

The River's Edge

June 2, 2010

Volume 8, Issue 8



Inside this issue:

<i>Fire Science I Class</i>	2
<i>Serendipity (Cont'd)</i>	2
<i>New Employee</i>	2
<i>McCord (Cont'd)</i>	3
<i>Koons Earns Master's</i>	3
<i>Foundation Scholarships</i>	3
<i>Distinction Scholarships</i>	3
<i>Campus Commentary</i>	4

Academic VP to Retire after 31 Years at BRTC

Faculty, staff, family and friends of Jack McCord, Academic Vice President at Black River Technical College, honored the longtime educator at a retirement reception Thursday, May 27, held in the Randolph County Development Center. McCord joined the staff of the college in 1979 as Assistant Director/Student Affairs of then Black River Vo-Tech School. He assumed his current position in 1991, when the institution became a two-year college.

At that time, students could receive a diploma in nine different academic areas. Today, the college has grown to more than 2200 students. Offerings include the Associate of Arts (college basics) degree; Associate of Applied Science degrees in 13 academic areas; Technical Certificates (one-year degrees) in 16 academic areas; and Cer-

tificates of Proficiency (one-semester degrees) in eight academic areas.

When McCord came on board, the institution had 27 employees; currently 152 full-time faculty and staff members work at BRTC.

BRTC President Richard Gaines lauded the service of McCord, saying he counted him not just a colleague but also a friend. In addition to Gaines, several others shared humorous and poignant memories of McCord during the presentation. These included VP for Finance Loretta Williams, VP for Development Dr. Jan Ziegler; and Division Chairs Dr. Roger Johnson and Angie Caldwell



VP for Academics, Jack McCord, accepts a retirement gift from VP for Finance, Loretta Williams.

who presented McCord a gift from the faculty and staff; and former BRTC Counselor Jim Ulmer.

McCord spoke fondly of his years at the college to the large number of guests present. "It's been a good

(Continued on page 3)

Important Dates

June 9

PTK Blood Drive

June 14-17

Kids' College

July 6

Summer Session II Begins

July 20 –August 14

Fall Registration for First Time and Transfer Students

August 23

Fall Semester Begins

Serendipity Discusses *Shanghai Girls*, Immigration

The final Serendipity meeting for the year included readings and discussions of the novel *Shanghai Girls* by Lisa See during the group's banquet held May 27 on the BRTC campus. Serendipity is an organization to promote life-long learning for older adults through readings, video, music, and travel. It is sponsored by BRTC's Department of Continuing Education and the Office of Development.

The theme for the year was "Global Cities: Rhythms of the Soul, Reflections of the Self." Readings and discussion focused on international cities and the "push-pull" attraction cities hold for individuals seeking a better life. Last



From Left: Kathryn Dust, her daughter, Kathy, and Kay McDonald share a laugh during the Serendipity Banquet held last week.

week's discussion centered on the immigration experience of Asians, and the ways their migration differs from that of Europeans who have emigrated

to the United States.

Earlier this year several members of the group traveled to Little Rock to see the Pharaoh exhibit at the Arkansas Arts Center. Other excursions have included a trip to St. Genevieve, Missouri, the Clinton Presidential Museum, and the River Market in Little Rock.

Serendipity typically includes a monthly lunch meeting, with special holiday or other events scheduled as possible. "Reading the material is always optional," according to Dr. Jan Ziegler, who plans the program. "The topics are always universal in nature, so that everyone

(Continued on page 2)

Fire Science I Class Makes Strong Impression on Instructor

With the ending of every semester, there are always several students who make impressions on faculty members. For Fire Science Instructor/

Coordinator K.D. Mullins, it didn't stop at one or two students; it was an entire class, Fire Fighter I.

"These students have done just a wonderful job in my class," Mullins said.

With 18 students in the class, this is one of the largest class enrollments this department has seen. But it's more than just a class; it's a unit, a family.

"Many of us have worked at fire departments and that's what it is, a family. You have to be able to trust the people you're with," Heath Haywood, student, said.

Haywood demonstrated that family feeling by providing food during the burn exercises the students participated in during the semester for training.

This training includes knowing how to work inside burning buildings and diffuse other burn areas such as a gas leak and a burning car.

When it comes to learning, it

doesn't stop once the instructor stops speaking. "We older students learn from the younger students as they learn from us," Student Joey McDowell said. "This class doesn't belittle each other either. But one thing to know is if you want to be by yourself, then you're not going to make it in this profession."

"I'm brand new to fire science," Student, Erick Free said. "I came in here knowing not a thing about being a firefighter. In here I'm with an experienced class and instructors. I've formed bonds with people here."

"We depend on one another. We've got each other's backs," Student, Ashley (Jo) Alphin said. In spite of being the only female in this class, she added that she feels part of the "brotherhood" that is not only in this class

but the profession as well. "It goes beyond just schooling here," she added.

"You walk into this with an attitude of self-sacrifice. It's what draws us together," Student Matt Lane said.

But it's more than just determination and sacrifice that drives not only these students but the profession as a whole. "What's encouraging is also our instructors. They're experienced in this field," Student Wes Davis said. Instructors for the

Fall semester included K.D. Mullins and Jonesboro Fire Marshal Jason Wills.

Student Danny Janes added, "From day one, Mr.

Mullins has been here for us. He said he was going to teach us what we needed to know to be good firefighters."

As student James Shields said, "We have some (students) with experience and some who don't have experience, but everybody has come together. It's unique."

With the exception of a couple of students, the Fall semester Firefighter I class is on the two-year degree track for the Associate of Applied Science in Fire Science degree. Students for the Firefighter II class also participated in many of the activities and events that the Firefighter I class did this semester.

For more information about the program, contact the Fire Science Department at 870-886-5750 or e-mail Renee.Davis@blackrivertech.org.



The Fire Science I class, shown in firefighter training exercises and (above) with the fire truck, included Ashley (Jo) Alphin, Aaron Burke, Matthew Carpenter, Wesley Davis, Preston Doshier, Christopher Ellis, Erick Free, Gregory Laramy, Heath Haywood, Terry Holland, Danny Janes, Seth Johnson, Devin Koch, Matthew Lane, Matthew Mask, Joey McDowell, Joel Schnick, and James Shields. Also pictured is Fire Science Instructor K.D. Mullins.

Serendipity

(Cont'd from page 1)

generally has an opinion and can relate to the discussion. It is perfectly okay for people to choose to read the stories or not."

"We are always open to suggestions from members as to activities or trips," said Continuing Ed Director Patti Blaxton. "We have 37 members currently, and we will soon be announcing our plans for next year, which will begin in September. Serendipity is a great way to keep your mind active and to

meet new friends and do some fun things."

The fee for Serendipity membership is designed to cover the cost of meals. Transportation costs for trips are covered by the institution, with each person paying for his/her own lodging and meals on trips. For more information, or to be placed on a mailing list for Serendipity updates, contact the Office of Continuing Ed at 870-248-4180.

Benton Joins Staff



Pamela Benton

Pamela Benton of Pocahontas has joined the BRTC staff as Administrative Specialist I in Student Services. Prior to joining BRTC, she worked for PrecisionAg Services and Pocahontas Family Medical Center. She previously worked at First Community Bank (now iBERI-ABANK) for ten years. She plans to complete her Business degree at BRTC.

Additional Academic Distinction Scholarships Awarded

Black River Technical College has awarded additional Academic Distinction Scholarships for the Fall 2010 semester.

The scholarship provides full tuition renewable up to four semesters provided the recipient successfully completes a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester and maintains a cumulative GPA of 3.00 for the first two semesters and 3.25 for the remaining two semesters.

Lauren McQuay of Pocahontas is planning to major in Nursing. She is the daughter of Randy and Terri McQuay.

Garrett Thomason of Pocahontas is the son of Darrin and Roseann Thomason. He plans to major in Criminology.

Ariel Housmann of Hardy plans to pursue a degree in Nursing. She is the daughter of Debbie Housmann and Robert Housmann.

Brandon Clay is the son of Charles and Pamela Clay of Caraway. He plans to seek a degree in Criminal Justice.

Steven Martin of Success plans to major in Industrial Electricity/Electronics. He is the son of David and Debbie Martin.

Brent Taylor is the son of Darrell Taylor, Terri Taylor, and Malissa Reed. A resident of Pocahontas, Taylor plans to major in business while at BRTC.

Allison Harris, not pictured, plans to major in Early Childhood Education. She is the daughter of Anthony and Rhonda Harris of Lynn.



Lauren McQuay



Garrett Thomason



Brent Taylor



Brandon Clay



Ariel Housmann



Steven Martin

Foundation Awards Additional Scholarships for Fall



Brittany Niswonger



Ashley Stallings



Alyssa McConnell

The BRTC Foundation has awarded additional scholarships for the Fall 2010 semester.

Brittany Niswonger of Lynn is the recipient for the iBERIABANK Scholar-

ship. This scholarship awards \$250 per semester and is awarded for two semesters provided the recipient maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5 and is enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours.

Ashley Stallings of Black Rock is the recipient of the Eddie Mae Herron Scholarship. This scholarship awards \$250 per semester and is awarded for two semesters provided the recipient maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5 and is pursuing a certificate or associate degree at BRTC.

Alyssa McConnell of Hoxie is the recipient of the Lee & Samantha Rice Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship awards full tuition for two semesters provided the recipient is a first-time entering freshman and maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5.

Shelby Borst, not pictured, has been awarded the BRTC Foundation Scholarship for General Education. This scholarship is in the amount of \$1000 per semester for two semesters provided the recipient maintains a cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

McCord

(Cont'd from page 1)

place to work, a good place to retire from," he said. "I'll miss it."

In addition to his years at BRTC, McCord worked in public education for ten years, serving as Vo-Ag instructor at Pocahontas High School, for a total of 41+ years in public education. He will retire July 1. McCord plans to spend time in golfing and other sporting activities, and to enjoy his family, including his three grandchildren. He and his wife, Kay, also plan to begin construction of their new home near Rolling Hills Country Club later this summer.

Koons Earns Master's Degree

Rachel Koons, Academic Advisor at BRTC, recently earned a Master of Arts in Sociology with a Minor in Criminal Justice from New Mexico State University. She also holds an Associate of Arts degree in General Education from BRTC and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Williams Baptist College.

Koons has been with BRTC since July, 2007, where she also serves as an adjunct instructor. She resides in Stokes.



Rachel Koons

Scholarship Deadlines

For Fall 2010 Semester

- Wal-Mart/BRTC Scholarship - July 15
- Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship - August 27

For more information, contact Financial Aid at 870-248-4019.

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Mission Statement

Black River Technical College is an institution of higher learning committed to a partnership with the individual and the global community to provide lifelong learning experiences, seeking always to empower those it serves to achieve their academic, vocational, and personal development goals.

On-Line River's Edge Address:

http://www.blackrivertech.org/rivers_edge/

Campus Commentary



Steve Shults
LETA Director

The highways were crowded with freshly washed patrol cars, all heading in the same direction with several officers in each car. Larger agencies traveled in convoys of like designed vehicles, lights on, with a purpose. People stood on the side of the roadway with somber stares. Flags flying half staff and signs expressing similar messages. As the destination grew closer, the scene intensified. Motorcycle convoys, helicopters, crowded sidewalks, specially designed observation towers with darkened windows, and fire trucks with substantially strong ladders fully extended toward heaven to form an arch for the purpose of supporting

an American flag which was waving in the unsettled breezes. All were symbolic of the day.

Thousands of police officers in their dress uniforms were present with gleaming shoes and boots reflecting images vividly though the skies were grey. Many wore white gloves. Laughter and tall tales would have been the norm in such a crowd, but noticeably absent on that day. So many faces were unfamiliar, but curiously all were family with a strong bond and totally united.

Inside were wreaths of white flowers in the shape of a badge with a blue sash angled across. The unique sounds of the drums and pipes were reverberating as the group marched around the floor of the auditorium in their characteristic attire. The prancing, side-stepping drummer was drumming with much flair, yet played softly. The guard was repeatedly exchanged at the side of the casket as officers marched in and out often. The color guard carried their flags and rifles with each step measured. The hand salutes were performed at a much slower pace than usual. A perfectly well-groomed black lab on his best behavior was positioned next to his former master throughout the ceremony. Strong men with moist faces were in abundance. The blast of gunfire shook the crowd, and finally scratchy radio traffic could be heard giving the final call. A Police Chief without an officer and son; another family with-

out a father and friend; two services in one day, all because of one sudden and unexplained act of evil.

It was a day that no one in law enforcement likes to experience. It is a reality that every law enforcement officer must face. It is the kind of day that fills your thoughts with reminders - reminders of things which are of greatest importance. More than once, speakers at the ceremony emphasized that God, family and job is the proper progression of importance. There were reminders of how often law enforcement officers are the target of disdain, often as a result of doing their job. A lot is asked of these young men and women who choose a career as an enforcer of the law and protector of the peace. We pay them so little for such a huge sacrifice. We expect so much of them when they have to make a life and death decision in milliseconds.

A day such as the one experienced in West Memphis, Arkansas, May 20, 2010, is also a reminder of how important training is. There were several heroes on that day. Two gave their lives in service to their city. Two others were wounded. A fifth officer risked his life to put a stop to the violent killings and escaped unharmed. It is important to look at events such as this to determine any and every step that could be taken to avoid a repeat occurrence. Training points of the West Memphis incident have already been reviewed and will be made available to future officers.

The staff at BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy is charged with the huge responsibility of training new officers. The basic 13-week course includes everything from report writing to defensive tactics skills. Technology has become an important part of police training. The firearms training system offers the ability to encounter life and death situations in a realistic setting by using weapons with Bluetooth technology. Electronic driving simulators will soon be added to enhance observational and decision-making skills while driving. Simulation weapons that fire nonlethal projectiles are used in felony vehicle stops to make the encounters as realistic as possible. From physical fitness to criminal law, each subject is vital to enhance the career of the officer. It is the *mission* of the Law Enforcement Training Academy to provide new officers with all skills necessary to perform their job ethically, efficiently and safely. And the *goal* is to insure that the officer makes that trip home each and every day to be with his family. How much training is enough? The answer is... all you can get. Avoiding days such as the one on May 20 is a victory.