



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

College of Arts and Sciences news

College of Arts and Sciences

2-2014

College of Arts and Sciences E-News Issue 10: February 2014

College of Arts and Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cas_news



Part of the Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

College of Arts and Sciences, "College of Arts and Sciences E-News Issue 10: February 2014" (2014).

College of Arts and Sciences news. 23.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cas_news/23

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Sciences at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in College of Arts and Sciences news by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



College of Arts and Sciences

W

E-News Issue 10: Feb. 2014



Dr. Gregory Veeck in northern China for multi-scale study of China's grasslands.

CAS News

Geography professor receives National Geographic Society award

Community invited to share the impact of CAS

CAS offers teaching excellence award for part-time instructors

'Poetry in Michigan' anthology named 2014 Michigan Notable Book

Department of Chemistry employee remains globally engaged with Ghana

Alumni Profiles

Comparative religion graduate, Richelle Mead '01, author of series that inspired film Vampire Academy

School of Communication alumnus, Michael Betz '77 '87, president of ImageStream

Tom Kolassa '72, political science graduate, named to Olivet College Board of Trustees

Stay in touch!



Update your
information



Geography Professor Receives National Geographic Society Award



Western Michigan University's Dr. Gregory Veeck was awarded \$11,500 by the National Geographic Society Committee for Research and Exploration to support his most recent research project, "An Ecological Economic Multi-Scale Study of China's Grassland Resources." These funds will support more than six months of fieldwork in selected husbandry areas in western China and complement awards he received from the WMU Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award and the Ruth and Milton Scherer Fund. Veeck recently took a two month trip to western Sichuan and northwestern Yunnan Province to survey five counties located at different elevations with distinctive pastoral environments.

Veeck will return to China in the spring to continue surveying arid pasture environments in Gansu Province and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. The multi-year project, designed by Veeck, is being conducted jointly by Veeck, WMU's Dr. Charles

Emerson (Department of Geography) and Professors Zhou Li and Fawen Yu of the Rural Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Collecting at multiple scales, the team combines environmental data (vegetation indices, interpolated climate data and elevation) derived from remotely sensed MODIS imagery with intensive field work that incorporates interviews with local official and herding families. The intent is to determine how the nation's pasture quality has changed since 2000 and how these changes have impacted the lives and incomes of herding families. Once these changes are identified, Veeck and his team will look for the correlations between them and changes in livestock counts by type (yak, sheep, goat, cattle, etc.) at the township scale. Veeck is seeking to examine how change in animal stocks co-varies with changes in pasture quality as determined through remote-derived vegetation indices statistically adjusted for variable precipitation and elevation.



I Am CAS

"The College of Arts and Sciences represents the academic heart and liberal arts core of Western Michigan University and provides a broad range of academic programs."

—Dr. Alexander Enyedi

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Western Michigan University

The Office of the Dean was extremely pleased with the quality of entries received for the first I Am CAS contest. For that reason, making a decision was difficult. We contemplated listing honorable mentions because the competition was so incredibly close, but every entry was honorable and worth mentioning. We are proud of each WMU student who participated. To see all entries visit the [I Am CAS photo album](#).

Winners were selected based on:

- completion of entry
- quality of statement
- clarity of photo
- attention to grammar and spelling

Congratulations to Casey Blair of Wheaton, Illinois and Kylia Dantzler-Morgan of Grand Rapids, Michigan!



Part-time Instructor Excellence in Teaching

<http://www.wmich.edu/arts-sciences/instructor-excellence-award>

WMU 'Poetry in Michigan' anthology named 2014 Michigan Notable Book

http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2014/02/wmu_press_poetry_anthology_n.html#incart_river_default

Globally Engaged in Ghana



Western Michigan University's Department of Chemistry electronics shop supervisor Sean Bashaw has had a long-standing relationship with Global Host Project, a grassroots organization committed to development and volunteerism in Ghana. Recently, Sean and his wife Connie Bashaw (retired scholarship assistant, WMU Office of Financial Aid), helped to raise funds used to construct the first 10-seat public toilet facility in Duakor, off the Cape Coast of Africa. Sean collected monetary donations from WMU organizations, including the National Organization of Black Chemist and Chemical Engineers in order to begin construction on the new public facility. By

creating this public lavatory, Sean hopes that this will create a sanitary environment to the people of Duakor and initiate an increase of tourism to the Cape Coast.

Though the installation of the public facility was a powerful advance, Sean does not plan to end his involvement for the improvement of Duakor. His next anticipated trip will be within two years to erect more sustainable public facilities. Sean says, "Every time we go, we will be doing something. I get a lot of satisfaction in going and seeing what has been accomplished. It's a rewarding experience and makes you appreciate what we have in the United States."

Sean and Connie Bashaw have made a personal commitment to being globally engaged by continuing to volunteer their time and talents in Ghana. In 2012 they were recognized for improving technology education at Okyeso Primary and Junior High School by donating five laptops. Not only did they

purchase the laptops, they also traveled more than 5,500 miles to personally ensure that the laptops were installed and ready for use.

Global Host Project's executive director and WMU alumna, Nicole Michelle Beauchamp '02, and country director, Paa Kwesi Sampson expressed great appreciation for the generosity of the Bashaws. Beauchamp and Sampson made it clear that an ongoing relationship has been established between the Bashaws and Global Host Project.



Vampire Academy Movie Based on Series Written by WMU Grad



WMU has a close tie to Vampire Academy, a new film that will be released in the United States on Friday, Feb. 7. Vampire Academy, is a series of young adult fiction that includes Vampire Academy, Frostbite, Shadow Kiss, Blood Promise, and Spirit Bound. This New York Times and USA Today bestselling series was written by WMU alumna Richelle Mead '01. The series has won honors from the American Library Association and been translated into 30 languages. It follows the war between two races of vampires, living and undead, by focusing on Rose Hathaway, a 17-year old half-vampire training to be a bodyguard for living vampires. [See the trailer.](#)

Mead is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of urban fantasy books for both adults and teens. Originally from Michigan, Richelle now lives in Seattle, Wash. Before becoming a writer, she received an M.A. in Comparative Religion from Western Michigan University. Mead was recently selected the

2013 [Alumni Achievement Award winner](#) for the Department of Comparative Religion.

Creative Communications



Michael Betz (*BS '77; MA '87, Communication*) was initially drawn to the technological side of film and media, but later realized it's more about communicating a story than anything else.

In high school, Betz started a side photography business. A hobby encouraged by their father, Betz's brother had no interest in snapping photos—but Michael did. He went on to community college and got a job working in the AV Center. Betz later transferred to Western Michigan University, which had recently opened Dunbar Hall—a learning facility complete with brand new production equipment, and a solid program to go along with it.

Betz recalls his Introduction to Broadcasting course at WMU, where professor Thomas Pagel said to the class "Look around you. Out of the five people nearest you, one of you may get a job in the industry, get used to that idea now."

Betz now knows that professor was dead on—and Tim Allen was in that class. After being in the industry for his entire career, Betz's advice to students is a little more positive, "Be persistent, and don't give up."

After completing his degree, Betz worked as a TV producer for the University. At the time, Community Television was becoming a trend. The idea of the power of media being used to hear the voice the people was an intriguing one, and Betz became part of a movement to establish the Community Access Center in Kalamazoo (now known as Public Media Network) in 1982. For five years, Betz served as a board member and facility manager.

Right around the time Upjohn was celebrating 100 years, Betz landed his dream job as a producer/director with the company, but when the company merged with Pharmacia, all marketing operations were moved to New Jersey.

A family meeting produced a negative vote for a move to New Jersey, so Betz and his colleague wrote a business plan, pooled their resources, and bought the facility in which his current business, ImageStream, is housed.

"I never intended to run my own business," said Betz. "It was just circumstance."

Betz is now President of ImageStream – Creative Communications in Portage, Michigan. ImageStream is a corporate video production company with clients like Stryker, Pfizer, Zoetis, and Southwest Michigan First—to name only a few. They are the producer of award-winning video, audio, multimedia programs, and live events. In short, they help businesses communicate with employees and customers.

For example, ImageStream works with Celebrity Cruises, a Division of Royal Caribbean, and Betz was on board to document a new ship in dry dock moving out for sea trials. The video content ImageStream produced then became available for media outlets, such as the Today Show, Good Morning America and others, to use in stories and features.

Today, Betz remains active with the WMU School of Communication as a member of their External Advisory Board. He is happy to have the association and remain connected to school and faculty, and is proud to see students in the school with a combination of great practical skills and solid theoretical understanding.

WMU Alumnus to Chair Olivet College Board of Trustees



Tom Kolassa has been elected to serve as chair of the Olivet College Board of Trustees. "I'm excited about all of the improvements Olivet College is making in accordance with our vision for 2020 and beyond," Kolassa said. "Some of my top priorities include increasing the college's endowment, as well as the percentage of alumni giving and enrollment. I anticipate continued improvements to the educational experience and campus culture for students as well, as we work to make Olivet one of the top colleges in the nation."

Kolassa, who resides in Battle Creek, is a 1969 Olivet College graduate. While at Olivet he studied political science, and went on to earn a master's degree in political science from Western Michigan University in 1972.

He has led a successful career in the insurance industry, retiring as senior vice president of HUB International of Battle Creek in 2013. He has also served as owner of Infinisource of Coldwater, a company specializing in human resources and employee benefits. Kolassa served Battle Creek for two years as city commissioner, two years as vice mayor and two years as mayor, and is currently active with the boards of Starr Commonwealth and Southern Michigan Bank and Trust. He is the former board chair of Binder Park Zoo.