Annual Family Fun Day scheduled for mid-June at Ham Wilson Arena

Auburn University will hold its 16th annual Family Fun Day for university employees and their families on June 13 at the Ham Wilson Arena on Donahue Drive from 3-5 p.m.

This will be the second year in the event’s history that it will be at this location, which features the advantage of two indoor locations and abundant parking. Free food, beverages and other treats will be available throughout the afternoon at the Alabama Farmer’s Pavilion next to the arena.

Adults and children can win prizes, play games, listen to music and participate in more than 20 activities that include Ring Toss, Horse Shoes, Wheel of Fortune, Peg Ball, Golf, Nerf Football Throw, Bingo, Basketball Shoot, Roll Ball, Dice Throw, Bean Bags, Duck Pond, Fishing Booth, Cup Throw, Animal Balloons, Find Toys in the Sand and the Moon Walk.

Employees will receive through campus mail a card that includes information about the event and a mailing label required to enter the door prizes. Event organizers request that all university offices ensure these cards are distributed to employees and remind them to bring their cards to the event. Employees must present their own personalized card to the gift table to receive a Family Fun Day T-shirt.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the event, contact Victoria Tate at 703-7438 or by e-mail on Outlook.

— Kevin Loden

Employees of the Year

Four Auburn University staff members were honored Monday by President Jay Gogue as Employees of the Year at a Human Resources ceremony recognizing employees for length of service and for outstanding achievement. Employees of the Year for 2012 are, from left, Glenda Freeman of Cooperative Extension Communications and Marketing, Glen Davis of Agricultural Land and Resource Management, Linda Dowdell of Housing Property Management and Bertha Gibbs of Cooperative Extension Information Technology.

Check Healthy Tigers status on web

Auburn University employees are now able to use the Self Service Banner system to check their benefit elections and status in the Healthy Tigers Wellness Initiative.

To access your benefits and Healthy Tigers information, log in through AU Access, go to Employee Services tab, click on Self Service Banner, click Benefits and Deductions, click Employee Benefit Summary, and select whichever tab you wish to review.

For example, the Healthy Tigers tab is where employees can review their current Healthy Tigers status.

“We really hope these new features to Banner will be an asset for employees,” said Karla McCormick, executive director of the Payroll and Employee Benefits Office. “Before, employees had to go through the Blue Cross Blue Shield website to see information about their health or dental coverage, but now it’s on Banner, along with their beneficiary designations and Healthy Tiger status.”

McCormick said the new additions to Banner will be the first in a series of updates the office has planned to provide employees electronic access to all of their benefit information.

The next step will be to put new hire and open enrollments online. Then, current employees will be able to make changes online after qualifying events, such as a change in marital status.

Healthy Tigers, the university’s employee wellness program, provides employees the opportunity to qualify annually for a $300 insurance premium discount by completing a voluntary, free health and wellness screening.

The screening requires a finger stick blood test to check cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and a blood pressure measurement. A height, weight, body mass index (BMI), percent body fat measurement and analysis, and a health and wellness questionnaire are all optional.

— Amy Weaver

Mason elected to Oak Ridge consortium’s governing panel

John Mason, Auburn University’s associate provost and vice president for research, has been elected to the board of directors for the Oak Ridge Associated Universities.

Also known as ORAU, the Oak Ridge Associated Universities is a consortium of leading doctorate-granting institutions that cultivates collaborative partnerships to enhance scientific research and education.

Mason earned a bachelor’s degree in transportation from Pennsylvania State University, a master’s in transportation engineering from Villanova University and a doctorate in civil engineering from Texas A&M University. At Auburn, he is responsible for research program development, sponsored programs, technology transfer and commercialization. He is also president of the Auburn Research and Technology Foundation.

“Dr. Mason is leading a number of multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional initiatives that support critical national and regional research and development priorities,” said Auburn President Jay Gogue.

Mason joins five other new members of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities board: Dale Klein from the University of Texas at Austin, Brendt Mueller from Duke University, Paul Sokol from Indiana University, Diane Schmidt from Proctor and Gamble, and Theodore Sherry from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

“These new directors bring a wealth of administrative, academic and research
International guests
Among several successful international initiatives at Auburn in recent years has been an informal program in which the university hosts diplomats from around the world for meetings with students, faculty and administrators. The visits seek to broaden the on-campus exposure of students to international perspectives and enable the visiting dignitaries to establish and renew contacts with faculty who have academic and research ties to their countries. The visits are arranged by Bob McGinnis, senior counsel to Auburn University President Jay Gogue. Capping a year of such visits were diplomats from Angola and Taiwan, shown above, and based, respectively, in Houston and Atlanta. In the photo at left, from left, are McGinnis; Antonio Van-Dunem, assistant to the consul general of Angola in Houston; Angolan Consul General Julia Machado; and Gogue. At right, Auburn’s president greets Anna Kao, Taiwan’s director general for the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Atlanta.

Recent graduates awarded Fulbright teaching grants for this fall in France

Hanna Gordon, a spring 2012 summa cum laude Auburn Honors College graduate with a major in French, has been awarded a Fulbright-French Ministry of Education English Teaching Assistantship. Gordon will be placed in a middle school in the Besancon region of France. She is the third consecutive Auburn student awarded the assistantship in France, following Kristen Snow in 2011 and Helen Hunter Robertson in 2010.

In addition to her work with middle school students, Gordon plans to further develop her understanding and appreciation of French culture by enrolling in cooking classes. She intends to travel throughout the country in an effort to discover the diverse cuisines and meet local chefs to better understand French cultural traditions through food.

“Hanna is one of a kind!” said Samia Spencer, a professor of French in the Department of Foreign Languages in the College of Liberal Arts. “I have rarely encountered a student as motivated, as determined and as excited about her studies as Hanna. Her passion for France, its language, its people and its culture is simply amazing. The Fulbright-France assistantship she is receiving is an honor she has earned and richly deserves. No one could be a more honorable ambassador of the United States in France than Hanna Gordon.”

Gordon will be joined by another new Auburn graduate, Kaylin Stephens, who has been awarded the competitive Teaching Assistant Program in France assistantship, sponsored by the French Ministry of Education.

Each year, the Fulbright Scholarship program and the French Ministry of Education allot 50 applications for the Fulbright-French Ministry of Education Teaching Assistantship.

To be eligible for the award, the student must complete a Fulbright Scholarship application which requires a detailed project proposal and personal statement. The applicant must also submit three letters of recommendation, a letter certifying fluency in French and an interview with the campuswide selection committee.

— Carol Nelson

Oak Ridge

Continued from Page 1

leadership to the ORAU board of directors,” said Oak Ridge Associated Universities President and CEO Andy Page.

“Their knowledge and experience will be a strong complement to this multi-disciplinary team as we continue to work together to meet our strategic objectives over the coming year,” Page said.

— Brian Keeter
Researcher cites link between job applicants’ Facebook profiles and employers’ decisions

Employers commonly examine an applicant’s resume, cover letter, references and personality to evaluate how well the potential new employee may perform. Now, the applicant’s Facebook profile may play a key role as well, according to an Auburn professor.

Kevin Mossholder, a professor in the Department of Management in Auburn’s College of Business, is one of three researchers who recently published a study linking Facebook profiles to job performance. Mossholder, along with lead researcher Don Kluemper of Northern Illinois University and Peter Rosen of the University of Evansville, conducted two studies of more than 500 students to find links of Facebook profiles with personality, hiring potential and job success.

Facebook is a popular social media website that allows users to connect with friends to share pictures and follow what is going on in their lives. The website has more than 850 million users and has search features to make it easy to find persons for whom you are looking.

“The study was interesting because it provided us an opportunity to determine whether Facebook profiles yielded information about users’ personality traits,” said Mossholder. “The results suggest Facebook profiles can be used to produce personality ratings that are comparable with those developed from students’ own self-ratings on paper-and-pencil personality inventories.”

Companies lose money on employee turnover annually and are always trying to find new ways to gauge the potential success of a new employee. While personality is only a small facet of what determines an employee’s success, Facebook could have the potential to affect how companies view a person’s chance at a new job.

The study looked at five traits often examined in organizational studies: conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability and openness. These traits have been variously linked to decisions to hire individuals and estimates of their job success and compatibility with other workers. The study also suggests raters can be trained to view aspects of a job-seeker’s Facebook profile to produce reliable assessments on these personality traits. “Facebook will never take the place of traditional means of assessing personality but we’ve opened the door to more research on how social media might be used by companies in the future,” said Mossholder. “Especially with the new timeline feature, it may become easier to track someone’s personal and social tendencies over time.”

The research focused on patterns, which develop over a long time. The researchers not only looked at how many friends a person has on Facebook and their hobbies but how they deal with stressful situations. Party pictures are among the first things to be deleted when job-seekers begin cleaning up their Facebook pages.

“A common question is, ‘Should I take all the pictures with alcohol off my Facebook?’” said Mossholder. “In many cases, pictures of you at a party could indicate you are extroverted and open to experience, which are good things. Of course if your employer sees compromising or out-of-control pictures of you, that could produce a different impression. It is important to use your best judgment.”

The legality of employers viewing Facebook is an emerging issue, and, with some companies now asking applicants for their Facebook passwords, the calls for legislative protections will only get stronger. However, social media has become part of the resume for some job applicants and they may try to figure out the perfect profile to help them get hired.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this study is that it is one of the first into the subject and could open the door to specific in-depth research studies into Facebook.

“The study wasn’t designed to determine how to make your Facebook more acceptable to employers,” Mossholder said. “My best advice for Facebook posting is to use common sense and be true to yourself.”

— Charles Goodson

American Society for Nutrition bestows top status on Bergen

Werner Bergen, a nutritional biochemist and professor in the Department of Animal Sciences in Auburn’s College of Agriculture, has been named a fellow of the American Society for Nutrition, the preeminent worldwide scientific organization for nutritional sciences.

The status of fellow is the highest recognition the society bestows on nutrition scientists and is reserved for individuals who are 65 or older and who have a lifelong record of distinguished research accomplishments in nutrition research and practice.

In announcing Bergen’s selection, Sharon Donovan, president of the society, cited the highly innovative research he has conducted throughout his career on protein and lipid metabolism in agriculturally important animals. Bergen’s research objectives include enhancing efficiency in cattle and pig production, improving meat quality and ensuring product wholesomeness.

Bergen came to Auburn in 1995 after retiring from 28 years at Michigan State. The nutrition society will officially recognize him as a fellow during its 2012 annual meeting in San Diego in late April. This is the second such honor for Bergen, who, in 2007, was named a fellow of the American Society of Animal Science.

The 4,500-member Bethesda, Md.-based American Society for Nutrition is dedicated to advancing knowledge and application of nutrition for the sake of humans and animals.

— Jamie Creamer
Philosophy professor in College of Liberal Arts awarded fellowship, residency at National Humanities Center

Keren Gorodeisky, an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, has been named a fellow of the National Humanities Center.

As the recipient of the Phillip Quinn Fellowship in philosophy, Gorodeisky will be in residence at the North Carolina-based center from September 2012 to May 2013, where she will work on an individual research project and have the opportunity to share ideas in seminars and lectures.

“This prestigious award recognizes Keren for what she is: a rising star in the philosophy of art,” said Michael Watkins, chair of the Department of Philosophy. The focus of her work at the center will be a book manuscript titled “A Matter of Form: Kant on the Judgment of Beauty.”

“My work concerns an interpretation of Immanuel Kant’s understanding of the way we appreciate beauty in nature and art,” Gorodeisky said. “The main thesis of the book is that Kant’s aesthetics has been largely misunderstood due to a prevalent confusion about the distinctive form of aesthetic appreciation. I argue that only when the form of aesthetic judgment is properly understood, as distinct from and independent of, the forms of other judgments we ordinarily make – factual judgments and practical judgments, in particular – can Kant’s account and its special merits come into view. The book includes a reconstruction of these three judgmental forms that aims to bring out the virtues in Kant’s aesthetics for present day concerns about beauty and art.”

Gorodeisky received her bachelor of arts in philosophy and comparative literature from Tel-Aviv University and her Ph.D. in philosophy from Boston University. She has taught in Auburn’s Department of Philosophy since 2007 and serves as the adviser for the department’s Philosophy Club.

The fellowship was established in 2010 to commemorate the work of philosopher Philip L. Quinn and is awarded annually in philosophy to a young woman in the early stages of her scholarly career.

The National Humanities Center is a privately incorporated independent institute for advanced study in the humanities. Since 1978, the center has awarded fellowships to more than 1,200 scholars, whose work has resulted in the publication of more than 1,400 books in all fields of humanistic study.

— Carol Nelson

Kerpelman named associate dean in Human Sciences

Jennifer L. Kerpelman, a professor and Extension specialist in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in the College of Human Sciences, has been named associate dean for research and graduate studies for the college.

She has served as interim associate dean since last September. Kerpelman will mentor and assist faculty in promoting scholarly work; recruit and mentor quality graduate students; identify funding opportunities from a range of potential sponsors; develop and promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary scholarship; and promote external research/scholarly program development for CHS at the national level.

Kerpelman holds degrees from Old Dominion University and Auburn. Her research focuses on the examination of adolescent and young adult development within the context of close relationships, including parents, peers and romantic partners.

Index

1 Family Fun Day activities for employees and their families scheduled for mid-June
2 Program bringing international dignitaries to campus for meetings with students, faculty
3 Professor’s study finds employers making use of applicants’ Facebook profiles

Employees of the Year for 2012, Page 1