



FOCUS

ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

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Join members of the ABAC Alumni Association on July 20 at the Murray County Ag Center, 1006 Green Road, Chatsworth, GA. Stop by anytime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and visit with alumni, current students, administrators, and prospective students. For more information about the event, contact Lynda Fisher at lfisher@abac.edu or 229.391.4900.

Museum to Co-Host 'Back Roads of Georgia' Essay Contest

The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture at ABAC, in conjunction with *Georgia Backroads Magazine* and the Tifton-Tift County Arts Council, will host a "Back Roads of Georgia" essay competition through Sept. 16. The contest runs in conjunction with the "Back Roads of Georgia" photo competition and a new exhibit which begins Oct. 19.

Gallery Coordinator Polly Huff said the exhibit will be on display through Jan. 25, 2014. The top three essays will be displayed during the exhibit and excerpts read during the awards reception at 6 p.m. on Oct. 18. Any Georgia resident 18 years or older is eligible to participate.

A total of \$1,000 in cash prizes will be awarded by the Tifton-Tift County Arts Council, with special consideration for possible publishing by *Georgia Backroads Magazine*. The first place winner will receive \$500, the second place winner will receive \$200, and the third place winner will receive \$100. Four essays will receive honorable mention status, along with a \$50 cash prize. All seven finalists will receive an annual pass to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture

& Historic Village.

South Georgia author Janice Daugharty will judge the essay contest. Daugharty is a Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of numerous novels and shorter works, including her latest book "Two Shades of Morning". She is also the current Writer in Residence for ABAC.

Essays should be no longer than 4,000 words and should address the "Back Roads of Georgia" theme. Essays can be memoirs or other personal accounts; profiles of people, places or events; lyrical essays; essays related to nature; investigative pieces; or travel or food narratives. Essays should be of literary and journalistic interest with attention paid to voice and writing techniques such as scene and dialogue. Essays must be submitted in Microsoft Word or a similar format. No previously published work will be accepted. The writer's name should not be on the essay itself.

The essay and cover letter must be submitted via email by Sept. 16 to Huff at phuff@abac.edu. The cover letter is required with each essay submission.

The letter must include the writer's name, address, email, and phone number. It must also include the title of essay, the name that will appear on the check for the entry fee, and the entry fee check number. This information should be in the main body of the email as well.

Participants may enter up to three submissions. Each submission should be in a separate email with its own cover letter. An entry fee of \$5 for each essay should be paid by check and mailed to Polly Huff, GMA Gallery Curator, 1392 Whiddon Mill Road, Tifton, GA 31793. The writer's name and title of essay(s) should be on the memo line of the check. Checks should be made out to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture. The submission process is not complete until the fee is paid.

Please e-mail all essay submissions to Huff at phuff@abac.edu. For any questions regarding the essay contest, interested persons can contact Dr. Sandra Giles, Professor of English, at sgiles@abac.edu.

Bridges Begins Eighth Year as ABAC President

With seven years as president of ABAC under his belt, Dr. David Bridges is thinking about the future. But then again, the 10th president in the history of ABAC never stops thinking about days to come.

"We've got to be thinking about the next innovation that will continue to make ABAC a place where people choose to come," Bridges, who began his eighth year as the ABAC

president on July 1, said. "My goal for ABAC is for it to be as successful in the future as it has been in the past. For that to happen, we must do things differently."

Bridges believes that the addition of bachelor's degrees coupled with strong associate degree programs such as nursing will keep ABAC on a path toward an enrollment of 4,000 students in the future.

"Our goal is a slow, steady enrollment growth where we'll approach 4,000 students over the next five years," Bridges said. "The advantage we have is that our tuition is very low. ABAC is a great value for students with tuition rates for the coming year of about \$1,400 per semester compared to about \$2,400 and \$4,000/semester for USG State Universities and USG Research Universities, respectively."

"Agriculture, forestry, and wildlife programs are growing rapidly. ABAC graduates with these degrees are finding good-paying. These programs are our meat and potatoes. I can see 1,000 students just in that school (Agriculture and Natural Resources) alone this year."

Bridges, the only ABAC president who is also an ABAC alumnus (Class of '78), said the bachelor's degree in biology is doing "phenomenally well." Graduates use the degree as an entry point into medical school, dental school, pharmacy school, vet school and other health-related occupations. With the addition of a new science building in the near future, these programs will grow even more.

He predicts the next big enrollment surge will come in the Stafford School of Business.

"Susan and Dill Driscoll brought creativity, innovation and energy in their first year as co-deans of that school," Bridges said. "All colleges have business schools but not all colleges approach it like we do. Enhancement of programs in business in the Stafford School of Business will have a long-



Dr. Bridges on March 1 at the Historic Front Campus Rededication ceremony.

lasting positive impact on the college and the community."

"It has been a difficult three or four or five years here during this time of economic downturn, particularly in rural communities," Bridges said. "But the long term impact is really what we need to concentrate on and a forthcoming economic impact study is likely to show that ABAC's impact is bigger

than ever."

"Because of the bachelor's degrees, students are staying longer, spending more money, and assimilate into the community. They find jobs. They find spouses. Some of them never leave. I don't know of any other institution in this town that brings in a more diverse group of people that leave a longer lasting impact on this community.

"In a 10 or 12 year period, we run thousands of people through the college. Many of them get degrees, stay in Tifton, raise a family, and contribute to the community."

Bridges said the newly formed Board of Regents showed great insight when they changed the name of the college in 1933 from the Georgia State College for Men to Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

"We are just a really good fit for this area," Bridges said. "Agriculture continues to be the state's largest industry. Every day I see our graduates who have gotten their degrees and put down roots here."

ABAC has made tremendous strides forward since Bridges assumed the presidency on July 1, 2006. To the outsider, the most noticeable change is the appearance of the front campus, including the reopening of the three original buildings.

Tift, Lewis, and Herring halls were the centerpiece of the campus when it opened as the Second District Agricultural and Mechanical School on Feb. 20, 1908. Time took its toll on the three structures. As a result, Lewis and Herring closed for 20 years, and Tift closed for five years until it reopened on May 14, 2012. Lewis and Herring reopened on March 1, 2013.

"Our local legislative delegation was extremely supportive on that project," Bridges said. "It took two chancellors and two governors but we got it done."

The addition of bachelor's degrees in January, 2008 will always be a milestone in Bridges' presidency. Until that point,

associate degrees had been the highest level of academic accomplishment at ABAC for 75 years. ABAC now offers bachelor's degrees in biology, natural resources (forestry and wildlife), agriculture, and turfgrass and golf course management. As part of its Rural Studies Program ABAC offers bachelor's degrees in business and economic development, writing and communications, social and community development, and politics and modern cultures. During the fall of 2012, 20 percent of ABAC's 3,200 students were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs.

Other headline accomplishments during the past seven years include the opening of the Health Sciences Building, the creation of an intercollegiate soccer team, the opening of ABAC Lakeside student housing, the division of the curriculum into six schools study with a dean for each school, the celebration of the college's 100th birthday, the addition of the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village to the campus, and the raising of the admissions standards.

"We raised the bar on our admissions standards so that we could recruit and retain better students," Bridges said. "It did have an effect on enrollment but it really improved the quality of academic programs and enhanced the student experience at ABAC."

The Tifton/Tift County Chamber of Commerce recognized Bridges' willingness to lead change when it awarded him the John Hunt Entrepreneur of the Year award in 2013. The 55-year-old native of Parrott, Ga., who became a grandfather for the first time in May, said he never really thought of himself as an entrepreneur but he recognizes that forward movement requires change and with that comes some risk. "ABAC has accomplished a great deal. I expect ABAC to accomplish even more in the future," Bridges said. "A great deal of change has occurred in higher education. It will change even more in the next 24 months. In fact, I predict it will change more in the next 24 months that it has changed in the last five years."

Without using a crystal ball, where does Bridges see ABAC five years from now?

"ABAC will be a place that carries a reputation for preparing students for life," Bridges said. "It will continue to be a desirable place for students to go to college. I want to see students lined up on the front steps of Herring Hall because they have made the choice to come to ABAC."

Museum Gallery Co-Hosts 'Back Roads of Georgia' Photography Contest

Entry forms will be accepted through Sept. 1 for the "Back Roads of Georgia" photo contest sponsored by The Gallery at the Georgia Museum of Agriculture at ABAC, Georgia Backroads Magazine and the Tifton-Tift County Arts Council.

The contest ties in to an essay contest and an exhibit titled "Back Roads of Georgia" which begins at 10 a.m. on Oct. 19 and runs through Jan. 25, 2014. The first 200 photographs entered in the competition will be displayed during the exhibit. Any Georgia resident 18 years or older is eligible to participate. The awards reception will take place at 6 p.m. on Oct. 18 at the GMA Gallery.

A total of \$1,000 in cash prizes will be awarded by the Tifton-Tift County Arts Council, with special consideration for publishing by co-presenter Georgia Backroads Magazine. The first place winner will receive \$500 and a four-year subscription to Georgia Backroads Magazine; the second place winner will receive \$200 and a three-year subscription to Georgia Backroads Magazine; and the third place winner will receive \$100 and a two-year subscription to Georgia Backroads Magazine.

Four photographs will receive honorable mention status, along with a \$50

cash prize and a one-year subscription to Georgia Backroads Magazine. All seven finalists will receive an annual pass to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and Historic Village, and the top three photos will be featured in the spring 2014 edition of Georgia Backroads Magazine.

Photographers can submit up to five photographs. Registration is \$5 per submitted image. Payment must be made by cash or check. All checks should be made out to the Georgia Museum of Agriculture and submitted at the time that work is delivered to the Gallery.

W. A. Park, retired professor of art and photography at Valdosta State University's School of Art, will judge the juried exhibition. Park will judge photographic interpretations of rural Georgia, antique barns, and farm life to go along with the "Back Roads of Georgia" theme.

Photographs must be at least 8x10 inches and no bigger than 20x16 inches. All submitted entries must be framed, matted, or mounted on foamboard. Framed works must have a hanging wire or a sawtooth hanger. Do not use any visible watermarks, copyright, or

added identification on the images. Entrants must own and be the author of all images submitted.

The Gallery Curator reserves the right to reject any works deemed inappropriate for family viewing. Images must be delivered to the Gallery no later than 4 p.m. on Oct. 12 to be included in the jurying process.

Any work in the exhibition can be offered for sale with permission from the photographer, who will retain copyright and all other rights. The Gallery retains a 10 percent commission on sold works and reserves the right to use award-winning images for marketing and promotional purposes. All unsold work must be picked up on Jan. 25 from noon - 4:30 p.m.

For more information, interested persons can contact Huff at (229) 391-5222.



Position Changes Around Campus

- **Dr. Amy Willis** will serve as interim Chief Data Officer and Registrar.
- **Elisabeth O'Quinn** is the new Business Apprentice for the Stafford School of Business. She is responsible for leading student projects for business partners, alumni relations, on-going operations of The Stafford School of Business and Lewis Hall, as well as fundraising and student recruitment activities.
- **Kim Talley** is now serving as the Office Coordinator for Academic Support. She will ensure that the office is run efficiently and provide top notch customer service for both students and staff.
- **Rebecca Cofer** has now transitioned to the Academic Achievement Center Coordinator. She will still be available to assist students/staff with their academic needs and questions, and will continue serving as a Pre-Nursing advisor.
- **Dale White** he has taken on the role of Head Tennis Coach and Academic Support Counselor.
- **Jennifer Gunn** has accepted the part-time administrative assistant's position in Human Resources and will be primarily responsible for TAP, Student Workers, and other general HR duties. In addition, she will continue to work part time for CAMP/HEP in her administrative support role for that group.
- **Sara Mumm** has begun her duties as the Cashier/Imaging Specialist and will be working with the Business Office and Enterprise Data Services.
- **Danielle Poole** will now be serving as the full-time Textbook Coordinator in the Bookstore.

Moore Named SFS Customer Service Representative

Tifton native and ABAC alumnus Allison Moore has accepted a position as the Student Financial Services new customer service representative.



Moore graduated from ABAC in 2010 with an Associate's in Political Science. She then went to UGA and was accepted into the Terry College of Business. She graduated this past May with a BBA in Economics. Welcome her to the ABAC Family. Moore can be reached at 229.391.4909 or amoore@abac.edu.

The FOCUS is an electronic publication produced by the ABAC Public Relations Office. Please submit information by **Thursday at noon** to Ashley Mock at amock@abac.edu for inclusion in the next FOCUS.

Travel From Beantown to the Smoky Mountains this Fall With ABAC

From historic Boston to the Christmas markets in Germany, the Office of College Advancement at ABAC offers a smorgasbord of travel opportunities this fall in cooperation with Kelly Tours and Collette Vacations.

Open to anyone with a passion for travel, the trips feature an educational experience loaded with fun and adventure. For more information on any of these excursions, interested persons can visit the ABAC travel web site at <http://www.abac.edu/more/office-of-college-advancement-alumni/travel-with-abac>, contact Diane Kilgore at dkilgore@abac.edu, or call (229) 391-5070. Prices for all trips listed below are per person rates and based on double occupancy.

The fall travel season begins Sept. 5-17 with a 13-day trip to South Africa with an optional three-night post tour extension of Victoria Falls. Focusing on the culture and nature of the country, highlights will include Johannesburg, Panoramic Route, Kruger National Park, Cape Town, Table Mountain, and the Featherbed Nature Reserve. This trip is \$5,049 and includes 21 meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare.

Travelers will cruise Canada and New England from Sept. 10-22. Visit Niagara Falls, Montreal, and Quebec before boarding the MS *Veedham* to Prince Edward Island. Once on board, passengers will also travel to Halifax for a guided photography tour and Bar Harbor, Maine, where travelers can climb Cadillac Mountain, tour the summit of Mount Desert, and visit Acadia National Park. Passengers will disembark in Boston and spend the day there, ending with dinner at the Salem Cross Inn in Sturbridge, Pa. This 13-day trip includes 14 meals, hotel accommodations, passage on the MS *Veedham*, and round-trip airfare for \$3,499.

From Sept. 12-16, tourists can explore the French Canada Gateway including four nights in Montreal with a tour of the city, a day trip to Quebec, and a lunch at Chateau Frontenac. This trip is \$1,299

and includes some meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare.

Travelers will be transported back to colonial days with the Historic Boston trip from Sept. 20-24. Visitors will spend four nights in "The Cradle of Liberty" to see all the sites Boston has to offer, including the Old North Church, Faneuil Hall, Boston Common, and the home of Paul Revere. Visitors will also tour Lexington and Concord, including Lexington Green and the Old North Bridge, where "the shot heard 'round the world'" was fired. The cost of this trip is \$1,299 and includes some meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare.

Visit the home of the Queen Mum from Oct. 4-18 with the Exploring England and Ireland excursion, which also includes Scotland and Wales. This trip will feature focal points including Stonehenge, Waterford Crystal, Blarney Castle, Ring of Kerry, and Stratford-upon-Avon. Travelers will explore the cities of London, Bath, Cardiff, Killarney, Dublin, Edinburgh, and York. The 15-day trip includes 22 meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare cost for \$4,819.

Celebrate the fall season with Autumn in New England from Oct. 8-14. Explore historic cities including Boston, Lexington and Concord, and Salem. As the foliage turns, travel to Vermont to see how cider is made at the Cold Hollow Cider Mill and sample a wide variety of ice cream from the Ben and Jerry's factory. Travelers will then head to the working dairy of Billings Farm and visit the iconic town of Woodstock. In Maine, travel by ferry through Casco Bay to Kennebunkport and dine on a lobster dinner. This trip includes 7 days with 9 meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare for \$3,999.

Experience the sights, sounds, and tastes of Italy with a trip to Rome and the Amalfi Coast from Nov. 7-16. Travelers will experience the breathtaking scenery of the Amalfi Coast, explore the ruins of Pompeii and the Greek temples of

Paestum, and visit the Villa Rufolo in Ravello. Cities on the itinerary include Rome, Ravello, Vietri-sul-Mare, Sorrento, Paestum, Pompeii, and Naples. This trip is \$3,349 and includes 13 meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare. Optional excursions also include Salerno By Night, a tour of the Vatican Museums and St. Peter's Basilica, Rome By Night, and Exploring Paradise - Isle of Capri. Each extra travel opportunity is an additional fee.



The holiday season gets into full swing with a trip to Germany, France, and Austria for the Classic Christmas Markets. Travelers will explore the French city of Strasbourg, home to the Cathedral of Notre Dame before heading into Germany. Once in the country, visitors will experience the ancient wine town of Wurzburg, the Bavarian Alpine village of Oberammergau, and the Glockenspiel and Olympic Park in Munich. Then travel to Innsbruck, Austria to tour the popular attractions including the Hofburg and the 'Golden Roof'. The cost of this trip is \$2,799 with 11 meals, hotel accommodations, and round-trip airfare.

The fall travel season will conclude with a holiday visit to the Smoky Mountains from Dec. 12-14. Spend a day in Dollywood, see the production of "Christmas at the Smoky Mountain Opry", enjoy shopping and a drive down Winterfest Lane to see the Christmas lights, and on the way home enjoy shopping at The Christmas Shop and a family-style dinner at the Dillard House. The trip is \$429 and includes six meals and round-trip transportation via motor-coach.

ABAC Birthdays

16 Joy Lott 16 Amy Willis 17 Donna King

18 Jimmy Ballenger 19 Keetra Branch 22 Shawn Seat

23 Jeff Newberry 25 Pam Leonard 27 Alan Murphy

Next Orientation:

July 19

Check-in begins

@ 8 a.m. in

Gressette Gym