PEOPLE

Dr. Shirley (Holly) Stave attended the Collegium for African American Research held at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Ga., in March. She co-chaired with Justine Tally a two-session panel entitled, “‘Frank Dreamed a Dream Dappled with Body Parts’: Toni Morrison’s Trip Home,” and presented a paper called “Growing Up to Be a Man: From Son to Frank,” which dealt with the same novel.

Thomas W. Reynolds, Jr. (Lang/Comm) presented his paper “Contemporary Charisma Studies: Toward a New Rhetoric of Eloquence?” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Las Vegas, Nev., on March 15. At the national conference, Reynolds also attended a workshop on the public work of writing program administrators.

Dr. Pat Pierson and all faculty members of the Department of Family...Continued on page 2

‘Bustin’ Out’ - Spring Read 2013

Students from Jim Crawford’s and Christine Ferrell’s Spanish classes created alfombras (carpets of sawdust), an Easter tradition in Guatemala.

Michelle Pichon explained the various themes around “Bustin’ Out” -- spring emerging from winter and individuals breaking free of their prisons. Organizers of Spring Read collected books that will be donated to area corrections facilities.

Andy Crank performed an original song.

Oona Zbitkovskis read a selection by Timothy Leary.

Jim Mischler read work by Alice Dunbar Nelson.
Dr. Brenda Hanson received the “Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher 2013” at the Federation of Business Disciplines southwest regional organization conference in Albuquerque, N.M. The Association of Business Communications awarded the honor.

The award places a primary emphasis on the impact of the recipient’s teaching philosophy or methodology in business communication over the last three academic years. Criteria include teaching or training experience in business communications and related areas, evidence of positive student and conference participant evaluations and evidence of conference presentations, publications and other related research in business communication. Letters of recommendation, with at least one from an administrator written specifically for the award, are also required.

Hanson was recognized for co-authoring a research paper submitted to the Association of Business Information Systems (ABIS) at the Federation of Business Conference in Houston that on the 2011 McGraw-Hill Outstanding Research Paper.

“I am deeply humbled and proud to be the recipient of the Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher 2013 award,” Hanson said. “Not only is this award a recognition of my teaching accomplishments, but it serves as a recognition for Northwestern State and the School of Business.”

Hanson is an associate professor of business administration and office information systems. She received her M.A. in higher education administration and her B.S. in business education at Northwestern State. Hanson earned her Ph.D. in vocational education through the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development at Louisiana State University. Her research has been published in refereed journals and she has made numerous presentations internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. Her areas of teaching and expertise are management, business education and office administration. She has prior work experience in insurance, banking and as a business teacher in Louisiana, Florida and Michigan.

“In an era of rapid progression of electronic business communication documents, webinars for oral communication and formal written documents/letters, I find that it is more critical than ever to instill in all students the importance of the oral and written word not only in a business or industry setting but as an ethical member of our society,” she said.

People … Continued from Page 1

and Consumer Sciences were responsible for planning and conducting the Louisiana Association of Family and Consumer Sciences annual meeting at Kent Plantation House on March 8. Dr. Michelle Fazio-Brunson and Cheryl McBride were keynote speakers, giving a presentation on “Appropriate Guidance: Classroom Strategies.” During the Research Poster Session, two of Dr. Fazio-Brunson’s early childhood methods students, Hailey Warner and Kayla York, made presentations on integrating learning activities with popular children’s books.

Dr. Lynn Woods’ poster presentation was entitled, “Adventure Travel Ecotourism: How It Impacts Quality of Life for Multicultural Communities.” Connie Jones’ culinary arts students were responsible for catering the meal functions associated with the conference and Audrey Jo Weaver assisted with the committee planning and logistics for the meeting.

The meeting included guided tours of Kent House with demonstrations of many aspects of plantation life. The final session of the conference included a guided tour of the impressive Louisiana State Emergency Shelter, built following Hurricane Katrina. Participants from all parts of Louisiana and several universities, including Louisiana Tech, McNeese, ULL and SUNO attended the very successful meeting.
Students, faculty will represent NSU at Academic Summit

Northwestern State University students and faculty will participate in the second annual University of Louisiana System Academic Summit Friday, April 12 and Saturday, April 13 on the campus of the University of Louisiana-Monroe. The celebration of academic excellence at UL System universities will encompass the previous system-wide service-learning conference, a student art exhibition and undergraduate research day. Northwestern State students were selected from among those who participated in Northwestern State’s annual Research in February to present service-learning projects, oral undergraduate research presentations, art exhibition pieces, a musical performance and poster presentations.

Faculty mentors attending the summit include Betsy Cochran, Neeru Deep, Matt DeFord, Leslie Gruesbeck, William Houseal and Sarah McFarland.

The Summit will open at 12:15 p.m. Friday, April 12 with an address by Dr. Lorilee R. Sandmann, professor at the University of Georgia and a member of the National Advisory Panel For Community Engagement.

MinJeong Kim will present a performance piece “Rigoletto Paraphrase, by Franz Liszt.” The performance art showcase will be from 4-5 p.m. Friday, April 12 in Biedenharn Hall.

Students participating in the art exhibition are Ethan McManus, Geoffrey Hollis, James Stringer, Thomas Stanford and Anna Dieter. A reception for the juried art competition will take place from 5-7 p.m. Friday, April 12 in Bry Hall.

Student participating in oral research presentations include Cory Artis, Amelia M. Bertrand and Caitlin LaCour, “The Impact of Social Networking on Dependence, Sleep and Communication in College Students;” Whitney Gochinas, “Gender-Bending Vengeance in ‘Ticked-Off Trannies with Knives’;” Bethany LaVergne, “Combination of Pim kinase inhibitors with Bel-2 antagonist in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia;” Rachel Pair, “Use It Up, Wear It Out, Make It Do: The Fashion of the World War II Era,” and Brandi Vincent, “My Faith is Gone!: The Complexity of Gender in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ‘Young Goodman Brown.’” Presentations will begin at 12:45 p.m. Saturday, April 13.


Service-learning projects include “Bringing a Local Food Bank into the 21st Century” by Steven Piwonka, “New Technologies in Professional Learning Networks” by Lauren Menard, “A Step in the Right Direction: A Gardening and Exercise Service-Learning Project:” by Dr. Michelle Morris and Dr. Terrie Poehl and “The Safety Hazards of Lead Paint in the Natchitoches Historic District” by Mitchell Bryant. The Summit will close with a faculty workshop, “Expanding Undergraduate Research” at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, April 13.

For more information on the University of Louisiana System Academic Summit, visit ulm.edu/summit.

Nominations for Faculty Senate officers due April 12

The Faculty Senate is seeking nominations for the Faculty Senate Executive Council, including president, vice president, secretary and parliamentarian, according to Andy Crank, Faculty Senate interim president.

Nominations should be forwarded to Jim Mischler at mischlerj@nsula.edu. The terms will begin in May and last through December 2013. Please submit all nominations by Friday, April 12. Self-nominations are permitted.
Northwestern State University’s Department of Criminal Justice, History and Social Sciences is offering a prelaw and paralegal studies concentration within the B.A. degree in criminal justice. The concentration will be delivered online and enrollment is currently open for Fall 2013.

“The purpose of this concentration is to establish a pre-law and paralegal focus of study in an online forum,” said Shirley Snyder, associate professor and coordinator of Criminal Justice, Pre-law and Paralegal Studies Programs. “Although no established pre-law curriculum is required for admission to law school, a comprehensive liberal arts education like that offered at Northwestern State is an excellent foundation for the study of law.”

The concentration provides a legal foundation of study to better prepare students who intend to pursue a law degree or those who intend to move directly into a paralegal occupation. Students will be able to transition into advanced legal study or into a support position with a better knowledge and understanding of the field.

“This will provide the opportunity for a student successful in this degree to be more marketable within the legal community,” Snyder said. The focus on paralegal studies is in response to a growing workforce need that is expected to grow by 18 percent between 2010 and 2020. Students who desiring a support position in a legal environment can pursue the paralegal concentration while earning their bachelor’s degree in criminal justice at NSU.

Northwestern currently offers a certificate program in paralegal studies through the Department of Criminal Justice, History, and Social Sciences under the criminal justice program. The program offers an eight-course preparation to train students in the field of legal studies and to instruct them in different areas of the law. This Legal Assistant Certificate of Completion Program already in place at NSU will continue to be offered with a name change to the Pre-law and Paralegal Studies Certificate Program.

Individuals pursuing this certificate need not be a fulltime student or be pursuing a particular degree program. All courses are taught by attorneys and will prepare the committed student to work in most legal venues. Students may enroll at the beginning of any semester and courses are not required in any particular order. Enrollment is open to anyone with a high school diploma. ACT scores are not necessary.

The Pre-law and Paralegal Studies (PLPS) certificate program eight-course rotation includes introduction to law, legal research, litigation, estates, trusts, and wills; corporations, real estate and mortgages, family relations law and law office administration. Two courses are offered per semester with each course offered either one night a week from 5-8 p.m. or completely online through the Internet. The entire rotation is completed over a two-year period, making this program particularly attractive to individuals who are employed and/or attending the university fulltime.

The program is offered through distance learning on various locations, including the Natchitoches, Alexandria, Leesville and Marksville campuses.

For information on Northwestern State’s criminal justice program, visit criminaljustice.nsula.edu/criminal-justice, call Snyder at (318) 357-6963 or view Northwestern State’s National Journal for Criminal Justice at criminaljustice.nsula.edu-national-journal-of-criminal-justice.

University Print Shop accepting requests via e-mail

The University Print Shop has established an e-mail account specifically for the submission of printing requests. Effective immediately, personnel can submit your requests to:
printshop@nsula.edu.
For details contact Judy Rachal, director of University Printing, at NSU extension 5271.
The Print Shop is located at 335 Sam Sibley Dr.
The Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) network, which includes the Small Business Development Center at Northwestern State University, has been awarded full accreditation. The LSBDC center at NSU serves 10 parishes in central Louisiana.

“It is gratifying to work for an agency that is highly respected locally, and is also considered one of the finest state networks in the nation,” said Jim Kilcoyne, director at the LSBDC center at NSU.

Accreditation qualifies the LSBDC to continue to receive Small Business Administration funds administered by the Office of Small Business Development Centers.

“This achievement affirms our commitment to providing quality programs, the highest customer satisfaction and continuous improvement,” said Mary Lynn Wilkerson, LSBDC state director. “Maintaining our accreditation is critical for the LSBDC to continue serving small businesses and supporting economic development across Louisiana.”

The accreditation review, mandated by Congress, is modeled after the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The review process involves an intensive examination of leadership and organizational management, strategy development, client and stakeholder focus, service delivery and program performance. These standards ensure that the investments made by the federal and state government, as well as the host institution of the statewide program, University of Louisiana at Monroe, and local host institutions result in strong returns for Louisiana’s small businesses and the overall economy.

The review team recognized the business continuity and risk management (BCRM) program, Ready for Anything, as a “Best Practice.” The program provides small businesses with education, training and business management assistance needed to minimize its losses and increase survivability when affected by workplace disruptions or natural and man-made disasters. The review team also commended the LSBDC for their ongoing disaster response efforts following the oil spill and the five hurricanes that have struck Louisiana in recent years.

Designated and funded as the state’s principal provider of small business assistance by Louisiana Economic Development, the LSBDC Center is the only statewide, nationally accredited program that provides business consulting to entrepreneurs at no cost. Through a network of 10 centers, the LSBDC provides high quality one-on-one consulting, training and information resources to empower new and existing businesses.

In January, the LSBDC recently received the highest rating offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Office of Entrepreneurial Development, Financial Examination Unit. The rating, a Level 1, signifies that the LSBDC is in excellent financial compliance standing, is self-certifying and its network budget has been appropriately managed. This is the second consecutive time that the LSBDC has received a Level I rating.

Over the last 10 years, through its partnership with Louisiana Economic Development and the U.S. Small Business Administration, the has LSBDC served over 116,000 small businesses - creating nearly 9,000 new jobs, 1,400 new businesses, $671 million in capital, and generated $693 million in new state income tax revenue.
Dr. Debra Shelton, back row center, associate professor in the College of Nursing and Allied Health, spoke at Overton Brooks V.A. Medical Center in Shreveport during their celebration of National Certified Nurses Day. Her address was entitled “Future of Certification in Nursing,” which discussed how the Office of Nursing Service in the V.A. had incorporated certification into the Nursing Strategic Plan for 2011-15. She also discussed how becoming and maintaining certification impacts the nursing profession and the impact on patient care. Shelton is licensed as an advanced practice nurse in Louisiana and certified as a nurse executive, oncology nurse and academic nurse educator.

Joyce Barnes, center in pink, won the People’s Choice Award for the Northwestern State Gumbo Cook-Off during the final home basketball game of the season on March 7. Proceeds from the event benefitted the American Cancer Society. Barnes is the nursing advisor at the Leesville-Fort Polk campus.
Nursing graduate student wins education award

Alyea Minter Pollard, a graduate student in Northwestern State University’s College of Nursing and Allied Health, received the Joe Ann Clark Graduate Nursing Education Award, presented by the Louisiana State Nurses Association. The award was announced during the 12th annual Nightingale Gala sponsored by the Louisiana Nurses Foundation in Baton Rouge. More than 300 nurses, their families and friends attended. Katheryn Arterberry, assistant professor of nursing at NSU, was mistress of ceremonies.

Pollard is a native of Jackson, Miss. Her nursing concentration is adult nursing education. She earned a bachelor’s degree in health care administration from Jackson State University in 2000 and BSN from Mississippi College in 2003. She plans to further her studies to the doctoral level.

The goal of this award is to provide financial support to an RN pursuing graduate education for preparation as a nurse educator in an academic environment. They must have unconditional admission and be fully matriculated in a Louisiana-based graduate nursing program nationally accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission or the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.
CDC exhibition features paintings by creative youngsters

Students at Northwestern State University’s Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center completed a study of the arts that culminated with an art show in which each student made a clay sculpture or painting that was exhibited for one week at NSU’s Orville Hanchey Gallery. The activity was a fundraiser to raise money for the Kids Fund at Children’s Hospital, New Orleans. Student raised $276. The preschoolers are, front row from left, Mackenzie Morgan, Gracie Watson, Maggie Massia, Collin Achord, Jason Aristidou, Sean Remo and Carter Jackson. On the second row are Kyleigh Severin, Nishi Handawela, Adam Penrod, Ainsley Pickett, Aidan Carney, Tristan Smith, Ana Reynolds Perez, Kaden Kuykendall, Sadie Summerlin and Kingston Morgan. On the third row are Tucker Seaman, Audrey Matt, Vivi Parr, Emorie Mathews, Max Wardell, Caleb Scott, Anna McMullen and Victor Pinkney. On the back row are Ava Grace Mitchell, Leyton LaCour, Jefferson Dunahoe, Max Hines, James Shaw, Lila Robertson, Brooklyn Johnson, Sam Cade and Ripplie Perkins. Also participating were Carter Ford, Cameron Brunson, Lilly Ann Boyd, Brian Morris, Emma Hernesman and Jaycie Creamer.

A painting by Ripplie Perkins was voted Art Show Favorite in an exhibition of paintings and sculpture by students at Northwestern State University’s Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center. Ripplie, a student in the 3-year-old class at the university preschool, is the daughter of Matthew Foshee and Rachel Van Tassel.
APRIL CLASSES

40 Hour Basic Private Investigator Course

Become a Private Investigator! Take your first step towards entering the exciting career of private investigations.

In this comprehensive course, you’ll gain the knowledge needed for passing the Louisiana Private Investigator License Exam!

Date: Apr. 4-7, Thurs-Sun
Time: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.
Fee: $350 (Manual included) + $50 exam fee paid on the day of exam paid to LSVPIE
Location: South Hall
Instructor: Henry Bennett

(Note: Licensing exam offered on Sunday at 3 p.m. after the course is completed. A $50 check is required and must be made payable to LSBPIE. Discounts do not apply. Per the LSBPIE, this course does not qualify for Private Investigator License CEUs beyond the first year.)

Text Required:
Available through The Louisiana Secretary of State Web Site:

Notary Exam Prep: Scenario Class

A notary study class geared solely to the most difficult portion of the notary public examination: the Scenarios. This class will start with general legal writing tips, then move onto the substantive information necessary to write a proper legal instrument, worthy not only of a passing grade on the exam, but more importantly, worthy of sound notarial practice.

Participants will use class time and personal time preparing notarial acts from scenario facts, which will be turned in to the instructor for useful and valuable critique. This course is geared to those who have already taken the exam and need further instruction for the Scenario portion of the exam. Participants should have knowledge of the materials contained in the “Fundamentals of Louisiana Notarial Law and Practice.”

Date: April 6-May 25, Sat
Time: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Fee: $199-(Textbook not included)

Location: Russell Hall, Rm. 122
Instructor: Robin Jones

Basic Floral Design I (BFD I)

Do you have an interest in floral design? Learn basic floral design including how to make a bow, various wiring techniques for flowers, how to design a centerpiece, and much more! This class is for beginning floral designers who want to learn “how the pros do it”!

If you have a love for flowers and would like to know how to arrange them, this class is for you!

Whether you would like to enter the floral industry as a designer assistant, or just want to arrange flowers at home, this class will teach you the basics you need to know!

Date: Apr. 20, 27, & May 4, Sat
Time: 1 - 4 p.m.
Fee: $200 tuition plus $100 supply fee
Location: The Master’s Bouquet 108 South Dr., Natchitoches
Instructor: Dawn Martin (LA State Licensed Florist, member of SAF & LSFA)

PLEASE VISIT http://ece.nsula.edu/non-credit/
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER CALL
800-376-2422 or 318-357-6355

To learn more about our on-line non-credit courses visit
http://www.gatlineducation.com/nsula
& http://www.ed2go.com/nsu/
## Group Exercise Schedule at the WRAC

### SPRING 2013

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VISIT US AT [http://wrac.nsula.edu](http://wrac.nsula.edu)

*** Classes are subject to change at any time; classes with low participation may be removed from the schedule.**
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Package of 5 - 1 1/2 hr sessions $350.00

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1/2 Hour: $35.00
1 Hour: $50.00
1 1/2 Hour: $75.00
Package of 5 - 1 hour sessions $200.00
Package of 5 - 1 1/2 hr sessions $325.00

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Neuromuscular Massage is a specific form of deep tissue massage designed to work targeted areas by applying alternating levels of concentrated pressure. Neuromuscular massages aim to reduce chronic pain and increase range of motion.

Call The WRAC For Appointments at
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**You don’t have to be a member to enjoy this service**
Revelations of Dance to showcase eclectic dance genres

Northwestern State University’s Theatre and Dance season will conclude with Revelations of Dance April 19-20 at 7:30 p.m. in the A.A. Fredericks Auditorium with a matinee performance on April 20 at 2 p.m.

The show will feature the NSU Dance Company, NSU Tap Ensemble and collaboration with dance students at the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts.

The performance will celebrate dance and showcase an eclectic style of genres. Revelations of Dance will include original and restyled works by Brett Alan Garfinkel, Kirstin Riehl, Rebecca Morgan and Renee Oates.

Tickets are $15 for adults, $12 for children and senior citizens. Northwestern State, BPCC@NSU and Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts students are admitted free with a current student I.D.

Tickets can be purchased online at theatre.nsula.edu. Northwestern Theatre and Dance also offers a “Five for Fifty” plan that allows patrons to buy and combination of five tickets for $50. For tickets or more information, contact Jane Norman at (318) 357-4483 or e-mail normanj@nsula.edu.

Senior Dance Concert will conclude spring performances

A Senior Dance Concert of all student works will be presented at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 27 in the A.A. Fredericks Fine Arts Auditorium, according to Brett Alan Garfinkel, assistant professor of dance.

Northwestern State named Tree Campus USA

Northwestern State University has been designated as a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation for its dedication to campus forestry management and environmental stewardship.

This is the fourth year in a row Northwestern State has been honored as a Tree Campus USA. Northwestern State was the first college or university in Louisiana to receive this honor.

“Northwestern State understands how important it is to carry out the best tree care practices on our campus,” said Vice President for University Affairs Marcus Jones. “The natural beauty of our campus is a tremendous asset. Planting and maintaining a variety of trees enhances our campus.”

Tree Campus USA is a national program created in 2008 to honor colleges and universities for effective campus forest management and for engaging staff and students in conservation goals. Toyota helped launch the program and continues its generous financial support this year.
Sympathy

University Records
Analyst Melinda McClung was killed in a traffic accident March 24. Her husband, Philip McClung, a teacher at NSU Middle Lab School, and a son were seriously injured. A love fund has been established at Bank of Montgomery for the McClung family at the Bank of Montgomery. Make checks payable to McClung Family Love Fund, ATTN: Reba Phelps, 814 Washington Street, Natchitoches, LA 71457.

Service details were not finalized as of press time.

Funeral services for Richard “Ricky” C. West, son of Linda West, NSU Leesville/ Ft. Polk Library, were held March 2 in DeRidder. Mr. West died Feb. 26. A plant was sent to the service from the NSU Floral Fund.

Mrs. Ruth Bolton Caldwell passed away on Saturday, March 2. Mrs. Caldwell was the mother-in-law of Dr. Austin L. Temple, dean of the College of Science, Technology and Business, and the mother of Mrs. Diane Temple. A graveside service was held March 5 at Liberty Hill Cemetery near Bienville.

Nohely Brodermann passed away March 2 in Coral Gables, Fla. She was a professor of Spanish at Northwestern State for 20 years before she retired and moved to Miami with her family. A mass took place March 5 at St. Raymond’s Catholic Church, Miami.

Elizabeth “Betty” Jones passed away March 21 in Alexandria. Mrs. Jones was the mother of retired NSU Elementary Lab teacher Debbie McBride and grandmother of Melanie McBride, Recruiting, and Stephanie Henson, ECE, and her husband Blayne Henson, I.S.

Services were held March 21 at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church in Alexandria. In lieu of flowers, the family requested that honorary donations be made to the charity of the giver’s choice.

Angela Foster, sister of Leah Pearce, College of Nursing and Allied Health, passed away March 27. Arrangements were incomplete as of press time.

Alumni Association offering Alaskan, European cruises

The Northwestern State University Alumni Association is offering an opportunity for travelers to experience exotic, historic and breathtaking destinations while contributing financial support to the Association. Two luxury cruises have been planned for 2013 to Alaska and to Europe with ports of call in Italy, Greece and Croatia.

“These trips are a great opportunity for our alumni to network with other Northwestern State alumni and Louisiana natives,” said Haley Blount, associate director of Alumni Affairs. “These trips are offered at discounted rates because of the partnership we share with other Louisiana universities and the travel companies. The NSU Alumni Association gets a portion of the proceeds from each booking.”

An Alaskan cruise, set for Aug. 5-12 aboard the Oceania Cruises’ Regatta will depart Seattle and sail to the Alaskan ports of Wrangell, Sitka, Ketchikan and through the stunning, scenic Tracy Arm Fjord and Inside Passage. Early bird specials including two-for-one cruise fares and free airfare are available. For more information to book passage call GoNext at (800) 842-9023.

The Italian Inspirations cruise with ports of call in Italy, Greece and Croatia, Oct. 17-25, will take travelers to centuries’ old towns aboard Oceania Cruise’s Riviera, Oct. 17-25. Travellers will visit Capri, Amalfi and Sicily, the Greek wonderslands of Zakynthos and Corfu and the walled city of Dubrovnik. Early bird specials, including two-for-one cruise fares and free airfare are available. Call GoNext at (800) 842-9023 for more information.

Information is also available at northwesternalumni.com or by calling Blount at (318) 357-4414.
Local Girl Scouts learned the chemistry of soapmaking during a visit to a Northwestern State University chemistry lab. Members of the Girl Scouts of Louisiana Pines to the Gulf Council Troop 1512 made soap under the guidance of Assistant Professor **Dr. Carol Chin**, Christina Palomo, a biology major, and **Debbie Smith**, a member of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training staff. The three served as instructors for 10 fourth and fifth grade girls.

“The girls were provided with a little background on the old ways of soapmaking,” said Chin, who is joint faculty with NCPTT. “Traditionally, lye (sodium hydroxide) was extracted from wood ash. The pH of lye is very high because lye is a strong base, so the girls tested some lye prepared from wood ash and found the pH to be approximately 12. We also talked about how triglycerides, fats, are converted to soap and a byproduct, glycerol.”

Girl Scouts worked at individual lab stations, measured the ingredients and prepared their soap using the hot process saponification method, Chin explained. They heated shortening, lye, and alcohol in a beaker using a hotplate, stirring the mixture using a magnetic stirring bar as well as a glass stirring rod. After much stirring and heating, the mixture began to thicken and form soap.

Next the girls added flower petals, oatmeal, or tea to personalize their soap, and then “purified” the soap by adding a saturated salt solution, Chin said. The salt solution caused the soap to separate from the glycerol byproduct. This step also helped to eliminate any excess lye. They poured off the byproduct, rinsed their soap chunks and took their freshly made soap home to re-melt and pour into molds.

“Soap is a household item that we often take for granted, but the girls learned that the task of soapmaking was historically a time-consuming endeavor that was necessary in order to have soap for cleaning, washing and bathing,” Chin said.

“I liked that we got to learn the formula before we made the soap,” said Girl Scout Lauren Mathews. “I had to do it twice because my first one didn’t have the right proportion of things. It was hard to do. I am going to give my soap as a present, so I haven’t used it yet. I really liked working in the chemistry lab!”