

October 6, 2003

Volume 1, Issue 2



Inside this issue:

Tragedy Erases Innocence 2
John Deere Seminar 2
AATYC Honors Announced 3
New Staff 3
Students Visit Eddie Mae Herron Center 3
From the President's Desk 4
Continuing Ed Provides Computer Class 4

Important Dates

- October 10
 - BRTC Foundation Meeting
- October 12-14
 - AATYC-Conference
- October 20
 - Chamber of Commerce Banquet
- October 13-17
 - Mid Semester Exams
- October 13
 - ACT Testing
- November 21
 - Law Enforcement Graduation
- December 11-16
 - Final Exams
- December 18
 - BRTC Graduation



The tenth annual First Community Bank/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament drew a record number of participants and generated a record amount of proceeds this year, breaking records in spite of less than perfect weather. Played at Rolling Hills Country Club, the event attracted a total of 74 teams in the morning and afternoon slates. This year's tournament also broke new ground in that the event was co-sponsored by First Community Bank, whose \$10,000 donation will help make it possible for the Foundation to fund nearly twice the amount of scholarships from the tournament proceeds, according to tournament coordinator Jim Ulmer, Director of Admissions at BRTC.

"The support from the entire community, especially from First Community Bank, has been tremendous," Ulmer said. "When I helped organize the first tournament ten years ago, it was my goal then that the event do exactly what is now doing, and that is to help more students afford college tuition." Ulmer also expressed special acknowledgement to Baltz Chevrolet Olds for their sponsorship of a new pickup grand prize for a hole-in-one, Ron Mangold for providing



First Community Bank / BRTC Foundation 10th Annual Golf Tournament

shots to golfers for a "fee," and retired BRTC instructor Dave Statler for cooking barbecue for the golfers. He noted that support of the tournament is quite widespread, drawing participants and sponsors from not only Randolph, but also Clay, Greene, Lawrence, Sharp, and Craighead Counties. Ulmer also expressed appreciation to the board of the Rolling Hills Country Club for the use of the facility.

BRTC Foundation Chair Scott Trammel and BRTC President Richard Gaines also recognized the generosity of the many business and individuals for their hole sponsorships, prizes, and other donations.

BRTC Foundation representatives projected that this year's event, which netted approximately \$18,000, will help to fund eight scholarships which will be awarded next spring to incoming students for the 2004 academic year.

Tournament organizers have announced the following winners: Championship Flight—Doc Teaster and Anthony Hausman, first place; Curt Johnson and David Bock, second; and Cade and Don Liebhaber, third.

Closest to the pin winners are Pink Baltz on # 2; Len Teaster on # 7; Ron Johnson on # 12; and Paul Carr on # 15.

Winners in the "A" Flight are Tom Bock and Jimmy Jackson, first place; A. J. Baltz, Jr., and Larry Weick, second; and Met McGowan and Will Broadway, third.



"B" Flight winners are Bob Dawson and Dr. Drew Dawson, first place; Gene Bloodworth and Paul Carr, second; and Jim and Sara Baltz, third.

Winners of the "C" Flight are Bill and Ruth Ann Vanlandingham, first place; Ron and Gayle Benson, second; and Chuck Haley and Darrel Fears, third.

"D" Flight winners are Bill Coats and Stan Moleski, Sr., first place; David and Phil Futrell, second; and Ricky Phillips and Keith McDonald, third place.



Tragedy Erases Innocence, but Student Finds New Strength

The anniversary date of March 24 is not so much a spark of remembrance for Holly Parks. The memories come rather from the warmth of the sun on her face, the brush of the wind, the look of the sky, or a certain smell in the air: when these elements align just so, exactly as they were that life-altering early spring day in 1998, that's when, in the words of the young woman, "you're right there again." "Right there" in this instance is at Westside Middle School on the day the nation listened with disbelief to the news of the tragic shootings at the school where Parks was then a thirteen-year-old seventh grader. And "right there" was where she and so many other young people witnessed the unthinkable—the senseless shooting deaths of four classmates and a teacher, and the wounding of another ten people by two of their fellow students.

Now a college freshman at BRTC, Parks still struggles with the memories and with what she describes as the loss of innocence of the students who huddled in chaos and fear in the gymnasium that day. In the five and one-half years since the shootings, Parks has moved at times deeply under the shadows of that day, suffering for a time from depression so severe, she candidly admits, she didn't care if she "lived or died." In the initial days

and weeks following the shootings, Parks and her fellow classmates participated in group counseling sessions. But eventually she began to experience nightmares and flashbacks. Parks explained that, "As the weeks passed, we stopped talking about incidents like this and began to 'get on' with our lives. But the nightmares and flashbacks never ceased, and since no one ever talked about them any more, I felt all alone in my torturing thoughts." Parks was tormented with the unanswered—why did her friend do this?—since Mitchell Johnson, one of the two convicted shooters, was a classmate and good friend of Parks. She struggled, too, with the anguish of watching as an injured classmate slowly and painfully recovered from her serious injuries, all the while wondering, "Why not me?"

She was eventually diagnosed by a psychiatrist as experiencing "survivor's guilt," but not before the 15-year-old found relief in cutting herself with a razor blade. Parks says she became a person "addicted" to



the release she felt with the "scarification," hating the pain she was causing her parents, but unable to control this need. In time, Parks would move beyond the anguish, finding some semblance of purpose and meaning through her involvement in an organization aptly named "S.O.S." The organization, "Save Our Society," had been established for those who, like she, had experienced the horrors of school shootings, and included students not only from Westside, but also from Conyers, Georgia, and Littleton, Colorado, site of the Columbine school shootings.

Through SOS, Parks had opportunity to talk, and talk she did. Overcoming her previously shy nature, she traveled to many public schools in other states where she met with other young people who had had similar experiences and who would be able to understand something of her struggle, as well as with those who had never experienced such trauma but were interested in hearing her story.

"It was like a whole new person

was growing inside of me," she said. "I quit dwelling on *why this thing happened* and started dwelling on *what I can do*. I can speak and talk about it. People want to know and I have this ability to speak, and maybe that's God's reason for me being here."

That's not to say, she is quick to add, that she is "over it." To the contrary, Parks insists, "people don't get over it. I wake up with this big cloud in my heart every day." Where Parks was formerly an avid hunter and a pretty good shot, she says she hasn't "picked up a gun since the shooting. If I looked through the sight," she says, "it would bring it all back." Even so, Holly Parks is a young woman who looks with hope to the future. She has plans to apply for BRTC's LPN program, and she keeps busy when not studying by working with her show cows and her horse. She is greatly looking forward to serving as a bridesmaid in the upcoming wedding of the friend whose physical wounds eventually healed.

"People may not understand it," she said, "but I wouldn't take anything in the world for the self-knowledge" resulting from that sunny March day. "I took it as an experience and it has made me *me*."

John Deere Dealers Seminar Hosted by Cont. Ed./Bus. Outreach

John Deere dealers from a wide region in Arkansas and Missouri attended a recent seminar, "Combine Solutions," hosted by the Continuing Education/Business Outreach Department of Black River Technical College. The seminar, held September 15-16 on the campus of BRTC, was facilitated by trainers David Lyons and Bill Bishop. Lyons is senior instructor at John Deere's Worldwide Agricultural Equipment Division at

the company's training center in Dallas. Assisting in setting up the seminar was Brad Flippo of Melton Brothers in Walnut Ridge. Those attending the seminar included seventeen on Monday, and 25 on Tuesday, from the following towns: New Madrid, Malden, Poplar Bluff, Dexter, Hayti, Kennett, Sikeston and Portageville, Missouri; and from Arkansas, Des Arc, Monette, Marvell, Little Rock, Corning, Helena, Blytheville, Paragould,

Joiner, Walnut Ridge, Hughes, Newport, Jonesboro, Wiener, Piggott, Pine Bluff and Wynne.



Sam's Club Membership Offered

Faculty and staff of BRTC will have opportunity to sign up for a "Sam's Club" membership card. A representative of the discount chain will be on campus Tuesday, October 7, to issue the cards for the new store opening soon in Jonesboro.

BRTC Student, Alumna, Faculty, and Staff to Be Honored at AATYC

The recipients of Arkansas' Academic All Star and Outstanding Alumni awards and the Outstanding Faculty and Staff members will be honored during the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges annual meeting October 12-14 in Hot Springs. This year's honorees from BRTC are student Manual L. Mooney of Walnut Ridge and alumna Paula Gardner of Hoxie. Also being honored are Outstanding Faculty Member Tina Harris, Dietetics, and Outstanding Staff Member, Steve Williams, Computer Services.

Harris and Williams will be recognized during an Awards dinner on Monday evening, October 13, while Mooney and Gardner will be honored during the AATYC Awards Brunch on October 14.



Mooney is nearing completion of an Associate of Applied Science degree in Business Administration. He is described by his instruc-

tors as "a mature, responsible, polite, hardworking, and organized worker" who often assumes a leadership role in the classroom, giving assistance to other students. In addition to excelling in his courses in his major field of study, Mooney has discovered while at BRTC a penchant for writing, and has been published in the BRTC creative arts journal, *Currents*.



Paula Gardner graduated from Marmaduke High School in 1978, but interrupted

her own college studies while husband Tim Gardner, Hoxie High School Principal, finished his undergraduate degree. She worked at various jobs, mostly as a cosmetologist, working "long days five days a week." But, Gardner said, "the dream of nursing never left." She combined her job with being a student, completing first BRTC's CRN class and then she entered the LPN program. "Things were hard some-

times, but by the grace of God, my family, and a lot of hard work, I finished in December of 2000. My instructors at Black River were excellent and gave me the knowledge and ability to expand my dream to become an RN."



Tina Harris of Pocahontas, who operates BRTC's cafeteria and teaches

in the Dietetics program, began her career in dietetics as a student at BRTC when her former employer, Brown Shoe Company, closed its doors. Prior to joining the faculty, Harris worked as a Registered Dietetics Technician for Beverly Enterprises in Jonesboro and Paragould. She was awarded an AAS degree in Dietetics in 1996, and is currently working on her Bachelor's degree in Dietetics. Her supervisor, Angie Caldwell, Division Chair for Technical Education, describes Harris' work ethic as "incredible." Not only does she oversee the preparation and serving of

breakfast and lunch for BRTC students, including those in residence in BRTC's Law Enforcement program but, according to Caldwell, "she does it with a smile." Harris believes she has the best of both worlds: working in food service and using her skills for teaching students.



Steve Williams of Jonesboro, Computer Specialist, is described as

the "first line of defense when faculty and staff have computer or software-related problems." Though his degree is a BS degree in Political Science, Williams is considered by his supervisor, Mike Greene, Director of Computer Services, to be "a thorough and conscientious worker who can be relied on to get the job done."

Though currently on active duty with the U.S. Army Reserve, MSGT Williams is scheduled to return to the BRTC campus next spring. "His presence is sorely missed," said Greene, "especially when the phone starts ringing."

BRTC Introduces New Staff



Joniece Trammel joins the staff of BRTC as the new Perkins Recruiter.

Her duties will focus on improving academic success, completion and retention in the technical programs, as well as working for continued growth of the technical programs through recruitment activities.

A native of Corning, Joniece graduated from ASU with a bachelor's degree in Music Education, majoring in piano and voice. She taught music in the Pocahontas Public School system for eight years and most recently served as head of the Human Resource Department at Tool Central in Pocahontas.



Dennis Cooper joins the faculty of BRTC in Paragould as Customized Training Coordinator. He

serves as an instructor of the safety training courses. After serving in the Air Force for 23 years, Dennis has worked for industry in the areas of Occupational Health and Safety, Quality Improvement, Leadership and Management, and Education.

He received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio, Texas, and earned associate degrees from the Community College of the Air Force in both Instructor Technology and Environmental Medicine.

Creative Writing Class Visits Eddie Mae Herron Center

Gary Buxton's Creative Writing class visited the Eddie Mae Herron Center on Friday, September 26, where they discussed the culture and heritage of the African Americans of the community and the role they

played during the period of segregation.

Students were able to share their own stories with the class and Mr. Buxton said he hopes the field trip will "bring out" stories from other students and inspire them during their writing assignments.

Mr. Buxton completed a research paper two years ago on Black Education in Randolph County and featured the former one-room school located

on Archer Street here in Pocahontas. Many BRTC affiliates have been involved in the research, historical collections and dedication of the Eddie Mae Herron Center.



Black River Technical College

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

Phone: 870-248-4000

Fax: 870-248-4100

Website: www.blackrivertech.org

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

janz@blackrivertech.org
annd@blackrivertech.org
dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org



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.

From the President's Desk



Without question, these are challenging times for community colleges, and for the entire education community, K-16 as it is commonly referenced today. Hardly a day passes that I don't hear of or read of another college, in Arkansas and around the country, struggling to balance declining state revenues and budget shortfalls with the need for increased services and expanding costs of providing educational oppor-

tunities to growing numbers of students. Many two-year colleges are actually capping enrollment in response to the funding crisis they face. We must always remember that the economic problems the colleges themselves face are reflected by and have impact on the economic pressures the students face.

That's why here at BRTC, we are very fortunate that the community is supportive of such efforts as the recent BRTC/First Community Bank Golf Tournament. This annual event provides much needed funding support to the BRTC Foundation which, in turn, supports the college in many ways. This support includes funding for student scholarships. The proceeds from this year's tournament will make possible nearly double the amount of scholarships funded by previous years' tournaments, providing tuition support for eight individuals during the 2004-05 academic

year.

The tournament this year deserves special note, because, for the first time ever, a local business partner, First Community Bank, provided \$10,000 in funding support and joined the Foundation as tournament sponsor. We just can't overstate the value and the potential impact of this sort of commitment, nor can we overstate our appreciation to FCB. It is important, too, to note that the tournament is built on a ten-year tradition and reflects the hard work of many individuals. Some of them, like tournament coordinator Jim Ulmer, are affiliated with BRTC, while many others in the community, like Scott Trammel, Mike Miller, and Brett Liebhaver, who volunteer their time and talents. I know Jim, Scott, Mike, and Brett join me in saying thanks to FCB and to the dozens of people who worked to make this event such a success.

Continuing Education/ Business Outreach Sponsors Training for Extension Employees

The Continuing Education/
Business Outreach Department at BRTC held a computer training course recently for County Extension offices in the area. The course was offered to provide training in the revision and application of a new computer tracking and reporting system the agency uses throughout the state.

Instructor of the eight-hour course was Daniel Spillers of Little Rock. Taking the course were Mark Phillips and Candy Futrell, Randolph County; Stewart Runsick, Lawrence County; Gayla Taylor, Roger Gipson and Andy Vangilder, Clay County.