Homecoming Goes ‘Wild West’

California: The Wild, Wild West” is the theme for events today through Saturday to celebrate Homecoming 2010.

A highlight of the week is Homecoming Day on Saturday. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. in the Performance Center, where President Angelo Armeriti, Jr. and First Lady Barbara Armeriti will host the annual Royal Brunch.

The Homecoming Parade will begin at noon. It will form on Hickory Street behind the Natali Student Center, travel down Third Street, turn right on Union Street, return to campus on Second Street and conclude at the Kara Alumni House.

A tailgating party with activities for all ages will begin at Roadman Park immediately after the parade. Highlights include the Pittsburgh Steelers Great Hall traveling exhibit, where a player will sign autographs; and the debut of the Pittsburgh Panthers “Rockin’ Robots: World Tour,” produced by Carnegie Science Center’s “Rocket” RoboPix World Tour, produced in partnership with Cal U.

At 3:30 p.m., the Cal U football team will host division rival Slippery Rock University in Adamson Stadium at Hepper-Bailey Field. At halftime, winners of the Homecoming Parade float competition will be announced, and the Homecoming king and queen will be crowned.

Other events during Homecoming week include:

• A performance by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at 8 p.m. Tuesday in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre. A pre-concert reception begins at 6:45 p.m. in the Michael and Julia Kara Alumni House. Cost is $75 for the reception, symphony performance and optional shuttle service between Kara Alumni House and Steele Hall. Admission to the performance only is $10 for members of the Cal U community or the general public and can be purchased by calling the Steele Box Office at 724-938-5943. The performance is free for students with a valid CalCard. Proceeds benefit the Alumni Scholarship Fund.

• A bonfire at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the River Lot parking area. The 2010 Homecoming Court will be announced.

• The 16th annual Cal U Athletic Hall of Fame banquet at 5:30 p.m. Friday in the Performance Center. Inductees honored this year are the late Dr. Michael Duda (President Emeritus), Jason Foreman ‘03 (baseball), Dale Hamer ’60 (football official), John Kovalchik ’53 (baseball), DingDing Lu ’04 (women’s volleyball), Sara McKinney ’05 (women’s basketball), and Kerry Novak-Drljak ’97 (softball).

• Cal U’s 2004 NCAA national champion women’s basketball team also will be honored.

• The sixth annual Industrial Arts/Technology Education (IA/TE) Alumni Society reception, 7 p.m. Friday in the Booker Great Room of the Kara Alumni House.

• President Armeriti’s annual visit to the various fraternities, sororities and other organizations preparing floats for the Homecoming parade on Friday evening.

• Live concert by the Mark DeRose Band and Natalie Stovall, 7 p.m. Friday in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre. For more information about Homecoming 2010 events and activities, visit http://sai.calu.edu/homecoming/2010/.

Parking Changes for Parade

Visitors attending Homecoming events may park in the Vulcan Garage. Rates begin at $1 per hour. Drivers who pay by the hour will find pay stations located on the garage’s first, third and fourth levels. Anyone who forgets to stop at the pay station will be able to pay with a credit card when exiting the garage.

On Saturday, the following road closures will be in effect:

• Sixth Street from the Vulcan Garage to Hickory Street will be closed.

• Hickory will be closed on campus beginning at 10 a.m.

• Third Street will be closed from the entrance to campus beginning at 10 a.m.

Lots 12 and 14 will be used for parade lineup.

The River Lot (Lot 4) will be open to those with a tag for that lot.

Lots 15 and 17 will be open for those who have reserved spaces, but no cars will be able to move from their spots from 9 a.m. until the end of the parade.

All permit holders in Lots 12 and 14 are directed to move their vehicles to Lot 4 (River Lot) from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday.

The Vulcan Flyer service will operate until 10:30 a.m. Saturday and resume immediately after the parade at the Booker Towers stop.

Also on Saturday, there will be no parking from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Second Street (200 to 300 blocks), Third Street (200 to 400 blocks) and Union Street (200 block). Vehicles that are parked along the parade route will receive a parking ticket beginning at 9 a.m.

Towing of those vehicles will start at approximately 10 a.m.

Growing Up Great with Science

Skye-Alexis Knight, 3, of Connellsville, Pa., experiments with air and flight at a "PNC Grow Up Great With Science" workshop Sept. 24 at Ohopale State Park, near Farmington, Pa. Children at the eight and Paper Airplanes station discovered how wind power can move a variety of objects and help certain objects fly. Some 80 students and faculty from California University of Pennsylvania worked together to present the daylong workshop, which featured 20 learning stations. More than 750 children and their families attended.

GAMES LET HISTORY STUDENTS RE-CREATE BATTLES

The Carthaginian Empire was defeated by the Roman Empire during the Punic Wars more than 1,700 years ago, but Carthage got its revenge in Johnson Hall’s Multipurpose Room just last month.

Game boards and dice replaced bloody battlefields in the remnant of Cal U’s Military History Through Weapons course (HIS 379).

Taught by Dr. Paul Crawford, assistant professor in the Department of History and Political Science, the course uses military simulations, or “war games,” to examine the military side of history in the ancient, medieval and modern periods.

The complex board games allow students both to recreate historical battles and to explore what might have happened had historical events turned out differently. Students study and discuss the conflicts in class before and after the Saturday game sessions, and then prepare written “battle reports.”

The first simulation session, which dealt with the Punic Wars (264 to 146 B.C.), lasted 10 hours on Sept. 18.

“They are called ‘war games,’ so people sometimes get hung up on the game side of it and think this is like Risk or Monopoly,” Crawford said. “These are very serious and sophisticated simulations designed by people who are deeply into history.”

Continued on page 3
Nominations Open for Gala Faculty Awards

Nominations are being accepted for the 2011 President’s Faculty Awards. Tenured faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, or service are eligible to receive one of these prestigious awards.

Any member of the Cal U community—students, faculty, staff or alumni—may make a nomination. Self-nominations are permitted.

Nominations close at 4 p.m. Oct. 18, 2010.

Although a faculty member may be nominated in multiple categories, he or she can compete for only one award. The nominee may select the category. For example, if a person is nominated for the teaching and service categories, he or she may submit supporting materials for one or the other, but not both.

Materials from nominees are due by 4 p.m. Nov. 4.

President Angelo Armenti, Jr. established the President’s Faculty Awards to recognize deserving faculty for their outstanding work. Each award recipient will be presented with a medalion, an engraved paperback, and a $2,000 check at the Presidential Gala in June 2011.

The 2010 President’s Award winners were Dr. David Boehm (Teaching), Dr. Andrea Marak (Research), and Dr. Mohamed Yamla (Service). The awards are separate from those given by the Faculty Professional Development Committee, which recognizes recipients at Commencement.

Nominations will be accepted via e-mail or paper copy. Please submit e-mail nominations to the President’s Faculty Awards Committee Chair, Dr. Chad Kauffman, at kauffman@calu.edu. Send hard copies to him at the Department of Earth Sciences, Box 55.

The nominations must include the name of the nominee, category of nomination (teaching, research or service), and name of nominator.

Faculty Member Designs Award-winning Videogame

Ryan Sittler doesn’t just talk a good game. He builds a good one, too. An assistant professor of Library Services, Sittler and five of his fellow doctoral students produced an educational videogame that was awarded first place in the Caspian Learning Co.’s Serious Game Challenge.

Caspian Learning, based in the United Kingdom, launched the challenge at the recent Game Based Learning conference in London. Sittler’s group used Caspian’s Thinking World technology to create a literacy information game called “A Planet in Peril: Plagiarism.”

In the game, a student uncovers the secret of a group of aliens who are disguised as academics at his university campus. The aliens have prophesied the end of the world, which is set to occur because of a student’s excessive plagiarism. It’s up to the hero to prevent disaster.

While working through the challenges, players learn about what constitutes plagiarism and ways to avoid it.

The game is targeted at college and university students, but it applies to high school students, as well. A beta version of the game has been released, and the final version is scheduled to be available this spring.

Sittler is pursuing his doctorate in communications media and instructional technology at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. After putting together a mock game in an education games course, he and his fellow students were inspired to create the real thing.

“After years of playing games, it was neat to say I was part of putting one together,” said Sittler, who is in his fourth year at Cal U. “It was an interesting challenge to see if we could pull off something big.”

Sittler and his colleagues, who jokingly refer to themselves as Random Precision Studios, hope the game offers a blend of enjoyment and education.

“Educational games vary,” Sittler said. “They’re either very educational and not much fun or a lot of fun and not that educational. We were shooting for a nice mix of fun and educational value, and from the feedback we’ve received, most people feel we’ve accomplished this.”

After winning the award, Sittler taught a course at Harrisburg University of Science and Technology. Eventually he hopes to make the game available on the Mandirino Library website and he may use it in workshops he teaches on campus.

Sittler also is inviting other faculty members to try the game with their students.

“What we see time and time again is that the students at least enjoy the fact that they get to play a game,” he said. Experienced instructional designers at Caspian Learning selected the game as the top entrant. Lee Rushworth, a marketing executive at the company, says he enjoyed it. He may have learned something, too.

“In Planet in Peril: Plagiarism’ was one that really stood out to us as a well-produced, serious game built with a great sense of humor and some innovative uses of Thinking Worlds interactions that even we hadn’t thought of,” he said.

California University will continue a fall tradition by playing host to a performance by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

Students, faculty, staff and the California community may attend the concert at 8 p.m. Oct. 12 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre.

The program includes the Overture to Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss Jr.; Die Fledermaus and Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, by Johann Strauss Jr.; and limited bar service will be offered.

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PSO Returns to Cal U for Fall Performance

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Students, faculty, staff and the California community may attend the concert at 8 p.m. Oct. 12 in Steele Hall Mainstage Theatre.

The program includes the Overture to Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss Jr.; Concerto No. 1 in G minor for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 26, by Max Bruch; and Symphony No. 39 in E-flat major, by Johann Strauss Jr.; and limited bar service will be offered.

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Radio Host: ‘No Substitute for Hard Work’

Entrepreneur and talk radio host Glen Meakem shared some of his strategies for personal and professional success during a visit to campus on Sept. 28. "If you want to be successful, you have to know yourself," Meakem said during his presentation, Help Save the American Dream: We Need You. An audience of about 100, including many students, attended the talk in the Eberly Science and Technology Center.

A Harvard graduate and Gulf War veteran, Meakem, 46, credited his military experience and also his jobs with Kraft and General Electric for teaching him business and leadership skills, but also teaching him “three things I did not want to do” as a career. “I’m impatient and want to get things done,” he said. “I’m one of those stalks that grows out of the hedge.”

In 1995, Meakem harnessed his entrepreneurial spirit and founded FreeMarkets Inc., a business-to-business Internet company that automated and improved purchasing functions for Global 1000 companies. He sold FreeMarkets in 2004 to Ariba Inc., and in 2005 he co-founded Meakem Becker Venture Capital, an early-stage venture capital firm headquartered in the Pittsburgh area.

He was named one of 40 technology pioneers by the World Economic Forum in 2003 and holds eight U.S. patents for electronic commerce inventions.

Known for his conservative views, he hosts The Glen Meakem Program, which can be heard in the Pittsburgh area on 104.7 FM from 8-9:30 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday mornings. “Society is a better place when we are free to be who we want to be and pursue our own destinies,” Meakem said. “We need young people such as yourselves who understand what freedom is and who vote for it.”

He urged students to work hard. “In America, we have the freedom to enjoy the fruits of our labor,” he said. “There is no substitute for hard work.”

Meakem also remembered his high school guidance counselor in New York, who suggested he apply to Harvard. “I don’t know if you are going to get in or not, but I know you won’t get in if you don’t apply,” the counselor said.

“You’re going to find your future by being out there in the world,” Meakem said.

Meakem’s appearance at Cal U was co-sponsored by the Linda and Harry Serene Leadership Institute, the American Democracy Project, the College of Liberal Arts and the Leadership Club.

He was introduced by Provost Geraldine Jones and Dr. Michael Hummel, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

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Students Urged to Make Voices Heard

At their 2010 Fall Convocation, students were urged to become involved and use the University resources available to them.

Before fielding more than 30 questions from the student body, President Angelo Armenti, Jr. gave his “State of the University” address, addressing themes he touched on earlier this fall with the faculty and staff.

The President mentioned the continuing decrease in state and federal funding for higher education, and he emphasized Cal U’s commitment to raising private funds for scholarships.

You represent what’s happening in higher education today,” he said, addressing students who hold down jobs in addition to their class work. “The financial challenge right now at California University is being faced by our students, who struggle to pay their tuition.”

President Armenti asked the students to become involved with Cal U Fusion, the campus-wide mobile technology initiative. A new Teaching and Learning Center will be created on campus to educate students, faculty and staff about innovative uses of mobile technology, he said.

The question-and-answer session with students included a number of queries about the new parking system. Several students asked why there are waiting lists when empty spaces are noticeable throughout the day.

President Armenti explained that when the parking system was implemented, lots were not “oversold.” Instead, a permit was issued for each available parking space — even though it is unlikely that all permit-holders will arrive on campus at once.

“Are we monitoring usage and times of day when there are open spaces,” he said. “Gradually and very carefully, we will begin to overbook.”

President Armenti then fielded consecutive questions about designated smoking areas and bike racks, which led to a discussion of the Cal U Forum and the Electronic Suggestion Box.

“The Cal U Forum, the University governance structure, is a way for you to recommend University policies,” he said. “Balancing the rights of smokers and non-smokers is a very tough issue.

“If you have an idea for what would be fair with regard to smoking, talk to one of your student senators in the Forum. I would love to see a solution.”

The President explained that new construction and campus upgrades, the mobile technology initiative, and even the football team’s appearance on network television are all designed to make the University to be more appealing to prospective students.

“Students see the value here, and they want to come to a University that’s happening,” he said.

Games Let History Students Re-CreatE Battles

The reports submitted by the students after each simulation are written as if they had fought a battle and are reporting to their senior commander, Crawford said. "There’s an enormous amount of detail that these scenarios generate as they’re playing," he said. "It’s important for students to learn to sift through the detail, discard most of the information, identify what’s important, and form that into a coherent narrative report. In a sense, it’s also a writing class, but they don’t know it.

Fortunately, these battles are being contested without a lot of blood on the ground," he added. "At worst, there’s some slaughtered pizza." Crawford hopes the class also helps students appreciate the brutality of war and removes some myths. "Some people also think war gamers are a bunch of bloodthirsty warmongers — and undoubtedly you will find warmongers among them, as you would in any population," said Crawford. "But a thoughtful war gamer is less likely to mindlessly support a war than somebody who has not fought and played war games. The thoughtful war gamer knows just what happens when armies collide!"

Emphasizing this point, Crawford noted that the final simulation, scheduled for Nov. 13, will deal with the Eastern Front in World War II.

"You have two totalitarian systems, Germany and Russia, colliding — and the human cost of that collision is unimaginable," he said. "Even though it may be clean and even antiseptic on your game board, if you have a medicum of imagination, it’s quite sobering.

Three war game companies — GMT Games, Columbia Games and Mayfair — offered student discounts, so the cost of the three games is equivalent to a textbook. The first and third simulations are tactical simulations, while the second one, exploring the Third Crusade, is strategic.

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During a recent visit to campus, entrepreneur and talk radio host Glen Meakem shared some of his strategies for personal and professional success.

Cal U sophomore Geter Sloan uses a smartphone as President Angelo Armenti, Jr. talks about Cal U Fusion during the Fall 2010 Student Convocation.
Kerry Novak-Drilak was a four-year starting right fielder for the women's softball team from 1994 through 1997.

A three-time all-conference and two-time all-region selection, she received National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) All-America honors following a 1997 season that culminated with the Vulcans winning its first of two consecutive NCAA II national championships.

Ending one an athletic career by winning a national championship is a special accomplishment, Novak-Drilak said.

“At the beginning of my senior season, I told people the only way they were going to get me off the field after my last game would be if we won the national championship,” she said. “That was the only way I was coming off the field, and it's something I'll obviously never forget.


During her junior season the Vulcans compiled a 45-5 overall record while winning the first of five consecutive PSAC titles and their second NCAA Regional crown in three years. Cal finished fifth at the national tournament.

Novak-Drilak batted a career-best .383 in 1997 and led the team with 47 RBI. She was named to the 1997 NCAA All-Tournament team after hitting a three-run homer in Cal's opening game victory and knocking in the winning run in the title game, which capped a school-best 53-5 season.

She also received GTE Academic All-American honors and was named the 1997 PSAC Scholar Athlete of the Year. Novak-Drilak also received NFCA Academic All-America honors for the second consecutive year.

Notably, Novak-Drilak committed just four errors during her career and had just one miscue over her final two seasons. She finished with a PSAC record 214 consecutive games played — a total that still ranks ninth in PSAC history. At the end of her career, she was among the PSAC leaders in five different offensive categories.

During Novak-Drilak's career under head coach Rick Bertagnolli, the Vulcans compiled a 184-30 cumulative record with an overall record of 244-33-2, three NCAA Regional crowns, two conference titles, and the school's first national team championship. Cal won 69 of 70 PSAC-West games from 1994-97.

“Kerry was a big reason for our success,” said Bertagnolli. “Her consistent play, along with her day-to-day approach to softball and her school work, was remarkable. She was the consummate student-athlete.”

Novak-Drilak believes that watching her sister Erin play at Cal, along with playing summer softball with several University players and coaches, helped her become familiar with the program. She credits Bertagnolli for making her an elite player.

“He came in and pushed us hard from the beginning. He knew how to get the most out of us as players. He would make me so mad in practice that I would play better,” she said. “Things could not have ended any better for me.”

A graduate of Chartiers-Houston High School, Novak-Drilak earned her bachelor's degree from Cal U in elementary education and worked for four years as a reading teacher at Fairfield (Pa.) Middle School. For the past five years she has been a sixth-grade teacher at Allison Park Elementary School, in the Chartiers-Houston School District.

“I got the best education I think I could have possibly received anywhere, and the professors were incredibly supportive,” she said. “Dr. (Tony) Saladin and Dr. (Gary) Kennedy would come to our games and were very encouraging. They did an excellent job of preparing me as a teacher. If anyone wants to be a teacher, there's no reason to go any farther than California.”

Having attained the ultimate success on the softball diamond, Novak-Drilak has found professional happiness as an educator.

Kerry and her husband, Ben, reside in Houston, Pa. They are the proud parents of two daughters, 20-month-old Taryne and one-month-old Kiera.

Yes, Sir! Cal U alumnus John H. Matlick ‘10 gets pinned by his father, John Matlick Sr., and his mother, Tammy Matlick, during a U.S. Reserve Officer Training Corps commissioning ceremony Sept. 27 in the Performance Center. 2nd Lt. Matlick received his bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Cal U in August. He will attend the Infantry Officer Basic Leadership Course at Fort Benning N.C. Upon completion of his training, he will serve in Bravo Company 1 of the 110th Infantry Battalion.