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# FOR THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF AUBURN UNIVERSITY report



### Walking on Thach

Late afternoon shadows stretch over students walking along the new Thach pedestrian corridor in the center of campus. Peaceful at times, the corridor is heavily used during peak class hours. Workers are completing landscaping and have almost finished construction of the walkway's entrance gates.

## Board considering external review of Auburn before seeking president

Acting on a recommendation from AU's presidential search consultant, the Board of Trustees agreed Friday to interview a nationally recognized consultant on university governance on Nov. 17-18.

The board will bring in author and former university president James L. Fisher to discuss conducting a review of the state of the university, including issues of governance and the relationships among the board, administration, faculty, alumni and students.

Fisher, who holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, is president emeritus of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and president emeritus of Towson University in Maryland. He is the author or editor of 10 books on higher education, including "The Board and the President" and "The Power of the Presidency."

Executive search consultant John Kuhnle recommended Fisher to the board after reporting that interviews with representatives of various constituencies raised concerns about Auburn's ability to attract outstanding leaders to be president until lingering questions about the state of the university are addressed.

Kuhnle said he will need a report to reassure potential candidates that the university has conducted a transparent and public review of the legitimate roles of the board, the president, the University Senate, the Alumni Association and the AU Foundation.

"With a public airing of these issues and consequent recommendations for change, the upcoming presidential search can provide the university with the opportunity to break from its cycle of recriminations among constituencies and allow the legitimate high quality of its nationally recognized programs, faculty and students to be acknowledged," Kuhnle said.

Board President Pro Tem Earlon McWhorter said Fisher has indicated he and three to five associates, who are current or former university presidents, could start a review in November and would take about two months to complete. Kuhnle said that timetable would not slow his efforts to help AU launch a presidential search early next year.

In other activity, the board agreed Friday for the university to develop plans for new residence halls to house 1,1664 more students on campus.



When a snake moves in

## Who ya gonna call? The Snakers!

They are not ghostbusters, but a group of AU students could be the next best thing for residents of the Auburn area.

They call themselves The Snakers, a group of graduate students from AU's herpetological society who specialize in snake removal and relocation. The group began as an effort to teach the public about the benefits of cold-blooded animals such as snakes.



"We are interested in educating the public on the value of conserving reptiles and amphibians and letting people know that snakes play an important role in the environment," said Scott Boback, a Snakers member who recently received his doctorate in biological sciences at Auburn. "We want people to know that it is not a good thing to chop the head off of every snake you see."

The program, which began five years ago, is run through the Department of Biological Sciences in AU's College of Sciences and Mathematics. The work is seasonal, with the most calls coming in spring and fall.

However, many calls are from people who only think they have seen something, said Geoff Sorrell, a fellow Snaker and graduate student in biological sciences.

"That is pretty typical, where there is no chance that you are going to go to this person's residence and find a snake. A lot of times we talk to them over the phone about things they can do to prevent snakes from coming in the house or teach them how to identify what they saw."

Even when a snake is present, a Snaker will sometimes arrive to find a dead snake. "Sometimes people go ahead and act if we do not get there quick enough," Boback said. "But that is still a great opportunity to educate those people about snakes."

The Snakers use a variety of tools to handle and

remove snakes. These include large metal tongs and a snake hook, which is essentially a golf club shaft with a metal hook at one end.

"We do not do it like a lot of people have seen on television - wrangle the snakes by picking them up by their heads and tails," Sorrell said. "We are looking out for our safety and the snakes' safety as well. A lot of people are surprised at how easy it is to hurt a snake."

So where do the snakes go once they are removed? Some are kept as educational exhibits that the group carries to programs at different schools, and others are kept for research.

Most of the time, however, the snakes are released in unpopulated areas where they are unlikely to encounter humans again. But the released snakes are seldom alone for long. "We take them to areas that already harbor snakes," Boback said.

There are several things homeowners can do to prevent snakes from taking up residence in their yards. "Tidying up and mowing so that you can see where you are walking is really important. It makes the yard less attractive to snakes," Sorrell said. "They do not like to be exposed."

Also, eliminating brush piles can reduce the possibility of harboring a snake. "Brush piles are great habitats for snakes," he said.

Some snakes can be beneficial. Although rat snakes, for example, grow fairly large and are good climbers, they are not venomous. "And as the name implies, they are probably doing some good because they are killing rats," Sorrell said. "If you keep things clean and keep the rats out, that is a great way to keep snakes out of your house."

The Snakers recognize that most people have limited exposure to snakes and are genuinely afraid. "We were once in those positions ourselves," Boback said.

Sorrell agreed. "The way I was raised was that you kill any venomous snake you come across," he said. "I definitely understand people's fears so we always come at a situation with an open mind."

For Snakers' assistance, call 844-4830.

## Orpheus chamber music group to present concert at AU

The Auburn Chamber Music Society opens its 41st season next week with a performance by three members of the Orpheus String Quartet.

The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 7, at Goodwin Recital Hall.

With one member sidelined with tendonitis, the musical group will emphasize compositions for trios, highlighting music by Beethoven, Schubert and Mozart among others.

Mozart will be an underlying theme of the

chamber music society's schedule this year as the society participates in a worldwide observance of the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth.

Rounding out the chamber music society's season will be performances by the Kuss Quartet from Berlin on Jan. 30 and the Peabody Piano Quartet from the Peabody Conservatory on March 2.

Season tickets are \$50 for the three concerts and \$20 at the door. Tickets for college students are \$5, and younger students are admitted free.

## Upcoming Events

Continuing

**EXHIBITION** "Quilts of Gee's Bend," Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, through Dec. 4

**EXHIBITION** "Momentary Traceries," mixed media response by Nikkole Huss to the "Quilts of Gee's Bend," Biggin Gallery, through Nov. 11

Wednesday, November 2

**GOODWIN LECTURE** "Converging Issues in Veterinary and Public Health," Lonnie King, dean of veterinary medicine at Michigan State University, 4 p.m., Overton Auditorium

**COMEDY** "One Arab, One Jew, One Stage: Two Very Funny Guys," comedians Ahmed Ahmed and Rabbi Bob Alper, 7 p.m., Goodwin Hall.

Thursday, November 3

**SEMINAR** "Patent Searching," 2 p.m., second floor computer lab, Draughton Library; also Tuesday, Nov. 8, at 9 a.m.; e-mail wohrlaj@auburn.edu

**POETRY READING** Chinese dissident Bei Dao, 7 p.m., Biggin Gallery

Monday, November 7

**NEXT AU Report**

**CHAMBER MUSIC** Orpheus Music Trio, 7:30 p.m., Goodwin Hall, tickets \$20 at door; for season ticket information, call 887-9379

**WORLD LITERATURE LECTURE** "Comparative Literature as Comparative Politics: Indian Literary Histories and Some Utopian Possibilities," Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University, 7:30 p.m., auditorium, Draughton Library

Tuesday, November 8

**MEETING** University Senate, 3 p.m., Broun Hall auditorium.

**FACULTY SEMINAR** "Active Learning Strategies," James Groccia, director, Biggio Center, noon-1:30 p.m. (bring your lunch), Foy 202

**AU THEATRE** "The Shape of Things," 7:30 p.m., Telfair Peet Theatre; 7:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday; box office 844-4154; online see <http://media.cla.auburn.edu/theatre>



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APT series host

Doug Phillips, center, host of the Alabama Public Television series "Discovering Alabama," shows a book about the series to interim AU President Ed Richardson and First Lady Nell Richardson. Phillips was the guest of honor recently at an Auburn reception celebrating the 20th anniversary of the popular documentary series that has featured AU faculty as authorities on Alabama subjects.



## Gossetts establish fund in memory of children killed in church bombing

Two retired Auburn music professors have contributed initial funding for a scholarship at Auburn in memory of four young victims of racial violence in Alabama during the Civil Rights Era.

Professor Emeritus Claude W. Gossett Jr. and his wife, Sylvia, a former adjunct professor, have donated \$10,000 toward a \$25,000 endowment for the Four Little Girls Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship will honor Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley and Carole Robertson. All four died in the September 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham.

The murder of four young girls in their Sunday School class by white supremacists was one of the most horrifying events of the Civil Rights struggle that brought an end to racial segregation in the South.

The Gossetts, who now live in Lindale, Texas,

said they wanted AU to have a scholarship that would help Auburn students while recognizing the four young girls whose deaths focused the nation's attention on the Civil Rights movement.

A younger sister of one of the victims later studied music under the Gossetts, and Claude was the first faculty advisor to the AU Gospel Choir.

"It is in the spirit of memorializing and celebrating both the lives of the four little girls killed in 1963 and in the spirit of grace and forgiveness that we wish to make this gift," said Claude Gossett, who taught at Auburn from 1974-98. "Our gift to establish this scholarship is our small effort to help encourage the celebration of the diversity that so richly endows our human population."

The scholarship needs additional support to become fully funded. For information, contact the Office of Development at 844-1130.

## Chinese dissident poet to read works at AU

Bei Dao, whose literary work has often run afoul of the Communist government in his native China, will read selections from his poems at 7 p.m. Thursday in Biggin Gallery.

In 1978, Dao co-founded Today (Jingtian), the first unofficial literary journal in China since 1949. The journal became a prominent forum for "Misty Poets," a group of poets derided by the Communist government-controlled literary establishment for their use of "obscure" language and their departure from "socialist realism."

Since 1987, Dao, who was born in Beijing, has lived and taught in England, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, France and the United

States. His work has been translated into 30 languages, including English translations of five poetry volumes — "Unlock," "Landscape Over Zero," "Forms of Distance," "Old Snow" and "The August Sleepwalker" — the collection of stories "Waves" and the collections of essays "Midnight's Gate" and "Blue House."

Dao has won numerous awards for his work and is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

His visit to Auburn is sponsored by the English Department in the College of Liberal Arts, the AU Center for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and the Auburn Asian Association.

### Landscaping award

AU's Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art recently won the Auburn Beautification Council Loveliest Village Award, which honors the most attractively landscaped buildings in the city. Museum Director Michael Panhorst, center, views the grounds with Robert Crittenden, left, president of the Auburn Beautification Council, and Jack Johnson of the awards committee.



## Lifetime Achievement Awards going to Dyas, Gresham, Smith and York

The Auburn Alumni Association has named four prominent alumni with close and lengthy ties to the university to receive Lifetime Achievement Awards for 2005-06.

The recipients, who will receive the awards at a ceremony in March, are orthopedic surgeon Ed Dyas of Mobile, architect Batey Gresham of Nashville, engineering entrepreneur Albert Smith of Houston and retired University of Florida System Chancellor E.T. York.

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes persons who have a deep connection to Auburn and have a distinguished record of achievements in their professional lives, personal integrity, community stature and service to the university.

Dyas, 66, is a 1961 Auburn graduate and was an All-America fullback on AU's football teams of that era under Shug Jordan. Turning down offers to play professional football, he went to medical school at Tulane University and served a residency at Duke University's medical center. After serving as chief of orthopedics at the U.S. Marines' Camp Lejeune, N.C., Dyas returned to his hometown of Mobile, where he became one of the city's leading physicians.

Gresham, 71, is a 1957 graduate of Auburn. With his degree in architecture, he co-founded Gresham, Smith and Partners, a Nashville firm that employs more than 700 people in 14 cities. His projects have included the Nashville International Airport, the Alabama Power Company headquarters in Birmingham and the Nashville City Center Building. Among his service to Auburn, Gresham has endowed a professorship in the College of Architecture, Design and Construction.

Smith, 80, graduated from Auburn in 1947, after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. With 20 years experience as an engineer with Westing-

house, he left to form Power Systems Engineering Inc., where he designed, built and operated privately owned power plants. A leading supporter of the arts in Houston, Smith has provided \$7 million in funding for AU's Jule Collins Smith Museum of Fine Art, which is named for his wife.

York, 83, graduated from Auburn in 1942. After military service in World War II, he earned a master's degree from Auburn and a Ph.D. from Cornell. He became director of the Alabama Extension Service in 1959 and moved to the University of Florida as provost in 1963. He retired from the UF System as chancellor in 1980. Auburn's York Distinguished Lecture Series is named for him.

"These people demonstrate what Auburn is all about," said Andy Hornsby, chairman of the Auburn Alumni Association's board of directors. "Their careers and achievements took them down many paths, but they all built their foundations at Auburn, and they all know the way back home."

### AU faculty member named to lead professional council

Kevin Gue, an associate professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering in AU's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, has been named president of the College-Industry Council on Material Handling Education.

The council is an independent organization founded in 1952 to provide information and logistical support to educators and professionals in material handling fields.

Gue, an Annapolis graduate, holds master's and doctoral degrees in operations management and industrial engineering from Georgia Tech.

## AU adding new degree for students in music

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education has approved a new bachelor's degree for AU's Department of Music in the College of Liberal Arts.

AU will offer the B.A. degree in music, performance option, to undergraduates and prospective students starting in January.

An alternative to the bachelor's degree in music education, the new degree will require eight semesters of private study on voice or the student's choice of instrument type plus a junior or senior recital.

Students in the program will also take other music courses and AU's core curriculum and may choose electives leading to a minor within the college. For more information, contact the Music Department.

### How Auburn Stacks Up

AU United Way 2005 Campaign progress toward \$140,000 goal



Source: Institutional Research and Assessment

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