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Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

APRIL 26, 2011

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Tomek hopes to educate on dangers of skin cancer, tanning

A typical summer day for Sarah Tomek involved lying out in the sun for up to eight hours, with minimal sunscreen and occasional sprays from a water bottle to help soak up the sun's rays. It took a visit to BGSU's Health Center and a suspicious mole to change that behavior forever. Last spring, the senior from Strongsville learned she had an early stage of malignant melanoma, a form of skin cancer.

The marketing major says it's not hard to pinpoint the source—not only did she have a family history of skin cancer, she was addicted to tanning. "It gave me a new sense of self-confidence I had been lacking. I loved how I looked in the mirror," she said.

Tomek said she would often go tan every other day; then a mole she'd had all her life started changing. "I went to the Health Center. The practitioner saw it, reassured me I would be fine, but because of its appearance suggested it be removed," she explained. "After a biopsy I got a call from the Health Center to come in from a person who sounded uneasy.

"Once I arrived, the doctor had me lie down so he could feel my lymph nodes, but didn't give me my results. When I sat up he sat next to me and gave me the news—it was skin cancer. I just broke down." Blood work and a chest X-ray revealed it hadn't spread. A plastic surgeon removed the mole and the cancer. Tomek emerged from surgery a changed woman, with a new attitude.

The Delta Sigma Pi member is now an advocate for skin cancer prevention and a part of Colleges Against Cancer. She's worried about the "it won't happen to me" attitude she sees among her fellow college students.

Tomek and two classmates developed a survey to find out the level of skin cancer awareness and education at BGSU for Dr. Earl Boatwright's advanced marketing class. She says the results were disappointing.

"It was hard to hear that students don't think skin cancer is important, that it won't happen to them. Incidents in young adults have increased over the years due to the use of tanning beds."

Tomek's hoping to work with Colleges Against Cancer and the University to do a better job of educating students. "We need to let students know that this is a reality for young adults—skin cancer can happen to you. Check yourself regularly for any changes and before heading outside consider grabbing that bottle of sunscreen."

Givens fellow follows circus dream to BGSU

It sounds almost too cliché to be true, but Logan Jacot really is the boy who left home to join the circus. Now a BGSU junior, Jacot received his high school education while on the road with a traveling circus, through his school district's online degree program and intermittently attending classes back at home in New Philadelphia, Ohio, when the circus was not traveling.

"At some point, I decided I didn't want to just be in a circus, I wanted to own a circus," he said. Jacot chose BGSU in part for its arts management minor degree, which will help give him the business skills he will need. He may be BGSU's only student who is also a contortionist, fire eater and can walk on glass, a skill he learned from "Crystal," a performer who is 27 inches tall and bills herself as the world's shortest woman.

Now, BGSU's Stuart R. Givens fellowship has provided him a way to combine his love of the circus and his entrepreneurial spirit with his education. The fellowship offers students the

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money and time to explore learning outside the classroom in an experience of their own design.

He has used the fellowship money to help purchase equipment and a "museum-style side-show from a run-down circus in California, with shrunken heads and the like," he said. "When I was 16 and 17, I worked in the last surviving sideshow in the world, where I met my best friend, a guy who has no arms or legs but plays the bass guitar with his feet. I wanted a live show like that."

That sideshow is but one of three ventures Jacot has created. The others are a reptile adventure show and a small circus show. All three will be going up next summer. From working with circus animals from tigers to Capuchin monkeys to camels, he developed an interest in conservation and wants his circus to have an environmental theme, which has led to his major in environmental policy and the circus's name: Circus Vera.

Jacot has a way of engaging others in his passion and bringing them into his shows. For the reptile show, he has gotten help from biologist Dr. Eileen Underwood, BGSU's resident herpetologist, and now has an apartment full of reptiles. In return, he works in her lab 14 hours a week.

As a freshman living in the Arts Village residential learning community, he taught circus arts to other students and they gave seven Circus Vera performances from May 20-Aug. 14 last summer. "It was very successful," he said.

Between his schoolwork, caring for the reptiles and planning the shows, "I don't have a life, but I love every minute of it," he said. He has connected with other circus buffs such as Dr. Montana Miller, popular culture, a former aerialist.

"I wasn't sure I wanted to go to college, and I wasn't sure I could do it," he said. "The trip here from Indiana was much more terrifying to me than stepping into the cage of tigers the first time, but it's been great. Everywhere I look, I've gotten a lot of help. I've found great friends who are really supportive."

Student's installation art captures moments in time

It is hard to conceive, when viewing ceramic artist Jamie Bardsley's intricate, nearly room-size arrangement of small porcelain water-droplet shapes, that in a short time the whole thing will be dismantled and taken away, but that is exactly what Bardsley looks forward to.

"It's all about the process," the installation artist said. "Palm Prints," the roughly 10-by-16-foot piece she created for her master's thesis exhibition in the Willard Wankelman Gallery, is meant to evoke water droplets at the moment they strike the ground and are briefly suspended before dispersing. Viewed from above, the scene is reminiscent of sand on a rainy day, the droplets creating concentric circles. The surface rises and falls in a gentle rippling effect, reaching peaks in some places and low valleys in others.

Made of unglazed, fired porcelain of subtly varying shades of cream and pale taupe, the "folds" have the delicate appearance of a wasp's nest tubes. Though they appear joined, the pieces are carefully set in place and can be reconfigured endlessly. "Palm Prints," which took about three days to assemble, is only the latest of many incarnations, Bardsley said.

After all that, isn't she loath to take it apart? The answer is an emphatic no. "In fact, the hard part comes about three-quarters of the way through, when I am already envisioning the next piece and it's hard to make myself finish this one," she said.

Her work is the result of "a year and a half of sitting on the floor, pounding out porcelain folds. It's so intimate — each one bears my palm print and a memory of the moment," she said.

The process involves taking a small piece of clay, throwing it down on the floor and pressing it out like pastry dough, repeating the process about three times and then gently folding it in



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her palm.

"Repetition is about the only cohesive theme in my work," she said — that, and the natural hues and organic forms of the folds. The rhythm of their creation reoccurs in the act of arranging them into a design. "It's like a giant puzzle. It's so intimate. You've handled each one so many times, you know what these objects want to do. You find their natural rhythm and it evolves into a ripple effect."

Bardsley did not always work in this style. She developed it after coming to BGSU for her master's program. She met BGSU ceramics faculty member John Balistreri when she was an artist-in-residence at the St. Petersburg Clay Co. in Florida. He is now her master's committee chair. "He's amazing. He doesn't hover but he steps in at all the right times," she said.

After graduating from Arcadia University in Pennsylvania, Bardsley stayed on a few years as a studio assistant to her teacher, ceramicist Paula Winokur, who works in large-scale porcelain sculptures. Then came the residency in Florida and her encounter with Balistreri. "Meeting John was a turning point for me," she said, also crediting BGSU art faculty members Joe Pintz, Lou Krueger and Shawn Morin as important mentors.

What is next for this artist? Bardsley is not sure; the total focus required by her current work left little time to plan, but she says she would like to take her boxes of porcelain folds and go west. "I'd like to see them outside, in different settings and places. It's been a long, hard, two years and I think I want to go on the road with them to places I've never been."