



## BioBlitz 2009

Saint Mary's University is gearing up for the second annual *BioBlitz* to be held June 5 and 6 in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Candidate Wilderness Area located behind Bayer's Lake Business Park in the Halifax Regional Municipality. BioBlitz is the only event of its kind to take place in Eastern Canada.



*Top: The Saint Mary's BioBlitz team meets at Blue Mountain in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area.*

*Left: Susies Lake, one of the pristine lakes in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area.*

BioBlitz is a 24-hour taxonomy survey that identifies the biodiversity of a specific wilderness area. It is part scientific endeavour, part contest, and part educational event. The event's first goal is to identify as many species as possible in a given area. This leads to a second goal, as the scientists take part in a contest to see who can find the most species, as well as other discoveries such as rare, previously unidentified, and other unique or unusual species. The third goal is to educate the public. BioBlitz is designed to increase public awareness of biodiversity in our immediate neighbourhood and the valuable services that various animal and plant species provide to improve the quality of our lives.

This year's event will take place in the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes area, which is a candidate area for protection under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act. This 1,350 hectare area includes forests and barrens, and a system of interconnected lakes, streams, and wetlands. To date, there has not been a detailed survey of the species found in this area.

Last year's event, which was held on June 6 and 7 in Long Lake Provincial Park, had more than 80 scientists participating and exhibits from ten community groups. 250 people came to view the displays, watch scientist in action and participate in the guided tours. Last year, 694 species were identified in the park within a 24-hour period. This year at Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes, because of the diversity of habitats, the number of species is expected to exceed last year's totals significantly.

The BioBlitz 2009 organizers include members of faculty and staff at Saint Mary's University, as well as representatives from several community groups including, Ecology Action Centre, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Sackville River's Association, the Young Naturalists Club and the Halifax Field Naturalists. In addition, the Discovery Centre, the Museum of Natural History, and the Nova Scotia departments of Environment and Natural Resources are helping to make this year's BioBlitz event a success.

# Which Open House is for you?

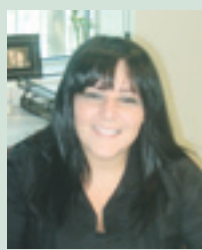
Dig deep into the area of study you're interested in at one of our three faculty-specific open houses. Learn the ins and outs of your faculty, find out where your degree can take you, meet your future profs and other students, and take a tour of the campus. It's an open house tailor-made for you and your goals.



## Meet the new Advisors...

Recently, Saint Mary's brought on two new Academic Advisors to the team of staff guiding students through their studies at Saint Mary's. The Sobey School of Business welcomed **Mahbouba Nassim**, who will help undergraduate commerce students, and the Faculty of Arts welcomed **Olugbenga Oredugba**, who will assist Arts students as they navigate through their program.

### **Mahbouba Nassim, Sobey School of Business, Undergraduate Programs Officer**



Mahbouba Nassim

Mahbouba is a Saint Mary's alumna, graduating in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. When she was a student, Mahbouba worked in the Registrar's Office during registration periods. When she graduated, like so many Saint Mary's grads, Mahbouba went to Korea to teach English for a year.

*"Teaching in Korea was one of the best experiences of my life. I got to experience not only Korean culture but other Asian cultures during my travels in Asia,"* said Mahbouba.

When she returned from Korea she began working full-time in the Registrar's Office first as a transcript secretary, and then as a front counter information assistant.

*"That's where I began the bulk of my work with students, assisting them with registration and other aspects of their university needs,"* added Mahbouba.

From that position, she moved up to become the Coordinator of Registry Services in 2007, supervising the front counter and our student employees. Now Mahbouba is Undergraduate Programs Officer in the Sobey School of Business.

Knowing the Academic Calendar and the Registrar's office as well as she does makes Mahbouba well equipped to help students as they move through their commerce degree.

Added to that, Mahbouba has considerable international experience. Born and raised in Halifax, Mahbouba has lived in the United States and Lebanon and speaks Arabic as well as some Korean.

### **Olugbenga Oredugba, Faculty of Arts, BA Program Advisor**



Olugbenga Oredugba

Olu came to Nova Scotia from Nigeria in 1983 as an international high school student. He liked Nova Scotia so much that he went on to complete his post-secondary studies in Halifax, graduating from Dalhousie University with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design with a Bachelor of Design in Environmental Planning.

Then in 1993, Olu moved to Vancouver to begin a professional career in the natural resource management field of the forestry sector, followed by a career in post secondary student services. From 2002 to 2006, he served as the International Student Coordinator in the Faculty of Arts at the University of British Columbia where he was involved with student recruitment, admissions, and academic advising. While at UBC, Olu traveled the world, recruiting students to British Columbia from Mexico, the United States, Norway, Japan, Taiwan, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya.

*"In 2006, I returned to Nova Scotia to reconnect with my maritime roots and continue to work in post secondary student services. For a while, I worked as a policy and educational outreach consultant for the Nova Scotia Department of Environment, and then most recently, as an Admissions Officer for the Nova Scotia Community College,"* said Olu, who joined the Faculty of Arts as Bachelor of Arts Program Advisor this January.

Olu's broad range of experience in various disciplines and his extensive travel around the world will greatly help our Saint Mary's students as they navigate through their university degrees.

*Welcome Aboard, Mahbouba and Olu!*