

## Seminars and Events

**Mon, April 10** - Ian Barbour, Carleton College Professor Emeritus, Winifred & Atherton Bean Professor of Science, Technology & Society, "*Intelligent Design: A Scientific and Religious Critique*." Joint seminar with Religion and Biology SC 280, 4:00 pm

**Mon, April 10** – Panel discussion – Pros and Cons of taking time off. Biomedical Senior Capstone Project, SC 278, 7:00 pm

**Tues, April 11** - Dr. Lillian Repesh, Admissions Director for the University of Minnesota – Duluth Medical School, will discuss the "ideal candidate" and the application process. VIKING theatre, 4:00 pm

**Wed, April 12** - "*M.D. or D.D.S.? What's the best choice for you?*" Hear from a physician and a dentist about what helped them make their decision between these two professional career paths. Biomedical Senior Capstone Project ~ Kaia Knutson SC 278, 3-4 pm

**Wed, April 17** – Susan Galatowitsch, Associate Professor, Horticulture Science, Univ. of Minnesota – Twin Cities, will speak about Reed Canary Grass, a common, invasive weed on campus. SC 278, 4:00 pm

**Mon, May 1** – Poster session for students applying for Distinction in Biology.

**Wed, May 3** – Biology Senior Banquet – Northfield Golf Club

**Fri, May 5** – 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Honors Day Science Symposium – see article

## **BioMass has an editor!**

by Tory Borovsky

Please welcome the newest staff member\* to the Biomass newsletter – Elizabeth (Liz) Berg! Liz now holds the esteemed position of editor and is graciously offering her services free-of-charge. In this position Liz will review the articles for BioMass and help provide cohesiveness to the publication. The biology department is very happy to have her.

Now, a little about Liz. She is a junior, biology major at St. Olaf. She is from Clearbrook, MN, a small town in the northern part of the state. At St. Olaf she lives in the Hospitality House with 9 other girls. Appropriately for an editor, she enjoys writing, specifically literary analysis and poetry. This semester her load includes intro to neuroscience, physics, environmental ethics and vertebrate biology. You may see Liz studying in any number of places on campus because she doesn't like to stay in one place for very long.

Liz's experience thus far at St. Olaf has been a positive one. She loves the people, both students and professors. She also likes the learning she is getting inside and outside of class. When not in class or studying, Liz enjoys being outside

and participates in the Collegiate Choir. She also enjoys attending musical and other events at St. Olaf.

Though there was no nationally advertised job opening with 150 applicants Liz still deserves recognition for her placement as editor. She was recommended by one of the biology professors for this position. I asked her if she knew why. She said she wasn't sure but suspected it may have to do with the journal writing she did while in South India last semester. I guess it made an impression and we are sure happy to have her!

## **Nikki Marvin Receives Prestigious Fellowship** by Liz Berg

First year student Nikki Marvin was recently awarded a fellowship by the American Physiological Association. The program annually provides an opportunity for thirteen full time undergraduates to conduct research in the laboratory of an APA member. First through third year students are eligible to apply. The program was developed with the goal of encouraging undergraduate students to pursue careers in basic research. A \$3,000 stipend as well as a \$1,000 travel allowance is provided to the student. A \$300 grant is also provided to the research advisor.

## **from the student naturalist**

The coming two months will highlight some of the most impressive times for the St. Olaf Campus and the Natural Lands. The re-greening of the campus rids us of the brown and brings back some of the beauty which we are renowned for. I'd like to use this platform to advertise some opportunities that will explore some of spring's offerings.

First, although our time here does not allow us to see the wildflowers that bloom in the prairie, ephemeral plants bloom in mid-April. During Earth Week there will be a guided tour through Norway Valley identifying some of the native ephemerals located on campus. Second, the spring migration is coming into full swing (many song birds and waterfowl have already returned), and thus birding provides a good chance to take a stroll along an infrequently taken path.

Lastly, which has little to with the out-of-doors, will be an opportunity for a limited number of students (how ever many specimens Gene Bakko has harvested or scraped off the side of the road) to prepare museum study skins for the St. Olaf mammalian and avian collections. Keep an eye out for future e-mails describing the details for all of these events, and enjoy the weather!

*Perry Williams*

\*Perry Williams is also a regular contributor, hence staff writer, to BioMass. He is the student naturalist at St. Olaf and has been writing a column each month. Thanks Perry!!!

The program requires 10 weeks of research conducted on a question of the student's choosing and includes a formal presentation of findings at one of several conferences held during the summer. Nikki will be conducting her research in Dr. Kevin Crisp's laboratory this summer, investigating the neuronal pathway involved in the swimming pattern of leeches. Her research will involve aspects of pharmacology and physiology. This work has implications for our understanding of spinal cord damage in humans.

Nikki is a biology major with a concentration in neuroscience. Her future plans include graduate school, and she hopes eventually to conduct research focusing on neuronal damage in the central nervous system and the effects of this damage particularly in children and adolescents. In Nikki's words, "A research goal of mine at this point is to understand how the mind's pathways form through the actions we take and how negative stimuli and nerve cell damage and death affect the pathways formation and the development of the cognitive mind."

Congratulations, Nikki, and best wishes for your investigation this summer!

### The Honors Day Science Symposium at St. Olaf

On Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, St. Olaf College will host its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Honors Day Science Symposium. This year's symposium is titled "A Balance for the Future: The Science of Sustainability." According to the St. Olaf Science Symposium website, "The Honors Day Science Symposium at St. Olaf College celebrates the contributions of the natural sciences and mathematics to the college and to society. Founded in 1999, with funding provided by the Paul & Mildred Hardy Distinguished Professorship in the Sciences, the symposium seeks to: highlight undergraduate research in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, psychology and related subjects; explore a topic in contemporary research; enable the St. Olaf community and the public to interact with invited guests working at the forefront of their fields ([www.stolaf.edu/events/sciencesymposium/about.html](http://www.stolaf.edu/events/sciencesymposium/about.html))."

This year's guests include Nancy B. Grimm, Ph.D., Arizona State University, Robin D. Rogers, Ph.D., The University of Alabama and Stephen Polasky, Ph.D., University of Minnesota. Dr. Grimm specializes in biogeochemistry, stream-riparian ecology, and urban ecosystems. Her talk is titled "Urban Ecosystems: A Challenge for Sustainability Science." Dr. Rogers

is the Robert Ramsay Chair of Chemistry, Distinguished Research Professor, Director, Center for Green Manufacturing, and Editor for Crystal Growth & Design. He will be speaking on "The Past, Present, and Future of Ionic Liquids: From Designer Solvents to Advanced New Materials." Dr. Polasky holds the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Ecological/Environmental Economics and is a faculty member of the Department of Applied Economics and of the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior. In 1998 - 1999 he was the senior staff economist for environment and resources for the President's Council of Economic Advisors. Currently he serves on two US EPA committees and is a Co-Chair for bioSustainability for DIVERSITAS.

Another important activity at the Science Symposium each year is the student poster presentation. All students or groups of students with a research project are encouraged to formally present their research. For more information about presenting a poster, please go online to the web address listed above in this article.

Stay posted for more information around campus and online about the Honors Day Science Symposium. Past year's symposiums have proven to be enjoyable and unique educational opportunities.

### WORD FIND

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AORTA  
CHROMOSOME  
CHLOROPHYLL  
CARTILAGE  
RIBOSOMES  
HEMOGLOBIN  
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Source: <http://biology.about.com/library/weekly/aa080901a.htm>



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LODDIGESSI BLOOM

St. Olaf College Greenhouse