

## Braun Fellowship to support faculty in study of insects, health care practices

A nursing educator and a scholar specializing in insects have been awarded the Braun Fellowship to pursue their research.

Elizabeth Roe, professor of nursing, and Stephen Taber, associate professor of biology, will each receive research support grants totaling up to \$37,500 over the next three years to further their scholarly and professional activities. Funds may be used for research expenses, equipment, travel and/or other related support.

Each is an award-winning faculty member. Roe received SVSU's Landee Award for Teaching Excellence in 2012 and the Ruben Daniels Community Service Award in 2006. Taber received SVSU's Warrick Award for Excellence in Research in April.

Roe's proposal involves a collaborative project with



Beth Roe

Steve Taber

clinical staff at long-term care facilities designed to improve patient care. She hopes to increase the knowledge of and implementation of evidence-based practice in the long-term care setting. Research suggests awareness and use of research evidence in practice remains low. Roe plans to publish her findings for academic journals and international conference presentations. There are potential benefits to SVSU including increased collaboration and academic opportunities for students.

Roe joined the SVSU faculty in 1988. An active scholar, she was a named author for one book chapter and two scholarly journal articles published in 2012. She has given 35 invited presentations since 2000. Active in the Saginaw community for many years, Roe has worked with the Saginaw County Sheriff's Department since 2002 as a victim support advocate, providing comfort and support to victims and families who have experienced crime, trauma or death. A resident of Saginaw, Roe completed her Ph.D. at Wayne State University. She holds a master's degree from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree from Northern Michigan University.

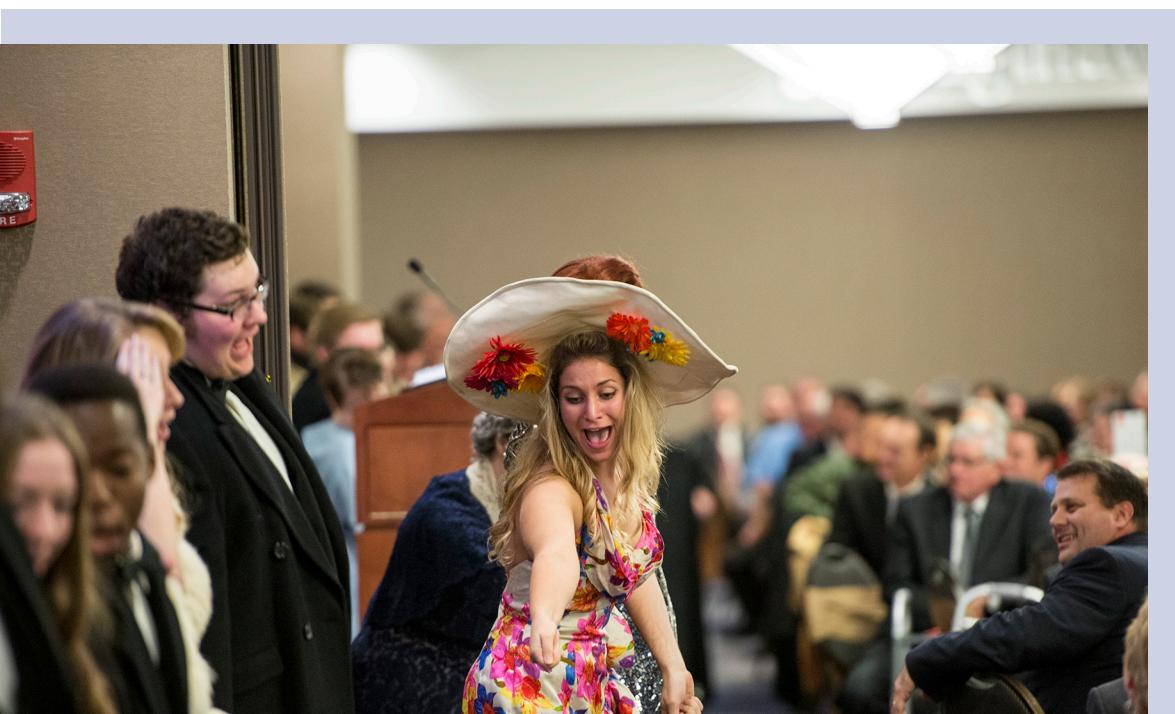
Taber's project involves teaming with SVSU students to search for insect species unknown to science. He has discovered 20 new species since

joining SVSU in 2004. Taber maintains one laboratory at SVSU focused on insect studies; he has a second lab in the Manistee National Forest. Taber and his students will search for insects in the forest from spring to fall. His findings are expected to be published in journal articles that document new discoveries.

Taber has authored two books, *The World of Harvester Ants and Fire Ants*, both published by Texas A&M University Press, and co-authored three other books on plant and animal life in his native Texas. He also has written nearly 50 peer-reviewed journal articles, including 30 that have been written during his tenure at SVSU. Three of these have included SVSU students as named authors.

A resident of Saginaw, Taber completed a bachelor's degree at Texas A&M University, a master's degree at Texas Tech University and a Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to joining SVSU, he received teaching excellence awards from the University of Texas at Austin and St. Edward's University.

Established in 2005, the Braun Fellowship program was created through a \$1.5 million endowment from the Saginaw-based Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation. Administered by the Saginaw Community Foundation, the program's purpose is to recognize the exceptional accomplishments and potential of select SVSU faculty and staff. It is named in honor of Ruth and Ted Braun of Saginaw.



SVSU is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2013-14 with a slate of programs and activities, including a banquet Nov. 9 that featured scenes from "The Producers" that was staged last week. To view the banquet speeches, go to [svsu.edu/50](http://svsu.edu/50).

# Rajani Muraleedharan

## Assistant Professor of Electrical & Computer Engineering

Rajani Muraleedharan was raised in the sizzle of southern India. Still, her move to America wasn't met with the typical exasperation experienced by overseas imports more acquainted with temperatures surrounding the earth's equator than the wintertime weather waiting stateside. Instead of irritation, she adopted that Dean Martin attitude.

Let it snow.

"I was excited and looking forward to it," the first-year assistant professor said about her relocation across the Atlantic in 2001. "In India, it always was just rain and sun, so I wanted to experience the snow. But, then I realized, I have to shovel this."

That American adjustment became a labor of love, not unlike the many research endeavors that engaged her brain from those first days as a Ph.D. student in the classrooms of Syracuse University to today, at her office within Pioneer Hall.

Muraleedharan and her former colleagues at New Jersey's Rowan University are developing a project aimed at mapping human emotions using facial expressions. She hopes the results will lead to many applications, including being able to anticipate harmful conduct by children as well as help autistic individuals better understand social situations.

"We want to use cameras to find out what they feel and predict their behavior," she said.

A computer engineer from Rowan is designing a video game that Muraleedharan and her former psychology colleagues want to use as part of an initial phase involving autistic people. The simulation would teach the participants how various facial expressions indicate social circumstances. At the same time, the game user would be filmed, allowing researchers to gauge emotional reactions.

"We are hoping this will be a way to understand them better," she said. She's attempting to secure grant money for the research via avenues within SVSU as well as the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation.

Muraleedharan also hopes to recruit students from the undergraduate level to help assist the study. "When I had interactions with undergraduates, sometimes they had this (impression) that undergrads don't do research," she said, "but I believe in project-based learning. I'm hoping they will help with the work."

As Muraleedharan awaits funding opportunities, she said she remains engaged both in the classroom and at her new home in mid-Michigan. She moved here in August with her husband, Thomas Silveira. They have a 3-year-old daughter, Reyna, who shares her mom's eagerness for new weather experiences. "Where I came from, there was no snow at all," Muraleedharan said. "When we told our daughter (about relocating to Michigan), she was so ecstatic. She is looking forward to the snow."



# LaDonna Young

Human Resources Specialist • November 2013

Make no mistake about it: LaDonna Young is from Saginaw Valley State University.

Some might call the human resources specialist's journey to the campus a coincidence. Others—including the 26-year-old herself—consider her arrival something closer to divine intervention.

Either way, she is here now. Don't make her remind you.

"I love it here," she said. "I love this office."

Young admits life easily could have led her elsewhere. On more than one occasion.

Coming out of Detroit's Renaissance High School in 2005, Young initially planned to spend her college years at Bowling Green State University on an academic scholarship. But her cousin, former Cardinal women's basketball player Brittany Collins, redirected Young's attention toward an institution Young hadn't yet heard of: SVSU. After a site visit the day after her prom and some hustle for scholarship dollars on behalf of former SVSU staffer Richard Buford, she made the campus her undergraduate destination.

"It was like I was destined to be here," she said.

After graduating with a bachelor's in political science in 2009, Young remained in the Saginaw area, working a number of jobs. A few months after graduating, she returned to SVSU on a tour while

a member of the Saginaw Valley African-American Leadership Training Institute. Young was assigned a nametag that indicated she graduated from Michigan State University.

"I scratched that out on my name tag and Jim Muladore (executive vice president for administration & business affairs) noticed that," Young said. "I said, 'If you want MSU to get the credit, OK, but I'm from Saginaw Valley.'"

The error led to a conversation about Young's post-graduation prospects, and that talk then led to Young applying for a position in SVSU's clerical temp pool. She eventually landed one of the spots in the Human Resources department. When the human resources specialist position opened up in 2010, she moved in as a full-time employee.

"I guess I proved myself," she said.

Young said she fit in immediately with her office colleagues. The youngest of seven siblings, she also is the youngest full-timer in the third floor Wickes Hall suite that houses Human Resources.

"It's fun here," she said. "We work in a fast-paced environment but, even on our most stressful days, we take a timeout to have a good laugh. If it was a stuffy environment, I wouldn't have been here this long."





SVSU helped net \$25,185 for a local Special Olympics organization during last week's annual "Battle of the Valleys" fundraising competition. For the eighth time in 10 years, during the weeklong campaign SVSU raised more money for its chosen charity than did Grand Valley State University, which raised about \$11,000.

## Professional Profile

- **Cyrus Aryana**, professor of mathematics, published a paper titled "Self-adjoint Toeplitz Operators Associated with Representing Measures on Multiply Connected Planar Regions and their Eigenvalues," in *Complex Analysis and Operator Theory Journal* (Vol. 7, No. 5).
- **Julie Foss**, assistant professor of modern foreign languages, co-presented "Extensive Reading: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?" and "Wish You Were Here: Highlights from CSCTFL and ACTFL" (with Emily Serafa Manschot, University of Michigan-Dearborn) at the 49th Annual Michigan World Language Association Conference, Nov. 7-8 in Lansing. Foss is MIWLA's president-elect.
- **Mike Mosher**, professor of art/communication & multimedia, edited issue #85: "Is Kennedy Dead?" of the online (bad.eserver.org) journal *Bad Subjects*. The issue contains Mosher's essay "Motown Records, 1963 and the Heat Wave in Detroit," as well as an article by **Rosalie Riegler**, professor emeritus of English, and a comic drawn by SVSU B.F.A. student Olivia Nixon.
- **Danilo Sirias**, professor of management, with **Robert Artberburn**, instructional technology specialist; **Poonam Kumar**, director of online/hybrid learning; and **Deborah Roberts**, instructional technology support specialist; co-presented a session titled "Using Web Conferencing Technologies to Build a Community of Learners" at the Lily Conference, Oct. 17-20 in Traverse City. The conference also included a poster presentation by **Mary Klaus**, ESL specialist, and **Judy Youngquist**, senior ESL specialist, titled "Developing an Extensive Reading Program within an Intensive Curriculum."
- **Christopher Surfield**, associate professor of economics, gave an invited talk on economic metrics for the Great Lakes Bay Region at the Saginaw Township Business Association meeting, Nov. 14. His presentation included wage and employment trends for Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties, along with growth happening in key industries such as manufacturing and service sectors.
- **Stephen Taber**, professor of biology, had his manuscript, titled "A New Species of *Micropsectra* Kieffer Midge (Diptera: Chironomidae)," accepted for publication in *Southwestern Entomologist* magazine.
- **Gladys Zubulake**, professor of modern foreign languages, presented "Touch the World with Spanish Cinema" at the Michigan

World Language Association conference in Lansing, Nov. 8. Several of Zubulake's advanced Spanish students co-presented at the conference.

## Condolences

- To **Mike Andrzejewski**, energy management specialist/foreman, whose brother, Robert Andrzejewski, passed away Nov. 9.

## Briefly Speaking

- Faculty and staff may present the alumni scroll to graduating members of their immediate family during the Commencement ceremony Friday, Dec. 13, at 7:30 p.m. Call Suzette Zimmerman at ext. 4384 to make arrangements. To confirm that your regalia order was received, call the Bookstore at ext. 4277.
- The SVSU Faculty Association honored several members at their annual awards banquet Friday, Oct. 11. **Nancy Colwell** and **Amy Hlavacek**, mathematical sciences, received the Outstanding Service Award for their work in the math/physics resource center. The Outstanding Scholarship Award was given to **Peter Barry**, philosophy, who recently published a book, *Evil and Moral Psychology*. **Kerry Segel**, English, received the Outstanding Mentoring Award for his efforts to support colleagues in Teaching English as a Second Language and English as a Second Language. In addition, the Faculty Association presented **Dave Schneider**, communication, with the rare honor of the Lifetime Service Award.
- Please note on page 1 in your 2013-14 Faculty & Staff Directory that the Center for Mathematics & Science Education (EN142) no longer exists.

**The Interior** is published on the last Tuesday of each month for faculty and staff at SVSU. University departments sponsoring activities or events listed in the Interior will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities when contacted at least three days in advance.

**J.J. Boehm**

Director of Media Relations      Director of Photography, Advertising  
jjboehm@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4055      & Publishing Services  
tmi@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4086

**Tim Inman**

Director of Photography, Advertising  
jjboehm@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4055      & Publishing Services  
tmi@svsu.edu • (989) 964-4086

**Submission Deadline:**  
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