The eclectic reports about outstanding faculty in this issue of The Western Scholar reflect the important roles of faculty in expanding student learning and new ideas. Such learning and ideas may change forever the students’ ability to identify and solve problems, interact with others on important issues, acquire depth in their knowledge base and research skills, as well as formulate choices leading to careers and professions. The value added by studying and learning in a baccalaureate or graduate degree program is immense if considered in the totality of quality of life, contributions to one’s community, and economic benefits ascribed to the graduate, his family, and recipients of creativity and outcomes from such Western Kentucky University graduates.

In this issue, Potter College’s Robert Antony, holder of four Fulbright grants, describes himself as a “combination historian and anthropologist.” His inquiries about ordinary Chinese citizens’ views of history and secret societies, and his research into women’s studies, and 18th Century Taiwan frontier culture and violence offer a number of insights into the cultures of Taiwan and South China. In addition, Dr. Antony explores the role of popular religion, along with the research challenges presented in studying a culture that includes many dialects. Currently, Dr. Antony is studying folk religion and symbols and their importance.

What did the Kentucky prairies look like when Bowling Green was founded in 1798? Professor Stokes can give you good answers to the question. Dr. Michael Stokes, from the Ogden College of Science and Engineering, studies the ecosystem of the Kentucky prairie, which includes mammals, birds, insects, grasses, flowers, plants, and their physical environment. Stokes works along with students from the Center for Biodiversity at the 160-acre Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve. Dr. Stokes points out elements such as burning, cattle grazing, recolonizing of small mammals, and the variety of plant life which are part of native prairie environments. He feels it is very important to increase people’s awareness and appreciation for biodiversity, which is “the diversity of life and what is living in your area.”

Potter College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences English professor, Dr. Joe Survant, Kentucky’s newest Poet Laureate, discusses the emotional, creative, and imaginative sides of life, and records extraordinary outcomes through his writing and poetry. A moving experience during the time he and his family lived on Penang led to his poem

of research conducted by Dr. Shoenfelt and her students. Perhaps with Professor Shoenfelt’s ideas, there will be more .400 hitters in baseball after a 60-year absence!

In recent years, the political and economic interests of Canada, Latin America, and the United States have merged and become more formally interpreted through a NAFTA plan. Dr. Brian Coutts describes himself as a “Canadian Latin American Specialist with an American Twist.” Dr. Coutts and former WKU librarian Peggy Wright were instrumental in establishing the first university library in Belize after a parliamentary democracy was achieved in 1981. As an ambassador from Western’s University Libraries, Dr. Coutts will impress you with his selfless, humanitarian, and creative leadership to foster improved learning opportunities for students and faculty.

Dr. Katrina Phelps, from the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, conducts research in an effort to improve the quality of life for young people and decrease delinquent activities among youth. In this issue, Professor Phelps discusses a number of steps to enhance after school programs, to develop alternative suspension programs for school systems, and to establish an information system and referral center to health and human services agencies. Dr. Phelps highlights a number of facts about building future bridges in order to grow healthy young people who can make good decisions. Her work fits well with WKU’s goal of “Enhancing Responsiveness to Constituents.”

New business ventures have provided considerable growth of new jobs in the U.S. economy in recent years. Dr. Linda Johnson, President of CITE, Inc., and faculty member in the Gordon Ford College of Business, is leading a new venture firm in Bowling Green that seeks to advance the use of technology applications in Kentucky to foster new jobs and use of computer technologies. Professor Johnson points out the important role of faculty in integrating information technology strategy with business and classroom applications for today’s students and faculty. The $2.65 million private-public partnership is part of this interesting not-for-profit incubator venture and efforts to develop the information superhighway in Kentucky.

It is exciting to read and learn about the accomplishments of the Western faculty in this issue of The Western Scholar. Our university is alive and vigorous as long as Western faculty such as these remain motivated and contribute to our students, alumni, constituents, and faculty colleagues.

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ROBERT ANTONY CAN TRACE HIS FASCINATION WITH CHINA BACK TO HIS FATHER, A MERCHANT MARINE. “HE WOULD ALWAYS COME HOME WITH STORIES ABOUT EVERYWHERE HE’D BEEN — EUROPE, ASIA AND CHINA. I THINK WHAT ATTRACTED MY ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY WERE THE INTERESTING STORIES HE TOLD ME ABOUT CHINA,” THE HISTORY PROFESSOR AT WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY SAID.

Those stories are the impetus of a fascination with a culture that has included four Fulbright fellowships to China and Taiwan, a forthcoming book on Chinese pirates, and a series of other projects awaiting time and opportunity for study.

“In the early 1930s, during one of my father’s early voyages, he had shipped out to the Orient as an ordinary seaman aboard an old freighter,” Dr. Antony writes in the opening of his manuscript. “I remember one story he told me about Shanghai. The waters around the port were infested with pirate craft, fishing boats, and a myriad of other Chinese junks, all indistinguishable from one another. At night pirates would sneak up alongside their prey, and using long bamboo poles with hooks on their ends would shimmy up the side of the ship to steal cargo and anything else that was not secured.”

Dr. Antony studies the pirates for more than their criminal exploits. “I am primarily interested in understanding piracy for what it can tell us about the nature of socioeconomic change in maritime South China during the late imperial age,” he writes.

His work illustrates a different approach to historical research. Calling himself a combination historian and anthropologist, Dr. Antony says he looks at history “from the bottom up,” looking at history from the perspective of ordinary people.

“I’m a strong believer that you need to go to a country in order to study it, and so I’ve traveled back and forth to China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, or somewhere in that region just about every summer,” he said. “And when I get a grant of some sort, I spend the time there.”

Dr. Antony’s style of research is not without its difficulties. Most of the writings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were by the elite or government officials. Those viewpoints don’t often reflect the perspectives of the ordinary citizen.

For example, Dr. Antony recently returned from a year-long sabbatical in Taiwan on his fourth Fulbright research grant. While there, he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Taiwan History at Academia Sinica and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Chinese Studies at Taiwan’s National Library.

His research was on “Passion, Sex and Violence on the Taiwan Frontier in the Qing Dynasty,” a look at the impact of frontier culture on sexuality and gender relations. His topic was a combination of women’s studies and a look at the frontier culture in 18th century Taiwan.

The idea came from a study of the American West and its frontier culture. While some researchers have been studying the impact that American frontier culture had on gender relations, no one was looking at the Chinese frontier and its impact on gender relations.

“So I thought that would be a really interesting topic. As it turns out it was an interesting topic,” Dr. Antony said. “After I got to Taiwan, however, I found there were not that many primary materials on the topic. No one had really written about it. I found things about women, but nothing really explaining how the frontier affected the gender relationship.”

Violence, however, was a major topic. Officials were concerned with violence on the frontier, especially in the “civilizing” of the native Aborigines. “I found a lot of information on the conflicts between the Chinese settlers or frontiersmen and those indigenous people,” he said. “So what began as a study of passion, sex and violence, turned out to be more of a study of violence.”

And while the study of gender relationships is still a viable topic that will take more time, Dr. Antony refocused his attention on violence, looking at bandits, secret societies, rebellions and, once again, pirates.

“As I was getting into it, I was drawn further and further into Chinese popular religion and the relationship between religion, popular religion or folk religion, and some of these rebellious movements in
Taiwan and South China,” he said. “My studies have evolved over time according to the sources I have had access to.”

This also fits well with research Dr. Antony has begun into secret societies, such as the Triads. “These societies were involved in a number of activities from banditry to prostitution to gambling, and were the source of rebellions against the Chinese leadership. “In a number of these movements, I found that there were these ‘preachers’ or shamans who went around the countryside stirring up people to follow them,” he said. “In some cases they were nothing more than charlatans, and other times they were genuine magicians or wizards or shamans who said they could cure illnesses by their charms. One of the things that upset the government was that sometimes they stirred up uprisings and rebellions.”

Many of these shamans preached the coming of demons or another Buddha. “What they were preaching was the destruction of the world,” he said. “Of course this upset the government very much because they were a part of the world order and many of the aims of these shamans, these wizards, were against the government. This is why we have lots of records about them in the archives because the government paid a lot of attention to these people.”

Dr. Antony said most people study the three great religions: Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. “But there’s also a fourth religion in China, the folk religion, which the ordinary people follow,” he said. “Many of the rebel movements that tried to overthrow governments in China throughout history were led by these folk religion leaders, or shamans, and there are some parallels with the government’s handling of religions today. “There’s the sense that the government has to be careful with these movements.”

Take the Yi Guan Dao, a religious movement that goes back to the beginning of the 20th century and earlier. It is considered an (illegal) religion in Mainland China and suppressed. “In Taiwan, on the other hand, it was looked upon earlier as a secret religion and also suppressed,” he said, “but in recent years because the membership has expanded and become a more powerful institution in Taiwan, it has become legalized and has built up close connections within the government and community and within the economic structure of Taiwan. Now it’s above ground, a legal religion on Taiwan.”

Of particular interest to Dr. Antony is a Triad rebellion in 1802 lead by the Hakka, a group of late-comers in Guangdong province in South China. Often settling in the poorer regions, the Hakka have maintained their own culture and dialect. Working with a professor in Guangdong province and local officials, Dr. Antony set out to locate the areas involved in this rebellion.

“In a poorer area, they [local Chinese officials] are so excited to have a foreigner there to do research and interested in their county. They took us in,” he said. “They didn’t know the places that I was interested in because I had only late 18th to early 19th century names for them. The names have changed. I had some general idea where they were, and also there were some similar names on modern maps, so we had a general idea. They took us up into the mountains into some of the villages, and we were able to find two of the areas that were important to this Triad uprising.”

The researcher was even able to locate the descendants of the rebel leader. “By chance I stumbled on them without having to really do a lot of running around and research,” he said. “They were very nice. I was able to talk to them, interview them about what they remembered about their forefather who was a rebel leader.” The family also produced a written genealogy that they allowed Dr. Antony to photocopy.

What [these shamans] were preaching was the destruction of the world. This is why we have lots of records about them in the archives because the government paid a lot of attention to these people.
DR. MICHAEL STOKES IS OUTSTANDING IN HIS FIELD — LITERALLY. ON A HOT JULY MORNING, STOKES IS ON A WALKING TOUR OF A PRAIRIE RESTORATION PROJECT AT THE RAYMOND ATHY BARRENS STATE NATURE PRESERVE IN LOGAN COUNTY.

“This is about the best example of native prairie we have in this area. This isn’t exactly what it looked like 200 years ago, but this is where I bring people if they want to know what a Kentucky prairie looks like,” Stokes said.

The Kentucky prairie is similar to the prairie of his native Kansas but is a somewhat different ecosystem, Stokes said. That ecosystem — mammals, birds, insects, grasses, flowers, plants, and their physical environment — is the focus of the research Stokes and Western students in the Center for Biodiversity Studies are doing at the 160-acre Logan County site.

“Everybody thinks the big things have an impact on the world around them, but a lot of times it is the little stuff that has a much greater impact than you would imagine,” said Stokes, who earned his doctorate at the University of Kansas.

The research began as a project to study the effect prescribed burning had on small mammal populations. Fire is a necessary and defining process in maintaining prairie ecosystems. In Kansas, Stokes knew the prairie soil was deep enough that small mammals could burrow and avoid fire. However, the shallow topsoil of the Kentucky barrens provides no haven for small mammals.

One of the early research projects looked at different burn patterns to determine what happens to small mammals and how quickly they recolonized the burned areas.

Now the research is looking at how the small mammal communities affect plant life in the restored prairie. “What we’re doing here in Kentucky is burning some of these areas throughout where the barrens are, in an attempt to bring back some of that native prairie-like vegetation,” he said.

It’s easy to see how grazing by cattle can change a plant community, but smaller animals like mice, voles, shrews, and moles are busily working out of sight eating seeds, clipping grass, and burrowing under the soil.

“Right now my students are looking at how the presence or absence of different small mammals affects plant communities,” he said.

‘A weedy old field is of much more interest to me than a golf course or a lawn.’

PHOTOS BY SHERYL HAGAN-BOOTH

One of the early research projects looked at different burn patterns to determine what happens to small mammals and how quickly they recolonized the burned areas.
To most who drive by, the Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve may look like an overgrown field, but to Stokes and his students, the fields are a piece of ecological heaven.

“Most of us as biologists are interested in seeing a lot of different things,” he said. “To us a beautiful lawn is a desert. It’s a monoculture of fescue or bluegrass. A weedy old field is of much more interest to me than a golf course or a lawn.”

Several types of native grasses, along with flowering plants, are growing in the nature preserve. The prairie-type grasses don’t need a lot of water and can flourish in the summer heat. The area also includes fire-resistant oak trees and not as fire-resistant winged elm and cedar trees.

“To me this is the perfect lawn. You have flowers that change all year round. I don’t have to mow it. I just have to burn in March or early April,” Stokes said.

But “if you look out across the countryside almost a third of the plants are not natives,” Stokes said, describing other plants such as fescue, bluegrass, or Johnson grass that have been introduced.

“The grasses that you see in the Raymond Athey Barrens State Nature Preserve are native. That’s the key,” he said.

For Stokes, the key to restoring prairie ecosystems is helping people appreciate biodiversity, which simply refers to “the diversity of life and what is living in your area.”

“I’ve found that if you get people out on a prairie, and if they care just a little bit, they become evangelical about prairie restoration,” he said.

Western’s Center for Biodiversity Studies, along with other centers in the Applied Research and Technology Program, is spreading the message to the region and the state that biodiversity is important to our ecological, environmental, and economic future.

Undergraduate and graduate students are involved in numerous research projects both on campus and for national parks and other agencies. Students from varied backgrounds — science, mathematics and computer science, for example — are well-prepared for careers in the field.

Since 1998, the center has received more than $1 million in external funding. In the coming months, Western will establish a field station along the Green River that will provide an enormous educational and research boost for the program, Stokes said. Western’s Biology Department also has plans for a new environmental education facility.

“In cooperation with state and federal agencies, we have new opportunities for certain types of ecological research along the Green River that is on a nearly unprecedented geographical scale,” Stokes said.
“Most [of the poems] were written during that time,” he wrote in the forward of his book, “others have continued to appear over the years as if they were dormant chrysalises waiting for some invisible signal to change and emerge.”

“It was not easy,” Survant recalled of their experience, “particularly for the first two or three months. We had to find a place to live and a place to buy food the girls could or would eat. We also had to buy a used car and find places to shop.”

The family set up residence in a multi-cultural neighborhood near the ocean. By living in modest housing, the Survants were able to afford to

WKU English Professor Joe Survant has always used the medium of poetry to express his memories and feelings. Last July, he published a collection of poetry, *The Presence of Snow in the Tropics*, which comes out of his experiences as a Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia during the mid-1980s.

“One thing poetry — and art in general — does is that it mediates experiences and deals with the emotional and imaginative sides of our lives,” Survant explained. “Through my writing, I tried to take in the interesting things we were seeing. This book came long after the fact, but the experience was powerful.”

During his Fulbright appointment, Survant and his wife and daughters lived on Penang, an island off the west coast, while he taught at the University Sains Malaysia.
that there is no struggle.

PHOTO BY LADONNA HARMON

and tells us

each night

Rain washes the streets

The island

is silent in its mists.

but Pearl Hill

and the year began,

from Mecca to Medina

Muhammad journeyed

and sixty-four years ago

for rising sharks.

like chum

Poet Laureate leads the state in literary endeavors, including the activities of Kentucky Writer’s Day in April.

In January, Kentucky Governor Paul Patton appointed Dr. Survant as Kentucky Poet Laureate for 2003-04. The announcement came after Survant was invited to submit a paper for the upcoming conference that would deal with the relationship between the United States and Southeast Asia at the turn of the century. Survant was invited to submit a paper on the backburner. In the summer of 1999, a friend who had taught him creative writing at Western Kentucky University wrote to him about a poetry reading, “Survant explained. “They were the best illustration of the conference topic, so I also offered to give a poetry reading.” Survant explained. “They liked the idea of a poetry reading, so I went to Singapore and participated in the conference. A member of the audience at the reading was the editor of a small press in Singapore, she asked to see more of my poems.”

“Even though I was an outsider to the culture, and my images were not always complimentary, my poetry was well received at the conference,” he said. “In a way it validated my work.”

The metaphor, with its double life in the worlds of the actual and the figurative, has a power greater than the logic of its construction. More and more I am aware of its value as an instrument of the unsayable.”

Joe Survant is a graduate of the University of Kentucky (B.A.) and the University of Delaware (Ph.D.). He teaches contemporary literature and creative writing at Western Kentucky University. In November 2002, Survant’s newest work, Rafting Rise, was published by the University Press of Florida. This work combines lyric and narrative to describe central Kentucky at the turn of the 20th century. Rafting Rise is the second in a trilogy, the first of which, Anne & Alpheus, 1862-1882, won the Arkansas Poetry Award. The third book of the series is in process and will be set in the 18th century.

In January, Kentucky Governor Paul Patton appointed Dr. Survant as Kentucky Poet Laureate for 2003-04. The Poet Laureate leads the state in literary endeavors, including the activities of Kentucky Writer’s Day in April.
It’s the big game. Time is running out. Your team is down by one point. A foul sends you to the free throw line. The game is on the line. The months of practice have come down to this moment. The outcome is in your hands—and in your head.

You’ve got to focus on the task at hand—making the free throws. You’ve got to stay positive. Forget about those missed shots earlier in the game.

The shot is up . . .

For the past two decades, Dr. Elizabeth Shoenfelt has been helping athletes improve their performances by improving their mental skills. The Western Kentucky University psychology professor directs the school’s graduate program in industrial/organizational psychology, but much of the applied research conducted by her and her students has come in the area of sport psychology.

Both areas share common themes of motivation, leadership, group dynamics, teamwork, goal setting, and training, she said.

“When I was in graduate school at Louisiana State University, I started working with the women’s basketball team,” Shoenfelt said. She began looking at the use of imagery and rehearsal techniques in improving free throw shooting.

Shoenfelt came to Western in 1983 and began working with Coach Paul Sanderford’s Lady Topper teams. She expanded on her work at LSU and began using behavior modeling and goal setting in her work with the Lady Toppers.

“Essentially what we found, and this was in the mid-80s, was that imagery was very effective in improving performance,” she said. Positive imagery focusing on proper performance and positive mindset helped the players improve their free throw shooting.

“She’s very good at what she does,” said Coach Sanderford, who worked with Shoenfelt during his tenure at Western and at the University of Nebraska. “The industrial/organizational psychology program at Western is one of the best in the country and Betsy has worked very hard in sport psychology.”

Goal setting has become a well-established motivational technique in sport and industrial/organizational psychology.

“Most coaches who’ve been around a while may not call it sport psychology, but they know an awful lot of sport psychology,” Shoenfelt said. “They may not know the terminology but they know how to use it.”

Public awareness, however, is another matter. “Most people don’t understand the term psychology,” she said of a field that includes dozens of disciplines. “They think of clinical psychology and picture the old Bob Newhart TV show or now Frasier Crane. There has been a stigma attached to the word psychology.”

But public awareness is improving as golfers, Olympic athletes, and professional teams use sport psychologists to enhance performance, she said.

Most of the research studies conducted by Shoenfelt and her students are published in psychology journals such as Professional Psychology: Research and Practice and Perceptual and Motor Skills. But in 2001 she joined Sanderford to co-author a book, Women’s Basketball: Inside the Practice Court.

In her previous work with Coach Sanderford, Shoenfelt also developed a technique to assist coaches and players in clarifying and communicating each player’s role on a team. Using a list of 16 roles, each player and coach independently select the primary role for each player, such as scorer, rebounder, assist leader, defensive stopper, or shooter. Results are tallied, then presented individually to each player and the coach. The procedure is followed three times during the season. Rates of role agreement between player and coach typically show significant improvement through the season.

“It was a great communication tool for me over the years,” Sanderford said.

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The bench erupts in celebration. The crowd goes wild. Al Morris (at right) jumps for joy. "The last shot was our shot," Morris said. "When a severe infraction has occurred. Lenient punishment does not deter future rule violations. Those three themes also have been used in several studies Shoenfelt and her students have conducted on free throw shooting. Practice. Repetition is the best way for athletes to learn a skill. The more a skill is practiced, the more it becomes automatic. Those three themes also have been used in several studies Shoenfelt and her students have conducted on free throw shooting.

In a study published in 1991, Shoenfelt investigated a coach’s concern that players’ free throw shooting was being negatively affected by a weight training program. In a study published in 2002, Shoenfelt and four graduate students compared constant and variable practice conditions on free throw shooting. They were trying to find out whether variable practice conditions would improve performance for a consistently performed task, or if constant practice is the only effective practice for a consistently performed task. The study used 94 students assigned to practice free throws by following one of four constant practice (that impair performance during training actually improve performance in the transfer setting.

In a study published in 1991, Shoenfelt investigated a coach’s concern that players’ free throw shooting was being negatively affected by a weight training program. In 2002, four of Shoenfelt’s graduate students studied team disciplinary decisions by looking at the severity of rule violations, the severity of punishment, and the decision-making processes used. The students found that athletes (as well as corporate employees) are concerned with fairness in reward or punishment, especially when the “star” athlete is involved. "What the athletes said was that consistent punishment is important. It is seen as more fair and as a greater deterrent to future misconduct,” Shoenfelt said. "If you let one athlete get away with something, it sends a message to the other players." It is also important that the severity of the punishment matches the severity of the violation. Lenient punishment does not deter future rule violations when a severe infraction has occurred.

Previous research has shown that in the business world or the classroom those performing standard tasks or procedures can benefit from varied training. Participants learn to generalize so that they can perform regardless of the conditions. Shoenfelt used the example of a student sitting at the same computer all semester who is discontented when that computer doesn’t work on exam day or someone else takes that seat. If a student uses different computers throughout the semester, he or she won’t be upset by a change later.

"I would recommend variable practice at this point,” she said. "In some situations, conditions (such as variable practice) that impair performance during training actually improve performance in the transfer setting.

Shoenfelt has used the process at Western, Nebraska, and East Carolina. This year she has modified the process for Western’s volleyball team. “It seems to be a very effective technique, a structured communication process that allows a coach to communicate to players what he or she wants them to do on the court.”

Sanderford agreed that more coaches are realizing the importance of mental focus and role acceptance. Their book, aimed at players and coaches, includes practice drills along with a chapter on mental techniques.

The main themes covered in that chapter are the following:

* Goal setting. Effective goals must be specific and difficult. Players must be aware of the goals, must understand them, and must be committed to achieving them.

* Focus and confidence. In a competitive situation, an athlete must focus on the present, the positive, and the performance.

* Practice. Repetition is the best way for athletes to learn a skill. The more a skill is practiced, the more it becomes automatic.

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“What the athletes said was that consistent punishment is important. It is seen as more fair and as a greater deterrent to future misconduct,” Shoenfelt said. “If you let one athlete get away with something, it sends a message to the other players.” It is also important that the severity of the punishment matches the severity of the violation. Lenient punishment does not deter future rule violations when a severe infraction has occurred.

Now back to the game…

The shot is good! To game:

The next shot is up. Gooooooood!!!! Your team is the champion.

The bench erupts in celebration. The crowd goes wild. Somewhere a sport psychologist is smiling.

Sitting in his comfortably cluttered office, he pushes his glasses up on his nose and peruses the piles of reference materials to which he has contributed in his 15 years at Western Kentucky University. Coutts, a native of Canada, received his BA (history) and MA (Central American history) at the University of Calgary. He later received his master’s of library science and his Ph.D. (History) from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, where he completed his doctoral dissertation on the Spanish administration of Louisiana. During this time, he lived in Seville, Spain, for a year.

“I was a Canadian Latin American specialist with an American twist,” he laughed. “I studied former Spanish possessions in the Southeastern United States, and was one of the first researchers to look at this area.” Coutts put this expertise to use writing 32 entries for A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography (1988), articles on three governors for The Louisiana Governors: From Iberville to Edwards (1990), and numerous articles for the Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture (1996).

His Latin American expertise led him to develop a research interest in the small Central American country of Belize. While Coutts was still in school at the University of Calgary in 1968, he had an opportunity to travel to Belize, which was then still a British colony. “While attending summer school my first assignment was to set up field work opportunities for other students,” he said.

Thus began his pursuit of knowledge and expertise about the country of Belize, something he is still deeply involved with today. “I came to Western in 1987,” he said. “At that time, Peggy Wright (former WKU coordinator of research instruction) was working in our department, and she was also interested in Belize. Belize had achieved full independence as a parliamentary democracy in 1981, and Peggy was instrumental in establishing the first university library in Belize. Materials were ordered at Western and delivered to Belize.”

Coutts and Wright collaborated on the publication of Belize, in 1993, the 21st volume of the World Bibliographical Series. This detailed volume, which outlines the history of the country, was three years in the making. Volumes in the World Bibliographical Series cover a wide range of topics from archaeology to tourism. Coutts and Wright are currently working on a new project together, the Historical Dictionary of Belize, which will be published next year.

“The country is desperate for more reference sources about its own people,” Coutts said. “We are writing this historical dictionary with the chief archivist in Belize. Our goal is to select the data and narrow it down so that it is helpful to students. There are few published references sources about the country, so we have had to gather some of the information through personal interviews.”

Coutts last visited Belize five years ago to write articles on its prime ministers. During this trip, he had the rare opportunity to meet personally with then Prime Minister George Price to discuss his experiences and views. “There were two political parties in Belize,” Coutts explained. “You were either in power and controlled everything or you were totally out of power. The prime minister came to the Supreme Court building in Belize City every Wednesday when the government was not in session in Belmopan, the capital. Anyone who wished could line up to try to speak to him. So one Wednesday, I lined up with the rest. I spoke to him, passed on my letters of reference, and requested an interview. Three days later, a courier arrived and summoned me to the capital.” The experience Coutts had in

Belize City harbor
meeting with Price gave him a unique perspective as he completed this project.

“Because of Western’s strong interest in Belize, we are interested in assisting the country in expanding academic opportunities for students,” Coutts said. In 1988, Western and Murray State University founded the Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation (COBEC) to organize their efforts in faculty and student exchange programs. Since then, COBEC has grown to include 12 American universities and all of the secondary institutions in Belize. The directors of the National Library and the University of Belize Libraries both trained at WKU.

Coutts’ interests and expertise are varied. He is a prolific book reviewer, having reviewed more than 300 publications. In 1987 the editor of Library Journal approached him about compiling a special feature article on the “Best Reference Books of the Year.” He has been writing that feature since 1988, and it is consistently the best selling issue of the magazine. He chooses publications that are most useful to medium sized public or academic libraries, and for the past several years has also chosen the 15 best Web sites for reference librarians.

The addition of reference web sites has changed the way libraries are wired for the new millennium, he said. “Some portions of the library have dramatically changed,” he noted. “The strongest area of change has been in the use of traditional print indexes. For many years research techniques were relatively similar. You checked in print indexes and looked in the backs of books to review the bibliographies.”

Coutts said this all began to change around 1980 with the invention of ROM (read only memory) microfiche readers — and even more dramatically after 1993 with the invention of Web browsers.

“No, few print indexes are produced,” he said. “What used to require months of research can now be done in an afternoon. This has not lessened the need for experienced researchers and librarians, though,” he laughed. “A researcher must now learn to harness the Web and give it some structure. We now have information overload, and the task is not any easier.”

“I was a Canadian Latin American specialist with an American twist.”
AS A CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST, RESEARCHER, YOUTH ADVOCATE, AND MOTHER, KATRINA PHELPS IS WELL AWARE THAT TEACHING CHILDREN TO MAKE CHOICES THAT ARE HEALTHY AND SAFE IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE. BUT THAT IS A DIFFICULT TASK WHEN CHILDREN GROW UP IN ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT DELINQUENT OR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR.

A number of recent statistics suggest we have reason to be concerned:

- Warren County has the fourth highest juvenile delinquency rate in Kentucky;
- Warren County’s poverty rate in 1990 was 17.5 percent and the county’s per capita income was significantly below the national average;
- More than 1,000 students were suspended during the 2000-01 school year for policy violations or criminal acts; and
- A significant number of students scored below the proficient level in reading, science, math, and writing on state exams.

However, through the federally funded Western Kentucky University Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Project, Dr. Phelps and others in Bowling Green and Warren County aim to change those statistics and brighten the future for our youth and our community.

“The overall goal is to improve the quality of life and decrease delinquent activities among youth in the region,” Dr. Phelps said.

Western received $500,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice for the ambitious program that uses the resources of the University, the Housing Authority of Bowling Green, the Warren County school system, the Warren County Fiscal Court, and other government and community service agencies.

“Having healthy young people is good for everyone,” Dr. Phelps said. “It’s not just a parent problem. You can have no children in your household and still have graffiti on your house. Juvenile delinquency can become your problem whether or not you have kids. It’s not just the schools’ problem, and it’s not just the police department’s problem. It’s everybody’s issue, and everybody needs to work to make this a great place for young people to flourish and find opportunities to succeed.”

She’s quick to point out that numerous agencies and groups are working together to improve the community. “This is not my brainchild. There have been many people over the course of the last few years coming together to say this is what we need.”

“IT’S NOT JUST A PARENT PROBLEM. YOU CAN HAVE NO CHILDREN IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD AND STILL HAVE GRAFFITI ON YOUR HOUSE.”

BY TOMMY NEWTON

Dealing With Delinquency

BY TOMMY NEWTON
OBJECTIVES:
- Reduce the number of repeat suspensions
- Improve school attendance
- Boost academic achievement

GOAL 2
Enhance after-school programs offered by the Bowling Green Housing Authority and create a Local Information and Volunteer Exchange Center (ALIVE) that will provide resources, and match volunteers with service opportunities.

GOAL 3
Establish a centralized information and referral center for the community’s health and human service agencies. The Center hopes to encourage youth to volunteer and become involved in their community, and to help connect them with service opportunities.

A Local Information and Volunteer Exchange Center (ALIVE) will open at 1818 U.S. 31-W Bypass to meet the community need. The center will create a database of human service organizations in the county, establish a community information hotline, connect families with services to meet their needs, create online access to local resources, and match volunteers with service opportunities.

The Center hopes to encourage youth to volunteer. A lack of service opportunities for young people was among the “not so good news” revealed in a 2000 Spotlight Youth survey of 1,032 Bowling Green/Warren County students. The survey assessed the attitudes, behaviors, and assets of young people in our community. In a sense, the results of the survey are a report card to indicate how well young people perceive the adults around them are meeting their needs.

The survey’s good news included: 74 percent are part of a religious community; 71 percent claim to tell the truth; 70 percent feel their family provides love and support; 70 percent are optimistic about their futures; 68 percent accept and take personal responsibility; 68 percent are motivated to do well in school; 61 percent have positive peer influence; and 60 percent feel safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. The not so good news included: Only 25 percent of youth believe the community values them; 29 percent believe they are given opportunities to contribute to their community; 30 percent see their parents or other adults as positive role models; 63 percent spend less than one hour per week reading for pleasure; and 68 percent spend no time outside of school in fine arts activities.

“This survey gives us a real local sense of what to do,” Dr. Phelps said. “If we know that some things are going well for youth and some things aren’t, we can start focusing on this idea that children in our area do not feel that this community values them or gives them opportunities to serve as resources. One of the goals of the community information and volunteer center is to develop service learning projects and volunteer opportunities for young people.”

Western faculty, staff, and students also will benefit from the program by participating in hands-on activities, by volunteering for community service projects, and by connecting with the community.

“I teach child psychology, so I have always had an interest in children growing up, the factors that help them to grow to be healthy and make good decisions and the factors that put them at risk,” said Dr. Phelps, who works with the Spotlight Youth coalition, serves on the Board of Kentucky Child Now! and is chair-elect of the Warren County Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Council.

She’s also interested in building bridges between Western and its service region. “I think there is support from the president and the provost for finding ways to connect with social service agencies and help to link services. We have a responsibility to use our expertise to work in a broader context,” she said.

“I think one of the most exciting things about this grant is that Western has a chance to serve in the capacity of providing a program that will benefit the entire community,” Dr. Phelps said. “This is not the type of research that will get written in a journal and that possibly the experts will know about. The ALIVE Center is a place that anyone and everyone in our community will know about. It has the potential to be very broad reaching in terms of influencing people in need.”

The Western Kentucky University Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Project fits WKU’s “Challenging the Spirit” strategic goal of “Enhance Responsiveness to Constituents;” she said. “I think projects like these put our money where our mouth is. We’re not just talking the talk. We’re walking the walk, and working to make Bowling Green a better place to live.”
IN THE CORNER OF LINDA JOHNSON’S OFFICE, AMID THE 42-INCH FLAT PLASMA WALL MONITOR AND THE TWO COMPUTERS, SITS AN OLD ROYAL MANUAL TYPEWRITER. AS SHE TALKS ABOUT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP, HER 6-YEAR-OLD SON WILL TRIES TO "LOAD" A SHEET OF PAPER INTO THE FRONT OF THE TYPEWRITER.

"Isn’t that amazing," Dr. Johnson says as she inserts the paper into the rollers at the top. "He’s only seen a computer printer before."

While Will has trouble adapting to the older technology, his mother’s mission is just the opposite — trying to help more Kentuckians use information technology to their advantage.

As president of CITE — the Center for Information Technology Enterprise — and a member of the Department of Management and Information Systems faculty at Western Kentucky University, Dr. Johnson remains in the forefront of Kentucky’s move into the “new economy.”

Although she has published and lectured nationally and internationally, her interests are somewhat surprising.

“I have a passion for computer literacy," she said. When she joined the Western faculty in 1991, she saw “a tremendous need for basic computer skills among the students at Western, among individuals in our region, and throughout Kentucky. I was really challenged by the fact that in the early 1990s we continued to lose faculty positions from our information technology program, and as a result of that, I participated with my colleagues in creating a number of innovative ways to teach computer literacy. We were one of the first programs in the country to develop a self-paced, Web-based, competency-based approach to computer literacy.”

That type of forward thinking is what characterizes the information systems faculty in Western’s Gordon Ford College of Business, Dr. Johnson said. "I have been fortunate to lead a very entrepreneurial and innovative faculty for the past several years," she added. Prior to becoming president of CITE, Johnson served as professor and chair of Information Systems, WKU’s fastest growing undergraduate program. While she was chair (1996-2001), the program grew from 120 to 285 students.

“Information technology is a very practice-driven field because it is relatively new," Dr. Johnson said. "I’ve always had a tremendous interest in tying together the practice of information technology strategy and policy, my focus area, with what’s going on in the classroom.”

As the information systems faculty began integrating technology into the classroom, they also attracted attention from business and industry. “Businesses needed advice, and they would call us,” she said. “The faculty talked about how we might help, and we came up with the idea of creating a company — and that company is now becoming quite successful.”

CITE (www.citeinc.com), a private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) company, with headquarters at 1711 Destiny Place in Bowling Green, now has six full-time employees and plans to double its space this year.

BY BOB SKIPPER

PHOTO BY SHERYL HAGAN-BOOTH

ILLUSTRATION BY MARCUS DUKES

INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISE
“CITE is not technically affiliated with the University, yet it certainly owes its existence to Western Kentucky University’s Foundation and WKU President, Gary Ransdell,” Dr. Johnson said. “This is just another outgrowth of a university committed to economic development and involvement with a group of professionals who are out-of-the-box thinkers. That’s why we choose to be faculty, because we like the intellectual freedom to try new ideas.”

The initiative that Dr. Johnson and her coworkers used to move the Information Systems program ahead is also being applied to business and industry.

“What really excites me, and what I have enjoyed most about creating a company and serving as CITE’s first president, is the ability to help companies develop ways to compete in the new economy. We assist ‘old economy’ companies transition their existing business practices to ‘new economy’ processes,” she said. “More than 80 percent of Kentucky’s businesses are small businesses. Unless we can help them be competitive in today’s global economy, Kentucky is going to struggle economically. Creating a strategic advantage through information technology is what we do at CITE.”

CITE also brings government into the equation. One of the first major projects Dr. Johnson landed was from the Governor’s Office for the New Economy to spearhead connectKentucky (www.connectkentucky.org), launched by Governor Paul Patton in the Capitol Rotunda in May, this three-year, $2.65 million, public-private partnership takes a look at the information superhighway in Kentucky — its condition, accessibility, and who’s using it. The Steering Committee includes representation from AT&T, Ashland Inc., Band One, Belcan, BellSouth, Cincinnati Bell, CSX, Humana, Nortel, Qwest, Scotty’s Development, Toyota, UPS, USEC, and Yum! Brands.

“We have basically mapped the highway, which is one big fast lane running from Cincinnati through Louisville to Nashville and on to Atlanta, as you might expect, based on where the global Internet commodity is located,” she said. Now, CITE is using Geographic Information System maps to assess the availability of high-speed on-ramps like DSL and cable modems. The information stored in a database will help Kentucky compete in the networked world of e-commerce.

“This is really important to economic developers, because if you’re trying to get businesses to locate in your area, they need access, high-speed on ramps to the Internet. You need to be able to get to this kind of information,” Dr. Johnson said.

While T1 lines offer quick access, the $600-$800 monthly fee is more than most businesses can afford. DSL and cable modems are more affordable, running about $35 monthly for homes and $100 for businesses.

CITE is using a national model to conduct the connectKentucky research in addition to implementing the Web site www.connectkentucky.org. “We are responsible for the entire project and are collaborating with the Ohio Supercomputing Center to make this a reality,” she said.

CITE also offers video conferencing from its office in Bowling Green. Dr. Johnson indicated some clients use the technology to cut back on travel costs and time away from the State.

Even though she spends much of her time traveling on behalf of connectKentucky and CITE, numerous challenges must be faced to stay on the cutting edge. She has found that while it is somewhat easy to create a business, finding the knowledge workers to staff the business is her greatest challenge.

She cites Dr. Bill Brumadge, Kentucky’s New Economy commissioner, who says, “The new economy is about blurring the lines between higher education, government, and industry.”

Involvement is the blur because it’s a group of academicians who are working with business people and with government constituencies, and we bring all of those parties to the table together,” she said.

One accomplishment of which Dr. Johnson is most proud is that of receiving the first Don and Suzanne Vitale Award for Initiative, Innovation, and Leadership, established in 1999 by Don Vitale, president of Manchester Capital in Bowling Green. “It is such an honor as an academician to be recognized by business people for our professional accomplishment. Two information systems faculty have received this award and it says a lot about the
The idea for Writing Who We Are: Poems by Kentucky Feminists started at a local restaurant when Western Kentucky University faculty members, Elizabeth Oakes, an English professor, and Jane Olmsted, Director of the Women’s Studies Program and an English professor, began talking about the need to highlight feminist writing by Kentuckians.

With the idea in hand, they spoke to several publishers in Kentucky and were turned away after being told that poetry didn’t sell. “We weren’t going to give up,” Olmsted said. “Somehow we were going to do this.”

After a year, they found people who believed in their publishing cause. The Kentucky Foundation for Women and Western Kentucky University gave them grants in order to publish Writing Who We Are: Poems by Kentucky Feminists, which sold 500 copies within two months, necessitating a second printing. They then received a larger grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women for a second book, and were able to have the fiction volume published with a full-color cover.

Letters were sent to a variety of people, including unpublished writers and award-winning authors. Olmsted and Oakes felt it was important that the books represent a wide range of Kentucky women, from the housewife to the businesswoman, the published to the unpublished. They reviewed the poems and stories and selected only the best.

Poetry and stories from women writers reflected their individual experiences amid Kentucky’s beauty and tradition, as well as its poverty and ugliness. Kentucky authors wrote about confronting their past, present, and future, and about changing perceptions of themselves and others. Writers from across Kentucky said that for the first time, they feel like part of a community. Many have continued to write and publish because of the editors’ encouragement.

“We had no idea how important these books would be,” Olmsted said. “Olmsted and Oakes believed it was important to place award-winning authors and unpublished writers side by side for a multi-dimensional collection that could be shared and enjoyed by everyone. For many authors, it was their first time to be published.”

Unlike many editors, Olmsted and Oakes keep up with their writers by sending updates on reviews to the contributors to the books. This personal touch helps the writers and editors understand each other and form an ongoing relationship. “Jane and Libby provided unwavering support and assistance,” one writer said. “They went far beyond the expectation of most editors, building our confidence as well as providing valuable suggestions for enhancing our work. They gave us wings and let us soar.”

The editors have held readings of the two books at local venues, such as the Kentucky Women Writers Conference and the 20th Century Literature Conference. Books-a-Million named Writing Who We Are: Poems by Kentucky Feminists the second best-selling regional book of 2001. Some teachers have started to use the books as required texts. Positive reviews and articles have appeared in local and state newspapers such as the Lexington Herald-Leader and Louisville’s The Courier-Journal.

Their third book, I to I: Essays by Kentucky Feminists, will be published in 2003. Oakes said she hopes the collection, which is still being planned, will include a few essays written by men. In addition to sending letters to high schools and universities, they will send letters to prisons and shelters and other diverse places, encouraging writers everywhere to share their life experiences.

One of the most exciting aspects of the books is the positive impact they have had on awareness about feminism in Kentucky. Just because the writing has a political view does not mean that it’s polemical or browbeating. Oakes and Olmsted describe the writing as subtle, inventive, creative, and authentic. From the writing, one gets a sense of political causes through the real life experiences of women. “I was really gratified that what comes through was the strength of the women of Kentucky,” Olmsted said. “Somehow we were going to do this.”
Leadership in the Workplace

Communication is critical to our everyday life in and out of the workplace. The better we communicate, the better we do at the entry level for jobs, and the better our chances are of rising in our chosen professions. Communication ability is even more important today because many of us will have several different careers during our lifetimes.

Dr. Cecile Garmon received an award from Tommy Lyons, a Glasgow businessman, to help women address personal and communication issues as they direct businesses and organizations at top leadership positions. Entitled “Women in Entrepreneurship,” the project will enable participants to develop communication strategies to handle their multiple roles in their leadership and personal lives more effectively and efficiently. The project has three primary objectives. Dr. Garmon will hold a needs assessment session with participants from Kentucky and Northern Tennessee. This session will identify critical issues to focus upon during the first year of the project. There will be a series of seminars during this academic year led by professionals who have strong experience and expertise in dealing with the issues and concerns of women in these specific roles. The third part of the project will consist of reviewing and evaluating how well the objectives were accomplished and the overall effectiveness of the project.

The project will be supported by organizations sending employees to the activities. It will also hire a graduate assistant to help coordinate the project. This is a model project that has the potential for replication in Kentucky and around the nation.

Improving Teacher Quality

Dr. Leroy Metze received an award of $500,000 from the U. S. Department of Education for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education programs. He was one of two million new technology proficient teachers who will be needed by 2012. With technology education as the basis, the project will include an array of professional development programs for teachers from a variety of teaching subjects. They will have opportunities to exchange ideas, learn more about technology applications to their fields, and demonstrate technology rich teaching units that meet National Educational Technology Standards. They will be made aware of mini-grant opportunities to help their schools improve technology in the classrooms. They will learn how to design electronic portfolios for pre-service and K-12 teaching and learning. Finally, Dr. Metze and selected participants will disseminate the outcomes of the project to assist even a wider audience of teachers.

Combating Environmental Pollution

Dr. Kate Webb is directing a number of chemistry research projects. One of her most recent awards is entitled “Occurrence and Distribution of Mercury in Mammoth Cave National Park (MCNP).” The University of Kentucky Research Foundation, the United States Geological Survey, and the Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute have jointly funded this project. This research, which is the first year of a four-year project, is part of a larger program of mercury-related work undertaken by Dr. Webb. This project has a strong public service component as it addresses the growing problem of the impacts of environmental pollution on National Parks.

The fate and transport of mercury, a persistent neurotoxin, in Mammoth Cave National Park’s aquifer system, and its potential impacts on associated organisms will be examined. Atmospheric deposition of mercury is the largest single source of mercury at Mammoth Cave. With over twenty power plant applications under consideration in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, it is likely that mercury deposition will increase. Therefore, determining the current mercury levels in MCNP and the factors that affect mercury levels and distribution are important. Contaminant transport in a karst aquifer system, such as in south central Kentucky, can be quite rapid and extensive. Mercury may interact with limestone, thus changing its mobility. Mercury’s mobility in surface water and ground water is of great concern due to its toxicity and its ability to biomagnify up the food chain. A number of surface and subsurface organisms are endangered or declining in MCNP. Dr. Webb will also determine the bioaccumulation of mercury in fish and mussels. This work will provide the first measurements of mercury levels in Mammoth Cave and the surrounding watershed.
Rural Health Outreach

Dr. Donna Blackburn leads a team of health care professionals to escalate a Rural Health Outreach Program in the Institute for Rural Health Development and Research (IRHDR) in WKU’s College of Health and Human Services. The team is drawn from the Public Health, Allied Health and Human Services, and Nursing departments. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Health Resources and Services Administration funded the $483,750 project. It grows from work already performed by WKU’s IRHDR under the direction of Staci Simpson. This project has already made an impact on our rural regions because it tackles the health care barriers residents face by making health care accessible, affordable, and affordable. It is especially valuable for Kentuckians who have no health insurance or are underinsured. The project aims at arresting health care decline.

The team works in rural regions of the state via a mobile health and wellness unit to promote health care and provide health education/screening services to the underserved and uninsured. The unit’s clinical coordinator, Beth Rush, oversees all functioning and outings of the mobile unit. Since November 2001, the mobile unit has made 76 outings and served well over 3,200 patients.

Among the health services offered are a variety of screenings, such as cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, oral cancer, and dental problems. In addition, a school-based sealant program has been implemented in Allen and Edmonson counties. To date nearly 700 referrals have been made for follow-up services.

The benefits of the project are numerous. Aside from bringing better health to rural residents, the project strives to improve quality of life, prevent and reduce disease, and engage Western’s students in the provision of care in real life situations. To date, 154 students have worked 1,340 hours providing health screenings as well as dental services.

Another project will provide a Hazardous Emergency Awareness Training (H.E.A.T.) unit to prepare rural communities for chemical and biological disasters. Under the direction of Dr. Rod Handy, this very timely initiative has measurable, cost-effective outcomes, and will not only build public confidence but public health as well.

Solar Energy Research

The Kentucky Science and Engineering Foundation awarded Kaveh Khatir of the Department of Engineering a grant of $74,190 for “Advanced Research into Application of Solar Energy to Residential and Commercial Units.” This interdisciplinary project consists of a team of WKU faculty and staff. The team will research the application of passive and active solar energy to residential and commercial industrial units. The team will study current technology to convert solar energy to water and space heating, and to improve the efficiency of energy conversion by means of design, manufacture, installation, data collection, and performance analysis.

The key objective is to design a solar energy conversion system that can significantly reduce lighting, heating, and cooling costs for single and multi-family homes. The project will determine the economic feasibility of producing the system for purchase through the Internet, through catalogues, or in local stores.

The award enables Mr. Khatir and his team to purchase equipment for data generation, logging, and analysis. The team will involve students in applied research by constructing a laboratory for teaching science through designing the lighting, heating and cooling systems.

A further benefit of the project will include addressing reduction of dependency on fossil fuels which are sensitive to price fluctuations.