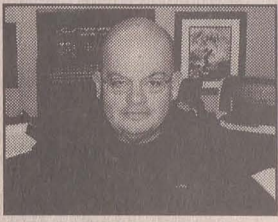


# Editorial/Commentary

November 2008

Page 3A

## How do you study? Is there a better way?



**Dr. Mark A. Curtis**  
Vice President for Instruction

To quote a song lyric by Trace Adkins: "It ain't no thinking thing, right brain left brain, it goes a little deeper than that."

As we near the end of one semester and anticipate the beginning of another, many of you are reflecting on what was learned, what was missed, grades, and of course doing better in the future. Learning, doing well, and getting good grades always involves the development of a system or process of study that works for you. In such a system, you must find a way of applying your mind to acquire knowledge and understanding. Students often say things like, "I need complete quiet to study" or "I like music or the television on when I study;" others speak to the time of day they study best or the fact they need the caffeine in coffee or pop to stay alert when studying. Yet, these preferences often miss the essence of what it means to study. In short, you need a comprehensive system of studying that works, regard-

less of the subject, its level of difficulty, or the style of the instructor.

Each faculty member here at Alpena Community College has devoted much of their lives to the particular discipline or subject they are teaching. Collectively, they want little more than to communicate important subject matter, knowledge, and information to their students. They love their subject and they want you to love it too. But if you do not or cannot love the subject, they want you to at least learn enough to pass the course and successfully integrate the knowledge and information received into your life and chosen field.

Having been both a student and an educator for the past 52 years (39 at the college level), I have given the whole process of teaching and learning a great deal of thought. At the very intersection of teaching and learning, we find the student studying. To that end, you have heard many people advise you to study, to study hard, but never explain how it is really done. Because of my interest in student success, and therefore, the process of studying, I have asked teachers, professors, tutors and very good students alike over the years to explain how they study. Remarkably, there has been a very high degree of consistency among all respondents; it involves four basic elements:

**Element 1:** This is the most basic of elements and involves attendance, paying attention, and

most importantly, actively taking good notes. Attendance is vitally important; in a 3-credit lecture course, you receive 45 hours of direct instruction from an expert who cares about the subject and you. Personally, I was, and to this day am not smart enough to miss class and do well, and I would guess that you and I are more alike than different. As you attend each class, take careful notes, especially noting things that are written on the board, displayed in a power point slide, or verbally emphasized by your instructor. Now set those notes aside.

But before I leave this first element, an observation: for many students in this generation, note taking seems to be a lost art. As I sit in on various course lectures (17 this semester alone), I rarely see students taking notes, most do not even have a pencil in their hand. The students seem to me to be taking in the lecture in a very passive manner as if they were watching TV. Don't get me wrong, I love to watch TV, but I would not want to take a test on a National Geographic special I saw a week ago. Again, active note-taking is of critical importance.

**Element 2:** Read the book and any supplemental materials carefully, outlining (i.e., taking hand written notes) as you go. Do not expect to read 20 pages and remember anything. Read and outline as you go.

**Element 3:** Complete all assigned work, readings, doing problems, writing papers and reports to the best of your ability and turn in this work on time.

**Element 4:** Take your class notes and your outlined notes from the readings and rewrite them into a single consolidated set of notes. At this point, you have a streamlined set of materials in your own handwriting that will form the basis for your studying and learning.

The system described above is a powerful system of studying that is rooted in theory and honed in practice. It involves many of the senses: hearing and seeing in class, the physical act of taking notes, reading, doing problems, and writing involves repetition, time on task and various ways in which the brain receives and integrates information.

By now, some of you may be saying, "of course anybody who goes to class every day, pays attention, takes good notes, completes the readings and other assignments on time, and then studies a comprehensive set of notes will do well and learn a great deal." That's right; I think you have got it.

If you have read this far and are thinking you do all those things, but there is too much information to remember, let me give you another technique that has worked for me. It allowed me to pass both my core and specialty comprehensive exams, which in part, lead to the earn-

ing of my doctoral degree. It is based upon how many in my generation first learned the ABC's; by singing "abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz and tuv wx y and z, now I know my ABC's, tell me what you think of me!" Along the same line, many of you listen to whole CD's full of your favorite music; you know every word, the next note, the next song and you will remember these notes and lyrics for decades to come. Trust me, it's true.

So, here is how it works: record a reading of your consolidated notes (see Element 4 above). Then listen to the recording several times over the days preceding a test of final exam. Once you get used to the sound of your own voice, the same phenomenon that allows you to recall song lyrics verbatim will take effect and you will be able to recall whole volumes of information by mentally working through your recorded notes.

Finally, I would like to tell you that my two years at Kellogg Community College in my home town of Battle Creek were the two most important years of learning and intellectual growth of my life, save possibly years 2 and 3 of my life as a toddler. So, take advantage of your time at ACC, the small class sizes, first-rate facilities, and caring and knowledgeable faculty, by laying the foundation for the rest of your life by thorough, serious study.

Good luck, and my door is always open over in Van Lare Hall 109D.

## News staff members

### Arielle Peirce

By Kayla Miller  
Staff Writer

Arielle Peirce is one girl who might not have had the same dream since a young girl, but she is in the process of still finding it, if she hasn't yet already. Like most, Peirce has changed her occupational goal several times, but for a long time she wanted to be an elementary teacher. Peirce is now 19 years old, and has her mind set on being an entertainment news reporter, similar to Entertainment Tonight TV. She knows she can do it because somewhere perhaps there has always been a part of her that shouts out, "reporting!" Peirce said she fell in love with writing when she was given her first journal as a gift for Valentines Day from her mom when she was only 6 years old. This made Peirce fall in love with the comfort of writing. She now has 12 journals completed, filled with written secrets, emotions, daily struggles, mostly life in general. Her journals are her way to vent. It was becoming clearer that Peirce had a passion for writing all along; she just had to find it in herself.



"It is important to live your life with no regret, don't hold back just live for the moment", Peirce said.

She knows that she can't spend her life being a mirror image of everyone else. Peirce believes it is important to set your standards high, and make the very best out of every situation. Though Peirce's parents are separated, their relationship is still close said Peirce. Peirce said her mother Mary is considered her biggest inspiration in life. Her mom has taught her to have hope and faith so that that she can always keep that drive of integrity inside her.

"You can only have hope, don't dwell on the simple things in life", says Mary. Peirce feels that her mom has given her that hope she needed to get her to where she is today and for her future to come.

Peirce has many hidden fears, one that she is not ashamed to admit. It is failure to live up to the expectations for her future. She knows she has to get to the point where she needs to be, so that she can accomplish her dreams of being a reporter. Peirce has been writing for 13 years, she doesn't intend on giving up on it either. She is going to continue her schooling at Alpena Community College taking journalism as her major.

ily. If there was a problem, we were there for each other. If something good happened, we praised one another," Welch said.

Work camp is slightly different. Welch spent a week of her summer in a different city to help others in need, such as painting houses. It was a youth group affair and she says it was something they wanted to participate in as a whole. Along with work camp came a chance to grow closer with her crew, which were people assigned apart from the church to help with the job.

"There is one kid that sticks out in my head from work camp. His name is Josh and he lives in Illinois. No matter what was going on, he could always make you laugh," Welch said.

From these endeavors, Welch believes one can obtain important life lessons, gratifying encounters, and of course, new friends that may stick with one forever. The U.S. isn't the only ground Welch has yet to cover.

"The only place that I still want to go is Europe. My ultimate life goal is to backpack through the country and write about my experiences," Welch said.

### Katie Welch

By Arielle Peirce  
Staff Writer

From family vacations and weddings to school and church trips, Katie Welch has covered a decent portion of the United States. She has journeyed to twelve states, some of them more than once, and Florida holds the top spot in most visits. Puerto Rico is in the mix as well. With all of her traveling, Welch claimed to have the flying on a plane ordeal down pat.

"I have been on a lot of planes because my dad flies for a living," Welch said.

The highlight of all of her adventures, said Welch, is the Summer Seminary Samplers and work camps. The Sampler was a three week stay in Ohio where eight high schoolers and high school graduates from all over the country group together and experienced what seminary life is like. Seminary life included service projects in the morning, class in the afternoon, and evenings and weekends for hanging out with friends.

"The friends I met at the Sampler became like fam-

Continued from 1A

## Barack Obama on the issues...

**Women's Rights:** He wants to enforce the Equal Pay Act, encourages investing in women-owned businesses and supports a woman's right to reproductive choice. He says he will protect Title IX, making sure women get the same education that men do.

**Job Market:** Obama aims to support American workers compete in the world market by making long-term investments in education, training and work force development. He also wants to raise minimum wage, making sure full-time workers have a compensatory income. As president, he will stop tax breaks going to companies that send jobs overseas.

**Education:** He plans to reform and fund the No Child Left Behind act. He also supports giving increased funding to early childhood education programs such as Head Start. Obama wants to increase the maximum Pell Grant in order to ease the pains of tuition. In addition, he says he will create a new tax credit worth

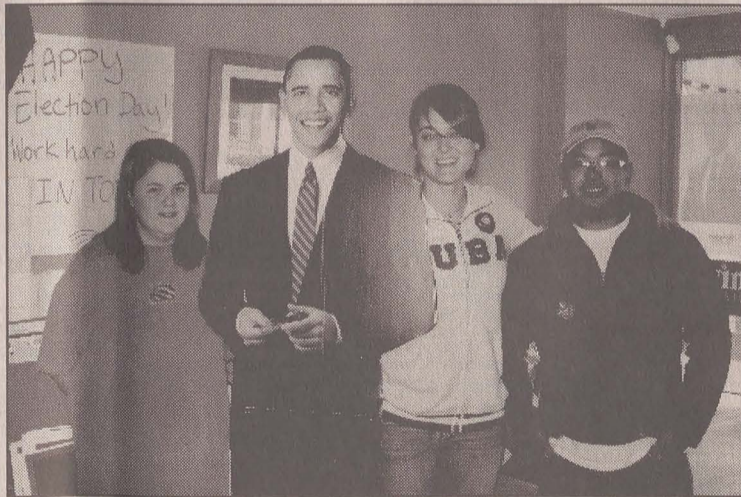
\$4000 that students would be able to get in exchange for 100 community service hours.

**Second Amendment:** The president-elect believes that this is a constitutional right all Americans possess. He said he will support the rights and traditions of sportsmen, and will oppose confiscation of legally bought firearms.

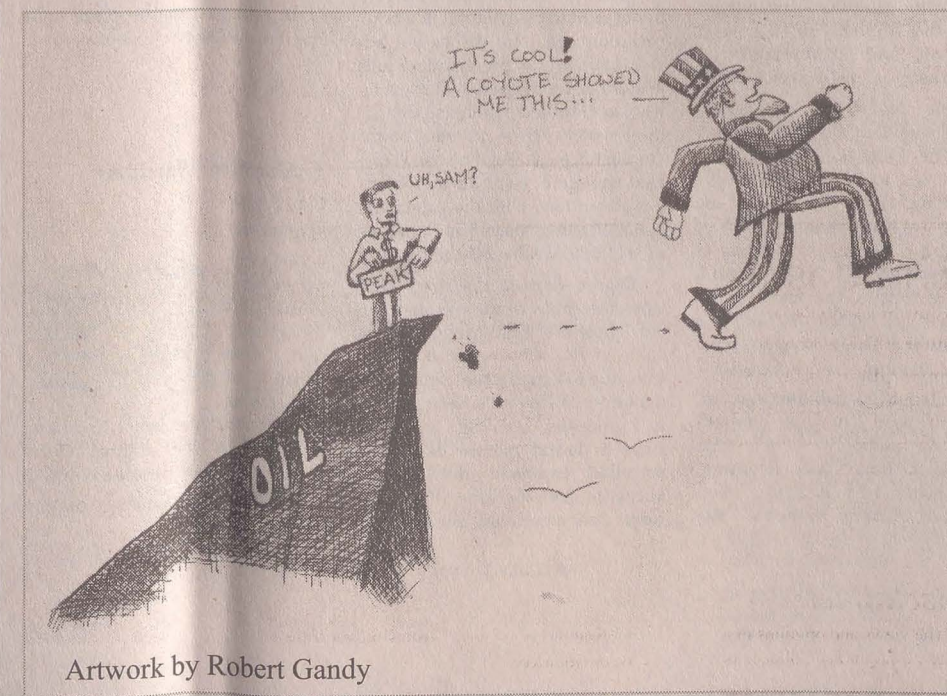
**Stem Cell Research:** Obama stands up for the use of stem cell research. However, he recognizes a need for the research to be conducted ethically, using only the embryos that would be thrown away. He wants to increase the amount of stem cell lines available for research by allowing research on stem cells from embryos that were donated for in vitro fertilization.

**Health Care:** He wants to introduce a bill that would permit everyone under 25 to remain on their parent's insurance plan.

Source: [www.BarackObama.com/issues](http://www.BarackObama.com/issues)



News photo Renata Bur  
Anna Brindley, Justin Gomez, and Peter Childs pose with a cardboard figure of Barack Obama at the Democratic Campaign office in downtown Alpena.



Artwork by Robert Gandy