**WMU-Air Zoo relationship being enhanced**

Tickets are $100 each, and reservations are required by Monday, May 12. All proceeds from the event will benefit the Air Zoo's growing portfolio of hands-on science and technology educational programs that impact southwest Michigan students.

President John M. Dunn says WMU's sponsorship of the gala is a reflection of the University's 75-year history and international reputation in aviation as well as WMU's commitment to the core values the Air Zoo is promoting with its decision to honor students and teachers in the disciplines known collectively as STEM—science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

“Aviation, the STEM disciplines and the fine arts are central to our University's success, Stonewall Award for Distinguished Service and Leadership.**

**Researchers get major grant to improve canes used by blind**

People who are blind or have visual impairments could be the ultimate beneficiaries of a $421,125 grant awarded to WMU researchers to improve the design and use of canes. The grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Institutes of Health was awarded to Dae Shik Kim and Robert Wall Emerson, blindness and low vision studies, and Koorosh Naghshineh, mechanical and aerospace engineering. The research team will study how to improve the ergonomic design and cane-use biomechanics to see what has the greatest impact on detecting obstacles and drop-offs in the walking environment. Kim, the project’s principal investigator, says the long cane and how it is used was developed during the 1940s during World War II and has changed little since then, partly due to lack of research.

Researchers will test whether cane rigidity, length, weight and weight distribution impact the ability to detect obstacles and drop-offs. Part of that will involve experimenting with different materials.

“B...
Around campus and beyond

Two big campus events start today

Thousands of visitors will be on campus as WMU hosts the 52nd annual Michigan Youth Arts Festival Thursday through Saturday, May 8-10, and the 49th International Congress on Medieval Studies Medieval Studies Thursday through Sunday, May 8-11. The festival is the culmination of a nine-month search for the finest artists in Michigan high schools, with 1,000 being invited to participate in the annual spectacular. Dan Scalon, film director and artist at Pixar Animation Studios, will serve as the official artist-in-residence and special guest artist at a public film festival with a post-show talk from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday in the Richmond Center for Visual Arts. That presentation is one of many public events offered during the three-day festival. Visit michiganyoutharts.org/festival for details.

Meanwhile, more than 3,000 of the world’s leading academics and other interested in the Middle Ages will gather on campus for the Medieval Congress, which is the world’s largest annual gathering of professional academics, students, performers, enthusiasts and independent scholars interested in all things medieval. Registration is required to attend the congress’ Exhibition Hall, special musical and theatrical performances, and all other events. A discount is available to Kalamazoo residents and members of the WMU community. For more information, visit wmich.edu/medieval/congress or call (269) 387-8745.

Registration deadline looms for campus’ annual Poker Walk

Registration must be received by Monday, May 19, to participate in the 11th annual Poker Walk for all employees. This fun-filled event to celebrate National Employee Health and Fitness Day is set for Tuesday, May 20. Participants create a team or walk individually around a two-mile course and collect cards along the way. Those with the best poker hands win prizes. Poker Walk check-in will be from 10:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. in the SRC Indoor Tennis Courts. Everyone must preregister, either totally online at wmich.edu/rec or by downloading the registration form on that website and mailing or faxing it to Jen Bailey, University Recreation, at Mail Stop 5447 or (269) 387-3766.

Retirement reception

Jeanine Bartholomew, College of Health and Human Services, will be recognized from the Quinn School of Irish Dance in residence and perform research on birth defects of the head and face. A multidisciplinary organization, it has some 2,500 members representing more than 30 disciplines in 60 countries. A primary objective of the association is to foster communication and cooperation among professionals from all specialties. Sharp presides over a 16-member Executive Council that establishes association policy and monitors activities as they are implemented through the national office. The council is supported by 25 committees and a staff of nine.

Counselor appointed to state council

Jennipher Wiebold, counselor education and counseling psychology and blindness and low vision studies, was appointed to the Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services in March by Gov. Rick Snyder. Wiebold, who represents disability advocacy groups, will serve a three-year term expiring Dec. 31, 2016. The 17-member council reviews and evaluates Michigan’s rehabilitation programs and services, and advises the department of health and human services. It works in partnership with Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs’ Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. Wiebold has held several national leadership positions that will support her counselor work. She joined the staff in 2000 and is a Fellow of the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association.
Campus community can help select top four staffers for 2014

Twenty-five staff members are in the running for WMU’s 2014 Make a Difference Annual Award, which carries a $1,200 before-tax prize and will be presented during this fall’s Academic Convocation.

The prestigious honor is reserved for the University’s most outstanding employees. The 25 candidates are recipients of 2013-14 fall and spring semiannual awards through the Make a Difference Program. As such, they are eligible to be considered for one of the four annual awards bestowed by this peer-to-peer staff recognition program.

Members of the WMU community have through Saturday, May 31, to decide which of the following staffers will be the “final four” — Bonnie Ayers, student financial aid and scholarships; Joanne Beverage, English; Don Beyer, intercollegiate athletics; Deanna Bowling, facilities management-landscape services; Mary Lou Brooks, geography; Bruce Carpenter, chemistry; Shona Drake, Haenicke Institute for Global Education; Maly Edmond, College of Arts and Sciences; Elena Caouelo, president’s office; Paul Flagg, Steinhardt, Haworth College of Sciences; Tracey Kauppi, College of Aviation; Steve Kmet, Landscape Services; Nancy Landsberger, civil and construction engineering; Edward Maring, maintenance services; Nicole Miller, student conduct; Patrick Niemi, theater; James Owolt, maintenance services; Dorliie Schubie, history; Gerald Schutz, maintenance services; and clicking the News & Events tab.

Trustees approve retirements of six faculty, 15 staff members

The retirements of six faculty members and 15 staff members were approved by the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees at its April 9 meeting. Trustees also signed off on two faculty resignations.

All of the faculty members who are retiring are doing so with emeritus status. Their names, positions, years of continuous service and effective dates of retirement are: Esther N. Gray, special education and literacy studies, 18 years, effective April 30, 2019; Christian R. Hirsch, mathematics, 41 years, effective Dec. 31; Thomyssous J. Kountanis, computer science, and his wife, Karen Woodin. The couple first saw the welded steel piece at the 2012 Grand Rapids ArtPrize exhibition and wanted to install it at their home. They opted instead to have it installed near the main entrance to the college to give more people the opportunity to see and appreciate it. The statue has since become the mascot of the University’s High Performance Computational Science Laboratory, and there are future plans to install LED lighting and dedicated solar energy panels by the statue. According to the artist’s statement about the work, the piece shows “Professor Einstein throwing a frisbee, taking a moment for light-hearted joy amidst his important work.” (Photo by Mike Lanka)

Allan Doolittle, a retired head football coach, died April 10. He was 90. Doolittle was coach from 1964 to 1974 and Mike Gary Athletic Fund director from 1975 to 1992. A celebration of his life is set for noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, June 22, in the Seeley Center. Gifts may be made to the Gary Fund. Visit allenfuneralhomeinc.com to make a memorial guestbook entry.

Claus S. Phillips Jr., founding director of the Institute of International and Area Studies, died April 17. He was 91. Phillips joined the faculty in 1957 and retired in 1990. He developed the Master of Development Administration and helped develop other international-related programs. Visit avinkcremation.com to make a memorial guestbook entry.
This month is excellent time to sign up for SRC membership

Benefits-eligible faculty and non-bargaining staff are eligible to sign up for a Student Recreation Center membership and pay nothing more than the taxes on $270. The membership year will run from May 5, 2014, through May 10, 2015.

Members may use the SRC Monday through Sunday anytime the building is open. Family hours are anytime during the summer, and kids under 18 can come in free. To sign up, go to wmich.edu/rec and click the orange SRC Access icon, then click Benefit Eligible Faculty/Staff Membership Form. Complete the form and submit it electronically.

The SRC is a convenient way to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Call Cindy at (269) 387-3115 for more details, to schedule an SRC tour or to arrange for an in-office presentation.

WMIU-Air Zoo relationship being enhanced

Doreen Brinson has been drawn to Kalamazoo since her college days. Brinson earned a bachelor’s degree in English literature and teaching from WMU in 1973 and has lived in the same historic home in Kalamazoo for the past 30 years.

Now Facilities Management’s labor relations specialist, she has most of her career in human resources. They began in 1974 at a Veterans Affairs hospital in San Francisco, followed by a job at WMU’s Human Resources unit in the town she had missed so much.

Brinson was the University’s training and development coordinator from 1985 to 1991 and director of staff collective bargaining until 1997. Then came a professional opportunity she couldn’t pass up—heading the city of Kalamazoo’s H.R. department. After a decade there, she worked locally as an H.R. consultant and served an interim stint as San Antonio’s H.R. director instead of accepting a post as that city’s full-time director.

“I love working in labor relations. It’s my favorite part of H.R. because it’s the hardest part,” Brinson says. “Everything gets done through people. That’s what makes this place tick—you, the plumber, me, the president. There’s a wonderful sense of community in Facilities Management and a common interest in what we’re all about. Once a Bronco, always a Bronco.”

Brinson’s duties include serving as the grievance officer and contract administrator for AFSCME and MSEA and serving on both of those unions’ management negotiating teams and on the training committee for the power plant’s apprenticeship program.

“My clients are directors and managers needing assistance with contract interpretation and disciplinary issues,” Brinson says. “I advise, counsel and work with the unions so we don’t get into grievance situations. My job is to have healthy employee relations. And it’s fun. It’s my life’s work.”

Brinson is a past management co-chair and 10-year member of the boards of directors for two joint labor and management organizations, but her main extracurricular activity of the past seven years has been volunteering at the Chef Therapeutic Riding Center in Augusta, Mich., home of her beloved equine buddy, Harvey. She has two adult sons and enjoys gardening, collecting locally made art, and attending theatrical performances, lectures, Art Hops and many other events on and off campus.

On Campus with Doreen Brinson

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Continued from page 1

WMIU-Air Zoo relationship being enhanced

academic core,” Dunn says. “We’ve been talking with the Air Zoo’s new director, Troy Thrash, about a closer relationship between the museum and WMU, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity to launch that partnership.”

Thrash says the new awards initiative is meant to boost the local focus on careers that meant to be the perfect opportunity to launch that partnership.

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Continued from page 1

Researchers get major grant

two-point touch technique, where the user lifts and taps the cane from side to side, bending at the wrist, and the constant contact technique, which keeps the cane tip in contact with the walking surface using a sweeping motion.

The study is actually a continuation of others Kim and his associates have conducted over the years.

Since 2008, he has conducted a series of long cane studies with his colleagues at WMU.

“Some blind individuals use a guide dog for their mobility. But that is a relatively small percentage of individuals,” Kim says.

“The vast majority use the long cane to get around. So by redesigning and improving its design, and also improving how the cane is used, we hope to improve the safety of blind individuals, which will obviously improve their quality of life.”

APA award winners feted—
The Administrative Professional Association honored three staff members April 17 during its annual awards reception. This year’s honorees, from left, are: Chris Voss, Student Recreation Center, Tony Griffin Service Award; Jennifer C. Hsu, diversity and inclusion, Outstanding New Professional; and Suzanne V. Beals, diversity and inclusion, Outstanding Professional. (Photo by Jeanne Baron)