



The River's Edge

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Important Dates

- March 12**
Advisory Board Dinner
- March 15**
Holocaust Survivor Visit
- March 16**
Foundation Board Mtg
- March 19—23**
Spring Break
- March 27**
Foundation Gala
- April 6**
Good Friday (campus closed)

U.S. Soldier in Iraq Attends BRTC Via On-line Classes

Instructors may laugh at some of the excuses students come up with for not having assignments done on time, but one excuse beyond challenge is, "I was late because we were being bombed!" One could only hope that excuse would never be more than a statement from the imagination, but for one BRTC student, unfortunately, it's a very real excuse. Jeremy Qualls, a Sergeant with the 875th National Guard unit out of Paragould, is not just struggling to get his online assignments in on time, but he is doing so in the middle of a war in Iraq where he is stationed. He is currently taking two online classes through BRTC: U.S. History from 1876 and Keyboarding I.

In addition to being bombed, there are other obstacles that Qualls has to deal with in his pursuit of an education online, including the time zone difference and the power supply. Often taken for granted here in the United States, electricity for those at war in Iraq is a luxury and is only supplied by generators that are frequently "knocked out." With any luck, the generators are up and running long enough to allow

Qualls to complete his lessons and get them submitted on time.

"Taking classes and being in Iraq can sometimes prove challenging," says Qualls, "but if I can do it in a war zone, I know anybody can do it. It is all a matter of self-discipline."

According to both of his instructors, Qualls does an excellent job despite the challenges. "It takes great dedication to do what he is doing and he does an outstanding job," said Qualls' history instructor, Dr. Jason Morrison. "He goes above and beyond in his work for his online history class."

"Jeremy is doing an excellent job," said Kellee Hardage, instructor of keyboarding. "He is doubling up on his lessons so he will have completed all 50 required lessons by the

time he returns to the United States next week. He will only be here for a month and plans to take both the mid-term and final exams during that time before returning to

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Jeremy Qualls

Holocaust Survivor Visit



Bob Behr

Response to an upcoming visit and presentation by a Holocaust survivor has been "tremendous," according to BRTC officials. Bob Behr, a participant in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Survivor Affairs program, will visit the campus and the Pocahontas community on Thursday, March 15. He is scheduled to speak to student groups in RCDC at 9 a.m.,

followed by lunch and a presentation at the BRTC Serendipity meeting at 11:30. Later that day, he will meet for dinner with members of the BRTC Board of Trustees and Foundation Board members. The visit will culminate with a Thursday evening presentation at 7 in RCDC. The public is invited to the 7 p.m. presentation.

(Continued on page 2)

Students Awarded Single Parent Scholarships



Kim Bates



Christy Banks



Emily Cook



Shirley Contreras



Tonya Garza



Whitney Jueal

Scholarships totaling \$5,125 were awarded to eleven Randolph County single parent recipients this spring, according to information from the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship Committee.

The awards are made to eligible single parents who live in this county and who are pursuing a degree in higher education. This award brings to \$76,743 the total awards made since the program's inception.

The local chapter is an affiliate member of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship program. The MSSPS is funded through payroll deductions of several BRTC faculty and staff members, as well as by an annual silent auction, donations from interested community members, and the BRTC Foundation. Funds raised locally

are matched at a rate of up to 150% by the state organization and other initiatives, including the Entergy Grant.

Scholarship awards are typically \$500 for full-time enrollment, and pro-rated for those attending part-time. Receiving the full award for the spring semester are Tonya Anderson, Kim Bates, Shirley Contreras, Emily Cook, Tonya Garza, Julie Perkins, Vivian Penn, Angela Thielemier and Lawana Watson. Whitney Jueal is receiving a \$375 award, and Christy Banks \$250.

For more information on supporting the MSSPS program, contact Vickie French at 870-248-4070. Applications are available through the BRTC Office of Financial Aid and at Camera Corner Studios in Pocahontas.



Angela Thielemier



Vivian Penn



Julie Perkins



Lawana Watson

Holocaust Visit *Continued from Page 1*

Behr and his mother were among those imprisoned in Theresienstadt in what is today the Czech Republic. He was about 20 when the Gestapo rounded up his Jewish community in Berlin and transported them to the infamous "model" camp.

The college anticipates approximately 500 junior and senior high school students, in addition to BRTC students and staff members, will attend the 9 a.m. presentation in RCDC. "We have students coming from Piggott, ORC, Batesville, Marmaduke, Pocahontas, Cave City, and Jonesboro," said Dr. Jan Ziegler, VP for Development. "It is wonderful that they and their teachers recognize the value of this program, and are taking advantage of what is surely a diminishing opportunity as Holocaust survivors age."

Theresienstadt, or Terezin in Czech, was both a ghetto and a transit camp, a point from which Jews and others were deported to extermination camps and other locations in the "east." The camp functioned as a major propaganda tool for the Nazis.

Behr eventually emigrated to the United States, and enlisted in the United States Army in 1947. He served as a translator with the American military, interrogating former Nazi personnel. After his retirement from 39 years of government service, Behr taught European history at a Dayton, Ohio, college, with emphasis on World War II and the Holocaust.

The visit is a joint project of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the BRTC Foundation SEAS (Special Event and Activity Support), with special funding assistance from Mike and Barbara Dunn. Dunn is Chairman of the BRTC Board of Trustees and serves as an ex-officio member of the BRTC Foundation.

Kimbrough Choir Member Awarded Music Scholarship



Ben Johnson

BRTC Ambassador Ben Johnson was recently awarded a Music Performance Scholarship from Arkansas Tech University in Russellville for the 2007-2008 academic year. The scholarship, in the amount of \$500 each semester, is renewable up to seven consecutive semesters as long as Johnson maintains a GPA of 2.25 or above and is enrolled in at least 12 credit hours each semester.

Johnson has attended Black River Technical College since December 2005 and is expected to graduate in May with an Associate of Arts in General Education degree before transferring to ATU in the fall. He will be pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing degree at ATU and will participate in *The University Choir*, which is the largest of several choral groups at the college.

U.S. Soldier

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Iraq.”

Qualls first started attending classes at BRTC after completing basic training in 2002. “Black River appealed to me because of the smaller classes and convenient times,” explained Qualls. “But, the military kept me on the road, so when I saw that online classes were being offered I decided to try. The first online class I took was Introduction to Business and I did very well in that class, so I decided to continue.”

Qualls posted this statement on Blackboard, the system through which students complete their online coursework and communications: *I know that this is a little off the subject of American History, but as all of you know I am in Iraq. The other day we saw a mud hut with a satellite dish. We all laughed. But the truth is not that funny. The people here have been fed propaganda for 27 years, so the first thing they buy is the access to information. We go to looking and everywhere you look satellite dishes are popping up. The*

people here are seeing what the outside world is like and what freedom really is. It really is amazing what we take for granted.

Qualls said he joined the military in an effort to turn his life around after making some bad choices. “I reached a point in my life where I realized that anything worth having or accomplishing would not come easy,” explains Qualls. “I decided that the only way to get anywhere in life was to be the best at whatever I was doing. When I reached that understanding, and quit looking for the easy way out, that is when my life turned around.” It was during that time of realization that Qualls was approached by a relative regarding the military and he chose to pursue it.

“Basic training was extremely challenging for me, but I learned who I was and what I was capable of,” said Qualls. “I can truly say that I went from being a self-centered boy to a trustworthy man. It was a turning-point; a new beginning.” The military has provided many opportunities for

Qualls, including an education. He first enrolled in college classes on the BRTC-Paragould campus and then he attended one semester of classes at Pocahontas, where he was recruited by his theatre teacher, Kelly Grooms, for the play *Blood Brothers* held at the Imperial Theatre. The online courses through BRTC have allowed him to continue his education while being on the road for his military duties.

A 1994 graduate of Paragould High School, Qualls said he is extremely proud to be serving his country in Iraq. He has been married for five of the six years he has been serving. He also expressed his appreciation to Black River Technical College. “Black River has always worked with me, and for that I am very grateful,” Qualls stated. “I would like to thank Black River Tech for all it has done for the community, for every working mother and father, for people like me who is always on the road, and for the 18-year-olds who are fresh out of high school.”



Levi Lamb



Jessica Ortgiesen



Joshua McKay



Stephanie Williams

Four Accept Scholarships for Fall

Four additional area high school seniors have accepted Academic Distinction Scholarships to attend BRTC in the Fall 2007 semester, according to the Office of Financial Aid. They are Stephanie Williams, Jessica Ortgiesen, Levi Lamb and Joshua McKay.

Williams is the daughter of Jana and Mike Caldwell and Jeff Williams. She is a senior at Pocahontas High School, and plans to major in English. She hopes eventually to teach at the college level.

The daughter of Robert and Lisa Anderson, Ortgiesen is a senior at Sloan-Hendrix. She plans to study Elementary Education, and also has interest in study in Photography and EMT/Paramedic.

A Black Rock High School senior, Lamb plans to study Veterinary Science. He is the son of Bobby and Sharon Lamb.

A son of Rodger and Teresa McKay, Joshua McKay plans to pursue a technical field of study, and eventually to work with his father in the field of heat and air. He is a Marmaduke High School senior.

These scholarships are awarded to students based on standardized test scores and/or class ranking. They provide full tuition, contingent upon maintenance of required GPAs. Students may be eligible for transfer scholarships at four-year institutions, pending approval of the university to which they transfer. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid at BRTC, 870-248-4000.

Memorial Scholarship Set

The family of former Pocahontas Police Chief Charles Meridith has funded a memorial scholarship in his honor to be awarded in the Fall semester. The \$500 award will go to a qualified student majoring in the field of Criminal Justice.

In announcing the scholarship, a family member stressed the scholarship has been funded and/or supported by family members, along with several community groups. These include KPOC, *Star Herald*, Greg’s Quick Shop, Bonanza Steak House, Randolph County Sheriff’s Department and Pocahontas Police Department.

For more details on the scholarship or to apply for the Charles Meridith Memorial Scholarship, contact the Office of Financial Aid at BRTC.



Charles Meridith

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

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

Website: www.blackrivertech.org

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

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

On-line Application address:

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

From the President's Desk



Richard Gaines

Already prospective new students are making choices about college next fall. Though it seems early, this is the ideal time for high school seniors to make a commitment. An additional four students are listed in this issue, along with those announced earlier, signaling their acceptance of Academic Distinction scholarships to attend BRTC. Other scholarship recipients and scholarship opportunities are highlighted as well. Navigating through all the possibilities for financial aid can get

difficult, and we here at BRTC are happy to meet with prospective students and parents to help you in any way possible.

Along with our academics function here at BRTC, one of our priorities is to do what we can to help generate funding options in the form of privately funded scholarships and other assistance. This is one of the important roles of the BRTC Foundation Board. This group of volunteers, fifteen individuals in all, work diligently through various fundraising efforts to help with the funding of scholarships and other needs. We are currently preparing for an annual Gala event to be held on March 27. Many tickets have been sold by Foundation Board members, but a small number remain. Purchasing Gala tickets is an excellent way to support the Foundation and the college, and have an enjoyable evening with great food and entertainment. Just phone us at 870-248-4000 if you are interested.

PTK Inductees Added

Forty new members were inducted into the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society last week. PTK is an international collegiate organization for recognizing academic achievement in the two-year colleges. Induction ceremonies were led by PTK officers Jonathan Bennett, President; Laura Alderson, VP of Leadership; Joy Clarimont, VP of Service; Stephanie Richey, VP of Scholarship; Patricia Segraves, Secretary/PR; and Dawn Chitty, Treasurer. PTK Chapter Advisors are Dr. Linda Moss, Gary Buxton, Phillip Dickson, Ruth Schaa and Joan Linnstaedter. In addition to the inductees, many family members and BRTC faculty members also attended the candle-lighting ceremony. Several members of the BRTC Administrative Staff also participated in the event.

PTK offers leadership opportunities to its members, and also serves as a vehicle through which Phi Theta Kappans assist the campus and the community in various worthwhile activities.



PTK Officers