End and beginning of eras

Auburn will see a transition in August as the university holds its last formal event in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, top left, with summer graduation at 2 p.m. on Aug. 9, followed on Aug. 17 by the first formal event in the new Auburn Arena, top right. That 2:45 p.m. event will be a convocation welcoming new students for the start of the 2010-11 academic year. Although best known as home to Auburn’s men’s and women’s SEC basketball teams, the coliseum has been a multi-purpose facility throughout its history, hosting four decades of graduations, concerts and visiting speakers. Many of those functions will shift to the new arena. The first basketball game is scheduled for the 9,600-seat arena on Nov. 6. By the start of fall semester, the only operations remaining in the coliseum will be those of the College of Education’s Department of Kinesiology. Those offices will remain in the building only until a new home on campus is found for the department, and then the coliseum will be removed. Among future options for the site are a parking lot or parking deck. In the meantime, the Board of Trustees has approved plans to construct a new student wellness center in front of the coliseum. Planning for the wellness center has been placed on an accelerated schedule in an effort to seek bids and start construction by next summer.

NSF grant funds scholarships in Engineering

A National Science Foundation grant in Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering will be used to award more than 55 scholarships over four years to undergraduate students studying computer science and software engineering and graduate students studying computer systems and embedded computing.

The scholarships will be financed with a $600,000 grant that NSF recently awarded to Sanjeev Baskiyar, an associate professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering.

“We are honored to receive this sizeable award, particularly because the competition was so intense,” said Baskiyar, the project’s principal investigator.

“These funds will help to provide a better learning environment and an opportunity for the department to recruit the best and brightest students worthy of these scholarships.”

Baskiyar’s proposal was titled, “Educating Talented Scholars in Computer Science and Software Engineering.” Additional information is available on the web at www.eng.auburn.edu/csse.

— Katie Mullinax

Study examines oil spill’s environmental impact

Stephen “Ash” Bullard, an assistant professor in the Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures in Auburn’s College of Agriculture, has been awarded a $145,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for Rapid Response Research for work related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The 12-month study will be conducted by Bullard and Middle Tennessee State University biology professor George Benz. Beginning this month, the researchers will study parasites of fish as biosensors to learn how the toxic effects of the spill impact the marine and coastal environment of Alabama.

“Our focus is on the health of the aquatic environment in Alabama and adjacent states,” Bullard said. “We plan to use each parasite species as a natural biosensor to examine the impact of the spill on fish health and ecosystem functioning.”

See Oil spill research, Page 2
**Campus Calendar**

**Thursday, July 29**

**Farmers’ Market** The Market at Ag Heritage Park, 3-6 p.m., South Donahue Drive, enter behind Ham Wilson Livestock Arena; also each Thursday in August, concluding Aug. 26

**Friday, August 6**

Next Auburn Report; final edition of summer term

**Monday, August 9**

Graduation Final ceremony in Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, 2 p.m.

**Tuesday, August 17**

Convocation welcoming freshman class and transfer students to Auburn 2:45 p.m., Auburn Arena

**Wednesday, August 18**

First Day of classes for fall semester, start of 2010-11 academic year

**Friday, August 20**

First Auburn Report of fall semester

**Tuesday, August 24**

Meeting University Senate, 3 p.m., Broun Hall Auditorium

**Visiting Exhibitions**

**Jule Collins Smith Museum** “News and Re-Views: Soviet Political Posters and Cartoons,” historical perspective on the use of art in service of propaganda in the former USSR, through Aug. 14; “Old Master Drawings from the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art,” July 31-Aug. 6

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**Oil spill research**

continued from page 1

A decline in the ecologically diverse community of fish parasites, including ectoparasites, which live on the surface of the fish, and endoparasites, which live within the fish, is known to be associated with marine pollution and indicates negative consequences for the marine food web and water quality of coastal and offshore fish.

The study of parasites can also help document the immediate and extended environmental “ripple effects” associated with the oil spill in the north-central Gulf of Mexico, as well as inform others about the use of parasites as bioindicators of oil pollution on a regional scale.

“People assume that a lot of parasites mean the water is dirty or contaminated, but it’s actually the opposite,” Bullard said. “Having a rich community infecting a fish indicates that it is healthy and intact.”

Parasites of fish are extremely diverse in both numbers of species and in numbers of individual parasites per fish, and even outnumber fish.

“The question that we’re asking is, ‘Are we going to see fewer parasites?’ and I think the answer will be yes,” Bullard said. “We expect fewer invertebrates and fewer mollusks. It’s a sad situation in the Gulf.”

Bullard performed his Ph.D. and postdoctoral research in the Gulf of Mexico where he collected 16 years worth of research on parasites. He has hopes of comparing his previous data to this study’s findings.

Partnerships of scientists and fisheries biologists have been established for the regional study, and include the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, Florida Marine Institute, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the University of Southern Mississippi’s Gulf Coast Research Lab.

— Sarah Phillips

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**New terminal**

The Auburn University Regional Airport is establishing its operations center in its new terminal in time for start of the busy flying season this fall. The terminal is the latest and most visible part of a long-planned expansion and renovation program that has included extended runways, new hangars and a new access road. Ribbon cutting for the new terminal is set for Sept. 24.

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**Note on distribution of the Auburn Report**

To all departmental administrative and support staff and mailroom personnel:

The Auburn Report is published biweekly for the faculty and staff of Auburn University and is delivered in bulk to departmental offices across campus and to division mailrooms of some large units, such as ACES, Facilities and Athletics and to the Alumni Center. The university depends on the office support staff in these units to place copies in the mailboxes of all faculty and staff throughout the campus. Supplies are limited, so please distribute copies first to all faculty and staff; copies placed in boxes for graduate students or others may deprive faculty and staff members of their copies. Please direct inquiries by e-mail to summero@auburn.edu.

— Roy Summerford, senior editor
Clearing the air

Researchers helping FAA assess air quality of airliner passenger cabins

How likely is it that airline passengers will pick up infectious diseases during air travel? Auburn University engineers and scientists are collaborating to answer that question by studying how different microorganisms survive in cabin air and on frequently touched surfaces.

James Barbaree of the Department of Biological Sciences and Tony Overfelt of the Department of Mechanical Engineering have been awarded a $300,000 grant from the Federal Aviation Administration, or FAA. They are working to get a better understanding of the possible disease transmission process within airline cabins and the application of existing and emerging technologies for rapidly determining the presence of potentially dangerous disease microorganisms.

“A number of commonly held ideas, such as ‘I often catch a cold when I fly on an airplane,’ need to be thoroughly investigated and understood within the context of aircraft engineering design,” Overfelt said.

According to the FAA, last year in the United States approximately 688 million passengers shared seats, tray tables and other common areas within aircraft cabins. With recent outbreaks of SARS, H1N1 and other communicable diseases, the transmission of pathogens in confined spaces is of increasing concern to travelers and flight crews.

Auburn researchers will test for the survival and release of different pathogenic bacteria and a virus on a wide variety of the material surfaces typically found in airline cabins.

“The project is designed to address risk assessment for certain types of bacteria such as Mycobacterium species, Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA, other bacteria of concern and a non-pathogenic virus that will be used as a simulant for other viruses,” Barbaree said. “Essentially, we are developing a risk assessment study that will be based on our data and not on suppositions.”

Kirby Farrington, an Auburn microbiologist and long-time pharmaceutical industry veteran, is assisting with the development of the study methodology. Farrington is a recognized expert in clean rooms and risk-based approaches to contamination control.

“The parallels between a sealed aircraft cabin and a pharmaceutical clean room will allow for the use of established risk-based systems methodologies to develop effective evaluation and control measures,” he said. “These proven methodologies can ultimately provide the airline industry with information that is designed to best protect the traveling public.”

Auburn will partner with the Harvard School of Public Health, Purdue University and Kansas State University to integrate research findings that will enable industry leaders to ensure both the safety of their crews and to address public concerns related to disease transmission.

The project is administered by the Airliner Cabin Environment Research Program of the FAA’s National Air Transportation Center of Excellence for Research in the Intermodal Transport Environment, or RITE. Overfelt is the executive director of the center.

— Beth Smith

Exhibition starts July 31

Art museum bringing works by Europe’s ‘Old Masters’ to Auburn

The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art will open a new exhibition of drawings featuring 42 works by European painters, sculptors and draftsmen on July 31.

The visiting exhibition, “Old Master Drawings from the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art,” will be in the museum’s Chi Omega-Hargis Gallery through Nov. 6.

With works spanning the 16th through 18th centuries, the exhibition focuses on the study of the human form, portraiture, architectural rendering and compositional design, offering a broad look at drawing’s utility and function.

The drawings range from spontaneous sketches in black and red chalk to minutely detailed renderings in watercolor. Among artists featured in the exhibition are Jean Honoré Fragonard, Angelica Kauffmann and Jean-Baptiste Oudry.

The works in Old Master Drawings were selected from the Ringling’s diverse holdings of nearly 14,000 objects. Established in 1927 as a legacy of the great circus impresario and his wife to the people of Florida, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, located in Sarasota, is highly regarded by art critics for its collection of European paintings and works on paper, along with many fine examples of American and Asian art.

Additional information about the exhibition and the JCS Museum is available on the web at www.jcsm.auburn.edu.

— Colleen Bourdeau

Rhodes Scholar Anderson adds USA Today academic team selection to national honors

Auburn graduate and Rhodes Scholar Jordan Anderson was recently named to the second team in USA Today’s All-USA College Academic Team competition. Each year the newspaper recognizes the top college students in the country based on academics, leadership, activities and the application of their talents beyond the classroom.

Anderson, who was named a Rhodes Scholar last fall, graduated in May with a 3.93 GPA in the Department of Biomedical Sciences. The recent Auburn graduate will head to Oxford in September to enroll in a master’s degree program in global health science study. Anderson said he plans to eventually pursue medical mission work in his career.

He is the second Auburn student in two years to be on the USA Today Team. Last year, the team included former Auburn SGA President Lauren Hayes, who, in addition, will attend Cambridge University on a Rotary Foundation grant this fall.
Campus News Briefs

Auburn Fisheries enters into partnership with Spanish aquaculture centers

Three faculty members in the College of Agriculture’s Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures have received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant for international research with colleagues from Spain. Cova Arias, Ash Bullard and LaDon Swan recently received nearly $150,000 from the USDA-NIFA International Science and Education program for a project titled “AM-SPAN: American-Spanish Research, Education, and Extension Partnerships in Marine Aquaculture.” This project will establish international partnerships to bolster the marine aquaculture program, expand the aquaculture curriculum and disseminate critical information to researchers, industry leaders, policy makers and stakeholders.

ACHE approves new doctoral program at Auburn in polymer and fiber engineering

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education has approved a new doctoral program in Auburn’s Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

The addition of the doctoral degree allows the university to offer students a comprehensive curriculum in polymer and fiber engineering,” said Engineering Dean Larry Benefield. “It is even more fitting that a program whose industry supports a rich tradition and history in Alabama should be the first of its kind here at Auburn.”

The Department of Polymer and Fiber Engineering was established as the Department of Textile Engineering in 1929. The department’s name and curriculum were changed in 2005.

Faculty members in Psychology Department appointed to boards of academic journals

Linda LeBlanc of the Department of Psychology in the College of Liberal Arts has been appointed to the editorial board of the journal Behavioral Interventions. Published by John Wiley & Sons since 1986, Behavioral Interventions is a peer-reviewed journal of research on the use of behavioral techniques in educational and therapeutic settings. LeBlanc has also been appointed to the editorial board of The Behavior Analyst along with Jim Carr, also of Auburn’s Department of Psychology, who has been appointed as an associate editor on the journal’s board.

The Behavior Analyst, published by Association for Behavior Analysis International since 1978, is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes articles on theoretical, experimental and applied topics in behavior analysis. LeBlanc and Carr are the directors of the Psychology Department’s master’s program in applied behavior analysis in developmental disabilities.

Follow Auburn faculty involvement in oil spill response through university website

Auburn researchers have been responding since late spring to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, which has long-term implications for coastal communities, the Gulf ecosystem, energy and environmental policy, public health, and local and state economies.

Because the disaster stretches across a spectrum of diverse issues and challenges, this blog aims to provide a convenient source of expert analysis and recommendations covering many aspects of the spill. Auburn scientists are providing regular updates, many of them based on personal experience in the Gulf. For details, see www.auburn.edu/research/oilspillblog/.

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