

# Rock Calendar

Listings taken from the  
SRU Master Calendar of Events.

## **Saturday, March 22**

Wind Power 101 Workshop  
1 p.m., Macoskey Center  
SRU students, \$10, non-students, \$20

## **Monday, March 24**

UPB Presents: Mae  
Featuring: Honorary Title, Between the Trees,  
Far Less and A Voice like Rhetoric  
6:30 p.m., University Union  
SRU students, \$5, general admission, \$10

## **Tuesday, March 25**

SRU men's baseball hosts Gannon  
1 p.m., Jack Critchfield Park

SRU women's waterpolo hosts  
Penn State, Behrend, 8:30 p.m.  
Morrow Field House

SRU women's lacrosse plays Shippensburg  
4 p.m., N. Kerr Thompson Stadium

Non-Alcoholic Mixoff  
Featuring Segway races, Oxygen Bar  
7 p.m., University Union

## **Wednesday, March 26**

SGA movie: P.S. I Love You  
8 p.m., McKay Education Building

## **Thursday, March 27**

SRU women's lacrosse hosts Bloomsburg  
4 p.m., N. Kerr Thompson Stadium

UPB Presents:  
Open Mic Night  
7:30 p.m., University Union

## **Friday, March 28**

Women's Softball plays IUP  
2:30 p.m., Softball Field

SGA movie:  
National Treasure Book of Secrets  
7 p.m., McKay Education Building

# rockpride

Volume 8 • Issue 8 • March 21, 2008

A newsletter for faculty, staff and friends of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania



Herat



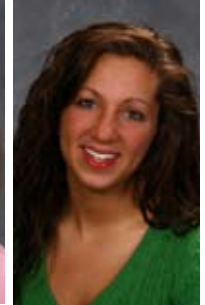
Smith



King



O'Brien



Mamoozadeh

## SRU salutes 2,500 scholars at annual Academic Honors Convocation April 6

Nearly 2,500 Slippery Rock University scholars will be honored for their academic achievements at the University's annual Academic Honors Convocation April 6 in Morrow Field House.

The 2 p.m. event is expected to draw more than 1,500 parents and other family members to campus. In addition to scholarship recipients, the event will honor all students named to the 2006-07 spring semester and the 2007-08 fall semester deans' lists.

Convocation will include presentation of:

- The President's Award for Excellence in Teaching to Athula Herat, assistant professor of physics, for his outstanding classroom work;
- The President's Award for Scholarly and Creative Achievement to Timothy D. Smith, associate professor of physical therapy for his "Evolution of the nose and nasal skeleton in primates" research published in the peer-reviewed journal *Evolutionary Anthropology*; and
- The President's Award for Outstanding Service to Mary Ann King, director of academic resources.

SRU's Presidential Scholars, Graduate Presidential Scholars, Graduate Scholars, Scholar Athletes, Service-Learning Scholars and academic scholarship recipients will also be honored.

(See Convocation page 2)

## SRU schedules weeklong Holocaust Remembrance

Slippery Rock University is expanding its traditional Holocaust Remembrance Program to an entire week in order to accommodate a growing number of presentations. The week will offer a series of lectures and films that remind the community about how fragile human rights can be.

Two people directly affected by mass murders, a Holocaust and concentration camp survivor, and a politically active Swarthmore College student who lost more than 100 members of her family at the hands of Rwandan rebels, will speak. The week will also include two films.

The Emmy Award-winning film "From Pittsburgh to Poland" opens the week at 7 p.m. April 7 in Spotts World Culture Building.

The film follows Holocaust survivors and teachers from Pittsburgh as they visit Auschwitz-Birkenau and other Holocaust-related sites and tell their personal stories. The film features Sara Reichman who was reunited with the Polish family that saved her from the Nazis. "The film has been shown on PBS and is well worth seeing to gain context for our Holocaust speaker," said Richard Martin,

(See Holocaust page 3)



Sittsamer

# Convocation (Continued from page 1)

## Senior speaker

Lisa Kathleen O'Brien, an exercise science major from Pottstown, will be the event's senior speaker. Her selection was based on her broad range of interests, outstanding academic performance, including a 4.0 grade-point average, and community and University service.

O'Brien is president of SRU's 300-member Exercise Science Society, a member of SRU's Strength and Conditioning Association, the University's Dance Express dance team, SRU Run Club, the Slippery Rock University Dance Theatre and a member of the SRU Bodybuilding and Fitness Club. She recently trained for the Mr. and Ms. SRU Bodybuilding Competition. In addition to working on campus, she is involved in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life, Project Christmas Elf, the campus blood pressure screening program and several food drives.

O'Brien captured the "Student of the Month" honor last February from the exercise science department after earlier winning the Aegersold Student Recreation Center's "Employee of the Month" honor.

A continuous dean's list honoree, she has received the Sheila Drohan Exercise Science Scholarship, the Dance Department Summer Study Scholarship, the Louis D. and Panagiota Pappan Scholarship, and has been an SRU Presidential Scholar since enrolling in 2005.

Her research project, undertaken with faculty adviser Nora Ambrosio, SRU professor of dance, is titled "A female modern dancer's self-perception and body composition in regard to the influence of a collegiate, modern dance-based program."

O'Brien expects to graduate in August and plans to apply to an osteopathic medical school or to specialize in physical medicine and rehabilitation work.

## Teaching excellence

Herat, an SRU faculty member since 2004, credits his classroom ability to following a philosophy captured in a quote from Confucius. "I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand." He uses that philosophy in his SRU classes ranging from "General Physics" to "Quantum Mechanics."

"I realize science is hard because it simply is hard. Science learning often involves counterintuitive learning while simultaneously covering a great many concepts, so students must study hard to master the material and understand how it applies to their studies and their understanding of science," he said.

"A physics teacher's philosophy must be not only to convey the importance and excitement of that pursuit, but also to create an environment that will allow students to experience the thrill of discovery for themselves. I strongly believe students should not be passive observers in the learning process, but active participants," he said.

Herat is recognized by fellow faculty for implementing a constructivist style of classroom teaching. He says the fundamental premise of his approach is to recognize that knowledge is constructed, not transmitted. In order to implement a constructivist learning environment he provides guided activities where students have the opportunity to develop ideas and answers themselves rather than depend on the instructor. "I see myself more as a facilitator than a provider of facts. The successful result of such teaching produces graduates who are confident, independent thinkers," Herat said.

Herat is "a teacher that realizes education goes beyond the classroom. He has pushed my classmates and me to pursue many opportunities such as a research experience, internships and contests. Inside the classroom, he is able to take a subject...and explain it in a way that all of his students, even non-majors, can easily understand," Duayne Rieger, a computational physics major from Cherry Tree, wrote in an evaluation.

Another course evaluation report simply said, "I would give Dr. Herat a 20-year extension to his contract. An awesome teacher," and another student wrote, "The course made me think...a lot. That is a strength."

"One salient fact about my teaching career," Herat wrote, "is the continual change, and I am certain it will keep changing. I strive to develop and discover new techniques to improve my teaching, both inside and outside the classroom. I will also persistently look for collaborative, interdisciplinary research opportunities to involve students. Through my teaching, advising and student-faculty research endeavors, I aim to develop my students' skills that will have a positive impact in their lives."

Herat serves as Webmaster and department server administrator for the SRU physics department and is adviser to 14 physics and pre-engineering majors. He is a reviewer for the SRU Research and Scholarship Symposium and served as a judge for the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science annual meeting at SRU.

(See Convocation page 4)

# Macoskey offers 'Wind Power 101'

The Robert A Macoskey Center for Sustainable Systems Education and Research at Slippery Rock University will offer a "Wind Power 101 Workshop" Saturday from 1-5 p.m. Participants will learn the basics of making "green" electricity from wind power.

Joe and Lisa DiFrancisco, local renewable energy experts from North Coast Energy Systems, will teach the workshop. They will explain how wind turbine equipment works and give tours of the 2.5 kW wind turbine installation in use at the Macoskey Center. Each participant will receive a wind design workbook.

The cost of the workshop is \$20 for residents and \$10 for SRU students.

## ...and an introductory organic garden class

The center will also offer an "Organic Vegetable Gardening 101 Workshop" March 29, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is an introductory workshop for novice gardeners presented by Macoskey Center staff.

Participants will learn to create and maintain an organic vegetable garden. They will test the quality of garden soil and receive advice on preparing garden beds, planting seeds and transplanting. Each participant will receive a course manual, free plant seedlings and lunch.

The cost of the workshop is \$25 for residents and \$10 for SRU students. To register, send your name, contact information and registration fee to: Organic Gardening 101, The Robert A. Macoskey Center at SRU, 247 Harmony Road, Slippery Rock, Pa. 16057

For more information on either workshop contact the center at Ext. 4050.

Sign up for  
emergency alerts:  
[www.sru.edu](http://www.sru.edu)



**READY FOR DISPLAY:** Regional members of Slippery Rock University's Institute for Learning in Retirement Quilt Guild gathered to prepare for their annual Quilts and Fiber Arts Show 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 19. SRU biology Professor Emeritus Rhoda Taylor shows several of her quilted wall art works she will display. Nearly 80 fiber artworks and handmade quilts will be shown at the United Methodist Church in Slippery Rock.

## Filmmaker's 'Toxic Bust' links chemicals to breast cancer

The Pennsylvania Film Institute will show Megan Siler's "Toxic Bust: Chemicals and Breast Cancer" at 7:30 p.m. April 2 in Slippery Rock University's Advanced Science and Technology Hall. The film explores how chemicals in the environment may be linked to increases in breast cancer.

The free screening is part of the March 31-April 4 and April 7-10 "Global Wealth Environmental Film Festival."

In her groundbreaking film, Siler argues that chemicals contribute to increasing breast cancer rates.

The film takes viewers on a virtual journey from the affluent coastal town of Cape Cod to the densely populated San Francisco Bay area, then to the high-tech world of Silicon Valley to hear from women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. These disparate communities are home to the highest rates of breast cancer in the world.

## Holocaust (Continued from page 1)

SRU political science professor and program organizer.

At 4 p.m. April 8 Jack Sittsamer will present the University's annual Holocaust Remembrance address in Miller Auditorium. His address is titled "The Story of Jack Sittsamer: Holocaust Survivor of Six Nazi Concentration Camps."

### Born in Poland

Sittsamer, born Dec. 30, 1924, in Mielec, Poland, was interred in camps in Mielec and Wieliczka, Poland; Flossenberg, Germany; Leitmeritz, Czechoslovakia; and Mauthausen and Gussyn II, Austria. During the ordeal, he lost his parents, two brothers and two sisters, becoming the sole survivor in his immediate family.

His story appears in the collection of local survivor testimonies found in "Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood During the Holocaust." The book was published in 2001 by Oxford University. Sittsamer's personal story was the inspiration behind the play "Mazel" written by Amy Hartman from a commission by the Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh. The work premiered in Pittsburgh last November.

### Genocide in Darfur

At 7 p.m. April 9 the film "Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide" will be screened in Spotts World Culture Building. The video covers the Darfur genocide origins and offers background for and address by Stephanie Nyombayire detailing the Darfur genocide at 4 p.m. April 10 in Miller Auditorium.

Nyombayire, 21 and a senior political science major at Swarthmore, was eight years old and living in the Congo during the Rwandan genocide. She lost 100 relatives in that tragedy.

To help combat the genocide, Nyombayire and six friends launched the Genocide Intervention Network. The group has raised \$1.5 million to support peacekeeping troops in the region, including \$250,000 for armed escorts for women at risk of being raped when leaving the humanitarian camp.

Last year, Nyombayire was featured in Glamour magazine as one of the top 10 college women in America. She was also honored by Jeannette Kagame, Rwanda's first lady, as a "Young Rwandan Woman Achiever" as part of an Imbuto Foundation program that encourages innovation and hard work among Rwandan women.

The foundation also rewards young women who have shown exceptional resilience to develop themselves and others. Nyombayire was specifically cited for her GI-Net work.

### Nyombayire

Nyombayire, a native of Kigali, Rwanda, recalls first learning of the mass killings while living in the Congo and being told her grandparents had been murdered. She immediately knew she wanted to do something to combat the fighting and said the world must say, "Never again." She has repeatedly spread word of the crisis, saying, "Taking action tells the world every human life is worth something."

In addition to her activism, Nyombayire has also reported on the Darfur crisis from the Chad-Sudan border for MTV. She introduced former President Bill Clinton at a national Campus Progress conference in 2005. Nyombayire traveled to Darfuran refugee camps in Chad in 2005 after being denied entry to Sudan.

Nyombayire's visit was arranged by Donald Kerchis, assistant professor of political science.

The SRU programs are sponsored by the political science department, the College of Business, Information and Social Science and the campus chapter of Amnesty International.

All programs are free.

## Research award

Smith, who joined the SRU faculty in 1996, had his research published in the July-August 2007 issue of *Evolutionary Anthropology*. Reviewers noted the work

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contains the most comprehensive available information to date on internal nasal anatomy of non-human primates. The work also updates the genetics and function of olfaction in non-human primates and humans. It examines a multitude of olfaction in primates, citing its importance to social, reproductive and dietary strategies. Smith notes there is indirect evidence in how the olfactory sense relates to sniffing and scent-marking as a form of communication. The paper also examines a multitude of other behaviors directly linked to olfactory abilities found in primates.

Joining Smith in the research were Kunwar Bhatnagar, professor emeritus in the department of anatomical sciences and neurobiology at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, and James Rossie, assistant professor in the department of anthropology at Stony Brook University.

One reviewer wrote, "This is an excellent review of primate olfactory anatomy and historical ideas on the evolution of the primate olfactory system." The reviewer cited an overall lack of literature on primate olfaction, adding, "With their review, Smith, Rossie and Bhatnagar have single-handedly corrected this oversight and brought the primate literature into the 21st century. I suspect that this review will be widely cited for many years and it will certainly be required reading in several of my courses."

Smith has published more than 50 papers during his career.

## Service award

King's nominations cited her previous work as assistant to five deans and her current service in academic resources. "Mary Ann King is one of the most competent people I have worked with at Slippery Rock University," wrote one nominator, who cited King's organizational abilities and her outstanding ability to offer solutions to nearly every presented problem. King, who joined the University in 1989, was also credited with being able to work with a vast number of constituents across campus with ease. "She is particularly invaluable when acting as a liaison between different departments and offices. She has a way of bringing diplomacy to the table and getting people to cooperate," wrote one nominator.

Nora Ambrosio, chair of the dance department, wrote, "On a number of occasions, the dance department has relied on Mary Ann in order to plan, execute and complete projects that were of the utmost importance to the internal functioning of the department. When the department hosted two dance festivals, one in 1999 and a second in 2004, she was instrumental in helping with the coordination of assistance from different departments and planning the logistics of the festival schedules, including building use and other facility matters. Mary Ann was instrumental in helping secure a Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Technology Grant to establish a state-of-the-art dance laboratory at SRU. The development of this lab was crucial to the department and now allows our faculty and students to create works that are on the cutting edge of dance and technology. Mary Ann helped oversee the project and made sure everything ran smoothly. Today, we have a dance lab similar to some of those in the largest institutions in the nation."

The Presidents' Award for Outstanding Service was first made possible in 1981 through the generosity of the late Robert and Donna McMullen, longtime Slippery Rock University patrons. It continues through the support of their son Doug and his wife, Linda. The award recognizes a University staff member who consistently contributes in ways that support the University's advancement as did Robert McMullen, a member of the class of 1951 and chair of the Slippery Rock University Foundation Inc. board of directors. Both he and his wife were involved in campus programs and offered continuing support to SRU throughout their lives.

## Syed R. Ali-Zaidi Award

The ceremony will also honor Nadya Mamoozadeh, a senior biology major, as the University's candidate for the Syed R. Ali-Zaidi Award for Academic Excellence presented by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. The selected recipient of the \$1,000 award will be honored at the student's home campus during spring semester commencement.

The award, established by Dr. Ali-Zaidi, a charter member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education board of governors and a strong advocate for the system's universities, honors students who excel in the pursuit of knowledge. Mamoozadeh was chosen following a rigorous internal procedure that solicited nominations from the entire academic community.

Her nomination came from biology department faculty and was endorsed by Dr. Susan Hannam, dean of the College of Health, Environment and Science. She has a 3.794 cumulative grade-point average and has participated in cross country and indoor and outdoor track and field while working two, part-time jobs.

Dean DeNicola, SRU biology professor, wrote, "Nadya has taken an even more difficult path by doing minors in chemistry and marine biology. The latter requires an extra commitment of marine biology courses taken over the summer at the Marine Science Consortium field station on Wallops Island, Va."

Simon Beeching, another SRU biology professor, wrote, "Few students complete the marine biology minor. Nadya has fulfilled her requirements with a 4.0 grade-point average and is interested in earning an advanced degree in marine biology."

Her career plan is to continue her education in a master's program in marine biology. She credits her desire to continue her studies with the learning experience she has had at SRU.

The ceremony is open to the public.

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