

# insights

For a Diverse Campus Community

## Welcome to *INSIGHTS*

Welcome to *INSIGHTS*, a new electronic newsletter at SCSU that will raise topics and create conversations. At first glance, the last thing we need around here is another “talking head” about ideas, especially provocative ideas. So allow me just a moment of your time to put *INSIGHTS* into perspective.

During the recent past, the university has been put under bright lights about various diversity issues. Those bright lights have created their own polarizing effects, so we thought that a newsletter like *INSIGHTS* might be valuable. Our goal is to provide diversity information throughout our campus community so that issues are illuminated in a necessary fashion but without all the “bright lights.” Beyond the important function of passing on critical information that affirms our community as safe and responsive, this newsletter’s purpose is to stimulate conversations about how the many ideas about diversity are experienced in real life.

We hope that the newsletter gets your attention, not as a siren warning of another crisis, but rather as a set of friendly voices you might hear sitting near you on a bench while enjoying the warm spring sunshine. We want to offer a place where those voices can be heard and ultimately invite other voices to respond, creating an open and civil conversation.

This is our first edition and as such it remains in a fluid and experimental format. We are clear about our communal and university responsibilities regarding diversity, and at the same time, promise that this newsletter will not be another set of bright lights that blind any of us from being able to see one another.

The very title of the newsletter is both an invitation and a promise. We invite you who want to join in the often risky process of sharing an “insight,” or new idea that comes from within. We promise that what we share is for the purpose of encouraging our readers, always ourselves, to think about the topics in different ways, in the hope that we will gain that most precious gift, a new way of knowing ourselves and others -- having an insight.

The feature story in the first edition is about symbols on campus. Just thinking about some of the “symbols,” we hope will add to our way of thinking about SCSU. I am pleased to be among this daring group of SCSU community members who are donating their time and effort to share just a few of their own “insights” in the hope that we can all see life here at SCSU with greater clarity and hope.

Joseph A. Edelheit  
Convening editor  
Director of Jewish Studies Program

## A note from the President

### UNIVERSITY COLLEAGUES:

I am pleased to introduce the second communication about diversity activities on our campus this year. This inaugural *INSIGHTS* electronic newsletter is a look at the diverse and evocative issues and ideas that are being brought up through special events, initiatives, projects and discussions happening every day on our campus.

I encourage you to get involved in this significant publication by reading it and contributing suggestions and story ideas for future issues. It’s important to have many voices heard in this quarterly, interactive newsletter, and I hope you will find it valuable and insightful.

Roy H. Saigo  
President

### INSIGHTS ADVISORY BOARD

Joseph Edelheit	Bill Huntzicker
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*INSIGHTS* welcomes your ideas for making this new publication a more comprehensive and interactive tool for communication about diversity issues and activities on the SCSU campus. Please contact [Insights@StCloudState.edu](mailto:Insights@StCloudState.edu) if you have suggestions or comments, or if you want to write or suggest a column.

# signs

# & symbols

## The Aluminum Triangle with Colored Lights

By Joseph A. Edelheit

I am new on campus. I never expected to be invited to the maintenance office in mid-December to discuss an electrified aluminum triangle on the roof of one of the dorms. I met a whole group of hard-working people who serve our campus community who are rarely acknowledged.

Even before I came to SCSU, I'd heard a great deal of discussion about the "December Dilemma." This is a period of the year when the public seems consumed by Christmas. The "dilemma" is that many people do not see Christmas as either a holy day or a holiday. This time of the year overflows with symbols -- symbols that include and at the same time exclude some people.

So when the maintenance staff created a seasonal symbol, an aluminum triangle with colored lights, they called the new director of Jewish Studies. Their "symbol" of a Christmas tree was not offensive, but a rather benign attempt to signify for the many people who work outdoors after both students and faculty leave, that they share a seasonal holiday, even here at a state public university.

I spent more than an hour explaining many "symbols" that afternoon and urged everyone to ask questions so we could really understand each other. Everyone was pleased that a member of the faculty would take the time to explain symbols and how they affect different people. I also learned a lot that day from people I did not know but whose work is vital to my presence here. I learned that this little aluminum triangle with colored lights affirmed their sense of seasonal joy. None of them intended to slight me or anyone else. In fact, they would love to add symbols to be more inclusive. Perhaps others saw the lit aluminum triangle on the roof and smiled while still others saw it and were offended. Symbols do that to people.

For me it was and always will be a symbol not of the season but of the people who work so hard and are rarely recognized for their part in this university community. Those people are really important to our lives here, and their aluminum triangle with colored lights is important to them. I am delighted to be present with them in the presence of their symbol.



### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCSU BEING CLOSE TO THE RIVER:

By Adam Klepetar

People in the St. Cloud community seem to enjoy living near a river or at least some sort of important body of water, though many admit that they have taken the Mississippi River for granted. Many people seem upset with the city for "turning its back on the river." Some of the people I interviewed acknowledged that in St. Cloud the river has high banks, and was never a primary use of transportation so they understand why the city didn't grow in harmony with it. A lot of people related the river to exercise and losing weight. People enjoy exercising by the running water. "The river is constantly moving and constantly evolving. It just seems to be the best place to jog, or walk or bike; there is something very ... well, right about being active there." Another amazing thing about the river is that it is such a symbol of connectivity; it is rather humbling to think that the Mississippi runs into the gulf and then to the Ocean and the same water could flow from St. Cloud all the way around the world.



### VALHALLA

By Anne Zemek de Dominguez

Every day we walk by Valhalla in the Atwood Center. Valhalla provides a place for us to sit down and enjoy a meal with friends and colleagues. Valhalla in Norse mythology refers to the Hall of the Slain, which is presided over by Odin, the chief divinity of the Norse pantheon. Odin is the Norse god of war and death and also the god of poetry and wisdom. Odin has only one eye because he traded his other eye for a drink from the well of wisdom, in order to gain immense knowledge. Valhalla was said to be a vast hall with 540 doors; the rafters were spears, roofed with the shields and breastplates of slain warriors. The Valkyries, Odin's beautiful armor clad female messengers and spirits of war, swoop over the battlefield on flying horses to pick up the most valiant of fallen Vikings from the battlefields and bring them to Valhalla to feast with Odin and other fallen heroes. Unlike our Valhalla, in Odin's Valhalla resides a goat named Heithrun from whose teats flow and endless supply of mead. The symbols and images conjured up by naming our dining room Valhalla are apt in many ways for an institution of higher education in this northern locale. The images of Valhalla personally harken me back to my studies of Latin American Modernist poets who wrote about mythological symbols such as Valhalla as a means to express their yearnings for past glory.



## SYMBOL OF JUSTICE

By Owen Zimpel

The concept of justice receives much consideration in disability conversations. Should the distribution of limited resources be a strictly one person equals one share prospect? Some feel it is fair to give a larger share to those who have the better prospect of valuable contribution to the greater good. Others feel that a larger share should be given to those who have a greater need in order to level the playing field. What reflects true justice?



## HANDICAPPED PARKING SIGN

By Owen Zimpel

The stick person in a wheelchair on a blue background gets different reactions from different people: What does this symbol mean on a parking spot? “Why are there so many?” “Sometimes when they are all full I have to park in a regular spot. When I have to walk too far, sometimes I’m not sure I can make it.” “The symbol is demeaning and leads to stereotypes.” “It’s nice to have a simple symbol that everyone can recognize.”



## THE JANE GREY SWISSELM PLAQUE

By Bill Huntzicker

Jane Grey Swisshelm seldom kept her strong opinions to herself, so it would not surprise her to learn that a plaque erected in her memory by the Minnesota Historical Society at SCSU became the subject of protest in recent years. In fact, the historic marker stands between Shoemaker Hall and the river near where protesters nearly 150 years ago broke into her St. Cloud Visiter (yes, that’s how she spelled it) newspaper office, smashed her printing press and threw type into the Mississippi River.

Swisshelm, an ardent abolitionist, angered prominent residents over slavery and politics. Although she advocated freedom for African-Americans, she wrote racist attacks on American Indians during the Dakota War of 1862.

Before coming to Minnesota, she had earned a national reputation advocating women’s rights and opposing slavery.

With financial help from across the nation, Swisshelm rebuilt her newspaper and changed the name to the St. Cloud Democrat. After resisting pressure from both the powerful and the mobs, she left St. Cloud during the Civil War.



## The Husky

By Adam Klepetar

People’s associations with the SCSU Husky often depend upon their views of SCSU. It was interesting to hear one faculty member talk about seeing a husky in real life and associating it with being untrustworthy, cunning, and sly. Others commented on its beauty, strength, power, and work ethic and on the ability to domesticate and educate the dogs as well. Another common association is with winter and dog sledding.

Since its athletic program began in the 1890s, St. Cloud State has gone through several mascots and nicknames, including “Normals,” “Teachers,” “Bear Cats,” “Peds,” and “Flying Clouds.” The first two were associated with the school’s name and purpose: The St. Cloud Normal School educated teachers.

Theories more than facts provide us with our ideas about how the nickname “Huskies” began to be used. One says that it is a result of a student contest. Another suggests that the name originated with the football team. A story in the Feb. 4, 1938, edition of the College Chronicle referred to the “football huskies.” Because huskies was not capitalized in the story, the author could have been referring to the team’s size. The story or the idea could have led to the nickname.

Another theory is that the nickname originated within the football team. “I think it occurred during Coach Kasch’s days as football coach (1935-42),” said John Weisman, former football coach and dean of men. “The team just started calling themselves the ‘Huskies.’”

Why the name was chosen or who exactly selected it remains unclear. The name could have been intended to mean “burly, robust or large,” “one that is husky,” or “a heavily coated working dog of the arctic region.” Perhaps the nickname was meant to encompass all three meanings.

### 1 What events has SCSU sponsored for prospective students from diverse backgrounds?

“What’s Next,” a recruitment event held March 5 this year in the Twin Cities on the Minneapolis Community and Technical College to entice students of color (SOC) to attend SCSU.

College Day, planned by cultural organizations but overseen and financially supported by Admissions. Over 100 high school juniors and seniors of color stay on campus for two days with an overnight stay included.

We have hosted numerous MEP, TRIO, and future educator groups on campus for daily visits.

### 2 How are the SOC numbers looking for next year?

As of March 25, the numbers are up. I can only anticipate they will continue to follow suit. We have admitted 224 SOC, compared to 208 at this time last year – a 7.7 percent increase in SOC admits.

### 3 How have the SCSU faculty and staff been helpful in the recruitment of SOC?

To be honest, the SCSU faculty and staff have surprised us with their personal level of commitment to outreach with SOC. If we had to single out one of the many who have showed a personal level of commitment, it would be Dr. Carolyn Williams, Dean of the College of Social Sciences. She frequently inquires about the numbers of applicants and events sponsored to recruit and retain a diverse student body. She has volunteered to accompany us to high schools visits, as well as agreed to be a guest speaker at our programs.

Hedy Tripp, Robert Johnson and others involved in Pipeline programs are instrumental in exposing young SOC to SCSU through their summer programs.

Several Latino and Latina faculty (Flora Calderon-Steck, Steve Cassanova, Margaret Villanueva and Augusto Rojas) have offered to contact Latino/a students in an effort to connect with them and develop relationships with admitted and prospective students.

Several faculty (Dia Cha, Carolyn Williams, Augusto Rojas to name a few) have attended high school visits, community college visits and college fairs and have met with students on campus during visit days.

### 4 What are some of the reasons SCSU is a good fit for an SOC?

In one word: “Opportunities”!

### 5 Are there any upcoming events the admissions office is sponsoring for SOC?

Yes, we are planning an event to bring SOC from the service area on campus for a day-long event! Details to be announced:

- Onsite admission programs at high schools with high SOC populations
- SOC Accuplacer testing day; this year on April 13.
- A high school event for admitted students on financial aide, math placement and APP promotion
- A “What’s Next” event on campus similar to the one at MCTC on March 5
- ACT prep workshop offered on campus for local SOC (working with School District 742)
- MEP juniors will be visiting in the spring
- Other SOC groups, including TRIO, continue to visit campus throughout the spring and summer.

## CARE Leadership Team Completes Intensive Anti-Racist Training Event

The recently commissioned 30-member Community Anti-Racist Education Initiative (CARE) Leadership Team completed a three-day, intensive anti-racist team formation training event in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. The overall purpose of the workshop was to provide the team with a training event for anti-racism leadership at St. Cloud State University. The workshop builds on the context created during the Planning and Design stage of the CARE Initiative.

The goals of the workshop were to develop the basis for team members to work together with a shared purpose and common vision regarding their leadership role at SCSU and within the greater St. Cloud community. The training was an opportunity to deepen the bonds of collegiality among the team members and facilitate the creation of an initial organizing agenda for the team’s work at SCSU. The team developed a deeper understanding of racism and the

processes of anti-racist institutional organizing. The team focused on clarifying their role in the process of dismantling racism at SCSU and in the community. Finally the team developed a vision of anti-racist institutional transformation relevant to SCSU and the greater St. Cloud community.

The training was developed by the Minnesota Collaborative Anti-Racism Initiative and facilitated by James Addington, co-director of Tri-Council Coordinating Commission; Karen McKinney, Assistant Professor Bethel College; and Carmen Valenzuela, co-director of Tri-Council Coordinating Commission. The workshop was made possible by funding from St. Cloud State University and the Otto Bremer Foundation. For more information concerning the training, contact Debra Leigh, principal investigator at [DLEigh@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:DLEigh@stcloudstate.edu) or (320) 308-2214.

## Villanueva, Calderon-Steck lead conference on Latinas in Central Minnesota

Latina immigrants in the St. Cloud area want more education and less welfare than the social workers who serve the group had thought.

Two SCSU faculty members, Margaret Villanueva and Flora Calderon-Steck, explained their research and led a United Way-sponsored forum and training session on Latina Immigrants in Central Minnesota on March 24.

About 80 participants attended the forum that focused on the findings of the groundbreaking one-year research project on Latina immigrants in St. Cloud and the surrounding region. Some of the data refuted media stereotypes and provided more depth and understanding to the information many Minnesotans have about their Latina neighbors.

For example, the study discovered that one of the top priorities for the women interviewed was higher education. Seventy percent of the women Villanueva and Calderon-Steck interviewed said a college education was an important need, and 20 percent named higher education as an urgent need. By contrast, only 2 percent of the service providers who answered the women's survey thought higher education would be an urgent need for their Latina clients, and 45 percent identified it as an important need.

In other findings, the survey identified home and family as driving forces for the area's Latina women. For example, the Latina focus groups said they came to this area of the country because they consider it calm/tranquil, safe, and family-oriented.

Seeking welfare benefits did not surface as a reason for coming to Minnesota. Only 5 percent said they were receiving welfare benefits. Among the service providers answering the survey, 11 percent perceived welfare benefits as a reason for Latinas to come to Minnesota.

"The perception of many Minnesotans is that they come because of good welfare benefits, but generally speaking, we found that very few Latinas are receiving welfare or other social services. Indeed, two-thirds of the women interviewed reported that they are workers," said Calderon-Steck, an instructor in ethnic studies at SCSU. "Another perception of Latinos as temporary migrant workers is not reflected in the experiences of Latinas in our sample. Latinas are part of a community that has been settling down in rural Central Minnesota. Seventy percent of the women in the sample have lived in Minnesota longer than three years."

This unique study is important for many reasons, including the rapid growth of the Latino/Latina population in this region, a 166 percent rise between the 1990 census and the 2000 census. "And these data are very likely underreported,"



*Margaret Villanueva, center; and Flora Calderon-Steck, right, talk with a forum participant.*

said Dr. Villanueva, who teaches a class on Latino communities. Projections are for the population of Latinos/Latinas to increase from 2.75 percent in 2000 to 6.61 percent in 2025.

The survey found knowledge and perception gaps between service providers and their clients concerning information and services that would help this population succeed. The most striking was the high percentage of Latinas surveyed who said they needed to know how to find out about services including medical care and cultural information.

Ninety-six Latina residents were interviewed, and 47 service providers responded to the survey. The study was supported by the Center for Rural Policy Development, Mankato State University, and carried out by Villanueva, Calderon-Steck, community studies Professor Luke Tripp and former mass communications faculty member Iliia Rodriguez, who has moved to the University of New Mexico.

The written feedback received from the audience at the training session will be analyzed to include in the final report to the Center for Rural Policy & Development (<http://www.mnsu.edu/ruralmn/>).



### SCSU hosts international 'Coexistence' exhibition

St. Cloud State University is hosting a three-week showing of the international poster exhibition titled "Coexistence" March 24-April 15 in the Atwood Theatre Lounge.

The exhibition, which consists of 31 large posters created by artists from around the world for the Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem, Israel, endeavors to make a contribution to the way individuals think about and treat the "others" in our societies. This universal visual message has been seen in the form of a giant outdoor billboard exhibition by millions of people in cities across Europe, South Africa and North America.

The actual billboard exhibition is being shown in Minneapolis from May 1 through July 6. "It's exciting for St. Cloud State to be hosting this preview of the Twin Cities event," said Joseph Edelheit, director of the SCSU Jewish Studies program.

Dr. Stephen Feinstein, director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Minnesota, spoke March 24 at the opening reception about the posters' "Lessons for a Civil Society and the Tyranny of Words."

Mark Eden of the SCSU mass communication faculty gave a talk March 31 on the meaning and value of the posters from the point of view of a graphic artist.

Sponsors of the exhibition were the Jewish Studies program and Office of Jewish Communal Activities and Resources, the Jewish Faculty Association, Committee on Diversity, Anti-Semitism and Social Justice of the Faculty Senate, and Community Studies.

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**"This exhibition intends to highlight in a creative way the art of living together. Here we see art as a language with no boundaries. It is...universal and it speaks to all ages, to all religions and to all nationalities."**

*Raphie Etgar, curator of the Coexistence Exhibition*

#### HIT MOVIE SPARKS DEBATE

Nearly 300 people gathered in Ritsche Hall Auditorium on March 10 to participate in a campus/community discussion on Mel Gibson's controversial movie, "The Passion of the Christ." Faculty from SCSU and the College of St. Benedicts participated in the panel discussion. The event was sponsored by the Jewish Studies program and the Office of Jewish Communal Activities and Resources.

#### REBUILDING HUMAN CONNECTIONS

Dr. Ervin Staub from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, spoke on "Reconciliation and the Rebuilding of Human Connections" April 12 in Ritsche Auditorium. Dr. Staub talked about the aftermath of genocide, especially in Rwanda, and of other mass violence, and the rebuilding of human connections. This program is jointly sponsored by the SCSU Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Jewish Studies Program.

#### DIVERSITY TRAINING MAY JOIN CONVOCATION

Human Resources is working in partnership with the Provost's Office to plan activities and sessions focusing on diversity education and in-service training for faculty and staff during Convocation. Dimensions of diversity and multiculturalism will be covered. The Human Resources Office will provide more information as arrangements are finalized. Watch for announcements in your convocation materials.

- The “Triumph of Life -- Holocaust Survivors” exhibition of photographs commemorating the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, originally scheduled for April 1-May 15 in the Atwood Gallery, was rescheduled for fall because of Atwood construction projects.
- During Social Justice Week March 21-27 writer, performer and community organizer Juliana Pegues led a presentation on the “Portrayal of Asian Americans in the Media.”
- Women’s activist Fahima Vorgetts told the history of her native Afghanistan, focusing on the need for human rights for women, at a presentation on the “Afghani Women’s Resistance” March 31. She told of her efforts to empower women in her country to lead productive, self-sufficient lives and to participate in the reconstruction of their country.
- A production of “A Woman, Ain’t I? Sojourner Truth” was enacted March 9 as part of SCSU’s commemoration of Women’s History Month. Boston actress Kathryn Woods portrayed Sojourner, recalling her early days as a slave, her work with Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman and her advocacy for freedom and women’s rights.
- Mai Neng Moua and Ka Vang presented “Hmong Women of the 21st Century,” a celebration of Hmong women’s achievements and contributions to society, on April 12. Moua is executive director of the Hmong American Institute for Learning and is founder and former editor of Paj Ntaub Voice, the premier Hmoob/Hmong literary arts journal. Vang is a playwright, fiction writer and poet.
- Award-winning Chinese writer, poet, and Macalester College faculty member Wang Ping will give a talk at the 2004 East Asian Studies Spring Forum April 14. Her discussion titled “Bronze and Lotus: Women in China,” is sponsored by the East Asian Studies Program, the East Asian Faculty and Staff Association and the History Department. Ping’s fifth book, *Aching for Beauty: Footbinding in China*, was the 2001 finalist for the Minnesota Book Award for “the best book in the humanities published by an American university press.”



## SCSU 2003 MnSCU 1B.1 Complaint Report

Produced by: Tracy Bowe, SCSU Lead Investigator

In 2003, twelve complaints were processed by the Designated Officer under MnSCU Policy 1B.1, Nondiscrimination in Employment and Educational Opportunity. The following is a summary of the complaint data for 2003 as compared to 2002:

CATEGORY OF COMPLAINT / CALENDAR YEAR	2002	2003
Race	3	3
Sex/Gender	6	8
Color	0	0
Creed	0	0
Religion	1	0
Age	0	2
National Origin	2	2
Disability	0	0
Marital Status	0	0
Status w/ Regard to Public Assistance	0	0
Sexual Orientation	1	0
Membership/Activity in Local Commission	0	0
Retaliation	0	0
Total by Category per Year *	13	15
* Total reflects complaints alleging more than one category.		
Total Number of Complaints per Year	11	12

**Informal Resolution Level:** Eight cases were processed at the informal resolution level and resolved by the designated officer. One case is on hold by agreement of the parties.

**Formal Resolution Level:** Three cases were processed at the formal resolution level and sent to decision makers. In one of those cases the decision maker found that a violation of the policy had been substantiated and discipline was recommended. In the other two cases the decision maker did not find a violation.

### COMPLAINANT V. RESPONDENT STATUS IN 2003:

Student v. Staff:	1
Student v. Faculty:	3
Student v. Other	2
Faculty v. Faculty:	3
Faculty v. Staff:	1
Faculty v. Administration:	2

Note: Student v. Student complaints are handled by Student Life and Development