Brushing up
Artist, poet and folklorist Brian “Bydee Man” Joseph of Austin, Texas, puts the finishing touches on a paneled artwork he painted at Foy Student Union on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 as part of “Diversity Through Art” Week. His painting was among activities sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Center for Diversity and Race Relations and the city’s Cary Woods Elementary School.

Board passes budget, includes money for salary supplements in mid-March

Under a $598 million budget approved Friday by the Board of Trustees, the Auburn University System will draw from internal reallocations and a recent tuition increase at its Auburn and Montgomery campuses to finance the final year of a five-year plan for enhanced academic quality.

The AU System will spend $24 million this year on improvements under the five-year plan at its Auburn and Montgomery campuses, the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

The new budget is retroactive to the start of the fiscal year on Oct. 1 and will be in effect until Sept. 30, 2004.

With passage of the new budget, AU President William Walker said the university should meet most or all of the goals developed by a committee of trustees, faculty and administrators in 1998 and adopted by the Board of Trustees in January 1999.

For the main campus, with a budget of $443.5 million, primary sources of new revenue are $19 million in reallocated funds within the university and $17.8 million from an increase in tuition and fees for the 2003-04 academic year.

The majority of new spending for the main campus, $31.8 million, is budgeted for implementation of goals under the five-year plan. Of that amount, $35 million will go toward one-time, merit-based financial supplements to bring salaries close to the regional average for 2004. The board accepted an administration recommendation to award the salary supple-
Evelyn Ford Crayton has been selected as assistant director for family and community programs at Auburn University. Crayton has been an Extension foods and nutrition specialist. Crayton began her Extension career as a foods and nutrition specialist at Tuskegee Institute in 1973, and she has been an Extension foods and nutrition specialist at AU since 1977. A registered and licensed dietitian, she was a professor in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences.

Crayton’s areas of responsibility as Extension assistant director for family and community programs will include family, nutrition and youth, children and families, community resource and economic development and consumer science and resource management.

“Combining family and community programs under one assistant director is a natural marriage,” Crayton said. “The two programs fit perfectly together because if you have healthy people you can have healthy communities. That is what we are going to be about.”

Crayton said she hopes to bring consumer sciences to the forefront again so that families in Alabama will look to Extension for information and education.

“I want to bring a new awareness to this generation that Extension is here for them,” Crayton said. “From pregnancy to birth, through the school years to adulthood, through marriages, divorces, middle-age crises and the senior adult years, Extension is here to help improve the quality of life.”

Extension has something to offer in every phase of one’s life cycle.

A native of Louisiana, Crayton graduated in 1968 from Grambling State University with a bachelor’s degree in institutional management. She completed requirements for her dietetics license in 1969 and earned a master’s degree in dietetics in 1972 from St. Louis University. She earned a doctorate in vocational and adult education at the University of Illinois in 1991. She also spent five years as a therapeutic dietitian in hospitals in St. Louis.

But, he added, the state’s deepening budget problems will likely affect AU and the state’s other universities for at least a year or two.

Walker said uncertainty over the state’s economy is “one of our primary goals over the past five years has been to bring Auburn’s salaries to the regional average in order to retain the university’s academic quality and reputation. The salary supplements enable us to do that.”

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The salary supplements, budget priorities, staffing plans and the five-year plan are the extended Excellence program, addressing deferred maintenance of academic-support facilities, improving departmental operating budgets and supporting the core curriculum, diversity and one-site projects linked to Peaks of Excellence.

Other funding on the university’s agenda is allocated to mandatory commitments such as increases for the Teachers Retirement System, new retiree costs for employees covered by the state, art museum, hotel-conference center expenses and accrediting agency compliance issues.

Budget trends for other AU System units are Auburn University-Montgomery, $53 million; the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, $42 million; and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, $49 million.

Evelyn Ford Crayton has been selected as assistant director for family and community programs in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

“Two of our primary goals over the past five years has been to bring Auburn’s salaries to the regional average in order to retain the university’s academic quality and reputation,” he said. “The two programs fit perfectly together because if you have healthy people you can have healthy communities. That is what we are going to be about.”

Evelyn Ford Crayton has been selected as assistant director for family and community programs in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. She will be working with Auburn University’s College of Liberal Arts to introduce new minor academic programs.

Auburn University’s College of Liberal Arts has introduced a new minor academic program. The minor academic program is available to students in several colleges and schools, and it will become fully operational in fall 2004.

“The minor could prove valuable to students majoring in pre-law, business, pre-medicine or communication fields or any of the social sciences, he said. “An Africana minor could give students an edge in consideration by law, medical or graduate schools. It should prove especially helpful to graduates seeking jobs in international businesses or corporations, but even small, local businesses often have international connections through retailers and customers.”

Kowalski said the most successful African studies programs on other campuses have proved popular with students of all races.

“For information, contact Kowalski at 844-2191 or by e-mail at kowalgs@auburn.edu.

The Auburn Chamber Music Society will host a reception for the performers and audience at Grey- stone Manor on East Magnolia Avenue after the concert. For more information, see www.auburn.edu/ academic/liberal_arts/music/acms.html.

The Talich Quartet from the Czech Republic will perform the annual fall season of the Auburn Chamber Music Society at 7:30 p.m. in Goodwin Recital Hall.

The visiting quartet will perform works by Schubert and Schumann. Tickets are $5 each for students and $20 for others.
AU Theatre cancels plans for premiere of play off campus

The Auburn University Theatre has rescheduled the opening of its production of “Freakspiel! A Demented Rock Opera,” originally set to open Wednesday at the city-owned Jan Dempsey Arts Center, for an unscheduled date in late January at the Tellair Peet Theatre.

“In consideration of the best artistic interests of both the Jan Dempsey Arts Center and the Department of Theatre at Auburn University, we will be postponing the production dates of ‘Freakspiel,’” said a statement released Friday by the AU Theatre.

“We feel that this decision honors the separate constituencies of both venues (Jan Dempsey and Tellair Peet) and that the creative work of the production will be strengthened by making this change.”

Cast members described “Freakspiel!” as a parody of the mass media that mixes elements of 19th century Punch-and-Judy puppet shows, early 20th century vaudeville and cabaret and today’s reality television and confrontational talk shows to create “a unique theatrical experience that will shock some and delight others.”

Student Affairs program helps new students thank hometown teachers

When Michelle Keener became a college student at Auburn University, one of her first assignments was to look back, not forward.

In Camp War Eagle, Auburn’s summer orientation program for entering freshmen, counselors asked Keener to identify someone among her high school teachers, coaches, counselors and administrators who had made a difference in her life. Keener chose Lisa Essman, her high school English teacher from Pelham High School.

“Ms. Essman not only cares about students’ academic work, but she also cares about their lives and what they are doing,” Keener said. “She is just one of those people that you don’t forget.”

The case is typical, say staff members in the Division of Student Affairs who work with new students in a program to recognize educators who have made a difference in at least one student’s life.

“I have been there; I have been a teacher, a counselor and a principal,” Williams said.

He added, “I know how hard they work and I know the challenges and responsibilities they face, and this is a small way Auburn University can thank our colleagues and tell them, ‘you do make a difference.’

Student Affairs receives thanks from various secondary educators who were nominated by Auburn freshmen as “influential” in their education careers.

“It is rewarding to just read the comments the people send to us after having received a letter,” said Wanda Sperow, executive secretary to the vice president of Student Affairs, said.

“I remember one woman called on a Friday; she had been having a terrible week and was asking herself ‘why am I doing this?’” Sperow said. “She went to her mailbox, opened this letter and burst into tears as she realized ‘this is why I do this!’”

AU office provides new details on dental options

The Office of Payroll and Employee Benefits has issued additional information about optional dental plans available to AU employees during the November registration period.

The basic plan covers regular exams and some related services. A new option, the expanded plan provides that coverage and adds 80 percent coverage for fillings, teeth extractions and some additional supplementary services. The expanded plan also provides some restorative benefits, including 80 percent of the cost of root canals from dentists on Blue Cross-Blue Shield’s list of preferred dentists. Coverage is not available for crowns and certain other procedures.

Costs, on a 12-month basis, for the basic plan are $9.50 per month for individuals and $30 for families. Monthly costs for the expanded plan are $16 for individuals and $49 for families.

Contact the Office of Payroll and Employee Benefits at 844-4183.