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Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

AUGUST 4, 2008

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BGSU student enters national environmental arena

This time next year will find BGSU master's degree student Sarah Opfer in Washington, D.C. As the recipient of a 2009 Knauss Fellowship, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Opfer will trade long days collecting specimens in Lake Erie and weekends analyzing samples in the lab for urban life and environmental policy work.

Opfer, a biological sciences major from Oak Harbor specializing in aquatic ecology and spatial environmental chemistry, will receive \$42,000 to spend a year in the capital working with a federal agency on environmental regulations and policy.

In preparation for beginning the work next February, she will spend a week in Washington in a sort of matchmaking process in which she will interview with agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, NOAA, NASA and even the State Department. Then she will prioritize which she feels best suit her interests and skills, the agencies will do likewise, and the matches will be made.

"I've grown up around the Great Lakes and my research has been on the Great Lakes, so it would be good for me to get more oceanic experience under my belt. It's a good learning experience for me," Opfer said.

Opfer, who is co-advised by Dr. Jeffrey Miner, biology, and Dr. John Farver, geology, was in Canada at an International Association of Great Lakes Research conference presenting her research results when she learned she had been selected for the prestigious award. She is one of two students to be chosen from Ohio among this year's 51 Knauss fellows.

The Knauss Fellowship, established in 1979 by Sea Grant, a part of NOAA, provides a unique educational experience to students who have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The program matches highly qualified graduate students with "hosts" in the legislative and executive branches of government for the one-year, paid fellowship. The program is named in honor of one of Sea Grant's founders, former NOAA administrator John A. Knauss.

Local impact of research

Opfer's master's thesis deals with heavy metal uptake in burrowing mayflies and contamination in sediments in western Lake Erie. Historically, research has focused on contamination from organic compounds in the lake, including PCBs. But heavy metals—such as cadmium, zinc and lead—can also present health dangers if consumed, Opfer noted. Cadmium, for example, used by the metal-plating industry and in nickel-cadmium and solar batteries, is a neurotoxin.

"Sarah's research indicates that these heavy metals are reaching levels of health concern, especially in sediments in the middle of the western Lake Erie basin," Miner said. The research was supported by a grant from the Lake Erie Protection Fund to her co-advisers.

Mayfly nymphs spend one to two years in the sediment at the bottom of the lake before rising to the surface for their one-day life, during which they mate. Their eggs drop back to the bottom to begin the cycle again. The emerging mayflies are most abundant in June and early July and are eagerly eaten by important sport fish such as yellow perch.

"We're not sure yet if there is 'trophic transfer' of these heavy metals from the mayflies to the fish and to humans who eat the fish," Opfer said. Determining that will be a later step in the research.

In spring 2007, she collected mayfly specimens and lake sediment samples, which she analyzed with a new, optical emissions spectrometer in the geochemistry laboratory at BGSU.

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"So far, we've found higher metal concentrations in the middle of the lake than near the shore," she said. These toxic metals appear to adhere to organic sediment particles that are lightweight and drift into deeper areas of western Lake Erie. Less turbulence from waves in these deep areas allows the heavy-metal-bound particles to settle. However, this is also where the mayfly nymphs are abundant and consuming the sediments.

"Ongoing research is addressing whether these heavy metals in sediment and insects are accumulating in yellow perch when the insects become available as prey in June and July," Miner said.

While Opfer is in Washington, the research will be continued by Farver and Miner. Other graduate and undergraduate students are ready to take on the project.

For more information on the Knauss Fellowship program, visit <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/knauss/>.

Williams film to be screened at Los Angeles and New York festivals

A feature film by Daniel Williams, theatre and film, has been accepted into the American Black Film Festival in Los Angeles and the Urbanworld Film Festival in New York. "Cigarettes for Breakfast" will be screened during the Los Angeles festival, running Thursday-Sunday (Aug. 7-10), and again during the New York event, Sept. 10-14.

The film follows Sirius, an aspiring writer self-destructively entwined with three women, who envisions himself as the main character of his fictional story. The line between reality, fantasy, dreams and memory fades as he struggles to overcome his personal demons.

Williams wrote, directed and edited the film. Production began in the fall of 2002, and principal photography lasted about nine months. Most members of the production crew were film students from Howard University, though four students from BGSU joined the project in July 2004.

Founded in 1997, the American Black Film Festival's mission is to strengthen the black filmmaking community through resource sharing, education, artistic collaboration and career development. The screening schedule is posted at www.abff.com.

The Urbanworld Film Festival is an initiative of the Urbanworld Foundation Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to redefining the role of multicultural constituents in contemporary cinema by implementing programs and events that support the development and success of the urban filmmaking community. Also in its 12th year, the festival will post its event program online at www.urbanworld.com after Aug. 30.

Williams was also recently recognized for his short film "No Faces," which was an official selection of the 2008 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase. The film was screened as part of the Shorts Program on July 22 at the Tivoli Theatre. The 20-minute piece, produced by Williams with the assistance of students from the BGSU Department of Theatre and Film, focused on the travails of a low-level thug who, when abandoned by his girlfriend, agrees to take on a hit so he can garner more respect and money from his peers.

The 2008 St. Louis Filmmakers Showcase was the eighth annual showcase. The event focuses exclusively on the work of local directors and filmmakers, as well as expatriates with strong local connections who have gone on to use their creative talents in other cities.

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Kolla's Fulbright work aimed at keeping the power on

Aug. 14 marks the fifth anniversary of the largest blackout ever to hit the United States. About 50 million people were left in the dark when the power went out in eight states from Ohio to the east coast.

Parts of Ontario were also affected by the blackout, which an investigative task force labeled as preventable. The task force said that operators for Akron-based FirstEnergy Corp. should have contained three power-line failures before the outage "cascaded," and the company admitted that its computer alarm systems didn't function.

In short, says Dr. Sri Kolla, electronics and computer technology, the blackout became a major one "because some schemes didn't work properly." Trying to improve those computerized systems, through a new algorithm, is one aspect of the work Kolla will be doing in India for the next nine months as a Fulbright Research Scholar.

He will be leaving next week for the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, where he will collaborate with electrical engineering faculty on development of protection and control schemes for electric energy systems.

Kolla says significant study of power-grid protection in India has helped make the combined research possible. A few years ago, a faculty member from the Indian Institute of Science made a presentation at BGSU about alleviating power network overloads and, in 2006, Kolla visited Indian universities with a presentation about "intelligent" systems applications to electric power systems.

"There is an ongoing, collaborative effort, and this will be enhanced once I go there," proving beneficial to both India and the United States, he says.

A recent Bowling Green graduate student applied artificial neural (intelligent) networks—another computer algorithm—to electrical motor protection schemes, so Kolla and his colleagues are also looking to extend protection to smaller components within the larger power system.

Control, meanwhile, refers in this context to the need to control electrical generators to meet demand in the system. To regulate those generators, he says, control algorithms are needed that look at how much electricity must be generated. And the introduction of alternative energies such as solar and wind power creates new challenges in this area, he adds. Tying the pieces of the power grid together are control, or operations, centers with controllers who are networked together. FirstEnergy has such a center in the Akron area, as does American Electric Power Co. in Columbus, notes Kolla, who is also working on an algorithm to better coordinate the network controllers.

He points out that current energy issues make the research particularly relevant. "The worldwide energy shortage brings the importance of efficient operation of electric energy systems to the fore," he says.

'Grey's Anatomy' star, alum to address August grads

James Pickens Jr., a BGSU alumnus and star of the television series "Grey's Anatomy," will be the speaker at summer commencement Saturday (Aug. 9).

Pickens, who earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from Bowling Green in 1976, will also receive the University's Distinguished Alumnus Award during graduation. The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. on the University Hall lawn or, in the event of rain, in Anderson Arena in Memorial Hall.

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Pickens portrays Dr. Richard Webber on "Grey's Anatomy" and has a Screen Actors Guild award to his credit as part of the ABC series' award-winning ensemble cast. He has received two NAACP Image Award nominations for his role as well.

Pickens began acting at Cleveland's Karamu House, distinguished as the oldest African-American theater in the United States. After moving to New York, he performed in the 1981 production of the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama "A Soldier's Play" at the Negro Ensemble Company with fellow cast members Denzel Washington and Samuel L. Jackson. He also starred in the 25th anniversary revival of "A Raisin in the Sun" at the Roundabout Theater.

In 1990, Pickens moved to the West Coast and began an impressive run of film performances, including roles in "Traffic," "Sleepers," "Ghosts of Mississippi" and "How Stella Got Her Groove Back." He is well known to television audiences, too, for his roles on "NYPD Blue," "The X-Files," "The West Wing" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm," among others.

Pickens came full circle with Karamu House in 2006 when he served as executive producer of the musical review "Gospel, Gospel, Gospel," which opened to rave reviews.

A man of wide-ranging interests, the actor is also active in the U.S. Team Roping Championships, roping cattle on horseback at events across the country.

About 1,280 students will receive degrees at Saturday's commencement. Representing 64 Ohio counties, 35 states and 28 nations, the summer graduating class includes nearly 40 students who will receive associate degrees and just over 600 who will receive graduate degrees. Among the graduate students are 37 Ph.D. candidates and more than 550 master's degree candidates.

Of the roughly 640 students receiving bachelor's degrees, about 95 are expected to graduate with honors. Thirteen students are expected to graduate summa cum laude, for maintaining a grade point average between 3.9 and 4.0. Eighteen degree candidates are expected to graduate magna cum laude, for maintaining grade averages in the 3.76-3.9 range, and 51 candidates are eligible for cum laude recognition, for averages in the 3.5-3.75 range. In addition, 12 students receiving associate degrees will graduate with distinction and one, with high distinction.

IN BRIEF**Plan to attend Opening Day address**

Mark your calendars for Aug. 22, when President Carol Cartwright will welcome faculty, staff, students and community members back to campus in her Opening Day address. The talk begins at 10 a.m. in the Lenhart Grand Ballroom, Bowen-Thompson Student Union. The doors open at 9:30 for social time.

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CALENDAR

Tuesday, Aug. 5

Dissertation Defense, "A Practical Distinction in Value Theory: Qualitative and Quantitative Accounts," by Galen Foresman, philosophy, 1 p.m., 317 Shatzel Hall.

Thursday, Aug. 7

Administrative Staff Council, 1:30 p.m., 207 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Saturday, Aug. 9

Commencement, 9 a.m., University Hall Lawn.

Continuing Events Through Aug. 12

Art Exhibition, Now Art 2008, Union art galleries. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY

There were no jobs posted this week.

Labor Postings

<http://international.bgsu.edu/index.php?x=facinfohires>

Contact the Office of Human Resources at 419-372-8421 for information regarding classified and administrative positions. Position vacancy announcements may be viewed by visiting the HR Web site at www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/.

Employees wishing to apply for these positions must sign a "Request for Transfer" form and attach an *updated resume or data sheet*. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/BGSU_only/page11151.html

Off-campus classified:

www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/cl_staff/page11145.html

ADMINISTRATIVE

http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ohr/employment/adm_staff/page11137.html

OBITUARY

There were no obituaries this week.

