

**THE SFAAS NEWSREEL**  
**Number 28 / July & August 2024**

Believe it or not – the Fall Semester has started! We may be in the dog days of summer, but school, sorority rush, and football must go on.

In this issue, we recognize a couple summer graduates and welcome several new students.

During the Fall semester, we plan on completing several improvements to our facilities in Greensboro, on Dauphin Island, and in Swingle Hall. More about these projects in future *Newsreels*.

Joe Tomasso  
Professor & Director (and *Newsreel* editor!)

You can find past *Newsreels* at

<https://agriculture.auburn.edu/research/faas/newsletters/>





## NEW MS GRADUATE

**Daniel Gragson** recently defended his thesis. Carol Johnston served as his major professor. Mary Mendonca and Jim Stoeckel served as his committee members.

His thesis topic was the effect of Roundup on the release of reproductive hormones in the rough shiner.

Daniel has accepted the position of Outreach Coordinator for ACES – Water Resources.





## NEW MS GRADUATE

**Luke Matvey** recently defended his thesis. Andrea Tarnecki served as his major professor. Tim Bruce and Amit Morey served as his committee members.

His thesis topic was seabird mitigation and the prevalence of *Campylobacter* at oyster farms in the northern Gulf of Mexico

After graduation, Luke plans to enter our PhD program and use his thesis work as a basis for a dissertation project.





## NEW PhD STUDENT

**Xiangcheng Kong** will soon join Alan Wilson's lab.

He is from Jiangsu Province, China and holds a BS in Environmental Engineering and a MS in Environmental Science, both from Nanjing Normal University.



## **NEW PhD STUDENT**

**Elizabeth Strasko** will soon join Nathan Whelan's lab. Her dissertation topic will be the conservation genetics of molluscs.

She is from Collierville, Tennessee and holds a BA in Biology from Asbury University and a MSc in Biology from Western Kentucky University.

Elizabeth's career goal is to work in the field of conservation genetics.



## NEW PhD STUDENT

**Alicia Krause** will soon join Nathan Whelan's lab. Her dissertation topic will be in the general area of conservation of freshwater species.

She is from La Crosse, Wisconsin and holds a BS in Biology from the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay and a MS in Natural Resources from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point.

Alicia's career goal is to direct a conservation genetics lab.



## **NEW MS STUDENT**

**Blake Rummage** will soon join Shannon Brewer's lab.

He is from Columbia, Tennessee and holds a BS from the University of Tennessee at Martin.

His thesis project will be the evaluation of three management strategies for largemouth bass in small impoundments.

Blake's career goal is to be a state fisheries biologist.



## **NEW MS STUDENT**

**Lisa Fermin** will soon join Shannon Brewer's lab. For her thesis research she will monitor the presence of silver carp in the Tenn-Tom Waterway.

She is from Lawrenceville, Georgia and holds a BS in Environmental Science from Georgia Gwinnett College.

Lisa's career goal is to work for a state or federal natural resource agency.





## NEW MS STUDENT

**Olivia Houpt** will soon join the labs of Rusty Wright and Dennis DeVries. Her thesis topic will be the ecophysiology of nongame riverine fishes.

She is from Marion, Ohio and holds a BS in Evolution, Ecology & Organismal Biology from The Ohio State University.

Olivia's goal is to earn a PhD and have a career in academia focusing on sustainable management of fish populations.



## NEW MS STUDENT

**Brittany Barker-Jones** will soon join Jim Stoeckel's lab. Her thesis topic will be the stress response in federally listed mussel species.

She is from Greensboro NC and holds a BS in biology from the University of North Carolina – Asheville.

Brittany is currently a biologist for the USFWS and is the recovery lead for several mussel species. She hopes her studies at Auburn will help with her conservation efforts.



## **NEW MS STUDENT**

**Sydney Staines** will soon join Tim Bruce's lab. Her thesis topic is not yet well defined but will be in the general area of catfish health.

She is from Murfreesboro TN and holds a BS in marine science from the University of South Carolina.

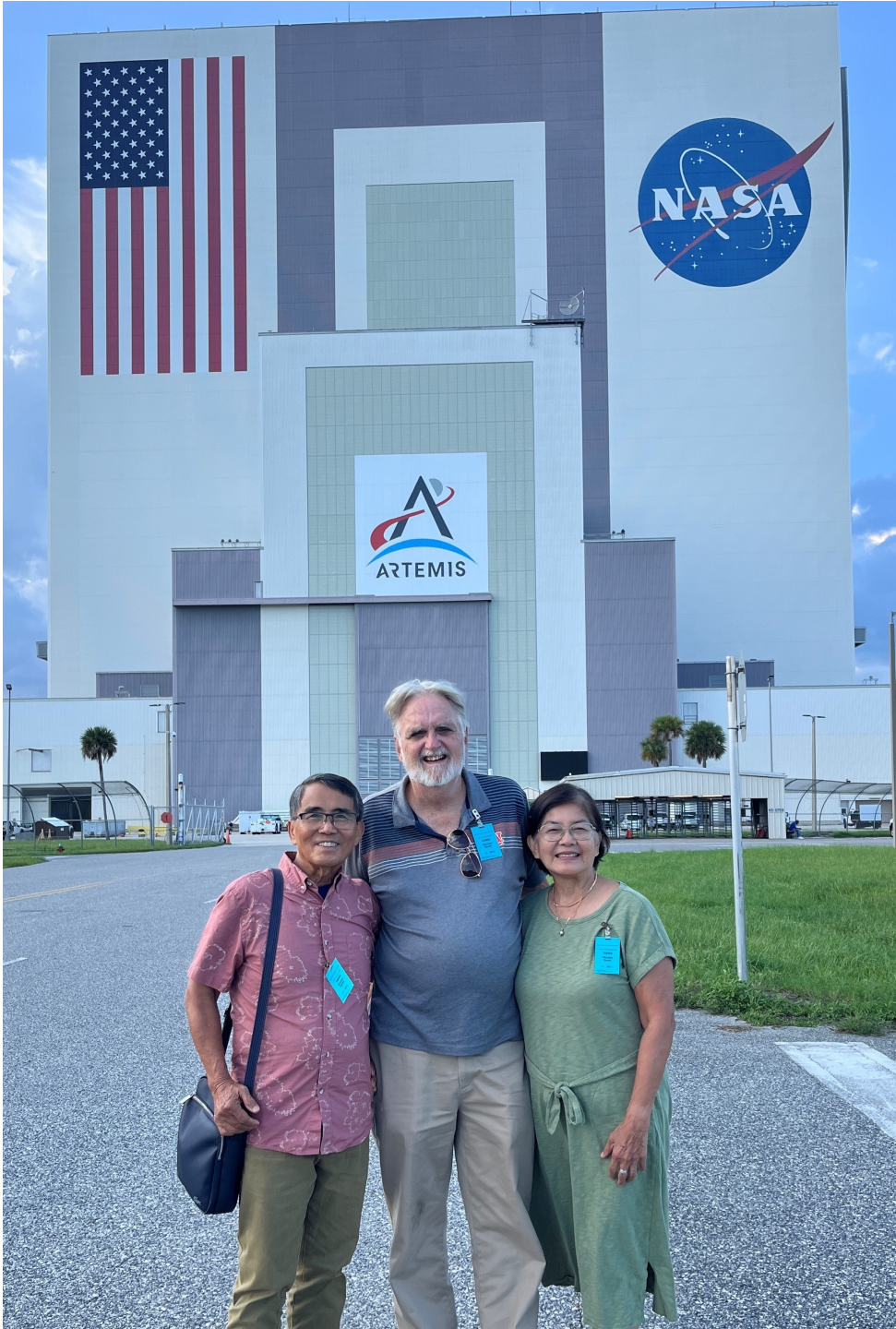
Sydney's career goal is to be a biologist for NOAA.



## **NEW STAFF MEMBER**

**Anna Mollica** will soon join Alan Wilson's lab as a Research Assistant I.

She is from Birmingham and holds a BS from Auburn in Marine Biology.




## ALUMNI UPDATE

Three retired PhDs from our program, Fred Santiago (left), Kevin Hopkins (center), and Cora Santiago (right), visited the Kennedy Space Center recently.

Fred and Cora's daughter heads the NASA safety office.

## VISITORS



**Bhola Ram Pradham (second from left) and his family dropped by Swingle recently. Bhola took his MS from our program in 1977. His thesis was on the natural history of bowfin in West Point Reservoir.**



## **NEW TIGER**

**Tracy Qin** wishes to announce that she recently had a baby girl – Hannah.

Tracy took her PhD from our program in 2019, working in Rex Dunham's lab. After leaving here she worked as a postdoc at Harvard University and is now in a postdoc position at Stanford.