Briggs Grows and Expands

Indra Neil Sarkar, Vice President, Lyman Briggs Association

Fellow Spartans:

As many of us make our latest life and career transitions, it is important to take a moment and reflect on the times we all had in Holmes Hall. Remember those laboratories in the basement? Well, in tune with the demand and need, they are in the process of a massive renovation. We’ve seen great things happen to Briggs under the leadership and vision of Dr. Simmons. From the Alumni Board perspective, it has truly been a treat to hear from you in all of your exciting endeavors! As your Alumni association, LBAA is committed to keeping all of us in touch with each other. That is why we have renewed our commitment to produce Briggantine on regular intervals. Please send us updates about your whereabouts and what great things that you are doing. Briggs has been growing enormously, both in terms of students and faculty. It is clear from the types of new and innovative courses, both in sync with the rapidly advancing fields of science, that Briggs faculty are amongst the most forward thinkers in the understanding and parlaying of science to ever astonishing brilliant young Briggsies that fill the Holmes Hall classrooms. I urge you to take some time from your busy schedules, and visit the Briggs website (http://www.lymanbriggs.msu.edu/) to see what wondrous things are going on at your alma mater. We hope that you can help join us in these exciting times through your contributions — both financial and personal.

Spartanly yours,

Indra Neil Sarkar, PhD

Letter from the Director

Elizabeth H. Simmons, Director of the Lyman Briggs School Of Science

Dear Briggs Alumni:

We’re proud to welcome the winter 2004 graduates to your ranks — photos of their graduation brunch are up on the website.

2005 promises to be an exciting year in Holmes Hall. In December we received permission from then-Provost (now President) Simon to begin work on Phase 1 of the LBS expansion and lab renovation.

This will include building a brand-new physics lab in E-26A (the former computer lab), turning the old physics lab in C-7 into a brand-new chemistry lab, installing a new HVAC system to handle the extra fume hoods, renovating the Lab Prep rooms C-13 and C-14, and building 5 new faculty offices. Work will start in the spring term and be done by the end of the summer, in time to welcome an expanded freshmen class of 575 students. We plan to hold a dedication/celebration at the start of the fall 2005 term — so watch for an invitation.

We’re continuing to plan for (and raise money for) the 2006 phase of the renovation which will include building a new biology lab and renovating the existing chemistry and biology labs. Dr. Simon has pledge that the University will match all money donated to the renovation project by individuals, so this a great time for your donations to have maximum impact! Visit http://www.ns.msu.edu/development/ and look for LBS under “College Priorities”.

Your suggestions about good corporate/foundation sources of funds are also very welcome — please contact me or write directly to Ted Kluck (kluckt@msu.edu) in CNS Development.

More generally, please stay in touch with Briggs and tell us what you’re up to. Your former faculty and classmates want to know where life has taken you.

Best wishes for your health and happiness in 2005.

Elizabeth Simmons
LBS is Honored With Two Rhodes Scholars Nominees

Lyman Briggs has the distinct honor of having two Rhodes Scholars nominees this year.

Colleen Kiernan of Joliet, IL, is a senior majoring in science technology studies in Lyman Briggs School of Science in the College of Natural Science, nominated for the Rhodes Scholarship. She is a research assistant in the Lyman Briggs School of Science and has been a research assistant in the College of Human Medicine. She also has been a peer educator in the Ingham County Health Department.

A member of the MSU Honors College, her volunteer experience includes working at a pediatric HIV research unit in the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in South Africa, independent volunteer work in Tanzania and the American Red Cross. She is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars. She is the daughter of Thomas and Jane Kiernan.

Vinay Prasad of LaPorte, IN, a senior majoring in physiology in the Lyman Briggs School of Science in the College of Natural Science and philosophy in the College of Arts & Letters, nominated for the Rhodes and Marshall scholarships. He is a member of the MSU Honors College, Associated Students of MSU student government, recipient of the 2003-04 Emerging Leader of the Year Award recipient and has held editorial positions on The Red Cedar Review undergraduate literary magazine.

He has volunteer experience in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and has been a research assistant on several projects in the Lyman Briggs School of Science and the MSU Department of Geology. His scholarship awards include the Alumni Distinguished Scholarship, National Merit Scholarship, and the Jeffery and Kathryn Cole International Study Award. He is the son of Ram and Padma Prasad.

The Rhodes Scholarships, the oldest of the international awards, brings outstanding students from around the world to Oxford University. Rhodes Scholars, named in honor of Cecil Rhodes, are selected for two years of study at Oxford, with the possibility of renewal for a third year.

Selection criteria include literary and scholastic attainments, energy to use one’s talents to the fullest extent, service and civic mindedness, and leadership abilities in the promotion of international understanding and peace. Thirty-two scholars are selected each year.

Meet Hanni Nichols (Gerhart)

We are delighted to feature Mathematics Instructor Hanni Nichols in this issue of the Briggantine. Hanni is a 1989 graduate of the Lyman Briggs School Systems Science program. After graduating from Briggs, she started teaching math at Jackson Community College and loved teaching so much that she decided to continue studying mathematics. She received her M.B.S. in Mathematics from Michigan State University in 1998. While earning her M.B.S., Hanni was a graduate assistant at MSU in the Mathematics Department. After graduation, Hanni continued to teach at Jackson Community College and also at Lansing Community College.

In 2001, Lyman Briggs School persuaded Hanni to return to her roots and offered her a position teaching in Lyman Briggs School. Hanni has taught everything from basic math to differential equations and she is planning on teaching her first course with Gifted and Talented Middle School students this summer. Hanni grew up in Adrian, Michigan, and continues to live there with her husband Steve, six cats, several Madagascar hissing cockroaches, two gerbils and two degus. Hanni tells us that before they were married Steve told her that he wasn’t “a cat person” like she was. One day, the neighbor brought over some kittens and Steve scooped one right up and declared it to be his! Among her many interests, Hanni particularly likes to visit zoos and travel off the beaten path with her husband.

Meet Dr. Jerry Urquhart

LBS is very fortunate to have Jerry Urquhart not only as a graduate of the program, but also as a valued faculty member. Jerry received his BS from Lyman Briggs School in Zoology in 1990. During graduate school, Jerry did his research on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua, where he still has two godchildren, an eight year old and nine year old. During this time he worked in remote villages with no electricity or running water for up to three months at a time, becoming intimately familiar with many tropical illnesses and parasites.

In 1999 LBS hired Jerry as an assistant professor to teach the Introductory Computer course (LBS 126), maintain the computer network and design the LBS Website. In 2001 Jerry developed the Study Abroad in Panama. He also developed a Study Abroad program in Nicaragua in 2004.

Jerry now lives in Dimondale with his wife Mollie and their two sons Willoughby and Benjamin. Jerry is fascinated by frogs and has an amazing collection of poison dart frogs.

We are glad to have Jerry back at LBS where he also serves as President of the LBS Alumni Association.
Alumni Happenings

Ed Stielstra a 1993 graduate of LBS and his wife Tasha a 1997 MSU Graduate own Nature’s Kennel Sled Dog Racing in McMillan, Michigan. The Stielstra’s operate a 70-dog distance racing and touring kennel in Eastern Upper Peninsula. In March of 2004, Ed completed Alaska’s 1,100 mile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Ed is one of only two MSU graduates to ever finish the grueling race across the interior of Alaska. The excitement and challenge of the Alaskan wilderness is drawing him back; he is already gearing up for a return to Iditarod again in 2005. Training for the upcoming winter has already begun at the Stielstra’s kennel, and over the course of the next three months the dogs will log over 2,000 training miles. In addition to preparing for distance racing, Ed and Tasha also operate a winter touring business where first-time musher’s come to learn the art of driving a dog team. It’s truly unique to experience the magic and silence of winter from the back of a dog sled.

More information about Nature’s Kennel Racing and Adventures is at www.natureskennel.com

The Faculty, Staff and Students at Lyman Briggs wish Ed the best of luck.

Get involved with LBAA!

Make your voice heard with Lyman Briggs and the LBAA by attending LBAA meetings or contacting the president of LBAA, Jerry Urquhart (urquhart@msu.edu).

Next LBAA Meeting:
Saturday, February 5th
PM, C-102 Holmes

Agenda items include:
• Expansion of Lyman Briggs
• Involvement of Recent Graduates
• Selection of new board members
• Anything you want to contribute!

Please attend and bring your best ideas for the future of LBAA!

Show Time for Lyman Briggs

Dr. Rob LaDuca, a new Chemistry Professor with Lyman Briggs was the host of Things to Boom in the Night at MSU.

A chemical demonstration of monstrous proportions — one that included everything from exploding balloons to glow-in-the-dark slime — was presented the night before Halloween.

The show, which was geared for children of all ages, featured exploding balloons, the crushing of cans, slime and, for the grand finale, a molten iron-spewing jack-o’-lantern.

“We want kids to know that science can be fun and exciting,” Dr. LaDuca said. “I’ve always felt that we learn better with a smile on our face.” The event was free and open to the public.

The event was sponsored by the Lyman Briggs School of Science, the Department of Chemistry and the Honors College.

Fall Graduation Completes a Good Year for LBS

Lyman Briggs held their Fall 2004 Graduation brunch at the University Club on December 11, 2004. We had a total of 25 graduates for fall. Of those, 13 attended with their families for the event.

Guest speakers for the day were Kristen Finos, a graduating senior who was the Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Elizabeth Simmons, Director of LBS, Dean George Leroi, College of Natural Science, Dr. Jim Smith, Professor of LBS did the Faculty Address, Dr. Steven Spees, Associate Director of LBS did a recognition of academic excellence, Dr. Simmons and Mr. Kent Workman, Coordinator of Student Affairs presented certificates to the graduates closing remarks were made by Mr. Philip Strong, Assistant Director of Lyman Briggs.

Several faculty and staff were in attendance, Diane Barker, LBS Alum, Deb Dotterer, CNS and Dr. Howard Hagerman and his wife JoAnn were also guests of honor. Dr. Jerry Urquhart took pictures of the event which will be posted on the LBS Website.

We would like to congratulate the 25 graduates at this time, 3 of them graduated with Honor College standing, 5 graduated with Honors and 3 graduated with High Honors.

We would like to thank Christie Tobey for planning an elegant graduation brunch for all to enjoy.
Faculty, Staff and Students of LBS would like to welcome the following new faculty.

Joining us to teach in the STS program is Dr. Charlie Yood, a Visiting Instructor from The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

To learn more about the new faculty and staff members, visit the Lyman Briggs website, www.lymanbriggs.msu.edu/index.php

Through collaboration and co-sponsorship of activities, Residence Life, Lyman Briggs, and Holmes/Briggs student groups have been working together to create a lively atmosphere here in Holmes Hall. Along with ongoing raditions (Homecoming float, Stress Free Zone, etc.), this past Fall featured several programs related to study skills and other academic matters; forums that encouraged dialogue about relevant issues (such as the 2004 elections); Saturday night fun times including a festival, a games with prizes night, and a luau; a Monday dinner series called HOTlight (discussions on topics related to politics, science, and technology); and bi-monthly Wednesday open mic nights with music, poetry, and dance—sprinkled with comic relief. Thursday craft nights offered a variety of activities ranging from bead jewelry to origami. We are looking forward to an exciting new year!

Kate Burdick, Complex Director

We are doing a scrape book for Mary Sheridan, for her retirement.

If you would like to have a card or letter from you included please send them to Debie LeCato, East-35 Holmes Hall, Lyman Briggs, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

The deadline for submission is: APRIL 30, 2005