Grant helping researchers stem crop diseases

A multi-university team of researchers led by Kathleen Baker, geography, will use sophisticated weather forecasting methods to reduce crop disease with the help of a nearly $1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Baker is working to limit the effects of global change on crop diseases through modeling of disease risks under changing conditions. This new effort will apply her models to crop-specific disease prediction based on newly available weather forecasts. Daily updates of the long-range forecasts will be provided via Web-based delivery systems tuned to the needs of growers.

The researchers will be targeting plant diseases affecting crops in three regions of the country: leaf spot of peanuts in the Southeast in Georgia and northern Florida; Fusarium head blight of barley in the northern Great Plains; and late blight of potatoes in Michigan and the Great Lakes.

Institutional partners in the effort are the University of Georgia, South Dakota State University, the University of Idaho and Michigan State University. Assisting in the development of necessary cyberinfrastructure will be partners at Indiana University’s School of Informatics and the San Diego Supercomputer Center.

The team’s long-term goal is to reduce disease infestation and better manage the application of fungicides used to combat it. The result will be a win-win situation for farmers and the environment. The researchers hope their project will prove that similar systems could be developed to better manage diseases for other crops across the United States and internationally.

New MLK event set; project proposals due Dec. 11

A new outreach event to help area high school students and their parents take advantage of the Kalamazoo Promise scholarship program will be part of WMU’s 2009 observance of the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr.

The University will sponsor a higher education open house starting at 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 11, in the Bernhard Center, where students and parents can learn more about the benefits of attending WMU and enjoy a free buffet dinner. Advance registration is requested.

Martha Warfield, associate vice president for diversity and inclusion, says the event is being held instead of a convocation this year to involve a broader range of campus and community members in the University’s two-month-long MLK Celebration.

“The city’s theme this year is ‘Reclaiming Our Voice: Connecting With the Beloved Community,’” says Warfield, who directs the WMU Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which oversees the University’s Kalamazoo Promise and MLK Celebration initiatives. “Our open
Around Campus

WMU event salutes Louis Braille

The 200th anniversary of the birth of Louis Braille, creator of the Braille reading system, will be celebrated with a free public event from 3 to 6 p.m. today on the fourth floor of the College of Health and Human Services Building. Blindness and low vision studies will staff learning stations and offer special activities and giveaways. Representatives of the Portage Lion’s Club will kick off their new project, “Braille Menus for Greater Kalamazoo.”

Einstein discoveries to be explored

The worlds of philosophy and science will come together today in a presentation on two of Einstein’s discoveries. John Norton, director of the University of Pittsburgh Center for Philosophy of Science, will discuss “Two Moments in Einstein’s Discovery of Special Relativity” at 4 p.m. in 3301 Friedmann.

Egan stars with theatre students

Closing out its fall season with a bang, University Theatre will present “Late Night Broadway,” a cabaret concert featuring Broadway star John Treacy Egan performing alongside graduating seniors of the musical theatre performance program. Productions take place at 9 p.m. today through Saturday, Dec. 4-6, in Williams Theatre at the Olin Multi-Use Performance Complex.

Rachel Carson is subject of play

“A Sense of Wonder,” a one-woman play based on the life and works of the late-environmentalist Rachel Carson, will be shown at no cost at 7 p.m. tomorrow in the North Ballroom of the Bernhard Center. The play, written and performed by Kaulani Lee, has been touring the United States for more than 10 years, being the centerpiece of regional and national conferences on conservation, education, journalism and the environment.

Brass concert is seasonal favorite

The Western Brass Quintet will present its 25th annual holiday program at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7, in the Dalton Center Recital Hall. The free holiday concert has become a celebrated seasonal tradition for audiences of all ages.

“Brass for the Holidays” features the internationally acclaimed Western Brass Quintet and an ensemble of WMU music students and faculty performing festive selections from the Renaissance, Baroque and other periods. The afternoon promises a great mixture of traditional holiday music, brass classics and contemporary favorites.

Brickman to perform at Miller

Take a break from the hectic demands of the holiday season to spend a few hours with Jim Brickman. The platinum-selling recording artist, pianist and composer will be at Miller Auditorium for one performance at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 11. Brickman’s 13th annual Holiday Homcoming Tour is filled with classic and contemporary favorites.

Joining the 30-city tour is Canadian vocalist and pianist Mark Mastri, vocalist Anne Cochran and electric violinist Tracy Silverman. The trio has performed with Brickman every December for more than a decade.

WMU surpasses United Way campaign goal for 2008

Although WMU remained shy of its goal when this year’s campus United Way campaign officially ended, students, faculty, staff and retirees came together to show their support for the greater Kalamazoo community and ultimately surpassed their $225,000 target.

“Despite the uncertain financial times that have affected so many people, the University community stepped up to the plate and chose to make a statement,” says WMU President John M. Dunn. “Through its investments of time, energy and money to support United Way, WMU said that people are our most important treasure and supporting our people is our priority—no matter what threatening clouds appear on the horizon.”

Nearly 1,600 employees and retirees gave more than $243,000 this year, and even students stepped up to get involved in the fund-raising efforts. Some 248 contributors were people who have never made such a commitment before and 300 increased the amount of their gifts compared to one year ago.

Jobs

Current job opportunities at WMU are announced daily on the Human Resources Web site at www.wmich.edu/hr/careers-at-wmu.htm. Please note that applications must be submitted online by the stated deadline. Complete application procedures are included with each posting.

Book examines myth of war, manhood

Jon R. Adams, English, has written a book that examines the ways in which novels, plays and films about America’s late-20th-century wars reflect altering perceptions of masculinity in American culture.

“Male Armor: The Soldier-Hero in Contemporary American Culture” exposes the myth of war as an experience that verifies manhood. Released in October by the University of Virginia Press, it finds a deep divide between popular images of war as it relates to manhood and the written record of war in literature and personal memoirs.

Engineer serving as international fellow

John Cameron, paper engineering, chemical engineering and imaging, was one of only 11 pulp, paper, packaging and converting industry professionals named 2008 TAPPI Fellows. TAPPI is an international association of professionals from those industries.

Cameron was awarded fellowship status to individuals who have made extraordinary technical or service contributions to their industries or to TAPPI. Less than 3 percent of the organization’s membership has attained the designation.

Prof receives award for consulting

Daniel Farrell, management, has received the Press On Award from the McDonald’s Corp. in recognition of his consulting work for the company. The award was presented at McDonald’s Supplier Summit Conference.

Farrell has served as a consultant to McDonald’s, providing objective analysis and assessment of managerial programs for the food service company. The naming of the Press On Award affirms that persistence and dedication are important attributes in the long-term success of any business.

Lectures spun into economics book

Jean Kimmel, economics, has edited and written the introduction for “How Do We Spend Our Time? Evidence From the American Time Use Survey.” The book is a compilation of lectures delivered during WMU’s 2006-07 Werner Sichel Lecture-Seminar Series.

Published by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, it draws upon the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ annual American Time Use Survey and is one of the first texts to give an economic analysis based on ATUS, which was unveiled in 2003 after years of study and preparation.

Kimmel now is working on a book with Rachel Connelly of Bowdoin College on maternal time use and how mothers’ maternal time affects their other activities.
A dozen staff members have received the fall semiannual Make a Difference Award for 2008-09, along with $250 and a commemorative certificate. The recipients were honored at an awards reception Dec. 2 in the Bernhard Center’s President’s Dining Room.

They are: John “J.B.” Barney, physical plant-maintenance services; Regina Buckner, University Libraries; Cindy Clegg, Sindecuse Health Center; Lisa Hotchkiss, residence life; Jessica Hutchinson, payroll; Stephan Kesto, plant-landscape services; Judith Medendorp, special education and literacy studies; Frances Morrow, Sindecuse Health Center; Natallia “Cris” Obreiter, military science; Mary Ramlow, Evaluation Center; Vicki Thompson, admissions; and Kathryn Wright, geosciences.

WMU’s Make a Difference awards program is a campuswide, peer-to-peer program that recognizes University staff members for their outstanding accomplishments and daily investment of energy and creativity.

Recipients are selected by a committee of their peers from the participating employee groups of AFSCME, APA, MSEA, POA and PSSO. Up to 15 staff members may be selected in each of two semiannual award periods. Semiannual winners are eligible for one of four annual awards, which carry a $1,000 prize.

The following faculty and staff members are recognized for 40, 35, 30, 25, 20, 15, 10 and five years of service during December.

30 Years—Erlinda S. Rolls, University Libraries.
35 Years—Barbara V. Caras-Tomczak, Haworth College of Business, and Kenneth J. Frieleks, physical plant-maintenance services.
40 Years—Cora Jean Bickel, admissions; Laura L. Coville, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; Raymond G. Hallock, physical plant-maintenance services; Deborah L. Hughson, dining services-Bernhard Center; Alan D. Poling, psychology; and Alicia J. Yeagley, College of Arts and Sciences.
25 Years—Damodor Y. Golhar, management; R. C. Krishna-Swamy, finance and commercial law; and Matthew C. Steel, School of Music.
20 Years—Lucann Green, West Hills Athletic Club.
15 Years—Diane K. Anderson, vice president for student affairs; Dennis N. Branich, dining-services-Davis; Carol B. Case, physical plant-landscape services; William H. Fenn, physician assistant; Janos L. Grantner, electrical and computer engineering; Cynthia Halderson, Mallinson Institute; Todd K. Havenner, public safety; and Daren T. Webb, Sindecuse Health Center.
10 Years—Robert E. Bunday, College of Aviation; Bryce Dickey, family and consumer sciences; Martha Haug, Center for Disability Service; Christine E. Hummel, Evaluation Center; Douglas D. Johns, information technology; Tamara M. Kliger, counselor education and counseling psychology; Margaret Pratt, physical plant-building, custodial and support services; and Rene L. Riggins, physical plant-building, custodial and support services.
Free computer training offered
The University began offering extensive online computer training for staff and faculty starting Dec. 1 through Lynda.com. Training can be accessed from any computer with high-speed Internet access any time of the day, seven days a week.

Lynda.com is an award-winning provider of educational materials, known for providing in-depth and frequently updated software tutorials.

It offers online training for more than 150 software programs, including Microsoft Word and Excel, Dreamweaver for Web sites, FileMaker Pro and many specialized applications. Go to www.lynda.com and look under the Products menu to see what’s available.

WMU faculty and staff accounts are valid for three weeks and may be renewed for two additional weeks. Those with accounts may request usage reports for professional development verification.

Send an e-mail to tech-support@wmich.edu or call 387-5016 for more information.

Lipsy retirement reception set
Daisy Lipsy, accounts receivable, will be recognized for 25 years of University service during a retirement reception from 3 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, in the Oaklands.

Obituary
Lloyd Brathwaite, a retired professor of criminology for more than two decades, died Oct. 23. He was 80. Brathwaite, who had been living and teaching in England since 1989, joined the sociology faculty in 1968 and retired in 1989.

W. Chester Fitch, former dean of the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, died Oct. 3 at his home in Sun City, Ariz. He was 91.

Fitch also served WMU as an associate professor, director of the Center for Deprivation Studies at WMU, which he organized; and an assistant dean. He was a faculty member for 14 years, retiring in 1982.

Julius Franks Jr., the last surviving member of WMU’s first Board of Trustees, died Nov. 26. He was 86.

Franks, who retired after a 40-year career as a dentist in Grand Rapids, Mich., was appointed to the University’s first board in 1964 and served until 1983. He was reelected in his home community as a civil rights leader who helped integrate the city’s neighborhoods and develop new housing opportunities for minorities.
MLK celebration  continued from page 1

house is a wonderful way for us to expand our ties to the local community, and it’s consistent with the high value Dr. King placed on education.”

As in past years, WMU is coordinating its activities with the Kalamazoo community’s MLK celebration.

Along with WMU, the communitywide celebration is being co-sponsored by the city of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo College, and first-time event partners Borgess Medical Center and Bronson Methodist Hospital.

Activities related to WMU’s observance are being organized by the MLK Planning Committee, which is headed by Tony Dennis, Graduate College.

In addition to opening the open house, the committee is soliciting proposals for a series of on-campus discussions, workshops and other events focusing on King that will be scheduled from Jan. 12 through the end of February.

The deadline for applying for funding is Thursday, Dec. 11. The deadline also is Dec. 11 for submitting non-sponsored proposals and have them included in the committee’s MLK celebration publicity materials.

To pre-register for the higher education open house, call 387-6313. Keep checking www.wmich.edu/mlk for more information about that event as well as other events on- and off-campus being planned to honor King during 2009.

Local South Pole explorer will receive honorary degree Dec. 13

A Kalamazoo man whose background includes exploring the South Pole, working with a number of federal agencies and a career as a science educator will receive an honorary Doctor of Science degree from WMU.

Alumnus William S. Hough will be honored during the 9 a.m. commencement ceremony Saturday, Dec. 13, in Miller Auditorium. He first came to WMU in 1943 as a Navy serviceman enrolled in the V-12 Officer Training program.

Following World War II, he returned to study physics under the G.I. Bill.

Hough was part of a 1957 expedition and the first group to spend the winter at the South Pole. His team laid the groundwork for succeeding decades of research at the then-primitive U.S. Navy Amundsen-Scott South Pole base station by expanding the base to prepare for future expeditions.

For the initiative, Hough observed and recorded changes to the ionosphere and helped construct a 1,000-foot seismometer tunnel by digging through the ice by hand with a shovel and ice pick. The Hough Glacier was mapped by the U.S. Geological Survey from U.S. Navy air photos and named for Hough by the U.S. Advisory Committee on Antarctic Names in honor of the ionosphere studies he completed in 1957.

Faculty duo launch new summer study abroad course

The role of geology in the civilization and culture of ancient and modern Egyptians is the focus of a new short-term study abroad program planned for May 1–16, 2009.

Robb Gillespie, geosciences, and Mustafa Mughazy, foreign languages, will teach the course, titled Civilizations and Geology in Egypt. Supported by a grant from the Haenike Foundation, Gillespie participated in an Arabic summer program led by Mughazy to learn the ins and outs of leading a study abroad program.

Other faculty members interested in learning more about developing study abroad programs may contact Brett Berquist at brett.berquist@wmich.edu or 387-5890.