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Bowling Green State University

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BGSU Monitor

AUGUST 18, 2008

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Venerable concept gives BGSU student writers new voice, audience

Three years ago, Amy Rybak was driving to work early in the fall semester when she heard someone reading what sounded like a student-written essay on National Public Radio. Thinking it seemed like something she would want her students in BGSU's General Studies Writing Program to do, the excited instructor went to her East Hall office and looked up "This I Believe," the NPR program airing the essay.

The series invites people—some famous, most not—to share personal philosophies and core values that guide their daily lives. Rybak immediately decided to try the idea with a class, whose reaction she likened to "light bulbs coming on." The students wrote down ideas and, "in 50 minutes, they were all able to write this essay," which was new, different and, perhaps most significantly, something they enjoyed, she said.

After two years of tweaking, Rybak had all of her English 111 students submit "This I Believe" essays to NPR last spring. Seven of the essays were posted on NPR's Web site, along with others written by students of Dawn Hubbell-Staeble, her colleague in General Studies Writing. And this fall, Rybak is teaching one section of a pilot First-Year Seminar course and planning to use "This I Believe" as part of the capstone assignment.

Now entering her 10th year as a full-time instructor at BGSU, Rybak had always required a diagnostic essay from her students at the beginning of each semester to gauge their writing ability. Until last spring, that is, when the "This I Believe" assignment got her English 111 class off to a good start, she said.

After multiple drafts and peer review of their papers, the students began to see that what mattered to them could also have meaning to others, Rybak noted. They were proud of their work, which ranged topic-wise from curling to suicide. In the latter case, writing about a friend's death was cathartic for a student, she said. "Writing can heal. We know that," she added. "Writing can be a great way to find peace.

"Some students think they're not writers, but then they write about something they care about and things just spill out of them that no teacher could change," she said.

She hopes the students in First-Year Seminar will be similarly motivated by "This I Believe," the NPR version of which is based on a 1950s radio show of the same name, created and hosted by legendary journalist Edward R. Murrow.

Another of her colleagues, Stacey Osborn, will teach the other two sections of First-Year Seminar, which is designed to explore transition-to-college issues while also keeping an academic focus, Rybak said.

Pointing out that students' values can now often be seen on Facebook, she plans to have those in her class maintain a blog dealing with feelings and transition issues. "That will become a sort of pre-writing for them," feeding into the capstone "This I Believe" essay, she explained.

"I feel like this class is who I am," said Rybak about First-Year Seminar, an idea advanced last year by Dr. Mark Gromko, senior vice provost for academic programs.

"The This-I-Believe essay is an excellent culminating experience for the First-Year Seminar," Gromko said. "It engages students, emphasizes academic skills, and showcases the University's distinctive emphasis on critical thinking about values."

The essays also give new college students "a permanent record of what they were feeling at that very important time of their lives," in addition to helping them see writing as valuable and

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potentially meaningful to multiple audiences, Rybak said. Submitting work for a wider audience, she said, is "a major success for a first-year student."

"We have tended to sell personal writing short," she added, noting the difficulty for some new students of jumping into academic writing. "It's a great place for my students to start."

"This I Believe" can be found at <http://thisibelieve.org/index.php>. To read BGSU students' essays, visit http://thisibelieve.org/dsp_AdvancedSearch.php and type Bowling Green State University in the "Keywords" box.

Area high schools to learn from BGSU environmental health majors

Because other students are such effective communicators when it comes to reaching high school students, BGSU is enlisting current environmental health majors to share information about their field at their former high schools.

The Association of Environmental Health Academic Programs (AEHAP) has awarded \$4,000 to BGSU to develop and implement the recruiting strategy. The award is made possible through a cooperative agreement with AEHAP and the National Center for Environmental Health, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We believe this project fits well with the goals of the grant, which are, ultimately, to increase the number of students enrolled in environmental health degree programs," the association told Dr. Gary Silverman, director of BGSU's environmental health and environmental studies programs.

The hope is that the high school students will enroll as environmental health majors at one of the three accredited undergraduate programs in Ohio. BGSU's program is one of only 274 nationally accredited undergraduate environmental health programs in the United States.

The recruiting effort also dovetails with Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut's plan to enhance Ohio's economy by enrolling and retaining more college students in the state and preparing them for the work force.

Assisted by program faculty, BGSU environmental health majors will develop presentations about opportunities available to students majoring in environmental health and graduates of such programs. They will visit the high schools they graduated from, leaving promotional materials behind for students and college counselors.

Visits to 20 high schools are planned over the next two years. "We hope that in establishing this initial program, we will build long-lasting relationships with these schools," Silverman said.

The experience of preparing and giving the presentations will also be helpful to the college students, Silverman said, and should boost retention as well.

According to BGSU's description, environmental health graduates are specialists in protecting the environment. They are prepared to evaluate and control threats to air, water and soil. An environmental health scientist may focus on the health of a particular occupational work force or the general well-being of a community.

Graduates meet the educational requirements to become Registered Sanitarians and Certified Industrial Hygienists after gaining sufficient experience and passing the appropriate professional examinations. Primary places of employment are in industry, government, insurance risk-management agencies, environmental engineering firms, consulting firms, testing laboratories, health care facilities and educational institutions.



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Fulbright alumnus returns to Kenya to help launch curriculum

When Dr. Bruce Edwards returns to the campus of Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya, this week, he says, "it will feel like home."

Edwards, English and Africana studies and associate vice provost for academic technology, has been invited back by Daystar's deputy vice chancellor, Dr. Philip Kitui, to provide the inaugural lecture to launch a new degree in Web-based professional communication.

Edwards, a visiting Fulbright Scholar in Kenya in 1999-2000, has continued to consult with and mentor faculty and administrators at Daystar over the past decade—virtually, by Internet, and through several campus visits.

"As a university, we cannot think of a better person than you to perform this ceremony considering the significant role you played in the inception of the idea, the development of the program and the training of faculty in this area," wrote Kitui.

"It is a great honor and thrill to be asked to give this lecture, but even more to see my colleagues at Daystar again," Edwards said. The Fulbright program, he noted, is designed to create just these kinds of "sustainable relationships."

Edwards' topic, "Global Professions, Higher Education," focuses on the opportunity for East African students to take their place among a growing world employment market that needs skilled writers and Web-savvy technical communicators in Global English.

"The skill set needed to work effectively as a Web-based technical communicator is encompassed in Daystar's new curriculum," he explained. "Daystar graduates will be able to compete for key positions in business and industry, not only in Kenya, but around the globe."

The new degree, the first of its kind in Kenya, has received the approval of Kenya's Commission for Higher Education. While in Kenya, Edwards will also visit other university campuses that are potential partners in online education with BGSU.

"Mobile education is increasingly popular, available and affordable in East Africa, and we can learn a great deal about new delivery systems from our African colleagues."

Classified Staff Council seeks to build strength

While faculty and students are gearing up for a successful new year, so are classified staff members. Among the goals this year for the Classified Staff Council (CSC) is to promote personal/professional development opportunities for all classified staff.

Each month, at the beginning of the regular CSC meeting, the council will sponsor a 30-minute program on a helpful topic, ranging from communications to money matters and health care.

"Our theme for the year is 'The strength of the team is the individual member, and the strength of each member is the team,'" explains CSC Chair Faith Olson, who is serving in the leadership role for the second time.

The meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month, with the professional development topics presented from 10-10:30 a.m.

The topics, dates and locations are as follows:

- Aug. 20 "Communicating with Our Constituents," 207 Bowen-Thompson Student Union
- Sept. 17 "Flexible Spending Accounts and Health Care Plan Changes," 208 or 315 Union
- Oct. 15 "Money Matters: Getting Out of Debt," 201B or 315 Union
- Nov. 19 "Money Matters: Setting Up a Budget," 309 or 315 Union



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- Dec. 17 "Money Matters: Planning for Purchases/Saving for Retirement," 315 Union
- Jan. 21, 2009 "Medical Mutual Test Results and Strategies to Improve," 315 Union
- Feb. 18 "How to Be a Better Health Plan Consumer," 315 Union
- March 18 To Be Announced, 315 Union
- April 15 "Becoming Healthier through Diet Changes," 315 Union
- May 20 "Becoming Healthier through Exercise," 315 Union

Any changes in the programs will be included in campus updates and announced in the listproc prior to the monthly meetings. For more information, contact members of Classified Staff Council. Contact information is available at www.bgsu.edu/organizations/csc/page35801.html.

Czisy wins U.S. collegiate skating title

Alissa Czisy, a BGSU senior and one of the top female figure skaters in the United States, won the senior ladies' competition Aug. 10 at the U.S. collegiate championships in Arvada, Colo.

The title earned Czisy, 20, the opportunity to represent U.S. Figure Skating at the 2009 Winter World University Games, set for February in Harbin, China.

Also a victor at the 2004 U.S. collegiate championships, Czisy went on to win Skate Canada in 2005 and was the bronze medalist at the State Farm U.S. Figure Skating Championships in 2007.

The Sylvania native grew up in Bowling Green, where she is now majoring in international studies, Russian and French at BGSU. She trains in Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

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

President Carol Cartwright invites the campus and community to her Opening Day address Friday (Aug. 22). 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.

BGSU Choral Society to hold open auditions

The University Choral Society will hold open auditions for the 2008-09 season Tuesday and Sunday (Aug. 19 and 24).

Auditions for new and returning members will be heard by appointment beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday and at 6 p.m. Sunday in 1038 Moore Musical Arts Center. Those auditioning are invited to bring a prepared solo; an accompanist will be provided. Directed by Mark Munson, music education, the chorus will rehearse at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays beginning Sept. 2.

In celebration of the composer's 200th birthday, the featured work of the season will be Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah," based on the life of the Old Testament prophet whose story is told in I Kings. The performance will be on April 26 with the Toledo Symphony Orchestra.



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Other repertoire for the season includes Mahler's "Symphony No. II," to be performed with the Toledo Symphony Sept. 26 and 27, and Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms," which will be performed as part of a community event on Nov. 23.

For more information, or to schedule an audition, call the BGSU College of Musical Arts at 2-2186.

Football home opener is Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night

All employees are invited to Faculty/Staff Appreciation Night Sept. 6 for the 2008 BGSU football home opener when the Falcons take on Minnesota. Kickoff is set for 7:30 p.m. at Doyt Perry Stadium.

Courtesy of BGSU Interim President Carol A. Cartwright, the first 600 BGSU faculty and staff members to stop by the Athletic Ticket Office beginning today (Monday, Aug. 25) will receive two complimentary tickets to the game. Additional tickets will be available for purchase at the time of pick-up at the special rate of \$9 each.

Questions? Call 877-BGSU TICKET. The ticket office is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, and is located in the main lobby of Anderson Arena inside Memorial Hall. A valid BGSU faculty/staff ID will be required for ticket pick-up and purchase at the special rate.

CALENDAR

Wednesday, Aug. 20

Classified Staff Council, 10 a.m. Meeting begins with professional development presentation, "Communicating with Our Constituents," 207 Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

Dissertation Defense, "Liberal Cosmopolitanism and Economic Justice," by Katherine Erbeznik, philosophy, 1 p.m., 301 Shatzel Hall.

Friday, Aug. 22

Opening Day Address, by Interim President Carol Cartwright, 10 a.m., Lenhart Grand

Ballroom, Union. Social time begins at 9:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 25

Fall Semester Begins.

Continuing Events Through Aug. 25

Exhibit, photography by Dr. Joseph Jacoby, professor emeritus of sociology, Union art galleries. Gallery hours are 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

JOB POSTINGS

FACULTY

University Libraries. Assistant Professor/Reference Archivist, and Assistant Professor/Electronic Resources Coordinator. Call Beverly Stearns, 2-7996. Deadline: Oct. 17.

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"



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form and attach an updated resume or data sheet. This information must be turned in to Human Resources by the job deadline.

Off-campus classified:

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

CLASSIFIED

On-campus classified:

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

ADMINISTRATIVE

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

OBITUARY

David Melle, 66, died Aug. 11 in Catawba Island Township. He was a professor of music performance studies in the College of Musical Arts from 1967-95, teaching flute and clarinet, and played in a faculty woodwind quintet.

