

# Saint Mary's College Athletics, Campus Life, News

## The Road to Enlightenment

### Biology professor leaves lab behind, takes 16 students to South Africa to teach them about HIV/AIDS

By Jennifer Wake

After spending months at a time volunteering in such remote locations as Niger, Tanzania and South Africa, Saint

calmed." Beutner was one of several nursing students who helped patients suffering from tuberculosis, deep bed sores, and

ranged from business and politics to biology and physics, helped with administrative duties at grass-roots organizations designed to ed-

native peoples. "But without jobs, men obtained permits to go and work in the mines of Johannesburg," said Robbins. "They weren't allowed to bring their families, but were required to live in large, male-only barracks for 10 or 11 months at a time. To keep morale up, the mines sometimes even provided them prostitutes. These men who went seeking a better life for their families brought back a virus. Since HIV has a ten to fifteen year latency, they are only now falling sick."

The United Nations estimates that a quarter of Africa's workforce will die of AIDS by 2020. And as the men die, women are left with no resources and no way to earn a living, often turning to transactional sex to support their families, thus perpetuating the problem.

And although treatments are now very successful, the costs of the anti-retrovirals limit the treatment in South Africa to only those with full-blown AIDS. "It's really frustrating," senior Mark Capobianco said. "You used



Junior Elizabeth Holst, sophomore Ellyse Power with Amakhle, 5, and Marcus, 7

Mary's College biology professor Jennifer Robbins, Ph.D., realized that much of what is known about AIDS in Africa is poorly understood in the United States.

In an effort to change that, Robbins developed a month-long travel course at Saint Mary's entitled Children of AIDS and, in January, took 16 students with her to South Africa.

"What [people in the U.S.] don't understand is that HIV in Africa is a disease of poverty," said Robbins. "I wanted my students to see this firsthand, but I also wanted them to see that the situation is not as hopeless as it's portrayed in the media."

Following a two-leg 30-hour flight, Robbins and her students arrived in Johannesburg and then traveled to the remote province of KwaZulu-Natal, which — with 65 percent of its 9.4 million population infected — has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS in the world.

For Saint Mary's sophomore Katherine Beutner, the prospect of the trip at first was a bit unnerving. "Jen told us at one of our first meetings that she wasn't sure what we would be facing and that it was likely we were going to see people die," Beutner said. Beutner volunteered in the local clinic, The Dream Centre, an entire hospital solely dedicated to treating HIV/AIDS patients. "Once I started work in the clinic, a lot of my nerves were

horrible cases of oral thrush. "It was a really difficult thing for me to deal with, but it showed me the true effects of HIV/AIDS," she said. "The

ucate and provide free screening or treatment for victims of this epidemic.

"All the organizations we volunteered with were run by



Traveling over the treacherous Sani Pass

facility was impressive, but the lack of supplies was staggering. You could see they needed help, yet you spent so much time looking for the right supplies."

Africans, for Africans," said Robbins. "We were learning from them, not teaching. And living with the orphans who have back stories that could make you cry, the students were struck by kids' ability to still be kids, to constantly celebrate life."

At one point in their trip, Robbins took her students to visit families stricken by the virus at their homes in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, which Robbins called "an unspeakably beautiful place that truly lies under the shadow of death."

The Valley was part of a Zulu 'Homeland' established by the Apartheid government as a strategy to contain the

**"Living with the orphans who have back stories that could make you cry, the students were struck by kids' ability to still be kids, to constantly celebrate life."**  
— Robbins

In addition to working at the clinic, students worked with children at God's Golden Acre-Khayelihle, an orphanage where hundreds of the over 10 million children who have lost parents to AIDS are given free education, healthcare, and anti-retrovirals for those with HIV. Others, whose majors

#### From Hearst Art Gallery Media Advisory:

#### Exhibition Explores Wonder of Paper

By Jennifer Wake

Artists love paper because it is accessible, inexpensive, and invites experimentation and risk-



Patti Quinn Hill  
Fire on the Mountains; 2001  
cotton archival paper, acrylic paint, metallic thread

taking. In the exhibition "Paper Cuts: The Art of Contemporary Paper," twenty-seven contemporary artists transform the material, creating everything from highly textured large-scale sculpture to intricate baskets and hand-made books to dazzling mosaics with an array of techniques, including casting, collage, and papier-mâché.

The exhibition opens Saturday, March 24 at the Hearst Art Gallery, with an opening recep-

tion on Sunday, March 25 at 2 p.m. featuring guest speaker Deb Koppman, Previews Editor for Artweek who has four paper sculptures in the exhibit. Koppman is also the artist-in-residence at Sequoia Elementary School in Oakland, an instructor at JFK University in Berkeley and at U.C. Extension, and has exhibited her works nationally and internationally.

Organized by Robert Cugno and Robert Logan of the Media Gallery in Garnett, Kansas, "Paper Cuts" is toured by ExhibitsUSA and supplemented with works from Bay Area artists and the Saint Mary's College Collection.

Photos: ExhibitsUSA



Photo by Ken C. Young, Moraga; [www.kcyoungfineartimages.com](http://www.kcyoungfineartimages.com)

## Go Gaels!

### Upcoming Saint Mary's Sports Events

- Thursday, March 22
  - Women's Softball vs. Pacific 1 p.m. at Cottrell Field
- Friday, March 23
  - Women's Tennis vs. Portland 3 p.m. at Korth Tennis Complex
- Saturday, March 24
  - Men's Rugby vs. Cal 1 p.m. at Pat Vincent Rugby Field
- Sunday, March 25
  - Women's Tennis vs. Santa Clara 11 a.m. at Korth Tennis Complex
- Tuesday, March 27
  - Men's Baseball vs. Cal State Hayward 2 p.m. at Louis Guisto Field
  - Men's Tennis vs. Air Force 3 p.m. at Korth Tennis Complex

## Campus Happenings

#### Art Exhibitions:

"Paper Cuts: The Art of Contemporary Paper" March 24 through April 29  
Opening reception with guest speaker Deb Koppman, artist/writer Sunday, March 25 at 2 p.m., Hearst Art Gallery  
Free

"William Keith: The 1870s Paintings" Reopens Saturday, March 24  
Hearst Art Gallery, William Keith Room  
Free

#### Lectures:

Brousseau Spring Lecture  
Dr. Joan Roughgarden of Stanford University  
"Evolution's Rainbow: Alternative Evolutionary Systems of Sex, Gender and Sexuality"  
Friday, March 23 from 4 to 5 p.m.; LeFevre Theatre  
Free

Tom Barbash  
Author of several books including "On Top of the World — Cantor Fitzgerald, Howard Lutnick & 9/11: A Story of Loss & Renewal"  
Wednesday, March 28 at 7:30 p.m.; Soda Activity Center  
Free

#### Special Events:

"Singers of the Night"  
WomenSing, a 55-member chorus with Artistic Director Martin Benvenuto, presents a concert featuring Vivaldi's "Beatus Vir" with string quartet; Spanish renaissance music; and 19th century Rheinberger to Andrew Carter's contemporary settings of William Blake poetry. A reception follows the concert.  
Sunday, March 25 at 3 p.m.; The Chapel  
Tickets available at the door.  
\$20 general, \$18 senior/student, and \$10 youth 18 and under.  
To charge in advance, call (925) 974-9169.

"The Carnival of Fashion"  
The Saint Mary's College Guild will feature fashions by J Jill of Walnut Creek. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served prior to the luncheon and fashion show.  
Saturday, March 31 at 11 a.m.; Soda Activity Center  
Tickets are \$40 (includes fashion show and luncheon.) Proceeds will benefit student scholarships.  
For tickets, contact Mary Power at (925) 672-6761

For more information about upcoming events at Saint Mary's College, visit the college website at [www.stmarys-ca.edu/news\\_events/](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/news_events/).



Sophomore Renee Johnson and senior Deborah Chestnut, with their African counterpart, a Dream Centre nurse.



Michael LaFosse  
Giant Hairy Scorpion; 1998  
handmade paper (abaca, cotton and agave)