Gordon wins National Book Award for fiction

Jaimy Gordon, English, was announced Nov. 17 as the 2010 National Book Award winner in fiction for her new novel, “Lord of Misrule.”

USA Today calls the book a "publishing's version of the Academy Awards." WMU will celebrate Gordon’s achievement from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 13.

The free public event will begin with a reading at 3:30 p.m. in 2008 Richmond Center. Featured guests are Bruce McPherson, publisher of Gordon’s award-winning novel, and several WMU graduates who have won prestigious writing awards, including Bonnie Jo Campbell, Liesel Litzenburger and Melinda Mountakis. A reception will follow at 4:30 p.m. in Richmond’s lobby.

Applications sought for MLK activity proposals

University community members interested in staging events as part of activities celebrating Martin Luther King’s life and legacy are asked to submit an application to have their events become a sponsored MLK program. The deadline to apply is 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 10.

WMU departments, offices, individuals and organizations are invited to apply for funding as well as publicity assistance. Whether seeking funding or not, those planning MLK-related events during spring semester are asked to submit proposals for each event so these activities can be included in WMU’s publicity for the 2011 MLK celebration.

The theme of this year’s celebration in honor of the slain civil rights giant is “Bringing Life to the Dream.” The first campus event that has been scheduled already is a WMU Celebration and Public School Visitation, set for Saturday, Jan. 15, in the Bernhard Center.

Visit the MLK website at www.wmich.edu/mlk to obtain an application form for proposals, along with submission guidelines. For more information on submitting a proposal, call the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at (269) 387-6313.

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Proposals sought for WMU writing centers conference

The East Central Writing Centers Association, the nation’s oldest writing centers organization, will hold its annual conference Thursday through Saturday, March 3-5, at WMU.

The theme is “Centering Assessment: Roles, Relationships, Resistance, Respect,” but organizers invite proposals about all aspects of writing center work and scholarship. Visit the conference website at www.ecwca2011atwmich.com/index.html to submit proposals, which are due by Friday, Dec. 10.

The conference will feature a panel keynotes discussion by four major voices in contemporary writing assessment and writing center assessment, all of whom are current or former writing center directors.

In addition, WMU’s Eileen Edward, vice provost for institutional effectiveness, a former director of the University’s Writing Center, will present a lunch-time talk. For more information, visit the conference website or contact Kim Ballard, WMU Writing Center Director, at kim.ballard@wmich.edu or (269) 387-4446.

Exchange

Home, estate sale—Brick home in the Kalamaoo County Public Schools district priced for quick sale. Three bedrooms, two baths, 1,800 square feet. Available for short appointment. Estate sale to be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4. Sale includes dining room table and buffet, kitchen items, yard equipment, ladies plus-size garments, and some 800 New York Times best-selling hardcover fiction and non-fiction books. Home and estate sale is located at 3127 Tampa Ave., between East Main Street and Gull Road. Contact Paige Warner at (269) 290-9246.

For rent—Two-bedroom mid-century home in quiet neighborhood close to WMU and Kalamaoo College (readers of dwell and Atomic Ranch magazines take note). Furnished or unfurnished apartment for one to two non-smoking professional people. Available Jan. 1. $750 per month plus utilities. Call (269) 273-4519.

Jobs

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

Prof named endowed business chair

David Burnie, finance and commercial law, has been named the National City Corp. Endowed Chair in Finance and Commercial Law. The honor includes a stipend and funding for research and research-related expenses. It is bestowed to recognize leadership with the opportunity for renewal.

“The award is given to an outstanding faculty member with a rank of assistant professor or higher who has demonstrated exceptional contributions to his or her discipline,” says Kay Palan, dean of the Haworth College of Business. “All aspects of academics were considered in the selection, including teaching, research and service.”

Burnie came to WMU in 1987 and has been a full-time faculty member since 2001. He previously served as Haworth’s associate dean and in other posts, as well as helped found the college’s Co-Op MBA Program.

Economist co-writes time-use book

Jean Kimmel, economics, has co-written a book that connects children’s development with how mothers choose to spend their time. “The Time Use of Mothers in the United States at the Beginning of the 21st Century” provides valuable information for policymakers dealing with education, taxation, child care and other issues.

The book, written with Rachel Connelly, economics chair at Bowdoin College, was released this month by the Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. It is based on the authors’ analysis of the American Time Use Survey. A WMU faculty member since 2001, Kimmel is involved in four research areas: parental time choices; the motherhood wage gap; the gender and racial divide in computer access as well as the factors contributing to computer time choices; and the relationship between fertility and labor supply.

Musician pens guide for performers

Stephen Zegree, music, has condensed 30 years as a professional musician, director and educator to write “The Wow Factor: How to Create It, Inspire It and Achieve It.” The book is a practical guide for performers, students and teachers and even parents.

It draws upon Zegree’s experience helping would-be stars attain success and is a treasure trove of fundamental philosophies and concepts essential to a performer’s growth and development. One chapter contains insights from interviews with top performers Zegree has worked with, including Nick Lacey, Bobby McFerrin and Lisa Minnelli. Zegree gleaned much of the wisdom for “The Wow Factor: How to Create It” from interviews with top performers Zegree has worked with, including Nick Lacey, Bobby McFerrin and Lisa Minnelli. Zegree gleaned much of the wisdom for "The Wow Factor: How to Create It" from interviews with top performers Zegree has worked with, including Nick Lacey, Bobby McFerrin and Lisa Minnelli.

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Older adults encouraged to save the date for learning academy info session

Older adults in the Kalamazoo area will have a new opportunity to stay intellectually active and socially engaged when WMU launches its Lifelong Learning Academy this spring.

The program will be similar to academies already established at other universities here and abroad to provide learning initiatives for older adults. An open house to introduce WMU’s academy and upcoming spring session has been set for 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, in the west lobby of Walwood. Refreshments will be served.

The local academy will have a diverse repertoire of non-credit educational programs specifically designed to address the interests of the adult learner. The courses will be designed to provide intellectual and cultural stimulation, promote personal growth, and foster social engagement in an informal and lively learning atmosphere.

Ongoing programming will encompass the arts and humanities, current events, the environment, health, history, international and enrichment topics, and science and technology. There also will be a rich, evolving array of other courses as well as interest groups, lectures, special events and presentations, and travel programs and classes.

Plans call for the WMU Lifelong Learning Academy to start with an initial session that will begin March 14. The session will feature two-hour daytime classes offered weekly for two to four weeks, depending on the subject. Instructors will be drawn from current and former WMU faculty as well as local community members who are experts in particular fields or have strong interests in selected areas.

The academy is membership based, but membership is open to anyone with a passion for learning. There are no membership requirements, such as needing previous college experience, and no tests or grading—just learning for the joy of it.

Courses are geared toward those age 50 and up. Attendees pay a nominal annual fee, which is being waived for the inaugural spring session, as well as a modest tuition fee for the courses that they sign up to attend. However, additional fees may be required for class materials, texts and travel.

A volunteer advisory board has been formed to lead the academy. The board operates under the auspices of WMU’s Extended University Programs, and in concert with educational and community organizations in the Kalamazoo area.

Co-chairing the advisory board are D. Terry Williams, WMU professor emeritus and former chair of theatre, and Ruth Heinig, WMU professor emerita of communication.

The board’s membership includes community residents, retired college and university faculty members, and WMU staff members.

A curriculum committee has been working since early fall to develop and schedule the initial classes. Other committees to be formed will focus on areas such as membership, events and resource development.

More information also may be obtained by calling Extended University Programs at (269) 387-4200. Questions may be directed by calling Extended University Programs at (269) 387-4200. Questions may be directed to Jennifer Fiore, director of outreach and special programs, or Cheri Lay, director of the Office of Lifelong Learning and Education.

Obituary

Phillip L. Bruce, emeritus in engineering technology, died Nov. 23 in Kalamazoo. He was 78.

Bruce joined the faculty in 1963 and retired in 1990 after 27 years. He was active in industrial arts and education organizations and served as a resident advisor in Garneau-Harvey from 1964 to 1973.

Arnold G. Nelson, English, died Nov. 13. He was 92.

Nelson joined the WMU faculty in 1954 and retired in 1981 after 26-1/2 years.

University recognized for innovative use of software

WMU is being recognized for its successful innovative use of 3-D computer-aided design software in the classroom by the internation­al company that created the software.

California-based Autodesk, a leading 3-D design, engineering and entertainment software company, is featuring WMU as a “customer success story” in its promotional materials for the software that allows students to model campus buildings for energy analysis and retrofits.

College of Engineering and Applied Sciences students and Facilities Management staff members have been using Autodesk for years and took it a step further to create building information models of existing campus facilities. The Autodesk promotion highlights WMU as the only owner of the software to take this innovative approach.

In addition to that recognition, Peter Stradza, associate vice president of Facilities Management, co-presented a workshop on building information models during the Construction Owners Association of America’s fall leadership conference Nov. 17-19 in Tampa, Fla.

He joined other presenters from Texas A&M, Walt Disney Engineering, Georgia Tech, the University of Florida, the University of Colorado, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and many national construction and architectural firms.

Emeriti set December program

The Emeriti Council’s next Wednesday II meeting will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 8, in Walwood’s Emeriti Lounge.

The program will be a performance of an excerpt from last year’s play “Good Death” and a discussion of the play’s topic by Joan Herrington, theatre chair.

“Good Death” is an original collaboration, created entirely by WMU theatre students. It explores the questions and emotional conflict behind euthanasia, terminal illness, aging, medical ethics and controversial topics.

The script is compiled from verbatim interviews and incorporates transcripts from the Dr. Kevorkian trial.

BIG WEB PRESENCE—WMU’s solar racecar, Sunseeker, helped officials at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway unveil plans Nov. 19 for an emerging technology day. The day will be part of the track’s 100th anniversary celebration week in May. Sunseeker and members of its racing team were invited to represent the American Solar Challenge during the technology day announcement. IMS officials released a YouTube video about the announcement that featured team member Nicholas Killoran and Sunseeker. Pictured is the main photo that accompanied the track’s official news release. (Photo by IMS)
Deadline for faculty award nominations approaching

Nominations are due Friday, Jan. 21, for the 2011 Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award. Up to three recipients will be selected. The recipients will be honored during the 2011 Academic Convocation and receive a $2,000 honorarium that becomes part of their salary. The award is based on outstanding professional achievement. Wide recognition beyond WMU is essential. Current continuing board-appointed full- and part-time persons with faculty rank are eligible if they have at least seven academic years of service to WMU and are not previous winners. Go to www.wmich.edu/research and click Newsletter & Awards for more information and forms. Questions should be directed to Ernst A. Breisach, emeritus in history, at ebreisach@sbcglobal.net or (269) 344-1734.

Gordon award

Gordon, who has taught at WMU since 1981, based the novel on a world she learned about fresh out of college in the late 1960s when she took a series of jobs intended to boost her life experience. She worked for a period as a groom and hot-walker at Charles Town Race Track in West Virginia. That experience served as background, as well, for her short story about horse racing, “A Night’s Work.” The story was chosen for “Best American Short Stories” in 1995. This is the second time in as many years an author with WMU connections has been among the National Book Award finalists. Alumna Bonnie Jo Campbell, a student of Gordon’s in the 1990s, was named a finalist last fall for her book of short stories, “Bogeywoman.” Gordon has published three other novels: “Bogeywoman,” “Shamp of the City-Solo” and “She Drove Without Stopping.” The latter, often described as a woman’s road novel, was an American Library Association Notable Book for 1990. In 1991, Gordon won an Academy-Institute Award for her fiction from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. “Bogeywoman” made the Los Angeles Times list of the Best Fiction of 2000. Gordon also has earned numerous other awards for her work, which includes a novella, poetry, masques, short stories and essays.

Visit the National Book Foundation site at www.nationalbook.org/nba2010.html to learn more about the competition and judges and to read an extended interview with Gordon about her award-winning book. Go to www.wmich.edu/research and click Newsletter & Awards for more information and forms. Questions should be directed to Ernst A. Breisach, emeritus in history, at ebreisach@sbcglobal.net or (269) 344-1734.

Apps keep WMU fans connected

WMU sports fans can now keep up with their favorite Bronco teams on the go, thanks to three new smart phone applications. Intercollegiate athletics and Smartphones Technologies recently released the WMU Broncos College SuperFans App for the iPhone and Android, as well as a clock widget and live wallpaper for Bronco fans using Android devices. SuperFans provides instant access to college football and basketball scores, schedules, stories, Associated Press and BCS polls, conference standings, and game previews and recaps. It’s available for $2.99 in Apple’s iTunes App Store and the Android Market. The other two Bronco apps also cost $2.99 and are available in the Android Market. The WMU Broncos Clock Widget XL allows users to replace their standard clock with a custom Broncos clock and also displays Mid-American Conference and top-25 stories, Associated Press and BCS polls, conference standings, and game previews and recaps. It’s available for $2.99 in Apple’s iTunes App Store and the Android Market. The other two Bronco apps also cost $2.99 and are available in the Android Market. The WMU Broncos Live Wallpaper features a 3-D Bronco logo and background animation that fades from “WMU” to “Broncos.” Visit www.smartphonestech.com/cs to download the applications.

Among the Chemistry Building’s many storage rooms is one filled with shelves of bottled and powdered chemicals, countertops lined with scales and other measuring equipment, and rows of glass beakers hung on pegs to dry. Sarah Hamilton is in her element working in rooms like that.

Hamilton came to WMU two years ago as chemistry lab coordinator. She manages the stock rooms and conducts lab demonstrations for teaching assistants. In addition, part of her job entails making sure all the right items are available and placed on carts for the chemical labs that are associated with various classes, including general chemistry and organic chemistry.

Hamilton has an educational background and deep interest in chemistry, but working with students and staff members is her favorite part of her position at the University.

“Students have an energy; they get excited about their future. It’s refreshing to work with them,” she says. “There’s always something different to do, and I can work independently to get my job done.”

A native of Dorr, Mich., Hamilton grew up and went to college in West Michigan. She earned her bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Ferris State University. Initially, her academic interest was in forensic science, and she worked as an intern at the Michigan State Police Forensic Science Division in Lansing, Mich.

Despite the numerous television shows on forensic science that wrap up complex cases in an hour, Hamilton says the real-life science is detailed and time consuming, with backlogs for test results sometimes taking a year to clear up.

“It’s fascinating, but it’s not like what you see in the shows,” she says, “who are not going to get your answers right away and, sometimes, not at all.”

Hamilton is married to Michael, a physical therapist at Borgess Medical Center. Opportunities for him to continue his education are what led the couple to locate to Kalamazoo.

Before landing her WMU job, Sarah worked at Avtech Corp. as a laboratory quality assurance professional. She enjoys reading and football, especially cheering on the Broncos and the Detroit Lions. The couple has a pug, Diesel, and a cat, Tessa.