

# MONROE DOCTRINE

DECEMBER 10, 2012

Volume 60, Issue 2

## FACULTY NEGOTIATIONS AT IMPASSE

**Christopher Morris**

PROVISIONAL WRITER

Contract negotiations between Monroe Community College and the Faculty Association have been stalled since August. Although both the FA and MCC administration declined to discuss the negotiations specifically, citing confidentiality of labor negotiations. It is widely known that the cost of health insurance and the minimum number of adjunct professors are topics of disagreement.

MCC President Anne Kress said in a statement that "the Board of Trustees are committed to resolving negotiations with the FA in a manner that is fair for union members, that recognizes the long term financial challenges facing our state and our students, and that leaves MCC prepared for the future."

These contracts give faculty a voice regarding the terms of their employment. A contract also establishes a historical record of the relationship between the board of trustees and the faculty. "The people who work at MCC don't work here because they intend on making a lot of money, we are here because we are passionate about education, dedicated to our jobs and we have

a sense of commitment to the students." Faculty Association President Bethany Gizzi said.

The breakdown in talks is part of a national trend of high-profile public union disputes such as Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's attempt to severely curb government employees rights to collective bargaining agreements to Chicago mayor Rahm Emmanuel's battle with the Chicago Public Schools teacher's union. The private sector also

*"We're still here, we're still working hard, we're still going above and beyond, even though we are working without a contract"*

- Bethany Gizzi

hasn't been immune from these circumstances; the National Football League, National Hockey League, Wal-Mart and New York City fast food industry have all recently seen prominent strikes, lockouts and other contractual disputes. Monroe County's public sector workers also recently experienced

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MCC President Anne Kress contemplates Athesia Benjamin's "Fair Contract Now" at the faculty art exhibition. photo by Anthony Bristol

## Approval sought for Master Plan Complex scheme calls for massive changes

**John Z. Walthall**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Monroe Community College is seeking government approval for a sweeping multi-year renovation and construction proposal called The Master Plan. The plan calls for a new building on the Brighton Campus as well as drastic remodeling of several existing Brighton buildings and an addition to the Applied Technologies center on a time frame from 2013-2018.

Under the plan Building 6 is to be completely reconstructed and all services for students will be consolidated there. Services such as Registration & Records, Counseling and Advising, Bursar, Health Services, Services for Students with Disabilities and others are currently scattered around the campus. The faculty offices and classrooms there now will be relocated elsewhere.

The Building 6 remodel is based on traffic patterns, the most

trafficked student services such as advising will be on the ground floor, the least like health services and services for students with disabilities will be on the top floor. A large, hospital-size elevator will be installed to bring injured or disabled students to this floor without using stairs. The plan aims to create what MCC Assistant Vice President for Institutional Planning Raymond Shea called "a one stop shop."

The plan also calls for the construction of a new 80,000 square foot Interdisciplinary Learning Commons in front of building 5. The new ILC will house an entirely new library, the electronic learning center, a café and individual and group carrels as well as offices for the ETS-Library and Instructional Technologies divisions of Educational Technology Services, presently also distributed in multiple campus buildings. The existing library is to become classrooms on floors 1-3

and offices on floor 4, including some of the offices displaced by the renovation of Building 6.

Raymond Shea called the plan "the physical manifestation of the strategic plan" (see sidebar p.2) saying that the Master Plan puts the college's vision for the future into effect for the physical buildings and addresses long-standing problems with the college facilities.

*"It's a giant wish-list, you have to put it all on the table."*

- Bob Cunningham

ties.

In March of 2012 the planning office sought the input of administrators, faculty, staff and students. Documents obtained by *The Monroe Doctrine* from the planning office indicate persistent concerns with the state of the library, lack of study and social space, insufficient computer labs

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## Astronauts selected for groundbreaking yearlong ISS mission

**Amy Hubbard**

Los Angeles Times (MCT)

NASA and Russia's space agency are pushing ahead with plans for a yearlong stay in space, choosing the two men who will undertake the mission.

Scott Kelly, a NASA veteran with more than 180 days in space, and Russia's Mikhail Kornienko are scheduled to launch in spring 2015 to spend a year aboard the International Space Station, according to a NASA news release. A main goal of the expedition is to determine the effects of such a long stay on the human body.

"The one-year increment will expand the bounds of how we live and work in space," William Gerstenmaier, associate administrator for human exploration and operations at NASA headquarters in Washington, said in the release.

Scientists have been monitoring how shorter stays aboard the ISS \_ which has been occu-

ried for 12 years \_ have affected physical aspects including muscle mass, strength and bone density. But horizons for manned missions have widened, and researchers are looking to move beyond low-Earth orbit and want to know how microgravity will affect humans in the longer term.

Documented effects of spaceflight include a host of sometimes nauseating problems - among them loss of bone and muscle mass, vision problems and redistribution of fluid in the body. A NASA source told the Los Angeles Times on Monday morning that the space agency will have details in about a week on the specific tests and experiments that will be performed during the yearlong mission.

Kelly, 48, has been with NASA since 1996. He became commander of Expedition 26 on the International Space Station in November 2010 and remained aboard for five months.

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF MCC, BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS.



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E-Privacy fix just a start



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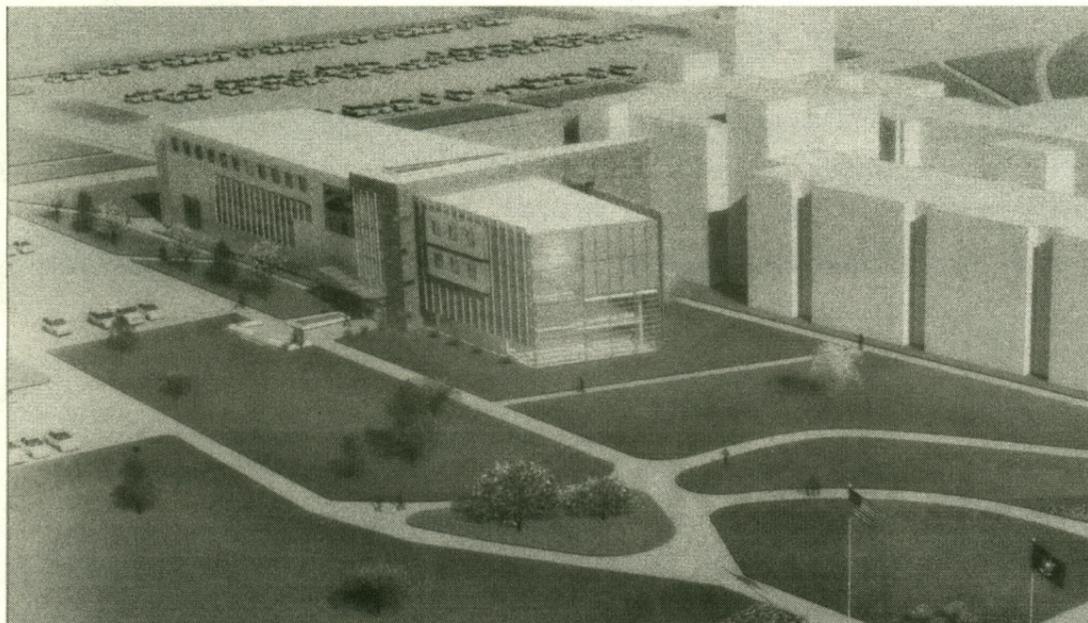
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The fiscal cliff  
Faculty exhibition



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This rendering shows the proposed ILC with existing buildings

JMZ Architects & Planners, P.C.

MASTER PLAN

and learning centers, insufficient faculty and adjunct offices and far flung student services. The plan reflects these concerns, more offices are added and the library and computer labs are put in a single building because the libraries of today are less about stacks of books and more about electronic access to scholarly resources Raymond Shea said.

The Master plan combines all the things the college thinks need to be done between now and 2018 into a package that can be proposed to government said Bob Cunningham, Director of Academic Facilities and Learning Environment at MCC. Because the plan is funded half by Monroe County bonds and half through a SUNY funding faculty with state legislative approval a single proposal is needed. If the entire project were approved and funded the cost would exceed \$109 million but Director Cunningham cautions that this may not occur, "It's a giant wish list" he said "you have to put it all on the table." Portions of the plan are already funded as existing maintenance

funds for fire protection, electrical enhancements and asbestos abatement can be redirected he said.

The Master Plan is part of overall county capital improvement planning and MCC is not the only public body seeking these funds. It is uncertain that the entire plan will be funded, it is "not set in stone" Bob Cunningham said.

The plan also aims to incorporate MCC's planned acquisition of the State Street and Morrie Silver Way facility in Downtown Rochester. Raymond Shea said that plans to move certain VaPA departments like television and graphic design were motivated by a desire to move these programs closer to internship opportunities in the city, WXXI-TV is located very near the new downtown campus he said.

JMZ Architects and Planners, P.C. of Glen Falls, New York developed the plan for the college and subcontracted The Pike Company for cost-consulting. M/E Engineering was consulted for code compliance and repair work.

**The Faculty & Professional Staff at MCC have been working hard without a contract for:**

**65** Days

**FAIL CONTRACT NOW!**

photo by Anthony Bristol

protracted contract negotiations. Despite public declarations of commitment, negotiations seemingly have come to a halt. According to persons familiar with the matter the current stalemate is unlikely to result in a strike. "We're still here, we're still working hard, we're still going

above and beyond, even though we are working without a contract" Gizzi said.

MCC President Anne Kress expressed gratitude for the commitment of faculty despite the expiration of the previous contract "We are grateful that they have not let the absence of a con-

**FACULTY CONTRACT** tract impact their commitment to ensuring our students receive the highest quality educational experience."

The previous contract stated, "[the] Faculty Association does not have the right to strike against the College [or] to assist in or participate in any such strike."

**? Explainer: What caused the Twinkiedämmerung?**

Twinkie maker Hostess Brands is going into liquidation after years of trouble. The union blamed management. Management blamed the union.

The proximate cause was in fact a strike by Hostess workers represented by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union but this was the latest in a series of events that severely damaged the company.

Hostess Brands, known for most of its existence as Interstate Bakeries Corp., grew through numerous acquisitions through the late seventies to the mid-nineties. This type of growth lead to a patchwork of corporate cultures and duplicitous collective bargaining agreements. The Hostess business itself changed hands numerous times before

IBC, at one point in its history it was owned by International Telephone and Telegraph Corp.

Poor management decisions also harmed the company: they were slow to adapt to changing taste preferences, seriously hurt by the low-carb fad and borrowed too much money. IBC also changed its recipes for key products with catastrophic results.

The high perishability of bread lead IBC to operate a scattered network of sixty bakeries so the bread didn't have to travel far to reach shelves. The development of a shelf-life extending enzyme was supposed to herald a major consolidation and cost-cutting program. However quality problems plagued the new recipe, customers revolted, sales tumbled and much of the promised cost-savings failed to material-

ize. In 2004, IBC filed for bankruptcy protection from which it did not emerge until 2009.

The company never really escaped its financial problems and in August of 2011 stopped paying certain pension benefits and filed for bankruptcy again the following January. While IBC, now known as Hostess Brands reached an agreement with the Teamsters Union, it was not able to reach an agreement with B.C.T.G.M. and, when the strike deprived it of the ability to conduct operations, it ceased to be a going concern.

Hostess' liquidation does not mean that Wonder Bread, Ho-Hos, Twinkies and the like will disappear. The company's brands are still valuable and popular and will be sold to the highest bidder, likely another food company.

**The Big Other: "The Strategic Plan"**

The "Strategic Plan" is a separate plan from the Master Plan, however the Master Plan aims to incorporate the overall intents of the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan says what the college values and what broad steps it will take to implement them. The Strategic Plan says, for example, that learning must come first and gives improving graduation rates as a goal towards this end and lists certain assumptions such

as "Liberal Arts students will require clear, navigable pathways to graduation" that are thought necessary to help implement the goal.

The purpose of the Strategic plan is very general and therefore the document says little about how these ideas will be executed. The Master Plan and other plans reflect these intentions.

See the Strategic Plan online: <http://is.gd/iluwuv>

**MCC Students Complain!**

During the consultation phase MCC planners closed with an open ended question: what should the planners keep in mind. This lead to two full pages of complaints, many unrelated to the master plan. Here are just a few:

- Classrooms are too crowded.
- Fixed classroom furniture and writing chairs should be replaced.
- There are not enough sections of General Biology and Chemistry.
- The nursing program is over-subscribed.
- Specific computers should be assigned for gaming and social media and for study.
- Wifi reception is poor.
- Food is overpriced, unhealthy and variety is poor.
- Food marketplace hours are too short and inconvenient for residents.
- There should be a Starbucks.
- There should be a football and a wrestling team.
- Building 9A [not part of Master Plan] needs to be updated.
- Wayfinding and interior signage should be improved.
- Students are not informed about college plans and changes to policy.
- Dorms are over capacity.
- ANGEL, the online learning system, is difficult to use.
- Parking is inadequate, too expensive and parking regulations are disliked.
- There should be a lounge specifically for those older than 30.
- The gym should have "female friendly equipment".
- Use TV screens to show MCC information [they already do.]
- There is no place to meditate.
- Students should not be dropped from classes.
- There should be an emphasis on teachers speaking English.

# Senators back online privacy update

Jessica Guynn

LOS ANGELES TIMES (MCT)

A Senate committee on November 29 backed privacy protections that would require the government to obtain a warrant from a judge before gaining access to email and other electronic communications.

The 1986 Electronic Privacy Communications Act was written before the Web was born and long before Americans started sending, receiving and storing so much of their personal communications and documents online. Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, who is chairman of the Judiciary Committee and the law's original author, is now try-

ing to make sure that the government needs to prove probable cause before rummaging through it all.

Digital privacy found itself in the spotlight after CIA Director David Petraeus resigned over an extramarital affair with his biographer Paula Broadwell. Privacy watchdogs asked: If the director of the CIA cannot keep the FBI from secretly rifling through his private Gmail account, what digital privacy protections do ordinary citizens have?

Under the privacy provision that Leahy tucked into a bill, authorities would have to get a search warrant to obtain emails and other communications that

are more than 180 days old. It would amend the 1986 law. Leahy said he was concerned about the growing intrusion into Americans' private lives.

"Our privacy laws are woefully outdated given the rapid advance of technology. This vote today sets the stage for updating the law to reflect the reality of how people use technology in their daily lives," Gregory T. Nojeim, director of the Center for Democracy & Technology's project on freedom, security and technology, said in an emailed statement. "It keeps the government from turning cloud providers into a one-stop convenience store for government investigators."



## Public Safety Report

11/12/12

- A student-life employee lost her college keys.
- A hazard to public health was found in the building 3 first-floor men's toilet.

11/13/12

- Graffiti was discovered in two building 10 toilets.

11/14/12

- Two roommates were subject to a harassment investigation.
- There was a motor accident in lot D.
- Public safety has learned that a student was stealing used cans from loading dock 9 to procure the return deposit.
- An employee complained that unwanted religious information was placed on her car in lot M.

11/15/12

- A hairstyling incident set off the fire alarm at Canal Hall at 2:50am.
- A cooking incident set off the fire alarm in Tribune Hall at 1:25pm.
- In a separate incident, more hapless cooking set off the fire alarm in Tribune hall at 7:10pm.
- A student's unattended wallet was stolen from Building 9A.

11/16/12

- A student required treatment for discomfort of the buttocks after falling out of a chair.
- A student reports property was taken from a drawer in the PAC center room 177.

11/19/12

- A student vehicle was keyed in lot G.
- A non-student stole a small bag of empty cans from building services but they were recovered.

11/20/12

- A student vehicle was keyed in lot H.
- A student parking permit was stolen in lot G.
- A cooking incident set off the fire alarm in Pioneer Hall at 12:40pm.
- A student's wallet was stolen from the Building 1 lounge. The incident is being classified as grand larceny, meaning the item in question is worth more than \$1,000.
- Drug paraphernalia was discovered in Pioneer Hall.

11/21/12

- A student's iPad was stolen from the Building 3 lounge

11/26/12

- A student was struck by a car in lot J.
- An iPod was stolen from Building 11

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## MONROE DOCTRINE

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# Understanding the 'fiscal cliff'

Congress must address tax and spending deadline by the end of year

By LISA MASCARO AND KIM GEIGER  
Chicago Tribune

The "fiscal cliff" is a term first used by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to describe the impact on the economy of about \$502 billion in expiring tax cuts and spending reductions, both separately set to occur within a two-day time frame at the end of the year. Bernanke warned that if Congress fails to deal with the issues, the fragile economic recovery could be dashed.

## What makes the cliff?

### AUTOMATIC SPENDING CUTS (Sequestration)

**\$64 billion**

**\$24 billion**

#### DEFENSE CUTS

Part of the debt ceiling resolution included the stipulation that some spending cuts come from defense.

**\$40 billion**

#### NONDEFENSE CUTS

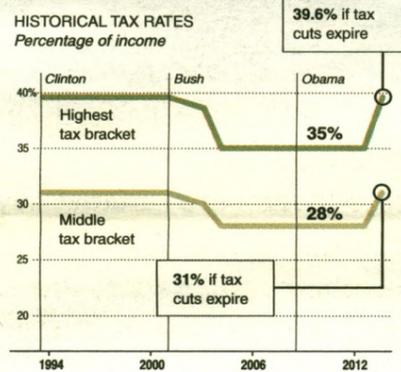
Among proposed cuts, Medicare is scheduled to be cut by 2 percent. For schools, the National Education Association warns that cuts would hit 9 million students, including those in Head Start and special education, with 80,000 jobs lost.

### INCREASED TAXES

**\$330 billion**

#### EXPIRATION OF THE "BUSH TAX CUTS"

On Dec. 31, 2012, the 2001, 2003 and 2010 tax cuts (often referred to as the "Bush tax cuts") will expire. Congress must decide whether to allow the cuts to expire, to extend the cuts, or to extend cuts to all except the wealthiest 2 percent of taxpayers. President Barack Obama and many Democrats support the 2 percent option while Republicans favor extending the cuts for everyone.

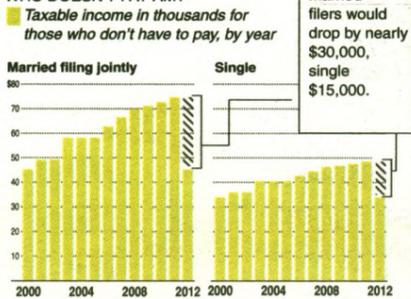


#### ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX

The alternative minimum tax, or AMT, is an additional income tax that currently applies to household taxable income of \$75,000 or greater. The AMT has had a legislative patch dating back to 2000 that excluded many families. If Congress does not act, the AMT would be applied to millions more citizens.

Currently, only 4 million people pay the AMT. If no action is taken by Congress, 28 million Americans (those who make more than \$48,000 in taxable income annually) will be required to pay it. According to the Tax Policy Center, the average family affected by the AMT would have to pay an additional \$3,700 in taxes.

#### WHO DOESN'T PAY AMT



#### ESTATE TAX INCREASE

The estate tax is currently 35 percent on any assets over \$5.12 million. On Jan. 1, the tax will be 55 percent on assets over \$1 million unless Congress changes the law. Most Republicans support a complete repeal of the tax, while Obama urges a compromise of 35 percent on assets over \$3.5 million.

### OTHER EXPIRING BENEFITS

**\$108 billion**

#### PAYROLL TAX CUTS EXPIRE

A key plank of Obama's stimulus plan, the payroll tax cut trimmed the employee portion of the Social Security tax from 6.2 percent to 4.2 percent. This legislation was part of the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010. The average worker will pay about \$1,000 more in taxes if the payroll tax cut expires.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Also coming to an end are the extended unemployment benefits, which provide jobless benefits for up to 99 weeks in many states. These items are likely to expire as there is little partisan disagreement over them.

## Where the two parties agree

#### DEFICIT CUTS

Both sides are aiming for a deal that would slash \$4 trillion from the federal deficit over the next decade. They also agree that there are some ways not to do it.

#### SPENDING

On the spending side, neither party wants to see the automatic across-the-board cuts that would take place under sequestration, and they want to prevent the looming cuts in Medicare payments to doctors.

#### REVENUE

On the revenue side, both parties want to avoid an expansion of the alternative minimum tax, and they agree that the Bush tax cuts should be extended — for 98 percent of taxpayers. Couples who make less than \$250,000 and individuals with income below \$200,000 should continue to receive those breaks, both sides have said.

## Where they disagree



#### BOEHNER'S POSITION

House Speaker John Boehner has said that raising tax rates is "unacceptable" and insists that any attempt to do so would never pass the House. Most lawmakers in the Republican majority have signed a pledge never to raise taxes.

Boehner wants to see all the tax cuts extended for another year to buy Congress time to put together a big deal. He has said that he would be open to producing new tax revenue in conjunction with an overhaul of the tax code that would also lower rates. Most experts say that approach would not raise enough money.

#### OBAMA'S POSITION

Obama opposes extending the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy — the top 2 percent of taxpayers — and has said that he won't sign a bill that continues those breaks.

He campaigned heavily on a pledge to "ask the wealthy to pay a little more" and views the election result as an endorsement of his position. Indeed, national exit polls show that 60 percent of voters support raising taxes on the wealthy. And a recent Gallup poll found that 56 percent say that at least half of any deficit-reduction deal should be accomplished through tax increases.

In his budget, Obama proposed a deficit reduction plan for the next decade that would raise \$1.5 trillion in new revenue, largely by allowing the tax cuts for the rich to expire, and would cut \$1.5 trillion in spending. Obama has signaled that he is open to making changes to entitlement programs as part of those spending cuts. The remaining \$1 trillion is already in place, through caps on discretionary spending that Obama signed into law last year.

## Four possible outcomes

#### OFF THE CLIFF

**1** Congress could do nothing, allowing income tax rates to rise to pre-Bush-era levels. Doing so would rattle Wall Street and cause consumer spending to contract. But it would also put new pressure on Republicans and would spare them from having to actually vote for a tax increase. The two parties could then negotiate lower tax rates for some or all taxpayers.

#### SHORT-TERM DEAL

**2** Congress could buy some time for a broader deal if it puts a down payment in place to prevent panic on Wall Street. Democrats would insist on some sort of new revenue in exchange for spending cuts. Obama has called on Congress to extend the Bush-era tax rates for all but the wealthy, but Republicans are more likely to offer to close some loopholes or limit some deductions instead.

#### THE PUNT

**3** Congress could postpone coming tax hikes and spending cuts while talks continue, but that would put Obama in the position of having to renege on his campaign pledge to end the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy by Jan. 1.

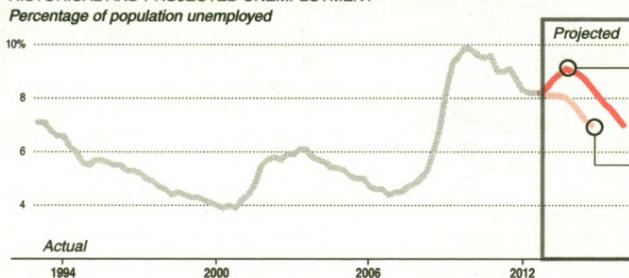
#### THE LARGE DEAL

**4** Both Boehner and Obama would prefer this option, which would address spending and revenue in one grand bargain, but it is not likely to be accomplished during the lame-duck session, so a short-term solution to the "fiscal cliff" would have to take place first.

## How the economy might react

What would happen if we went off the "fiscal cliff"? The Congressional Budget Office projected just such a scenario. The result in the short term: The gross domestic product would drop by 0.5 percent in 2013, which would likely cause unemployment to rise and as a result imperil the economic recovery. It's widely believed going over the cliff could spook the markets and raise questions with credit-rating agencies. The two scenarios shown below represent letting the tax cuts expire and spending cuts go into effect (off-the-cliff scenario) or conversely continuing the tax cuts and delaying the spending cuts (delay scenario). The CBO projects the delay scenario would be easier on unemployment in the short term but would also add to the federal deficit, which could have longer-term consequences if it is not dealt with.

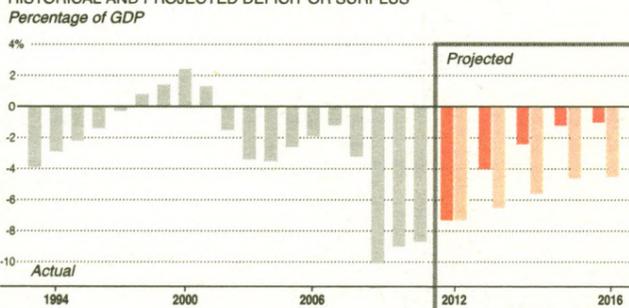
#### HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED UNEMPLOYMENT



**Off-the-cliff scenario:** The CBO predicts short-term pain with unemployment peaking at 9.1% in Q4 of 2013, then gradually declining.

**Delay scenario:** The CBO predicts continued short-term recovery with unemployment down.

#### HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED DEFICIT OR SURPLUS



**Off-the-cliff scenario:** The CBO predicts raising taxes and cutting spending would greatly reduce the deficit in short order.

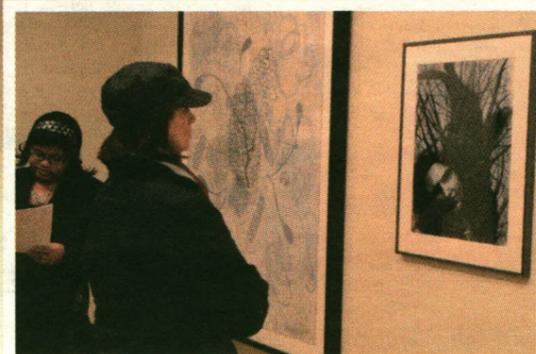
**Delay scenario:** Not dealing with tax or spending challenges would keep the deficit at a high percentage of GDP, which could be problematic.

NOTE: Large figures represent costs in fiscal years 2013 and 2014.

SOURCES: CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE, REUTERS, TAX FOUNDATION, TAX POLICY CENTER, TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS REPORTING

GRAPHICS BY CAROLYN ALER AND RYAN MARX, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

# Faculty art exhibition



An exhibition of artworks by MCC faculty is currently underway at the Mercer Gallery in Building 12.

The faculty exhibitions are held every two years "It's really to show our students what we do" said Kathleen Farrell, Mercer Gallery director and MCC arts

faculty. She said that while professors show their works in class there was a real benefit to seeing it professionally, well lit on a white wall.

The exhibition features a broad variety of types of works including typography, painting, sculpture,



notebooks, photography and an audiovisual work.

The selections are made by the teachers themselves typically from their most recent work, or from work they feel is among their best. Admission is free and open to the public and the



program is ongoing until the 21st of December.

Student work is also often exhibited, Farrell said. The next student show will begin in May and with the call for entries in April. Students can submit up to three pieces for consideration she said.



The exhibition features the work of MCC professors Athesia Benjamin, Jasna Bogdanovska, Fred Burger, Marjorie Crum, Jim Downer, Kathy Farrell, Susan Ferrari-Rowley, Jason Flack, Karen Sardisco, Jason Smith, Franzie Weldgen and many adjuncts.

More information:

- 🌐 <http://www.monroecc.edu/go/mercer>
- 📞 585 292 2021
- 📍 12-114 (Bldg 4 atrium)
- 🕒 M,W,F 10am-5pm. T,R 10am-7pm
- 💰 Free

## Extend ELC Hours for around-the-clock learning

Brett Keenan

ASSOCIATE WRITER

Monroe Community College is one of the best two year schools this country has to offer. That being said, why is it that there are limitations on the hours a student can work within the school? Since college students (including myself) work jobs, are involved in extra-curricular activities, pay bills, and have social lives, isn't it unfair to tell them what time they're allowed to work at school? Isn't maintaining an overwhelming day to day schedule enough to handle without the worries of how much time you have left to print your project off for an 8 AM class?

Not everyone who goes to college is fortunate enough to have Internet access at home. Those students have the unfortunate pleasure of meticulously planning and constricting their hours work time around the hours of the school's learning center. There wouldn't need to be extreme measures to be taken in order to start this. Just hire an additional two people to work overnight shifts at the center, and if their salary is a concern just

put a coffee vending machine in there. Not only will the students be wide awake feverishly working, the learning center staff will be accommodated for their time and effort by the profits of something as simple as a coffee machine.

It was the great Oscar Wilde who once said, "You can never be overdressed or overeducated", which in this case would translate to; you can never be overdressed but can only be educated from 7:45 AM to 4:45 PM. The learning-center staff are always helpful, insightful, and compassionate and doing their best to help students every day of the week. So why not just have more of a good thing for the better of the school? By having a place student's can go to anytime of the day anytime of the week, there's an underlying sense of endless. Giving the opportunity to further one's schooling no matter how complicated one's schedule may be is an extremely advantageous proposition that is for the collective good of the college as a whole. Wouldn't a good slogan be "Here at MCC, we believe the education never stops."



Online privacy anxiety is preoccupied with embarrassing Facebook photos. This attitude illustrates basic ignorance, perhaps willfull, of about deeper, systemic problems with online life.

photo by Anthony Bristol

## Email reforms don't go far enough The threat from the cloud is nearly unimaginable

John Z. Walthall

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the movie *Twelve Monkeys* by Terry Gilliam, a group of scientists send Bruce Willis's character back in time for purposes best explained by the movie itself. Whenever the Scientists interrogate him about his experiences, they strap him into a hoist and communicate through an array of cameras, microphones and screens. This interposition of technological devices into human discourse served as an alienating device in the 1995 movie, but in the 2012 real world we have convinced ourselves that it in fact knits us closer together. This is not actually a new thing; it started in the fifties.

The advent of television news heralded a drastic shift in what we understood to be "real". Technology became the primary means through which to view the world. Television looked like a direct experience but was in fact a written account and even to this day we are still susceptible

to the strangest of effects because of this. Technological interventions like Facebook, texting and phone calls (how quaint), have now become the primary channel through which to communicate and understand other people period. We prefer to view representations rather than reality itself. This is a vast topic with many subtle complexities and the effects it will have on humanity are not yet certain.

While we cannot say what may happen in the future we can and should ensure that our institutions, society and ideals are not compromised. The founding fathers saw the importance of protecting the persons and papers of the public from unreasonable searches and seizures. The digital simulacrum of our online lives in "the cloud" deserves the same protection.

In fact it deserves more. The papers and letters of the people of the past contained mere glints and shards of information about a person. Our online data describes us in so vast and so

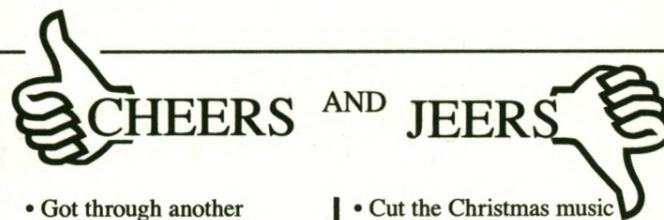
totalizing a scope that it may soon be impossible to distinguish it from ourselves. Under an even slightly totalitarian regime the threat from the cloud above would be unimaginable.

Privacy is not dead, in fact privacy has never been more important. Senator Leahey's attempts to repair a mistake in the law that allows law enforcement to waltz into what may be the most private thing of all, our email, without a care are most welcome however they do not go remotely far enough. Increasingly almost everything is being stored in "the cloud", not just our email but also our documents and even our very social lives themselves. Electronic communication should be completely privileged from surveillance and completely off limits to searches, with or without warrants. Otherwise we will never develop the technology to read people's minds so beloved of science fiction. We won't have to: we will just read their email.

## Editorial Cartoons

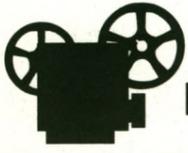


SHENEMAN TRUBINE MEDIA SERVICES

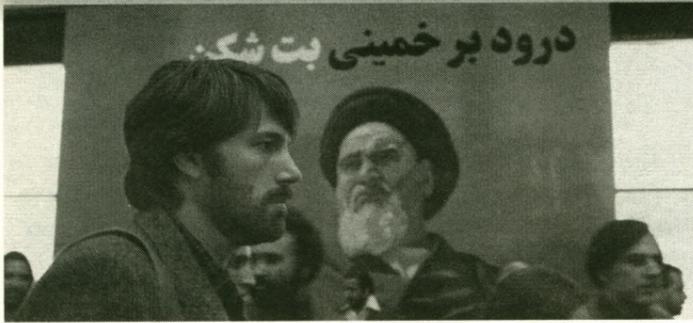


- Got through another semester!
- Finals!
- New spring courses like Honors Literature of the Holocaust!
- Intersemester activities!
- Bright new year ahead
- Christmas, apparently some people like it.

- Cut the Christmas music already! Enough!
- One millimeter of snow and everyone suddenly forgets how to drive. Never fails!
- Excessive PDA, get a room folks!
- Poor water pressure at many drinking fountains
- Mallpocalypse.



MOVIE REVIEWS



Ben Affleck in "Argo"

Courtesy Warner Bros.

Argo full of tension, wit

Brett Keenan

ASSOCIATE WRITER

Rarely do political films make you laugh just as often as make you think. But Ben Affleck has surely pulled it off with his new film *Argo*, about the 1979 Iran hostage crisis. The film starts with a graphic novel style exposition, and kicks in to high gear immediately after. Showing the panic and confusion of the day the US embassy was raided; Affleck does a terrific job at capturing the blinding intensity of the situation. While most of the embassy staff are taken hostage, six escape and hide in the home of a Canadian ambassador. As a result, CIA specialist Tony Mendez (Affleck) thinks of a way to infiltrate the conflict without anyone being aware of it. Make a fake Canadian science-fiction film that is on location scouting

in Iran. But in order to make a fake picture, there needs to be some real credibility behind it. So Mendez reaches out to John Chambers (John Goodman) a special effects designer and Lester Siegel (Alan Arkin) an aging, jaded film producer. Arkin and Goodman bring an upbeat comedic tone to the film, which helps balance its constant tension and solemn source material. As the film progresses, so does Mendez's struggle with convincing the escapees to trust him while maintaining the CIA's support of the mission. Overall *Argo* is a well articulated work of passion, with an end credits sequence that shows the real pictures of the events next to the film's portrayal, giving the audience the understanding of immaculate detail that went in to recreating the events.

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L to R: Ben Whishaw, Javier Bardem, Daniel Craig, Naomie Harris, Judi Dench

Photos by Francois Duhamel. Courtesy Danjaq, LLC/Columbia Pictures/United Artists/Sony

Skyfall: Dial 'M' for 'Mommy'

John Z. Walthall

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

*Skyfall* starts with a simple, dynamite premise: computers have so invaded every aspect of life that whoever controls the computers can inflict tremendous damage on the putative real world; we do not live in the real world; we live in fundamentally unreal machine dream. In one surreal sequence, Bond fights a henchman amid a hallucinatory blur of neon signs. Unfortunately, this fascinating concept is not well developed and is eventually obliterated by genre conventions but *Skyfall*, directed by Sam Mendes from a script by Neil Purvis, Robert Wade and John Logan is still a smart, technically impressive thriller.

*Skyfall* is an attempt to reboot a half-baked reboot of the James Bond franchise that started in 2006 with *Casino Royale* and fizzled out with the botched 2008 follow-up *Quantum of Solace*, about which hardly anything went well at all. *Casino Royale* tried to repair major deficiencies in the original franchise by breaking away from the past and making it about the character of James Bond himself as played by Daniel Craig in a pointedly different way.

This concept was inherently self-limiting and the wheels were already falling off it by the end its first outing so even more dramatic changes had to be made this time around. There are still a few charmingly amateur psychoanalyses of the Bond character but *Skyfall* shifts the emphasis onto the franchise itself and onto questions of the relevance of older things (like—unsubtly—

James Bond movies) in post-post-modern times. This general theme pervades the whole film the characters, the plot and the dialogue.

The plot concerns itself with a character from M's (Judi Dench) past: Javier Bardem's Silva. Silva is a computer hacker with blond hair and a large dose of megalomania, draw comparisons to Australian figures in current affairs as you wish.

"Sometimes, the old ways are best" a character 'meaningfully' intones near the end and while these sort of on-the-nose lines are best avoided the remark not only reflects the way the film was made, it perhaps may be actually true. While the topic, overall visual style and even the all-digital production itself are up-to-date—even cutting edge—may of the films ways are as traditional as can be. There is a traditional three-act structure, a very traditional campy villain (for better or worse), traditional Hitchcockian themes of The Mother and a traditional McGuffin-based plot.

McGuffins are plot devices often used in thrillers. They are vague "things" that motivate the plot without being part of it. In a heist movie, the McGuffin is usually a priceless jewel or something of that sort. The hard-drive with the list of names is the first McGuffin, the casino chip Bond retrieves from an offed henchman is a McGuffin to get the character to the second act and the minor character Severene is another. After these elements fulfill their purpose they are forgotten, used up like coupons.

*Skyfall* is largely free of the major errors that plague action

movies; it pointedly avoids gadgetism and Hollywood healthcare. There are a scattering of minor ones: henchmen are appallingly bad shots, the protagonist and antagonist survive, multiple non-survivable events, characters talk about the symbolism, etc. There is also a big one: the whole third act is ill-conceived.

The action moves to the Scottish countryside to get the upper-hand against Silva's technowizardry, this necessarily moves the plot away from the strong concepts it started off with and the film essentially loses its nerve and collapses into a heap of repetitious, forgettable pop-corn action. The "twist" ending is so obvious and lazy that only the sacred duty of film reviewers never to reveal who dies in the end prevents an outpouring of scorn.

Erratic acting also harms the film. Javier Bardem is given a role that is essentially unplayable and lines that are essentially unreadable and reacts the way most grade-A actors do in situations like these, he goes for the grotesque and massively overacts. Daniel Craig goes the opposite direction. Again, the writing is partly to blame but nevertheless it is generally accepted that examples of good acting will rival or surpass Kristen Stewart's diverse range of facial expressions. Judi Dench is Wonderful with a capital W.

The bottom line is that *Skyfall* is a good movie that could have been a lot better. While it can be frustrating to see a film fail to make the most of its premise, it's mostly fun and gives one a little something to think about.

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