

alumni

CLASnotes

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA SPRING 2009

GIANT SNAKE
STALKS COLOMBIAN COAL MINE
(60 million years ago)

CLASact

Todd Barry
B.A., English, 1986

I CALL MYSELF...

Comedian.

LATER TODAY I'M...

Well, my bathroom sink is being repaired now, so I look forward to washing my hands. But I always look forward to that.

MY HOBBIES ARE...

I walk around, stare into space, find places to eat. Nothing too dramatic.

ONLINE I'M AT...

[You have an extensive web site at www.toddbarry.com, you are on MySpace and you Twitter—but how much time do you actually spend on the internet?] Oh, yes, I knew I left something off the list from the prior question. I spend too much time on the internet; it's sort of embarrassing. I think I just used a semi-colon correctly.

MY BEST ADVICE IS...

Sleep a lot. Not like 15 hours like a loser, but eight or nine hours. Nine.

I FIND INSPIRATION IN...

Watching someone who's really good at their job.

IF I WEREN'T A COMEDIAN, I'D BE...

Civil rights attorney sounds good.

MY THEME SONG IS...

Who Put the Bomp
(In the Bomp, Bomp, Bomp).

AN ENGLISH DEGREE HAS HELPED ME...

I'm a big fan of confused and baffled looks, so it's helped me in that regard.

MY WORLD DOMINATION PLANS INCLUDE...

I can't stand hearing people eat popcorn at movies, so I would do something about that. I guess there are other things I'd change first, but that would be one of them.

ANYTHING ELSE?

How come I've never been asked to perform at Gator Growl?

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA

About CLAS

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Florida is the largest college on campus, with more than 700 faculty members responsible for teaching the majority of the university's core curriculum to at least 35,000 students each year. CLAS has more than 12,000 undergraduate students pursuing a variety of disciplines through its 35 majors and 45 minors. Additionally, nearly 2,000 graduate students are attaining advanced degrees in the college.

About Alumni CLASnotes

Alumni CLASnotes is published twice a year by the University of Florida College of Liberal Arts & Sciences for its alumni and friends. Please send all correspondence to Editor, CLAS Dean's Office, PO Box 117300, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611-7300 or editor@clas.ufl.edu.

Dean

Paul D'Anieri

CLAS Communications & Outreach

Margaret Fields, Editor
Jane Dominguez, Designer
Jeff Stevens, Web Master
Jocelyn Sanchez, Intern
CeCey Zhang, Intern

CLAS Development & Alumni Affairs

Zoe Seale, Senior Director
Cody Helmer, Director
Norman Portillo, Director
Christy Popwell, Assoc. Director
Melissa Tyrone, Assoc. Director

on the COVER

CLAS scientists use the remains of largest snake ever found to estimate the climate 60 million years ago.
Photo by Timothy K. Hamilton.

MATTHEW RODGERS



2 **CLASact: Todd Barry**

The up-and-coming comedian, actor, and writer answers a few questions.



4 **Titanoboa**

Remains of the largest snake ever found suggest tropics were hotter in the past.



6 **Predicting the Invasion**

Study shows when invasive species will travel by air.



8 **Flavors for Conservation**

Which Amazon fruits will catch on next?



10 **Reaching Out**

The people of CLAS know that every little bit helps.



12 **UF Teach**

A new program may have the answer to Florida's math and science teacher shortage.



13 **Winning the Fight Against Malaria**

Grant funds development of modeling tools for malaria elimination.

14 **Updates from CLASmates**

16 **Alumni Bookshelf**

17 **Dean's Circle**

18 **Campus Views**

20 **Keeping up with CLAS**

There are plenty of ways to stay connected with your alma mater.

TITANOBOA

REMAINS OF THE LARGEST SNAKE EVER FOUND
SUGGEST TROPICS WERE HOTTER IN THE PAST

The largest snake the world has ever known—as long as a school bus and as heavy as a small car—ruled tropical ecosystems only 6 million years after the demise of the fearsome *Tyrannosaurus rex*, according to a new discovery published in the journal *Nature*.



A vertebra from an anaconda (top) is dwarfed by one from Titanoboa (bottom).

Partial skeletons of a new giant, boa constrictor-like snake named “Titanoboa” found in Colombia by an international team of scientists and now at the University of Florida are estimated to be 42 to 45 feet long, the length of the *T-rex* “Sue” displayed at Chicago’s Field Museum, said Jonathan Bloch, a UF vertebrate paleontologist who co-led the expedition with Carlos Jaramillo, a paleobotanist from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama.

Researchers say the extinct snake was even larger than the wildest dreams of directors of modern horror movies.

“Truly enormous

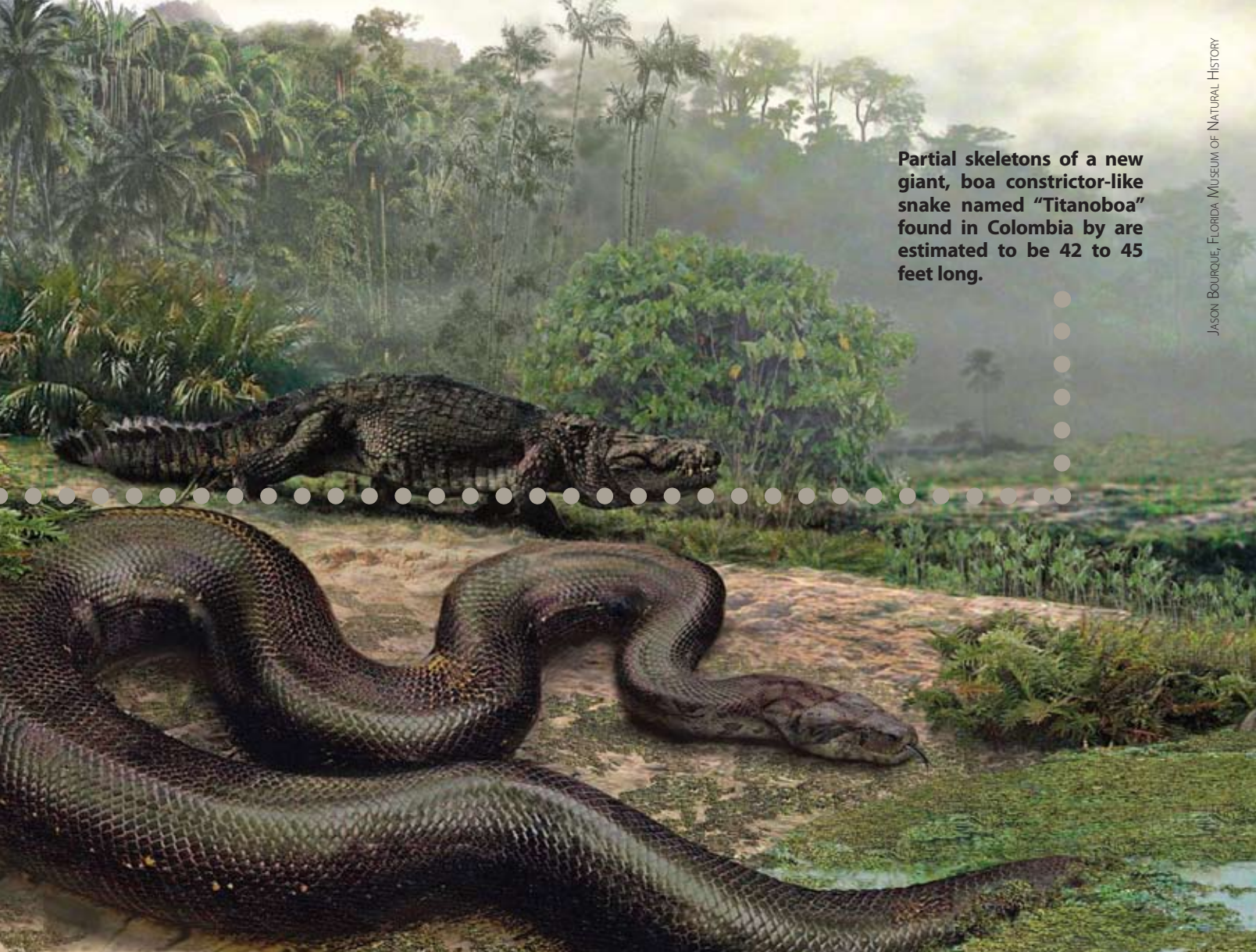
snakes really spark people’s imagination, but reality has exceeded the fantasies of Hollywood,” said Bloch, who is studying the snake at the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus. “The snake that tried to eat Jennifer Lopez in the movie *Anaconda* is not as big as the one we found.”

Jason Head, a paleontologist at the University of Toronto in Mississauga and the paper’s senior author, described it this way: “The snake’s body was so wide that if it were moving down the hall and decided to come into my office to eat me, it would literally have to squeeze

through the door.”

Besides tipping the scales at an estimated 1.25 tons, the snake lived during the Paleocene Epoch, a 10-million-year period immediately following the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago, Bloch said.

The scientists also found many skeletons of giant turtles and extinct primitive crocodile relatives that likely were eaten by the snake, he said. “Prior to our work, there had been no fossil vertebrates found between 65 million and 55 million years ago in tropical South America, leaving us with a very poor understanding of what life was like in the northern Neotropics,”



Partial skeletons of a new giant, boa constrictor-like snake named “Titanoboa” found in Colombia by are estimated to be 42 to 45 feet long.

he said. “Now we have a window into the time just after the dinosaurs went extinct and can actually see what the animals replacing them were like.”

Size does matter because the snake’s gigantic dimensions are a sign that temperatures along the equator were once much hotter. That is because snakes and other cold-blooded animals are limited in body size by the ambient temperature of where they live, Bloch said.

“If you look at cold-blooded animals and their distribution on the planet today, the large ones are in the tropics, where it’s hottest, and they become smaller the farther away they are from the equator,” he said.

Based on the snake’s size, the team was able to calculate that the mean annual temperature at equatorial South America 60 million years ago would have been about 91 degrees Fahrenheit, about 10 degrees warmer than today, Bloch said.

The presence of outsized snakes and turtles shows that even 60 million years ago the foundations of the modern Amazonian tropical ecosystem were in place, he said.

Fossil hunting is usually difficult in the forest-covered tropics because of the lack of exposed rock, Bloch said. But excavations in the Cerrejón Coal Mine in Northern Colombia

exposed the rock and offered an unparalleled opportunity for discovery, he said.

After the team brought the fossils to the Florida Museum of Natural History, it was UF graduate students Alex Hastings and Jason Bourque who first recognized they belonged to a giant snake, Bloch said. Head, an expert on fossil snakes, worked with David Polly, a paleontologist at the University of Indiana, to estimate the snake’s length and mass by determining the relationship between body size and vertebral—backbone—size in living snakes and using that relationship to figure out body size of the fossil snake based on its vertebrae.

Harry W. Greene, professor in the department of ecology and evolutionary biology at Cornell University and one of the world’s leading snake experts, said the “colossal” ancient boa researchers found has “important implications for snake biology and our understanding of life in the ancient tropics.”

“The giant Colombian snake is a truly exciting discovery,” said Greene, who wrote the book *Snakes: The Evolution of Mystery in Nature*. “For decades herpetologists have argued about just how big snakes can get, with debatable estimates of the max somewhat less than 40 feet.”

—Cathy Keen



Global airlines be forewarned:
June 2010 could be a busy
month for invasive plants,
insects and animals seeking
free rides to distant lands.

P R E D I C T I N G THE INVASION

Study Shows When Invasive Species Will Travel By Air

A new study forecasts when climate factors such as temperature, humidity and rainfall will match at geographically distant airline departure and destination points, which could help to shuffle invasive species, and the diseases they may carry, across the globe along existing flight routes. The findings provide a framework that could help people who monitor airline flights—and the people, baggage and cargo aboard—to plan more efficiently and accurately for detecting and intercepting invasives.

Andy Tatem, who holds a joint position at the Emerging Pathogens Institute and the University of Florida's geography department, said his model uses the latest forecast data for climate change and air traffic volumes.

"The problem is that as the global transport networks expand, we're getting more and more invasive species and pathogens coming from different parts of the world that have survived isolated for thousands of years," said Tatem, who joined UF in January. "But now they have this high-speed link going between different regions of the world."

The study was published online Jan. 22 in the journal *Ecography*, and the work was performed in his previous position at the University of Oxford.

Tatem predicts a peak risk will be reached in June 2010, when multiple factors converge to create a month when the climate factors at many flight origin and destination airports would be most similar.

"The model shows us that climatic shifts are not greatly significant over the next few years," Tatem said. "But the great increase in traffic volumes from expanding economies in India and China are likely to have a significant effect on moving species. This gives us much more of a detailed idea on the importance of key risk factors and how these change over time, compared to previous work we did in 2007."

Tatem reached his conclusions by comparing fine-scale global climate models for 2009 and 2010 prepared by the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research with models forecasting traffic volumes on existing airline networks, prepared by OAG Worldwide. The airline models include more than 35 million scheduled flights between 3,570 airports on more than 44,000 different routes.

But exactly how native species wind up aboard an outbound passenger or freight aircraft is still being studied. Tatem said it can be a combination of goods, transport and people bringing things aboard either accidentally or knowingly.

"Some studies have shown that mosquitoes can fly on randomly, or they may get into baggage," he said. "But some things, like plant pathogens, happen when people purposely bring fruit aboard, or they may bring in a plant that makes it through inspections, or they may just have seeds stuck in the soles of their shoes."

These activities compound over the entire global system, threatening local economies, public health and native ecosystems. In 2007, a biological invasion was documented from a single invasive insect in a study conducted by York University biologists Amro Zayed and Laurence Packer. A different 2007 study by Andrew Liebhold, published in *American Entomologist*, examined records of U.S. Department of Agricultural inspectors encountering invasive species in airline baggage. Liebhold, a research entomologist with the Northeastern Research Station of the U.S. Forest Service, reported that infested fruit, mainly from the tropics, was the most commonly intercepted commodity, and that flies, cicadas, planthoppers, aphids and scale insects were the most commonly intercepted invasive insects.

Liebhold said Tatem's study provided fascinating predictions about expected trends in the accidental transport of invasive species among continents.

"Unfortunately, unwitting air passengers have too frequently provided transport of plant pests and human diseases and this trend has increased with elevated intercontinental passenger traffic," Liebhold said. "Hopefully, government agencies will pay attention to these results and utilize them to strengthen inspection activities at airports in order to protect the world from the devastating impacts of alien species on natural ecosystems as well as on human health."

—DeLene Beeland



FLAVORS



for conservation



photos by Nigel Smith

Geographer Nigel Smith has spent his career researching and promoting fruits most of us have never heard of, but which might some day be grocery staples. For more information on this rainforest bounty, pick up a copy of Smith's book *Amazon River Fruits*, or visit National Geographic News at www.tinyurl.com/amazon-fruit to read a featured article on his research.

Opposite & Above: Rich in vitamins C and A, aguaje (*Mauritia flexuosa*) is the Amazon's answer to oranges and carrots. It is one of more than a hundred wild and domesticated fruits available to residents of Peru's Pacaya Samiria National Reserve.

Left: Mainly a children's treat in the Peruvian Amazon, the sweet, juicy yumanasa (*Muntingia calabura*) is common along the banks of sediment-rich rivers.

REACHING OUT

As the economy travels down a bumpy road with unemployment rates at all-time highs, many across the globe are in need of help as they find themselves without food and shelter. During these times of great unrest, there has arisen a selective few who have taken up the cause of the less fortunate. At the University of Florida, a new breed of leader dedicated to public service has been born.

Dr. Ed Kellerman reminisces on his parents' volunteering their expertise in eye care for rural tribesmen across Kenya. It was their devotion to the African people that instilled in him and his brother, Phil, a lifelong dedication to public service.

As a senior lecturer in the Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication in CLAS, Ed and Phil Kellerman are embarking on a new course: Nonprofit Leadership. The duo has developed this team-teaching program courtesy of a grant from the Bob Graham Center for Public Service. With special topics in nonprofit leadership and management, the course comes complete with a lecture series as well as real-world experience to prepare students for entry into the nonprofit sector. Currently the program has 18 students from a variety of backgrounds such as agriculture, business and liberal arts. Even members of the student organization Heal the World, which raises money for international and domestic projects, participate in the program.

The two nonprofit organizations the program focuses on are the Harvest of Hope Foundation, which helps migrant farm workers, and Project Nepal, which runs the Nabha Deepti School for orphaned schoolchildren in Kathmandu. Ed Kellerman serves on the board of both organizations. For the Harvest of Hope Foundation, the Kellerman brothers managed to bring together 141 bands, including Less Than Jake and Against Me!, for a benefit concert at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds in St. Augustine, Florida. With more than 17,000 attendees, the three-day event was a great success.

Over the years Kellerman has helped Harvest of Hope to raise more

than \$600,000, but with the onslaught of a down-turned economy, donations have experienced a slow decline.

"At the grassroots level, students are still contributing," Kellerman said.

This is evidenced by the \$450 recently raised by Harvest of Hope during a fundraising event at The Atlantic, a Gainesville social club. On the larger levels, donations are being delayed as corporations feel the economic crunch.

Kellerman believes better leadership is needed in today's students and that the corporate world could stand to benefit from the skills students develop.

Born to a family that didn't have much, Department of Psychology professor **Dr. Carolyn M. Tucker** grew up in a small Virginia town with plenty of culture—and high cholesterol.

"For African-Americans, food is a way of expressing ourselves and our love and affection," Tucker said.

Yet, for Tucker, who once weighed more than 200 pounds, at what point did the price of comfort become too much?

With this question in mind, Tucker launched the Family Health Self-Empowerment Project for Modifying and Preventing Obesity. Funded by a \$1.1 million grant from The PepsiCo Foundation, the program teaches children, adolescents and their caregivers in low-income families, how to live healthier lifestyles. More than 600 families across the U.S. will participate in a training program that extends over a two-year period. To calculate the effectiveness of the program, interactive workshops will be tested to give participating families the education and training they need to gain control of their eating

habits and better manage their weight.

Another program Tucker has instituted is the Culturally Sensitive Health Care Research Project. Federally funded, the program evaluates whether the affects of providing culturally sensitive healthcare to patients influences their adherence to treatments.

"A passion of mine is conducting research aimed at health promotion and reducing health disparities," Tucker said, "and preparing the next generation of researchers—both minority and majority students—who are committed to minority health and reducing health disparities. If I have any kind of legacy, I hope it will be this research and mentoring. Right now there is such a strong need for both."

In her own research group at UF, she encourages and promotes a culturally diverse working environment. Because of this philosophy, Tucker was awarded UF's first President's Humanitarian Award in 2002. Many students have found Tucker's teachings to be of great benefit to them, and tout her as one of the most influential mentors of the college. That reputation earned her UF's Doctoral Dissertation Advisor and Mentoring Award.

Mike Gunter listened in disbelief to the small voices in front of him as they professed they were upset the school year was coming to an end. He was not shocked because the children claimed they would miss their academic studies. Instead, his shock stemmed from the realization that school was the only place they received a regular meal.

During his time as a volunteer coach at Westwood Middle School and the Boys and Girls Club of Alachua County in Gainesville, Florida, Gunter was hit by a harsh reality: there really were children who had no food at home. Armed with a passion and an idea, Gunter approached the Boys and Girls Club and local businesses to address the hunger issues plaguing many children in the community. With this one step, Gunter set in stone his promise to make a difference.

In collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club, Gunter formulated his idea into an organized plan and presented it to the University Athletic Association. As a maintenance mechanic with the UF Department of Biology, Gunter knew he could count on the kindness of UF alumni, the Gator Nation, to help him in his cause.

The UAA embraced the idea. The program, now dubbed the Gator's Canned Good Challenge for Kids, asked fans and others to donate canned foods when attending home games.

"The (women's) basketball team...they have my support forever. Those girls came out and worked their tails off for us," Gunter said. The team not only boxed the various donations, it even went so far as to tote boxes around the stadium to collect more food items.

There was only one problem the volunteers encountered while taking donations. Location. Nestled between the Stephen C. O'Connell Center and front of Ben Hill Griffin Stadium,

CLAS wants to know what you are doing to CHANGE THE FUTURE. Email editor@clas.ufl.edu with your name, degree, year, and what you are working on so we can add your cause to the outreach portion of our website at www.clas.ufl.edu/outreach.html.

THE PEOPLE OF CLAS KNOW THAT EVERY LITTLE BIT HELPS

many fans found the walk too long to donate. Next year he plans to have various locations around the stadium as a convenience to donors.

The Gator's Canned Good Challenge for Kids managed to collect more than 15,000 pounds of food during UF's 2008 football home games. Of the donations given, the Boys and Girls Club received 200 pounds of food each game. The majority of the donations were reserved for The Bread of the Mighty Food Bank to distribute among the general community. Though most food banks charge a small administrative fee to organizations that use their services, the Boys and Girls Club are glad to be able to offer its pantry at no charge to its members.

With continued success, Gunter hopes to explore more options for spreading word about the program. He hopes to extend the program into more Florida athletic venues, reach out to those who don't attend Gator games and set up donation stations in local businesses to involve the whole community.

When asked if he thought he would ever be able to create such a program, Gunter humbly replied, "No...not really. It just kind of happened. We started out on the wing last year, not knowing what we were doing—We still don't," he laughs, "but we're getting better at it."

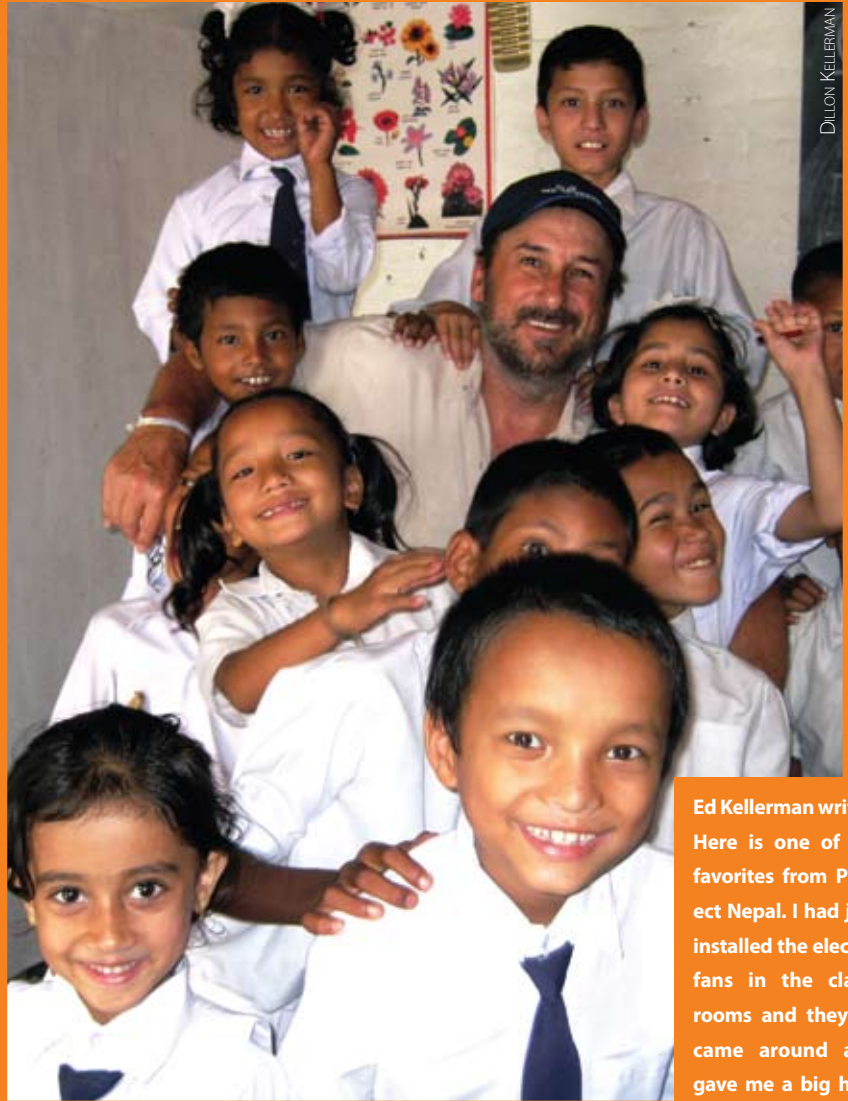
.....
Terri Lowery, 2008–2009 President of the Leadership Gainesville Alumni Association, urged board members to brainstorm problematic issues affecting Gainesville. The group wanted to plug into the community as a way of giving back and chose education as its focus.

With help from the School Board of Alachua County, the LGAA chose Rawlings Elementary as the school with the greatest need. To get a better understanding of the school's needs, Lowery and Greg Bradley, of the Gainesville Community Redevelopment Agency, met with school officials to discuss the group's plan. The LGAA proposed ideas to start influential programs in three areas: a speaker series, a mentoring program and a block party.

"This program takes advantage of the diversity of strengths and interests amongst the Leadership Gainesville Alumni," said Dr. Margaret Fields, Assistant Dean in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences—who is both an alumna of Leadership Gainesville and a current board member. She saw this as an opportunity to foster community involvement from an early age.

Since September 2008, guest speakers have presented to Rawlings' third- and fourth-grade classes. The topics have covered issues such as career alternatives, character development and honest discussions about personal issues some of the students face on a day-to-day basis.

The mentoring program consists of 10 mentors who each work with three children. The small groups, affectionately named "Pea Pods," have participants selected by school staff. As a way to develop life skills, the Pea Pods also provide accountability and academic encouragement.



Ed Kellerman writes: Here is one of my favorites from Project Nepal. I had just installed the electric fans in the classrooms and they all came around and gave me a big hug.

On a grander scale, the LGAA organized its third program: the Rawlings Block Party. The party was created to assist the school in nurturing relationships between staff and parents in the surrounding neighborhood.

"The event definitely had a positive impact in the community," said Candy Taylor, LGAA Board Secretary and co-organizer, "I was pleasantly surprised by the response from the families." The event also provided access to valuable information that would benefit families, and "many parents expressed their gratitude for putting on an event where their families could go, have a good time and obtain valuable information." The valuable information came at a price that all student attendees

could afford. Each child had to bring a parent or legal guardian to participate in the activities.

.....
As reports of economic doom and gloom continue to flow out of radios and televisions, there are those who are able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Who will be there to help those trapped in the darkness? Fortunately, leaders like Ed Kellerman, Mike Gunter, Carolyn M. Tucker and members of the LGAA have taken notice. Taking up their own brand of torches, these new leaders are taking time to carve paths in the community that help light the way.

— April FitzGerald

Like many kids grappling with algebra, the state of Florida has math anxiety. It has science woes, too. A new program at UF may have the answer.

UFTeach

With less than 10% of the state's vacancies for mathematics and science educators filled and lower performance scores in these subjects nationwide, the question nags—where are the qualified teachers and what can schools do to strengthen their recruitment?

A new program at UF may have the answer. UFTeach, a collaboration between the College of Education (COE) and the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), is a curriculum based around students seeking education degrees in math and science. Patterned on the UTeach model at the University of Texas at Austin, UFTeach is designed to support qualified new teachers and aspiring teachers through their induction process integrating teaching techniques with research methods and practical field experience. UF is joining its efforts with 12 other colleges and universities, including Florida State University and the University of California at Berkeley.

With the PROTEACH masters program already in place at UF, this initiative and others like it is what undergraduates need, especially when it comes to training, according to UFTeach master teacher Dr. Griff Jones.

"This program could better prepare them for a career in teaching, and allowing new teachers to have students in their fields without pedagogy or a degree is lowering standards and setting them (the teachers) up for failure," he said.

UFTeach covers from 25–28 credits and

can be treated as a minor. After a preview session, students of UFTeach sign up for Step 1, a COE 3-credit course that coaches students in project-based instruction, which involves drawing up lesson plans with a partner—and teaching them to elementary school students at the P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School or in the Alachua County school district.

"In a lot of programs, most students don't get field experiences until junior year and with this program, they start as freshmen," said Gloria Weber, a master teacher for UFTeach. Weber added that she loves being able to watch the growth and development of the students as they learn to deal with younger kids.

As the student pairs learn to design and deliver lesson plans, a mentor teacher, who is present at all times and who provides immediate feedback, attends them. A master teacher also supervises them and gives additional help. UFTeach currently has 12 middle school teachers working as mentors from four schools in Alachua County, including Lincoln and Howard Bishop and also 14 elementary school teachers from schools like J.J. Finley and Glen Springs.

Also taught in Step 1 is inquiry-based instruction, a student-centered, teacher-guided learning method. With this practice, teachers learn to step out of the way and let students investigate the lesson plan and relate it to their own interests, thereby helping to develop critical thinking skills

through analysis, questions and solutions, and making their learning visible to themselves.

"We don't want them (the teachers) to be a sage on the stage," Jones said. "We want them to be a guide on the side."

Weber agreed. "The kids are actively engaged in their own learning, not little vessels that we fill, and this is how people can truly learn," she said.

Students will continue from Step 1 to Step 2, another COE course that covers inquiry-based lessons in designing science and mathematics lesson plans. After that, students will move on to CLAS courses such as the Fall 2009 "Perspectives in Math & Science," taught by the History Department, and "Research Methods" in Spring 2010, taught by the chair of the Physics Department, Dr. Alan Dorsey, who is also co-coordinator of the UFTeach program along with Dr. Tom Dana, the associate dean of the COE.

Since its inception in 2008, the program has received generous praise and unexpected interest from students. While approximately 25 students were anticipated for the first session, over 50 students registered, prompting the staff to open up a new class to accommodate them. The group includes 35 female students, eight Hispanic students, four African-American students and four Asian students. Twenty-five students have returned to complete Step 2 of the program. Jones attributed this early success in part to the grants that fund UFTeach.

“There was no funded, specific program that was co-operative, until now,” he said. “The money made the difference and it’s allowed for new resources to develop.”

Backed by a \$1.4 million grant from the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), sponsored by Exxon/Mobil, UF will match the money over five years with another \$1 million endowment from NMSI at the end of this period. The Helios Foundation has made a \$1 million gift to both UF and FSU and in addition to many private donors, UF has a new grant pending from the Smallwood Foundation, which may enable UF Teach to offer paid internships starting in the summer of 2010, according to Dr. Dimple Malik Flesner, associate director of UF Teach.

If internships become available, they could assist in encouraging students to stay and remain immersed in the program. With the temptations of high-paying research jobs and other avenues for math and science majors, it can be difficult for educators to keep students interested in the toil of teaching. But even if students decide that teaching is not their field, the experiences they take away can be invaluable to their career development.

“We’re casting a large net,” said Jones. “Some students may never go into teaching, but I think they’ll know more about what education is and they can be advocates, as well as better communicators and multi-taskers.”

Katrina Short, the teaching assistant for UF Teach, noted that the staff focused on reaching the students in many ways and that effective instruction works on many levels. She is confident that this curriculum will continue to thrive.

“The interest in the courses themselves prove the success of this program,” she said.

Jones agreed, and added that UF Teach was not the only valuable show in educational programs for Florida, noting that there were many wonderful programs out there.

“We’re just trying to develop some integral courses that really address the heart of what it means to be a good teacher,” he said. “We need to change what the teachers say and how they say it so that it keeps students’ interest and helps them to truly understand teaching.”

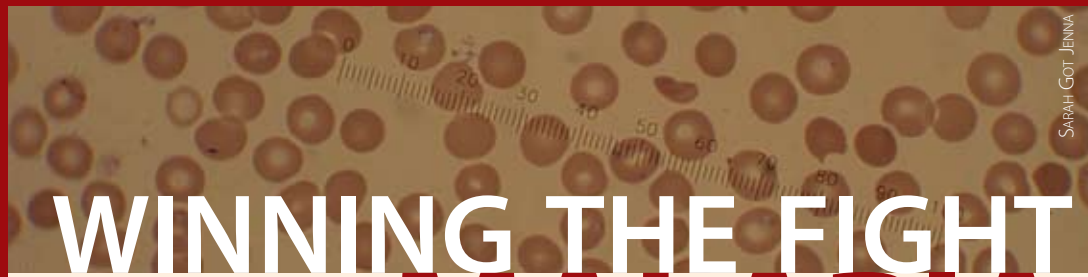
For more information on UF Teach, please visit the website at <http://ufteach.clas.ufl.edu>.

—Rebekah Koran

Anopheles stephensi mosquitoes are known malarial vectors with a distribution ranging from Egypt all the way to China.



GUSTAV DURAN



SARAH GOT JENNA

WINNING THE FIGHT AGAINST MALARIA

In wealthy countries, the war against malaria was won nearly half a century ago, but the disease continues to afflict communities in the developing world.

Now the University of Florida is doing what it can to help fight malaria. UF recently announced that it has received a \$1.5 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop modeling tools for malaria elimination. This is the first time a UF researcher has been awarded a direct grant from the foundation.

David L. Smith, associate director of disease ecology at UF’s Emerging Pathogens Institute and an associate professor in the biology department, will lead work on the new project. Smith’s previous research has focused on policy-oriented science related to malaria outbreaks, spread and management.

“To plan, we need to understand how malaria parasites move around in humans, and we also need to understand the interplay between economic and ecological aspects of malaria elimination,” said Smith. “These are difficult questions to answer, but we hope to provide some quantitative advice to help guide countries as they make strategic decisions about malaria elimination.”

The Emerging Pathogens Institute brings together researchers from diverse fields to develop control, diagnostic and treatment plans including vaccines and other antimicrobials for new and emerging diseases. The institute’s focus is to develop the research capabilities to prevent and contain outbreaks of new diseases that threaten Florida, the rest of the country and ultimately the world.

This research is also part of efforts by the Malaria Atlas Project to develop evidence-based high spatial resolution maps of malaria endemicity. The modeling tools will help to fill gaps in malaria theory so these maps can be used for malaria elimination planning. The new research will increase the general understanding of disease transmission.

“We want to connect malaria transmission models, malaria endemicity maps and high-resolution human population maps,” said Andy Tatem, a new member of the Emerging Pathogens Institute and the UF geography department, who helped develop the grant.

—Tamekia Massaline

updates from

CLASmates

1960s

Roland H. Gomez, Jr. (B.S., in Arts & Sciences, 1963), a civil litigator and lawyer, received the Henry Latimer Center for Professionalism's Award for his service as a mentor to young lawyers, his longtime community involvement with the Optimist Club, his work as director of North Dade Pet Rescue, and his devotion to creating a girls soccer program, which he ran for over 20 years.

Ronald M. Keyser (B.S., Physics and Math, 1965; M.S., Physics, 1967; Ph.D., Physics, 1970) has been named General Chairman of the 2010 IEEE Nuclear Sciences Symposium and Medical Imaging Conference. This nine-day, annual conference attracts over 1500 scientists from around the world. He is a Senior Scientist with ORTEC-AMETEK in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He and his wife, Merry, have two children and three grandchildren.

Donald Songer (B.A., Political Science, 1967) has recently been named the Olin D. Johnston Professor in Political Science at the University of South Carolina. His most recent book, *The Transformation of the Supreme Court of Canada: An Empirical Examination* was published by the University of Toronto Press in January.

1970s

Joseph A. Alfred (M.S., Mathematics, 1972) was promoted to director of patent licensing and sales at AT&T in January. He will be responsible for developing wireless, broadband, and standards-based patent licensing programs.

Kelli Edwards Brown (B.A., Arts & Sciences, 1979) is a certified geriatric care manager who serves on the board of the Florida Geriatric Care Manager Association and chairs the Committee on Aging for Dunedin, Florida. Dunedin was the first city in Florida to be certified as Elder Ready. Brown was in private practice for eight years and has been with Care Resources for the past three. At the national conference in 2009, she received the Outstanding Chapter Member Award. She is an active advocate for the elderly and their concerned parties in her community.

John P. Hussey (Ph.D., English, 1971), Professor Emeritus of English at Fairmont (WV) State University, has published a collection of novellas set in 19th century Concord, Massachusetts, *The Ghosts of Walden*.

David Vacca (B.A., Political Science, 1978) received his MBA specializing in acquisition and contract management from the University of Dallas in 1986. After leaving UF, he became an officer in the U.S. Navy, and later joined the Federal Government as a contract specialist. He has been with the General Services Administration since 1990. In 2001, David was recognized as Contracting Officer of the Year.

Samuel L. Wright, Sr. (B.A., Psychology, 1974) was recently named Student Ombudsman at the University of South Florida and appointed to the State of Florida African American Task Force. He was re-elected Second Vice President of the Hillsborough Branch of NAACP in November, 2008.

1980s

Dawn Cusick (B.A., English, 1989) has two nonfiction children's science books coming out this August: *Bug Butts* and *Animal Tongues*. She wrote and edited craft and how-to books for 20 years, while attending school part time to earn a certificate in biology at the University of North Carolina-Asheville and an M.S. in biology at Western Carolina University. Her books are the convergence of two passions: publishing and science. She is also a part-time biology instructor at Haywood Community College in Clyde, North Carolina.

Laura Jane Deleruyelle (B.A., Speech Pathology and Audiology, 1984) is completing her Doctor of Nursing degree from Case Western Reserve University. Her doctoral thesis topic covers menopausal symptom relief and side effects experienced by women on compounded bio-identical hormone therapy and women taking synthetic conjugated equine estrogen and progestin hormone therapy. She is employed at Bradenton Urgent Care Center and Carlos Arias family practice.

Edward Hobson (B.A., Political Science, 1983) was promoted to program manager in charge of criminal investigations and physical security at the U.S. Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, DC. Previously, he served six years as the regional security officer for Peace Corps in East Africa, based in Uganda and Kenya. He is also an accomplished wildlife artist; one of his paintings is currently on display as part of the "Art of Conservation" exhibit at the Hiram Blauvelt Museum in Oradell, New Jersey.

Stephen Kraus (B.S., Psychology, 1986) received his Ph.D. in social psychology from Harvard University in 1991 and taught at UF from 1991-1993. He recently co-authored *The New Elite: Inside the Minds of the Truly Wealthy*, a research-based look at the lives and lifestyles of the wealthiest one percent of Americans. He is vice president of the Harrison Group consulting firm and lives in San Francisco with his wife and five-year-old son.

Alma B. Littles (B.S., Chemistry, 1982) is Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Florida State University College of Medicine. She currently serves as chief academic officer with oversight responsibility of the medical school curriculum on the six regional campuses in Florida.

Robert Joseph Nolan (B.S., Psychology, 1985) is Adjunct Associate Professor of Human Development at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida. He is also president of New Pinnacle Performance Counseling in Bradenton.

Harsha V. Ramayya (B.A., Speech Communications, 1986) has been named senior account executive at New Horizons Learning Center in Jacksonville, Florida. He served as President for the Northeast Florida American Institute of Banking Council, as an adjunct instructor at Florida Community College in Jacksonville, completed the Graduate School of Bank Management at the University of Virginia in 2001, and is a member of the Florida Banker's Society. Ramayya maintains his passion for communications as a radio announcer, and has worked for Clear Channel radio in Orlando and Cox Radio in Jacksonville.

Ronald J. Renuart, Sr. (B.S., Zoology, 1986) was elected State Representative to the Florida House of Representatives. He is a combat veteran who, as a Colonel in the Florida Army National Guard, served two tours in Iraq and a tour of Afghanistan. He attended the Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine where he earned his D.O. degree. He was elected as Chief-of-Staff of Baptist Medical Center Beaches in Jacksonville Beach in 2004, and he was recognized in 2006 as Physician of the Year by the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association. He lives in Ponte Vedra Beach with his wife Jackie and his three teenage children.

Terry M. Truex (B.A., Geography, 1989) is a Vice President and Regional Information Systems Manager at Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. in West Palm Beach, Florida. In November he married Brandy Upright (B.S., Public Relations, 1992).

1990s

Robert J. Sniffen (B.A., Political Science, 1990) of Sniffen Law Firm, P.A., Tallahassee, has been listed in Florida Trend Magazine's "Legal Elite" in Labor and Employment Law. He was also recently named in the 2009 edition of The Best Lawyers in America publication as one of the country's top attorneys in Labor and Employment Law.

Lea Phillips Todd (B.A., English) has returned to school after several years of successful teaching in Nebraska and Florida. She completed her M.A. in Education, Culture, Curriculum and Change from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is currently working toward a Ph.D. in Education. She currently teaches undergraduate courses at UNC-CH. She and her husband, William C. Todd (UF 1997), have added two baby gators to the family: Scarlett is three years old and Mason is seven months.

continued on page 16

A simple man, **Erik van Brero** has led a life ripe with intrigue and adventure.

Born into a family with a grandfather who fed more than thirty families through the support of his soap business, and parents who helped shelter wounded troops during the Nazi invasions, van Brero was influenced by his surroundings to have a military career.

Van Brero toured in Vietnam as the Executive Officer at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. He saw the build up of Vietnam and helped start the process that brought American troops home.

Today, as a program manager and senior director with Nakuuruq Solutions, van Brero helps provide contractual services to various federal government agencies.

As an elementary student taking his first step on U.S. soil, van Brero was already at a disadvantage. He didn't speak English, but with his parents' help, he conquered the language in five months.

While at UF, van Brero experienced his fair share of mischief. As a senior Alpha Tau Omega fraternity brother, he helped initiate a young Steve Spurrier. Van Brero remembers being house manager and prodding Spurrier when he felt his charge wasn't working hard enough. At a Touchdown Club event in Washington, van Brero asked Spurrier, in his heavy Dutch accent, if he remembered him. "I remember that voice!" Spurrier replied.

Majoring in Political Science, van Brero hoped to become a lawyer, "but back in those days we still had the draft." He went into the ROTC to get his two years of service out of the way, "I went into the military... and 20 years later," he laughs, "I retired. So obviously I didn't make it to law school."

His time in the military brought him to Vietnam, where he met and befriended local nationals and attended some of their weddings.

Yet not all of his experiences were light-hearted. While camping in a war zone city, underground tunnels were found with blueprints of the field he was stationed six months earlier. The blueprints con-



tained "a picture of the officers' quarters... and in the room was my name—of all my roommates' names." The officers discovered that some of the local nationals that visited to shine the soldiers' shoes and ready their uniforms had collected the valuable information.

The military bug has also bitten his wife, Gay van Brero. An Army Civilian Employee, she currently works for the Garrison Commander of the Fort Myer Military Community, in Fort Myer, Virginia. The installation supports the Pentagon and Arlington National Cemetery and houses 43 general officers that work with the Pentagon, where she was stationed during the 9-11 attacks on New York and Washington.

"That plane came almost directly overhead before it went into the Pentagon," van Brero said. "She was working that day when it hit. The three-star general that was killed at the Pentagon was actually one of her residents."

A grandfather of 14, van Brero's life is now filled more with the laughter of family and friends rather than the harsh sounds of gunfire. He hopes that when all is said and done, he will have left his grandchildren with the simple message: Respect all others and you will be respected in return.

—April FitzGerald

2000s

Earl D. Fisher (B.A., Sociology, 2005) is an insurance agent with AllState property and casualty licensed in Florida and Georgia.

Jason Graham (B.A., Classical Studies, 2001) was recently promoted to regional marketing specialist for the Penn Mutual Florida regional office. He will cover the Central and Northern regions of Florida. He earned a Masters degree in Business Administration from the Rollins College Crummer School of Business in 2007.

Harrison Hove (B.A., Political Science, 2005) earned his American Meteorological Society certification in 2008, becoming the youngest certified broadcast meteorologist in the country. He now works as a meteorologist for the Ohio News Network based in Columbus, Ohio.

Stephen K. Rice (Ph.D., Sociology, 2006) is an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at Seattle University. His areas of focus include criminological theory, race and ethnicity, and emotions and crime—restorative justice, procedural justice, and defiance.



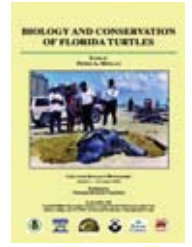
This February, **Justice Charles T. Wells** (1961, Political Science), dressed in his orange and blue Gator robe, was honored by the Florida Supreme Court in a ceremonial session in its Tallahassee courtroom. The Orlando native practiced law for many years in Florida before Governor Lawton Chiles appointed him to the court. He is best known for presiding over the Florida Supreme Court during the presidential election cases of 2000. He also confronted the terrorist attacks of 9-11 during his term as Chief Justice, and created the first comprehensive emergency management plan for Florida's state courts as a result. When asked about his colorful sartorial choice at his retirement ceremony, he joked that he felt that he could get away with wearing the robe on his last day: "What are they going to do, fire me?" According to his wife, Linda F. Wells, Esq. (also a 1961 CLAS alumna), there was much Gator talk during the retirement ceremony from the various speakers, former legislator Dudley Goodlette, 9th Circuit Court Chief Judge Belvin Perry, former Justice Stephen Grimes, Florida Bar President John G. White, and clerk Candy Messersmith (all of whom but Belvin are certified Gators).

alumni bookshelf

Death in a Prairie House: Frank Lloyd Wright and the Taliesin Murders. William R. Drennan, (English, 1966). Drennan spares no details in this true-crime mystery of scandal, murder, Wright's legendary career and tangled personal life.



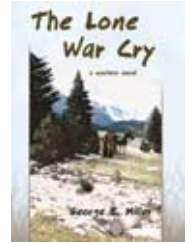
Biology and Conservation of Florida Turtles. Peter A. Meylan (Zoology, 1985), editor. This summary of all 25 Florida turtle species includes distributions, habitats, ecology, threats, status, and conservation information.



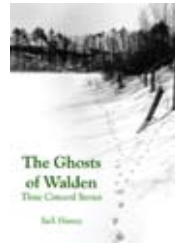
Born to Run. James M. Grippando (Political Science, 1982). When the vice president dies hunting Everglades alligators, a Miami lawyer must solve the suspected murder in this fast-paced novel.



The Lone War Cry: A Western Novel. George E. Miller (Political Science, 1972). Two warriors lead in the face of disease, famine, and constant battle. Meanwhile, adventurers travel the western U.S., seeking their fortunes.



The Ghosts of Walden. John P. Hussey (English, 1971). Three novellas relate the lives of writers Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Alcott, and denizens of 19th-century Concord, Massachusetts.



The Cracker Kitchen. Janis J. Owens (English, 1983). Humor, short stories, and cultural peculiarities intermingle with 150 recipes in this celebration of family, storytelling, and, of course, eating.



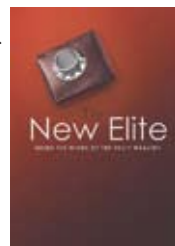
Skin of Sunset. David S. Johansson (English, 1986). Set partly in Gainesville, Florida, this novel of love, betrayal, sex, and rivalry explores the pursuit of happiness, revenge, and murder.



Anthropological Intelligence. David H. Price, (Anthropology, 1993). Through evidence of anthropologists' role in WWII, Price examines ethical issues raised when social scientists tackle national tasks.



The New Elite: Inside the Minds of the Truly Wealthy. Jim Taylor, Doug Harrison, and Stephen J. Kraus (Psychology, 1986). The wealthy are misunderstood, argue authors; assessing this group is indispensable to sales, product development, and advertising success.



The Transformation of the Supreme Court of Canada. Donald R. Songer (Political Science, 1967). Songer examines effects of institutional changes on the Court proceedings using in-depth interviews and analysis of Court decisions.





ARE YOU IN THE CIRCLE?



Membership Levels

Fellow recognizes donors for annual contributions of \$500-\$999.

Associate recognizes donors for annual contributions of \$1,000-\$2,499.

Advisory recognizes donors for annual contributions of \$2,500-\$4,999

Director recognizes donors for annual contributions of \$5,000-\$24,999.

Chair recognizes donors for annual contributions of \$25,000-\$49,999.

Tenured recognizes donors for annual contributions of more than \$50,000.

Membership is based on a fiscal-year calendar from July 1 to June 30.

To join the Dean's Circle or to make a contribution, please visit www.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/CLAS.asp or complete the form and mail to: College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, University of Florida Foundation, PO Box 14425, Gainesville FL 32604. For more information, please contact Christy Popwell or Melissa Tyrone in the CLAS Office of Development and Alumni Affairs: 352-392-5471, cpopwell@ufl.ufl.edu, mtyrone@ufl.ufl.edu.

Can't afford to join the Dean's Circle at this time? We still need your help, even if you only have a few dollars to share. Gifts of any size are greatly appreciated, and may be eligible for a charitable income tax deduction.

The Dean's Circle recognizes the generosity of alumni, friends, faculty and staff who make annual gifts of \$500 or more to the Dean's Fund for Excellence. As a member of the Dean's Circle, your investment helps meet the educational needs of our students; take advantage of extraordinary opportunities and meet new challenges in teaching, research and service. The Dean's Fund for Excellence provides the resources needed to: fund scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students; offer students and faculty seed grants for pursuing new research interests and other academic endeavors; provide scholarships and awards to students for travel abroad experiences and experiential learning; invest in new technologies and equipment; improve classrooms, labs and other facilities.

To demonstrate our appreciation, members receive invitations to events hosted by the Dean and on-campus lectures and symposiums. In addition, Dean's Circle members are recognized in *CLASnotes* magazine, the e-newsletter of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and online on the Dean's Circle honor roll.

Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____ My company matches gifts; form is enclosed.

Name(s) as you wish to be listed

If you have a degree from UF, please list degree and year

Preferred mailing address

City, State ZIP

Home telephone

Business telephone

E-mail

Company name

Please enclose a check made payable to the University of Florida Foundation, or submit your credit card information below.

Charge \$ _____

to: Mastercard Visa
 American Express Discover

Card number

Expiration date

Signature

Date

ASAI-CLASnotes

campus views



From January 10–21, Sharon Austin, Associate Professor of Political Science, accompanied 19 University of Florida students to Washington D.C. to participate in the Campaign 2008: Presidential Inauguration Seminar Series.

Sponsored by the Washington Center, this seminar examined the new administration of President Barack Obama and the role of the media in determining the outcome of the 2008 election and the candidates' use of it during their presidential campaigns, the political and policy changes that are likely to result from the 2008 election, the potential relationship between the new president and Congress, the role of the new vice-president during the next four years, the impact of this presidency on the war in Iraq and the war on terror, and the ability of the new presidential administration to address economic problems in America. Approximately 800 students from the U.S. and Guam and 100 professors participated in the program's activities.

During daily morning sessions, the participants listened to lectures by speakers such as Ambassador Hussain Haqqani of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, *CBS News* Correspondent Bob Schieffer, CNN Correspondent Dana Bash, Sam Donaldson of *ABC News*, former *ABC Nightline* host Ted Koppel, Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist Clarence Page, *FOX News* commentators Brett Bayer and Juan Williams, and *USA Today* columnists Cal Thomas and Bob Beckel. Two of the morning sessions were televised on CSPAN's *Washington Journal Live*. Students participated in brown bag discussions facilitated by Dr. Austin, and in the afternoons, they visited historic sites in the District of Columbia such as the Canadian Embassy, the Center for American

Politics, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Embassy, the Israeli Embassy, the Fund for Peace, the Newseum, the U.S. Capitol, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the White House.

At the end of the program, the students had the option of attending commemorative activities celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the inauguration of President Obama. "It was a very busy week because the students also visited college campuses and found out about internships and jobs in Washington," said Dr. Austin. "The organizers of the program wanted them to learn things that would change their lives forever. I think they accomplished their mission."

— Sharon Austin

Smocovitis Wishes Darwin Happy Birthday

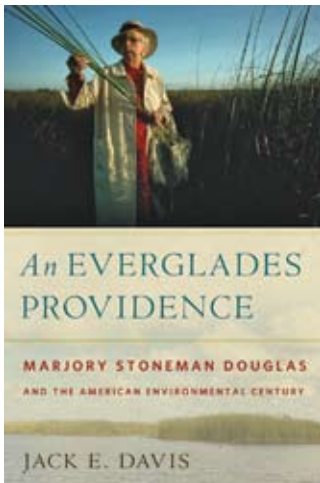
Betty Smocovitis, as a Phi Beta Kappa Society visiting scholar, has been visiting campuses throughout the U.S. to deliver lectures and seminars commemorating the bicentennial of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his *On the Origin of Species*—specifically on his theory in popular song and musical production.

Attendees to her lectures enjoyed a lighthearted look through song and film at Darwin and the issues and controversies regarding his theory of evolution. The lectures were designed to introduce a general audience to the life of Darwin, offer new insights into his life and work and provoke thought about the relationship between science and American popular culture. At many of the events, Darwin birthday cake was served.

This multidisciplinary scholar, who holds joint appointments in history and biology, capped off the academic year with yet another honor—she was selected as the 16th Distinguished Alumni Professor. She receives an award of \$20,000 from the UF Alumni Association and monetary support from the Office of Academic Affairs. Smocovitis' research focuses on the history, philosophy and sociology of the 20th-century biological sciences, especially evolutionary biology, systematics, ecology and genetics, as well as the history of American botany.



DARWIN—JULIA MARGARET CAMERON; BLUE-FOOTED BOOBY—FRANCIS BONTE



Jack E. Davis (History) has written the first comprehensive biography of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, whose life and writing were instrumental in the preservation of the Everglades. In *An Everglades Providence* he finds that the intertwined stories of Douglas's life and south Florida's wetlands illuminate the way Americans changed their views on ecology and conservation over the course of the twentieth century. While reconstructing this larger picture, Davis recounts the shifts in Douglas's own life and her instrumental role in the making of a positive wetland image, the creation of a national park, the expanding influence of ecological science, and the rise of the modern environmental movement.



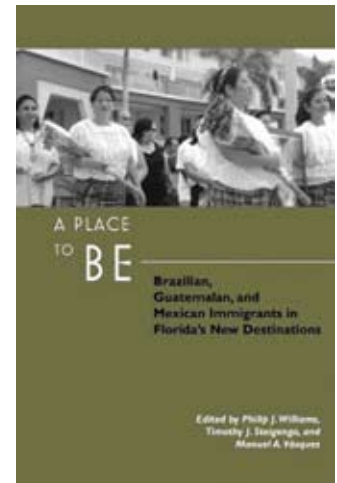
Benjamin Hebblethwaite (Languages, Literatures, and Cultures) was the principal subject matter expert and editor of the development team for Haitian Creole Express, a multimedia distance-learning course designed to provide U.S. Government employees and family members assigned to work in Haiti with basic familiarization with the Haitian Creole language and Haitian culture. The courses, based on the traditional Familiarization and Short Term (FAST) courses offered in the classroom at the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Institute, prepare the learner to get things done despite limited linguistic ability by making use of essential language and cultural knowledge.

Latina Activists across Borders



Women's Grassroots Organizing in Mexico and Texas
MILAGROS PEÑA

Milagros Peña, director of the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research and professor of sociology, was awarded a Distinguished Book award from the Latino/a section of the American Sociological Association (ASA), the premier organization in the field. Peña's book, *Latina Activists across Borders: Women's Grassroots Organizing in Mexico and Texas*. The ASA awards committee noted that they were impressed with the theoretical contributions, methodological rigor, and substantive findings on pastoral as well as secular feminist movements among Latinas in the border area.

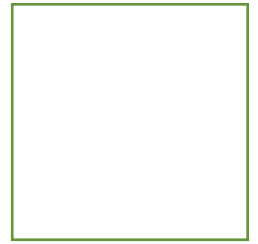


Manuel Vásquez (Religion) and Philip Williams (Political Science) are co-editors of *A Place to Be: Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican Immigrants in Florida's New Destinations*—the first book to explore migration dynamics and community among Brazilian, Guatemalan, and Mexican immigrants in America's new South. The authors adopt a fresh perspective to explore patterns of settlement in Florida, including the outlying areas of Miami and beyond. Stellar contributors from Latin America and the United States address the challenges faced by Latino immigrants, their cultural and religious practices, as well as the strategies used, as they move into areas experiencing recent large-scale immigration.

UF | UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

2014 Turlington Hall
PO Box 117300
Gainesville FL 32611-7300
editor@clas.ufl.edu
www.clas.ufl.edu



keeping up with CLAS

VISIT THE CLAS WEBSITE

www.clas.ufl.edu

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR RSS FEED

www.clas.ufl.edu/feed.xml

BECOME A FAN ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

www.snipurl.com/ufclas

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

www.twitter.com/CLASnotes

