

# Goucher DIGEST

April 8, 2009

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**Due to technical difficulties the *Goucher Digest* is being mailed out today, instead of Monday, April 6. We apologize for any inconvenience.**

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### **Goucher Presents a Conversation With Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**

Goucher College presents a conversation with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female head of state, on Thursday, April 16, at 7 p.m. in Kraushaar Auditorium.

This event is free and open to the public, but tickets must be reserved by calling 410-337-6333 or by e-mailing

[boxoffice@goucher.edu](mailto:boxoffice@goucher.edu).

Often referred to as Africa's "Iron Lady" for her strong will, Johnson Sirleaf has pledged to

embark on reforms to help her country “become a brilliant beacon, an example to Africa and the world of what love of liberty can achieve,” as she said at a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.

In November 2007, Johnson Sirleaf was bestowed with the United States Medal of Freedom Award, the U.S. government’s highest civilian award, for her personal courage and unwavering commitment to expand freedom and improve the lives of people in Liberia and across Africa.

Her first book, *This Child Will Be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life by Africa’s First Woman President*, will be published by Harper Collins Publishers this month.

For more information on Johnson Sirleaf click [here](#).

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## Not Your Average Robots

They may look like Roombas, but Otto and Anna—the Computer Science and Mathematics Department’s newest robots—are a lot smarter than a vacuum.

With his built-in camera, sonic sensor, and Wi-Fi capabilities, Otto rules the 7-foot-by-8-foot space he calls home. His job is deceptively simple — help his mate, Anna, traverse their little universe. But Anna is blind, on the opposite side of the room, and there are pink bricks between them.

What’s a robot Lothario to do?

That’s what Professor Jill Zimmerman and her assistant, David Gage ‘09, are trying to figure out.



Zimmerman purchased the two iRobots last summer with grants from the Nancy Larrick Crosby ‘30 Fund and the William H. Maltbie Mathematics Fund. Associate Professor Thomas Kelliher modified their hardware and installed their Linux-operated brains.

Zimmerman said she was intrigued by the idea of one robot directing another.

“You can just picture an army of robots directing each other. Just wait until I install the lasers on them,” she said, laughing.

The military is already experimenting with using small robots in warfare. Having a robot

that soldiers could toss into a potentially dangerous building and report back what's inside could save lives, Zimmerman said.

But having a robot navigate in an unknown environment is a complex task, she said.

Otto's camera allows him to see the brightly color blocks before him and avoid them, but he still hasn't been able to accurately map out his space, which Zimmerman and Gage continue to work on.

Once Otto is able to map out his space, Zimmerman and Gage will work on a program that will allow him to send the map to Anna via Wi-Fi and direct her on how to navigate the room.

With Gage graduating at the end of the semester, Zimmerman is searching for a new assistant to help her with the research. She's also planning to hold another robotics class within the next two years.

Zimmerman's first robotics class, held last year, named Anna and Otto and designed their faces. The class spent most of their time working with Armand, an industrial robot arm with five joints, a gripper, and an optical sensor.

The class taught him how to play tic-tac-toe (a game he excels at), identify shapes, and write signs. The "Robots Rule" sign taped to lab's door is Armand's handiwork.

Zimmerman hopes to have Associate Professor Mark McKibben develop mathematical equations that she could use to program Armand to move his arm along curves at different speeds. The ability would allow him to perform more complex tasks.

Until then, she and Gage will focus on helping Otto map his small world.

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## **Tandia Joins Goucher as New Assistant Dean for Multicultural Student Services**

Mary Tandia came to Goucher College in January as the new assistant dean for multicultural student services. In this position, Tandia directs all aspects of the college's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), including organizing and developing the EOP Summer Bridge Program. She also develops and coordinates support services for international students and oversees outreach activities for African, Latino, Asian, Native American, and all other minority students. Tandia collaborates with colleagues across campus to assist with institutional retention efforts and to develop and incorporate intercultural learning opportunities for all Goucher students.

Just prior to coming to Goucher, Tandia worked for a private, not-for-profit company as a case manager and therapist for teenage male offenders and their families. She has extensive experience working in higher education and has served as the director of

residential life and housing at Delaware State University, as the coordinator of multicultural affairs at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, and as the coordinator of residence life at Iowa State University.

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## **“Transatlantic Emancipation: Julia Griffiths’ Letters from the Old World in Frederick Douglass’ Monthly”**

Wednesday, April 8  
4:30 p.m., Buchner Hall

Sara Meer, Ph.D., a Cambridge University lecturer and director of studies in English, presents this lecture about the newspaper columns British abolitionist Julia Griffiths wrote for Frederick Douglass in the mid-1800s. The columns and related letters demonstrate some of the official and personal dimensions of antislavery networks.

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## **Graphene - what's all the excitement about?**

Thursday, April 16  
4:30 p.m., Kelly Lecture Hall

Florida State University and National High Magnetic Field Laboratory Professor Oskar Vafek '98 will discuss graphene, the atom-thick sheets of honeycombed carbon that may one day replace silicon as the basic unit of ultrafast electronics. It's also showing promise for broadband satellite communication.

Vafek will discuss why electric charges zoom through this material at incredible speeds and why excitations in these systems behave as massless charged particles as opposed to free massive electrons.

Refreshments will be served at 4:15 p.m.

This talk is supported by the Taylor Lecture Fund, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, and the Physics and Astronomy Club/Society of Physics.

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## Money Conference for Women

Saturday, April 18

8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Merrick Lecture Hall

This conference is designed to help women develop the money management and investment skills to plan for a financially secure future and is sponsored by Goucher College and the Baltimore County Commission for Women.

The conference is free, but registration is required. For more information or to register, call 410-887-3448.

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## Deadline for Winter 2010 Intensive Course Abroad Program

The Office of International Studies knows it's finally getting warm outside, but the deadline for the Winter 2010 Intensive Course Abroad Programs is Wednesday, April 8 at 5 p.m.!

The programs being offered are:

- Dance, Theatre, and Production in the Old World (London)
- Spanish 120 and 130 in Cuernavaca, Mexico
- Connecting Jane Austen's Work & World Via Her Heroines (United Kingdom)

Students must visit the Office of International Studies and attend an advising session to get an application. For more information contact Carol Donhauser, study abroad advisor, at 410-337-6454 or [cdonhaus@goucher.edu](mailto:cdonhaus@goucher.edu).

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## New Events from the Office of Career Development

The Career Development Office is offering students a series of programs to assist in preparing resumes, learning about majors, and developing the skills needed to conduct a job search.

### **Wednesday, April 8**

#### **Major Café**

Faculty, current students, and alums from the communications and environmental studies departments will share information about their programs. Students will also hear about ways in which the CDO can help them through the process of major selection.

3:30 p.m., Geen Community Center

## **Friday, April 17**

### **Searching to Succeed**

Seniors who are looking to get their job search underway won't want to miss this half-day seminar. Students will learn the basic skills needed to write resumes and cover letters, as well as the strategies that will help them land a job. Participants will also learn important job search tips from employers.

1 p.m.–5 p.m., Buchner Hall

For more information contact the Career Development Office at [career@goucher.edu](mailto:career@goucher.edu) or call 410-337-6191.

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## ***Awake Zion***

Sunday, April 19

8 p.m., Pearlstone Atrium

Although Jews and Rastafarians appear very different, both claim figures from the Old Testament as their forefathers, both send a message of truth and love to their followers, both speak of Zion, and both have integrated their beliefs into their lifestyles.

*Awake Zion* is socially conscious documentary that explores the connection between Judaism and Rastafarianism through the themes of music, symbols, and culture.

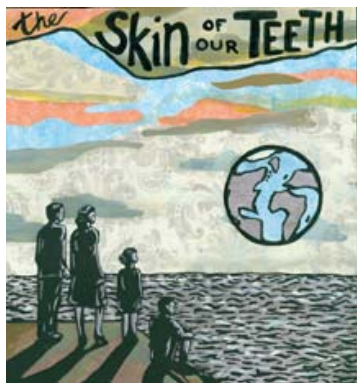
Candy will be on sale for cash only. Please bring your own chairs and blankets.

For more information, e-mail [Hillel@goucher.edu](mailto:Hillel@goucher.edu).

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## ***The Skin of Our Teeth***



Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *The Skin of Our Teeth* is being presented by Goucher senior theatre majors and minors on Friday, April 17, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, April 18, at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Thursday, April 23, through Saturday, April 25, at 8 p.m. in the college's Mildred Dunnock Theater.

Tickets to the performance are \$9 general admission and \$5 for students, faculty, and staff with a Goucher ID. Contact the Mildred Dunnock Box Office at 410-337-6512 to reserve a ticket or for more information.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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## Kudos

**Jennifer Jordan '11**, a math and computer science major, was awarded a Goldwater Scholarship honorable mention. The Goldwater Scholarship is a national scholarship for sophomores and juniors who want to pursue a graduate degree in the natural sciences, mathematics, or engineering. Jordan wrote a research proposal on modeling digestion in humans, research she will conduct with Assistant Professor Gretchen Koch.

**Leslie F. Miller**, a graduate student in the Master of Fine Arts Creative Nonfiction program, turned her thesis into a book about how to love cake. *Let Me Eat Cake* was published this month by Simon & Schuster. Click [here](#) for an article about Miller and her book.

Visiting Assistant Professor of Modern Languages **Carrie Landfried** delivered a paper titled "Voicing the Pre-Vocal: How Radio Influenced Nathalie Sarraute's Literary Career" at a panel on Radio Paper at the American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference held in March at Harvard University.

Modern Languages Professor **Florence Martin** served on a Filmmakers' Roundtable where she presented Yamina Benguigui's film *Inch'allah dimanche* at the Global Film and Migration Film Festival held in March at the College of William & Mary.

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## Goucher in the News

Check out the latest media coverage of Goucher College and its community members.

["Artists use economic woes as outlet for creativity"](#)

*The Baltimore Sun*, April 5, 2009

Article Abstract: The article discusses how the recession is inspiring artists such as Goucher alum Andres Zapata '98. Zapata wrote *Recession Nation*, a book of art and poetry inspired by the economic crisis.

["Nobel Prize winner connects environmental health, global unrest"](#)

*Pittsburgh Courier*, March 36, 2009

Article Abstract: Dr. Wangari Maathai's lecture at Goucher College as the Winter 2009 Robert and Jane Meyerhoff Visiting Professor is discussed. The Kenyan political and environmental activist presented a lecture titled, "Environment, Democracy and Peace: A Critical Link."

["Web Extra: A Who's Who of Baltimore Green Groups"](#)

Urbanite, April 3, 2009

Article Abstract: Goucher's Biological Science major was listed in the research/academics section of this "Who's Who" article of Baltimore's top green groups.

For more news stories, check out the [Goucher in the Media](#) section of Goucher's website.

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## Missed an issue of the Goucher Digest?

Check out past issues of the Goucher Digest e-newsletter online at [www.goucher.edu/digestnewsletter](http://www.goucher.edu/digestnewsletter).

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## Deadline for the next Goucher Digest

The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the Goucher Digest is Thursday, April 16. Send all submissions to [digesteditor@goucher.edu](mailto:digesteditor@goucher.edu).

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