

California University JOURNAL

VOLUME 18, NUMBER 6 APRIL 11, 2016

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Cal U students (from left) Brynna Shernoy, Justine Fartini, Adam Harris, Shannon Chitcoe, Haley Bashada and Jaquelyn Ouma enjoy a moment outside the University of Havana library. Faculty members on the trip were Sean Madden, Arcides Gonzalez, Candace Riley, David Lance and Karen Alston.

'Life-changing' Spring Break Takes Students to Cuba

Students and faculty can choose to spend spring break in a variety of ways.

Sophomore Brynna Shernoy opted for what she described as a "fantastic, life-changing experience."

An international studies major, Shernoy was one of six Cal U students and four faculty members who spent their break in Cuba.

History professor Dr. Sean Madden, director of the international studies program, organized the trip through Education First College Study Tours, which facilitates academic travel

programs around the world.

The trip took place just days before President Barack Obama visited Cuba, the first time a U.S. president had traveled to the island since 1928. While the president's trip was intended to forge a more open relationship between the United States and Cuba, the Cal U visit had a people-to-people focus.

"It was set up as a student-centered trip to provide a cultural and study-abroad experience," Madden said. "It wasn't a government or political trip. The idea was to connect American students with Cuban citizens."

The visit was associated with a three-credit online course, Special Problems in History (HIS 379), although the travelers were not required to enroll.

"I love to travel, and this was such a unique opportunity that not many U.S. citizens get," said Shernoy, a Mechanicsburg, Pa., resident and vice president of the Student Honors Advisory Board.

"You get away from stereotypes and your perceptions change when you actually go places instead of just

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Forest Service Honors Professor

The U.S. Forest Service has honored Dr. Carol Bocetti, a professor in the Department of Environmental and Biological Sciences, and her team with the 2016 Wings Across the Americas Bird Conservation Partnership Award.

The award was presented to the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, a partnership of public agencies and private organizations that has worked to save the endangered songbird species.

Bocetti and the team accepted the award March 16 in Pittsburgh, Pa., at

the 81st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

This is the second time that Bocetti has received a national award for her efforts on behalf of the Kirtland's warbler. She was honored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2011 for her work as recovery team leader, a role she has held since 2006.

She also received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2013 Recovery Champion award for her work with the

Delmarva Fox Squirrel Recovery Team. "It is very gratifying to be

recognized as a team," said Bocetti of the 2016 U.S. Forest Service award. "It has always been a collaborative effort."

The Kirtland's warbler, which breeds only in Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio, was one of the first species protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. In 2015, the population was estimated at 2,366 pairs, the largest ever recorded for the species and 10 times larger than when the species first was protected.

The songbird soon may be considered for "de-listing" as an endangered species, which means that emphasis would shift from recovery to sustainability.



Dr. Carol Bocetti

Strike A Spark Event Returns

The University's academic community showcases research, scholarship, creative activity and application at the second annual Strike a Spark conference, "Bridging Across Disciplines," from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. April 21 in the Convocation Center.

This year's theme focuses attention on the interconnectedness of creative, scholarly and entrepreneurial activities practiced throughout the University. It points out that members of the campus community regularly develop new ideas, methods, processes and products within and beyond their disciplines.

The conference will include presentations and posters prepared by faculty, by students or by faculty-student teams.

Patrick Mullen, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity in the University of Pittsburgh's Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, will present the keynote address following welcoming remarks at 9 a.m.

As part of this year's conference programming, the 10th annual Celebration of Student Writing will take place from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The celebration recognizes the work students put into writing personal essays, research papers, analyses, journalism articles and creative pieces.

University President Geraldine M. Jones urges the campus community to invite alumni and University friends, members of the local business community, teachers and students from area schools, and others who might be interested in Cal U's teaching and learning community.

"Our campus becomes more vibrant, our collective outlook more positive, when students and teachers are actively involved in scholarly, creative, and exploratory activities," the President said.

Conference organizer Dr. Gregg Gould, director of Cal U's Center for Undergraduate Research and professor in the Department of Chemistry and Physics, noted that all three, undergraduate colleges and the School of Graduate Studies will take part in the event.

"There was a great deal of energy throughout the Convocation Center during our inaugural conference, and we believe this year's event will sustain and build from that momentum," he said.

"The research projects they do for this conference further distinguish our students when they go out looking for a job."

For more information and a conference schedule, visit www.calu.edu.

Expert Discusses 'Different Era' in Politics

While the country is becoming more polarized as the 2016 presidential primary season continues, the months following November's general election may be even more intriguing, according to political expert Dr. Alan Abramowitz.

The professor of political science at Emory University spoke to an audience March 31 in Eberly Hall at a free event sponsored by the American Democracy Project at Cal U.

"This is a very unusual and interesting campaign, and clearly the stakes are higher because the direction of the country is going to be very different," Abramowitz said.

The next president may nominate a justice to the U.S. Supreme Court to fill the late Justice Antonin Scalia's seat. Also in November, 34 seats are up for re-election in the U.S. Senate — 24 currently held by Republicans, 10 by Democrats.

"The control of the Senate is very much at stake, and the presidential race will be telling."

Abramowitz said we are in a different era of electoral competition.

"The contrast between the two parties is enormous, and there's a really big difference in what Democrats and Republicans stand for these days," he said. "It's almost as if Republican and Democratic candidates are talking to two different countries, and in some ways they are."

Despite the differences, 40 of the 50 states have voted for the same party in the last four presidential elections.

"There are relatively few swing states lately, and we are an extremely partisan country today with many independent identifiers, but the large majority of them lean to a party," Abramowitz said. "Data shows the independent learners are closer partisan."

Abramowitz said Donald Trump may be nominated on the first ballot at the Republican National Convention, in July, or there could be the first multiple-ballot presidential convention since 1952.

"If this was a normal election, I would have expected a closely divided and strongly partisan electorate with very few swing voters," he said. "The reality is Donald Trump is not a typical presidential candidate and in many ways is quite different than any other presidential candidate from either major party in, well, ever."

He believes Hillary Clinton will maintain her lead in the Democratic race.

"It's going to be hard for Bernie Sanders to catch up because in the Democratic Party there are no winner-take-all primaries," he said of the race for the 2,383 delegates needed for nomination. "Hillary Clinton is still overwhelping in front, it's just not as prohibitive as it once was."

As for the general election Abramowitz cited Gallup polls of



Dr. Alan Abramowitz makes a point about the 2016 presidential election during an American Democracy Project event in Eberly Hall on March 31.

registered voters showing Clinton with a 9-point lead over Trump. She led in 32 of 33 polls.

"It's a long way from November, and we have not had the conventions yet or fall campaigns," Abramowitz cautioned. "But when the candidates are well known, the turnouts of the early polls tend to be pretty accurate."

"Hillary Clinton will have a significant advantage, and if it's those two it will certainly be interesting who they choose as running mates."

Coordinating the event was Dr. Melanie Blumberg, campus director of the American Democracy Project and a professor in the Department of History, Politics and Society.

'Communication Generation' Introduces Department

The Department of Communication, Design and Culture invites high school students, as well as the Cal U community, to discover

"Communication Generation" April 11-14 at various campus locations.

The weeklong series of free events showcases the department, which was created when the College of Liberal Arts reorganized this spring. In addition to communication studies, the department houses the graphic design, art history and philosophy programs.

Senior students in the PR Campaign Management course have organized three events to meet faculty, current students and graduates of the reorganized department:

Mix 'N' Net — 5 p.m. April 11, Kara Alumni House. Meet and interact with faculty in the Department of Communication, Design and Culture.

LinkedIn Live — 11 a.m. April 12, Morgan Hall auditorium. A panel of working professionals, including some Cal U alumni, discuss pathways to careers and life beyond the University.

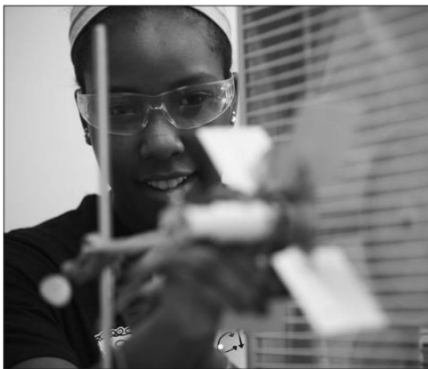
Keystone Keynote — 5 p.m. April 14, Keystone Hall, Room 205. Meet Steve Pearson, Class of 2010, who works as a graphic designer for USA Today.

Following the keynote event, students can network with alumni and professionals at a "Back to the Future" event at Lagerheads, in Coal Center.

All "Generation Communication" events are free, and both current and prospective Cal U students are encouraged to attend. No registration is required.

Learning Science and Having Fun

Raeynce Howard, a sophomore at Gateway High School in Monroeville, Pa., sets up her fan for the wind power competition at the 2016 Pennsylvania Science Olympiad's Southwest Regional event, which was held at Cal U on March 16. About 650 middle school and high school students from more than 40 Pennsylvania school districts participated in contests focused on Earth science, physics, engineering, biology, health science, computing science and chemistry. Winners of state contests will compete for scholarships and other prizes at the 2016 Science Olympiad National Tournament, which will take place May 18-21 at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, Wis.



Campus BRIEFS

Students Prepare for The Big Event

Cal U students will give back to the community during The Big Event, starting at 8 a.m. April 23.

The Big Event began at Texas A&M University in 1982, when student leaders saw a need to give back to the community that had long supported their university.

Cal U's Student Government Association and the Center for Civic Engagement have been teaming up since 2007 to lead students in their quest to lend a helping hand around California Borough.

Hundreds of Cal U student-volunteers will work at various community locations. They will perform a variety of tasks for local residents including window washing, painting and general yard work.

All volunteers are urged to sign up on OmgSync. For more information e-mail stugov@calu.edu or volunteer@calu.edu.

Event Focuses on Climate Change

What exactly is climate change? What are its dangers? And is there any room for optimism?

These questions and more will be addressed when the Cal U Faculty Climate Change Task Forces presents "Understanding Climate Change" from 7-9 p.m. April 19 in Duda Hall, Room 103.

The program will include a faculty panel, video presentation and discussions. Comprising the task force are Cal U faculty members Carol Bocetti, Melanie Blumberg, Chad Kauffman, Mario Majcen, Dawn Moeller and Michael Slaven.

For more information on this free event, e-mail moeller@calu.edu.

Young Anglers Ready for Festival

Cal U and the California community again will collaborate to present the 21st annual Pike Run Youth Fishing Festival, set for 8 a.m.-3 p.m. April 23 at Rotary Park, off Route 88 (Third Street) in California.

The free event is open to boys and girls ages 15 and younger. A parent, guardian or other responsible adult must accompany children younger than 13.

Registration begins at 7 a.m. Participants may bring their own fishing gear, or they can borrow equipment from a Cal U student volunteer as part of the state Fish and Boat Commission's Borrow-A-Rod-and-Reel program. Expert fishing guides will be on hand to answer questions or help young anglers learn how to catch trout.

The Pike Run Fishing Festival Committee will stock the stream with nearly 600 rainbow, brook, brown, and golden trout, some as long as 24 inches. As it has done in the past, the committee will provide entertainment such as games, activities, face painting, a bounce house, Happy the Clown with balloon animals, fishing contests and many other activities.

Vendors will sell bait, tackle, food and beverages at the park.

The festival closes with a weigh-in, prizes and the awarding of trophies.

Youngsters are encouraged to help stock the stream at 2 p.m. April 22, which is also Earth Day.

Dr. John Confer, faculty adviser for the event, said this successful collaboration between the University and the community has attracted 160 to 200 young participants in each of the past nine years.

"This event generates a lot of good exposure and positive feedback from the public. It really helps improve the town-gown relations," Confer said.

"Our students always give their best and learn from a real hands-on experience. The kids really make this event worth it."



Children can try their luck at landing a trophy fish and participate in many other family-friendly activities April 23 at the Pike Run Youth Fishing Festival.

The festival is organized and programmed by the University's parks and recreation management program, the Parks and Recreation Student Society, the Recreation Program Planning class, and the Cal U Eco-Learning Community, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, California Rotary, the

Borough of California and the California Borough Recreation Authority.

For more information, contact Dr. John Confer at 724-938-4211, confer@calu.edu; or visit the Pike Run Youth Fishing Festival website at workforce.calu.edu/confer/PKEYF/.

You can also search for "Annual Pike Run Youth Fishing Festival" on Facebook.com.

Film Writers to Discuss Their Craft

Alumnus Don Ammon '97 and Kristopher Veenis, co-writers of the film *Summerlings*, discuss screenwriting and the technical side of filmmaking at 3 p.m. April 13, in Eberly Hall Room 110.

Produced by Pittsburgh-based Sulliv Creek Productions and directed by Melissa Martin, *Summerlings* takes place in the 1980s as the steel industry falters in Pitsburgh, Pa.

The film's website describes it as "a coming-of-age drama" about two boys, Billy and Sid, who "discover a shared vulnerability and forge an unexpected friendship" amid the collapse of the industrial economy in a small Pennsylvania town.

The campus presentation is hosted by the English Department. According to faculty member Dr. Carole Waterhouse, Ammon and Veenis spent 10 years writing and rewriting their script.

The trailer was shown last fall at the Three Rivers Film Festival.

"This is a wonderful opportunity not only for students to learn more about the screenwriting and filmmaking process, but also to become more aware of the dedication involved in making a creative project a success," she said.

"People often see art as something spontaneous and free, but that meticulous attention to detail is also part of the process."

The free event is open to the Cal U community and the general public.

For more information, e-mail waterhouse@calu.edu.

Spring Break Trip Life-changing for Students

—Continued from page 1

reading about them."

Madden said the trip was highly structured because of strict Cuban tourism guidelines. But the students were able to communicate freely with the Cuban citizens they met as they participated in various community-based projects.

"We actually got to talk with and meet people from different walks of life and see and learn what they did," Sheryn explained.

"They were all very friendly and willing to share their stories with us. They had a lot to say."

A student in the Special Problems in History course, Sheryn has been leading online discussions and writing a paper that compares the students' expectations to what they actually saw.

"I feel that the more places I travel to, and the more interactions I have with different cultures and people, the better I'll be able to understand the world," she said.

Senior Haley Basha, a secondary education major with concentrations in

English and Spanish, already has given a presentation about her Cuban experience at Waynesburg High School, where she is a tutor in the Upward Bound program.

"I can always share what I experienced with my students and truly attest to what it's like (in Cuba), rather than just teaching from photos on the Internet," she said.

"Everything I saw and did there, such as practicing my Spanish, will help me with my teaching career and as a person."

Basha, of Belle Vernon, Pa., said she especially enjoyed *Muralandia*, a community art project in Havana.

Throughout the country, billboards and urban murals depict Cuban heroes or scenes from the Cuban revolution rather than advertising products or businesses, she explained.

"It was such a culturally authentic experience, because it was not like we were just tourists seeing some sights," said Basha, who is vice president of Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society.

"We got to really see these people's

struggles and pride. They were evolving, interesting, and it came across that they liked us."

A former standout pitcher for Cal U's softball team, Basha had the chance to pitch to a top Cuban baseball player when the Cal U group visited the city of Remedios.

"They all knew I played softball," she said with a smile. "I had not pitched since last spring, but he couldn't hit my curve ball."

Junior Shannon Chilcote also described the trip as life changing. She is majoring in Spanish, Arabic and international studies, and she enjoyed visiting some of Cuba's numerous biosphere reserves.

"The environment seemed very important to (the Cuban people), and I was surprised at how many plants and animals there were," she said.

"My goal was to pet all of the animals in Cuba, but sadly, I fell short of my goal."

Chilcote, an honors student from West Chester, Pa., hopes to join the Peace Corps after graduation.

"To see Cuba under communism and

before Obama went there was the coolest thing," she said.

"No other international traveling I do will be like that. I got to see a piece of history."

Madden, who says he has visited 30 countries, regularly arranges study-abroad trips and other events, often in collaboration with Elizabeth Bennelick, director of International Programming at Cal U.

"The Cal U students were stars," he said. "They were open-minded, engaged in everything with constant conversations and discussions."

"This was really the eye-opening kind of University experience that I'd hope we can provide at Cal U."

Preparations are under way for a 2017 spring break trip focusing on the Holocaust in Europe.

The travel itinerary includes stops in Berlin, Germany; Warsaw and Krakow, Poland; and Prague, Czech Republic. Travelers will visit historic sites including Auschwitz, the Brandenburger Gate,Checkpoint Charlie and the Berlin Wall. For information, e-mail Dr. Sean Madden at madden@calu.edu.

Hester's Hard Work Leads to Hall of Fame

Editor's Note: Cal U will hold its 21st annual Athletic Hall of Fame banquet at 5:30 p.m. April 22 in the Performance Center, inside the Natall Student Center. For reservations, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 724-938-4418.

As an educator, coach, and administrator, the late Eugene J. "Gene" Hester had a profound impact on countless Vulcan student-athletes during a diverse 30-year career at California.

After his honorable discharge from the military in 1946, he was hired at California State Teachers College. An assistant professor in the Health and Physical Education Department, he also became the assistant football and basketball coach. He started the golf program in 1947 and served for several seasons as head coach for tennis.

Eventually Hester was promoted to associate professor, became chair of his department, and served as athletic director and head coach for men's basketball.

As an assistant football coach, he worked extensively with the ends, helping the 1946 team produce an undefeated season (9-0) and win the conference championship under head coach Earle Bruce.

He also assisted the 1951 team, which went 7-2 overall under head coach Ted Nemeth and competed in the Pythian Bowl.

After four years as the assistant basketball coach, Hester replaced

longtime head coach Ed Cubbon and guided the Vulcans for 12 seasons.

He coached seven Cal U Hall of Fame inductees: Frank Bernadowski '62, Lloyd Gilmore '57, Roger Hatz '59, Jim Kennedy '53, Sebastian LoNigro '57, Dick Majernik '55, and Walt Sigut '64.

Majernik, who finished his playing career as the school's career-leading scorer with 1,317 points, recalled a conversation he had with Hester shortly after the close of Majernik's senior season.

"He reminded me of my accomplishments, thanked me for my contribution and told me that all he could give me was a Cal red-and-black blanket," Majernik said.

"I replied by telling him I could not have done any of this without his outstanding coaching abilities, and we just hugged each other.

"I still carry that Cal blanket in the trunk of my car for emergencies."

As California's athletic director from 1951-1968, Hester became actively involved with the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. He served as president of NAIJA District 18 for 10 years.

He also held a two-year term as president of the Pennsylvania State College Athletic Conference (later PSAC) and served five years on the conference's executive committee.

Replacing Hester as men's basketball coach following the 1961-1962 season was Myles Witchey, who coached under Hester's athletic directorship for six years.

"He was a good man. I always called him 'genial Gene Hester,' because of

how nice he was," said Witchey, who coached the Vulcans for 16 years.

"Never once did he ever raise his voice. He was just a super guy and a great man to work for."

An innovative teacher, Hester began a driver education program on campus in 1949 and helped to form a parking committee. In addition, he was a member of the Committee for the Admission of School of Teacher Education, as well as the School of Education Council.

Hester retired from California State College in spring 1976 and received emeritus professor status in June of that year.

According to Witchey, who nominated Hester for the Hall of Fame, Hester's work ethic equaled his polite demeanor.

"He put in so many long hours to do the many things he had to do to help the student-athletes," Witchey said. "Instead of complaining, he looked at his many duties as a goal he was determined to carry out.

"He loved California, and California University was his life. Gene Hester was special."

Longtime local journalist Ron Paglia believes Hester's courtesy and respect for others enhanced the public perception of Cal U. He recalled attending a testimonial dinner marking the end of Hester's term as athletic director in August 1968.

"We talked about how he would always go out of his way to give everyone (in the media) the red-carpet treatment when they were covering any athletic event at Cal U," Paglia said. "It didn't matter who you were, you always got a



As an educator, coach, and administrator, the late Eugene J. "Gene" Hester had a profound impact on countless Vulcan student-athletes during a diverse 30-year career at California. Among his many duties, Hester coached the Vulcans men's basketball team for 12 seasons.

fair shake from Gene Hester.

"He was a real gentleman and someone I had a great deal of respect for."



Accurate Archers

Members of the Cal U Archery Club recently competed in the U.S. Collegiate Archery Association (USCA) National Indoor Championships at Kentucky Christian University. Kansas Michaels finished fifth nationally in the Women's Compound division, and teammate McKenna Greene placed 22nd. In the Women's Bowhunter division, Heather Berkebile was 19th. Braidly Schmidt led the Cal U archers in the Men's Compound division by finishing 14th in the nation. Three Cal U men placed in the Men's Bowhunter division—Brody Hoobour (32nd), Logan Uhrvar (48th) and Alex Bowman (53rd). The Archery Club competes next in the USCA Regional Outdoor Championships, which will be held April 22-24, also at Kentucky Christian University.

'Meet the Coaches Night' Set April 22

California University's Football Alumni will host a "Meet the Coaches Night" from 7-10 p.m. April 22 at the California Hill Gun Club.

All football alumni and supporters of Vulcans football are welcome to attend and meet first-year head coach Gary Dunn '95, '97, as well as members of his coaching staff.

As a four-year starting center for the Vulcans, Dunn earned a *Football Gazette* All-American honorable mention in 1993 and was a first-team all-conference selection in 1994.

"The program is always open to our alumni," said Dunn, who brings more than 20 years of college coaching experience to his alma mater.

"This has been a dream of mine. We are going to move this program forward, doing things the right way."

Cost for the "Meet the Coaches" event is \$25, which includes food and beverages. Checks or money orders

should be made payable to "California University of Pennsylvania Football."

All are welcome to watch the football team close its spring practice session with the annual Spring Game at 1 p.m. April 23 at Adamson Stadium. Admission is free.

During the Spring Game, the annual DeMichela Award for leadership, spirit and hustle in spring practice will be presented, and the 2016 recruiting class will be introduced.

This award is named for alumnus Michael DeMichela '76, an all-conference tight end who was the driving force behind an annual alumni game that was contested for 30 years, from 1979-2008.

An alumni picnic will be held before the Spring Game, starting at 11 a.m. in the pavilions at Roadman Park.

For more information about "Meet the Coaches Night," call Cal U's Alumni Relations Office at 724-938-4418.

The California Journal is published by California University of Pennsylvania, a member of The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

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