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For Immediate Release

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WMU JOURNALISM STUDENTS TAKE OVER ENCORE MAGAZINE’S MAY ISSUE

If they were given a magazine to write, what would today’s college journalists write about? That question is answered in May’s issue of Encore Magazine, a regional lifestyle magazine based in Kalamazoo and serving Southwest Michigan.

The May 2017 issue was written almost entirely by a team of junior- and senior-level Western Michigan University journalism students taught by Professor Sue Ellen Christian in the WMU School of Communication. For their senior capstone experience, five aspiring journalists — Carolyn Diana, Samantha Marzke, Samantha May, Jay Penny and Greyson Steele — conceptualized, reported, researched and wrote the feature articles in the magazine and also, in many cases, took photographs to accompany the articles.

The students’ articles are in keeping with Encore’s mission of showcasing the greater Kalamazoo community, but, the articles have a decidedly WMU bent. Among the stories are an in-depth feature on how technology has revolutionized the academic and social lives of college students, an article about a program that addresses student hunger and economic need, a profile of an inventive cellist, and another about an enterprising student who has turned custom-dyed socks into a viable business and a montage on how dorm décor has evolved over the decades.

Encore editor Marie Lee says that the project was conceived in collaboration with Professor Christian to encourage and showcase future journalists.

“In a time when journalism is under fire and people wonder about its future, we want to showcase just how important journalism education is,” Lee says. “Not only do these young writers give us great stories about people and initiatives at their own university, but this issue spotlights their talents and the outstanding journalism training they are receiving through WMU’s School of Communication.”

The project was a semester-long endeavor for the five students who began in January working on content for the May issue. Sue Ellen Christian says it was an important and exciting collaboration that is in keeping with the intent of the journalism program’s capstone reporting course, which focuses in depth on a single topic or project throughout the semester.
"The Encore collaboration was a mountain-top experience for the students because they were treated as professionals, received excellent editing and were highly motivated to get the facts and stories right. They were able to put into practice all the lessons they'd learned throughout their program at WMU, and had a great time doing it," says Christian.

The issue will be available May 1 and will be available at public distribution points around the greater Kalamazoo area and online at encorekalamazoo.com.

To view the digital edition of Encore’s May 2017 issue, visit http://issuu.com/issuuencore/docs/encore_may2017?e=4962941/47832685

Hometown Information for Students:

Carolyn Diana, 22, is from Beverly, Illinois, and graduated in April from Western Michigan University with bachelor's degrees in journalism and Spanish.

Samantha Marzke, 22, is from St. Joseph, Michigan, and graduated from Western Michigan University in April with a bachelor’s degree in journalism.

Samantha May, 21, is from Washington, Michigan, and graduated in April from Western Michigan University in April with a bachelor’s degree in film, video, and media studies.

Jay Penny, 39, is from Edwardsburg, Michigan, and graduated from Western Michigan University in April with a bachelor’s degree in journalism. He will pursue a graduate degree in communication at WMU this fall.

Greyson Steele, 20, is from Plainwell, Michigan, and is a third-year journalism major at Western Michigan University who will graduate in 2018.

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