“IN THE NEWS”

JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2014

Prepared by
The office of Public and Media Relations
SUNY College at Old Westbury
Thousands of Volunteers Work Together on Day of Service

The State University of New York kicked off a new partnership with the Governor’s Office and the Office of National and Community Service on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this week. The partnership will foster volunteerism among SUNY students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

The launch, which included a slate of activities and opportunities to volunteer for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this week, was coordinated by the Commission’s 10 regional volunteer centers and SUNY campuses. More than 80 volunteer projects, including ongoing drives for needed items, were hosted, including 24 campus-based days of service.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a visionary leader who inspired us to take better care of ourselves, our neighbors, and our communities, and this partnership is an ideal way for all of New York to honor his legacy this week and throughout the year.

Thank you to the more than 2,000 New Yorkers across the state who volunteer as part of this effort Monday, to the hundreds of staff at our regional centers and food banks who volunteer year-round, and to the SUNY colleges and universities who collaborated to offer projects for students, faculty, and staff on-campuses and in local communities.

SUNY’s partnership with Governor Cuomo and the Office of National and Community Service is facilitating and deepening community engagement and volunteerism across New York not just for SUNY students, faculty, staff, and alumni, but for all of the state’s citizens. This coordinated statewide volunteer effort was a fitting tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. and the hope and inspiration that he instilled in all Americans.

More than 80 volunteer projects are planned throughout the state this week, including opportunities to sort produce at food banks, repair homes, attend disaster preparedness trainings, and participate in a “Basic Need Drive” to collect needed items for local charities. A full list of projects and information is available at:

http://newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov/

- SUNY Old Westbury:
  - 105 student volunteers attended mostly from the Freshman class with high energy and enthusiasm.
  - The volunteers helped create 250 disaster preparedness kits for two nonprofit organizations that serve vulnerable populations, EOC of Nassau and The INN (Interfaith Nutrition Network soup kitchens and shelters); select student leaders delivered the kits to the organizations and got a presentation and tour at their facilities.
  - 5 exhibitors were on hand to introduce attendees to additional ways to serve the community including American Red Cross, All Hands Volunteers, LiVC, Nechama, and Nassau County CERT.

- The event was emceed by Dr. Mary Langlie, Vice President for Student Affairs, and the keynote speaker was Scott Reich (author of *The Power of Citizenship, Why JFK Matters to a New Generation*) who gave an inspiring talk on the importance of public service.

- Volunteers received an engraved commemorative pin at the conclusion of their service act.
(From left) Laura Anker, William Pruitt, Scott Reich and Nellie Taylor took part in SUNY College at Old Westbury’s Community Action Learning and Leadership Partnership Fair.
February marks Black History Month, four weeks dedicated to celebrating achievements of African Americans.

In commemoration, the Islamic Center of Long Island held its 11th annual Black History Month celebration on Saturday, Feb. 1. The theme of the event was “Keeping the Dream Alive.”

The keynote speaker of the event was Dr. Rev. Calvin O. Butts, III. He is president of the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, as well as pastor of the nationally renowned Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City.

Butts spoke about “keeping the dream alive” and what that phrase really meant.

First of all, what is ‘the dream?’” he asked. “We use these terms so easily, but we rarely take the time to unpack and see what they mean.”

Butts brought up the topic of equality and how God wants us to see each other as the same.

“I have to see the shade of your skin, I can’t help that,” he said. “Thank God for eyesight. I know who is black and who is white, but I don’t see you as any better than me or any less than me because of it.”

One of the walls in the Islamic Center was covered with three large posters listing the names of famous black inventors. The posters listed 25 inventors, including John Christian, who invented and patented new lubricants used in high flying aircraft and NASA space missions, and Philip Emeagwali, the 1989 Gordon Bell Prize winner for developing the fastest supercomputer software in the world.

Several Nassau County Legislators were also present at the Black History Month celebration. A few legislators gave brief speeches, including Kevan Abrahams, Carrié Solages and Laura Schaefer, who represents Westbury and Carle Place.

Town of Hempstead Town Clerk Nasrin Ahmad spoke to the audience as a Muslim American. “For me, color doesn’t matter,” said Ahmad. “The most important thing is that we are human beings.”

As an immigrant, a mother of three, and without any formal education, Ahmad remarked on how in America, she is still able to run for a public office. “The American dream is alive and well and I’m living proof of it,” she said.

After the event, there was South Asian, Indian and Pakistani food made by members of the community, as well as refreshments available for those who were in attendance.
In honorary doctorates, a degree of separation

By Kristen D’Andrea

When Detroit Tigers closer Joe Nathan walked across Stony Brook University’s stage for the second time in 16 years in December, he joined a respectable list of notables, including the Dalai Lama and late actor Christopher Reeve.

Neither Reeve, a big-screen “Superman” who became a global quadruple-istic activist after being thrown from a horse during an equestrian competition, nor the manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, ever sweated through a ninth-inning showdown with Robinson Cano. But they both received honorary doctorates from Stony Brook, a distinction now shared by Nathan, a six-time Major League Baseball All-Star.

“I’ve been taken aback and humbled by the whole experience,” Nathan said. “It blew me away. They could have gotten anybody.”

But Stony Brook chose Nathan – a member of the Class of 1997 who earned a degree in business management while starring for the then-NCAA Division III Patriots (now the Division I Seawolves) – to receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters during its winter commencement ceremonies.

The honor was in recognition of Nathan as an upstanding role model and also a thank-you for his commitment to his alma mater and its athletics department; in 2008, the Joe Nathan Charitable Foundation gifted the department $500,000 to help pay for a new baseball facility, ultimately named Joe Nathan Field.

Magnanimous gifts aside, Stony Brook doesn’t just throw around its honorarium. When Stony Brook Vice President of Island Harvest, and Theresa Regnante, president and chief executive officer of the United Way of Long Island.

Sometimes a recipient is chosen because he or she is, without doubt, worthy of the degree. In 2007, when Stony Brook granted an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to former history professor W. Burghardt Turner, it was a symbolic gesture to set things right, according to former Graduate School Dean Lawrence Martin.

For nearly 20 years, Turner was actively engaged in helping under-represented students achieve academic access and success – but family obligations, according to Martin, prevented him from completing his doctorate work. Awarding the honorary degree “corrected what seemed to many of us to be an injustice in the life of someone who had always fought for justice for others,” the former dean said.

However the recipients are chosen, of paramount importance to the school is how the awarding of honorary degrees elevates a university’s reputation.

“Recognizing leaders offers colleges and universities the chance to align themselves with those who are known for excellence and achievement, which is always a good way to strengthen your brand position,” Kinane said. “Such honors may not lead to direct gains in recruitment or fundraising, but they can help to elevate the profile of the institution.”

And while recipients bring distinction to a certain commencement ceremony, they also become linked with the university – a potential long-term benefit for the recipient and the school alike. “Honorary degree recipients become friends of the university and assist in a variety of ways, including academic programming, cultural events and introductions to other persons of distinction,” said Adelphi President Robert Scott.

For the recipient, there are of course perks associated with an honorary doctorate, although specific decorum is required. Recipients are conferred the title of “doctor,” but this is not an earned credential and shouldn’t be listed as such on a resume, noted Marcia Harrington, Long Island University’s PR director.

There’s also a certain alumni pride factor, according to Dr. Joseph Michael Nathan, and the gratification of helping a school grow.

“It shows the respect the school is getting,” Nathan said, “and its motivation to continue to get stronger.”
U.S. securities regulators are wary that pressure to reduce auditor fees could lead to worse audits.

Regulators grow “worried” when auditor fees appear to fluctuate with economic cycles, Paul Beswick, chief accountant at the Securities and Exchange Commission, said at a Practising Law Institute conference in Washington, D.C., on Saturday.

“I wouldn’t actually think audit fees should fluctuate with the state of the economy,” Mr. Beswick said. “In fact, as the economy gets worse, I would think the auditors need to spend more time.”

In financial crises, it is common for companies to say they are cutting payments to vendors by a certain percentage across the board, but Mr. Beswick says he’s heard “horror stories” about companies applying the same pay cuts to their auditors.

When companies switch their audit firms they often receive initial year fee discounts from auditors, but Mr. Beswick cautioned that companies should be careful that a lower audit fee isn’t the primary motivation for switching firms.

Auditors themselves often propose a lower fee for the initial year audit as an incentive to win business. In recent years, when companies switch from a Big Four accounting firm to a non-Big Four firm, audit fees declined about 62% of the time, while audit fees declined about 38% of the time when companies switch between Big Four firms, according to research from professors at the State University of New York at Old Westbury and Florida International University.

“We keep hearing stories about some audit committees fee-hunting,” Mr. Beswick said. Audit committees are in charge of appointing the auditor, but requesting a lower fee from an incoming auditor might not fully appreciate the economics of audit work, Mr. Beswick said.

Audit committees could also run into legal issues in cases where an auditor fee reduction is followed by a material misstatement, and shareholders or regulators may be concerned that board members violated their fiduciary duty, he said.

Fee cuts can put “pressure on the nature of the services,” Mr. Beswick said.

Waiting for Daylight

EXPLORING LONG ISLAND'S ROLE IN THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
By Aileen Jacobson

SECRET PASSAGEWAYS and trap doors led to the attics, cellars and crawl spaces where fleeing slaves were once hidden on the branches of the Underground Railroad that may have wended through Long Island. Most people know that trains were rarely involved in any part of the national...
Slavery and Salvation: Long Island’s Underground Railroad

By Spencer Rumsey

By the light of a single match a group of shadowy figures followed a path that would take them under the cover of darkness from their hiding place in the attic of a Quaker house in Old Westbury, through the fields, to a waiting boat in Roslyn Harbor, where they’d quietly board and hope to cross the Sound safely on their way to freedom. A cough or a sneeze could be suicide. Rachael Hicks, born there in 1857, wouldn’t learn about her own family’s role in Long Island’s Underground Railroad until her older siblings told her about it after the Civil War had ended.

Another key way station, Jericho’s Maine Maid Inn, also held its secrets. Known to us today as the Maine Maid Inn, it was once the home of the Quaker abolitionist Valentine Hicks and his wife Abigail, whose father Elias Hicks had been the spark that helped convince Quakers and other like-minded people after the Revolutionary War that all men were created equal—including people of color who were enslaved. “Elias spread the word and Valentine made the connection,” says Kathleen G. Velsor, a professor in the school of education at SUNY-Old Westbury and author of The Underground Railroad on Long Island, which came out last year. She said that a removable panel behind an upstairs linen closet at the Maine Maid Inn concealed a staircase to the attic where Hicks hid runaways until the coast was clear—and it’s still there today. The Town of Oyster Bay designated the site as an historic landmark in 2012.

Velsor insists that the Island was actually an important destination, albeit a temporary one, because the Quaker “conductors” of the Underground Railroad, which was neither a real railroad nor a tunnel underground, used their Long Island Society of Friends to help the fugitives “hide in plain sight,” dispersed among different homesteads beyond the reach of the slave catchers until they could move “up the trail.”

Unfolding this chapter of our Island’s history has been daunting for Velsor, because documents are scarce and skepticism abounds. One local librarian once responded to her query thusly: “Don’t be silly, dear! There was no Underground Railroad here because there was no slavery on Long Island.”

February 5, 2014
BY BILL SAN ANTONIO

Four Manhasset High School seniors on Wednesday were named among the 300 semifinalists from across the country in this year’s Intel Science Talent Search.

Kevin Tong, Priya Alagesan, Albert Kim and Michael Kusnierek each won a $1,000 prize for their research projects and will learn on Jan. 22 whether they have been named finalists in the competition.

“This is the type of group that would be here on a Saturday, not because I told them to be or they had to be, but because that’s what the research demanded,” said Peter Guastella, Manhasset’s science research advisor.

Guastella attributed the class’s success both to the devotion of the students in furthering their research as well as the contribution of second-year science research teacher Alison Huenger.

“Their class was the first year of what we call the Saturday Science Program, their eighth grade class way back when,” said Peter Guastella, Manhasset’s science research advisor. “From the time they were young, we knew this was an exceptional group, not just the winners, but the entire class.”

Tong, 17, of the Village of Munsey Park, tested the effects of the MFG-E8 glycoprotein on heavily irradiated intestinal cells by monitoring the cell death process.

He found that higher doses of MFG-E8 slowed cell death, which he said can be applied to patients who have undergone chemotherapy or faced radiation from atomic bombs.

“The results came out pretty early in the day, and I was getting ready for school and I got a text from another student,” said Tong. “I couldn’t even check it at first because my Internet was down.”

Alagesan, 17, of the Village of Plandome, analyzed the interactions of different proteins involved in cell division of yeast. She found specific interactions between the SSP1, ADY3 and YSW1 proteins, which she said may have implications on slowing the division of cancer cells.

“I actually didn’t know that the results were released when they were,” said Alagesan, who worked with Aaron Neiman of Stony Brook University’s Simons Summer Research Program. “I got a call from my sister to congratulate me, and then it finally processed.”

Kim, 18, of the unincorporated Stony Hill neighborhood, sought an alternative treatment for Alzheimer’s disease using lyceum barbarum, or goji extract.

He investigated the stress response induced by the environmental toxin 4-nonylphenol, which has been known to mimic Alzheimer’s in the body.

Kim, who studied with Dr. Patrick Cadet and Dr. George B. Stefano of SUNY Old Westbury’s Science Research Institute, found the lyceum barbarum effectively combated 4-nonylphenol in numerous instances of Alzheimer’s.

“I was texting with a friend, telling him to bring music for our chamber group, and he congratulated me,” Kim said. “I didn’t respond, I had to look through my e-mails to see if it was true.”

Kusnierek, 17, of the Village of Munsey Park, tested the effects of carbon nanotubes in strengthening common plastics and killing bacteria.

He said previous research indicated that the plastics would grow stronger with higher concentrations of carbon nanotubes.

But he found in his experiments that the plastics were strongest when the nanotubes were dispersed evenly, and killed the highest percentage of bacteria.

“I was really surprised to hear I was a semifinalist,” he said. “I was sleeping and then I started getting all these text messages congratulating me. It was great.”
New Digital Exhibit on the Black Press: “Songs Without Words”

Many scholars are taking advantage of technology and creating innovative resources on the Black Press. One of these resources is “Songs Without Words,” an excellent digital exhibit of anti-lynching drawings from late nineteenth century African American newspapers by Amanda K. Frisken, Associate Professor of American Studies at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury and MA student in American Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Pamela Robinson.

The exhibit is a digital companion to Frisken’s article “A Song Without Words: Anti-Lynching Imagery in the African American Press, 1889-1898” in the Journal of African American History.

Frisken’s work discloses the way that Black newspapers created awareness of lynching and visually combated these crimes. In so doing, “Songs Without Words” helps us to understand how the power of the visual in the nineteenth century Black Press challenges the photographs of lynched African American men and women throughout the twentieth century that served as souvenirs and mementoes.

This entry was posted in Newspaper and tagged Black Press, History, Lynch, Nineteenth Century on February 26, 2014 by KimGallon.

Woodhead named men’s swimmer of the year

The SUNY College at Old Westbury men’s and women’s swimming teams traveled to Purchase College last week for the 2013-14 Skyline Conference Championships. The Old Westbury men finished in fourth place with 47 points, while the Panther women scored 28 points to earn sixth place.

Port Jefferson’s Bryan Woodhead dominated the championships and was rewarded with the 2013-14 Skyline Conference Men’s Swimmer of the Year award. Woodhead captured his first win of the evening in record breaking fashion, finishing the 100-yard breaststroke in 59.24. Woodhead also recorded wins in the 50-yard freestyle (21.58) and 100-yard freestyle (47.90) races. He set season-best times in the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle and the 100-yard breaststroke, earning All-Skyline Conference First-Team honors in each of those events.

Woodhead earned Co-Swimmer of the Year as a sophomore in 2012-13 after capturing Rookie of the Year honors in 2011-12. Woodhead has won the 50 and 100-yard freestyle races at the past three championships and has 11-career All-Skyline Conference honors.

Cameron Russo added a trio of third-place finishes in the 50-yard freestyle (23.41), 100-yard freestyle (52.87) and 100-yard breaststroke (1:00.05).

On the women’s side, Sandi Woodhead capped a sensational freshman season with a trio of second-place finishes. Woodhead earned All-Skyline Conference Second-Team honors in the 50-yard freestyle (27.18), 100-yard freestyle (58.89) and 100-yard butterfly (1:06.66) races. Jessie O’Hagan had a strong showing in the 200-yard backstroke with a third-place finish in 2:34.80.


Men’s Hoops

The Old Westbury men’s basketball team conceded a road Skyline Conference match up with the Mount Saint Vincent Dolphins (6-13, 4-8 Skyline) Saturday afternoon, 78-68. The Panthers, who had won their two previous conference games, fell to 11-7 overall and 7-4 in conference competition.

Floyd Leroy was Old Westbury’s top scorer with 15 points. Omari Trebuse scored 11 and dished out a game-high seven assists, while Andrew Andries picked up Old Westbury’s only double-double (10 points, 10 rebounds). Mark Gjonlekaq recorded three blocks.

Women’s Hoops

The Old Westbury women’s basketball team dropped its second-consecutive Skyline Conference game Saturday afternoon to the Mount Saint Vincent Dolphins, 77-70. The Panthers now sit at 5-14 on the season, 3-5 Skyline, while the Dolphins improve 13-4, 6-2 Skyline.

DeAndra Scott once again led the way for Old Westbury. The senior’s 15th double-double of the season featured 24 points and 17 rebounds. She had scored a career-high 34 points with 11 rebounds in the team’s 87-73 loss to the Farmingdale State College Rams earlier in the week. Chloe Mellon added 14 points and Clarissa Gallagher 10.
Gjonlekaj named to Skyline honor roll for first time

Gjonlekaj enters the Skyline Conference playoffs averaging 9.6 points, 5.5 rebounds, 1.9 blocks (5th Skyline) and 1.4 steals per game (8th Skyline). As of Feb. 20, Gjonlekaj was amongst national leaders in blocks.

Women’s Basketball

The Skyline Conference announced on Monday afternoon that senior forward DeAndra Scott was named to the Skyline Conference Weekly Honor Roll for the week ending Feb. 23. It’s the eighth time Scott has been named to the Weekly Honor Roll and the 12th overall weekly honor she’s received this season.

Scott continued her stellar double-double filled season averaging 20.7 points and 13.7 rebounds through Old Westbury’s three games last week. Scott also picked-up three steals.

On Wednesday, Scott led the Panthers past NYU-Poly at home with a monster 23 points and 17 rebounds for the 40th double-double of her career. Three nights later on Saturday night, the St. Albans native collected 14 points and eight rebounds in a loss to Farmingdale State, but returned back to her double-double ways on Sunday, scoring 25 points and 16 boards in a road victory over Mount Saint Mary in the final game of her season.

Scott’s 2013-14 campaign was the best of her career, as she averaged 21.4 points (2nd Skyline), 11.8 rebounds (2nd Skyline) and 1.4 steals per game.

Men’s Baseball

The SUNY College at Old Westbury baseball team completed a season opening four-game series with the Frostburg State Bobcats Sunday afternoon in Thomasville, NC, falling in games three and four by the final counts of 4-1 and 15-8, respectively. Old Westbury now stands at 0-4 to open the young season. The team opened the season by falling 7-4 and 13-3 to the Frostburg Saturday afternoon.