Who's Who at GSU

GSU Professor Adapts Novel and Directs Feature

‘House of Leaves’ Book Review

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GSU’s Helps Local Business to Bloom

By Bob Rakstang

Assistant Director, CenterPoint

Bruce and Lee Ann Bultema had an exceptional spring season at their Beecher nursery, Windmill Acres. The plants they nurtured throughout the winter flew off the greenhouse shelves as customers from Kankakee to Orland Park and from Crown Point to Joliet sought both popular and hard-to-find bedding plants for their homes.

As business bloomed, the duo recognized the need to expand and visited the CenterPoint for Entrepreneurs Illinois Small Business Development Center at Governors State University seeking funding to help double their greenhouse space. As the CenterPoint SBDC counselors evaluated the business' financial information, they discovered that the Bultemas were having difficulty creating their financial statements.

A closer look revealed that the entrepreneurs had always managed their books by hand and weren’t able to successfully transfer the records into QuickBooks accounting software. In fact, the Bultemas didn’t know quite how their finances looked for the year.

At the same time, Dr. Tony Fontana, accounting professor in the university’s College of Business and Public Administration, approached the center when looking for a real-life project to use for his Cost Accounting class. Fontana had contacted CenterPoint SBDC on several previous occasions looking for projects for his upper level classes, and had become a strong proponent of the connection between CenterPoint and the college.

“The CenterPoint SBDC is a vital resource for the faculty and students of the business school. We’ve had great success exposing students to real-life experiences through collaboration with the center,” Fontana said.

“They learn what accountants really do for their clients,” he continued. “In the past, some students have even found jobs through these projects. With CenterPoint’s reach in the community and their willingness to assist during the project, we’ve always had a great experience for the students and real value for the clients.”

GSU students Babatunde Akintayo and Naveed Karim, with Fontana’s help, investigated and identified some of the accounting issues and even offered helpful hints on how operate the business more efficiently.

They helped the Bultima’s make sense of QuickBooks and set up a system for costing inventory – which is difficult due to the long growing season and the somewhat hidden costs of growing product.

“It was exciting to really help a business by applying what we had learned in class. I really understand some of the accounting issues better because of the project,” said Babatunde.

With their financial statements up to date, the CenterPoint SBDC counselors were able to prepare the Bultema’s to approach a bank for financing.

“The combination of CenterPoint SBDC’s resources and the assistance from Dr. Fontana’s students really helped us get a handle on our business. I’d still be trying to make sense of our finances if it wasn’t for them,” noted Bruce Bultema.

For more information on the CenterPoint Illinois SBDC free business consulting services, call (708) 534-4929 or visit www.centerpointgsu.com.

‘String Theory’ an Attractive Addition to GSU

By Barbara Hogu

Contributing Writer

A new installation based on a grid as its foundation has been added to the GSU art gallery. The grid has been used as the foundation of many images in painting, weaving, design, and sculpture just to mention a few art mediums.

Now in this wonderful new addition by Harley J. McDaniel, the grid has been used as the foundation for knotted strings to hang and flow through the movements of air currents and persons going through it. The installation, titled “String Theory,” was created from “over seven miles of bailing twine to create a monumental, transparent, extremely tactful half-cube shaped installation,” stated McDaniel in his artist statement.

“My work’s primary focus is to enhance the common, banal, abundant, or mundane through either a simplification of complicated thoughts, feelings, and or issues into basic archetypal forms or an exaggeration of a basic idea,” McDaniel said.

The multiplicity of hanging strings to create a string laced environment confirms McDaniel’s concept of “an exaggeration of a basic idea,” a knotted hanging string.

To move through the string maze is to be confronted with barriers that are sleek, slim, and stifling. Michael Costanza, the GSU Gallery Coordinator, knows how it feels. He has moved through it numerous times, detangling and arranging the strings after children and adults have wandered through it for the ultimate experience beyond viewing it.

See ‘String Theory’ page 3
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GSU: New Place, Fast Pace

By Sarah Sihlan
Editor

It's true. I am a certified book nut. I love to read. But usually, during the school year, I don't get to do much leisure reading. So I was excited that during the past two weeks between Spring/Summer and Fall term, I was able to read four novels I had been eyeing for the past few months.

One of my favorite authors is Janet Evanovich. Her books are laugh-out-loud funny, and her Stephanie Plum novels always bring a smile to my face. Over the break, I read two more of her novels. But I was also fortunate to find that she had written an article for the Chicago Tribune last Sunday.

She wrote about how she and her daughter, Alex, had found a shared passion — not for reading or writing — but rather, for NASCAR. Hard to believe, right? Well, maybe not.

The fast-paced sport, complete with the smells of exhaust, the sounds of the engines, the 10-second pit changes, thousands of people on their feet cheering for their favorite driver, and the ever-popular offerings of hot dogs, funnel cakes and beer makes a day at the speedway an appealing one. I can certainly see why Ms. Evanovich and her daughter love it.

As we start a new term at Governors State University, I was thinking that for those students who are new on campus, it might feel a bit like a day at the races. You're not yet familiar with the landscape of GSU, you're not sure where your classes are. You may not know anyone else. You've never written a paper longer than three pages and now you're expected to write 10. It can all be a tad overwhelming.

And while you're trying to adjust to a new setting and a new schedule, you also are balancing family and personal responsibilities and obligations. Yes, the new term is a lot like a day of NASCAR. You're rushing around, looking for familiar faces, hoping you don't get run over by a difficult assignment or pushed into the wall by a seemingly impossible Physics test.

But the first term of a new year is also a chance for new beginnings. It's a chance for the No. 48 car to start the race in the No. 1 spot. As we move into the Fall 2008 term, I invite any student — new or returning — to take the time to enjoy it. Though it may be overwhelming and hectic at times, it is nonetheless a fantastic opportunity to learn something new, to meet new friends and to do something positive for yourself.

And if you get lost, you can always pop into the Phoenix office in E1500 for directions — because unlike NASCAR, GSU's campus is not just a circular track. I also hope you'll consider contributing to the paper, either through a letter to the editor or by sharing story ideas and suggestions. I always love hearing from YOU!!

So ladies and gentlemen, START YOUR ENGINES! And welcome to the 2008-2009 school year... it's going to be a great ride!
McDaniel's string maze.

GSU Gallery Coordinator, moves through Phoenix

Photo by: Barbara Hogu

McDaniel has created numerous installations. Some are posted on his Web site along with his other creative works. You can see more of his work at http://web.mac.com/harleymcdaniel/Web/Site/home.html.

Who's Who at GSU?

Dr. Katherine Helm

Outreach Counselor

By Julie Widicki

Contributing Writer

Dr. Katherine Helm, Outreach Counselor at Governors State University (GSU), obtained her undergraduate degree from University of Illinois and her Doctorate from Southern Illinois University. Influenced by her father, who was a psychologist, and her many experiences working at hospitals and in community health, Helm chose to teach and practice psychology.

She currently teaches psychology at Lewis University and is a psychologist in the counseling center at GSU. Her primary duties include counseling GSU students and advising interns in the counseling center.

Her advice to GSU students is to "use the services available to them." "The [counseling] office here is more than willing to help students get through their issues," Dr. Helm says. Counseling issues range from students having difficulty adjusting to GSU to students who are struggling with grief or divorce.

There are no fees for counseling, as GSU students are already paying for these counseling services as part of their tuition.

Other services provided by the counseling center include couples theory, individual counseling sessions, and career counseling.

Career counseling helps students who are having difficulty deciding on a career. According to Dr. Helm, students will complete a self exploration process, led by the counselor, to help them figure out their career goals. They also complete a career inventory.

The inventories are short tests that ask about your interests and factors that you look for in a job. Often times, the counseling center will work with career services to help find careers of interest.

The counseling centers' latest work includes one-hour outreach sessions. Recent sessions have dealt with test anxiety, stress management, and personal relationships.

In the future, they hope to form some GSU support groups. Look for announcements this fall of more outreach sessions on the GSU TV's, in The Phoenix, and through the GSU View (available online at www.govt.edu).

Helm's largest challenge is not being able to see as many students as she would like, simply due to time constraints. However, this doesn't change how she feels about her role at GSU.

"I really enjoy working with the student population at GSU," she says. "They are very diverse, and the students overcome so much to come to school. I am in constant admiration."

When Helm is not teaching or counseling, she enjoys spending time with family and friends. Currently she is training for the Chicago Sprint Triathlon. Her true passion is exploring all the great restaurants the Chicagoland area. Her favorite two restaurants are 'Vong's Tai Kitchen' and 'Ras Duchen' Ethiopian restaurant.

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(Various assorted Garage Sale stuff, too)
Nearing poetry with Chicago Heights

By Archie Cocke
Photos by Dirk Fletcher

It's not enough to possess good production gear.
It's not enough to have resources.
At some point, leadership needs to lead.
After years of effort, Governors State University has been accredited to award a Master of Fine Arts degree in Independent Film and Digital Imaging. This is a terminal degree that befits the university’s motto: Empower yourself.
The MFA program is focused in such a way that fosters true independence for a filmmaker to see a project through from concept to distribution. Professor Dan Nearing is taking this pioneering spirit to heart and is leading by example. He is creating a feature film using extremely limited resources. He is accomplishing this by using every trick and secret known to established filmmakers and using the entire production process as a teaching opportunity. The film features a cast and crew comprised of GSU students and faculty and local talent.

Instead of paying for the rights to adapt a current novel, Nearing took Sherwood Anderson's novel, Winesburg, Ohio, and adapted it as a screenplay. Winesburg, Ohio was originally published in 1919, so the copyright has moved to public domain. The adaptation is simply titled Chicago Heights.

The film is a digital feature, which in irony means there is no celluloid used to create imagery. Nearing and producer, professor Sang Hoon Lee carefully chose a camera to fit their situation and meet their goals. The winning camera was the Sony EX-1, a high definition camera weighing in at 5.3 pounds. The camera is a unique instrument that offers some of the best features for sound and video for a camera you can find on the market for less than $20,000. Some of the test footage screened by myself and other faculty and staff has proved to be quite breathtaking. One of the few shortcomings of the Sony camera is a shallower color space when compared to other premium cameras and formats. Nearing’s solution? Shoot in black and white. Simple. Brilliant.

Production on Chicago Heights wrapped in early August. Post production is set to get underway with editing, scoring and audio sweetening. Nearing and team hope to continue the learning process through the post process and beyond. When the film is completed, the goal is to get it screened at key film festivals, allowing the students to gain real world insights far beyond just pointing and shooting a camera.

Will Chicago Heights be accepted by Sundance and distributed by Sony Pictures Classics? Will the film be any good? Time will tell. The feeling in my gut says it will be fantastic. Whatever the future brings for the film, the effort made by the cast and crew will be seen by the community through screenings and a revitalized buzz about GSU.

True learning happens through doing. This feature has created many opportunities for the greater good of students, GSU and the surrounding communities.

For more information about Chicago Heights, visit Dan Nearing’s website: www.923Films.com.

In 1919, Hart Crane said of Sherwood Anderson’s Winesburg, Ohio: “America should read this book on her knees. It is an important chapter in the Bible of her consciousness.”

Anderson’s modular novel—a collection of interconnected short stories—remains one of the highest regarded works of American literature to this day, yet has proved resistant to adaptation as a mainstream Hollywood feature. That resistance continues in Chicago Heights, a stunningly vivid black and white, experimental, non-linear interpretation of the antique narrative. The film takes the originally all-white, century-old rural stories and tells them with a predominantly African American cast in contemporary south Chicago, celebrating the universal power of the source while playing on its anachronisms.

Nathan Walker is a young man living in Chicago Heights, Illinois, many miles south of downtown Chicago. He finds himself

Dan Nearing adapted the novel into a screenplay and is directing the feature.

photography

photography
Horm has been chosen as Director of Photography, seen above and left with the new Sony EX-1 XDcam HD camera.

Every day in the lives of his neighbors, they're polite, friendly, down-to-earth people. But in any community, individuals have their own private passions that their neighbors will never know. Each has a dark secret, a disappointed dream, a fervent hope, a spirit-breaking fear. We accompany Nathan while he comes of age and observe him as the layers fall away from this seemingly random array of ordinary people who, below their practiced, Christian surfaces, are extraordinarily human.

Chicago Heights is a unified collection of miniature portraits — vignettes that capture the moments of joy and tragedy that will mark an individual life.
Post Office Hosts Passport Booth

By Sarah Silhan
Editor

Anyone looking to travel to Canada or Mexico will have a harder time now that new Department of Homeland Security restrictions are in place. The Study Abroad Office and Governors State University (GSU) are hoping to make that a little easier by hosting a passport fair today (Sept. 3) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Officials at the Park Forest Post Office thought it would be beneficial to get GSU students more involved in the "international experiences" and hopes the Passport Fair will help students who are looking to study or just travel abroad.

The Postmaster also hopes that the fair will increase interest in international and globalization issues, as well as offer a convenience to students. A booth will be set up at the University to allow students to apply for U.S. Passports.

Those wishing to obtain a passport need to bring proof of U.S. citizenship such as a birth certificate or previous passport, a valid state or government photo ID, a passport application and checks or money orders for the passport fees. Passport applications will be available at the event, but they are also on the Web or at your local post office.

Homeland Security has changed regulations as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) so that any person traveling outside the United States needs a passport. This new rule applies to travelers who vacation on cruises to Bermuda or the Caribbean, as well as travelers who fly into Canada or Mexico.

According to the U.S. Department of State Web site, beginning June 1, 2009, the U.S. government will implement the full requirements of the land and sea phase of WHTI. The proposed rules require most U.S. citizens entering the United States at sea or land ports of entry to have a passport, passport card, or WHTI-compliant document.

For a list of these documents, as well as passport application and fee information, visit the International Travel section of www.travel.state.gov/travel.
‘House of Leaves’

By Michelle Hulett
Staff Writer

Mark Danielewski’s novel, “House of Leaves,” begins with the mysterious death of Zampano. While sorting through his apartment, Johnny Truant stumbles across a chest full of papers. As he takes on the task of putting the papers together, he is pulled into a destructive quest for the house on Ash Tree Lane and the family who lived there.

Opening Danielewski’s book is like stepping into another world. The novel itself, shifting and changing at every page, mirrors the vast abyss that takes over the house on Ash Tree Lane. Mimicking the changing relationships between the characters, the novel engrosses the reader in a struggle for understanding. With each turn of the page, the reader comes closer to the truth, only to have it uprooted and redefined with another turn of the page.

Focusing around a seemingly simple story of the house on Ash Tree Lane and the family within it, “House of Leaves” is anything but simple. It harnesses the individual reader’s imagination and personal experiences, creating an individualized truth for each reader. Through this novel, Danielewski creates endless possibilities for interpretation with each new obstacle. Zampano, a silent but vital character, explains that “all stories are necessarily personal” (115). There are no right answers.

“House of Leaves” is an im-mappable maze of contrasting, and often competing, characters, fonts, footnotes, letters, and documents. When checked, many footnotes are found to be completely fictitious while others are rooted in fact, or entirely factual. The reader is then left to question what is real and what is not.

But I am not entirely sure it matters what is fact and what is fiction. It may all simply be a part of the maze, leading the reader on a wild goose chase.

However, each word, character, footnote and even text color is painstakingly designed to create this textual labyrinth. Even the book’s cover is exactly one quarter-inch shorter than the pages it houses, mimicking the house itself.

Danielewski also takes great care in assuring that even the smallest characters are an integral part of the novel. Because none of the characters are truly given a first-person account, they provide yet another maze. The reader is never allowed to come within arm’s-length of the characters, allowing Danielewski to create levels upon levels of storytelling.

This novel not only explores the written word, it explores the world. Danielewski also takes great care in assuring that even the smallest characters are an integral part of the novel. Because none of the characters are truly given a first-person account, they provide yet another maze. The reader is never allowed to come within arm’s-length of the characters, allowing Danielewski to create levels upon levels of storytelling.

In the winter constellation, Taurus, is a group of stars known as the Pleiades, or the Seven Sisters. According to Greek mythology, there were seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione. They were called the Pleiades, because they turned themselves into stars to save them from the pursuing Orion and lifted them into the sky, where they became stars. Merope, the youngest sister, married Sisyphus, who is described in the Iliad as a “most crafty of men.” Her marrying a mortal offended the family. In her shame, Merope hid herself. Hence, oftentimes, when people have looked at the Pleiades, they have seen only six stars.

Many astronomers suspect that this reflects something about the stars themselves. The star lore of some societies refers to the Pleiades as being six — for example, certain South American tribes call the Pleiades Cepajal, “the Six Stars” — but that of others refers to them as seven or formerly seven.

Through a telescope, many more than six stars can be seen. Some people, with good eyesight and good viewing conditions, can see nine stars with the naked eye. Astronomically speaking, the stars in the Pleiades are an "open cluster," an unevenly shaped group of stars lying in the plane of the galaxy. The stars don’t just appear to be close together, as the stars in the Big Dipper do. Some of the stars in the Big Dipper are much farther away than others, while all of the stars in the Pleiades are about 400 light years away and spread out just 13 light years of space. There are 700 stars in the Pleiades.

Not long after the invention of the telescope, J. B. Riccioli, in Almagestum Novum, recorded nine of the Pleiades as being named after Atlas and Pleione and their daughters. Riccioli supplied the names for many of the features on the moon. He’s also remembered for opposing Galileo’s contention that the earth revolves around the sun.) Ironically, the star called Merope is one of the brightest stars. It is about two and a half times as bright as the sun, while all of the stars in the Pleiades are about 400 light years away and spread out just 13 light years of space. There are 700 stars in the Pleiades.

The Pleiades are a very young only 115 million years old. Contradict that with the age of the Earth at 4.5 billion years. The cloud glows because it is reflecting the light of the stars within it. It is blue for basically the same reason the sky is blue. The particles in the cloud scatter blue towards us better than they scatter the other, longer wavelength colors. There is evidence that the missing Pleiad is the star named after Pleione, the mother after whom the Pleiades are named. William H. Pickering believed Pleione was the missing Pleiad because an analysis of the light of Pleione suggested a similarity to a star called P Cygni, a former nova. A nova is a star that temporarily brightens as it expels a small fraction of its mass. Such a brightening would last at most a year, not long enough to be incorporated into the lore of any society. Interestingly, the P Cygni characteristics of Pleione’s light later disappeared. But observations in 1996 by William Calder of Harvard Observatory detected a gradual dimming of Pleione over three winters. It has since been determined that Pleione is rapidly rotating, has a hot shell of material around it, and varies in brightness over a period of as much as 34 years. Given the possibility of longer lasting types of erratic behavior in the past, Pleione could well be the often-missing Pleiad.

In any case, there is a marble statue of Merope at the Art Institute of Chicago on Michigan Avenue and Adams Street. The statue was sculpted by Randolph Roger in the mid 1870’s. It can be found in the Institute’s Roger McCormick Memorial Court and is called, The Lost Pleiades.
Crossword & Sudoku: solutions on page 7

Across

1. Impartial
5. Travel though water
9. Jamboree
13. One time only
14. Overwhelming fear and anxiety
16. Assist
17. Molecule
18. Large sports area
19. Melody
22. Seers
24. Pouch
26. Large wood plant
27. Sapience
30. Disclose
35. Droop
36. Decree
39. Prominent
42. Not silently
44. Surface layer of ground
45. Obviate
47. Boredom
49. Animal companion
50. Ceremonial bodyguard of British monarch
52. Supply with oxygen
54. Religious ceremony
57. Illuminated
58. Health facility
62. Beer mug
66. Small inlet

67. Still legally acceptable
69. Halo
70. Overt
71. Diplomat
72. Harvest
73. Look after
74. Completed
75 Sharpener

9. Movable barrier
10. Adjoin
11. Part of a camera
12. Consumed
15. Frolic
21. Manufactured
26. Ice hut
29. 1,760 yards
31. Large open vessel
32. Conflamate
33. Concur
34. Departed
35. Controlling influence
37. Scam
38. Large fish
41. Obtuse
43. Prearranged fight with deadly weapons
46. Moist
48. Part of the eye
51. Callow
53. Append
55. Stall
56. Fusillade
58. Expect with desire
59. Kitchen appliance
60. Transmit
61. Large predatory feline
63. Currency of the European Union
64. Metallic element
65. Part of the neck
66. Crib
68. Staining substance

Down

1. Froth
2. Not in favor
3. Graphic symbol
4. Neglectful
5. Health spring
6. Distor
7. Torpid
8. Lessor in scope or effect

9. Moveable barrier
10. Adjoin
11. Part of a camera
12. Consumed
15. Frolic
21. Manufactured
26. Ice hut
29. 1,760 yards
31. Large open vessel
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Coffee Time?
You know you've had too much coffee when ...
- You ski uphill.
- You get a speeding ticket even when you're parked.
- You speed walk in your sleep.
- You answer the door before people knock.
- You haven't blinked since the last lunar eclipse.
- You just completed another sweater and you don't know how to knit.
- You grind your coffee beans in your mouth.
- You sleep with your eyes open.
- You have to watch videos in fast-forward.
- The only time you're standing still is during an earthquake.
- You can take a picture of yourself from ten feet away without using the timer.
- You lick your coffeepot clean.
- You spend every vacation visiting "Maxwell House." You're the employee of the month at the local coffeehouse and you don't even work there.
- You've worn out your third pair of tennis shoes this week.
- Your eyes stay open when you sneeze.
- You chew on other people's fingernails.

Sudoku

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