Filming best bands

ESPN and Paramount Pictures have selected Auburn’s marching band as one of the top 8 marching bands in the country. A production crew was on campus Sept. 12 to film the band as it performed the theme song from the Indiana Jones movie series.

The taped performance will be put online and fans will have an opportunity to vote for their favorite college marching band. The other university bands selected include LSU, Clemson, Georgia, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma and Southern California.

Each university represented will receive $5,000 for being selected and the winner of the online voting contest will receive $25,000 for a first-place finish.

United Way sets $140,000 goal for campus support

The 2008 United Way campaign starts on the Auburn campus this week as dozens of volunteers launch a drive to raise $140,000 to support charities and non-profit social services in the Auburn-Opelika area.

The campus goal is 14 percent of the $1 million goal for the United Way of Lee County. The goal for each remains the same as the goals in the successful campus and countywide campaigns last year.

Funds raised locally support approximately 33 non-profit agencies and charities that provide services to youth groups, the elderly, victims of abuse, persons with disabilities or acute health needs, victims of natural disasters, the working poor and the indigent in the community.

Bill Sauser, a professor of management in the College of Business, is serving his third year as campus campaign chair and is assisted by Dianne Townsend of the College of Business, Susie Hall of Auxiliary Services and numerous volunteers across campus.

Sauser said contributions have already started coming in to the campus campaign, with $20,000 in contributions two weeks before the official start of the campaign on Sept. 22. “It is always good to see people step forward and offer their support during the pre-campaign leadership drive,” he said. “These gifts are coming from people who care deeply about the community and who set an example for the rest of us.”

Sauser said the early donors and the volunteers set an example for the entire campus. “We have a large group of dedicated volunteers from all across campus to lead the campaign, so I am very optimistic about meeting our goal.”

He added, “This is a caring, concerned community, where people have a tradition of stepping forward to help their less-fortunate neighbors. We are asking the entire university community to join these volunteers in doing so, again.”

Sauser said accountability to donors for low overhead and a commitment to quality community services remains a priority. Approximately 90 percent of funds collected through the campaign will remain in Lee County for services in and around the county. A sampling of organizations and agencies that depend on United Way support to provide services to local residents includes Auburn Day Care Centers, Project Uplift, Hospice of East Alabama, Salvation Army, American Red Cross and Food Bank of East Alabama.

— Roy Summerford

Fans urged to help prevent Toomer’s Oaks fires

The university’s Department of Public Safety and Security and the Office of Campus Planning have issued a notice that setting fire to toilet paper on the Toomer’s Oaks trees can permanently damage the trees and that offenders can be charged with arson.

On Sept. 13, between 11 p.m. and midnight, someone threw lit toilet paper into the trees. The fire spread throughout the canopy and caused minor damage to the trees and to newly installed irrigation pipes. Police are examining security video to possibly determine the identity of those who may have caused the damage.

The trees have been a fixture at the junction of the campus and town for more than a century. Last summer, tree experts installed the irrigation pipes, gave the trees a health checkup and removed dead and damaged limbs.

To report someone damaging the trees, contact the Department of Public Safety and Security at 844-8888 or publicsafety@auburn.edu.
UN food program official takes leave to teach at Auburn for two years

On a two-year assignment from the United Nations World Food Programme, Douglas Casson Coutts began teaching in Auburn’s College of Human Sciences this semester as a distinguished visiting professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Science.

While continuing to provide support for the “Universities Fighting World Hunger” initiative, a joint partnership with WFP and Auburn University with 70 university members in North America, Coutts is teaching Auburn’s first undergraduate course on “World Hunger: Causes, Consequences and Responses.”

Human Sciences Dean June Henton said Coutts will have both teaching and administrative functions in the college. “Doug will be a part of the College of Human Sciences administrative team so that all faculty in the college will have access to his expertise,” she said.

In his course, Coutts is guiding students in examining hunger as a complex issue of sustainable human development. He is scheduled to introduce such topics as the root causes and consequences of domestic and global hunger as well as current responses and potential solutions. The course will also focus on helping students develop a skill set for global citizenship that includes opportunities for advocacy, leadership and critical thinking. The course includes a service learning component in which each student will work with a local organization or event that addresses the issue of hunger.

Coutts was the World Food Programme manager responsible for the WFP/Auburn partnership and Universities Fighting World Hunger. While at Auburn, he will serve as a guest lecturer at member universities.

As special adviser on child hunger to the World Food Programme’s executive director, he was previously based in Washington, D.C., and responsible for working with institutions in North America as part of the new global Child Hunger Initiative being developed by the World Food Programme in conjunction with UNICEF and the World Bank. Within this framework, he was supporting efforts to launch an outreach and advocacy Programme with institutions of higher learning. He was also part of a team formulating a strategy for corporate partnership development in North America in support of World Food Programme humanitarian and development operations worldwide.

Coutts has more than 23 years of experience with the World Food Programme, more recently as country director for Bangladesh, where he oversaw the organization’s single-largest development operation in the world. That effort included integrated food security, school feeding and refugee operations, nutritional support and HIV/Aids awareness/community health programs.

He has represented the World Food Programme all over the world, including a stint in 1997-98 as the UN’s first Humanitarian Coordinator for North Korea with the responsibility for implementing what at the time was the World Food Programme’s biggest emergency operation. He also served as WFP country director in Nepal and Namibia, and as the program’s representative to the United Nations, United States and Canada.

Before joining the United Nations, Coutts was a staff member of the Select Committee on Hunger at the U.S. House of Representatives and was an economist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Previously, he managed international education Programs at Carnegie Mellon University and Georgetown University. He holds master’s degrees from Johns Hopkins University and Universite Laval in Quebec.

— Neali Vann

Caroline Marshall Draughon Center to help local communities in state with forums on education issues

The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities in the College of Liberal Arts is working with the David Mathews Center for Civic Life and five communities around the state on a series of deliberative forums on issues related to public education.

The project, funded by a $50,000 grant from the Mathews Center, is led by community partners that include local libraries, chambers of commerce, community foundations, local schools and churches and county extension offices in Anniston, Chatom, Collinsville, Elba and Prattville.

The first forum will be based on the National Issues Forums issue book “Preparing Today’s Kids for Tomorrow’s Jobs: What Should Our Community Do,” followed by other similar topics on education.

In a deliberative forum, citizens weigh the attractions, weaknesses, costs and consequences of differing perspectives on how to approach an issue. Participants identify acceptable and unacceptable tradeoffs among the differing approaches.

“We are delighted to participate in a project that brings together so many diverse partners to think and talk about issues that are important to communities and to their future,” said Jay Lamar, director of Auburn’s Carolyn Marshall Draughon Center.

The Mathews Center is a non-partisan organization dedicated to fostering public deliberation and innovative community decision making. As the outreach arm of the College of Liberal Arts, the Carolyn Marshall Draughon Center is dedicated to strengthening the bonds between the academic community and the general public through programs in schools, towns and communities around the state.

For more information on the project, call 844-4946.

Signing Climate Commitment

Student Environmental Initiative Committee members Brittany Branyon and Clay McInnis joined President Jay Gogue on Sept. 8 as Gogue signed the American College Presidents Climate Commitment. Signatories to the agreement are part of a nationwide movement that is working toward making campuses carbon neutral. In prior discussions with campus constituencies, Gogue said the agreement would confirm that Auburn is actively involved in programs to enhance the environment and will increase its efforts in the future.
Freshmen set record for ACT average as enrollment increases

Auburn’s freshman class for 2008-09 boasts the highest average ACT score in school history at 25.9, more than a point increase on a 36-point scale over last year’s then-record 24.8.

In addition, the university’s enrollment of undergraduate students surpassed 20,000 for the first time, and enrollment of international student numbers of 911 set another school record.

In numbers released after the 15th class day of fall semester, Institutional Research and Assessment lists main campus total enrollment as 24,531. Undergraduate enrollment of 20,038 is up from 19,812 last year, and graduate student enrollment of 3,519 is up from 3,375.

At the undergraduate level, enrollment of new, first-year freshman is 3,984, down from 4,191.

Meanwhile, first professional enrollment — students in Audiology, Pharmacy and Veterinary Medicine — is 974.

At 12.6 percent of the student body, minority enrollment for fall semester is 3,081 students, compared to 3,147 last year. Minority enrollment at the graduate and professional level is 12.8 percent, up from 11.9 percent last year.

At 25.9, Auburn’s new freshmen have an average ACT score well above the national average of 21.1.

“A one-point gain may not sound like a lot, but the ACT scale only runs from 1 to 36,” noted Drew Clark, director of institutional research and assessment. “The same improvement would amount to about a 50-point increase on the SAT scale.”

Clark continued, “On any scale, what this tells us is that we have been fortunate enough to recruit not just a few bright students but a large number of new freshmen who are more ready than ever for the challenging academic environment that Auburn is committed to providing.”

The numbers reported by Institutional Research and Assessment are official enrollment numbers, which are calculated after the 15th class day of every fall semester. This fall, the 15th class day fell on Sept. 8.

— Katie Wilder

Future basketball arena

With the frame of a new basketball arena rising behind them, Auburn trustees and President Jay Gogue joined Athletics Director Jay Jacobs and head basketball coaches Jeff Lebo and Nell Fortner for the Aug. 29 groundbreaking that marked the official start of construction on the university’s new arena. Scheduled to open in 2010, the arena will replace Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum.

Construction gets off to rapid start on new basketball arena

Construction on Auburn’s new $92.5 million basketball arena officially began with a groundbreaking ceremony on Aug. 29.

The 243,792-square-foot facility, located across Roosevelt Drive just north and west of Beard-Eaves-Memorial Coliseum, is scheduled to open before the start of the 2010-11 basketball season.

Plans for the new arena were announced in June 2007 and the construction bid to BL Harbert Construction was awarded in June 2008.

The arena, with a capacity of approximately 9,600, will include more than 29,000 square feet of student-athlete space, a two-court practice facility, coaches’ offices, the Athletic Ticket Office, an Auburn Team Store, the relocated Lovelace Museum and two food courts along with other amenities.

The new arena will feature chair-back seats along with bleacher seating for students. The building also will provide improved facilities for the student-athletes, including men’s and women’s locker room suites with sports medicine facilities, lounges and team meeting rooms. Along with a strength and conditioning center, a two-court practice facility will enable the men’s and women’s basketball teams to practice simultaneously and while the arena is in use for other purposes.

The facility will have 12 luxury suites on the arena level that will open to the inside and outside of the arena for multiple entertaining opportunities throughout the year. Loge Box seating will also be available, as well as on-site food preparation.

A Kansas City firm, 360 Architecture, worked with Davis Architects of Birmingham on the arena’s design, and the firm of Robins & Morton of Birmingham is the construction manager.

The seating configuration will offer better sight lines and will move fans closer to the court. The most distant seat will be just 43 feet in elevation from courtside, compared to 60 feet in elevation at Beard-Eaves, with two-thirds of the seats in the new facility being less than 27 feet in elevation from courtside.

The facility will also be the site for concerts and cultural events, convocations and other community gatherings, and it will be adjacent to the new Village student housing complex.

— Auburn Athletics
Anti-Hazing Forum
Athletics Director Jay Jacobs, second from left, makes a point during a Sept. 4 forum to form a united front against hazing on campus. To Jacobs’ left, President Jay Gogue and Dean of Students Johnny Green spoke forcefully against those who practice hazing of students, colleagues or subordinates and those who fail to take action against or report such instances. The university officials joined student leaders, faculty members and leaders of employee groups in the effort to raise awareness of the consequences of hazing to perpetrators as well as victims.

JCS art museum presenting series of independent films

The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art has launched a series of independent films and documentaries on topics not normally available in commercial films.

The Auburn presentations are part of the 2008-09 Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers, in cooperation with the nonprofit Southern Arts Federation. The film series is presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts.

The series began Sept. 16 with “Ripe for Change,” a documentary about the intersection of food and politics in California. Next up, on Oct. 21, is “Counting Backwards,” a narrative feature about a man with leukemia. Directed by Aprill Winney, film tells the story of the man’s inner struggle to change his life and embrace romance and passion in the time he has left to live.

Later films in the series include “The Meaning of Tea,” by Scott Chamberlin-Hoyt on Nov. 11, examining the role of tea in various cultures; “Member of the Club: A New Orleans Cinderella Story” by Phoebe Ferguson on Feb. 17, a documentary about a debutante who has been groomed since infancy to be a Mardi Gras queen; and “All About Us” by Christine and Michael Swanson on March 24, about two young African American filmmakers who find contrasting experiences between Hollywood and Mississippi.

The series will conclude on April 14 with “A Man Named Pearl” by Scott Gallo- way. The documentary about creativity is centered around self-taught topiary artist Pearl Fryar.

All showings are at the museum on South College Street, with each feature starting at 7:30 p.m. For patrons who want dinner and a movie, the JCSM Cafe will offer a specialty buffet for $15 per person from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. before each film presentation.

— Colleen Bourdeau
Engineering adds National Academy member to faculty

Oliver D. Kingsley Jr., Auburn’s first member of the National Academy of Engineering, has joined the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering.

Kingsley, who is a member of the State of Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame, is widely credited with revolutionizing the operation of U.S. nuclear power plants, and he has received every major United States and international award available to professionals in the civilian field of nuclear energy.

“Mr. Kingsley brings to Auburn a double distinction,” said President Jay Gogue. “He combines a stellar career leading top organizations along with membership in the National Academies, one of the highest honors that can be achieved by an engineer. He will be a great asset to Auburn in identifying and recruiting other members of the Academies.”

Auburn’s strategic plan, approved by its Board of Trustees in June, calls for increasing the number of members of the Academies among its faculty, which “distinguishes leading national universities, helping them attract the best students and other top faculty to their institutions,” Gogue said.

A native of Ozark, Kingsley graduated from Auburn with honors in 1966 with a bachelor’s degree in engineering physics. He began his career with five years of service with the U.S. Navy Nuclear Submarine Force, and joined Southern Company in 1971, where he held various positions in the nuclear division, including managing the Farley Nuclear Plant. In 1985, he began a three-year tenure as vice president of nuclear operations for Middle South Utilities. After significantly improving the Grand Gulf Nuclear Plant, he was named chief nuclear officer of the Nuclear Generation Group at the Tennessee Valley Authority and was credited with the turnaround of the agency’s nuclear program and the restart of all shutdown units.

In 1997, he joined Unicom as president and chief nuclear officer of its nuclear generation group. Under his leadership, the company’s nuclear program experienced marked improvement and growth, and in 2000, Unicom merged with PECO to create Exelon Corporation. Before his retirement in 2004, Kingsley served as president and chief operating officer of Exelon Corporation and as chief executive of Exelon Generation, which today is one of the largest power generators in the nation.

“Mr. Kingsley is a longtime supporter of the College of Engineering, and his experience and reputation are sure to bring a great deal to our program,” said Engineering Dean Larry Benefield. “His knowledge of the field of engineering, as well as his personal connection to the national academies, make him ideally suited to help bring new distinguished faculty members into the college.”

— Sara Borchik

Award winners for July and August

Each month Auburn University presents Spirit of Excellence awards to four staff members for outstanding performance.

Recipients for July were (top left photo, from left) Sara Ziska of Veterinary Medicine Administration, Andy Stewart of the Paint Shop in Facilities, (bottom photos, from left) Othello Dalton of Engineering Administration and Deborah Czerkawski of Pathobiology in Veterinary Medicine.

Recipients for August are in the top right photo. They are, from left, Rolahac Phillips of Building Services in Facilities, Charlie Saliba of Information Technology, Frankie Chaffin of Housing and Residence Life and Anita Cox of Athletics.

The Spirit of Excellence program is administered by Auburn University Human Resources, which presents awards to administrative-professional and university staff members in four categories: Service/maintenance; secretarial/clerical; technical; and administrative/professional. Each spring the university selects four employees of the year from among the year’s 48 Spirit of Excellence winners.
Silent witness

After more than a half century as one of the busiest buildings on campus, the former Foy Student Union, now Foy Hall, is quiet, while students throng to the new Student Center, shown in the middle photos. Named for former Dean of Students James E. Foy, who started at Auburn about the time the building was constructed in the early 1950s, Foy Hall has witnessed almost one-third of the university’s history. Most offices moved to the Student Center along with the students, themselves, before the start of fall semester, leaving only Photographic Services, Freshman Year Experience and a unit of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs still in the old building. While the eventual fate of Foy will be determined later, the building is being evaluated for use as temporary space for other units around campus while other buildings are being constructed or renovated.
Auburn faculty play crucial role in launch of online encyclopedia about Alabama

Over the past five years, experts on Alabama’s history, culture and other subjects about the state have been sharing an encyclopedic array of knowledge with one another. On Sept. 15, they displayed the results of their collective efforts with the launch of the online Encyclopedia of Alabama.

Alabama Gov. Bob Riley and other government leaders joined educators, information technology experts, arts and humanities leaders and others in a Birmingham ceremony for the launch of the online encyclopedia, which seeks to eventually contain knowledge about all things Alabama.

Free to any viewer and available on the Web at www.encyclopediaofalabama.org, the site contains hundreds of articles written and edited by experts in their fields. The articles, providing detailed examination of topics about the state, encompass numerous subsets of 12 broad areas: Agriculture; arts and humanities; business and industry; education; folk life; geography and environment; government and politics; history; peoples; religion; science and technology; and sports and recreation.

Last week’s launch brought to fruition nearly a decade of planning and activity capped by five years of intense development by experts in each of these fields, with financial support and encouragement from national and state leaders in the arts and humanities, as well as government leaders.

The project started in 2001-02 with initial efforts by the Alabama Humanities Foundation and the University of Alabama Press and a planning grant by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Project planners soon turned to the state’s most acclaimed historian, Wayne Flynt, who held the title of University Professor Emeritus in Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts.

Flynt agreed to serve as editor in chief of the online encyclopedia, and John Pritchett, Auburn’s provost at the time, committed Auburn to development of the online encyclopedia. In 2003, the Encyclopedia of Alabama established its editorial offices at Auburn, with Jeff Jakeman of the History Department as editor. The effort was soon joined by Auburn’s College of Liberal Arts, Office of Information Technology, University Libraries and faculty and administrators from a variety of academic departments, colleges and schools.

At last week’s ceremony, Flynt said the Encyclopedia of Alabama provides a broad and enlightening look at the state from a range of knowledgeable sources. “The content of the articles in the Encyclopedia constitutes a magnificent tapestry of the human spirit,” he said. “All readers, and I do literally mean all readers, are going to find a piece of this tapestry that enraptures them and amazes them.”

Flynt added, “We have made no attempt to hide or to exaggerate or to embellish the truth of this state, but I’ll guarantee if you read them all you will burst with pride at the end of the story.”

Auburn, the University of Alabama, other academic institutions, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, several state agencies and a variety of associations, museums, libraries, newspapers and organizations around the state are among more than 40 EOA partners.

Meanwhile, academic experts in each of the subject areas contributed articles and reviewed the articles of others in their field. Noting that the encyclopedia launched with approximately 500 articles, Jakeman said the number could exceed 1,000 within two years. The encyclopedia also has 2,000 images, and Jakeman said he expects that number to grow rapidly, as well.

“The beauty of the project is that it will continue to expand, and it will be kept up to date,” said Jakeman. “We started out with articles of statewide interest and we are moving down the list to include articles of regional interest within the state.”

Jakeman describes the online encyclopedia as a hybrid product possessing the immediate access and easily updated entries of general interest online Web-based encyclopedias with the accuracy and depth of traditional print encyclopedias, where all entries are written by recognized experts in their fields and then edited and fact-checked.

The encyclopedia was available to the public for several weeks while the editorial staff, contributors and information technology experts applied finishing touches before the launch.

Jakeman said the site is already a popular resource for teachers and students in Alabama schools and will become more so in the future. But scholars are not the only people getting information from the site, he added. Other users include persons interested in tourism, history, art, geography, politics and other aspects of life in Alabama, he said.

— Ray Summerford

Going online
University Professor Emeritus Wayne Flynt helped launch the Encyclopedia of Alabama last week. Flynt served as the encyclopedia’s executive editor during more than five years of development.
Campus News Briefs

Museum invites public to birthday party
The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art is inviting the public to a birthday party at 1 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 5, to help celebrate the university art museum’s first five years of service to the community.

Print artist and bookmaker, Amos Kennedy will headline the events with printing and papermaking demonstrations. Festivities include printmaking and papermaking in the paper recycling studio, scavenger hunts, children’s art activities, music by the Saugahatchee Ramblers and various activities and games for the whole family.

Children’s art programs set for museum
The Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art is hosting two sets of children’s one-hour programs on select Saturdays this fall.

The next Stories in Art hands-on programs for children ages 4-7, will be 10 a.m. Oct.18 and Nov. 15. Each program combines age-appropriate literature with a hands-on art project. The stories focus on imagination and often tie into the objects in the galleries. Projects seek to encourage the children to explore different media with the guidance of museum educators.

Saturday Art Club continues this fall for students ages 8-12 with programs on Oct. 11 and Nov. 8, featuring materials and projects based on works in the collection. The children will spend 15 to 20 minutes observing the artwork, while the remaining time is used for creating projects based on the students’ observations. Students will be able to focus on their drawing skills, incorporating techniques and approaches that artists use.

For more information on the children’s art programs or to sign your child up for a program, e-mail jcsmtours@auburn.edu or call 844-3486. The museum requests that parents accompany their children.

Raptor Center hosts birds-in-flight programs
The Southeastern Raptor Center, part of the College of Veterinary Medicine, hosts an educational, birds-in-flight raptor program this Friday and future Fridays this fall before home football games.

Each show begins at 4 p.m. in the 350-seat amphitheater on Raptor Road just off Shug Jordan Parkway. Tickets will be available at the gate for $5 each. Tickets are $3 a person for school groups, which should call ahead at 844-6943. Children under three are admitted free.

The program uses a flighted format to teach the relationship that raptors have with other animals in the environment. Guests will see birds such as hawks, owls, eagles, and falcons flying free. All birds used in the programs are non-releasable due to prior injuries or human imprinting. Any bird capable of surviving in the wild must be released, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which permits Auburn to house the birds.

Index

1 United Way sets $140,000 goal for fall campaign on campus
2 UN food program official takes leave to teach at Auburn for two years
3 Enrollment numbers up as ACT average climbs for freshmen
4 Auburn leaders use forum to stress university’s rules against hazing
5 Engineering adds National Academy member to Auburn faculty
7 Auburn faculty help launch online Encyclopedia of Alabama

AuburnReport

September 22, 2008

A ghostly silence has settled over Foy Hall, the former student union, this semester. See page 6.

www.ocm.auburn.edu/au_report/aureport.html

The AuburnReport is an official publication of Auburn University. Each university office mailing copies of this document to off-campus addresses must include its return address. The Office of Communications and Marketing will not accept billing for copies mailed by other units.