



The River's Edge

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Important Dates

- September 15**
Foundation Board Meeting
- September 28**
BRTC Open House
- October 14**
FCB/BRTC Foundation Annual Golf Tournament
- November 6**
PN Meet and Greet
- November 17**
LETA Graduation



Al and Donna Dixon

Robinett Shares Research on "Five Founding Fathers"

Local historian and genealogist Cindy Robinett unveiled her research on aspects of the county's early history in a presentation titled "Five Founding Fathers of Randolph County" last week. Hers was a part of the final session in a lecture series at BRTC coordinated by BRTC English instructor Gary Buxton in conjunction with Pocahontas' Sesquicentennial events.

Robinett, who teaches Adult Education at BRTC, chose to focus on five men who played a key role in the area's early history, and continue to be of significance today. The subjects of her presentation were William Looney, Reuben Rice, Dr. Peyton Pitman, Ranson Bettis and Governor Thomas Drew. The five were contemporaries who migrated to this region, all of them born in the East. All became landowners, and all were slave owners, though Rice is

believed to have owned only one.

"There are many, many people who are important historically, but I chose these five because they are central to things going on right now in Randolph County," Robinett said. She went on to explain that Looney and Rice are in the news right now because of an ongoing project to research and eventually restore their log structures in the Eleven Point River Valley. Pitman was selected, she said, because of the importance of his ferry to Civil War history, while Bettis and Drew were included



Cindy Robinett, local historian, is pictured with a copy of a document listing the slaves in William Looney's personal property inventory from 1846. Shown on the computer screen is a (circa 1896) photo of her ancestors, early descendants of the Reuben Rice family. Pictured are Lydia (Rice) Upshaw and her family. Lydia was Robinett's great-great-grandmother.

because of their connection to Sesquicentennial activities and study.

Her presentation included Power-

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Students Juggle Jobs, Coursework

According to a national survey, six out of ten BRTC students have jobs to help pay for college, working either part-time or full-time, according to Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development. Based on the "Faces of the Future" survey results, 22% of the student body surveyed said they work full-time, while 38% listed part-time employment.

This is actually below the national average of student employment, according to survey results, which show 7 of every ten students nationally are employed. Locally, the data show that more than 64% of BRTC students work 20 hours or more per week, while almost 40%

work more than 30 hours per week. An additional 13.8% of BRTC students indicated they were unemployed, but seeking jobs. The survey also showed, not surprisingly, that "Cost of Transportation" ranks as the number one obstacle for BRTC students, and that the primary factors in students' decision to attend BRTC were "Cost," "Distance from Home," and "Scholarship and Financial Aid Availability." A large percentage of students, 86%, a higher percentage than the national average, indicated they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with BRTC overall.

Ziegler presented survey results to the BRTC Board of Trustees at its last meeting. (see chart on page three)

Scholarship Number Hits New High

An additional four students have accepted Academic Distinction Scholarships to attend BRTC in the Fall 2006



Charles Coffman



Andrea Flaherty



Chalee Matlock



Amber Starling

semester, announced Financial Aid Officer Brandi Chester. This brings to 26 the total number of Academic Distinction scholarships awarded. The scholarship provides tuition for one semester, and may be renewed for subsequent semesters, based on the student's GPA. According to data provided by Chester, the number represents an all-time high of not only the Academic Distinction Scholarships, but the overall scholarship number. That number already stands at 50, and additional scholarship awards will be made, Chester indicated.

The four new recipients are Charles Coffman and Chalee Matlock of Maynard, Amber Starling of Delaplaine, and Andrea Flaherty of Corning.

Coffman, son of Franklin and Dawn Coffman, plans to complete college basics and then transfer to a four-year university. He is a Maynard High School graduate.

Also a Maynard graduate, Matlock is the daughter of Steve Matlock. She is enrolled in

college basics at BRTC.

Starling, daughter of Willard and Lynn Starling, is an accounting major. She graduated from Delaplaine High School.

The daughter of Mark and Marsha Miller, Flaherty also is pursuing general education courses and plans to transfer to a four-year institution.

The Academic Distinction scholarship is awarded to students based on their ACT scores or their ranking in the upper ten percent of the class.

Scholarships remain open for students who wish to apply for a single parent scholarship. Guidelines of the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship require that the applicant be a resident of Randolph County enrolled in an institution of higher education, and that the applicant meet certain income requirements and have custody of dependent children.

Summer Holds Adventure for Al and Donna Dixon



BRTC Math instructor Al Dixon and his wife Donna shown in hiking gear on Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau, Alaska, on their summer vacation.

Many couples might celebrate a 25th wedding anniversary with a gift of silver and an elegant dinner at their favorite restaurant. But Al and Donna Dixon live less conventionally. The two traded their books and chalkboards and seemingly slow-paced lives as educators for spiked

shoes and ice axes to go glacier hiking during a summer Alaskan adventure.

Earlier trips to the Caribbean had proven to the couple they enjoy action-oriented vacations involving the natural world. The Alaska trip provided plenty of opportunity for

physical activity, including not only the hike on Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau, but also rock climbing at Skagway, where the 50-ft. cliffs made earlier rock climbs back home in Arkansas seem, well, elementary. "We had done rock climbing at Petit Jean, where if you fell, you *might* hurt yourself," Al Dixon quipped.

The Dixons are experienced at cave exploring, having gone spelunking at Devil's Den and in the Buffalo River Valley back in Arkansas. "Actually, I was more nervous when I was re-roofing my house this summer and almost slipped off," Dixon said.

A day at a mountain climbing school prepared the two for the adventure ahead. The glacier hike began with a helicopter ride up, and then the Dixons, a guide, and three others trekked about on the 3000-year-old ice field, drinking the melt-off from the upper layer of ice formed from snow that fell 500 years earlier. Dixon described the ice as more like "Sonic ice" on the surface,

allowing hikers to get a foothold, with a blue hardness underneath where the ice is compressed. The glacier, Dixon explained, is between 800 and 4500 feet thick.

The trip held many "surprises" for the Dixons. For example, Dixon said, "It doesn't get that cold along the coast of Alaska in the winter—not below 20 degrees Fahrenheit." He was also surprised—and excited—to see that near the base of the glacier, "eagles were as plentiful as sea gulls in Florida." And he came away with the impression that the locals don't seem all that worked up over the issue of global warming, believing that the glaciers have been changing since long before the impact of fluorocarbons on the climate. Mendenhall Glacier, like the others in the Juneau Icefield, is "constantly changing," Dixon said, moving slowly toward the sea.

Al Dixon teaches Mathematics at Black River Technical College, and Donna Dixon teaches Reading at Maynard Public Schools.

Eight Positions Filled for Fall Semester



Melissa Carter



Nanette Carter



Jana Culp



Valerie Dwyer



Lisa Jackson



Angela Loveless



Sam Swartzlander



Mylea White

A large number of new employees have assumed duties at the start of the academic year at Black River Technical College. Some have been appointed to fill vacated positions, while a few have been hired for new positions created to meet the demands of an increasing enrollment.

Lisa Jackson has accepted the newly created position of Developmental Instructor and will be teaching developmental math and English. She has taught the last three years at BRTC as a full-time temporary and adjunct instructor in math and business. Prior to that, she taught business in Neelyville and math at Poplar Bluff, both at the high school level. Originally from Piggott, Jackson has lived in Corning for the past 26 years with her husband. They have three children. Jackson holds AS, BS, and MSE degrees from Arkansas State University.

Mylea White recently joined the BRTC staff as Student Services Secretary. A graduate of Corning High School, White currently lives in Biggers with husband Darrin and two children. She earned an Associate of Applied Science in Business Technology degree from BRTC in 1997, and previously worked at First Community Bank in Pocahontas.

Nanette Carter is the new Phlebotomy instructor. This will be her first year of teaching after working for the past 29 years as a nurse with experience in every aspect of health-care. Originally from Viola, she and her husband Rick have lived in Pocahontas for almost twelve years and they have one daughter. Carter earned a Practical Nursing degree from Ozarka College and an ASN from Arkansas State University.

A native of Paragould and graduate of Greene County Tech High School, Valerie Dwyer has joined the BRTC staff as Secretary for the Paragould campus. She previously worked at Robinson Electric and Caldwell Furniture. She holds a cosmetology license and earned a

certificate in Medical Transcription from Cotton Boll Technical Institute. Dwyer and husband Danny have two children.

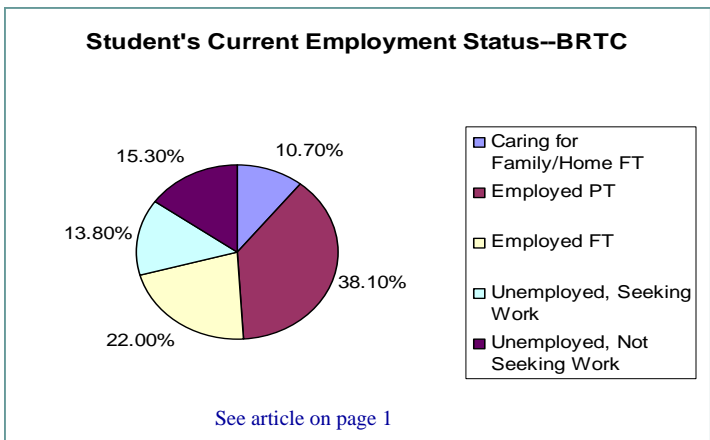
Sam Swartzlander of Imboden is the new Aviation Instructor at BRTC. He is a graduate of BRTC's aviation program and has twenty years of aviation experience, which began while he was serving ten years of active duty with the army. He has spent the past seven years operating his own aircraft maintenance facility. Swartzlander and his wife Melissa have four children.

After twelve years of work in critical care, home health, surgery and recovery, cardiac care and with Kids First, Melissa Carter has joined

the BRTC staff as full-time instructor in the Practical Nursing program. She most recently held the position of surgical nurse at Randolph County Medical Center and has also worked for BRTC as an adjunct clinical instructor. She earned a BS in Nursing from University of Central Arkansas. Carter and her husband Shawn live in Pocahontas with their three children.

Pocahontas High School graduate Jana Culp is a new science instructor at BRTC. She holds an AAS in Radiological Technology, a BS in Education, and an MS in Vocational and Technical Administration, all from Arkansas State University. She is currently working on her Doctorate in Education. She previously taught at ASU and as an adjunct instructor for Three Rivers Community College in Poplar Bluff and BRTC. Culp and her husband Ronald reside in Poplar Bluff and are expecting their first child in December.

Angela Loveless will be teaching science classes on the Paragould campus. She has been teaching for BRTC as an adjunct instructor for the past two years and taught at Rector High School, her alma mater, for seven years before returning to school to complete her master's degree. She earned a BSE and MSE from Arkansas State University. Loveless and her husband Gary reside in Rector with their two children.



BRTC
 to Celebrate
 Sesquicentennial
 with Open House
Thursday, September 28,
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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*The River's Edge is produced by the
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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 Application address:

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

From the President's Desk



As we enter another academic year, our 16th since becoming a college, we are looking at another large enrollment. Official numbers will be available after the 11th day of class. What we do know is that we are able this semester to offer a record number of scholarships to our students.

This is good news for several reasons. The fact that we are awarding more Academic Distinction Scholarships than ever before means that we are attracting more and more students who are recent high school grads. We know that many of these

are students who could have chosen to attend other colleges, but chose to come here. We are also awarding more privately and institutionally-funded scholarships, another important positive indicator. This means that we continue to grow in the level of community support, enabling us to direct more and more each year into student assistance in the form of scholarships.

Our surveys and other research confirm just how important scholarships and other forms of financial aid are to the students of all ages we serve. A large percentage—60 percent—also have jobs to help with education costs. Another significant percentage—nearly 14 percent—list themselves as “unemployed, but seeking work.” Thus the availability of financial assistance, especially in the form of scholarships, will continue to be a priority for us here at BRTC. We appreciate all the community does to help in this need.

Robinette

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Point slides of photographs of the old houses, of family members and descendants, and of primary documents associated with the five founding fathers.

Among these documents was a digitally copied record of William Looney's personal slave holdings at the time of his death as reflected in his probate file. The list shows that Looney, who arrived in 1802 in what would become Randolph County, owned thirteen enslaved African Americans at the time of his death in 1846. The record lists the slaves by name, gender, and age.

She said that according to the 1830 census, Looney owned four slaves, Rice one, Pitman 12, Bettis 17, and Drew 17. By 1840, the census listed the slave ownership for the five men at 9, 0, 17, 17, and 25, respectively.

Bettis, instrumental in the establishing of what is today Pocahontas

as the county seat, came to this area by way of Wayne County, Missouri, where his family is described as a prosperous and major slave-owning family. In fact, Robinett said, in 1820, “one-third of all (Wayne) county slaves belonged to the Bettis Clan.”

Interestingly, the five individuals on whom Robinett's presentation focused had much in common, but left greatly varying legacies. Particularly interesting, according to Robinett, is the fate of Thomas Drew, who married Ranson Bettis' daughter, Cinderella, and went on to become Arkansas' third governor, but eventually fell from fame and affluence. He apparently wandered around the country for a few years, and then died in Texas in relative obscurity.

In addition to Robinett, other presenters at the final lecture included Harmon Seawel and Kirby Riffel.