Ashburn Student Wins Top Academic Award at Honors Day

Sarah A. Rooks, a senior biology major from Ashburn, was named the top academic student at ABAC during Wednesday’s Honors Day ceremony.

Rooks became the first person in the 28-year history of the J.G. Woodroof Award to receive the distinction on two occasions. She received her first Woodroof Award in 2013. The award is given annually to a student at Honors Day in recognition of top academic standing at the institution. Rooks also received the discipline award in biology from the School of Science and Mathematics in the General Studies track at the ceremony.

Woodroof was the first president of ABAC in 1933. Each of the 30 units of the University System of Georgia selects a top student as the Academic Recognition Day Student of the Year who is also honored in a proclamation by the Georgia General Assembly. A Distinguished Honor student with a perfect 4.0 grade point average, Rooks has been named to the President’s List and has been selected as an Achievement Through Student Support and Experiential Training in Science (ASSETS) Scholar. She is a member of the ABAC Honors Program and the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Rooks has also served as a member of the national biological honors society, TriBeta; served as a judge for the Georgia Regional Science Fair; participated in the Miss ABAC contest; and presented research at two conferences during her time at the college.

A total of 19 discipline awards were also presented to ABAC students who excelled in their individual disciplines. Discipline award winners from students obtaining associate degrees in the School of Agriculture and Natural Resources included

Continued on page 3

ABAC Honors Top Faculty, Staff, Advisor and Administrator

The top faculty member, staff member, administrator, and academic advisor for the 2014-2015 academic year were recognized during Wednesday’s Honors Day ceremony at ABAC.

Dr. Hans Schmeisser, Assistant Professor of Political Science, received the W. Bruce and Rosalyn Ray Donaldson Award for Teaching Excellence. Sherin Nixon, Credentials Data Processor in the Office of Enterprise Data Services, was honored with the Roy R. Jackson, Sr., Award for Staff Excellence. Javier Gonzalez, Director of Multicultural Education Programs, received the E. Lanier Carson Leadership Award for College Administrators, and Rebecca Daly Cofer, Coordinator of the Academic Achievement Center, received the W. Bruce General Studies track at the ceremony.

Schmeisser earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from Mercer University, graduating magna cum laude in 2002. He then attained both his master’s degree and doctorate in political science from the University of Florida. A member of the ABAC faculty since 2009, Schmeisser serves as the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

An advisor for the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the Political Science Club, Schmeisser received the Impact Award from the Student Government Association in 2010. In the Tifton community, he is a member of Kiwanis Club and attends St. Anne’s Episcopal Church where he teaches Sunday School.

Nixon retired from ABAC last month after serving the college for over 29 years. She worked in the Office of Enterprise Data Services as a Credentials Data Processor, but her time at ABAC was not strictly served in an office. She could be found on campus giving a financial aid presentation to Upward Bound and CAMP students, administering the SAT/Continued on page 3
Exciting and Eventful Homecoming Week!

Below you'll find a quick look at the many activities from Homecoming:

Alumni vs. Student Softball Game

Laser Tag

Yaking With The BOSS

Ag Awareness Day

Forestry Society Wins Stallion Cup

King and Queen

Slime Your Professor

Donna Campbell Leads Parade

Ambassadors Win Sidewalk Chalk

Broadway Night

Pie the Dean

Alumni Awards & Athletics Hall of Fame

Homecoming Parade

Stallion Marketplace

Greek Council Luau
Register for Carry the Load and Buy A Shirt

Swing by Lewis Hall or the Tiftarea YMCA and purchase a Carry The Load shirt for only $10. For more information about the Step-off Rally on April 23, visit carrytheload.org/tifton or email tifton@carrytheload.org

Donaldson and ABAC Alumni Association Award Nominations Due Thurs.

It’s time for students to apply for the Donaldson and ABAC Alumni Association Awards. Eligible students have been notified, but please encourage your best and brightest to apply for these great awards which will be presented during Graduation May 7. Students will need three letters of recommendations in their packet which is due by Thursday, April 16. For more information and to apply, visit http://www.abac.edu/more/alumni-association/awards-information

Woodroof continued from page 1

Meagan R. Giddens from Ocilla, Diversified Agriculture Technology; Jeb C. Stewart from Swainsboro, Environmental Horticulture Technology; and Ryan M. Falk from Dublin, Forestry Technology.

Discipline award winners working toward a bachelor’s degree in diversified agriculture included Joshua A. Willis from Bogart, Agribusiness track; Matthew S. Bridges of Lakeland, Crop Production track; Matthew D. Makarow from Nashville, Crop and Soil Science track; Nelson R. Rentz of Ehrhardt, S.C., General Studies track; and Allison L. Williams of Lakeland, Fla., Livestock Production track. Discipline winners working toward a bachelor’s degree in the field of natural resource management included David-Lee Bradford from Macon, Forestry track; and Scott W. Fulton of Whitesburg, Wildlife track.

Kristoff Coхран from Thomasville received the discipline award in the bachelor’s degree track in Business and Economic Development from the Stafford School of Business. The School of Human Sciences awarded Rural Studies bachelor’s degree candidates Edith D. Barrios of Ocilla and Jessica L. VanDeVelde of Omega with the discipline award for the Social and Community Development track.

Megan C. Wehmeier of Douglas received the discipline award for the associate’s degree in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Music from the School of Liberal Arts. Other discipline winners from the School of Liberal Arts included Rural Studies bachelor’s degree students Maggie M. Hart of Moultrie, Agricultural Communication; Crystal E. Goines of Ty Ty, Writing and Communication; and Douglas Shawn Burnette of Cordele, Politics and Modern Cultures.

The discipline award winner in the School of Nursing and Health Sciences was Brittany L. Benton of Gainesville. Besides Rooks’ award, the School of Science and Mathematics also presented Eduardo D. Moreno from Moultrie the Biology pre-professional track award. He is working toward the bachelor of science degree in biology.

Faculty continued from page 1

ACT on a Saturday, or advising members of the Christian Student Fellowship Club.

One of Nixon’s colleagues said, “She was never too busy to help me with any problem I faced while I was a student at ABAC. Now that I am an employee, she has never said no to me when I call her asking for assistance with a student.”

An administrator at ABAC since 2003, Gonzalez was selected for the Executive Leadership Institute of the University System of Georgia in 2009. He was also the guest speaker at the 2009 ABAC fall commencement ceremony. In 2010, Gonzalez was named as the president of the National HEP-CAMP Association.

Gonzalez began his educational career by receiving his GED certificate from the Heart of Georgia Technical Institute. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Spanish from Georgia Southern and his master’s degree in education leadership from Columbus State. In the last three years, he has worked successfully to obtain grants in excess of $6 million for ABAC.

Cofer received her bachelor’s degrees in English and history in 2004 and her master’s degree in English Literature in 2006, all from Virginia Tech. She joined the ABAC faculty in 2009. At ABAC, she serves as the coordinator of the Academic Achievement Center, advises pre-nursing students and is the Study Abroad Coordinator. She also currently serves as an academic support counselor.

Cofer was named Outstanding New Advisor by the National Academic Advising Association in 2009 and served as a mentor to the organization’s Emerging Leader Program class of 2012-2014. She has also published extensively on tutoring for the College Reading Learning Association.
Alumni Association Hosts Senior Cookout on April 20

All students graduating with a bachelors degree are invited to the Senior Class Cookout on Monday, April 20, at the Alumni House. Dinner will be served and many alumni will be there to provide advice that helped them when they graduated. All attending seniors will receive a gift from the Alumni Association. Please encourage students to RSVP at http://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/Z0zgeD1j02t

Spring Band Performances Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Howard

The Concert Band at ABAC will present its spring concert on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Howard Auditorium.

This performance is free of charge but space is limited. Those interested in the attending are encouraged to arrive early.

The concert begins with the dramatic concert opener entitled “Go.” Composer Samuel Hazo said, “Go was written to be an impact-filled opener that would truly set the concert hall on notice.”

Then the ABAC Band will perform Quincy Hilliard’s monumental work “Requiem”, which portrays an earthquake that buried a city in Cyprus in the year 493 AD.

Guest conductor for the show this evening is retired Tift County High Band Director Bill Belcher. He will conduct John Philip Sousa’s “Riders For the Flag” march.

The ABAC Concert Band will also perform German composer Otto Schwarz’s “Roller Coaster” and follow up with a beautiful romantic composition, “Mountain Thyme”, by Samuel Hazo. Next will be Robert Longfield’s “Italian Holiday” featuring selections from all of the great Italian operas and folk music.

Closing out the spring concert will be an impressive history of our country through music entitled “An American Spectacular” by composer Chris Sharp.

For more information contact Johnny Folsom at (229) 391-4944.

ASSETS Represent ABAC in Tennessee

Members of the School of Science and Math accompanied 17 students to the Association of Southeastern Biologists annual meeting in Chattanooga, TN April 1-4. During the meeting the students presented posters on research projects they conducted on various projects like sorghum resistance to aphids, mercury in fish in south Georgia lakes, and population studies of largemouth bass. One student presented a talk in the Tri Beta competition on her work with tomato spotted wilt in tobacco. They also went on field trips around south Tennessee to Sequatchie cave where they searched for an endangered snail, hiked the Lula Lake Land Trust, investigated unique plant life of the area, and took an Ichthyologic exploration of S. Chickamauga Creek where they found native darters and crawfish.

‘Bottles and Brushes’ Art Class at Museum on April 24

The Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village at ABAC will host a “Bottles and Brushes” art class from 6-8 p.m. on April 24. Participants will paint “Green Forest” by Brenda Rose, a local artist and the “Bottles and Brushes” instructor.

“For this class, Brenda will teach students how to paint with a palette knife instead of a brush,” Polly Huff, assistant director and curator at the Museum, said. “The effect is truly stunning.”

Rose will guide participants through the process of recreating her original work, while students create their own interpretation before their eyes. Participants can bring their favorite beverage while enjoying an evening of creativity and fun. The Gallery at the Museum will provide the paint, canvas and brushes.

Registration for the class is on a first come, first served basis upon payment of the fee. Space is limited so early registration is important. Participants must register ahead of time by contacting Huff by e-mail at phuff@abac.edu.

The class fee is $25 per person or $40 for couples. It is non-refundable and non-transferable. The fee includes all supplies and instruction.

Forestry Students at Folklife

Members of the Forestry Club volunteered their time to demonstrate logging sports at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture’s Folklife Festival on Sat.
Internationally acclaimed trombonist Ron Westray will join jazz trumpet artist Thomas Heflin for a dynamic performance at 7 p.m. on Thursday of The Ron Westray-Thomas Heflin Quintet in the final show of this season’s performing arts series at ABAC. A Jazz Clinic will be held at 4 p.m. in Howard Auditorium prior to the performance.

A limited number of tickets priced at $15 each for adults and $10 each for students are available for the Westray-Heflin performance by calling (229) 391-4895 or by visiting www.purplepass.com/abac.

Heflin currently serves as the director of the ABAC jazz band and as assistant professor of jazz in the School of Liberal Arts at ABAC. In 2005, he placed second in the Carmine Caruso International Jazz Trumpet Solo Competition in Seattle, Wash. He has released three albums as a leader on Blue Canoe Records, the last of which was a collaborative CD with Westray.

In addition to a former position as brass instructor at Roane State Community College, Heflin has served as the Central Greenough Artist-in-Residence in Western Australia and as an artist-in-residence with the Always on Stage Festival in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada. In 2009, he received his doctorate in Music Performance from the University of Texas. Shortly after, he moved to New York City and served as Program Manager and on the jazz faculty at the Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division for five years.

Westray, who will be featured with the ABAC jazz band during the evening, is well-known as one of the most highly regarded trombonists of his generation. He was the lead trombonist with Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. In 2009, Westray and Heflin released an album together, "Live from Austin," a live recording from the Elephant Room in Austin, Tex.

The ABAC jazz band has performed throughout the Southeastern United States, Mexico and Europe including performances at the Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, the North Sea Jazz Festival in Amsterdam and two World Fairs. The band also performed at the opening of the Olympic Games in Atlanta. The musicians have also been featured in theme parks such as Disney World, EPCOT Center, Sea World, and Six Flags over Georgia.

The Westray-Heflin performance in Howard Auditorium serves as the icing on the cake for the day-long ABAC Jazz Festival, which will feature 13 high school jazz bands from across the state beginning at 10 a.m. on the ABAC campus.

The high school jazz band performances on The Meadows are open to the public at no charge. Visitors can bring their own lunch or just come and listen to the music. In the event of rain, the Jazz Festival will take place in Howard Auditorium.

Sponsored by the School of Liberal Arts, the Jazz Festival promotes jazz and jazz education in South Georgia. For additional information on this event, interested persons can call the ABAC music program office at (229) 391-4945.

Ron Westray-Thomas Heflin Quintet, Jazz Festival Thursday

FACS Clubs Hosts Meeting
The Georgia Association of Family and Consumer Sciences hosted its Annual Meeting at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture on Friday, March 27. Members of the ABAC Family & Consumer Sciences Club assisted in hosting family and consumer sciences professionals and students from institutions around the state. Dr. Darby Sewell coordinated the local arrangements.

Pre-K Day at ABAC
The Tift County Pre-K Center enjoyed a recent fun-filled and educational field trip to ABAC. The tiny Future Stallions and Fillies enjoyed creating an art project, the library, viewing a puppet show, participating in an alphabet egg hunt, and dancing with the Equus Dance Team. The ABAC students enrolled in the education courses served as teachers and guides for the visitors.