



News for
Eastern Michigan
Faculty and Staff

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Pulitzer winner Parks to give MLK speech

By Summer Wilhelm

Suzan-Lori Parks, playwright and Pulitzer Prize winner, will provide this year's keynote address at Eastern Michigan University's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration Jan. 19.

Parks' appearance will highlight the day's events, which will include more than 30 activities.

Parks, who also is a screenwriter and novelist, will speak briefly at the President's Luncheon, scheduled at noon in the Convocation Center. Later that day, she will present a one-hour lecture at 3 p.m. in Pease Auditorium. The lecture, co-sponsored by the department of communication and theatre arts, is free and open to the public.

Parks, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, where she studied with author James Baldwin, has taught creative writing at universities across the country, including the Yale School of Drama. She currently runs the dramatic writing program at the California Institute of the Arts.

She was the recipient of the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play,

"*Topdog, Underdog*." She's also received a 2001 MacArthur "genius grant," a PEN/Laura Pels Award for excellence in playwrighting and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

Parks has penned many acclaimed plays and scripts, including "*The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*," "*In the Blood*" and "*Devotees in the Garden of Love*."

She is an alumna of New Dramatists, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development of new playwrights. She also is an associate artist at Yale Repertory Theatre and has received grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, The New York Foundation for the

Arts, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, The W. Alton Jones Foundation, The Kennedy Centre Fund for New American Plays and numerous other organizations.

Her first feature film was "*Girl 6*," directed by Spike Lee. She also wrote the screen adaptation of the novel, "*Gal*," for Universal; rewrote "*God's Country*" for Jodie Foster and Egg Pictures; and wrote an original television pilot for Kennedy/Marshall.

Her first novel, "*Getting Mother's Body*," was published in 2003 and quickly received good reviews by critics across the country. Her book draws comparisons to William Faulkner's "*As I Lay Dying*," and revolves around the story of a mother's death and its impact on a family.

Parks, who lives in Venice Beach, Calif., currently is working on an adaptation of Toni Morrison's novel, "*Paradise*," for Oprah Winfrey; and "*Hoopz*," a musical for Disney Theatricals.

MLK Luncheon seating begins at 11:30 a.m. For tickets, call the Convocation Center box office at 487-2282.



Parks

DECK THE HALLS

Holiday decorating has long, storied history

By Carol Anderson

Lights, ornaments, action. One of the most frantic decorating seasons of the year has begun – it's a holiday activity that is not for the weak of heart.

Outside decorations are sometimes hung amid snowstorms and freezing cold temperatures that only Frosty the Snowman could appreciate.

While inside the house, deciding on this year's decorating scheme and fighting the annual tangle-of-lights battle gets underway. It's all part of the joyous season called Christmas.

But how did decorating ever get started and where is it going these days?

Initially, we can thank the Germans for giving us the Christmas tree, said Kelly Welker, assistant professor, department of human, environmental and consumer resources at EMU, whose first job was working at a Christmas tree farm when she was 15.

According to a 16th-century legend, Martin Luther, the founder of the Protes-



'TIS THE SEASON: Apparel, textile and merchandising students in assistant professor Kelly Welker's classes have been busy decorating downtown Ypsilanti. EMU seniors Shannon Williams (left) and Melissa Cauchi put the finishing touches on a holiday village display at Ekletic, a business located along Michigan Avenue.

tant faith, was walking through a wooded area on Christmas Eve and noticed stars twinkling through the branches of an evergreen, Welker said.

He brought home an evergreen and decorated it with

candles to show the children how the stars twinkled in the night, Welker said. Decorations soon expanded to include not only candles, but also berries and pine cones.

For outside decorations, lights are still the main deco-

ration and include running (seem to be in motion) lights, icicle lights and the traditional single string of tiny lights around the house and in trees.

SEE DECORATE, page 3

Noda works as crusader for bilingual education

By Kathleen Shields

Phyllis Noda knows firsthand the challenges bilingual students face in America's classrooms.

When her Arabic-speaking grandmother brought Noda's forgotten boots to school one snowy Detroit day, the kindergarten teacher greeted her grandmother with, "You stop talking that dirty language. This is America."

Noda's grandmother, who was multi-lingual and had been educated at the University of Cairo, apologized, and lowered her head in shame, Noda recalled. Noda was so angry that she walked out of the class ahead of her grandmother, stubbornly refusing to return to school until a truant officer visited the family a few days later.

Marching out of that kindergarten classroom was just the beginning. Noda has been forging a path for bilingual education ever since.

She is a past executive board member of the National Association for Bilingual Education; a national advisory board member for the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education; and has directed seven federal projects serving language-minority students. Two of those projects, LEP-Tnet and the Team 8 Community-Building Coalition Award, earned Best Practice Models

designation from the U.S. Department of Education and the National Crime Prevention Council.

"There is a certain arrogance against people who don't speak English that is counterproductive, to say nothing of inhumane," said Noda, director of EMU's Bilingual Education Teacher Training Program. "Most refugees that come here bring with them a wealth of linguistic and cultural resources that can enhance our competitiveness in the global marketplace."

Countries where present-day refugees come from have literacy rates equal to or higher than the U.S., Noda said. Iraq, for example, Eastern European and many Middle Eastern countries have a literacy rate of 98 percent or higher.

In spring 2003, Noda was appointed to the U.S. Department of Education Advisory

Team for Parental and Community Involvement. The team consists of language acquisition experts from across the country. They are charged

The team recently finished its first major outreach program. Hundreds of educators from across the nation joined with more than 200 parents of

tors lies in not losing the limited-English population in that time period, as dropout rates for this group continue to rise."

Noda and Stuart Karabenick, associate professor of psychology, and past director of EMU's Center for Research Support, created a Web caucus for the advisory team so they can dialogue across the distances. The Web caucus is not the first collaboration for Noda and Karabenick. Their research on bilingual education will be published in the winter edition of the *Bilingual Education Research Journal*, and they have been collaborators on a number of projects.

Noda currently serves as director of the EMU Comprehensive Education Assistance Center, a satellite office of the U.S. Department of Education Comprehensive Centers Region VI, and was past associate director of the Institute for Diversity in Business Services.

Prior to joining EMU in 1987, Noda served as a bilingual education professor at the University of Detroit-Mercy; as an administrator in several capacities in the Detroit Public Schools; and as a consultant for many state, local and national entities, including the U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Services; and the U.S. Department of State, Mid-East Bureau.



FOR THE CHILDREN: Phyllis Noda, director of EMU's Bilingual Education Teacher Training Program, has played a supportive role in fostering the No Child Left Behind Act.

with coming up with ways to implement and strengthen parental involvement in the education of bilingual children as it pertains to Title III of the "No Child Left Behind Act" of 2000.

Noda led two of the sessions on parent involvement best practices.

"It takes seven years to become truly proficient in another language," Noda said. "The challenge facing educa-

EMU BY THE NUMBERS

For the past four years, the amount of appropriations Eastern Michigan University receives from the state of Michigan has decreased. That overall decrease in state funding has resulted in less per-pupil funding over time. Here are the state appropriations and actual per-pupil funding amounts for the past four fiscal years.

\$88,827,546*

\$4,792

FY 2001



\$87,637,200

\$4,727

FY 2002



\$84,569,754

\$4,555

FY 2003



\$78,873,480

\$4,096

FY 2004



SOURCE: Office of Budget Management
*includes supplemental appropriation

Two former EMU employees die

Gladys Eshenroder, former secretary of University Health Services at Eastern Michigan University from 1990-2000, died Nov. 25 in Ann Arbor.

Born in Wichita Falls, Texas, she earned her bachelor's degree in sociology from Texas Women's University in 1963.

Before coming to EMU, Eshenroder worked at the First Presbyterian Church and taught at Alcona Community, Emmanuel Lutheran and Alpena schools. She also was a Girl Scout leader and board member of the Big Waters Council of Northeast Michigan. She enjoyed camping, hiking, canoeing, cross-country skiing and quilting, a talent she shared with her mother.

"She was a quiet, but very compas-

sionate person," said Mary Jo Desprez, assistant director of health education at University Health Services. "She had such a caring manner with the students and staff. She was a great lady."

Eshenroder also did volunteer work at Michigan Social Services and at Ronald McDonald House.

William Alexander, former professor of biology at Eastern Michigan University, died Nov. 13. He was 91.

Alexander, who was born in Alabama, taught biology and botany at several colleges, including the University of Michigan, Alabama State, Washtenaw Community College and EMU. He was appointed to the State Commission on Services to the Aging in 1991 and was still serving in that position at the time of his death.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE



WATCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIER: A wooden soldier keeps watch over revelers enjoying the food at the annual Holiday Open House festivities in Welch Hall Dec. 10. EMU President Samuel A. Kirkpatrick and his wife, Pam, host the traditional event.

EMU raises \$126,193 for United Way campaign

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By Ron Podell

Eastern Michigan University's United Way campaign wrapped up a month ago, but time was made to celebrate those who made a major impact on the campaign.

Those key individuals and units that made major contributions to the month-long campaign were recognized during a United Way breakfast in Guild Hall Dec. 11.

"We're here to thank our United Way staff and steering committee, the leadership givers who gave us energy, and our unit reps, who were the backbone in the process," said Athletics Director David Diles, who served as EMU's United Way campaign chair this year. "We're satisfied. To date, we've raised just about \$126,000. That's a great statement given the economy. It's a great statement for our University."

Overall, EMU employees donated \$126,193 during the campaign, which was short of the \$150,000 goal. EMU's participation rate was 43 percent and there were 30 leadership givers (goal was 50), those who donated at least \$1,000 to the campaign.

"(Dave) had a complex job. We

appreciate his efforts and his athletics department team that helped him," said EMU President Samuel A. Kirkpatrick. "This is a challenging time."

Kirkpatrick explained that such factors as the war in Iraq, the state and national economies and the fact that EMU had 84 less persons (prior budget cuts) to approach for pledges this year were all barriers to reaching campaign goals.

"We were shy of our goal, but our participation rate was good," Kirkpatrick said. "Given the nature of the economy, our help is needed more than ever in Washtenaw County."

After breakfast, there was a brief awards ceremony in which plaques were given out.

The divisions of Business and Finance and Student Affairs were recognized for bringing in the most donations during the campaign. Business and Finance raised \$12,842 while Student Affairs garnered \$12,825.

Human, Environmental and Con-

SEE CAMPAIGN, page 4

DECORATE, from page 1

"Keeping up with the Jones'" has elevated the outside lighting decorations to neighborhood contests, with costs reaching up to \$1,000 for decorations and electricity bills, Welker said.

Entire cities also are getting into the act. Driving through parks with lighted displays has become a popular family pastime during the holidays, she said



OH', CHRISTMAS TREE: EMU sophomores Cara Calloway (standing) and Hillary Cunningham decorate a Christmas tree at Eklectic.

In the 1850s, the Victorians brought the tree inside and ladies worked hours on decorations of paper flowers and ribbons while hanging fresh greens over doorways and all around the house, said Welker. Evergreen trees are

still the main Christmas decoration.

While simplicity was the theme then, the "bigger is better" syndrome took over more than a century later.

"In the 1980s, people got ostentatious. They would buy completely new sets of decorations each year and develop a theme or color for each tree," Welker said.

A continuing trend in homes is having several trees located in different rooms or trees of different heights in one room grouped together with white lights in an attempt to bring nature inside.

White, the closest in color to stars, is the advertised color in lights this year, she said. Strings of tiny white lights

EMU students help revive tradition of window displays to lure shoppers

By Carol Anderson

Years ago, lavish holiday window displays were a key way for retailers to lure shoppers into their stores. There's a little bit of that tradition going on in downtown Ypsilanti today, thanks to the help of some Eastern Michigan University students.

Kelly Welker, an assistant professor in the department of human, environmental and consumer resources, and 26 of her apparel, textile and merchandising students decorated five stores, including "Eklectic," along Michigan Avenue.

The students arranged a Christmas village and trimmed a tree in one display window. The second

window was filled with a menorah for Hanukkah and harvest decorations for Kwanzaa.

This November marked the fifth year that EMU students have helped decorate storefronts for the holidays.

During the early 19th century, shop owners realized that a good way to sell their products was to display them in the windows. Thus, the term "window shopping" originated, Welker said.

In the post-World War II era, people moved out of downtowns into the suburbs, which caused downtown stores to lose their audience.

"Everything is cyclical. Even window shopping is coming back with the revival of the downtown area in the suburbs," Welker said.

have replaced candles, but the effect is the same — a desire to replicate twinkling stars.

"Homey" is the interior decorating theme this year, Welker said. Greens and natural decorations are joining traditional or vintage ornaments (anything made in the 1970s

or before) in popularity, she said.

"Go to grandma's and get the ornaments she doesn't want," Welker said.

Also, anything that produces memories can be hung on a tree and is included among the "in" decorations.

That includes ornaments made as a youth, souvenirs collected from various vacation spots or gifts attached with special meaning. Newlyweds celebrating their first Christmas sometimes combine personal ornaments to decorate their first tree.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2003

JOBSLINE

To be considered for vacant positions, all Promotional Openings Application Forms MUST BE SUBMITTED directly to the Compensation/Employment Services Office and received no later than 5 p.m., Monday, Dec. 22. NOTE: LATE OR INCOMPLETE FORMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Vacancy information may also be obtained by calling our 24-hour Jobs Line at 487-0016. Compensation/Employment Services office hours are Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

CLERICAL/SECRETARIAL (Hiring Rate)

CSAA0426 CS05 \$26,118 Senior Secretary, College of Education Clinics.

CSEN0407 CS06 \$28,482 Office Supervisor, Holman Learning Center. MS Word, Access and Excel. Desired typing speed 45-55 wpm.

PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL (Hiring Range)

PTSA0402 PT06 \$27,631-\$32,271 Assistant Unit Manager, Dining Ser-

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vices, Dining Services/Eateries. Varied hours.

FOOD SERVICE/MAINT. (Hiring Rate)

FMSA0415 FM06 \$10.73 Custodian, DC1/Custodial Prorate, 11 p.m.-7:30 a.m., Sunday-Thursdays.

FMBF0419 FM24 \$17.17 Group Leader, Physical Plant/HVAC, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday.

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CAMPAIGN, from page 3

sumer Resources; Computer Information Systems and Dining Services were singled out for showing the most improvement from the prior year's campaign.

For example, Dining Services had 33 of its 50 employees donate, up significantly from the prior year's nine contributors.

Sixteen units had 100 percent participation from their employees. They include: College of Business-Dean's

Office, Graduate School, Vice President for Student Affairs, Business Operations-Student Affairs, University Apartments, Student Media, Alumni Relations/EMU Foundation, Convocation Center, Charter Schools, Financial Aid, The Holman Learning Center, Vice President for Enrollment Services, Athletics, President's Office, Office of Budget Management and Vice President for Business and Finance.

Larry Gates, director of dining services, and Lewis Savage, assistant director, housing/apartments, were named "most valuable players" during the campaign for their work on the steering committee and with United Way agencies in the community.

FOCUS EMU takes holiday break

FOCUS EMU will not be published Dec. 23 due to the Christmas holiday, but will return to its regular print publishing schedule Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2004. University Communications wishes the EMU community happy holidays.

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY.

Please send all submissions to Editor, *Focus EMU*, University Communications, 18 Welch Hall. Please direct questions to 487-4400.

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When you need to know if bad weather has forced the cancellation of classes or University events!

**EMU
Newsline
487-2460**



"It is important to bring the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world. I think learning occurs when these worlds collide."

**Jessica "Decky" Alexander
Assistant Professor
Communication and Theatre Arts**

Why I teach at Eastern Michigan University

I came to EMU in 1993 to do graduate work and, in 1994, I was a teaching assistant. In 1996, I was hired as a full-time lecturer and became an assistant professor in 2000.

In 1997, I, along with University Health Services, founded the CloseUP Theatre Troupe. It is the best part of my job and it is this type of collaboration — a synthesizing of student, staff, faculty and disciplines — which fuels my love for the EMU community.

CloseUP Theatre Troupe has been able to meet the needs of the community by exploring social, health and wellness issues that perpetually reflect the changing student body. I believe in this type of university and am in awe of its students. EMU students have such strong spirits and their ability to balance work, life and home has been an educa-

tion for me.

I don't believe in a division between what happens outside the classroom and what happens inside. It is important to bring the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world. I think learning occurs when these worlds collide.

EMU, particularly my department, celebrates teaching and the idea of a democratic classroom — a classroom where student voices initiate, challenge, critique and question. At EMU, every day and every class is and has been full of possibility.

Jessica 'Decky' Alexander