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Georgia Southern computer science professor attends Colorado "Hack-a-thon"

FEBRUARY 6, 2007

Georgia Southern University's Robert Cook recently spent time on a Sony PlayStation 3, but it wasn't to play games.

Instead, Cook, Yamacraw professor of computer science in the University's College of Information Technology, worked with top researchers at the first-ever 'hack-a-thon' sponsored by Colorado-based Terra Soft Solutions, a leader in the use of the Linux computer operating system. Cook was the only computer science faculty member in attendance from the U.S.

'Most people do not realize the advanced capabilities of the processor used in a PlayStation 3,' said Cook. 'It uses IBM Cell technology, which is a computer chip with nine processors. A normal PC has one processor. For a computer programmer, a PlayStation 3 is like having a personal supercomputer.'

The Cell or Cell Broadband Engine Architecture is a microprocessor architecture jointly developed by a Sony, Toshiba and IBM alliance known as STI. Sony's PlayStation 3 is the first major commercial application using this new technology.

Cook said there are innumerable scientific and engineering breakthroughs that can be accomplished with the increased computational speed of Cell processors.

'The next generation of supercomputers will be Cell computers linked together,' said Cook. 'They will be able to perform billions of billions of instructions per second. It has profound implications, especially in the area of bioinformatics.'

As an example, Cook said scientists studying DNA and RNA proteins could study and manipulate individual proteins by comparing them through computerized databases.

'Proteins are the individual building blocks of life,' Cook said. 'Computerized databases can be created to store proteins from every living thing. When a researcher needs to identify where a protein came from, it takes time to compare samples. Cell-powered supercomputers will speed the process.'

In addition to studying complex proteins and molecules, Cook said advanced computer technology could aid researchers to better predict changes in the Earth's climate and ecosystem; develop more fuel-efficient, less polluting cars; or understand the origin, spread or mitigation of infectious diseases.

Cook said the challenge is to create the software that can take advantage of the Cell technology. The 'hack-a-thon' at Terra Soft Solutions' headquarters in Loveland, Col., was the start in how to address this challenge.

'It was an exciting atmosphere at the hack-a-thon,' Cook stated. 'There was a maelstrom of intellectual give-and-take that resulted in a rare free-flow of ideas. Software vendors were modifying product specifications on-the-fly based upon feedback from us, the attendees. Becoming coding buddies with total strangers was a great experience.'

For more information, contact Cook at 912-681-0892 or e-mail bobcook@georgiasouthern.edu.

Eagle Entertainment sponsors trip to Panama City

FEBRUARY 6, 2007

Eagle Entertainment is sponsoring a spring break trip to Panama City, Fla., Saturday, March 10, through Wednesday, March 14.

Cost of the trip is \$300 per person and includes transportation by bus and beachfront lodging.

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due by Friday, Feb. 16, by 4 p.m., with the balance due on Friday, March 2, by 4 p.m. Payment may be made by check, Visa or MasterCard.

For more information, or to sign up, contact the Office of Student Activities at 912-486-7270.

Southern Georgia Symphony presents Bach, Barber, and Strauss Feb. 17 and 18

FEBRUARY 6, 2007

The Southern Georgia Symphony, under the direction of Cheung Chau, continues its 2006-2007 season with 'An Appointment with Bach, Barber and Strauss,' featuring two special guests, soprano Heidi Bindhammer and flutist Anna Thibeault. The concerts will be held in Savannah on Saturday, Feb. 17, at 8 p.m. in the Lucas Theatre, and in Statesboro on Sunday, Feb. 18, at 3 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

'An Appointment with Bach, Barber and Strauss' will include Bach's Brandenburg Concerto #3; Barber's Adagio; Strauss' Pizzicato Polka; Bach's Orchestral Suite no.2 in b minor, featuring Anna Thibeault on flute; Barber's Knoxville Summer, featuring Heidi Bindhammer, soprano; Strauss' Radetzky March; and Bach's Coffee Cantata. The 'Rest of the Season' tickets for 2006-2007, and individual tickets, can be purchased by contacting the Performing Arts Center Box Office in Statesboro, 912-486-7999, and in Savannah, the SCAD Box Office at 912-525-5050. For more information, visit the Southern Georgia Symphony Web site at www.SouthernGeorgiaSymphony.org

Music Director and Conductor Cheung Chau shared his thoughts about this performance. 'Bach is the patriarch of music and represents the epitome of the Baroque ideals of classical music,' said Chau. He continued, 'Barber really loved the music of Bach and his pieces are very rich and somber his compositions go right to the heart and are very deep. Barber is also a favorite among American composers.'

Chau continued, 'Strauss, on the other hand, is very light and easily accessible, providing a good contrast with Barber and Bach. This concert has something for everyone and I look forward to seeing many music lovers and new patrons in the audience. '

Upcoming Southern Georgia Symphony Performances include: East Georgia Medical Center's 'Music in Memoriam,' to be performed in Statesboro on Monday, April 9, and Memorial Health's 'Music in Memoriam,' to be performed in Savannah on Tuesday, April 10. The season concludes with the Statesboro Herald and Statesboro Connect Pops Concert in Statesboro on Sunday, April 29, and the COMCAST Pops Concert in Savannah on Tuesday, May 1. 'Mercer and the Movies,' showcasing the timeless classics of Savannah's own Johnny Mercer, will be presented during both Pops Concert performances.

The Southern Georgia Symphony is a partnership between Georgia Southern University and other organizations committed to bringing a high-quality symphonic series to the Coastal Georgia region, including WTOC-TV, Clear Channel Radio Savannah, Savannah Morning News, Belford's, The River 98.7, East Georgia Regional Medical Center, Comcast, Bank South, Memorial Health, The Statesboro Herald, Connect Savannah, Connect Statesboro, Northland Cable, Sea Island Bank and Smack Dab Studios. The Southern Georgia Symphony is proud to serve the artistic needs of the broad and diverse community of Coastal Georgia. The Southern Georgia Symphony has expanded its reach, visibility and influence within the region so it may substantially contribute to the wealth of cultural life in the area, enhance the musical education of young audiences, contribute to economic growth and build strong ties with each community.