THE HONORS COLLEGE

2009

IMAGINE

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

IMAGINE STAFF TOP ROW: Deidre Elliott, Justin Kleberg, Briton Bennett, Josh Pond, Brian Railsback.
BOTTOM ROW: Lauren Williams, Casey Weems, Kristin Smith

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A Great Building Demands a Great College

In fall 2009, The Honors College moves from Reynolds Hall to Phase One of a $51 million residential complex in the center of campus – the most expensive construction project in Western Carolina University's history. With completion of the entire project in 2010, The Honors College will be located in arguably the finest home for an Honors program in the country.

The Balsam and Blue Ridge Halls complex will be spectacular, but it demands that The Honors College rises to the level of excellence that this facility represents.

We have been working to get there. The student Honors College Board, under the leadership of President Erin Ponder, has raised the admission standard and tightened up the requirements to remain in the College. The Honors College's 2009 Undergraduate Expo enjoyed the most faculty participation ever, support of student travel to the 2009 National Conference on Undergraduate Research resulted in WCU's tie for fifth in the nation out of 308 universities, introduction of Honors Study Abroad grants helped more students learn overseas (Honors students made up more than 50% of all students going abroad from WCU last year), and the College continued to fund Undergraduate Academics Projects Grants despite budget cuts.

Still, all of this is not enough for that new building.

The most important project underway in The Honors College now is a new Honors Liberal Studies Program that will be different from the university's liberal studies curriculum. The new curriculum was initiated by The Honors College Board and The Honors College Advisory Board (an external advisory group led by Chairman Dr. Mark Whitehead), then revised with considerable input from faculty, staff, and administrators across the university. Presently it is under review.

Related to WCU's Quality Enhancement and UNC-Tomorrow plans, the new Honors Liberal Studies Program will emphasize "The Honors Path" for achievement after graduation. Specifically, the new curriculum will encourage or require Honors students to participate in service-learning, undergraduate research, study abroad, internships, and graduation with The Honors College diploma. The new curriculum will create a great foundation for the major and help to provide Honors students with the in-class and out-of-class abilities necessary to excel in a career or in graduate school.

As fantastic as the new Honors residence will be, what matters is what the students who live there do while they are at Western and, most importantly, what those students are able to do when they graduate.

Brian Railsback, Dean
The Honors College
April 7, 2009

SOMETHING SUPER ABOUT HER

by Briton Bennett

Jewel Counts, Honors College grad Spring '08, was a double major in Political Science and Communications in Electronic Media. In the spring of 2008, she was asked to work on a paper about the Super Delegates in the Democratic Party. Her paper, titled "There's Nothing 'Super' About It," was completed by the end of the semester. Associate Professors of Political Science Gibbs Knotts and Christopher Cooper based their editorial, "Democratic Party's Process Undemocratic," on her research. The editorial ran in the Charlotte Observer on May 23, 2008. Jewel was honored to see her name on the article beside both of her professors. "I work hard, and it felt good to get recognized for it," she said.

Writing "There's Nothing 'Super' About It" took almost the entire semester. Jewel explains that she began by "compiling a dataset of 778 Super Delegates, including their names, states of residence, positions held within the party, genders, endorsements, and endorsement dates." Then she compared the data in order to determine whether or not certain factors played a role in the decisions of the Super Delegates about which presidential nominee to support at the Democratic National Convention.

"The hardest part was assigning a gender," Jewel notes. "Sometimes the Super Delegates would have ambiguous names and it made it difficult to assign a gender."

Jewel says that she was particularly interested in gender in the Democratic Party since Hillary Clinton was one of the contenders for the presidential nomination during the 2008 election. When Jewel was asked whether the fact that she is a woman in the male-dominated fields of politics and journalism affected her, she simply replied, "I feel like it's somewhat of a dead issue." Jewel seems undaunted by the male psyche that tends to dominate the political arena. "I work just as hard as everyone else and I don't rely on my gender to dictate my future."

Jewel said that it was easy for her to remain unbiased during her research. She did not allow her own political persuasion to taint her data or her research. "Studying Communications has taught me that it is in [a journalist's] code of ethics to remain unbiased."

Jewel graduated shortly before the editorial was published in the Charlotte Observer, but she has remained at Western Carolina University to pursue her master's degree in Public Policy. Jewel says that eventually she wants to obtain her doctorate and be a political commentator "on CNN or Fox News." For now though, she will remain just as motivated, undaunted, and driven as ever.

Giving More Than An Inch

by Briton Bennett

Alan Goggins, an Honors junior at Western Carolina University, didn't know what to expect as he stepped off the bus. He was on the Southside of Chicago, an area known for violence and poverty, and yet he was anxious to participate. Wasn't that why he had signed up for WCU's Alternative Spring Break? This was one of the last opportunities he would have to help on this particular trip. He had already spent time working at homeless shelters, but that had consisted mostly of folding clothes and moving boxes…no real human interaction. He had traveled here with his wife, Bessie (a WCU graduate student in English), and other students with the most basic of intentions – to help people.

And so they walked. It was only supposed to be a couple of blocks through Englewood, a Southside neighborhood. It was almost noon and the students were headed toward a church annex where Alan and the rest of the group were going to work with PEACE (Promoting Education Against Crime in Englewood) for the afternoon. Just then, a Chicago police officer pulled up in his cruiser and said, "Do you guys know where you're going? I don't know if you should be walking much further." The group pressed on though, secure in knowing that today was going to be different.

PEACE (formerly known as Will-Feed) is a non-profit, after-school program aimed at providing a safe haven for the children of the Englewood neighborhood. PEACE started after a brutal summer a few years ago. The murder rate on the Southside had skyrocketed and an outcry came from the community to protect its children.

Alan and his comrades stepped into the basement of the church annex where Anita Dominique, one of the primary organizers of PEACE, greeted them and showed them around. The PEACE program is severely underfunded and understaffed, so most of the building was near condemnation, but the basement was still in working order. The area where a beautiful auditorium once stood has since been deemed too dangerous for the children to enter. Once the children started arriving, however, Alan began to shine.

It is impossible to tell how many children will show up on any given day at PEACE. There could be anywhere from eight to fifty kindergarten to high school-aged kids. "It's more like a family than a daycare," says Alan. The full-time staff have a hard time keeping up with names since the children don't always come every day – or every week for that matter – so they have taken to calling each boy "Prince" and each girl "Princess."

After the princes and princesses were finished with their homework, the group headed outside to the grounds to pick up trash. There, amid broken bottles and bags used by dealers to package and sell illegal drugs, Alan had an epiphany. "It's clear as day, once you walk in, that these are not kids from rural North Carolina. These kids are born into poverty. They have a real tough exterior, a true dog-eat-dog mentality, but once you get them one-on-one, that all melts away."

That "mountain top" experience left Alan wanting more. He wanted to keep giving back. Of all the things he experienced on his 2008 Alternative Spring Break, Alan found PEACE to be the most rewarding. He was only there for a few hours, but what he took from that experience left a lasting impression.

Alan returned to Western Carolina University with a changed heart and an open mind, and what he found at that Southside oasis kept calling him. Over the summer of 2008, he and Bessie took a thirty-three day cross-country camping trip. They made plans to stop in Chicago on the way back to see the children at PEACE. On their way out of Sylva, they stopped at Wal-Mart and spent as much money as they could spare buying toys and games to give the children of PEACE. "Whatever was on sale in the toy section, we grabbed," he explains. "It was hard because we were driving a Honda Civic – not much room – but we filled the trunk with as many toys as we could fit."

Once they arrived in Chicago, they pulled up to the building and walked in. "It was incredible to see the kids who have nothing …who come from nothing… playing with those toys. It was not much, but they really appreciated what we had done."

Now, back at Western Carolina University, Alan still feels a need to give back. He is currently working on a benefit concert for Goal, another non-profit organization, this one aimed at providing basic needs, food, and shelter to the poor.

Interested in donating to PEACE?

Call 773/651-9288 or write to:
PEACE Community Center
6455 South Peoria Street | Chicago IL 60621

He and Bessie both spoke about their experience with Alternative Spring Break and about the importance of Service Learning at Campus Compact, a Service Learning conference at High Point University in November, 2008. Service Learning takes students out of the classroom and gives them opportunities to volunteer as well as ways to apply their skills to real-life situations.

Alan has been working on another Service Learning project involving his other passion, mosquitoes. As an Environmental Health major, he has had the opportunity to do mosquito research in various locales around Western Carolina University. Alan took it a step further by identifying potentially hazardous areas that might be infested with disease-carrying mosquitoes. To do this, he goes out with what Bessie has termed, "the ghostbuster machine." This device is much like a vacuum that you might wear on your back and is designed to suck mosquitoes into a tank with netting and keep them there. He takes the insects home and studies them to determine their sex and species. Bessie says he even lined the windows of their house with the many jars of his mosquito research.

Alan continues to excel in his Environmental Health and Honors College classes. He is also Vice President of the Environmental Health Club.

Recalling his first visit to PEACE in Chicago, Alan says, "What started out as basic intentions turned into a significant experience." Giving just seven hours of his spring break, a symbolic inch, Alan Goggins took away much more than a yard.

get Animated

by Kristin Smith

Catherine Connor is an Honors senior English major with a concentration in Professional Writing. Currently, she writes mainly screenplays and fiction with a concentration on fantasy. She says that she "dabbles in poetry, but only when the inspiration hits."

Internships are often an important part of a student's education. Internships are required for students concentrating in Professional Writing, and Catherine has completed not one, but two, internships. She has one piece of advice regarding internships: "Just go for it."

Catherine's first internship was with the Coulter Faculty Center's Sandbox, a program designed to help Western Carolina faculty learn new technology skills. She worked there as a multimedia assistant during the spring 2008 semester.

Her second internship was with Cartoon Network during the summer of 2008. She gained her Cartoon Network internship through persistence. She applied to at least fifteen different internships at Turner Broadcasting System and got one call back from Cartoon Network Latin America. Cartoon Network Latin American offers animated entertainment in Spanish, Portuguese, and English to 8.4 million Latin American households. Fortunately, the internship was in Atlanta, only forty-five minutes from where Catherine lived.

You know when you're watching television and a commercial comes on for the network that you're already watching? That's called an ad promo. Catherine helped with the production of ad promos for the Latin American division of Cartoon Network. She went through the entire production process, including helping to make decisions on who would produce the ad and who would translate it into Spanish and Portuguese.

As well as working with the ad promos, Catherine shadowed several people, including animators for "Harvey Birdman, Attorney at Law," a cartoon that airs on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim, a division that offers programs for adult audiences.

During her time at Turner Broadcasting, she learned how to animate using the "flour sack test." This exercise teaches how movement works in animation. Catherine explains it by saying that "the challenge is to move the sack of flour

in an interesting way. You can make it jump, dance, whatever. The flour sack just needs to show that the animator understands weight distribution, composition, lighting, and anatomy of the character."

Although she enjoyed the work, Catherine says her favorite part was the people. Everybody was kind and always willing to help, especially if she needed to understand more about a particular aspect of the process.

After working at Cartoon Network, Catherine has a better idea of what she wants to do with her writing. Before the internship, she had "no idea what it was like to work in the real world." She realized that her writing can be applied to many things and that, despite what some people think, writing majors can get more than teaching jobs.

In addition, Catherine is a multimedia minor and is very interested in film. She likes both making and watching movies. Catherine works with Indy West, an independent film group that started at Western Carolina during fall 2008. She's a producer and script supervisor.

She has also started writing for the entertainment section in the Western Carolinian, and she's been published in two school magazines, Nomad, WCU's literary magazine, and Vision and Voice, the Women's Center newsletter. She is working on getting a children's story published. The story is part of a series titled "Latanya Oranto." Catherine said she has had the entire series of books and characters in her head since she was in middle school.

After she graduates, she wants to work in broadcasting for a couple of years before going to graduate school. After that, she thinks it would be awesome to be hired by Pixar and work with the animators there. So in the future, watch for her name in the credits!

Balancing Act

by Lauren Williams

Could you imagine waking up at 5 a.m. every morning? How would you like to spend a large chunk of your day training and then spend the rest at the library researching? For most college students, this schedule is not a reality, but for Andy Horn, a senior philosophy major from Charlotte and Western Carolina's starting quarterback for part of the fall season, this is a normal day, a regular part of his balancing act of academics and extracurricular activities.

Wait, you may say. Isn't a quarterback majoring in philosophy unusual? This is what makes Andy's situation so unique. Philosophy appeals to Andy because it examines the "big, unanswered questions," he says, such as humankind's purpose and how we came to be here on Earth.

Andy was interested in philosophy since childhood and was "always thinking outside the norm, always asking those 'big questions.'" His interest in philosophy was partly influenced by his uncle, Richard Davis, who reads a lot of philosophy. Once Andy got older, he was glad to discover that all his curiosity and questioning actually had a name – philosophy.

To Andy, one of the most wonderful things about Western Carolina is that all the philosophy professors are objective and teach their students to think for themselves and form their own beliefs, instead of relying on the opinions and beliefs of others. "Their enthusiasm inspires enthusiasm in their students," Andy explains.

Two of Andy's research papers were accepted at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, or NCUR, in two successive years. NCUR is an annual research conference for undergraduates. One of Andy's research papers, "Christianity's Will to Power: A Different Take on Slave-Morality," was a defensive response to German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity. In the other, "Exploitation of College Athletes: Through the Breaking of a Promise," Andy used a Marxist perspective to address the issue of student athletes who "are brought in [just to play for colleges] and seem replaceable." He thought Marx's argument about employers' exploitation of workers compared well with the exploitation of student athletes by universities.

Naturally, Andy felt great that his papers were accepted, although he wishes that he had had the opportunity to attend both of the NCUR conferences, one at the Dominican University of California and the other at Salisbury University in Maryland. However, he is committed to his team and couldn't go to either conference because of the football schedule.

Although the opportunity was unique, the decision to stay in Cullowhee became simple for Andy. He says, "My football career would have been hurt by missing practice, but my academic career did not directly suffer because of not being able to attend NCUR, though I'm sure the experience would have greatly benefited my academic experience."

As for the football, during his first season on the team, he was ranked as low as ninth-string on the team's depth chart, but he advanced to become starting quarterback at the beginning of the 2008 season by working hard. He advises, "Be your best in multiple facets of life: persevering, believing, knowing what you want to accomplish."

Of course, being a starting quarterback can teach you many things. One lesson that Andy learned is that if you work hard and give yourself the best chance to accomplish your goals, you can definitely succeed. He gives himself an even better chance to succeed

by going beyond what is expected of him. Being a starting quarterback also taught him to be an able leader for his teammates. He served as game captain for several games and saw how his actions directly influenced his teammates.

Andy is inspired in football by his dad, Andy Horn Sr., who gave him the advice, "If you want to be good, you've got to get out and practice." Andy took this advice to heart. Brett Favre, ex-quarterback for the Green Bay Packers and the New York Jets, also inspires him because Favre always enjoyed playing football and didn't let one play, successful or not, affect him. This attitude helped Andy when, due to a 2-4 record after WCU's fall 2008 Homecoming game, he lost his first-string quarterback position.

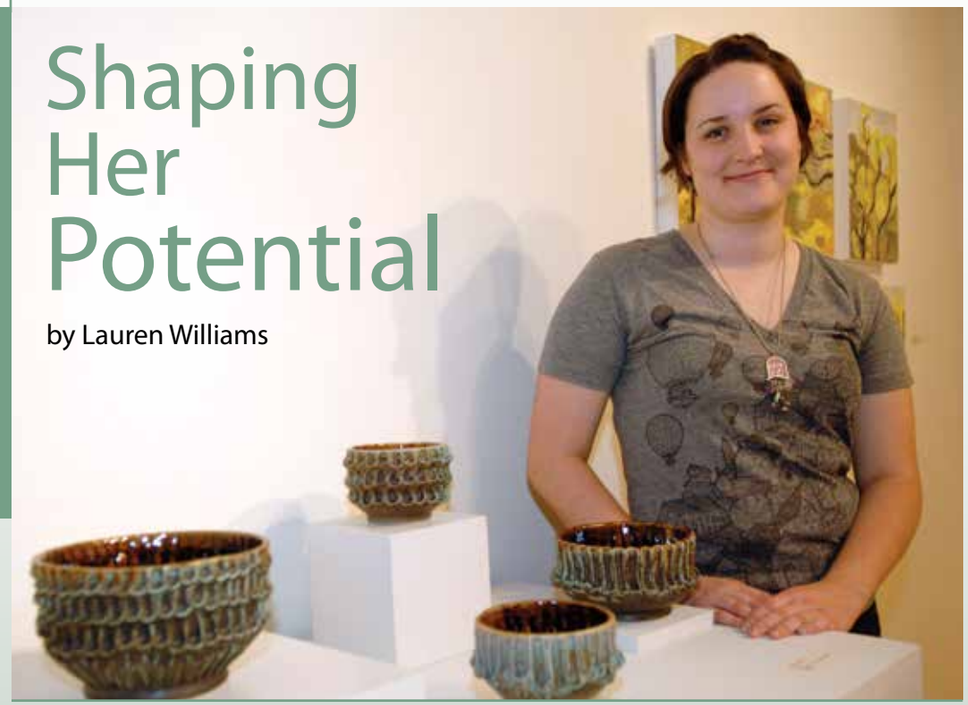
Regardless, for Andy, the most rewarding part of balancing academics and extracurricular activities is testing himself and pushing himself to the limits. It's not all sunshine and the hardest thing about balancing these two very different pursuits is time. "It's difficult being able to put maximum effort into both areas and not have anything lacking," he says. Though managing these two pursuits is difficult, Andy has learned that hard work and perseverance give him the best chance to reach his goals.

During spring 2009 semester, Andy will do a professional animal training internship in Florida at Walt Disney World's Epcot Center where he will work with marine mammals – feeding them, cleaning their environments, observing training techniques, and giving presentations to the public. He is interested in animal consciousness and what it reveals about humanity's relationship to the natural world.

In the future, he would like to go to graduate school to study the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of science, and especially, questions about consciousness and ethics.

Shaping Her Potential

by Lauren Williams



Think of the typical college life and career. There are many hectic moments and experiences, but overall, it's not impossible or unmanageable, right? Nothing too out of the ordinary – classes, studying, socializing, maybe a job or internship. However, for Jessica Capps, an art major with a concentration in ceramics, life at Western Carolina University is one big lesson in time management and organization. She has to juggle going to class, owning a business, and raising a three-year-old daughter.

Throughout the course of any given day, the life of this senior from Danbury, North Carolina, bustles with activity. Because her schedule varies each day, she goes from one thing to the next all day long. She goes to class, works at her ceramics business, and spends time with her family whenever she can. Consequently, she has to organize her time extremely well. Usually, she gets up, takes her daughter, Addison, to day care, and then goes to class. Throughout the day, Jessica works on ceramics between classes, then goes home in the afternoon to cook supper, and goes back to the studio with her daughter later in the day. When she finally returns home for the evening, she puts her daughter to bed and does her homework late at night. Thankfully, her professors are understanding about certain family situations – if Addison is sick, for example, or if Jessica needs to bring her to class.

How does someone get involved in such an interesting lifestyle? Jessica has always liked interior design and especially tile-making. In fact, she originally came to WCU for its excellent interior design program. However, she changed her major to ceramics in 2006 when she took a class and discovered her true passion. "I would do ceramics all day long if I could," she comments. "It's just so relaxing." She particularly enjoys the Fine and Performing Arts Center because it has galleries where pieces can be displayed, and the art studios it contains are an excellent environment to work on ceramics.

Jessica runs her own small business. She sells her ceramics in many different ways, including at craft shows, in gallery shows, and in her online shop (simply titled Jessica Wood Capps' Shop on the Etsy internet marketplace). Her work was recently featured as décor in one of the houses in Raleigh's Parade of Homes. Originally, she began her business in 2005, when she took a year off from Western Carolina, married Adam (a 2008 Western Carolina graduate), and had her daughter. While she was at home raising her child, she had enough downtime to make jewelry, her original business merchandise. After she returned to Western Carolina and took her first ceramics course, she started to sell ceramic necklaces, functional pieces such as bowls and jars, and tile wall panels.

For Jessica, the most rewarding part of her experience at WCU is being able to see her work in ceramics grow and change. Indeed, many people have helped to shape her artwork. Her ceramics professor, Joan Byrd, is an inspiration because she gets excited about clay, and the ceramic artists Jun Kaneko, Ayumi Horie, and Don Reitz have influenced Jessica as well. Some of these people have even visited Western Carolina as guest artists. When guest artists visit, Jessica learns about their travels and what inspires them. Jessica explains, "It's nice to have a range of ideas broader than those of your professor."

Nevertheless, juggling all these aspects of life can be difficult. For Jessica, the hardest part of balancing school, business, and family is trying to get work done and still spend time with her daughter, who needs quite a lot of playtime. Still, Jessica doesn't enjoy keeping up with her business' finances, because she is more creative than math-oriented. Regardless, the good experiences definitely outweigh the bad. Jessica enjoys owning her own business because it allows her to have flexible time to spend time with her daughter.

More About Jessica's Art

To learn more about Jessica's art, visit her Web site at **www.jessicacapps.com.**

To make a purchase, select the "Etsy Shop" link at the top of the homepage.

She realizes that it is very rewarding to be a parent, especially when her daughter shows appreciation by giving her a hug. "That's when you know you're doing the right thing," she says.

Jessica's senior thesis exhibition, a ceramic bowl and tile wall panel, was on display during WCU's BFA Student Portfolio Exhibition, "Nine Lives: Zombies for Art," held at the Fine Art Museum galleries November 10 through 25, 2008. A senior thesis exhibit is a required project in which senior studio art majors display their final work in an art show on campus. Nine seniors receiving Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees participated in that show.

Jessica is currently working on a series of pieces based on a letter her grandmother wrote to her about her fight with breast cancer. One day Jessica hopes to have these ceramics displayed in hospitals and rehabilitation centers.

She has worked diligently and passionately in her chosen field and wants to become a studio artist. In the future, she plans on concentrating on her creative work in her own studio. Right now, her whole house has turned into a studio. Someday she hopes to own her own gallery. Surely, ceramics will bring her joy and satisfaction for many years to come.

Like You Mean It

by Justin Kleberg

What is more difficult than working forty hours a week in a laboratory? How about also holding three executive positions with the Student Forum for the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science in addition to that forty-hour week? Just ask Mickey Yost. Mickey is a junior at Western Carolina majoring in clinical laboratory sciences. In addition, she also works on clinical studies at Mission Hospital in Asheville. "I can see how some people could not handle it," Mickey says, noting her massive workload. However, she explains how she manages by adding, "If there is something in front of me, I will get it done."

Mickey was introduced to clinical laboratory sciences by her father. Mickey had always read science books and journals and was enthralled by them. Her father, seeing her enthusiasm and excitement, urged her to look into the field of science as a career. What, other than a fascination with science, could lead someone into the medical field? Mickey says, "Thinking medical was me wanting to help people. Also, no matter what happens to the economy, people are going to get sick."

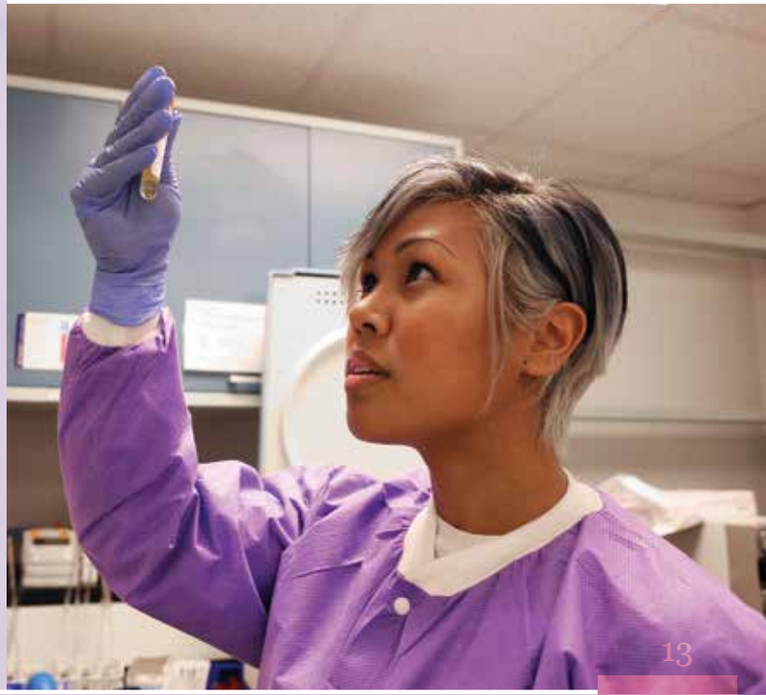
Mickey certainly is helping people. More than that, laboratory work has its own special allure for her. What many people don't know about the medical field is that 70 to 90 percent of diagnoses come about from work done in laboratories. Mickey says, "Working in the lab is not like working in a factory. It is different every time. It is like a puzzle."

In an attempt to raise awareness about the important role of laboratories and to continue expanding her educational opportunities, Mickey joined the Student Forum for the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science, or ASCLS. At the March 2008 state meeting in Wilmington, Mickey was elected North Carolina student chair. A few months later, at the end of June, Mickey traveled to the national ASCLS meeting in Washington. There she was appointed Region 3 chair, representing seven Southeastern states as well as Puerto Rico.

As if these two positions were not enough, Mickey started a campaign with the slogan "Like You Mean It" and ran for the only position remaining – national Student Forum chair. As the candidate with the clearer plan for the future of the ASCLS, Mickey was elected. All of these positions are yearly appointments. "To the best of my knowledge, I am the first to hold all three positions," she adds triumphantly, "and I will probably be the last."

ASCLS serves as an awareness-raising group. Mickey explains, "Most people do not think about the lab, but it's [made up of] all doctors and nurses. The lab is a whole workforce that people do not see." By raising awareness about the needs and goals of the laboratories, Mickey hopes to improve working conditions for clinical laboratory scientists everywhere.

The future is bright for the ambitious, aspiring, dedicated, and driven junior from Maggie Valley. After completing her undergraduate work, Mickey hopes for employment with a company as a traveling clinical laboratory scientist, where she will fill spots at hospitals throughout the United States. She will use this job to pay off her undergraduate debt before she pursues a doctorate in parasites, viruses, fungi, or cellular biology. As for now, her work will continue in the laboratories of Mission Hospital as well as with ASCLS.



Why Does the Turtle Cross the Road?

by Justin Kleberg

Trying to find a needle in a haystack is tricky. Trying to find a needle that moves is even trickier, unless, of course, you are using radio telemetry. That is a typical day in the field for junior Bill Donaldson. Except Bill isn't trying to find needles – Bill is trying to find turtles, Eastern box turtles to be exact. And Bill's haystack is the Balsam Mountain Preserve, a private community located twenty-five minutes north of Western Carolina University, off U.S. Highway 74.

Bill, a junior from Tallahassee, Florida, is conducting research on how box turtles operate in a developed landscape. In particular, Bill wants to know how the turtles react to the inclusion of roads in their habitat. The Eastern box turtle is the state reptile of North Carolina and rapid development is altering large portions of its habitat. As more and more people move to Western North Carolina, rapid development puts even more of the turtles' habitat at risk.

Bill, a Natural Resource Management Major, began his research in the summer of 2008 after being hired to work with Ronald Davis, assistant professor in the Geosciences and Natural Resources department. An interest in geographical information systems, or GIS, led Bill to Davis. GIS was the major reason that Bill took the job, a job that entails approximately ten hours per week tracking box turtles using radio telemetry. Bill recalls applying for the job, saying, "I really didn't think I'd be interested in turtles. I like wildlife, but I wasn't sure about turtles."

Bill has located three turtles on his own. Three more were captured by residents and guards at Balsam Mountain Preserve. These six turtles were tagged with small Global Positioning System, or GPS, tracking devices attached with epoxy to the outside of the shells. Every Tuesday and Friday, Bill travels to Balsam Mountain Preserve armed with his GPS tracking gear. Bill notes, "You can be in the forest and be completely surrounded by wildlife and never know it. The turtles blend in so much." So, in addition to the GPS gear, Bill goes equipped with a keen eye for the heavily camouflaged turtles that enjoy hiding underneath leaves in order to regulate their body temperature.

On every trip to the field, Bill retrieves the current GPS coordinate points for each of the six turtles. All of the turtles cover different home ranges, which include different habitat structures, such as streams, pastures, and the occasional road. GPS coordinates are recorded in order to catalogue the movement of the turtles. These coordinates provide valuable information, such as the turtles' range of movement, how often the turtles cross the roads, and how successful they are at their crossings. Fortunately, none of the turtles has failed at the road-crossing attempts.

Perhaps the most interesting result from this study so far is that roads seem to have very little to no impact on the movement of the turtles. One turtle in particular, an older female, has crossed the road almost every time Bill has checked her coordinates.

Bill says that it is important to avoid anthropomorphism (attributing human characteristics to nonhuman creatures) while conducting scientific research. That can be rather difficult, however, as Bill has noticed. He comments, "There are always more things to know about these little critters. Turtles are stubborn. They all have different patterns of movement and they tend to act in their own particular ways."

As for now, Bill continues to track six of the Eastern box turtles that roam Balsam Mountain Preserve. Thanks to donations and funding from Balsam Mountain Preserve, Bill has developed a close bond with creatures that, at first, he was not sure he would enjoy.

After graduation, Bill hopes to obtain a geological information system analyst job and continue work in the field of natural resource management. Or, if the opportunity presents itself, he will continue turtle research in a graduate school program, hoping to answer the age-old question, "Why does the turtle cross the road?"

Toledo Surprise

by Casey Weems

There's just something about Jen Toledo, Honors College Student, that says, "I am an artist." Maybe it's her urban-bohemian sense of style, that uniquely appealing combination of Urban Outfitters and her "I-found-this-in-a-hole-in-the-wall-shop-north-of-nowhere" attitude. Maybe it's her tilted, black-rimmed glasses that match her sleek black bob, or maybe it has nothing to do with being in vogue. Maybe it's just an artist's aura – a bit of modesty and poise mixed with a swirl of intriguing quirkiness. Somehow, a palette just belongs in her hands.

For as long as she can remember, this senior art major with a concentration in painting has been creating art. "Just take a look at my class notebooks," she smiles. "They're filled with doodles – everything from flowers to boxes."

Get her in front of an easel and the canvas takes on new life, or in Jen's case, untraditional still life. "You know, like laundry or a dinner table after dinner," she says. And her medium of choice? "Oh! Oils – they're my favorite!"

While her talent is more than obvious, making a living as an artist is no easy lifestyle, though it's one that Jen, a Sylva native, has already begun preparing for. Her artwork has been featured in gallery shows at Guadalupe Café in downtown Sylva as well as in several editions of Western Carolina's Gadfly magazine (a satirical journal of social criticism and philosophy).

Her creativity extends beyond the easel as she handcrafts and sells one-of-a-kind journals at Honey Pot on Lexington Avenue in Asheville for extra income. Honey Pot encourages a reduce and re-use ethic, so each journal Jen creates is uniquely bound and decorated with reusable items such as buttons or scraps of fabric. No two are ever quite alike, but all are eco-friendly. Jen says, "For me, bookmaking is a stress reliever. The slow tediousness of the process is relaxing to me. It's creative and personal and in the end, I have a functional object."

Even as demanding as her senior schedule is, Jen still finds time to be editor of the arts and entertainment section of the student newspaper, the Western Carolinian, a job she came by because they needed help. "They were short-staffed," she says simply. As section editor, Jen usually interviews local bands, but in October 2008, Katherine Duff-Smith, assistant director of student media and marketing on campus, offered her a private interview with Henry Rollins, a spoken-word artist and former lead singer of the hardcore punk band Black Flag. "She was hesitant at first," Duff-Smith says of Jen, "but she's grown as a music journalist." Jen agrees. "It was good experience for me to be on the other side of the table, to write about other artists," she said.

Duff-Smith also says that Jen brings an "inclusive approach" to the newspaper through the calendars that she writes highlighting on-campus activities such

as gallery exhibits, author readings, and performances by local bands from Sylva to Asheville. "WCU is often called a 'suitcase campus' because so many of our students leave on weekends," Duff-Smith says. "Jen's works remind the WCU community about how vibrant the arts communities are in Western North Carolina and how much there is to do here."

In 2006, Jen chose to take the fall semester off and travel abroad to South Africa. A bold decision, for some people, considering the political unrest there, but Jen felt differently. "South Africa was mysterious; you start to get a different perspective."

Now, two years later, Jen feels that the experience taught her a lot about America. "Oh!" Jen smiles, "I should probably tell you, I didn't study art in South Africa. They lost my transcript." That's right. Jen got on a plane, flew across an ocean and into a foreign country expecting to study art, only to find that her transcript was MIA and she was – surprise! – forced to study a combination of philosophy, political science and literature. However, this didn't seem to bother Jen in the least. "You can't make art about art," she says philosophically.

As for her future, after she graduates, Jen plans on moving to New York and taking classes with the New York Art Student League for a year before applying to graduate school. Until then, she plans to keep doing what's she's doing. "I've had a lot of opportunities, but I'm still learning, still experiencing. This is my gestation period."

Juggling ACT

by Josh Pond

Let us say you are an Honors College student who loves math. Let us also say that you want to teach math some day, and so you have worked to become a North Carolina Teaching Fellow. Let us add to your hypothetical identity that you are involved in a half-dozen different student organizations and service projects, you have the will to graduate as a Math Education major in three years, you maintain your status as a member of the Honors College, and yet you still find time to breathe. Do you think you could handle it? That is just what Kerri Bernhardt is doing.

Kerri, a sophomore from Claremont in Catawba County, North Carolina, brought several credits with her to Western Carolina University, thanks to Advanced Placement courses. She also had already taken part in numerous Teaching Fellows activities, including helping to teach elementary school children and working at the Special Olympics Summer Games in Raleigh.

Kerri is working toward her degree in Math Education and she is a Teaching Fellow. Teaching Fellows are students who have decided that they wish to teach some day. They are chosen for their abilities and they take part in education-themed activities in order to help them learn to become better teachers.

Essentially, Kerri has wanted to be a teacher all her life. She notes that her father, an elementary school physical education teacher, has had a profound influence over her. She explains, "I saw the impact he had on the children and knew that was for me." In high school, she took part in two internships to help her better prepare for the job. She helped teach in a second grade classroom and also at her high school in an Algebra II class.

Whenever she can find time in her hectic schedule, she enjoys reading, taking pictures, scrapbooking, and being outdoors. Two of her unique skills are unicycling and juggling, both of which she learned in her elementary school PE club.

At WCU, Kerri is involved in many student organizations and service projects. She is a member of the Student Leadership Council, as well as a student representative on its board. She helps out with the Wesley Foundation, a local Methodist student ministry. She has attended both the North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCCTM) conference and Mathematical Association of America (MAA) conference.

At NCCTM, held in Greensboro in October 2008, she attended sessions which discussed tips for teaching, education issues, and interesting math topics. At MAA, held at The Citadel in March 2008, Kerri presented a poster titled "The Aftermath of New Math." The poster explored the after-effects of New Math teaching ideas, specifically the focus on discovery instead of memorization which was commonly used in the 1960s.

In December 2008, NCCTM named her the Western Region Outstanding Mathematics Education Student of 2008. This prestigious title marks her as the best of all Mathematics Education students in the western region of North Carolina. This year is the seventeenth in a row that a WCU student has received this award.

Kerri is on track to graduate in three years. This means that her schedule is very full and very busy. "After I fit in all the classes that I have to take as well as the Liberal Studies courses, I had only about a handful of classes that I could choose myself." After all that, she plans to return to WCU to earn her Master's degree. Once she has earned this advanced degree, she hopes to teach somewhere near her hometown.

Easy Being GREEN

by Kristin Smith

Curt Collins, a senior from Raleigh, North Carolina, majoring in nutrition and dietetics, has been growing his own organic vegetables for four years. He and John Thompson, an undergraduate major in International Business, have an organic farm in Cullowhee on Tracer Lane, not far from campus.

They grow various items, depending on the season. During the fall, for example, they had a good selection: fifteen to twenty varieties of salad and cooking greens, including pac choi, arugula, black-seeded Simpson lettuce, butterhead romaine, red Russian kale, dinosaur kale, white Russian kale and red iceberg lettuce; daikon (also known as Japanese radish); carrots; and various herbs, including rosemary, sage, parsley, oregano, basil, fennel, lavender, and borage. Over the summer and through fall 2008, they set up a produce stand at the farm every Thursday afternoon.

You may wonder what made Curt decide to start growing his own food when there's a grocery store only a few minutes away. With the economy the way it is, he says that it just makes sense financially to grow your own food. It simply costs less that way. Curt also believes that part of the American dream is being able to provide for yourself. And what better way than to stop depending on grocery stores and to start depending on your own hard work?

Curt is older than most undergraduates and has a background in horticulture, the cultivation of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. When he took a year of classes at North Carolina State University's horticulture program, he worked for various landscaping businesses and ran the water garden department at Logan Trading Company in Raleigh. He helped customers incorporate waterfalls into their landscaping, designed ponds, and selected fish. He also did private consulting for water gardens.

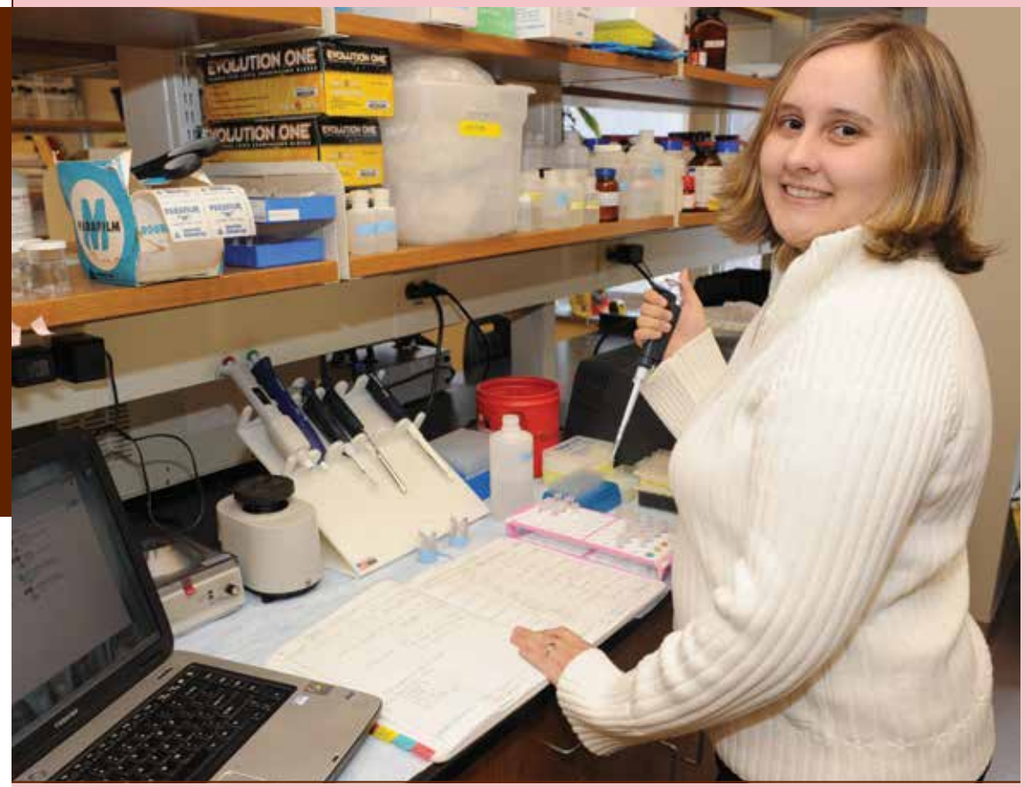
Along with his organic garden, Curt is involved in many other activities, both on and off campus. During fall 2008, he was the program director for WCAT, an on-campus cable radio station. He recruited volunteer disc jockeys and other employees and was responsible for uploading music into the system, creating automatic playlists, and training DJs.

He helped found the WCU Green Party, currently in its third year. The Green Party platform emphasizes nonviolence, grassroots democracy, social justice, decentralization of wealth and power, ecological wisdom, and community-based economics.

Curt writes an environmental column for the Western Carolinian called "The Green Light." One article, he says, "focused on one's ability to alter his or her driving patterns in order to reduce fuel and car repair costs as well as to yield better peace of mind when driving." Other articles have challenged the university to build "greener" buildings by incorporating active and passive solar power and water heating, geothermal heating, updraft cooling, and grey-water collection.

After graduation, Curt hopes to enter the post-baccalaureate Dietetic Internship at Western Carolina. He plans on becoming a registered dietician so that he can create his own practice and "not only help clients heal, but also help them prevent disease through the use of holistic methods."

Curt spends a lot of time outdoors. His other hobbies include hiking, mountain biking, tubing along rivers and creeks, and stargazing. And of course, he likes "to just sit and relax with an incredible view from almost anywhere around here."



FASCINATED BY RESEARCH

by Josh Pond

Alisha Hunter pursued a bachelor's degree in chemistry with a focus on laboratory sciences at Western Carolina. During the summer of 2007, she worked on a research project and then took her findings to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research, or NCUR, held in April 2008 at Salisbury University in Maryland.

Her research centered on enzyme catalysis, a process by which enzymes help to break down sugars. She compared the overall reactions of different enzymes on different substrates (the items the enzymes act upon) in order to determine which enzymes react better with which substrates and vice versa. She describes the research process this way: "It's time-consuming and although it may seem incredibly boring to do the same thing all the time, chemistry is really interesting, and I love it."

Alisha hails from Waynesville, just thirty minutes from Cullowhee. She graduated in fall 2008 and is continuing as a graduate student at Western Carolina. After she finishes her academic career, she hopes to move to Raleigh and get a job in the Research Triangle Park, where she might continue her work in the laboratory. Eventually, she hopes to get a good job, marry, build a family, and someday own a house.

What Are Recent Honors Alumni Doing in the Recession?

To see how Honors students who graduated in the last two years were doing in the midst of the economic recession, Honors undergraduates Amanda Bienhaus, Lydia Crystal, and Heather Grosse managed to contact by phone in March nearly 40 out of the most recent 100 Honors College graduates. Although five were still searching for a career job, the others were either employed or pursuing graduate degrees.

ALUMNI NOTES

Megan Arrington (BS Chemistry, 2008) is pursuing her MS in Chemistry at WCU, where she is also a teaching assistant in the department.

Analicia Ashe (BSEd English, 2008) has taught English at the Swain County School of Applied Science, Math, and Technology in Bryson City, NC, and plans to pursue the MA at NC State University in fall 2009.

Megan Barbero (BS Communication, 2007) works in the Graduate Studies Office at Winston-Salem State University and has begun graduate work in Communications at UNC Greensboro. She recently bought her first house. Her long range plan is to teach at a university.

Melissa Berry (BS Sport Management, 2008) is pursuing the MS in Physical Therapy at WCU and plans to continue on to her doctorate.

Morgan Bowling (BS Mathematics/BSBA Finance, 2007) plans to pursue the MBA.

Michael Brackett (BSBA Marketing, 2008) is pursuing the MBA at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC and beginning work with the John Hancock Financial Network in Charlotte.

Jen Carman (BS Biology, 2008) plans to pursue the MS in Biology at WCU beginning in fall 2009.

Jennifer Cloughly (BSEd Music Education, 2008) is Director of Bands at Eastside High School and Greenville Middle Academy in Greer, SC ("I have my dream job," she said on the phone).

Jamie Crumley (BS Psychology, 2008) plans to start at the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law at Campbell University in Buies Creek, NC, in fall 2009.

Bailey Culp (BS International Business, 2008) works in Richmond, VA, as a Research Policy Assistant for The Council on Virginia's Future, an advisory board to the governor and general assembly. Culp is researching issues concerning educational attainment in the state.

Teegan Dykeman (BA Humanities English/Humanities Philosophy, 2008) is writing her first novel, working in a coffee shop, and is doing graduate work in English at WCU. She plans to be a professional writer and perhaps teach English.

Valerie Edwards (BS Communications Sciences and Disorders, 2008) is pursuing the MS in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Jeneane Efird (BS Interior Design, 2008) works as the Kitchen and Bath Designer for Walker Woodworking in Shelby, NC.

Jennifer Ferrara (BSBA Management, 2007) got in on the ground floor of a new, thriving company in the Boston, MA area: FoodShouldTasteGood, Inc.

NOTES CONTINUED ON PG 26

Crystal L. Olson (Honors College, 2002) has put her chemistry major and undergraduate research experience to work. The Honors College Board of Directors President in 2001–2002, she is now Clinical Research Coordinator for the Piedmont Medical Group's Hickory, NC office. "I work with various doctors and am directly involved with patient care," Crystal notes. "Right now, I am doing studies for hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis, and Type II diabetes . . . I work with all kinds of patients." In March, 2008 she bought her first house and stays busy in several community groups and a local karate studio (she hopes to achieve the black belt by 2010). "There are few dull moments these days," she adds. "I stay on the go."

NOTES CONTINUED

Jocelyn Fulton (BS Sport Management, 2008) works at Southeastern Sports Medicine, with offices in Asheville and Waynesville, NC, and she plans to pursue a graduate degree at WCU perhaps as early as fall 2009.

Susan Fowler (BS Communication, 2007) works in an Atlanta marketing firm and plans to open her own marketing firm in the future.

William Gambill (BS Communication, 2007) is pursuing a master's degree in Adult Education at NC State University in Raleigh.

Tara Gleason (BS Psychology, 2008) toured seven countries in Europe after graduation and returned to Cullowhee, where she works full-time in Hunter Library at WCU and where she is also pursuing a master's degree in Human Resources.

Melissa Harrison (BS Environmental Health, 2007) works in government as an Environmental Health Specialist for Macon County, NC.

Lauren Hawthorne (BS Sport Management, 2008) works part-time with a physical therapist and is also a pharmacy technician at a Bi-Lo store in Anderson, SC. She plans to pursue a graduate degree.

John Hensley (BSBA Business Administration and Law, 2008) until recently worked as a Research Assistant at WCU's Institute for the Economy and the Future before leaving the position to pursue his doctorate in Applied Economics at Clemson University.

Lena Ivie (BA Anthropology, 2008) is pursing a master's degree in Forensic Anthropology at WCU.

Max Long (BA History, 2007) lives in New York City. He worked recently as a field organizer in Georgia and North Carolina for Barack Obama's presidential campaign.

Norrie Meus (BA English/Art, 2007) is pursuing a graduate degree in literature (focusing on American Literature) at NC State University in Raleigh.

Joe Mullins (BS Communication, 2008) works as a Broadcast Operations Coordinator at Turner Broadcasting in Atlanta; he works "master control" for TBS, TNT, and Adult Swim.

Laura Orr (BA English/BS Psychology, 2007) is pursuing the MA in English literature at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with an expected graduation date in May 2009.

Melia Pinnix (BS Nutrition and Dietetics, 2008) is pursuing the master's in Physical Therapy at WCU.

Candice Roberts (BS Psychology, 2008) is in the Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program at Wake Forest University, where she plans to begin medical school there in fall 2009.

Macie "Summer" Williams (BS Social Work, 2008) works at the Lexington County Department of Social Services in the Adult Protective Services Unit in Columbia, SC. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in social work, beginning as early as fall 2009.

Summer Woodard (BA History/Political Science, 2008) is pursuing the master's degree in Public Affairs at WCU; she notes that she has received job offers but has turned them down to do full-time graduate work.

NCUR 2009

Part of WCU's 2009 NCUR team get ready to head for home from La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Architecture and Interior Design

Interior Redesign of Existing Buildings into Multi-Use Spaces as a Component of Small Downtown Revitalization
Margo Peck, presenter | Jane Nichols, sponsor

Biology

The Effect of Web Location in a Host Plant on Web Population Size of the Social Theridiid Anelosimus studiosus
Jody Harkey, presenter | Kefyn Catley, sponsor

Estimating Bacterial Diversity in a Disturbed Forest
Jamie Tidmore, presenter | Sean O'Conell, sponsor

Business

The Darker Side of Fun
Amanda Bienhaus, presenter | Lorrie Willey, sponsor

Societal tattle tales: The business of public tips and law enforcement
Cassie Erwin, presenter | Lorrie Willey, sponsor

Chemistry

Authentication of Cremation Remains with Infrared Spectroscopy
Jessica Spear, presenter | Scott Huffman, sponsor

Ecology and Organismal Biology

An Examination of Oak Regeneration After a Prescribed Understory Burn in a Southern Appalachian Mesic Oak-Hickory Stand (Haywood County, North Carolina)
Mark Roloff, presenter | Peter Bates, sponsor

Habitat Use of the Eastern Box Turtle (Terrapene Carolina Caronlina) Within a Developing Landscape
Emily Willard, presenter | Peter Bates, sponsor

Education

Chinese Digital Stories
Charles Miller, presenter | Marylou Matoush, sponsor

Electrical Engineering & Physics

Enormous Field Enhancement in Periodic Birefringent Media
Shawn Rigdon, Mitchell Pate, presenters | Weiguo Yang, Mesfin Woldeyohannes, sponsors

Anomalous Sprectral Phase and Effective Negative Index of Refraction
Kirill Sinchuk, presenter | Weiguo Yang, Mesfin Woldeyohannes, sponsors

Engineering

An Inexpensive Bathing Assistive Device For Home Healthcare
Richard Domanski,Loc Wilkerson, Chris Rhodes, Josh Ellis, presenters | Phillip Sanger, sponsor

Vehicular Upright Sitting Assistance Device
Mark Little, T.J. Powers, Evan Burnette, Adam Cruthis, presenters | Chip Ferguson, sponsor

History

The Morality of a Smoking Ban
William Burton, presenter | John Whitmire, sponsor

An Immigrant Crisis: The Question Of Foreigners In The Civil War
Michael Frixen, presenter | Richard Starnes, sponsor

The Tune of War: An Analysis of Confederate Music
Leia Hays, presenter | Richard Starnes, sponsor

Archers and Artillery: Early Modern Military Evolutionism
Steven Johnson, presenter | Laura Cruz, sponsor

From Otzi's Ears, to Rebekah's Nose, to Your Kid's What?! The Progression of Body Piercing Through History
Cayli Meizel, presenter | Jessica Jones, sponsor

Conversion en Español: The Hellin Family and the Transition to Modernity in Early Modern Spain
Nathan Roberto, presenter | Laura Cruz, sponsor

Interdisciplinary Studies

Go Team…Go?: A Lack of School Spirit at Western Carolina University
Dominique Keaton, presenter | Bart Andrus, sponsor

International Studies

Machismo In American Politics And Foreign Relations
Emily Collman, presenter | Russell Binkley, sponsor

Law and Legal Studies

Does the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution Apply to the States
Russell McLean IV, presenter | Debra Burke, Malcolm Abel, sponsors

Management

Re-examining the significance of stakeholder view of strategic management: the case of Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel
Marsha Ensley, presenter | Kyuho Lee, sponsor

Mathematics

Quasigroups and Cryptographic Application
Michael Russell, presenter | Risto Atanasov, sponsor

Music

Implementing Community-Based Learning Opportunities in the Music Classroom
Rebecca Frank, presenter | Michael Schallock, sponsor

Evolution of the Clarinet: Antiquity through the Eighteenth Century
Nicholas Gattis, presenter | Christina Reitz, sponsor

"Serial Killers Existed Before Slayer," but who can Argue with "Take the gun and try it"?: The Perpetual Debate over Heavy Metal and Violence
Cayli Meizel, presenter | Jessica Jones, sponsor

Philosophy and Ethics

Wicked Wenches: Overlooked Factors in Explaining Infanticide in Early Modern Europe
Byron Burnette, presenter | Laura Cruz, sponsor

Abraham Is Still Lost: A Critique of Fear and Trembling
Carrie Eidson, presenter | John Whitmire, sponsor

The Necessary Communal Virtues for the Greatest Individual Human Flourishing
Andreas Horn, presenter | John Whitmire, sponsor

The Ease of Palliating "Dis-Ease:" An Argument for the Unobjectionable Morality of Physician-Assisted Suicide
Marie Rawlings, presenter | John Whitmire, sponsor

The Experience Of Pure Existentialism: A Nishidan Reading Of Sartre
Jared Utecht, presenter | James McLachlan, sponsor

Why Capital Punishment Should Be Retained
Lauren Williams, presenter | John Whitmire, sponsor

Utilitarianism is a Humanism: In Defense of Mill's Utilitarian Philosophy
David Young, presenter | Daryl Hale, sponsor

Physical Therapy

Subscapular Bursitis in A Collegiate Athlete
Dan Brown, presenter | James Scifers, sponsor

Testicular Torsion in a High School Football Player
Brian Gill, presenter | James Scifers, sponsor

Transverse Process Fracture in a Collegiate Baseball Player
Andrea Kaufman, presenter | Jill Manners, James Scifers, sponsors

Blunt Trauma Resulting in Pancreatic Transection in a Collegiate Soccer Player
Emily Whittington, Kelly Robertson, presenters | James Scifers, sponsor

Political Science

The Hidden Hazards of the Staffard Act
Tristan Artman, presenter | Todd Collins, sponsor

Power, Money, and Safety: Why States Pursue Nuclear Weapons
Katy Elders, presenter | Julie Loggins, sponsor

Just How Accurate are Polls Anyway?
Matthew Neely, presenter | Gibbs Knotts, sponsor

The Peace Corps in Africa: Who gets a piece?
Ashley Runnion, presenter | Gibbs Knotts, Betty Farmer, sponsors

Voting Trends in the South
Logan Thomas, presenter | Gibbs Knotts, sponsor

Psychology

Motivations For Meat Consumption Among Ex-Vegetarians
Morgan Childers, presenter | Hal Herzog, sponsor

Thinking About Death Changes Basic Moral Values
Jessica Howell, presenter | Hal Herzog, sponsor

Sociology

Assessing the Presence of the Women's Movement on a College Campus
Katheryn Ballard, presenter | Peter Nieckarz, sponsor

Psychiatric Hospitalization: The Effect of Stigma on Treatment Seeking Under the Recovery Model
Jennifer Stickle, presenter | Kathleen Brennan, sponsor

Theater

Tales of Trickery: A Visual Synthesis of the Cultural and Theatrical Traditions of Bali
Cara Ward, presenter | Glenda Hensley, sponsor

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