



## LETA Graduation Dedicated to Slain West Memphis Officers

West Memphis Police Chief Bob Paudert addressed 41 officers from around the state during BRTC's Law Enforcement Training Academy graduation ceremony held November 19 in the Randolph County Development Center. Paudert is the father of Sgt. Brandon Paudert who, along with Officer Bill Evans, both of the West Memphis Police Department, was gunned down during a routine traffic stop May 20.

LETA Director Steve Shults had the idea of dedicating this semester's course and the graduation ceremony to the slain officers after being so moved while attending their funeral. "The service had a huge impact on me," Shults said. "Afterward, my thoughts went to training issues. I tried to analyze more closely what occurred and what could be done to improve training for the officers should they be unfortunate enough to face similar situations."

Jesse Wilson of the Independence County Sheriff's Office opened the ceremony by singing the National Anthem and Shults served as Master of Ceremonies. Class members selected Steven Payton of the Pope County Sheriff's Office to serve as class spokesperson.



*Class Spokesperson Steven Payton of the Pope County Sheriff's Office, presents West Memphis Police Chief Bob Paudert with a plaque commemorating the two fallen West Memphis officers.*

Graduating students completed a thirteen-week course which included instruction in standard police tactics, firearms, legal education, technical skills and practical exercises. Officers are required to score at least 70% on each

*(Continued on page 2)*

Inside this issue:

<i>BRTC Offers Classes in Corning</i>	2
<i>Looney Tavern (Continued)</i>	2
<i>LETA Graduation (Continued)</i>	2
<i>Career Pathway Staff Has a Change of Heart</i>	2
<i>Dream Comes True for 80-Year-Old GED Recipient</i>	3
<i>Farewell to Manzanar Comes to Life</i>	3
<i>Campus Commentary by Anne Simpson</i>	4

### Important Dates

- Dec. 5**  
*RN Pinning Ceremony, 3:00 p.m., RCDC*
- Dec. 8-14**  
*Final Exams*
- Dec. 16**  
*BRTC Graduation, 7:00 p.m., RCDC*
- Dec. 17**  
*MSSPS Auction*
- Dec. 23-Jan. 2**  
*BRTC Offices Closed for the Holidays*
- Jan. 10**  
*First Day of Classes*
- Jan. 14**  
*Business Tech. Day*

## Looney Tavern Restoration Ceremony Honors Donor Family

BRTC officials marked the completion of the Looney Tavern restoration on November 18 with a special ceremony featuring a historical enactment, music, and words of praise and appreciation for members of the donor family. Along with faculty, staff, and Board members of BRTC, family members of Jack and Christina French gathered at the 1833-constructed Looney Tavern to celebrate the project's completion while acknowledging the generosity and vision of the French family.



*Thom Fielder (from left) portrays William Looney; Jackson Privett, his grandson, and David Rodgers portrays Fielding Stubblefield.*

The French family donated the log structure to BRTC in 2006, making it eligible for grant funding from Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources. The grant provided for historical, architectural and archeological research, as well as funding for the actual restoration.

The dedication event included a skit performed by Thom Fielder, BRTC-Paragould Communications Instructor; Jackson Privett,

great-grandson of Jack and Christina French; and David Rodgers of the Dalton community. Dr. Gary Buxton played period pieces on his fiddle.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## BRTC Offers Classes in Corning

BRTC's Spring Schedule for 2010 includes two classes that will be offered in Corning - English I and Introductory Algebra. English I is a required general education course worth three hours of credit, and Introductory Algebra is a prerequisite to College Algebra, also a required general education course.

"These are the first college courses we are offering in Corning," said Patti Blaxton, Coordinator for Continuing Education and Business Outreach at BRTC. "Up to this point we have only been offering Adult Education and Continuing Education classes in Corning," she added.

Introductory Algebra will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m., and will be taught by Lisa Jackson. English I will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. on Tuesdays. The

teacher will be Jennifer Woolard, who is currently teaching a concurrent credit course on the same subject at Corning High School. The classes will be held at the Corning Community Education Center, 1001 A North Missouri St./Hwy 67.

"This is something the Corning City Council has wanted us to do for a long time," commented Blaxton, "and we're pleased to be able to do this beginning in January."

"We hope to be able to offer a variety of other transfer courses in future semesters," said Dr. Roger Johnson, BRTC's Vice President for General Education.

For more information, or to sign up for either of these courses, please contact Patti Blaxton at 870-248-4000 ext. 4181, or Kim Bigger at ext. 4015.

## LETA

exam, and consistently fire at least 80% during firearms training exercises in order to graduate.

According to Shults, the course included constant reminders of the West Memphis incident as well as modifications to some of the training. One example of the modified training was the use of a car at the firing range during firearms training. This was used to demonstrate how easily bullets penetrate the glass and what little safety a vehicle provides.

Foster Steward of the White County Sheriff's Office received the Top Overall Award, which is earned by having the highest overall average in the areas of academics, firearms, and physical fitness. He also received the Top Physical Fitness Award. Christopher Brown of the North Little Rock Police Department received the Top Academics Award,

## Cont'd from Pg. 1

and Jeremy Wheelis of the Jonesboro Police Department received the Top Firearms Award.

During the ceremony, Payton presented a plaque to Chief Paudert on behalf of the class to commemorate the slain officers. 'In Loving Memory' is engraved across the top, with 'Blessed Are The Peacemakers' and 'Presented by LETA A Class 2010-B' engraved across the bottom. In the middle is a picture of the two officers with a replica of their badges with badge number on either side.

Chief Paudert cautioned the graduating officers about the Sovereign Citizens - a group of anti-government extremists to which the gunmen belonged. He wishes to educate officers about the dangers of this group and the warning signs to watch for in potential members.

## Career Pathways Focusing on Needs of Children This Christmas

The Career Pathways staff at BRTC has decided to spread their Christmas this year, according to Helen Shipley, Career Pathways Administrative Assistant. "Instead of giving among ourselves, we are going to buy items and donate to the Children's Shelter in Walnut Ridge, Shipley explained. "We want to see those children have a good Christmas."

Since The Children's Shelter opened its doors June 2009, they have housed 266 children from 22 different counties in Arkansas who have been removed from their homes due to no fault of their own. The majority of children have been from the

counties of Craighead (61), Lawrence (50), Green (39), and Randolph (34) with others coming from 18 different counties around the state. The Shelter is currently housing 11 children, six females and five males, ranging in age from 3-months to 15-years.

"This year we decided we want to help provide these children with the best Christmas possible," said Shipley. "Being away from home and family during the holidays is difficult enough, but for a young child, this should be an exciting time of year. We want to help make that happen."

## Looney Cont'd from Pg. 1

BRTC President Richard Gaines presented a plaque commemorating the event to the French family. Guests were able to tour the two-story dogtrot prior to the ceremony, with BRTC Construction Manager Ronnie Walker and Tommy Jameson of Little Rock, Architect for REACH, providing commentary.

Board of Trustees Chair Mike Dunn acknowledged the guests, who included not only family members, but also several members of the Board of Trustees and Foundation Board. Dr. Roger Johnson, VP for General Education, and Angie Caldwell, VP for Technical Education, spoke about the educational activity and opportunities afforded by the structure.

VP for Development Dr. Jan Ziegler, REACH Coordinator for BRTC, acknowledged also the central involvement of Joan Gould of Fayetteville, historic preservationist. She also presented a plaque of appreciation to President Gaines in acknowledgement of his and the Board's willingness for BRTC to develop the project, noting that REACH and the educational possibilities it brings place BRTC in a position unique among other two-year colleges across the state.

The Looney Tavern, along with the Rice-Upshaw House on the opposite side of the river approximately one mile distant, form Project REACH (Researching Early Arkansas Cultural Heritage). Both the French family and the donors of the Rice-Upshaw House, Jean Upshaw and family, decided to deed the properties to the college for use as educational settings and in order to ensure the Territorial-era log structures could be restored.

The Looney Tavern was built by pioneering settler William Looney and enslaved African Americans, while the Rice-Upshaw House was built in 1828 by Reuben Rice. Both men migrated to the Eleven Point River Valley from the Holston River Valley area in Tennessee.

Ziegler noted that a family ceremony similar to this one had been held to mark the completed restoration of the Rice-Upshaw House last fall. She said that a more public grand opening for both structures will be held in 2011, after the site enhancements currently underway at the Rice-Upshaw House are completed. Those site enhancements include construction of a new roadway, parking area, ADA-accessible sidewalk, pavilion and restrooms to better accommodate the public.

If anyone would like to join the Career Pathways staff in providing presents of toys and clothes for the children, you may do so by contacting one of the Career Pathways staff for more information, or drop off your gifts at their office located in the Administration Building at BRTC. You may also contact Shipley at 870-248-4000, ext. 4064.

## Dream Comes True for 80-Year-Old GED Recipient

On December 16, Black River Technical College will be holding a graduation ceremony for GED recipients, and a life-long dream will come true for 80-year-old Wanda L. Ray. Ray tells the sad story of having to leave high school during her senior year to care for her ill mother. By the time her mother recovered, it was too late for Ray to rejoin and graduate with her class, the class of 1949. Instead, she entered the work world. "I longed to go back to school," Ray says, "...but I had to work and never had a chance."

Ray was laid off from work in 1955, six years after her class graduated from high school. This event gave her the opportunity to study at Southern (now Williams) Baptist College in Walnut Ridge. She tells how difficult it was for her to be off work during that semester, explaining that she rode to school with a neighbor, took her 5-year-old son to class, and was expecting her second child.

When her daughter was born, Ray returned to the work force. "I got 14 hours of college (credit)," Ray explains, "but still I wanted to march down the aisle in a cap and gown and receive a diploma." Ray's next chance to pursue her education did not come for another fifty-four years. She says that during this time she lost all hope of completing her education, but that the longing was still there.

In 2009, Ray was offered the opportunity to study for her GED at BRTC. Through "a lot of studying, encouragement, prayer, meditation and a

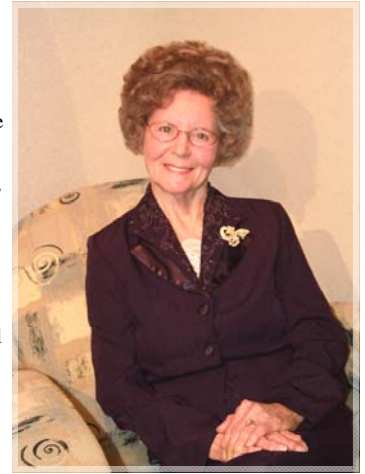
wonderful teacher," Ray says, "I crossed the finish line.... November 15 at 8:00 a.m., I received the news that I had so longed to hear. I had passed all my tests.... When my teacher gave me the news, I burst out crying." Ray tells the story of being in disbelief for a long time after hearing the results.

"I decided to do a short story of me,/how much I had wanted my G.E.D." These are the opening lines to a poem written by Ray upon the acceptance of the realization of her dream. She continues, "Opportunity came, I started the race,/at times it was hard to keep up the pace." Ray's story of understanding that her dream had come true continues for 31 stanzas, all of which are rhyming couplets. "I looked at the class of forty-nine./Sixty-one years ago! Why that class was mine!/I thought, 'I'm surely not that old!'/I checked all the odds, and the story was told," her poem continues.

The piece conveys disbelief as she plays with a myriad of mathematical terms, trying to make her GED reception seem not quite so far away from what should've been her high school graduation year, "I'll try geometry, that'll solve the problem./Wow! That gave me my height, my width and my volume!"

Ray's poem takes on a more serious tone near the end, as she accepts the numbers for what they are, "I tried really hard to grow old with grace,/but along came mercy, and took grace's place." The poem comes to its climax with these two stanzas, "Twenty-

ten the sixteenth day of December,/I'll graduate from BRTC. Oh, yes I'll remember!/I can't do the two-step, but I'll waltz down the aisle,/In my cap and gown, with a great big smile!"



Wanda L. Ray

Ray plans to continue her education at BRTC, starting with two college courses: Computer Science and Psychology. Now that she has her GED, she has made it a goal to learn more about how to operate a computer. She also says that a Psychology class she took at Southern (Williams) piqued her interest in studying Behavioral and Clinical Psychology and that she wants to understand more about "the way human beings act, why they differ, and how the mind works."

Ray shared with interviewers that it is her sincere hope that people will hear her story and be inspired to pursue their dreams as well.

## Farewell to Manzanar Comes to Life for Serendipity

Serendipity members enjoyed a special reading performance by BRTC Oral Communications and Theatre instructor Kelly Grooms and Dr. Roger Johnson, VP for General Education, during the group's November meeting. The two read from *Farewell to Manzanar*, bringing to life a tense exchange between the author's father, "Ko" Wakatsuki, and the soldier charged with interrogating the imprisoned Japanese American.

The book is the memoir of Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston. She and her family were among the approximately 110,000 West Coast residents of Japanese ancestry forcibly removed from their homes in the wake of Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor and detained in inland camps during World War II.

In the exchange, Ko Wakatsuki had been "rounded up" by the FBI as a potentially dangerous enemy alien and imprisoned in North Dakota. Frustrated, embittered and angry by his family's fate and by the absurd accusations and groundless suspicions, Ko was finally asked whether he wanted his native

country or the country he had called home for more than 30 years to win the war, Ko's response, powerfully delivered by Grooms, was "When your mother and your father are fighting, do you want them to kill each other? Or do you just want them to stop fighting?"

Serendipity, now in its sixth year, is focusing on the theme "Through a Glass Darkly," reading selections from literature that depict aspects of the American experience seen through the lens of the nation's diverse ethnic groups. The organization is sponsored by the Office of Development and the Department of Continuing Education, and is devoted to promoting the college's mission of lifelong learning.

"We really appreciate Kelly and Roger being a part of our presentation," said Dr. Jan Ziegler. "Hearing the words spoken, and masterfully so,



Dr. Roger Johnson and Kelly Grooms reading an excerpt from "Farewell to Manzanar" to Serendipity members.

instead of just reading them from a text makes all the difference in the world."

In addition to his work at BRTC, Grooms is Artistic Director of the Imperial Dinner Theatre.



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

Phone: 870-248-4000  
Fax: 870-248-4100

P.O. Box 1565  
1 Black River Drive  
Paragould, AR 72450

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

[www.blackrivertech.edu](http://www.blackrivertech.edu)

On-Line River's Edge Address:  
[http://www.blackrivertech.org/rivers\\_edge/](http://www.blackrivertech.org/rivers_edge/)

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

*janz@blackrivertech.org  
dina.hufstedler@blackrivertech.org  
melissa.mewborn@blackrivertech.org  
rhonda.foster@blackrivertech.org  
anns@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.*

## Campus Commentary



*Anne Simpson  
Librarian*

Years ago predictions were made that computers and technological advances would put many people out of work. It was also predicted that these advances would displace print resources and make libraries obsolete; however, the opposite is true. More jobs have been created to assist with the developments of the computer age. More people are computer literate, and the library is more valuable than ever. The library contains both print and computer resources for use in finding information for students and faculty.

The college library is vital and important. Librarians and staff must know how to use automated cataloging, Internet and database sites, as well as be able to maintain printers, computers, copiers, video and DVD materials, and other types of equipment.

Books are still being published in print form in all disciplines. The students and faculty borrow just as many today as they did 30 and 40 years ago. One of the changes for print media is with journal subscriptions. Since it is so expensive to subscribe to journals, periodicals, and magazines, the library subscribes to the databases to have access to the materials. The majority of these collections are available on databases. The library therefore subscribes to the databases to have access to the materials. The database is accessed through the Internet, but a database is not a web search engine. Online databases have saved time and money since the librarians do not have to subscribe to each journal and log it in every time a new publication ar-

rives. It also allows for more space to be used by reference and core collection materials. In addition, BRTC does subscribe to many periodicals and magazines in hard copy which are available to in the library.

Many instructors have their students take advantage of the library orientation class to learn how to use the online catalog to locate books. They also learn about databases such as *EBSCO*, *ProQuest*, or *JSTOR*, which are used the most because of their valuable resources. Other databases used are *Health Reference Center* and *Issues & Controversies*, which have up-to-date information in health care, government, and current issues.

BRTC is part of a consortium that allows students to borrow books from other libraries in the area. This is done through an organization called ARKLink. Other colleges and universities in the association allow BRTC students to use their libraries and check out books and their students can do the same through our library.

The library is one of the most popular places on campus for studying,

researching, and using the computers. Tutoring for some select subjects is available in the library study rooms. Groups of students also use the study rooms to view DVDs and to study for projects and exams. The library classroom is used for orientation classes and often by faculty when their class is working on a library project or needs to view a film. The library has different types of art and posters on exhibit. The display case is also used to highlight books and collections or artifacts.

The library recently received new computers, which enhanced the effectiveness of the library. With our state-of-the-art resources, the library supplies information critical to the success of both the students and faculty. As technology and procedures have changed over the years, librarians and library staff members have become even more essential by delivering quality services critical to the success of the student body, but the overall mission of the library has not fundamentally changed in many decades. Our purpose has always focused on providing resources and services for the students and faculty.