



The River's Edge

Inside this issue:

Nursing is 'Family Affair' for WR Trio 2

WWII Exhibit to Highlight Open House 2

Single Parent Scholarship Deadline Near 3

"Can You Hear Me Now?" 3

Senator Speaks to Government Class 3

Clevenger (Cont'd from Page 1) 3

From the President's Desk 4

Enrollment (Cont'd from Page 1) 4

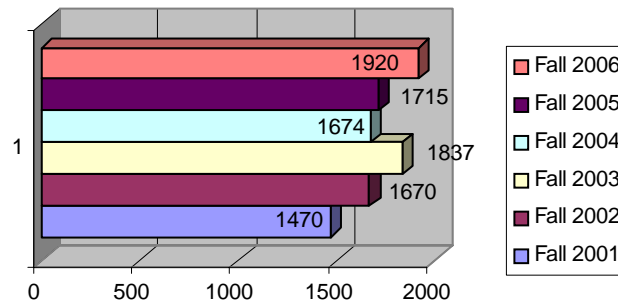
Fall Enrollment Breaks All Records

The Fall 2006 enrollment for BRTC is a record-breaking 1920 students, according to data released this week by the Office of Student Services. Dr. Mike Sullens, Vice President for Student Services, said the 11th day figure, which colleges submit to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, is higher than Fall 2005 enrollment by about 12 percent, and higher than Spring 2006 number by six percent.

approximately 35 percent; followed by Lawrence County, 18 percent; Greene County 19 percent; Clay

Other data released show that just over 56 percent of the students are enrolled full-time, and that almost 62 percent of the students are female.

Fall Enrollment 2001-2006



"Obviously, we are very pleased with these numbers," said BRTC President Richard Gaines. "We have enjoyed steady growth, and that is a good signal for the

future economic health of our communities."

(Continued on page 4)

Important Dates

- September 15**
Foundation Board Meeting
- September 21 - October 8**
Sesquicentennial
- September 28**
BRTC Open House
- October 8 - 9**
Trustee Conference in Little Rock
- October 14**
FCB/BRTC Foundation Annual Golf Tournament
- October 15 - 17**
AATYC Hot Springs
- November 6**
PN Meet and Greet
- November 17**
LETA Graduation

BRTC's Bert Clevenger Turns Guitar Hobby Into Business



Bert and Debbie Clevenger showing "the best guitar" he has built so far.

A passion for playing guitars has developed into a passion for building them for Bert Clevenger, Computer Networking instructor at Black River

Technical College. Although he has been refurbishing guitars for nearly 25 years, Clevenger actually began building his own custom guitars from scratch a year ago.

"Although I do love to play," said Clevenger, "I've discovered that my real talent is in the building." After many experiments, he completed his first custom-built guitar last September, laminated with photos of another passion...cigars. "I picked cigars for the guitar because it represents my two vices in one object. I love cigars and guitars."

Clevenger pointed out that during the past year he's probably made fifteen guitars that survived his rigorous "quality control" standards, and there are about fifteen more that did not survive and will never be finished.

According to Clevenger, the best guitar he has built so far is a piece he made this summer of two-inch thick African Mahogany with a clear lacquer finish that accentuates the natural wood grain. "That's one of the best I've built," he says of the piece

(Continued on page 3)

Nursing is 'Family Affair' for WR Trio



Three family members, daughter Lindsey, Dad Greg (standing), and Mom Linda are all students at BRTC, pursuing careers in nursing. Greg and Linda Bunn entered college as dislocated workers when their factory jobs disappeared.

His wife and daughter look to Greg Bunn as “an inspiration,” a dislocated worker who has worked hard to achieve his goal, motivated by a determination to build a better future with a rewarding job that will never “go away.” That better future is in the field of nursing, and it is the career choice not only of Greg, but also of his wife, Linda, and daughter, Lindsey. All three members of this Walnut Ridge family are currently pursuing eventual degrees in nursing through their course work at BRTC.

Greg downplays his influence, saying it's more likely that his wife and daughter “just figured if I could do it, anybody could do it.” At this point, Greg says, he is hoping he *can*, in fact, go the final step: completing his RN degree in December, and then passing the state board exam for RNs.

Linda Bunn, who is also a former dislocated worker, understands her husband's anxieties, but has confidence in his tenacity.

His last day of work at Dana Corporation in Jonesboro, where he had worked for nine years, was on Sunday, May 11, 2003. He finished his twelve-hour shift, and then started classes the very next day at BRTC. “I had actually wanted to go into radiology,” Greg Bunn said, “but Dr. (Kevin) Diamond of Walnut Ridge said, ‘What about nursing?’”

Once he considered the many employment

options nursing offered, he decided this was the way to go. “I looked at this as my last chance,” he said. “I was about forty, and I knew I wanted a job that would always be there, and I decided to give it everything I had.”

Greg's efforts were rewarded when, in May 2005, he completed his PN degree, and then passed his state boards. That spring was particularly bittersweet for the Bunn family, though: Greg's college graduation mirrored that of daughter Lindsey who graduated from Walnut Ridge High School, but both events were tempered by Linda's loss of her job of 24 years at Skil-Bosch when that industry continued its workforce reduction.

She, like Greg, could have likely found work in Jonesboro, but did not want to re-enter the workforce in another job that might disappear.

“I had heard him (Greg) talking about nursing—he always talked about how rewarding it was—and so I just followed in his footsteps,” said Linda Bunn, who is enrolled in the Practical Nursing class at BRTC. Going to college can be “intimidating,” according to Linda, particularly the fast-paced summer classes in which she enrolled just three weeks after her job ended. “I have test anxiety,” she confessed. “People say ‘I can't go back to school at my age,’ but I believe you just have to be driven, to really want to do it.”

Being able to study together with daughter Lindsey, who is enrolled in Gen Ed classes at BRTC, was also encouraging. Lindsey provided some coaching for her mother in Algebra, and the

two actually helped each other study in History and Human Anatomy and Physiology classes.

Lindsey actually knew before either of her parents she would one day work in the field of medicine. Right now, she plans to complete college basics at BRTC and then transfer to a university for her BSN degree. She then plans to study to become either a Nurse Anesthetist or Nurse Practitioner. “I think I might want to work in pediatrics at Arkansas Children's Hospital,” she said.

Even though her interest pre-dates her parents' entry into the study of nursing, Lindsey is quick to acknowledge their accomplishments. “I'm proud of them. My dad put his whole heart into this. He'd worked in a factory most of his life,” she noted. But once he set out on a new path, she added, “he'd have his books and papers scattered out all over the kitchen table, or all over his bed, and he'd tell us, ‘Leave me alone—I've got to study.’”

Greg is currently employed at Lawrence Memorial Hospital, and hopes to continue working there after he completes his RN degree. But he hopes also for experience working in an ICU. He and Linda may even consider travel nursing—maybe in Alaska. But that's after Lindsey and their son, Logan, a ninth-grader at WRHS, are both out and on their own.

In the meantime, he is more than content with his career choice. “I love it,” Greg Bunn says without reservation. “I know most of the people [at LMH] I'm seeing and helping. I just wish I had done this a long, long time ago.”

WWII Exhibit to Highlight Open House

Julie Hendrix of the BRTC Bookstore is pictured with several artifacts telling of the World War II experience of several Randolph County residents. The artifacts will be featured in a display window of the Bookstore as a part of BRTC's Open House on September 28, in conjunction with the Pocahontas Sesquicentennial Celebration.

Complimentary gifts will be given to those who visit the Bookstore during the Open House event, and members of the BRTC Kimbrough Choir will perform special WWII-era music selections at 10 a.m. and 12 noon. The public as well as BRTC students and staff are invited to enjoy refreshments and to visit the campus, and to view the exhibit and visit the Bookstore during this special event.

Shown here are items belonging to Ruth Tyer, who served as a WAVE during the second world war.



Single Parent Scholarship Deadline Near

The deadline for applications for the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship for the Fall 2006 semester is Friday, September 15, according to Brandi Chester, Financial Aid officer at BRTC. The scholarships providing up to \$500 are available to single parent residents of Randolph County pursuing higher education. Applicants must have custody of children and meet certain income guidelines.

Applications are available online

(www.blackrivertech.org) and in the office of Financial Aid at BRTC, as well as at Camera Corner Studios in Pocahontas.

The Mary Sallee SPS chapter affiliate was established in the early 1990s, and has provided approximately 160 awards totaling over \$63,000 to date. It carries the name of longtime Pocahontas educator, former Home Economics teacher Mary Sallee. Funding support for

this vital scholarship program comes from payroll deductions by BRTC faculty and staff and other staff-sponsored funding events, as well as competitive grants from the Entergy Charitable Foundation. Additionally, the BRTC Foundation provides funding support, along with residents of the community who make contributions.

Students must apply to the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship

affiliate chapter in their county of residence. Those living outside of Randolph County may find more information on county affiliates by checking the Arkansas Single Parent Foundation website at www.arkansascholarshipconnection.org. For additional information or to make a contribution, which is matched by the state organization, contact Vickie French, 870-248-4070.

“Can You Hear Me Now?”



Eddie Schmeckenbecher

“Can You Hear Me Now?” was the topic of an entertaining and informative presentation by Eddie Schmeckenbecher at the Fall In-service meeting for BRTC faculty August 14. Schmeckenbecher, a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor at the state Rehabilitation Services Learning and Evaluation Center in Little Rock, spoke about issues and strategies in assisting members of the deaf community.

Clevenger

Continued from Page 1

he has for sale. “It sounds great whether you play country, blues or metal.”

Hand-selecting the wood is the first process of building a custom instrument, Clevenger explained. He works with several suppliers of both exotic and domestic lumber, but he really loves to use the exotic woods. In addition to the African Mahogany, Clevenger works with African Sapele, Maple, Sycamore, Quilted Maple, Flamed Maple, Poplar, Basswood and Ash. He has several styles and actually created the tools he uses to make them. No two instruments are the same and each instrument is



“Cigar Guitar”

custom-crafted from start to finish.

“We work closely with our friends to accommodate their own design specifications and preferences,” he added.

At this time, building guitars is just a creative outlet for Clevenger.

“It’s just a hobby...a labor of love,” he said. “I’m not in this for the income, but rather for the passion of it. There is no feeling like it,” he continues, “when looking at the finished product and being able to say ‘I made that.’”

The small, artisan shop where Clevenger

Custom Guitars are produced is located in the garage of the

Senator Speaks to Government Class

State Senator Jim Holt of Springdale was on the BRTC campus Thursday speaking to students in Dr. Jason Morrison’s U.S. Government class. According to Morrison, Holt was explaining the structure and operations of Arkansas State Government. A candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Holt also shared with the students many interesting facts and statistics about Arkansas and how the state compares in relation to other states.



Senator Jim Holt

**Constitution Day Celebration
Thursday, September 14
at 9:45 a.m. in the Student Lounge.**

Clevenger home in Corning. Clevenger is quick to note that “we” build the guitars, referring to the labor by his wife Debbie in the creative process of making the guitars. “My wife is an important part of the operation,” he proudly stated. “With her sense of style and impeccable choice of colors, her many contributions to the operation are invaluable.” In addition to assisting her husband with the production of guitars, Debbie Clevenger teaches special education at Corning High

School and is working to complete her specialist degree in Education Administration.

More of Clevenger’s work can be seen on the website www.clevenger-guitars.com, which he also created.

In addition to networking, Clevenger teaches PC Repair, Small Business Management, and related courses at BRTC. He first became associated with the college in 1992 when he worked for the Department of Workforce Education doing industry training.

Black River Technical College

P.O. Box 468
1410 Hwy 304 East
Pocahontas, AR 72455

P.O. Box 1565
2402 North 12th Avenue
Paragould, AR 72450

Phone: 870-248-4000
Fax: 870-248-4100
Website: www.blackrivertech.org

Phone: 870-239-0969
Fax: 870-239-2050

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.

The River's Edge is produced by the Office of Development.

janz@blackrivertech.org
annf@blackrivertech.org
dina.hufstедler@blackrivertech.org



On-line Application address:

<http://connect.blackrivertech.org/nappadm.html>

From the President's Desk



Richard Gaines

BRTC's new record fall enrollment is good news for us here at the college, and good news for the communities we serve. The fact that we are still growing, fifteen years after becoming a two-year college, is evidence that BRTC is still a dynamic organization, changing and maturing to meet the changing needs and demands of our student base. It is evidence also, it seems to me, of an environment where there is a growing awareness of the vital need for higher education in both the technical and college transfer programs.

As a community college, we serve students who have choices. They can, first of all, choose to attend or not. We have worked hard to help educate the public about the benefits, economic and otherwise, of higher education and of completing a degree.

Our students can increasingly choose not only *if* but also *where* they will pursue that degree or complete coursework or learn technical skills. They can choose from several regional institutions, and they can choose from the many online study options that exist today. The fact that an increasing number of people are choosing BRTC is especially gratifying, and speaks well, it seems to me, of the hard work of the employees, full-time and part-time. We see our job as not only providing the programs of study, but also of helping to remove the barriers or obstacles that would prevent the pursuit of higher education. I congratulate the staff on a job well done.

Enrollment

Continued from Page 1

A five-year average of the fall enrollments stands at 1763. The 2006 figure is almost nine percent higher than that five-year average. The previous high enrollment was in Fall 2003, when the number stood at 1837.

"We have worked hard to provide the programs, the personnel, the classes, and the support services needed by students, and we have worked to get out the message that BRTC is a good choice," Gaines said. "We're very pleased to see these results."

Counties of Residence Fall 2006 Enrollment

