

Faculty, community plan lake, wetland restoration

by MacKenzie Mathis
staff writer

Members of the DSC biology faculty and representatives of several area organizations have joined forces recently to plan the restoration of the lake and wetland at Dalton's Lakeshore Park.

Plans call not only for the restoration and beautification of the natural habitat but for increasing outdoor educational opportunities.

"Another interesting and enjoyable part of the effort," said Dr. John Lughart, professor of biology, "is that a lot of people have gotten together to make this work, to improve this area for the benefit of both wildlife and park visitors."

In addition to Lughart and his colleagues, among those involved are representatives from Brookwood Elementary School, Keep Dalton-Whitfield Beautiful, the Lakeshore Park Community Garden Association, Dalton Parks and Recreation, Dalton Utilities, the University of Georgia's Archway Partnership, and the Limestone Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Work at the park began in summer 2011, when DSC biology major Jaana Linna assessed several plant and animal communities inhabiting the wetland.

"For years," Lughart said, "we've been hoping we could restore the wetland. Simultaneously, now that we have a bachelor's in biology, we can also offer research opportunities for students."

"A big factor in the success of our student research program has been the support of the Dalton State Foundation, which has awarded summer research stipends to many of our students."

So far, eight DSC students, guided by six faculty members, have researched the wetland's plants, aquatic invertebrates, birds, turtles, and water chemistry, gathering what Lughart called "before data."

The idea is that, if the wetland is going to be restored, Lughart said, "let's go ahead and collect data so we know what the current status is. Then we can make a post-restoration comparison to determine if ecological improvements have resulted."

The past two summers have seen turtle surveys conducted in both the wetland and the lake. Participants trapped turtles and recorded such data as the species, size, and weight of each. Lughart said the surveys are ongoing, as students plan to return to the park this summer to resume sampling.

"Each turtle is uniquely marked so we can estimate population size through the mark-recapture method," he explained. "We hope to see an increase in the number of turtles following the restoration of their habitat."

After the "before data," Lughart said, come the more arduous parts of the restoration.

Efforts beyond student research projects require substantial funding, and for that reason the Limestone Valley Research Conservation and Development Council and its public and private partners last November applied for a \$57,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The sum is to fund several improvements, among them the removal of construction debris, illegally dumped, and several invasive plant species.

Chinese privet and parrot feather are two species slated for removal. Both are ornamental plants that, though imported for their aesthetic attractiveness, rapidly squeeze out native plant species.

Plans also call for the planting of trees, perhaps a few hundred, to create a natural barrier between the wetland and the park's recreational area.

Another large part of the plan focuses on education. Interpretive signs will offer information about local plant and animal species, an outdoor classroom will provide a setting where students can learn about the environment and ways to protect the local ecosystem, and an overlook platform at the north end of the park will give visitors a view of the habitat better than any now available.

"The idea is to make it an educational asset rather than a little swampy place at the edge of the park where people rarely go," Lughart said.

After restoring the wetland, planners hope to restore the lake—which, Lughart said, would require further funding and may not happen for several years.

Plans call for the stabilizing of lake banks to decrease erosion so turtles have an easier time moving between the lake and surrounding areas to lay eggs.

Because animals such as frogs and snakes have so few hiding places around the lake, and because bird nesting sites are limited, plans also call for trees to be planted to provide cover and shade.

For the park's human visitors, plans call for fishing piers on the lake and a trail connecting the lake to other areas of the park.

Besides their involvement with the restoration itself, DSC biology faculty have visited Brookwood Elementary to help students learn about the local environment.

"Their administrators and faculty are enthusiastic about this effort because they see great benefits for their students from what's essentially an outdoor laboratory adjacent to their school," Lughart said.

"The main idea is to teach their teachers to teach their students how to get the most out of a nearby natural resource."

(see *Restoration*, page 3)



Volunteers including DSC senior Marlon Romo, junior Cris Shelton, and Peter Lughart—son of Dr. John and Gretchen Lughart—collect, measure, and mark turtles at Dalton's Lakeshore Park during the summer of 2013. Photos contributed by Dr. John Lughart.

Dr. Ellie Jenkins

Making sure music keeps playing on campus



by Sarah Blevins
staff writer

For the past few years, one DSC professor has done more than any other to make sure music keeps playing on campus.

As Dalton State's one and only assistant professor of music, Dr. Ellie Jenkins teaches music courses—Music Appreciation, American Music, and Concert Band—and has played a vital role in building what one day could be a degree program in music.

As chair of the Fine Arts and Lecture Series, Jenkins has helped bring dozens of free concerts to campus.

She's overseen appearances by pianists, guitarists, trumpeters, even entire choirs, and has performed several times herself.

This semester is no exception. The Fine Arts and Lecture Series will present six concerts by local and regional performers this spring.

Alongside pianist Kris Carlisle, Jenkins performed with flutist John Davis during his Jan. 27 appearance at Dalton State.

Performing comes naturally to her. Even though she started playing the French horn by accident, 37 years later, she's still playing it.

"My parents weren't musicians," Jenkins says, "but my mom loved music. I'm one of five kids, and she was determined that all five of us were going to be in the band. There were no ifs, ands, or buts about it."

Because she was the fourth child and not allowed to choose instruments her older siblings played, the saxophone, trombone, and flute weren't options.

Her oldest sister, however, was a band director and had a spare French horn sitting in her apartment.

"Mom said, 'Jeannie has a horn, so why don't you try it?'" Jenkins says. "And as luck would have it, I was a natural at it."

Her earliest experiences performing were in and around Savannah.

A native of St. Simons Island, Jenkins moved to Wilmington Island when she was 13 and

eventually played as a substitute in the Savannah Symphony.

When it came time for her to go to college, she started at Georgia Southern but then transferred to the University of Miami for her bachelor's in music.

"As much as I loved my friends at Georgia Southern," she says, "I needed a bigger pool of players to inspire and challenge me."

"It was the right decision. I learned so much by going to a place where I wasn't the best player—where I had to work to get noticed."

In Miami, she played in various ensembles, accompanying such famed jazz artists as Jon Faddis and Paquito D'Rivera.

The French horn "doesn't play too big a role in jazz," she explains, but "some arrangers have expanded the typical jazz palette to include the timbre of the horn."

Jenkins then spent a decade in Wisconsin, first earning a master's at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, then a certificate in chamber music, which led to her freelancing with orchestras including the Green Bay, Rockford, and Kenosha Symphonies.

They performed what she calls the "standard orchestral repertoire," but while with them she also occasionally backed artists from Frank Sinatra, Jr., and the Moody Blues to Cheap Trick and Vince Gill.

Jenkins is quick to recommend music as a means of travel.

She once spent three weeks traveling Taiwan with the Atlanta Pops Orchestra, performing in concert halls all over the island, and she and her horn once toured Sicily with the Sicilian Band of Chicago.

"We performed for festivals all over Sicily, mostly outdoors," she says. "It was the time of year when they celebrate the Feast of the Virgin, and there are parades, concerts, and fireworks in every town of any size."

She returned to Italy in 2006 as part of a study abroad program through the University of Georgia, and that same summer she traveled to southern Brazil to teach at a winter music festival.

"I didn't speak Portuguese at all when I got there," she says, "but the students spoke enough English to help me through. We mostly communicated with our horns."

Traveling that way, she adds, has been "great. I love traveling with my horn."

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Top: Kris Carlisle (left), John Davis (center), and Dr. Ellie Jenkins play Lydia Busler-Blais's "Lanterns" during a recital Jan. 27 in Goodroe Auditorium. Bottom: Jenkins concentrates on the sheet music to "Lanterns."

Oscar picks from a lifelong film fan

by **Jorden Wade**
staff writer

For as long as I can remember, I've had a fascination with film. Even before I could drive, I found myself going to movies whenever I had time and a ride.

When I came to Dalton State, I signed up for English 1201: Introduction to Film as soon as I had the prereqs out of the way. Still, watching movies in Liberal Arts 312 twice a week just wasn't enough.

For several years now, I've tried to see every movie that might win the Oscar for Best Picture before the Academy even announces nominees.

A lot of the time, that means I've had to venture beyond Dalton or Chattanooga, but this year I've seen all the Best Picture nominees except *Philomela*—which I swear I'll see before the winners are announced.

This year's Oscar telecast will air March 2 at 7:00 p.m. on ABC. For the second time, Ellen DeGeneres will host.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognizes twenty-four categories, but I don't have the space to talk about them all, so my picks for Best Picture, Best Director, the four Best Acting categories, and the two Screenplay categories will have to suffice.

Nine films are fighting for Best Picture. Each deserves its nomination, but the real fight is between *Gravity*, *American Hustle*, and *12 Years a Slave*.

The space thriller *Gravity* is captivating and intense but doesn't have the screenplay to take home the prestigious award. It seems most of the energy spent making the film went into cinematography, production design, and special effects rather than the narrative itself.

American Hustle features a stronger screenplay and a powerful ensemble cast—Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Bradley Cooper, Jeremy Renner, and Jennifer Lawrence—but loses



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its momentum with a lengthy runtime. It seems like little to no effort went into anything beyond the acting and screenplay, which often perplexes viewers by frequently changing narrators.

12 Years a Slave is an honest, brutal journey through the life of an American slave and is responsible for many viewers more fully understanding the brutality of slavery and racism. Its raw emotion makes them forget they're watching a movie and not there alongside the characters—and that's why *12 Years a Slave* will take home the most prestigious award of the night.

The second-most prestigious award is that for Best Director. All five nominees have demonstrated remarkable skill. In fact, this is the strongest group of Best Director nominees in years.

Steve McQueen, who directed *12 Years a Slave*, is one of the frontrunners. His brutal and gritty style does help capture the horrors

of American slavery, but as in his two previous films, *Hunger* (2008) and *Shame* (2011), it can also alienate audiences.

The day I saw the film, many viewers got up and walked out, seemingly because of its brutality. *12 Years a Slave* should win Best Picture, but McQueen won't win Best Director because some viewers just don't like to feel so uncomfortable while watching a movie.

David O. Russell, the director of *American Hustle*, does an exceptional job of gathering and instructing actors.

He lacks the stylistic uniqueness of McQueen, instead relying on his cast to carry the film. Russell often uses the same actors—Bale and Adams were in *The Fighter* (2010), and Cooper and Lawrence were in *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012)—which makes me wonder if he could do the same with a completely different cast. Only then would

I award him the Oscar for Best Director.

Alfonso Cuarón created *Gravity*, a film set entirely in space. The movie was perfectly executed and beautifully captured.

Cuarón introduced groundbreaking technology and created some of the most beautiful cinematography seen to date. So, despite the lackluster screenplay, Cuarón will leave as the best director of 2013.

Five nominees are competing for Best Actor, but the real competition is between Bruce Dern, Chiwetel Ejiofor, and Matthew McConaughey.

Dern, who in *Nebraska* plays an old man on a mission to collect sweepstakes winnings, delivers one of the best performances in what's already been an illustrious career.

Ejiofor, in *12 Years a Slave*, so realistically portrays a free African-American thrown into slavery that it's easy to believe he's the character he's playing.

The Oscar, however, is going to go to Matthew McConaughey for his career-best performance—not that that meant much before this year—as a man diagnosed with AIDS in *Dallas Buyers Club*.

The top nominees for Best Actress create one of the most competitive categories at this year's Oscars.

Meryl Streep delivers an enthralling performance in *August: Osage County* as a drug-addicted matriarch who slowly loses herself and everyone around her, but it falls short of her previous performances, such as Margaret Thatcher in *The Iron Lady* (2011).

In *American Hustle*, Amy Adams creates the risqué Sydney Prosser, which shows great talent, but because the character lacks the charm audiences have come to expect from Adams, she won't win March 2.

Cate Blanchett is a British actress who convinces everyone

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Restoration

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Lugthart and his wife Gretchen, a part-time member of the biology faculty, met with Brookwood teachers to discuss activities they could use to help students learn the value of wetlands and the plants and animals that live there.

Chris Manis, another part-time member of the biology faculty, has been meeting with fourth- and fifth-grade teachers to teach them

about turtle sampling methods so their students can carry out sampling later this spring.

"It's really his expertise that's allowed us to carry out the turtle research project," Lugthart said. "Without Chris, that part of the effort wouldn't be happening."

Dr. Gene Mesco, associate professor of biology, visited Brookwood to discuss plant and animal

life cycles and climate change, and Annabelle McKie-Voerste, instructor of biology, met with Brookwood teachers to discuss the scientific method and ideas about bird-watching labs for students.

Overall, Lugthart said, Lakeshore Park efforts have not only taught members of the community more about the environment and ways to improve a local lake and

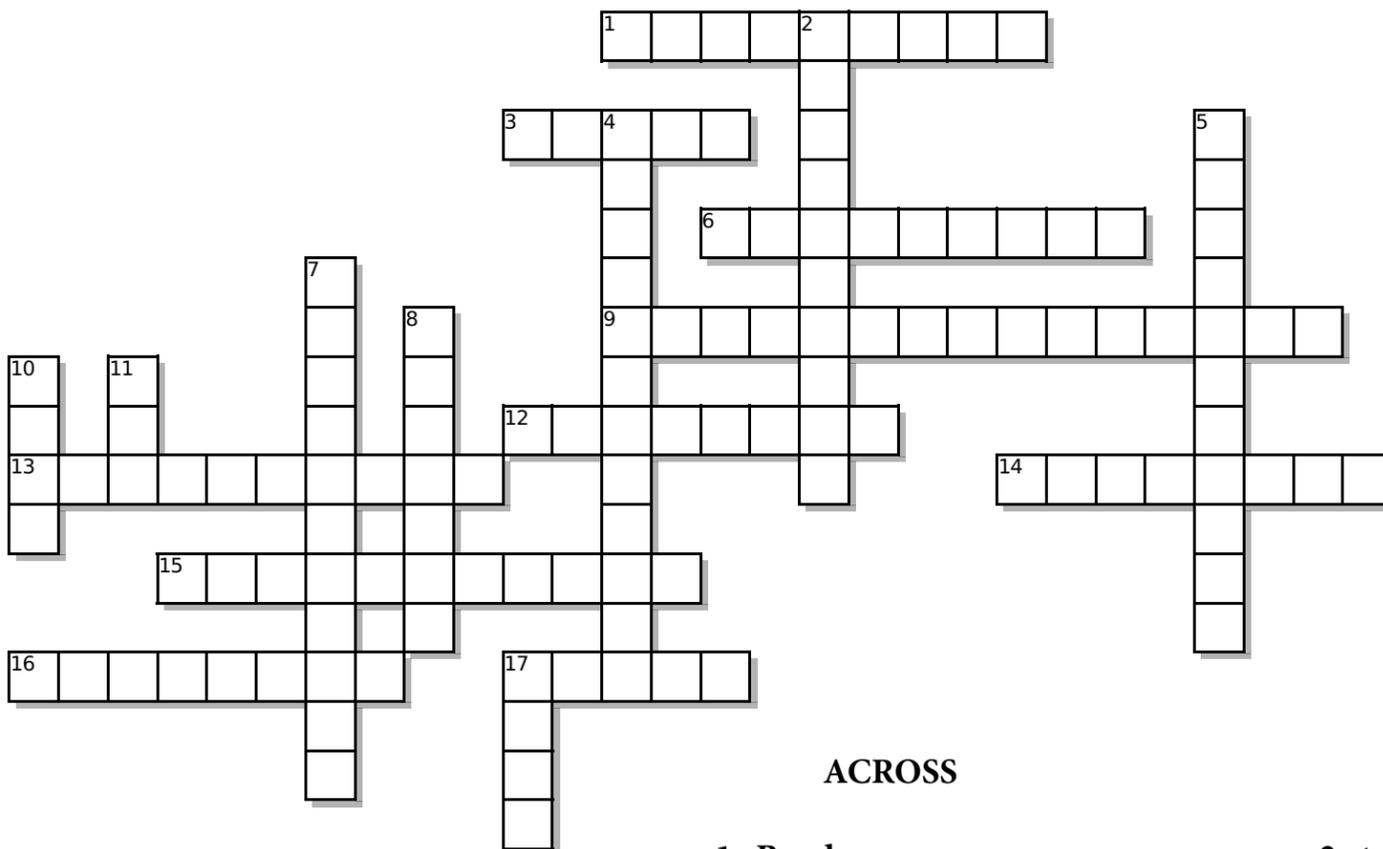
wetland but brought many of them together for the common good.

"This project has connected Dalton State with the community in very positive ways," he said.

If you're interested in becoming a part of the restoration—and Lugthart stressed that efforts can always use help from students—please contact him at jlugthart@daltonstate.edu.

College Days

by Cynthia Allgood



ACROSS

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Jenkins

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"I'm not sure what I would do if I went somewhere without musical work to do. I really like being immersed in my work."

Jenkins eventually made her way back to Georgia and taught at the University of West Georgia from 2002 to 2010. The following fall, she came to Dalton State.

Last February, she and her husband Eric Hanson, also part of the DSC music faculty and a professional double bass player, performed here. She commissioned a special piece written specifically for them by composer Karen Griebeling.

"For the French horn and double bass there is not a lot of music," Jenkins says. "We're constantly looking for anything—either for composers interested in writing for unusual combinations or for music that can be reworked into something that will work for the two of us because we like to play together and we don't get that opportunity very often."

Jenkins says playing the original work was a big responsibility.

"It can feel a little oppressive because it's like 'she wrote this piece for us so we have to do a good job.' In that way it was a little stressful, but at the same time it was great. We had this brand new piece that no one had played before."

She discovered that composers are more flexible than she thought they'd be.

"Usually they're open to suggestions, like they might not have thought it through," she says. "Either that or they might have thought they put more detail in the notation than they actually did."

Jenkins says she likes working with living composers, and that Griebeling was great to work with. "She wrote that piece very quickly for us—much more quickly than I expected," she says, laughing.

Although she's not planning to perform any recitals at the college this year, she hopes to both continue traveling and teaching at Dalton State.

"The good thing about being a college teacher," she said, "is that it opens time in the summer for doing different things."

At the moment, she's trying to find a way to go to London next summer to participate in the International Horn Symposium, a gathering of horn players from all over the world for concerts, lectures, and presentations by "the greatest horn players alive."

Jenkins is also working toward having a major in music approved at the college. A good start is the recent approval of the concert band course.

DSC does not have the facilities or equipment at the moment to host a concert band, so the Dalton/Whitfield Community Band, founded

last year by Jenkins, Northwest Whitfield High School Band Director George S. Barnett, and former Dalton Middle School Band Director Mickey Fisher, is serving a dual function as a Dalton State and a community band.

Students in Concert Band "just fold into the band as regular members," Jenkins explains.

"It helps Dalton State get our feet wet, and it helps the community band to solidify because it's a really new entity too," Jenkins said. "It's a win-win for everybody involved."

Jenkins adds that a choir course, already approved at the college level, is awaiting approval at the state level.

"I've talked to a lot of people that are interested in chorus," she says. "I think the proposal will be approved. Then we'll start looking for someone to direct it."

She encourages interested students to "let her and the upper administration know" that they would support a DSC degree program in music.

"We've already had several college students participating in the band," she says, "but we'd love to have more."

The band meets Tuesday nights, 7:00-8:30 p.m., at the Northwest Whitfield High School band room.

For more information about it or anything else music-related on campus, please contact Dr. Ellie Jenkins at ejenkins@daltonstate.edu.

DSC Homecoming 2014



Top: Students tailgate before the Dalton State—Allen University game in the parking lot outside the Northwest Georgia Trade and Convention Center Feb. 1. Middle: 1974 Dalton Junior College Homecoming Queen Nancy Stone Whaley, 2014 Dalton State College Homecoming Queen Malaka Awad, Awad's brother Omar Awad, and 1974 DJC Student Body Vice President Ron Whaley celebrate during halftime. Bottom left: students socialize at the post-game Homecoming Bash at Trevitt Hall. Bottom right: Rage poses with Homecoming Princess Katherine Fromm and her escort Seth Owen. (staff photos by Amy Hartline)

Oscars

(continued from page 3)

that she's a ritzy, American gold digger on the verge of insanity in *Blue Jasmine*. She delivers the right emotions and facial expressions to convince viewers that this is exactly who she is. She's guaranteed to win, and it'll be a shame if she doesn't.

Supporting actors and actresses always add another layer to whatever story they help tell. This year, Best Supporting Actor nominees had unique roles to fill: an 1800s slave owner, a Somalian pirate, and an HIV-positive transgendered woman.

Michael Fassbender, in *12 Years a Slave*, delivered a powerful performance but held back on the passion and talent that he has shown in previous McQueen films, most recently *Shame*.

In *Captain Phillips*, Barkhad Abdi made his film debut, showing raw talent but also inexperience. He'd take home the award if it wasn't for that.

And if there were no Rayon.

Jared Leto, who hasn't been on the big screen in four years, delivers a performance as Rayon, an HIV-positive transgendered woman in *Dallas Buyers Club*, that undoubtedly will earn him his first Oscar.

He embodies the role so flawlessly that all eyes focus on him.

The most influential nominees in the Best Supporting Actress category are Julia Roberts for *August: Osage County*, Jennifer Lawrence for *American Hustle*, and Lupita Nyong'o for *12 Years a Slave*.

Roberts plays the estranged daughter of Streep's Violet Weston in *August: Osage County*, an uncharacteristically powerful performance that still does not quite match the strength of the other two performances.

In *American Hustle*, Jennifer Lawrence plays a neurotic character similar to the one she played in *Silver Linings Playbook*. The fact that we've seen it before reduces her chances of taking home the gold.

Nyong'o, in *12 Years a Slave*, plays a selfless slave woman who touches viewers' hearts in strong and emotional scenes.

Her performance in the scene in which she's whipped by another slave almost earns her the award by itself.

In the screenplay categories, both adapted and original, one nominee so surpasses the competition that I'm not even going to mention the others.

John Ridley's adapted screenplay for *12 Years a Slave* completely transformed every character into a person living in the 1800s, thus winning him Best Adapted Screenplay.

In the category of Best Original Screenplay, Spike Jonze wrote an original, modern love story in *Her* that takes risks many other screenwriters would have avoided.

The screenplay perfectly covered every aspect of a man's romance with an operating system and did so in a way that keeps viewers from laughing at the silliness of the concept. The Oscar for Best Original Screenplay will go to *Her*.

From *12 Years a Slave* to *Dallas Buyers Club*, the 86th Academy Awards have some of the most competitive films in years.

Make sure to tune in Sunday, March 2, to find out which movies take home which awards.

DALTON STATE
THE ROADRUNNER RUN AROUND
 5k race and 1 mile walk around the DSC campus
 Saturday, March 29, at 8:30am
 Sign up at www.active.com
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1 GYMNASIUM
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 3 BACHELORS
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Interested in writing a guest column? Have an opinion you'd like to express in a letter to the editor or an entry in **ROADKILL**? E-mail us at roadrunnernews@daltonstate.edu.

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