

The State News



Cop and medical dramas: Science or substance?

LOWDOWN, PAGE 1B

DEATH

MSU STUDENT FOUND DEAD IN SPARTAN VILLAGE; CAUSE UNKNOWN

By Kyle Feldscher
THE STATE NEWS

The death of an MSU student found in his Spartan Village apartment was not being treated as a homicide, MSU police said Wednesday night.

Police found the body of Don Ausman, a 22-year-old interdisciplinary studies in social science and international studies senior, in his apartment after responding to a call to report a suspicious death at about 9:15 a.m. Wednesday at the 1615 building off Crescent Road in Spartan Village.

As of Wednesday night, police had not released information about the cause of death, but said they had no reason to

believe the community was at risk.

During a town hall meeting Wednesday night at the Spartan Village Community Center, MSU police Sgt. Shaun Mills said police are not investigating Ausman's death as a homicide.

"Right now, we're not looking for any one person or persons," Mills said.

MSU police crime scene investigation units were investigating Ausman's apartment into Wednesday evening. MSU police Sgt. Florene McGlothian-Taylor said Ausman's autopsy is scheduled for today.

Ausman, of Northville, Mich., had quit his job at Clara's Lansing Station, 637 E. Michigan

Ave., just last week, manager Jennifer Elmer said. Elmer said she last saw Ausman on Sunday and said he appeared to be in great spirits.

"He just seemed fine and was really very happy and smiling," Elmer said. "I gave him a real big hug when I saw him. This is just a huge tragedy."

McGlothian-Taylor said police had notified Ausman's family. The family could not be reached for comment Wednesday by The State News.

Dave Morris, a history senior, lived in the apartment directly above Ausman. Morris said he was shocked to hear about Ausman's death, and said he had no reason to believe anything was

wrong until his roommate told him about a crime alert MSU police distributed via e-mail and text message.

Morris said he and his roommate were not particularly close with Ausman, but the two had been to Ausman's apartment before. He said Ausman was friendly with both of them.

"(Ausman and his roommate) would have parties over the summer," Morris said. "He was a good guy."

About 25 people attended the town hall meeting Wednesday night to seek more information about Ausman's death.

In addition to questioning Mills about the police investigation



MSU police detective Gus Fernandez, right, gives instructions outside MSU senior Don Ausman's Spartan Village apartment.

SEAN COOK/THE STATE NEWS

See DEATH on page 2A

GOLF RANGE

Getting into the swing of things

Heated outdoor driving range opened this week at Forest Akers East

By Jacob Carpenter
THE STATE NEWS

Where there was once desolate solitude on the Forest Akers

East Golf Course, there is now the sound of hope. The ping of titanium drivers and crack of soundly struck irons is audible from the course's new heated, covered driving range, reminding golfers of the promise of spring days spent on the links.

For Dick Belding, it was the hope of adding a few yards to his iron shots after a lesson Tuesday, one of the first offered by course professionals during the winter at Forest Akers East.

"I want to see if I can sharpen my game up and add a little bit of club head speed," said Belding, 80, of Lansing, as he whacked wedges into a snow-covered range Wednesday.

Belding and several other golfers were the first to try the course's range, which features 20 public stalls, a private garage for lessons and an area for MSU's men's and women's golf teams.

The \$700,000 project, funded entirely by course revenues, will offer year-round range and lesson availability. Large heaters span the entire ceiling of the building, pumping heat



Jolynne Peeters of Okemos warms up before her golf lesson Wednesday at Forest Akers East Golf Course. The new heated driving range opened Tuesday, and although there are still some things that need to be completed, it will be open seven days a week through the winter.

ANGELI WRIGHT/THE STATE NEWS

down to the stalls while golfers hit onto compressed snow.

"We're very excited and we feel we have a wonderful building," said Stephen Ruthenberg, the course's interim manager. "What we didn't want to have was a range facility that was plywood and paint. We have a building that is going to truly represent MSU."

"This allows us to get out and add to the community for golfers here and give them an option. There's been a big response."

Bryan Harris, golf professional

To open the range for golfers year-round, the course's staff had to figure ways to pick

up golf balls when snow is on the ground. They purchased a snowmobile, a large steel

mat to pack the snow and a specialized golf ball collector to pick buried balls from the snow. On mornings with snowfall, maintenance staff will run the snowmobile across the course with the steel mat trailing behind it. At night, they will attach

See GOLF on page 2A

POLICY

MSU drops spam charges against ASMSU official

By Chris Vannini
THE STATE NEWS

After a near five-month battle with university officials, ASMSU Association Director Kara Spencer's life may finally return to normal.

The MSU Office of Judicial Affairs notified Spencer via e-mail last week that the university had withdrawn charges that she sent a "spam" e-mail to faculty.

Spencer also learned the university will review its bulk e-mail

policy and possibly change it. "Initially, this was about my case," she said. "But as I started to look into the policy more, I found that this one in particular was fundamentally flawed."

On Sept. 15, Spencer sent an e-mail to a selected 391 faculty members, roughly 8 percent of MSU faculty, encouraging them to increase discussions over proposed changes to Welcome Week before the changes were enacted.

Katherine Gross, director of

the Kellogg Biological Station, received the e-mail and asked Randall Hall, representative of Academic Technology Services, or ATS, how Spencer had obtained the list of faculty members.

On Sept. 17, Hall filed a complaint claiming that Spencer had violated three policies.

First, Hall claimed Spencer refused to obtain the proper permission needed to send the e-mail. Second, Hall claimed Spencer had misused MSU computing resources by sending the

More online...

To view Spencer's e-mail and other documents related to the case, visit stateneews.com.

e-mail through the MSU network, even though Spencer sent the e-mail using her Gmail account. Hall also claimed Spencer broke the Network Acceptable Use Policy by sending a bulk unsolicited e-mail.

Hall said he filed the complaint

because the e-mail violated policies, regardless of whether the policies were fair.

"What I base my decision on is the policy," Hall said. "My job is not to write the policy; my job is to enforce the policy."

After a hearing before the Student-Faculty Judiciary Board, Spencer was found guilty on Dec. 10 of misusing university resources and send-

See SPAM on page 2A

ECONOMY

Stimulus plan heads for Senate after passing House

By Allison Bush
THE STATE NEWS

Michigan moved one step closer to getting an estimated \$4.6 billion in federal funds Wednesday after the U.S. House of Representatives approved President Barack Obama's \$89 billion stimulus package.

The House passed the package by a 244-188 vote. The U.S. Senate will take up the proposal early next week.

Economics professor Charles Ballard said the proposal could be approved and passed to Obama's desk before Feb. 16, when Congress goes into recess.

Still, Ballard said it's possible that positive effects of the stimulus won't be felt for months.

"There's a good chance that sometime late this year, things will look much more stable than they are now," Ballard said. "The amount of damage done is huge. You can't take a sledgehammer to the workings of the economy the way that we did and then immediately fix it."

About \$30 billion of the plan will be devoted to infrastructure, including roads and bridges. Another \$6 billion could go to higher education infrastructure.

East Lansing officials are in the early stages of applying for a portion of the stimulus for various road repair projects. Infrastructure improvements could provide incentives for companies to locate in Michigan, said state Rep. Mark Meadows, D-East Lansing.

"(The package) would get money back into the system and people back to work," he said.

See STIMULUS on page 2A

HOCKEY UPDATE

Ann Arbor police won't file charges against two former MSU hockey players, page 6A



Weather

Snow Showers

High 27° | Low 15°

Three-day forecast, Page 2A