The Daily Athenaeum

"Little good is accomplished without controversy, and no civic evil is ever defeated without publicity."

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Students unveil posters to chronicle research projects in several fields

By Colin Booth, Staff Writer **Issue Date:** Thursday October 18, 2007 **Section:** State & Local Section

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The National Research Center for Coal and Energy hosted a student research poster session from 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday, displaying the research of undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students.

The poster projects ranged from linguistic and historical research to advanced mathematics and organic chemistry.

The posters communicated a complete synopsis, listing of grants, an explanation of progress and process and some idea of the significance of the often complex research projects.

The event represented the "Launching Research and Discovery" section of Inauguration Week.

Stephanie Conrad, senior special events coordinator for West Virginia University, introduced the event to visitors.

"This entire week is celebrating the University and what we do here. What better way to show the work of the students than these presentations?" Conrad said.

One of the more popular posters at the event was an advanced mathematics display on Egyptian fractions. Presented by Jennifer Manor, a junior mathematics major, the poster deals with the representation of fractions in the same formula ancient Egyptians used.

Manor spent her summer doing research with Dr. Michael Mays of the Department of Mathematics.

"I had a lot of fun doing math all summer ... my project is just an old twist at looking at fractions," Manor said.

One of the more advanced research projects was presented by David Statler, a doctoral chemical engineering graduate student. His chemical materials research study titled "Recyclability and Mechanistic Study of Polycarbonate Flame Retarded with Potassium Diphenylsulfone Sulfonate" dealt with making recycled polycarbonate – the clear plastic material CDs are composed of – more flame-resistant.

Statler got the idea for making the recycled polycarbonate flame retardant after attending conferences on flame retardants.

Statler received grants from the West Virginia Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research Challenge and the U.S. Department of Energy. The Bayer Foundation gave 100 pounds of various compositions of polycarbonate to use for testing. Statler has been working on the project for three or four years, he said.

Straying from hard science, junior English and international studies major Erin Clemens presented her study titled, "Lost & Found In Translation: Common Traits in Japanese, Korean and Cherokee," which dealt with the similarities between far-east Asian languages and the nearly extinct language of the Cherokee.

Clemens went in-depth on the specific parallels between languages, which include the honorifics, agglutinative languages, particles and syllabaries. She also pointed out that the origins of both languages were initially developed by women.

WVU President Mike Garrison was present at the event. He expressed a sense of awe at seeing the cumulative research work of the University's students.

"It blows me away. It's one thing to do this research, but it's another thing to sell it – just blew me away," Garrison said.

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