

Nov. 19, 2009

1. ['04 alum to show acclaimed documentary](#)
 2. [St. Bonaventure student honored as Camp Fire USA's National Youth of the Year](#)
 3. [New textbook by St. Bonaventure professor reframes biblical studies](#)
 4. [Newsmakers](#)
-

'04 alum to show acclaimed documentary

Filmmaker Torre Catalano returns to his alma mater Thursday for a screening of his acclaimed documentary “The Mayor of Strawberry Fields.”

Catalano, a 2004 graduate of the Jandoli School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will show the 38-minute film to the university community at 7 p.m. in Dresser Auditorium of the Murphy Building and then discuss the documentary afterward. Admission is free.

“The Mayor Of Strawberry Fields” is a moving look into the quirky homeless subculture living in Central Park. Gary, the self-proclaimed “mayor” of Strawberry Fields, has lived at John Lennon’s Imagine Memorial and decorated it with flowers for the past 14 years. Thousands of tourists see his labor of love daily, while he sits on as the “silent” artist.

The short documentary delves into Gary’s euphoric yet dysfunctional life on the streets, and takes the audience into a world only a true rock and roll fan would understand. Whether it’s the searing city heat or blistering cold of winter, Gary stands by the memorial with flowers from bodega dumpsters, and gives the world, as he says, “the peace sign it needs.”

Like any average Joe, Gary has a wife, a dog and a happy job. His unorthodox profession has started to make his artwork yet another landmark of Manhattan, and through his own self-promotion, made him a celebrity in his own rite.

The Buffalo native’s film was featured in a Sunday edition of the Buffalo News this summer. (<http://www.buffalonews.com/entertainment/arttheater/story/772362.html>).

Catalano has written for Comedy Central, been published in Seventeen Magazine, and has creatively consulted for some of the biggest record labels in the music industry.

After several years working in artist management, Catalano turned his focus to writing, directing and producing short films, documentaries and viral music videos for many of the brightest stars in music — including John Legend for the Emmy Award-winning “Yes We Can” Obama tribute video. His short film “Freedom Friend” recently received acclaim in the Brooklyn Film Race Festival this past fall.

Since then, Catalano has written, directed and produced videos for stars like Katy Perry, Ben Harper, Avant and The Kooks. His clients have included landmark corporations and household names — from Kodak to Snoop Dogg — while collaborating with

iconic filmmakers and musicians like Jojo Pennebaker and Teddy Geiger.

Catalano continues to produce videos for EMI Records and Evenings Empire Studios, and lives in Manhattan's East Village.

[Click here to return to the top of the page](#)

St. Bonaventure student honored as Camp Fire USA's National Youth of the Year

St. Bonaventure University produces leaders. Anastasia Wroblewski is one of them. Wroblewski, a sophomore from Bowie, Md., was recently named 2009-10 Camp Fire USA National Youth of the Year.

Camp Fire USA is a not-for-profit youth development organization with multiple programs throughout the U.S. It serves youth from birth to age 21 and includes programs based on youth leadership, self-reliance, childcare and environmental education.

The National Youth of the Year honor is one of the highest awards given to a youth member of the Camp Fire USA program. It is awarded to an individual who illustrates the highest level of commitment to leadership and service. Since age 5, Wroblewski has participated in Camp Fire USA programs, including this past summer when she served as assistant camp director at Camp WoHeLo in Greenbelt, Md.

"I was very honored and shocked to receive this award," Wroblewski said. "I never think about the service that I do as work. I always think of it as a way to meet new people, make new friends and learn new things."

Not only has Wroblewski been honored as Camp Fire USA's National Youth of the Year, but in the past she received Camp Fire USA's highest honor, the WoHeLo Medallian.

"It is the equivalent to the Eagle Scout," Wroblewski said. "WoHeLo is the watchword of Camp Fire and it is the first two letters of Work, Health and Love. It is a word that I have always known and those are the three things that are important to a Camp Fire Kid in any activity that we do. The motto of Camp Fire USA is 'Give Service,' which I have taken to heart."

The childhood studies major certainly has taken the Camp Fire USA motto to heart as she has continued to become a leader at St. Bonaventure. She serves as a coordinator of the Bona Buddies Program, handling recruiting, training and assigning students to work with underprivileged children in the surrounding communities. She also joined St. Bonaventure's Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) leadership team. Wroblewski continues her commitment to leadership and service by also teaming up with Students for the Mountain to recruit students to journey to Mt. Irenaeus for weekend retreats.

"Anastasia has developed into an amazing young woman with great talent and abilities," said Mary Ruth Sherren, president of the Patuxent Area Council, which nominated Wroblewski for the National Youth of the Year award. "She has served well and we are very proud of her accomplishments."

Even after 15 years at Camp Fire USA, Wroblewski plans to continue her involvement with the camp. She eventually wants to open up a similar camp of her own to help more children learn as much as she did through such organizations.

By Bobby Gohn, '10

[Click here to return to the top of the page](#)

New textbook by St. Bonaventure professor reframes biblical studies

A St. Bonaventure University theology professor has authored a new textbook that offers a fresh approach to studying the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in university classrooms.

“The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach,” written by Dr. Christopher Stanley, analyzes the religion of ancient Israel using methods and insights derived from the comparative study of religion. The book employs cross-cultural examples and more than 350 full-color photos to illustrate the similarities and differences between the religion of the Hebrew Bible and other religious traditions.

Stanley cites his treatment of the biblical narratives as an example of his approach. “The people who preserved these stories were not simply trying to record the past; the stories that made it into the Bible were valued for their religious significance,” said Stanley. “In this sense the biblical narratives are a lot like stories in other religions. A comparative approach draws on cross-cultural observations about the role of stories in world religions to help students understand how stories work in the Hebrew Bible.”

Such a comparative approach uses a wide range of methods to shed light on the history and meaning of the Hebrew Bible. Pauline A. Viviano, associate professor of theology at Loyola University Chicago, notes how this approach benefits students.

“Drawing upon historical, anthropological, sociological, and literary studies to discuss Israel’s religious beliefs, practices, and writings,” Viviano states, “this textbook focuses on the close connection between a people’s history, culture, and religion, thus enabling students to understand how the beliefs of ancient Israel developed and were appropriated, used, and changed over time.”

Another aspect of the book that sets the book apart from others in the field is the author’s conscious effort to make the material accessible to contemporary college students.

“Textbooks in this area typically seek to introduce students to professional biblical scholarship as it relates to the Old Testament, which is fine for students who have a lot of biblical knowledge,” Stanley said. “But more and more students come into biblical courses at the undergraduate level with little or no knowledge of the Bible, and many have poor reading skills as well. I tried to address these problems by writing in clear, simple English and assuming no prior knowledge of the Bible.”

Stanley has used a number of the chapters of this book in his classes for years. The response from his students has been positive.

“My students consistently say that this book is much easier to read and makes more sense than the textbooks that they encounter in other classes,” Stanley said.

“The Hebrew Bible: A Comparative Approach” is published by Fortress Press, one of the largest publishers of academic books on biblical studies. For more information, contact Stanley at (716) 375-2454, cstanley@sbu.edu, or visit the book’s companion Web site at <http://fortresspress.com/stanley>.

[Click here to return to the top of the page](#)

Newsmakers

Fr. Xavier Seubert, O.F.M., director of the visual arts program, will be giving a lecture at The Cloisters of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009. The title of his talk is "The Mary-Eve Parallel in Medieval Art."

[Click here to return to the top of the page](#)
