Evening for ABAC Sells Out; Big Payoff for Student Scholarship

When Katie Deal takes the ABAC stage on Friday at the annual Evening for ABAC, she will be singing the songs of Patsy Cline.

Vice President for External Affairs and Advancement Paul Williams will be singing the praises of the donors and sponsors for the annual scholarship fundraising event.

“This is just one arrow in the quiver of the Office of College Advancement in terms of fundraising efforts, but it is probably our best known effort,” said Williams. “We need to seize every chance we have to draw attention to the continually rising cost of a college education, the challenge that students and parents have in obtaining the necessary funding, and therefore the enormous good accomplished by those who support ABAC financially.”

Williams said the event is a complete sellout for the first time since the ABAC Foundation changed to a new format in 2008. He expressed his thanks to all sponsors and patrons whose contributions will make a difference in the lives of ABAC students for years to come.

Evening for ABAC actually began as an event called Dollars for Scholars in 1972 when ABAC President Clyde Driggers was looking for a way to complete the funding for the Chapel of All Faiths. After those dollars were in hand, all funds generated since that time have gone to ABAC student scholarships.

Anita Bryant was the first performer in a 37-year Dollars for Scholars run which included top entertainers such as Debbie Reynolds, Ray Stevens, Barbara Mandrell, Marie Osmond, and Roy Clark. Trisha Yearwood attracted the largest crowd ever for the 2006 show, which was held at the University of Georgia Tifton Campus Conference Center.

Through outright gifts and matching funds, Williams said the event has raised millions of dollars for student scholarships. In 2014, the ABAC Foundation distributed $40,000 to 17 very deserving Foundation Scholars. The goal for this year’s gala is to raise $55,000 in funds that will allow for 22 ABAC Foundation Scholarships for the 2015-2016 year.

ABAC Foundation Chief Operating Officer Jodie Snow said the Foundation Scholars program is very competitive and attracts some highly qualified students to the college.

“The Foundation Scholars are some of the top academic students from area high schools,” Snow said. “They have a lot of choices as far as colleges but the Foundation Scholars’ program offers them a tremendous incentive to choose ABAC.”

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AET Hosts Truck & Tractor Pull Thursday - Saturday

The AET Club will host a truck and tractor pull Thursday through Saturday at the ABAC Pull Track. The events on Thursday and Friday will begin at 7 p.m., and the pulling action on Saturday begins at 6 p.m. This is the first sanctioned truck and tractor pull at the college in almost 30 years.

Stock Truck Night on March 5 kicks off the three-day event. Tickets are only $5 per person to attend that evening. Truck owners can participate in the pull for $5 per pull. A special ABAC students only pulling class will also be part of the night’s schedule.

Highlighting the truck and tractor pull will be the Southern Pullers Association Super Modified pulls on March 6-7. Admission for each of those nights is $15 for adults, $10 for children 6-10 years of age, and free to children five and under.

AET Club President Brittany Gunter said The Southern Pullers Association, Inc., was formed in the early 90s to help organize all the local pullers who have been pulling for years under other sanctioning bodies. Some of the regular pullers have been pulling since the early 70s and are still dedicated pullers with the Southern Pullers Association organization today.

For more information on the AET Truck and Tractor Pull, contact Gunter via e-mail at bgunter1@stallions.abac.edu.
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Williams said Evening for ABAC serves three primary purposes for the college. First, it allows the Office of College Advancement to raise funds exclusively for the ABAC Foundation scholarships; it provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievement of the recipients of the scholarships; and it offers an opportunity to invite benefactors and other supporters to celebrate another year of progress in the life of ABAC.

“Evening for ABAC also impacts future students of the college,” Williams said. “The funds raised from Evening for ABAC indirectly benefit all ABAC students who may need financial assistance attending college because the awarding of the ABAC Foundation Scholarships means that these recipients are not using less restrictive funds.

“Attracting these top academic students to the campus also improves the academic reputation of the college, adding value to an ABAC degree for all graduates – past, present, and future.”

As evidenced by this year’s sellout, Williams believes Evening for ABAC has the potential to grow well beyond its current size and have a much more significant financial impact as it likely outgrows the existing campus facilities.

“The bottom line is that the mission of the Office of College Advancement and the Evening for ABAC event may seem to be about raising money, but that is just a means to the real objective which is changing lives by allowing deserving students access to a quality education that they might not get otherwise,” Williams said.

Fulbright Scholar Speaks to Faculty and Students

Last Tuesday, the Center for Teaching and Learning hosted Fulbright Scholar, Raj Sashti, Director, International Education, Nine University and College International Studies Consortium of Georgia. In conjunction with this visit, Sashti spoke to International Business students about doing business and the culture in Southeast Asia.

The Whipping Man

When General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865 at the Appomattox Court House, lives changed across the country as the long, bloody Civil War was finally at an end.

The Baldwin Players will examine three of those lives in a special presentation of “The Whipping Man” Thurs. - Sat. at 7 p.m. each night at the Peanut Museum of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC.

The ticket cost for the play by Matthew Lopez is $7 per person. Tickets are available at www.purplepass.com/abac or by calling (229) 391-4895. The tickets are available at no charge to ABAC students, faculty, and staff.

The student newspaper and the student television broadcast team at ABAC received 10 awards at the recent Southern Regional Press Institute (SRPI) in Savannah. ABAC students competed against other students in two-year journalism programs.

Dr. Thomas Grant, advisor to “The Stallion,” said the publication received second place in the categories of Best Overall Newspaper and Online Newspaper. In individual categories, eight ABAC students claimed awards.

Kelly Burge, a journalism and mass media major from the United Kingdom, received second place in the Sports Writing division. In Feature Writing, first place went to Jason Brown, a rural studies major from Ashburn. Second place was awarded jointly to recent graduate Dixon Fletcher, who is now majoring in digital media at Western Kentucky, and Prue Benson, a former journalism and mass media major from Tifton. Jenna Pope, a history major from Norman Park, received first place in the Editorial/Column Writing category.

Grace Holland, a journalism and mass media major from Tifton, took top honors in Photography. Holland is the political editor for the newspaper. Jo-Leigh Warren, a journalism and mass media major from Fitzgerald, and Matthew Reid, a business and economic development major from Eatonton, received first and second places respectively in the Video category.
Walker to Display Artwork Beginning Today in Bowen Hall

Jordan Walker, adjunct art appreciation instructor at ABAC, will showcase his selected artwork in the exhibit “Echoes – New Beginnings” beginning Monday and continuing until March 13 in the Art Gallery in Bowen Hall.

A reception on Thursday from 4-6:30 p.m. will also be a part of Walker’s gallery showing. Dr. Jeff Newberry, ABAC poet-in-residence, and a select group of poets will present readings during the reception.

“Painting has always served as a method of telling stories in my work, and it is a constant endeavor to explore the narrative potential of both image and material,” said Walker. “These ‘narratives’ often take the form of probing psychological introspection. Through both portraiture and abstract compositions, I have sought to provide a chronicle of the dialogue between the painter and the painting that simultaneously reflects my own varying mental states at the time. By laying bare certain aspects of my own psyche, I hope to address these traits in humanity on a universal level.”

A native of Preston, Walker attended Georgia Southwestern before going on to receive his master’s degree in fine art from Long Island University in New York. He has exhibited art in New York City and throughout Long Island.

Mark Your Calendars for the Folklife Festival April 11

Connect with the rich, rural heritage of South Georgia during the Georgia Museum of Agriculture’s annual Folklife Festival April 11. The event showcasing South Georgia history, art and culture runs from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. and features events and activities to please all. A highlight of the Festival is the annual operation of the Turpentine Still, this ceremonial firing of the Still marks the annual turpentine distillation. Guests will enjoy numerous interactive activities and demonstrations including sheep shearing, wool spinning, weaving, wool washing, and log hewing. Little ones can also enjoy having their faces painted. As always the day would not be complete without a ride on the 1917 Vulcan steam train. The festival also coincides with the seasonal opening of the Wiregrass Farmers Market. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for seniors 55+, $5 children 5+ and free for children under four.

Please submit information by Thursday at noon to Lindsey Roberts at lroberts@abac.edu for inclusion in the next edition of the FOCUS.
Sign-up for ‘Yakking with the Boss’ April 11 at ABAC

As part of the Homecoming Week festivities from April 6-12, the Stafford School of Business Alumni Council will host “Yakking with the Boss”, a first-time kayaking event on Lake Baldwin April 11 at 1:30 p.m. This event is open to the public and registration is required.

There is a cost of $20 for those who register by the early bird date of March 27 and a $25 fee for those who register on March 28 or later. Those interested can also sign up the day of the race if space is available. The fee is payable by cash or check made out to the ABAC Foundation.

Those who register by March 27 will receive a free t-shirt. After the early bird registration deadline, t-shirts will be given out upon registration until supplies last. All those competing in the race must bring their own kayak.

Funds from this event will help the Stafford School of Business in special projects for the students and provide scholarships. For more information on the “Yakking with the Boss” event or to register, visit www.abac.edu/kayakrace.

Stem Students Learn About Search Engine Mathematics

Dr. Jan Gregus, Dr. Eunkyung You and Amanda Urquhart accompanied twelve STEM Affiliates students to the Mercer University Undergraduate Research in Mathematics Conference (MUURMaC). The students attended presentations by current undergraduate students on many mathematic topics. The keynote speaker, Dr. Amy Langville, co-author of the award-winning “Google’s PageRank and Beyond: The Science of Search Engine Ranking”, presented on how search engines use mathematics to organize the web and her life as a mathematical consultant. Langville was an expert analyst during the patent infringement case regarding link analysis algorithms used by search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, and AOL.

Turf Students Represent ABAC in San Antonio

Four Turfgrass and Golf Course Management students represented ABAC at the Golf Industry Show and Superintendents Conference in San Antonio, TX. The students attended educational seminars, visited with ABAC alumni, and gained experience networking with golf course superintendents.

Pictured (left to right): Patrick Douglas, Travis Forbes, Ricky Powell, Zach Rhoden and John Layton.

ABAC Travels to Atlanta for Dinner and Show

Fifty of ABAC’s alumni and friends had a Wicked good time traveling to Atlanta on Saturday, February 21. They ate lunch at the Varsity, enjoyed Wicked at the Fox, and dined at the Whistle Stop Café in Juliette for supper.

For more information about traveling with ABAC, visit abac.edu/travel.

ABAC BIRTHDAYS

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