

# Experiential education conference a success

by Drew Brennan  
Faculty Contributor

Brevard College Senior Nan Pugh, Junior Laura Shain and Professor Drew Brennan traveled to Little Rock Arkansas this past weekend to attend the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Association for Experiential Education (AEE) conference.

Pugh and Brennan's workshop presentation, entitled *Exploring the nature of experiential education in higher education internships* was a collaborative effort with two other students from regional schools. Pugh used her experience from her summer internship at Outward Bound in Mazama, Washington, to help analyze the effectiveness of internships.

This year's conference attracted over 500

professionals and students to the Peabody Hotel in downtown Little Rock for the three-day conference. Over the span of several days, participants could choose from over 60 workshops, 2 keynote addresses, a playnote address, and 3 evenings of live entertainment.

This trip wouldn't have been complete without visits to the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, and Central High School (home of the historic 1957 desegregation of America's schools).

In a blog entry from this year's conference, Rick Curtis, author of *The Backpacker's Field Manual*, illustrates the value of conferences like this one for undergraduates when he wrote:

My very first AEE Conference

was in 1977 at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario when I was twenty-one. At that time I had no idea that Experiential Education was more than just the outdoor trips I was leading as a college student, it was a field with thousands of programs, academic degrees, scholarship, research, etc. While that first conference helped me in my undergraduate research in psychology studying the impacts of wilderness orientation programs, it's been the dozens of conferences, both International and Regional that I've gone to over the years that have really expanded both my vision of the field and my skills as an educator, facilitator, and outdoor practitioner. If you haven't ever been to an AEE Conference, then put it on your

list of "must do's." The caliber of professionals in the field to network with and as presenters is the highest I've seen anywhere. Three days at an AEE Conference is like a week of personal coaching from the best in the business. (taken on November 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm from <http://www.outdoored.com/Community/blogs/outdoored/archive/2007/11/11/35th-annual-association-for-experiential-education-ae-conference-blog.aspx>).

Next year's Annual AEE Conference will be held in Vancouver, Washington. If you are interested in more regional activity with the organization you might consider attending the AEE Southeast Regional Conference in Cedar Mountain, March 14-16, 2008. For more information go to [www.aee.org](http://www.aee.org).

# Tobacco Awareness Week

by Rhea Frederick  
Copy Editor

Tobacco use is very popular among college campuses all over the nation, and it continues to keep growing. There are many forms of tobacco use including smoking cigarettes, dipping, chewing, and smoking a hookah. Each of these is equally harmful to your body, causing cancer in the lungs, mouth, throat, tongue, and gums.

This past week was Tobacco Awareness Week, also known as the Great American Smokeout. If you are thinking about quitting, now is the perfect time to do it. While thousands of students all across the nation pledge to not smoke for one

day, you should too! By proving to yourself that you can go a whole day without smoking, you should realize that maybe you can go two days without smoke, and eventually give up the cancer sticks for good!

The American Cancer Society urges you to replace cigarettes and dip with candy and gum. It is so much easier to quit as a group than individually. So, round up a group of friends addicted to nicotine and make a pact. It is totally worth it and could add several years to your life.

The Peer Health Advocate Team hopes to bring oral cancer survivor, Gruen Von Behrens to the campus in the spring in order to tell us his story of his treatments and survival.

# WLEE immersion finishes expedition

by Emily Clark  
Business Manager

As the semester comes to an end, the two Wilderness Leadership and Experimental Education (WLEE) Immersion group's 21-day expeditions are also approaching the final day. One group will be coming back on Friday and the other group plans to end their trip on Monday.

This semester there is the first time that there have been two WLEE immersion groups. One group has set two new records as the first immersion expedition to go without any food or gear drops as well as traveling the greatest distance.

This particular group, with ten students has planned to canoe most of the trip and finish by

hiking 14 miles on the Palmetto Trail on Friday.

The Immersion semester promotes leadership and teaching in the outdoors. "There is a common misconception that the immersion semester is mainly all trips in the wilderness," according to Robert Dye, a professor in the WLEE program.

The Immersion semester consists of receiving Wilderness First Responder and Leave No Trace certification; going on a week long sea kayaking trip; planning the 21-day trip, and of course going through with that plan. Throughout the semester students learn various skills to prepare them as outdoor professionals.