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**Important Dates**

- March 8**  
*BRTC Health Fair*
- March 10**  
*Strategic Planning - Session 4*
- March 15**  
*PTK Induction*
- March 16**  
*Etiquette Luncheon*
- March 21-25**  
*Spring Break*
- March 30-31**  
*PTK Blood Drive*
- April 5**  
*Strategic Planning - Session 5*

## Foundation Gala 2011 is "Biggest Ever"

The 2011 BRTC Foundation Gala was the "biggest ever," according to Gala Chair Brenda Walls. The annual event netted approximately \$13,000 for the BRTC Foundation, which is a record amount since the Gala began several years ago. The funds are used primarily in support of scholarships and other special needs at BRTC.

A capacity crowd not only bought tickets for the event, but also purchased the many auction items given and/or obtained by members of the BRTC Foundation Board. Several of the items were sold during the silent auction phase, while other items were sold to the highest bidders during a lively and sometimes unconventional auction under the direction of "Colonel" Jack McCord, assisted by Mike Dunn and John Jackson.

The event, held in the Randolph County Development Center, included musical entertainment by BRTC Choir instructor Joniece Trammel, Kimbrough Choir students Travis Rainbolt and Ben McClellan, and Doug Dreisel of Hardy. The meal was prepared and served by Dietetics instructors Tina Harris and Cathy Murdock and their Dietetics students.

BRTC President Richard Gaines announced the Foundation Gala Award, a scholarship named in honor of the



*Brenda and Danny Walls accept the Matt Walls Memorial Scholarship announced at the Gala.*

*—Photo by Felicia Hausman*

late Matt Walls, son of Danny and Brenda Walls. Pocahontas Glass owners Sammy and Sheila Jackson announced an additional \$500 to be added to the memorial scholarship for Walls.

*(Continued on pg. 2)*

## PTK Receives Donation from Teleflora

BRTC's Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society recently received a \$500 donation courtesy of Dallas Gunn, BRTC student and PTK Vice President for Fellowship. The donation was made possible through the employee grant program, "Roll Giving," of Teleflora LLC where Gunn is a Customer Service Agent.

Teleflora is one of several companies owned by Stewart and Lynda Resnick under the parent company of Roll Global, a privately held corporation with diverse interests. According to the company's website, the "Roll Giving" employee grant program was established by the Resnicks to encourage philanthropy. "It is our way of giving back to the community through all of you, the workers who make Roll what it is today," the site says.

Through the grant program, money has been set aside for every eligible employee to donate to the charity or charities of their choice. After one year of employment, an employee can choose up to three charities to be given up to a total of \$1,000. They also match a portion of funds raised by the charities.



*Dallas Gunn (left), BRTC student and PTK officer, presents a check from Teleflora to PTK Advisor Dr. Linda Mos.*

"This donation, in addition to the BRTC Foundation's SEAS funding, helped pay for registration and hotel fees for those attending the regional conference in Conway,"

*(Continued on pg. 2)*

## New English Club is Organized

Lisa Inman and Joe Collier, English instructors at BRTC, recently organized an English Club for interested students, faculty and staff and will serve as co-sponsors of the new club.

Inman attended a Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) workshop in November, where she learned about the advantages of campus interest groups in community colleges.

"I spoke with faculty from many other community colleges that are comparable in size to BRTC," said Inman, "and, to my surprise, each of those schools offered over 20 clubs or major activities."

According to CCSSE Data, students are more likely to stay in school if they have established relationships with peers and with faculty. "I believe that the implementation of student interest groups at BRTC could help with retention," said Inman. "I'm excited about the possibilities and hope that other departments will consider starting new clubs and we can reach students who are at risk of dropping out."

The first meeting of the English Club was held January 25. Those present elected officers and planned subsequent meetings. The officers elect-



English Instructor Lisa Inman (far right) visits with students involved in the newly formed English Club at BRTC.

ed are Tammy Vaughn, President; Jason Moseley, Vice President; and Heather Simmons, Secretary/Treasurer.

"The first meeting attracted a small but enthusiastic crowd," Inman said, "and the students showed an interest in meeting more often than just once a month. We are ready to grow and do great things."

In addition to discussing favorite books, the club plans to hold such events as creative writing workshops, faculty readings, movie nights, field trips, and volunteer work.

The next meeting will be Monday, March 14, 4:00 p.m., in the student lounge of the Business Technology building and will be a creative writing workshop. Participants are welcome to bring their original poetry and short stories to share or just come and listen.

## PTK Donation Cont'd from Pg. 1

according to Dr. Linda Moss, PTK Advisor. "I really appreciate Dallas as well as Teleflora for this wonderful gift. It was a tremendous help towards the funding of our trip."

Gunn, a Paragould resident, is a graduate of Greene County Tech and earned an AA in Graphic Design from Collins College of Design in Tempe, AZ. He is currently working towards a career in anthropology.

Regarding his employment with Teleflora, Gunn says "It's a wonderful place to work, but it's not what I want to do for the rest of my life. The company has helped me get started with my new plan by providing tuition reimbursement and I am so grateful to them for that."

Gunn plans to graduate from BRTC in December with an Associate of Arts degree and then transfer to Boise State University to pursue a Master of Arts in Anthropology degree. He would eventually like to teach Anthropology at the college level.

## Gala Cont'd from Pg. 1

Foundation President Mike Miller acknowledged special guests. Others who were acknowledged included the following individuals or groups who helped with various aspects of the event: Auto Collision Repair and Automotive Service Tech instructors and students for valet parking; Phi Theta Kappa Advisor and students for coat check; BRTC Ambassadors for assisting with decorating, serving, and clean-up; BRTC Maintenance Department for their help in set-up; and the Foundation Gala Planning Committee: Walls, Mike Dunn, Vickie French, Ann Savage, Sharon Watson, and Dr. Jan Ziegler.

## Serendipity Discusses *The Help*

*The Help*, a new novel set in Mississippi in the 1960s, was the topic of discussion at the February Serendipity lunch meeting. The meeting, attended by nearly thirty members and guests, was held in the Eddie Mae Herron Center in observance of Black History Month.



Jacquelyn Weick and Georgia Berry share a laugh during the meeting.

The novel, written by Kathryn Stockett, examines the stories of African American maids and their relationships with the white women for whom they cooked, cleaned, and provided childcare in the Jim Crow South.

The Eddie Mae Herron Center cooked a special lunch of beans, cornbread, potatoes and dessert for the guests. Spirited discussion of the south and of Pocahontas was interspersed with readings from the novel, which will soon be a motion picture.

Serendipity is a lifelong learning activity sponsored by BRTC's Department of Continuing Education and the Office of Development. This year's theme is "Through a Glass Darkly." Next month the group will read excerpts from and discuss *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* by Native American Author Margaret Craven.

Serendipity is planned and directed by Patti Blaxton and Dr. Jan Ziegler. The group also takes occasional day or overnight trips. For more information, contact Blaxton at 870-248-4000, ext. 4181.



Pat Johnson, Director of the Eddie Mae Herron Center, gives a tour of the center to fellow Serendipity members.

# Guest Speakers Stress “Hard Work” to Business Students

Two business classes at BRTC recently hosted guest speakers Terry Burnside of Walnut Ridge and Jake Foster of Pocahontas to speak to students regarding topics that were covered in their classes. Burnside spoke to students in Darendia Kersey’s Small Business Management class and Foster spoke to students in Ruth Schaa’s Personal Financial Planning class.

Burnside is the owner/manager of Sonic’s Walnut Ridge franchise and discussed franchise opportunities and the pros and cons of being a franchisee right now. He has been with Sonic for 20 years. Sonic began in 1953 with its first store and now has over 3,000. Of those 3,000, less than 200 are corporate owned and the rest are franchised. “Sonic is a performance-based company and working a lot of hours is one of the cons to being an owner,” said Burnside. “I typically work 60-70 hours per week.”

One of the pros is getting to know so many people in the community and being able to work with the kids. “School and grades are a priority,” Burnside explained. “We have to be flexible with the schedules of the students.”

Foster also talked about the time and sacrifices made in order to be successful when he spoke to

students about planning for the future, a career, and retirement. Foster became an apprentice butcher at the age of 14 and worked at a store in Sikeston, MO, that his parents bought for \$500. While serving in the Army during WWII, he learned of Piggly Wiggly, the first self-service grocery store founded in Memphis, TN. He tried to encourage his parents to invest, but they wouldn’t.

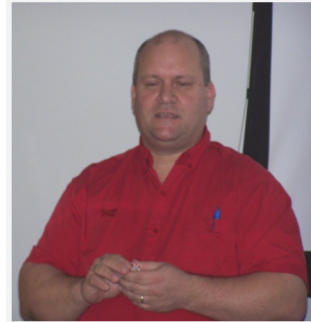
After working for many years at Armor Meat Packing and relocating many times, in 1971 he purchased the Pocahontas IGA store, which at one point was a top seller in Northeast Arkansas and Southeast, Missouri. He sold the store after ten years.

“Do what you enjoy doing,” said Foster, “but if you are going to do anything, do your best! It’s not only what you do, but it’s what you put into what you do.” He went on to explain that to be successful you must be conservative and start saving from the beginning. “Save something out of everything you make because you can’t count on Social Security

alone for retirement.” He invested in his first IRA account at the age of 26.

Although speaking on different topics, both Burnside and Foster expressed the importance of hard work. “If you are going to work hard, you are going to reap the benefits,” Burnside stressed. “You will be rewarded for hard work.”

“There are some things you won’t enjoy in your job,” said Foster, “but, you do what’s needed anywhere. You have to be flexible and put in the time, and learn to recognize opportunities and take them.”



Terry Burnside



Jake Foster

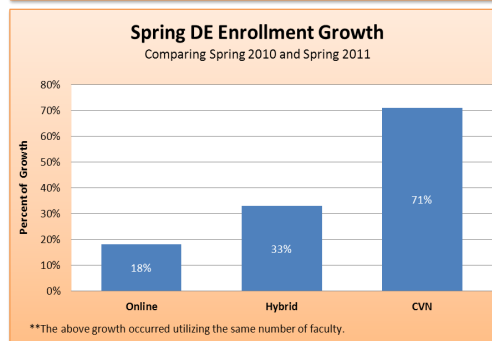
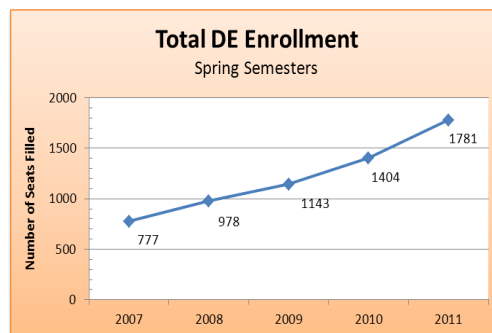
## DE Enrollment Continues to Increase

Distance education at BRTC, which is composed of online, hybrid, and compressed video (CVN) courses for all BRTC programs and certificates, has grown dramatically, according to Karen Liebhaber, Distance Education Coordinator. “Over the past five years, enrollment in spring DE courses has increased by 129% and the number of online sections has increased by 55%.”

“Spring 2011 is another trend-setter with a 27% increase in distance education enrollment from the Spring 2010 enrollment,” added Liebhaber. (See Table 1)

For spring semesters from 2007-2011, the number of individual students taking any form of a distance education course grew by 92%. The number of individual students taking online courses grew by 75%, hybrid courses by 165%, and CVN courses by 156%.

The Distance Education department is working hard to help meet the ever-increasing student demand for distance education courses. As Table 2 notates, despite an 18% growth in online seats filled, a 33% growth in hybrid seats, and a 71% increase in CVN seats, no additional faculty have been added to the BRTC Distance Education pool. Faculty are teaching more DE sections in order to address the intensifying student demand.



## Health Fair is March 8

The public is invited to attend the Annual BRTC Health Fair to be held Tuesday, March 8, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., in the Randolph County Development Center on the Pocahontas campus.

Students in BRTC’s Nursing, Dietetic, Phlebotomy, Fire Science, EMT/Paramedic, and Respiratory Care Programs will provide health screenings free of charge. The screenings will include height and weight measurements, body mass index (BMI) calculations, body composition analysis (percentage of fat vs. lean), blood pressure, blood glucose and lung function.

Local businesses will be on hand to provide health-related information and/or services. Businesses scheduled to attend are Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation, Area Agency on Aging, Lawrence Health Services, Affordable Medical Supplies, Baltz Dentistry, Medical Solutions, and many others.

Pocahontas Eye Care Clinic will be conducting vision screenings. The Randolph County Health Department will be giving free flu shots, adult Td and Tdap, and checking for anemia. Zumba Fitness instructor, Trina Swift, and Fitness Worx will also be having Zumba demonstrations throughout the day, starting at 10:00 a.m.

For more information, contact Dana Clay, 870-248-4000, ext. 4150.



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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.*

## Campus Commentary



*Dr. Jan Ziegler  
VP for Development*

BRTC is currently accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association. This means this college offers courses and degrees that are accepted and recognized by other institutions across the nation. BRTC's students can be assured that the educational programs here have been evaluated and judged by representatives from peer institutions to meet acceptable standards of quality.

Every ten years, institutions of higher education undergo an intensive period of self-study as a part of this accreditation process. BRTC received its ten-year accreditation in 2002; in April 2012, this college will once again undergo a comprehensive site visit from peer evaluators from the HLC of the North Central Association.

The self-study is a two-year undertaking. BRTC is already one year into the process. Various committees have been formed and are periodically meeting to consider how the college is doing in fulfilling its mission, and how improvements can be made. The centerpiece of the self-study is an assessment of student learning, with emphasis on continual improvement.

Also a vital part of the self-study process is the review and updating of the college's Strategic Plan. The first three sessions have been held and two additional ones are planned. These sessions involve college staff, community members, and members of the Board of Trustees and Foundation

Board, along with student representatives. Each meeting covers a different topic: 1) Growth and Enrollment Potential and Opportunities; 2) Retention and Completion Issues and Strategies; 3) Programmatic and Educational Needs; 4) Facility Challenges and Opportunities at Pocahontas and Paragould; and 5) Conclusions and Implications for BRTC: Strategic Plan 2011-2015. The process will result also in development of a new Mission Statement for BRTC.

Each session to date has examined the topic from a broad global and national perspective, narrowing down to a state and local consideration, and culminating with projections and implications for the BRTC community, which includes Randolph, Greene, Lawrence, and Clay Counties.

As it is intended to do, the act of strategic planning is yielding better understanding of where this institution rests in relation to the larger environment, of the direction this institution will move in the coming years, and of the opportunities and obstacles it will face in its quest to meet the goals it sets for itself. Input from various

stakeholders—internal and external—is yielding valuable information, suggestions, and insights.

For example, Session 1 affirmed that BRTC must never sacrifice quality for numbers or growth. Session 2 served as a reminder that accountability on the part of the student (and his/her parents, where applicable), the community, and the institution is vital to achieve success, defined as college or degree completion or retention. Session 3 confirmed that to educate students for the workforce of the future, BRTC must hold firm to its two-fold commitment to a strong liberal arts foundation coupled with advanced technical skills and knowledge in specific areas of study.

These planning sessions will conclude in early April of this year; the process for reaccreditation will conclude about a year later. But these are only beginning steps in a new cycle that will carry this institution into the next decade. It could not happen without the participation of the many individuals inside and outside the institution who are committed to education.