One for the history books

Graduates reflect and plan for future endeavors at conclusion of GSU’s first dual commencement ceremonies

By Corrie Gray
Staff Writer

For the first time, Governors State University held two separate commencement ceremonies in which 2,400 students earned bachelors, master’s, and doctorate degrees.

“We call this ceremony commencement because you are at the beginning of a lifelong commitment to education. Let’s make sure that we educate the next generation for a new era of responsibility,” said GSU President, Dr. Elaine P. Maimon.

Honorary doctorate degrees were conferred to world-renowned glass artist, Charles Lotton in the morning and Emmy Award-winning producer and director, Laurens Grant at the afternoon ceremony.

Lotton encouraged the graduates to be fearless, unafraid of the future, and unafraid of their ability to achieve accomplishments.

“You only have to look up to God and ask him to help you,” he said. “Use him as a source of knowledge, wisdom, and power to carry you throughout your life.”

Student speakers Erin Fletcher of Richton Park and Fredi Parks from Park Forest, were also honored.

Fletcher energized the morning audience with her address. The mother of four graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies and was recently elected to a one year term as student trustee on GSU’s Board of Trustees.

Currently working towards a Master’s degree in Communications, Fletcher remembers coming to GSU as an adolescent, tagging along with her mother who worked as a secretary in the GSU library.

“She had to work one Saturday a month and she’d bring me along,” Fletcher said. “I found some of my best friends in the library shelves.”

While some graduates reflected on their time here at the GSU campus, others like Malik Matari, who earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice, were eagerly anticipating post graduation endeavors.

Matari says his education at GSU has prepared him well as he hopes to soon become a police officer.

Sevrin Konan, who received a Master’s degree in Accounting, will be traveling to China with Dr. Zhao and 20 other GSU students to complete an internship this summer.

Koran is presently considering several offers from various accounting firms and gives much of the credit to his professors.

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Take the cheap route
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Pierre all packed and ready to go
By Ashley Baker
Contributing Writer

Pierre the Penguin has packed his bags and is once again ready to go on summer vacation with you and your camera.

Pierre feels there is no way the summer 2012 can possibly top all of the fun that he had with his GSU friends last year when he went on a cruise, visited Paris and enjoyed chillin’ in the south burbs.

From now until September 14 you can invite Pierre the Penguin to party with you and your friends and family to ensure that our friend Pierre has a cooler summer than last year.

Take a picture of Pierre the Penguin while on vacation, partying with your bff, or even while hanging with grandma.

If you think you can ensure a great summer vacation with Pierre enter the Pierre the Penguin photo contest. See more details on how to hang out with Pierre on page 6.

“I had been out of school for 8 years, but I knew that the only way to excel in life was to seek an education. Education meant power.”

-Patricia Gaines
Mother-Daughter Graduates
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Do you like to write?

If you have an interest in writing, journalism, or design, the Phoenix has a place for you! The Phoenix Student Newspaper is looking for student contributors to help in making the Phoenix a success. If you are interested, please contact the Phoenix office at 708-534-4517 or phoenix@govst.edu.

The Phoenix & Governors State University’s student newspaper. It is published twice monthly during the fall and winter, and monthly during the spring/summer.

We welcome articles, suggestions, photos, commentary, cartoons, and letters to the editor on issues that concern you or the greater GSU population. We reserve the right to edit submissions for clarity, legality, and interest to our GSU readership. All submissions should be signed, and include the student, faculty, or staff member’s ID number, department, and phone number.

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Editorial: phoenix@govst.edu
Advertising: 708-534-3068

Editor-in-Chief: Danyale Lucado
Associate Editor: David Lipowski
Staff Writer: Cortney Gray
Business Manager: Lauren Ashley White
Faculty Advisor: Victoria Pierce

Contributors:
Marlene Lees
Melissa Hall
Anthony Ross
Ashley Baker

Reprint: Although the Phoenix staff works diligently to present a flawless publication to the GSU campus, occasionally, a mishap sneaks by our editorial watchdogs and finds its way onto our pages, as was the case in our April 18th story on best-selling author and journalist, Alex Kotlowitz.

We sincerely apologize for this misprint. The entire story on Mr. Kotlowitz’s contribution to the spring lecture series is featured below.

“Navigating Our Colliding Worlds” lecture series features well-known writer

By David Lipowski

OSU welcomed bestselling author and journalist Alex Kotlowitz to campus on April 11 as a part of the GSU Honors Program’s “Navigating Our Colliding Worlds” lecture series. The lecture was entitled: “Making Sense of the Madness: Reflections from Twenty Years of Reporting on Urban Violence.”

Kotlowitz is the recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award, the George Polk Award, the Thurgood Marshall Award, and the George Foster Peabody Award. He has been published in the New York Times Magazine and the Wall Street Journal, but he is best known for his book “There Are No Children Here,” which tells the true story of two children growing up in a gang-ridden neighborhood on Chicago’s West Side.

The lecture, which lasted from 5 to just after 7 p.m., was originally set for the Hall of Governors, but changed the night before the event to Sherman Recital Hall after the event generated a high amount of interest. The venue change turned out to be an exceptional idea, as GSU students, faculty, students of other universities, and members of the public filled the room.

Dr. Larry Levinson, director of the University Honors Program, and GSU President Dr. Elaine Maimon introduced Kotlowitz, citing how incredibly excited they were to have such an important speaker come to campus.

Kotlowitz spoke primarily about his work on the book “There Are No Children Here” and on the film “The Interrupters,” a documentary on urban violence and one group trying to stop it. He urged the audience to listen to, believe, and repeat the stories, both good and bad, coming out of the urban neighborhoods where violence is a growing problem.

After his presentation, a brief Q&A session took place. A number of those in attendance complimented Kotlowitz for the work he was doing. Others told their own stories of growing up in neighborhoods where violence was a problem.

The next lecture in the series are “Urban School Reform: the State of the Debate” by Dr. Charles Payne, taking place on Wednesday, April 18, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Hall of Honors. It is followed by “Riding the Cultural Revolution: Lessons From Chicago’s Southland” by Anna Carvalho on April 25, also from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Hall of Honors.

Both events are free and open to the public.

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Family Affair: mother daughter cross stage together

By Corrie Gray
Staff Writer

This year’s commencement was especially exciting for the Gaines family who celebrated the accomplishment of not one, but two GSU degrees.

Patricia Gaines, 41, of Richton Park received a master’s degree in Media Communications and her daughter Crystal Gaines, 24, of Chicago received her bachelor’s degree in Communications.

While Crystal plans to continue at GSU as a graduate student in the fall, Patricia has plans of seeking a PhD. in the very near future.

“This whole journey was filled with blood sweat and tears, but the entire process has empowered me to keep on going,” said Patricia. After giving birth to Crystal at 16 years of age, Patricia was forced to grow up fast.

“My number one focus was always my children. Even though my life was totally thrown off balance, I knew I had to push forward.” Patricia said. “My children were told, constantly, from the time they could speak, that education is an important factor and you must go to college.”

In 1996, Patricia returned to school and began taking classes at South Suburban College. She then went to Moraine Valley where she obtained an Associates in Applied Science degree before transferring to GSU to complete a four year degree in English.

“I had been out of school for 8 years, but I knew that the only way to excel in life was to seek an education. Education meant power,” she said.

Patricia says that she is extremely proud of her children. Crystal, who has her own children, says she now understands the tremendous sacrifices made by her mom so that her and her sister’s futures could be brighter.

Crystal, an independent hip hop recording artist, performs all over Chicago, Memphis, Atlanta, and Mississippi. She goes by the name of Lady Pharoh and is currently working on her third project with London’s very own Amon Tobin.

While Patricia supports all of her endeavors, Crystal says that her mother was most adamant about her getting an education. Even as a teen mom, Patricia understood the value of providing opportunities for a solid academic foundation for her children.

Crystal recalls her mother’s early struggles and acknowledged that she truly admires her.

“I am so proud of my mother because she has endured a lot over the years. As a single mother, she worked hard to ensure that my sister and I were taken care of,” Crystal said.

“She went to Moraine Valley part time for 9 years while working 3 jobs to get her associates degree. That is how much education means to her.”

She added, “Graduating with my mother was an honor and a privilege. It really meant a lot to me. I actually took two extra classes just so that I would be able to walk with her.

Patricia admits that she often felt pressured to perform well and set an example for her children because her parents had been great role models for her.

She credits her parents for sticking with her through thick and thin and helping her to persevere.

“Overall, I feel blessed that I have made it this far,” Patricia said. “Nothing would be possible if it were not for the grace of God, my parents, a host of beautiful friends, and the wonderful staff, stemming from SSC, MVCC, and GSU. I salute you all for a job well done!”
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* FEATURING *

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Affordable bus rides save your summer roadtrip plans from spiked airfares and gas prices

By Melissa Hall
Contributing Writer

Looking to get out of town this summer on a small budget? Look no further than Megabus. Megabus offers a cheap alternative to flying or driving, with bus fares as low as $1—and no that is not a typo.

Megabus might just be the ticket for anyone wondering how they could possibly afford a roadtrip this summer with gas prices hovering around $4 a gallon.

According to Megabus.com, Megabus offers customers “safe, convenient, low cost, daily express bus service in the U.S. and Canada.” Megabus serves cities in the eastern half of the United States, as well as the Ontario and Quebec provinces in Canada.

Megabus does not offer discounts to college students. However, because their rates are already so low, Megabus is a great transportation option for college students. Jaclyn Hall, a 2010 graduate of Saint Xavier University in Chicago used Megabus during her college years. She cites affordability and the chance to see new places as perks of riding a Megabus.

“If you’re a college student it’s a good way to get around because it’s cheap and you can see new places,” says Hall. “It’s a good scenic ride if you go during the day.”

While Megabus does not offer connecting service between Megabus routes, riders can easily plan connecting trips to reach cities not available from their home city.

As an example, a passenger who wants to get from Chicago to Atlanta can take a Megabus from Chicago to Nashville, Tenn. followed by a Megabus from Nashville to Atlanta. Megabus suggests that passengers allow extra time between bus rides, in case there are any delays in service.

Those who are fortunate enough to travel overseas to Great Britain this summer can also take advantage of Megabus’ bargains. Megabus offers low cost service throughout Scotland, England, and Wales. The company has also added train service to their British operations under the name Megatrain, and an integrated bus and train service called Megabus Plus.

Bus fares can be purchased through Megabus’ website, www.megabus.com. Megabus buses offer amenities such as reclining seats, on-board restroom facilities, and Wi-Fi.

While food and beverages are not provided to passengers, Megabus does allow for passengers to bring food and beverages on board. Passengers are allowed to bring one piece of luggage and one small carry-on item with on a Megabus.

So pack your bags, bypass the high priced gas pumps and head out for summer vacation with Megabus.

Crossword Solution from page 8

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Pickup Pierre

Continued from Pg. 1

Pick up Pierre the Penguin from the Office of Marketing and Communications (C1310). Invite Pierre out with you for a trip or just a day of fun, take a photo of Pierre at the event and e-mail the submission to gsuview@govst.edu by September 14.

All entries must include your name, phone, email, and GSU status (student, faculty or staff). Three photos maximum per person and no computer generated or manipulated are allowed. A signed photo release form is needed if Pierre the Penguin is photographed with a person or student.

In late September there will be one grand prize winner announced along with two runners up to win cool prizes and awesome GSU apparel.
Table tennis team does it again

By Marlene Lees
Contributing Writer

Another great performance by the GSU Table Tennis Team! In a three-day intense competition April 13, 14 and 15, in Plano, Texas, 158 schools battled to win in the 2012 College Table Tennis National Championships.

The GSU co-ed team took fourth place in 2011 at the National Collegiate Table Tennis Association tournament in Rochester, Minnesota. In 2010, the women’s team took 11th Place at the NCTTA national championship competition in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

The men’s team players are: Captain Wenjie “Neo” Nie in the MBA Program/Finance, Yuefan “Penn” Lin, MBA Program, Lishun “Leeson” Lu, in Business Administration, Yuanfei “Vergil” Cai in the MBA Program, and Larry Webster, Psychology Major.

The women’s team players are: Captain Jie “Jassie” Wang, in the MBA Program, Jing “Jackie” He in the MS Accounting Program, Xue Hong “Carmen” Chen in the MS Accounting Program, Ting “Lynette” Li in the MBA Program, and Ruizi “Yvonne” Fong in the MS Accounting Program.

A year of practicing and competing goes into making it to the National Championship playoffs. It’s hard to acknowledge all the effort and dedication that creates success. Congratulations to our team and Coach TJ Wang.

Summertime Movie Review: Men in Black III

Agents J & K back to blast alien refugees

By Anthony Ross
Contributing Writer

Fifteen years ago the world was exposed to eerie fact that alien life forms live in our midst. Actually they are a part of our everyday lives masquerading as sports stars, models, celebrities, politicians - some are even teaching classes in our educational systems. Just like the many government agencies that maintain law and order for humans there is an agency that has the sole responsibility of maintaining law and order among the alien segment of our population “THE MEN IN BLACK.”

Since the first time this organization was introduced in the original 1997 “Men In Black” film, Kay, Jay, and Zed bolted on the scene policing Sephlapoids, Archillians, Ceronians and 1,500 other aliens and intergalactic refugees; some wielding weapons with reverberating carbonized mutating capacities that can annihilate and disintegrate with one blast of a laser burst.

What is so amazing is all of this is taking place right in plain sight at 504 Battery Drive. Sound strange? Not if you have had the opportunity to see any of the MIB series directed by Barry Sonnenfeld and produced by Steven Spielberg.

MIB III is currently playing in theatres around the world to some pretty decent reviews and some have given the latest offering great reviews. I must admit that I wasn’t very impressed with the latest offering as I was with the initial film. Reason being is that in the first MIB there was a very good story line that had a fresh perspective on alien human encounters.

While it was packed with action and quick dialogue this first episode had promise that left the viewer wanting to see more and the writers left the ending opened so a sequel and or sequels was inevitable.

Thanks to technological advances in graphics and special effects the viewer has a sense that this fanatical presentation mirrors reality as evidenced by Will Smith’s son, actor Jaden Smith, recent question to President Obama, “President Obama what about the aliens?” The president said he could neither confirm nor deny their existence.

It looks like Hollywood is capitalizing and this trend of alien invasions with the new series on television “The Fallen Sky,” and movies like “Battle L.A.” and this genre is maintaining if not gaining momentum. So MIB III may very well not be the last of what we’ll see of these installment. In fact I wouldn’t be at all surprised if in the near future there will be a MIB sequel starring Will and Jaden Smith.

My feeling on this latest installment is that Josh Brolin’s portrayal of the young Kay is amazingly realistic and mirrors the audience’s vision of what Kay may have been like at 28 or 29 years old. The chemistry he shared with Jay was okay. My concern was with the back story and how it did not live up to my expectations at points. And before we get to the crisis the story seems to become very slow.

Overall it was a very credible performance playing the role of young Kay and I can see a future in this saga of MIB drawing moviegoers for years to come.
Recreation / Fitness Center hours
Monday - Friday: 6 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday: Noon - 3 p.m.

The Phoenix welcomes letters to the editor and/or editorials. Letters can be submitted to phoenix@govst.edu. Submissions must include your name and a contact number or email address by which you can be reached.

Please be advised that letters may be edited for space and content.

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GSU Happenings

Donate to the Student Food Pantry
June 6 and 7
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Hall of Governors

Recreation, Fitness, and Nutrition Demonstrations
June 6 and 7
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Hall of Governors
Sponsored by Student Life

Pre-K Screening/Registration/Tours
June 6, 7, 12, 13
9 a.m. to 2
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Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
Thursdays
6 - 7 p.m.
A2150

Meditation Thursdays
2:30 p.m.
D 34150
Free

Solution on Pg. 6

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