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Bull Frog pond, Vol. VII, No. 3

Grand Valley State College. Thomas Jefferson College

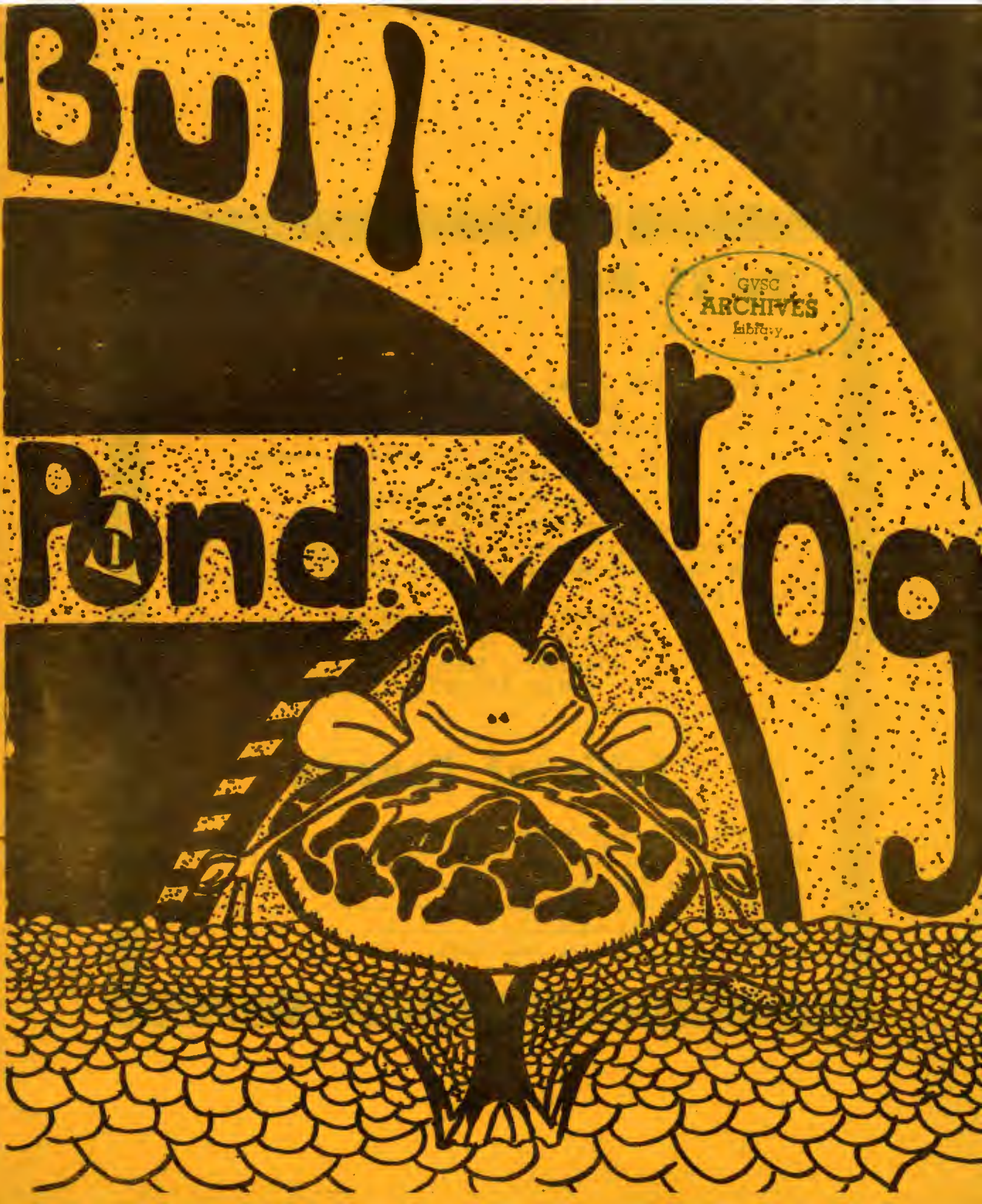
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Bull Frog Pond

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[12 VII]

This is the Thomas Jefferson College
BULL FROG POND

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For more information about TJC please write
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Dear Editor:

Letter



Thanks for sending me Bull Frog Pond. It has interesting and inspiring ideas.

Sincerely,

(Dr.) Charles Mereieca
International Association
of Education for World Peace

Becoming Absorbed

SELF-STARTING MADE EASY

Cameron Wilson

Let's say you have some stuff to learn for a class or special study. You want to do it yet it gets boring and discouraging when you actually work on it very long. In addition, you don't often really want to sit down and do it. It's so easy for three days to slip by, a week, without your sitting down to read. Yet you really do want to learn the stuff. You know you do and so why can't you? "Firm resolve" lasts an hour and before you know it, two more days of inaction have gone by.

You may change all this with the following items. They work as a system, a package deal.

1. You may make the material readily available to ◆

yourself so you don't have to "go out of your way" or "make a special effort" to study it. For example, you may carry the book with you in your pocket or purse or take it to where you go (home, work, school) and leave it in a readily accessible room (your Tutor's office, for example).

2. You may strengthen the cue to work by responding to it with some work. When it occurs to you that now you could do some reading, you may do it. Note: strong desire to study is not what you're looking for in this system. In the beginning, the cue will come as just a passing thought in the pause of things. It might even come as a fleeting negative: "Nah, I don't wanna read. What else is there to do?" Later, the cue comes as a real readiness to work right now, a felt anticipation of "it would be good."

3. When you are reading (or writing, drawing, washing the dishes or whatever) the moment you realize that you've done some of it without its registering, you may stop the activity. Your awareness that you've been inattentive is the signal to stop for now, even if you've been working for only two minutes. You may stop and do something else until the cue to work again occurs to you. That might be in thirty seconds or three hours. Whatever the time, so be it.

4. You may be aware of each instance of cue that arises and you may decide in each case whether or not to implement this system. You do not have to go by whether or not you want to work.

* special thanks to Jim White, TJC



The Destructive Process

(Creativity Revisited)

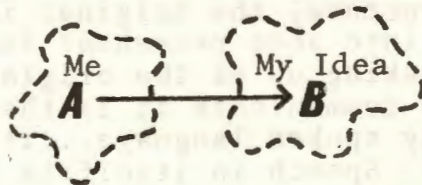
Last Spring I hit on some ideas about the so-called "creative process." I got an idea for a course I'll be teaching this fall (THE PROCESS OF IDEATION), which I originally called...ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE. The first thought was to do a course in writing designed after the way (method?) I find myself using with my composition students. The idea forced me to examine what happens with these students. After some reflection, I realized that there is a process that seems to repeat itself time and time again...a process that I went through studying with my teacher...one that I see my students go through, and one that I constantly re-experience every time I set out to make a new composition.

The course title...ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE... came from a notion that any manifestation of an idea, a whim, something I have in my head, must somehow be TRANSLATED in order for it to be communicated to someone else. Any kind of sharing represents a form of translation... getting the thought, the idea, the inspiration (whatever) out of my head and into a place of its own where it can be understood, communicated, examined and even manipulated. I must break (destructure) the original idea into parts to render it again into some permanent form outside my own head. This breaking up of the original idea in order to capture it or to communicate it is the DESTRUCTIVE PROCESS. English...any spoken language...is only one of many "second languages." Speech in itself is a second language ...the thought behind the speech being the original language...first thought.

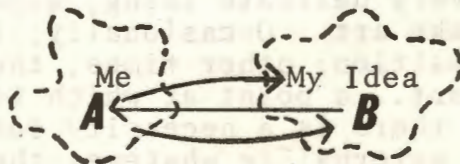
An idea is a very delicate thing, especially when one is trying to make art. Occasionally, I have an idea for an entire composition; other times, the idea represents only a place to start...a point at which to begin. But in either extreme, there is a necessity for me to "get the idea out"...to externalize whatever there is in my head; to capture it in a way that allows me to play with the idea itself. My technique for this is mostly to represent the idea in some visual form. This is only one

of many methods for fixing or capturing an idea. Once the thought, the idea...is made permanent in some form, several things can begin to happen: First, I no longer have to worry about forgetting my idea...it now has permanence outside me. I can now examine the thought (idea) at my leisure...it won't get away! I don't have to be concerned with being in the same place in my head again in order to think about my idea. I can move away from my idea...give it some room to breathe on its own...space for it to sit there and allow me to examine it tomorrow if I want to...once the fervor of having caught the thought subsides. I can now turn my idea upside down, around, on its back...look at it in ways that I couldn't while it was still locked up in my head. All of this is made possible by DESTRUCTURING the original idea (breaking the first gestalt; translating it into some fixed shape outside me). This process...this DESTRUCTURING...is what we commonly call the CREATIVE PROCESS. But we're too obsessed with the term CREATIVITY...so much so that we've lost sight of what the process actually entails! We don't realize that its first necessity is to learn the art of DESTRUCTURING. In order to create one must become familiar with DESTRUCTURING...(my idea must no longer be me; it must be outside me so that I can begin to manipulate it, criticize it, play with it, love it, hate it...and most importantly, ENTER INTO A COLLABORATION-WITH IT!)

At this point the process looks like this:



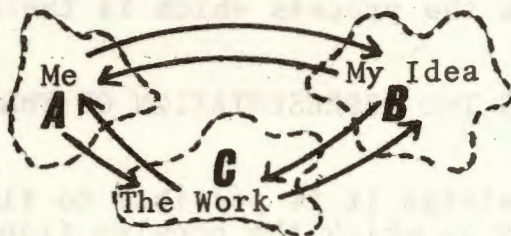
(Translated outside me)



"A" represents the original thought...idea...locked up in my head; delicate, sometimes unreachable when I want to think about it again. "B" represents the idea DESTRUCTURED.

The idea taken out of my head, part by part, and represented outside of me, perhaps by a visual diagram, perhaps by an outline, perhaps by talking into a tape recorder. The first diagram shows "A" (Me and my thought(s)) giving the thought or the idea some permanent form. The second representation shows how once I've translated the idea into some form of its own...I can now enter into a RELATIONSHIP with it (play with it...manipulate it); and the idea in its permanent or fixed form, can also stimulate me to find new things from it; to expand it, to make it grow. I use the idea in its translated, DESTRUCTURED form ("B") to turn me on to new ways of looking at it. In this way, a relationship is created.

Usually, as the result of the interaction between "A" and "B", something quite distinct and separate begins to grow..."C".



"C" represents the completed work itself...the musical composition, the poem, the dance, the painting, etc. It is neither "A" (the original idea, me), nor is it "B" (the first externalization of the idea); but it is a new thing in itself...a PRODUCT of my collaboration with myself. A new gestalt ("C") created through the interaction of the original idea ("A"), with its DESTRUCTURED FORM ("B") ...and my consciousness, my craft, my technique, my taste, my sensitivity to my own ideas ("A"). "C", the work itself, represents the culmination of a process that has gone on in me...the complete externalization of a whimsey ...a thought...an idea. Most importantly, "C" is not ME ...it is my work. Therefore, it can and MUST live by itself...I do not have to identify with it. In this lies something about the so-called "ego-less" state...nonidentification. I am me...my work is my work. This nonidentification can only happen once a thought or an idea becomes DESTRUCTURED in a way that allows us to manipulate it...to enter into dialogue with it...and to move away from being identified with it.

The expressive quality in a great work of art lies

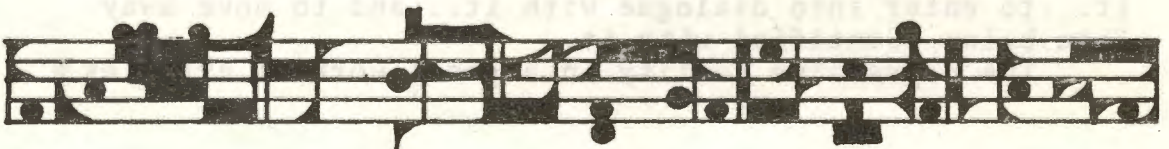
in this sublime human act: Someone in interaction with himself...wholeness.

Often the germ of the idea is hidden from us as we experience a poem, a painting, a dance, a piece of music. We usually get to know "C" first. That's the completed piece. But through analysis, we can work from "C" back to "B", and maybe even right back to "A"...the thought or impulse the artist began with. Analysis is the DESTRUCTIVE process backwards. Available to us with the necessary techniques, for instance, is the possibility of working with a Beethoven Sonata...discovering the nuts and bolts of it...discovering the blueprint...the plan, realizing the function the sounds have; and even getting down to the original idea ("A"). Then one can re-hear the music in a new way...hear the unfolding of the problem and the solution...share the process which is the same thing as the result.

A WORK OF ART IS THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PROCESS IT TOOK TO CREATE IT.

Through analysis it is possible to find three kinds of work. A work in which the problem (idea) being worked with by the artist is interesting, exciting, and rich with possibilities; but a work in which the solution ("C") is not as interesting as the idea ("A"). Another work might show a beautiful solution ("C"), but in getting to the idea or the problem ("A") one finds it (the idea) rather dull. And then one finds works in which the solution ("C") is a magnificent answer to a beautiful problem/idea ("A"). There are the masterworks!

There is too much nonsense talk about creativity. We miss the essentials when we don't consider that the "creative process" begins somewhere around learning how to function in the DESTRUCTIVE PROCESS...learning how to capture a whimsey...to make it permanent enough so that we can play with it...manipulate it; and to ultimately allow us to learn from it without being identified with it...to eventually produce a finished version that has independence...a life of its own.



Contractual Degree Program



SOME IDEAS ON HOW IT WILL WORK

Depending on the individual's personal goals, needs, experience, past education, state of mind, drive, and initiative.

Part one of the CDP might be a total-research enquiry, into the individual's past experiences, and education. The purpose of this is for the committee and the individual to better determine in what way to help the student: to be able to decide the how, what, when, and why of the student's decisions, and what application of special courses, studies, and private projects will be necessary to the student's completion of the CDP.

Another purpose is to help the student in recognizing his cognitive modes -- which will help him in deciding exactly how to proceed, on what -- if that understanding has not already been reached.

Undertaking analysis of past educational performances, and the successes or failures therein -- and the reasons for success or failure -- will help the student in future evaluation of his courses.

The better the student is prepared for his program the easier it should be for him to finish it. Of course, as stated, it should remain a program that is flexible and as fluid as possible, so that the student is able to cope with new events.

Goal Determination -- short and long range -- should be conceived mostly by the student and then refined by the student and his committee. ♦

Short range goals, I believe, should be as important as the final ones. Each time a short range goal is completed it should reinforce the student and add to the total completion.

"You gotta have it together"

I don't think that anyone who doesn't have it together will try the CDP, yet maybe a calling card to the program would be to offer a chance to accomplish this in the beginning of the program. But, personally, I feel that an understanding and showing of these qualities might be a sort of prerequisite to the CDP.

Such background material would be furnished by the student in any manner he chooses: written, displayed, verbal, etc. Written form would most help the committee on subjects such as past education. But the main idea is to give the committee a handle on the situation and a way to understand the individual behind the student.

This paper is then distributed to the committee at the first meeting.

It might also be a big help to have the tutors at TJC offer an in-depth background of themselves, in order to help the student choose committee members.

I don't think that the CDP will be dealing with the ordinary type of student. I may be wrong, yet I kind of expect that the student the CDP will attract will have different goals -- those that are bigger, broader, and, for him, necessary. Necessary because he or she sees something that could be done and knows that it is for him to do, or at least try to do. This brings in the concept of Right Work.*

* The normal time schedules of term-to-term work may not be applicable to the student. I feel that they should be removed and redecided upon by the student and his committee.

I think that CDP students should be aware of each other, to better understand each other and themselves, and to be able to help set up new or needed curricula.

Possibly -- at least I hope that -- the CDP student will put out more, create more, accomplish more, and generally work harder for his degree.

Depending on the student, the courses he takes or designs for himself might entail finding faculty or curriculum of other colleges besides those of the "Guiding

College," TJC. Hopefully, it will be possible to use those facilities, making the CDP one of the most comprehensive, innovative, flexible educational concepts of our time. Because of its nature, it might come under fire from those who cannot see its potentials; but from a student's point of view its potentials are unlimited, and its possible benefits are immeasurable and great.

Performance: Of course anything less than the agreed amount of production in the agreed amount of time would be an incomplete. But in some cases where the energy has been liberated the student may outperform his goals. In such cases, when they do happen, the student should receive extra credit consideration by the committee.

Degree or Degrees: Depending on the initiative and the drive of the individual, and the program he designs, the degree would be, if possible, tailor-made and in some cases maybe more than one.

Evaluations: Students should be asked to evaluate themselves, their program, their committee, and the CDP as a whole every so often. Improvements are to be encouraged and asked for in all areas, in order to make the CDP a smoother, more comprehensive operation.

Leaves of Absence: During the course of the CDP a student may need to take a vacation for a week, a month, a year. For many reasons: exhaustion (hopefully not), fun (necessary), work (to acquire needed funds for CDP projects), etc. This would be negotiated with the committee.

* See Blithering Beginnings, Part 2; R. Munkachy

Advance Fun 101

Prerequisite : None

In the year of attempted enlightenment 1973, somewhere between the dates of the twentieth and the twenty-third of September, Thomas Jefferson College students flocked down highway M-37 with bodies, minds, spirits, and other camping gear to Circle Pines Center, a co-operative camp begun around 1938 by people of the early co-op movement. The idea was, in the tradition of TJC, to Advance several

paces in the interaction of our learning community, exist a few hours to a few days in a respected natural setting about 50 miles south of Grand Rapids, eat some food, dance some dances, boogie some boogie, and volley some balls. We came by all modes of transport: from pedestrian to ten-speed bicycle to gas-eating sedan to pick-up truck.

Activities were varied. Planned and unplanned events began with an ice-breaking ritual of getting-to-know-each-other, led by Wayne Kinzie from the Counselling Center, and ended with a massive cleaning campaign inspired by Lee Kaufman and Mother Nature herself. In between lay countless experiences, only a few of which can be recorded here and many of which will go unrecognized but for the memory of it all.



That first night, Dan Andersen and many followers stood beneath the open universe; and aided by Circle Pines' 10" telescope the children of the night skies were able to observe distant heavenly bodies, and bodies of bodies for some three hours; and they could have gone on longer but for the chilly air close to earth. The second night, our own planet's atmosphere forbade such a spectacle again; earthly vapors began gathering their forces for Friday's rains.

The next day, before those rains struck, Mike Birtwistle and his merry gang were to be seen engaging in theatrical romping amidst the waist-tall weeds. That evening, folk dances from far corners of the earth were taught to those interested. Despite the difficulty of teaching/learning very structured dances when some folks wished mainly to boogie all over the floor in their varying degrees of sobriety, some people enjoyed the dances and music from the world's past and present archives of folklore.

Israeli, Yugoslavian, American, Greek and other dances were taught. Soon afterwards was a spontaneous uproar of boogie-ing complete with a rocking farmhouse and some fine rag piano.

Saturday afternoon, Cam Wilson conducted a Field Crawl, which the topography of Circle Pines seems to compel any body to do. The fields there stretch out with natural wild-flower cover, of which some remaining specimens were bursting forth their last fall spurts of pollen and glorious patterns. Cam and his people descended upon all this and proceeded to crawl. That night, we had a sneak preview of the musical play "The People's Parade" to be staged the 28th through 31st of November and the 5th through 8th of December. Performed with minimal preparation, the play gave many of us understanding jabs of humor-depression to recognize a witty portrayal of familiar contemporary tragicomedy.

Besides the planned activities of the weekend Advance, many undocumented delights arose from our creative resources. People discovered the beauty of the camp, from Lake Stewart to the junkyard. Meals went well, considering a small budget, and were events of combined cooperation and confusion. Many pushed a ladle, scrubbed a pot, and swept a floor.

In short, we Advanced four days, learned a lot and met some of our comrades before and outside the TJC classroom scene. Sunday morning, suddenly the camp was clean -- styrofoam cups, cigarette butts, and other contemporary evidence were made scarce -- and people disappeared again down the road to their northern havens to gather their energies for the great fall.

Jill Cliffer





COMMONS DINING ROOM

	<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Lunch</u>	<u>Dinner</u>
Monday - Friday	7:00-8:30	11:00-1:00	4:45-6:00
Saturday	8:00-8:45	11:00-1:00	4:45-5:45
Sunday (brunch)	9:30-Noon		3:30-5:00



COMMONS RESTAURANT 225



Monday-Friday 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

This room cannot be reserved during the weekday lunch period of 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It is available by reservation only for breakfast and dinner, for morning, afternoon and evening meetings, and anytime on the weekend. For reservations, contact the Campus Scheduling Office in the Campus Center.

COMMONS SNACK BAR

Monday-Friday	7:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday	CLOSED
Sunday	CLOSED



CAMPUS CENTER SNACK BAR

Monday-Friday	7:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:30 a.m.-11:00 p.m.
Sunday	11:00 a.m.-10:30 p.m.
Breakfast Menu	7:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.
Lunch Menu	11:00 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

Bus Schedule for Fall

Arr. Sheldon Complex	7:05	a.m.	8:55	a.m.	10:55	a.m.	1:55	p.m.
Lv. Sheldon Complex	7:10		9:10		12:10		4:10	
Arr. Jr. College	7:16		9:15		12:16		4:16	
Lv. Jr. College	7:21		9:21		12:21		4:21	
Arr. St. John U.C.of C.	7:31		9:31		12:31		4:31	
Lv. St. John U.C.ofC	7:36		9:36		12:36		4:36	
Arr. GVSC	7:50		9:50		12:50		4:50	
Lv..GVSC	7:52		9:52		12:52		4:52	
Arr. Allendale ShopRite	8:00		10:00		1:00		5:00	
Lv.Allendale Shop-Rite	8:05		10:05		1:05		5:05	
Arr. 64th Ave.	8:07		10:07		1:07		5:07	
Lv. 64th Ave.	8:08		10:08		1:08		5:08	
Arr. GVSC	8:16		10:16		1:16		5:16	
Lv. GVSC	8:20		10:20		1:20		5:20	
Arr. St. John U.C.ofC.	8:35		10:35		1:35		5:35	
Lv.St.John U.C.ofC.	8:37		10:37		1:37		5:37	
Arr. Junior College	8:45		10:45		1:45		5:45	
Lv. Junior College	8:47		10:47		1:47		5:47	

One way fare between Grand Rapids and GVSC - \$.35.

One way fare between Allendale and GVSC - \$.10.

Tickets for bus transportation are available at the Concession desk in the Campus Center, or students may pay while boarding the bus.

THOMAS JEFFERSON COLLEGE
GRAND VALLEY STATE COLLEGES
ALLENDALE, MICHIGAN 49401

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