mean to us now?'" His version of the star-crossed lovers' story brings us hurtling into the garish 1990s. The prologue is delivered by a TV anchorwoman; Verona is now Verona Beach, a teaming Latin metropolis; and the feuding sword-wielding families, the Montagues and the Capulets, are now gun-packing warring gangs, who are first seen shooting it out in a gas station. Mercutio is a black drag queen, Juliet's nurse is a Latina spitfire, and the "wherefore art thou Romeo" balcony scene is set in a swimming pool. This not a movie for the Shakespeare purists, but Luhrmann's interpretation of Shakespeare's tale of power, politics, sex, and violence makes sense. If you want pristine *Romeo and Juliet*, he says, it'll always be there. It's no surprise to learn that Luhrmann has directed music videos. Much of this movie has just that look—frantic cutting, a succession of vivid images, and one sound blast after another, mostly rock. The movie is relentless razzle-dazzle, and it's exhausting to watch, but you'll probably be glad you went.

On the road Continued from page 4

to NASA, Boeing, Hamilton Standard, and ION Electronics scientists and engineers at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. They presented interim results of their efforts to develop mathematical models describing the performance of the potable water processor on board the International Space Station.

Professor Emeritus **Richard Heckel** presented an invited talk March 6 at the meeting of the Engineering Workforce Commission in Washington, DC, on his work on engineering education statistics. His databases include information on faculty, degrees, enrollments and research expenditures for all engineering colleges and departments since 1967 and allow a variety of ways to sort, rank, and classify the data.

Professor **James Gale** (SBE) presented a paper, "Inflation in a Transition Economy: The Case of China," coauthored by graduate student **Hai Tao Sun** (SBE/computer science) at the annual meeting of the Missouri Valley Economics Association, held February 28 in St. Louis, Missouri.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT MTU

The following positions will be posted Friday, April 4, 1997, at 1:00 p.m. through noon, Friday, April 11, 1997, in the Human Resources Office.

- Visiting Assistant Professor of Operations Management—School of Business and Economics
- Research Scientist II—Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Vice Provost for Instruction—Office of the Provost

University employees are reminded to apply in writing prior to noon, Friday, April 11, 1997, to be considered as internal candidates. Applicants from the recall pool will be given first consideration for non-bargaining-unit positions. Vacancy announcements are normally posted every Friday at 1:00 p.m. in the Human Resources Office. Complete job descriptions are available in the Human Resources Office or by calling 487-2280. More information regarding employment opportunities is available by calling the Job Line at 487-2895. Michigan Technological University is an equal opportunity educational institution/equal opportunity employer.