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PIONEER ONLINE

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EDITORIAL

THE NATION HAS BECOME DESENSITIZED

Online Editor Whitney Knight says recent jokes about a man whose face was disfigured from an attack shed an ugly light on society.

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With the primaries on the horizon, voters need to be ready. Look inside to find out deadlines for registering to vote as well as polling places in your area.

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KIDS CAMP TAKES TO THE SOCCER FIELD

Children, ages 6 to 12, recently learned about the sport of soccer in a recent Kids Camp. Turn to page 8 to find out how to enroll in upcoming classes.

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PIONEER

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

JUNE 22, 2012

WWW.OCCC.EDU/PIONEER

COVERING OCCC SINCE 1978



Graduation time

Samantha Shuman waits with her son for OCCC's GED graduation ceremony to begin.

On June 15, 74 students received a GED certificate in the College Union.

Vice President for Community Development Steven Bloomberg said a GED opens doors for adults seeking to better their lives.

He said most companies will accept a GED as long as it meets the minimum qualifications of a high school diploma.

"Without the GED, that door is not open either," he said.

For the story and more photos, see page 12.

CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

REGENTS APPROVE BUDGET FOR FY 2012-13 AT JUNE MEETING

OCCC employees receive first raise in years

JEREMY CLOUD

Editor

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The recently approved college budget for Fiscal Year 2013 has generated mixed feelings among faculty and staff, despite including allocations for raises for the first time in four years.

"Overall, I am positive about the budget for next year," said Paul Sechrist, OCCC president.

"A modest pay increase for most employees — 2.4 percent on average for regular employees, an increase to \$670 a credit hour for adjunct faculty and a 25 cent per hour raise for student employees."

The pay hike came at a cost of higher tuition and standstill department budgets.

"Flat (state) appropriations and a modest increase in tuition and fees, \$95 per credit

"...In light of the budget problems and that we all just feel lucky to have jobs, we appreciate the effort to make us feel valued."

—TAD THURSTON

OCCC ASTRONOMY AND PHYSICS PROFESSOR

hour to \$99, means that departmental budgets can stay the same."

History Professor Ray McCullar said he appreciates the raise.

"I feel the school has been ready to give us a raise but the money hasn't been there because of the economy," McCullar said.

"The college has been very responsible, I think, in not letting people go, in not cutting back on personnel or taking risks. As soon as they were able to give a raise, they are."

McCullar said while he likes the raise, he'd prefer the raise formula be need-based instead of merit-based in a limited funding situation.

"It's just my opinion, but I believe that if any group needed to receive more, younger faculty and people who are more likely to have children who may be lower paid should receive more than older faculty like myself who have been here a while and have had a chance for our salaries to build up."

Tad Thurston, astronomy and physics professor, said he appreciates the effort.

"Pretty much any faculty member would feel that it's too small. But in light of the budget problems, and that we all just feel lucky to have jobs, we appreciate the effort to make us feel valued."

"After so many years of not having raises,

See **RAISE** page 9

OPINION

EDITORIAL | When a homeless man is brutally attacked, even the CDC turns it into a joke

Society is desensitized to tragedy

Last month, a grisly headline gripped the U.S. and beyond.

Rudy Eugene, a 31-year-old Floridian allegedly under the influence of bath salt drugs, chewed off the face of Ronald Poppo, a 65-year-old homeless man, in broad daylight off a Miami highway.



WHITNEY KNIGHT

With traffic whizzing by, the cannibalistic attack lasted 18 minutes before police officers shot Eugene dead.

In that period of time, Poppo lost 75 percent of his face, including his entire left eye and the vision in his right. He remains hospitalized to this day, struggling with numerous skin graft surgeries and physical therapy sessions.

Reading this recount, did you feel a grin on your lips? No, probably not.

But sadly, many people have managed to find humor in this disgusting attack. And it is inexcusable.

As soon as news of the assault hit the Internet, most

were rightfully shocked, disgusted and appalled. But others took it upon themselves to turn the attack into a sick joke.

Headlines warning of an impending zombie apocalypse gripped the online community. Articles, even some from reputable news sources, referred to Poppo as a victim of a zombie attack.

Shortly after the incident occurred, popular blog site LiveJournal put a poll on their home page asking if users had heard about the attack and if they were worried about zombies coming.

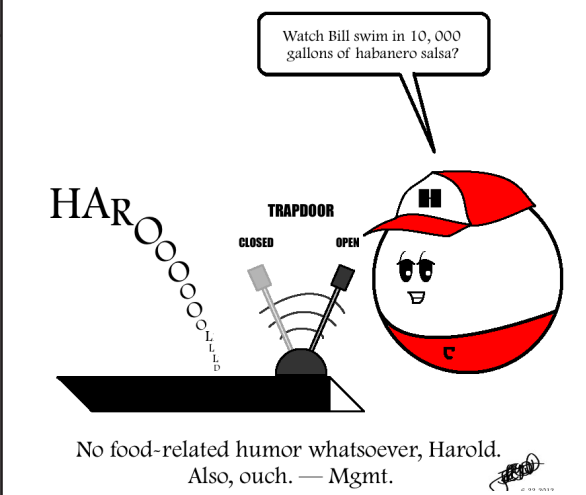
There was no solemnity. No requests for thoughts or prayers for Poppo's recovery. Just a brutal attack trivialized into another Internet joke, like cheeseburger-seeking cats or a Rick Astley redirect.

Anyone with Internet access is probably familiar with the zombie craze.

From movies and video games to a prank zombie apocalypse preparation guide posted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, undead humans are clearly the "in" thing right now.

Liking horror movie characters is one thing, but to compare an attack that nearly killed a man to a fictional monster is nauseating.

BALLIARD BILL



JEREMY CLOUD

It shows just how much our society has fallen. Instead of rallying around our downtrodden, we josh about how they got there.

Perhaps it is easy for some to turn Poppo's tragedy into a joke because he is a homeless man, with no one to step up for him and keep his story from becoming a mockery. But the victim could have been anyone: you, a friend, a family member.

Maybe people should keep that in mind next time they want to laugh at someone who nearly lost his life — and did indeed lose life as he once knew it.

—WHITNEY KNIGHT
ONLINE EDITOR

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Heat-related illnesses can be prevented by taking precautions

Check often on infants and elderly during high heat months

Oklahoma's hot summer days are on the way. Even if this summer is milder than last year, the Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) advises everyone to take precautions to protect their health against heat related illnesses that may cause heat stroke or death.

To reduce the potential for heat-related illnesses, OCCHD offers these prevention tips:

- Drink more fluids, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. You should drink more liquids while the weather is hot.

- Don't drink liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar; these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps.

- Stay indoors and, if possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help

your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat.

- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, will not prevent heat-related illness. Take a cool shower or bath, or move to an air-conditioned place to cool off.

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.

- NEVER leave anyone or pets in a closed, parked vehicle.

- Although anyone can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on infants and young children, people aged 65 or older, people who have a mental illness, and those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure.

If you must be out in the heat:

- Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours. Try to rest often in shady areas.

- Cut down on exercise during the hottest part of

the day. Whenever you exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, non-alcoholic fluids each hour. Plain water provides the best hydration.

- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.

- If you experience signs of heat stress such as dizziness, rapid heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, cramps, throbbing headache, dry skin (no sweating), chest pain, great weakness, mental changes, breathing problems, or vomiting, contact your health care provider immediately.

For more information about heat-related illnesses and heat safety tips, contact the OCCHD at 419-4246 or check out these websites: www.occhd.org, www.health.ok.gov and www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.asp.

—OKLAHOMA CITY-COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PIONEER

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The PIONEER welcomes **letters** to the editor and encourages the use of this publication as a community forum. All letters must include the author's name, address, phone number and signature. E-mail letters should include all but the signature. The PIONEER will withhold the author's

name if the request is made in writing.

The PIONEER has the right to edit all letters and submissions for length, libel and obscenity. Letters should be fewer than 250 words. Students must list their major. OCCC staff and faculty must list their work title.

Letters to the editor can be submitted to the PIONEER office, located in room 1F2 on the first floor of the Art and Humanities Building, mailed to 7777 S. May Ave., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73159, or submitted via e-mail to editor@occc.edu with a phone number for verification included. The PIONEER ONLINE also can be accessed at www.occc.edu/pioneer.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

RESTAURANT REVIEW | From breakfast bagels to dinner salads, eatery can provide every meal

Reviewer can't get enough of Panera

Many people have that one food they could live off of.

For me, that food is from Panera Bread.

Panera Bread is a restaurant most commonly known for its delicious bakery.

Whether a bagel for breakfast, a panini for lunch or pastries for dessert, it's fresh out of the oven.

Some of my favorite menu items include their signature chicken caesar sandwich, Greek salad and macaroni and cheese.

Although these sound ordinary, Panera Bread has a special way of making them elegant enough for anyone's taste buds.

In addition to specializing in fresh-baked breads, fresh salads and homemade soups, the cafe also specializes in espresso-based drinks.

And, as though that weren't enough, Panera Bread offers free WiFi service, making it a favored hangout



for both students and business people alike.

The "You Pick Two" ordering method is especially great.

Customers are given the option of a combination of two

items with the choices being half a café sandwich, a salad or a cup of soup. This allows for variation and results in more than satisfied tummies.

Panera Bread's service is almost as good as its food. It's a tasty, timely, affordable and friendly place.

And, with so many locations nationwide, there's bound to be a Panera Bread just around the corner from where you live.

For more scrumptious details, visit www.panera-bread.com.

Rating: A+

—NADIA J. ENCHASSI
COMMUNITY WRITER

STORE REVIEW | With many items under \$10, For Your Entertainment is affordable shopping

FYE offers entertainment for all

Music, movie, and video game junkies can expand their collections all in one affordable and fun store right here in OKC.

FYE, an acronym for For Your Entertainment, provides a vast variety of CDs, DVDs, Blu-rays, vinyls and video games in various gaming systems, plus other goodies that are sure to satisfy even the biggest junkies.

On a recent trip to one of the store's locations at 7301 S Pennsylvania Ave. in Oklahoma City, the exciting buy-two, get-one-for-a-dollar sale on all used CDs and DVDs was more than tempting to run my wallet dry.

With the used items being in flawless shape and rarely costing more than \$10, I was able to walk out with three DVDs for under \$20. It's hard to beat that.

One of the best things about FYE is that whether someone is a new soul or an old soul, the store provides an endless selection of both new and older releases. It is the go-to place for anyone looking for classic items from the good old days but also meets the needs of those looking for the new Adele or Maroon 5 album, or the latest "Twilight" movie, perhaps.

That's not all FYE has to offer. Apparel displaying funny sayings, video game characters and various other fun graphics is another gem FYE has to offer.

The shirts that stood out were the ones featuring Angry Birds and another one that featured St. Paddy's Pub on the front — to go with your "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia" DVD, of course.

A useful feature that FYE offers is the ability to special order a DVD or CD that they don't have in



stock. For a small fee, usually under \$10, a customer is able to order an item and FYE will inform the customer when it arrives.

So those movies or CDs that are impossible to find just became a little more possible.

Backstage Pass members are able to save good amounts of money by receiving 10 percent discounts on all items, 20 percent discounts for birthdays, exclusive offers, bonus discount days, among other features and savings for the low price of \$25 per year.

That's a one-time fee for a whole year of savings.

Having a local and affordable place that provides classic items that are hard to find and also provides selection for newer items is refreshing and stress relieving.

With the affordable, good quality, endless selection of items FYE has to offer, it is and will be for a long time my go-to place for movies, music and other items.

Rating: A

—PARIS BURRIS
STAFF WRITER

ADVISER'S 411

Meet with advisers now to enroll early

Summer classes are off and running, and for those who have not yet enrolled for the fall semester, it is important to get enrolled as soon as possible.

Classes will be filling up soon, and optimal times and days for those on a restricted schedule will be difficult to find soon.

Likewise, for students planning to attend in the fall, this is a great time to meet with one of the faculty advisers working in our office for the summer semester.

Faculty advisers can help you in the selection of your faculty-approved electives, career exploration and a variety of other needs particular to your major.

For international students who will be traveling within the U.S. and abroad this summer, it is important to come in and meet with an academic adviser to set up your fall courses.

By doing so, international students ensure their enrollment and degree/course planning is done and they can spend the rest of their summer worry free about finding the appropriate courses at the right times for their schedules.

Students who wait until the last minute to enroll may find that class availability at times that are convenient with their work and personal schedules are more difficult to find.

Enrolling early also allows you to ask important questions and get informed responses.

Students often want to know: What classes do I have left to take? Can I take an intersession course? What is online coursework like and is there online help if I have trouble? Can I enroll online? Do I need to test for course placement? When do I apply for graduation?

These are all questions the Office of Academic Advising can help you to get the answers to.

Therefore, planning ahead and meeting with an academic adviser now may ensure optimal course placement and course availability.

To set up an appointment for summer to meet with an academic adviser or a faculty adviser call 405-682-7535.

—LINDA LITTLE
TRANSFER AND ACADEMIC ADVISER
COORDINATOR

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

TELEVISION SHOW REVIEW | Talk host helps make life-changing difference in everyday peoples' lives

'Ellen Degeneres Show' scores high in daytime viewing

If laughing is something you want as part of your daily routine, you might want to try watching "The Ellen Degeneres Show."

The show, which just completed its ninth season, is full of games, guest speakers, musicians and lots of entertainment. Ellen, best known as a stand-up comedian, enjoys dancing, making her audience laugh and most importantly, helping those who need it.

Broadcast Monday through Friday, Ellen starts her hour-long show with a monologue, usually discussing a popular topic or something that has happened in her personal life. She ends it by dancing among and with her audience as her DJ Tony plays music.

After she returns to her seat, an audience participation game is usually played before her guests come out.

Ellen enjoys embarrassing her guests by playing games such as "Know or Go" in which three players stand over a hole and are dropped if they do not correctly answer a trivia question. Or she may go through audience members' Facebook accounts, finding funny and sometimes disturbing photos, and sharing them with her audience. Everyone who takes part in Ellen's games are

always rewarded with a prize.

Ellen also has hilarious ongoing segments that she rotates throughout her shows. These include segments such as "Clumsy Thumbsy" where viewers send in their autocorrected texts, "Hot Glam Girl" where viewers send in old glamour shots that were once thought to be attractive, "Wacky Album Covers" which showcase funny albums viewers have sent in.

In her most recent segment "Ellen's Dance Dares," viewers send in videos of themselves dancing behind people in public without the other person knowing. If a viewer's video is shown on the show, that person is given a \$100 JC Penney gift card.

Ellen also takes pride in scaring her guests. Whether it be having someone sneak up on them while they are being

interviewed or Ellen herself hiding in the bathroom until they appear, Ellen makes sure all her guests will be watching their backs for years to come, or at least every time they appear on her show.

In addition to having high-profile celebrity guests on her show, Ellen likes to bring in everyday people

such as Internet sensations she finds on YouTube, people

she has read or heard about on the news, or people who have been nominated as "deserving" to be on her show — for example, people who are going through financial difficulties, have lost a job, or teachers who are

simply trying to make their school a better place.

Ellen always helps these people in any way she can. This past season, Ellen picked out an audience member simply because she liked the woman's enthusiasm, brought her up on stage,

and once she found out the woman's story, Ellen ended up giving her a brand new house fully furnished and letting the woman help design it.

Perhaps the most anticipated shows are the ones in December which are referred to as "Ellen's 12 Days of Give-aways" in which she generously gives away several expensive gifts a day to each audience member to celebrate the upcoming holiday season.

The best thing about Ellen is she truly cares about our world and society.

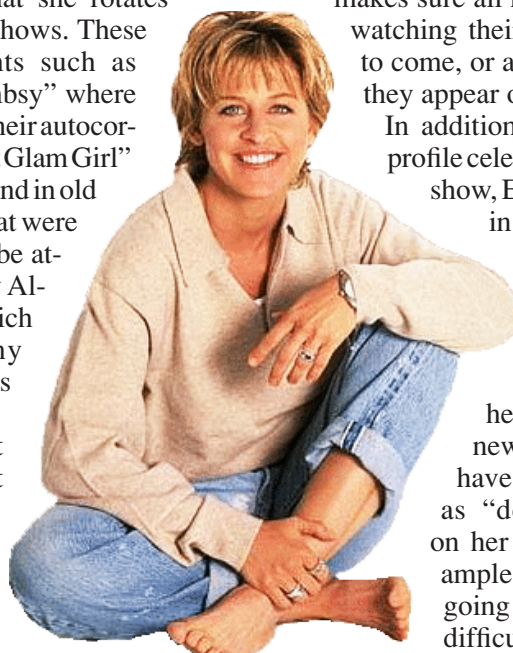
While her show is funny and entertaining, Ellen also promotes kindness and love for one another. She is not only an inspiration to the thousands of people she helps but also to the people who watch her show.

Several guests have mentioned how they have been able to get through some of the toughest times of their lives just because of the one hour of joy they receive from watching each day.

By watching the Ellen Degeneres show, I guarantee you will laugh, cry and maybe be surprised. Anything is possible.

Rating: A

—ERIN PEDEN
STAFF WRITER



TELEVISION SHOW REVIEW | Show offers viewers many reasons to watch

Vampire show still rocks after four seasons

As media proliferates — spawning not only new channels, radios stations, and publications, but new ways of producing shows and audio broadcasts, and text media — it seems strange that the more we have to consume, the less quality consumables there are.

Which is why HBO's "TruBlood" is such a wonderful treat.

The show, an adaptation of Charlaine Harris' Sookie Stackhouse series, kicked off back in 2008 with an explosive force that rocked the world. Overnight, TruBlood became an phenomenon.

But it's the staying power, and the ongoing creativity, that make this show so great. Five seasons in, and it's still getting better.

At its center, the show revolves around Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin) Bill Compton (Stephen Moyer) and Eric Northman (Alexander Skarsgard).

Sookie is a waitress from Bon Temps, La., with the "gift" of telepathy.

Unfortunately for Sookie, it's not the mind control version gifted to Charles Xavier, or Emma Frost; it's more of the "everyone screaming in my head all the time" version. Bill and Eric are vampires, and rivals for Sookie's affections.

But it's the universe Sookie inhabits that makes her interesting.

In the first episode, vampires have just recently "come out of the coffin" in response to the development of a blood substitute, and all the world is going crazy...and all the other things that hide in the night want to come out and play too.

Characters have come and gone — and in the tradition of great gothic soap operas, come again, even if they're dead — and new characters have been added.

The original core cast is surprisingly intact for a show with an astounding amount of violence in its fifth season. But the expanding cast, the new characters, keep bringing more to the table.

The trials and travails of the characters as they blaze through relationships, alliances, and feuds have made the show incredible for four years now.

And season five just blew the doors off, changing everything without losing touch with previous seasons.

So for anyone that's given the show a pass based on those first few episodes (y'all know the ones — where Paquin developed the 'simper and whimper' to an art form) go back and pick it up again.

Sookie loses her whimper, Bill outgrows that angsty exterior and Eric... gets more awesome. Cause he was always awesome.

But be warned, everything that's said about how racy the show is? That's all true. There's nudity, sex, violence, drug use, alcohol abuse...these are not your kids sparkling angst machines. These are vampires.

RATING: A

—JEREMY CLOUD
STAFF WRITER

TOP 20 MOVIES

Weekend of June 15 through 17
www.yahoo.com

1. *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*
2. *Prometheus*
3. *Rock of Ages*
4. *That's My Boy*
5. *Snow White and the Huntsman*
6. *Men in Black 3*
7. *Marvel's The Avengers*
8. *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*
9. *Moonrise Kingdom*
10. *Battleship*
11. *What To Expect When You're Expecting*
12. *The Dictator*
13. *The Hunger Games*
14. *Dark Shadows*
15. *Bernie*
16. *For Greater Glory*
17. *Intouchables*
18. *Safety Not Guaranteed*
19. *Hysteria*
20. *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GRANT FUNDS SERVICES

TRiO program serves up success for students

ERIN PEDEN

Staff Writer

staffwriter1@occc.edu

Graduate, transfer, succeed. That is the goal of TRiO Student Support Services at OCCC. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, TRiO serves 160 students at OCCC annually for a five year grant cycle.

TRiO Grant Programs Director Karolyn Chowning said the program is a great way to assist students in their aim to graduate and transfer from OCCC.

"The idea is we're an educational opportunity program," Chowning said. "It's basically a year-round program of counseling, tutoring, and supportive services."

To qualify, students must meet one of the three requirements: have a low income (qualifying for Pell grants), be a first-generation college student, or have a documented disability. Chowning says over half of students at OCCC qualify but may not realize it.

"Because about 10,000 students qualify for our services, we have a selective process," Chowning said. "The most qualified applicants would have already completed six college hours with a 2.0 or better that bear a credit."

Some of the benefits of being in the program include tutoring in almost any subject, help with course selection, finding scholarships, transferring, and much more.

“

A big focus of our program is to get students thinking where they're going to transfer to get their bachelor's degree."

—KAROLYN CHOWNING
DIRECTOR TRiO GRANT PROGRAM

All of these benefits come free to students accepted into the program.

Student Jennifer Smith said she is interested in applying for the program.

"Since I am undecided about what I want to do, I think it would be beneficial to take advantage of all the resources TRiO offers," Smith said. "I will definitely consider applying."

In addition to being part of the program, students must have a learning support meeting every semester with an academic specialist.

"A big focus of our program is to get students thinking where they're going to transfer to get their bachelor's degree," Chowning said. "Lots of times students don't think about that until their last semester and it turns out if they would have made a different choice for a requirement, it would do double duty at another college."

In addition, TRiO takes transfer trips, does community service projects, hosts workshops and guest speakers, and provides information to help students with seeking financial aid and filling out applications.



Chowning says a main benefit of being in the program is the attention students receive.

"I think the number one thing you get from us that you can't get anywhere else is that free one on one tutoring where it's just you, a scheduled appointment, and people aren't floating around," Chowning said.

While applications are taken accepted year-round, students wishing to be in the program for Fall 2012 should apply before the end of the summer semester. If you aren't accepted into the program the first time, keep trying.

"Don't be discouraged," Chowning said. "Apply again every semester until you are in," she said. "We want you to be successful and we're here to help students graduate and transfer. Stop by anytime and ask questions. We are a friendly place."

For more information or to find an application for the program, visit www.occc.edu/trio or stop by the TRiO office located next to the Bursar. Chowning encourages students to visit anytime.

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER SERVICES HELPS MAKE GOOD IMPRESSIONS

Being prepared helps when finding employment

PARIS BURRIS

Staff Writer

staffwriter2@occc.edu

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are not so private when it comes to current or potential employers. Employers can squeeze through the privacy barriers of their employee and applicant profiles. You heard right. Those photos and posts from the weekend are not safe from the eyes of employers.

"Employers look. They really do," Debra Vaughn, Student Employment and Career Services director said.

"When I mention this, students are just like, 'What? I didn't know that.'" Vaughn said.

Diversified Studies major Mark Walkup was surprised to find this out. "I personally have never gotten in trouble over something posted online, but I would be pretty upset if I did. That's none of their business," Walkup said.

One of the main purposes of Vaughn's department is to help students make the very best impression that they can and to get their foot in the door to their career path. The department has helped over 7,000 students do just that.

By simply going online or stopping by the department, students are able to learn how to build a resume, and cover letter, develop interview skills and tips. Also students find opportunities to apply for both on-campus and off-campus jobs. The list doesn't end there, Vaughn said.

Through occc.optimalresume.com, creating a resume is easy, she said. The website contains a large selection of resume examples and formats. The department also allows students to stop by in order to get hands-on help building a resume, and provides a guidebook with all the information a student needs to apply for a job.

This includes the do's and don'ts for interviews, proper dress attire, resume and cover letter examples, and even instructions on how to tie a neck tie.

By simply creating an account and doing a simple search, students can find hundreds of job postings through collegecentral.com/occc in almost every type of field imaginable.

The website allows for students to post their resumes that are viewable to multiple employers. So, not only are students able to look for employers, but employers are able to see the resumes of the applicants.

Internships are also easier to find through the

department's partnership with greatergrads.com.

It's as simple as going to the website and doing a simple search. From there, students are provided information on how to get started with internship opportunities. Career categories include art, business, graphic design, and public relations among many other opportunities. If a student is unsure of what career field they are interested in pursuing, the department offers a way to get an idea.

A program called Discover provides an easy, online quiz that helps determine the individual's interests and what career fields may fulfill those interests. To do this, a student just needs to stop by the department, located in OCCC's Main Building, and ask for the login information. It's that easy.

Whether it is by visiting the department or going online, students have many opportunities available to help them succeed. Just remember, she said, when applying for a job, keep the unimpressive Facebook or Twitter posts to a minimum.

For more information on these services, contact Debra Vaughn by email at dvaughn@occc.edu, by phone at 405-682-1611, ext. 7362 or stop by the Student Employment and Career Services Department in the Main Building.

MORE THAN 200 PARTICIPANTS FLOCK TO CAMPUS

SuperSprint Triathlon makes annual return



Eric McCrary during the 5K run, the final leg of the SuperSprint Triathlon at OCCC. McCrary was the first to finish the triathlon with a time of 57:48. McCrary said he tries to come out every year.

MITCHELL RICHARDS
Sports Writer
sportswriter@occc.edu

The OCCC SuperSprint Triathlon made its annual return to the campus Saturday, June 8. Over 200 participants from Oklahoma, Texas, Indiana, and Tennessee competed in the triathlon consisting of a 500 meter swim, a 12 mile bike ride and a 5K run.

The overall winner was Eric McCrary, 24, of Catoosa with a total time of 57:48. The female division winner was Debbie Brooks, 51, of Oklahoma City with a time of 1:07:26.

One of the most inspiring parts of the race was 54 year old John Shelton, a single-leg amputee, who finished the race 75th in the men's division and 85th overall with a time of 1:19:03.

Just before jumping into the pool to begin his race, Shelton said the hardest part of the triathlon was changing his prosthetic legs for the different events during the transition time, something he never practices. Shelton said this was probably his tenth time participating in the OCCC SuperSprint.

"Triathlon is a lifestyle that promotes health and love," Shelton said. Shelton said his biggest problem in competing in triathlons is his health and his piling medical problems. "Just when you think you're kicking ass, something happens," Shelton said.

Shelton said he participates in races for fun and to stay healthy. When asked what time he was hoping to finish with, Shelton said, "Wherever I end up." He then pointed out his friend who already had begun swimming and confidently said "I'm going to pass him in the pool. He'll beat me on the bike, but I'm going to pass him in the pool."

As Shelton later crossed the finish line, he was showered with applause and encouragement from both the onlookers and his peers.

Prior to the race, both Kathryn Bray, 27, and Katy Brown, 23, who have competed in similar events before, were not nervous as they were preparing for the race. They were both hoping to finish with a time somewhere around an hour.

Brown said it was her competitive nature that got her to compete. Brown finished third place in the women's division, 50th overall and Bray finished 12th in the women's division.

The youngest competitor was 9 and the oldest was 72.

Three young men competed in the 11 to 14-year-old division; Ash Brayer, 11, Garrett Elmore, 14, and Dylan Mitchell, 11. All were a part of H.I.S. Racing Team, a racing team based out of Oklahoma City promoting triathlon involvement to kids ages 7 to 19.

Brayer said his favorite part of the triathlon is running, Mitchell said his is swimming, and Elmore jokingly said his is "the end." It was Brayer's first triathlon, finishing 82nd among males and 98th overall with a time of 1:20:19. Elmore and Mitchell have run in triathlons previously and finished 32nd and 132nd overall respectively.

Friends and family members lined the transition areas and the finish line to cheer on their loved ones and to encourage the 144 men and 66 women who finished the race.

After crossing the finish line, it was a place for exhausted racers to regain their bearings and energy, many suffering from exhaustion and cramps and some even vomiting as volunteers handed out water, snacks, and sports drinks. Full race results are listed at dgroadracing.com.



Megan McKee starts out on her bicycle for the second part of the SuperSprint Triathlon on OCCC campus June 8. The triathlon consisted of a 500-meter swim, a 12-mile bike ride, and a 5K run. One hundred and forty-four men and 66 women completed the race.



Swimmers race through the first part of the SuperSprint Triathlon, on campus June 8. Over 200 participants from Oklahoma, Texas, Indiana and Tennessee competed in the triathlon.

VOTING IS A RIGHT MORE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STUDENT LEADER SAYS

Oklahomans encouraged to register, vote

MORGAN BEARD

Online Writer

pioneermedia@occc.edu

Election season is in the air and the time to vote is right around the corner.

Aside from simply making the informed decision to cast a ballot, voters need to know how to become eligible to vote and when to cast that vote.

For those who are unregistered, the process is no more difficult than filling out an application.

According to the Oklahoma State Election Board website, applications can be found at libraries, tag agencies, and other public locations such as OCCC's Student Life office. An application also is available for download at www.ok.gov/elections/Voter_Registration/Voter_Registration_Application_Form.

State Election Board Secretary Paul Ziriaux said voters need to be registered 24 days in advance of any given election. For the upcoming state primary on June 26, the deadline has passed.

"Unfortunately unregistered voters will not be able to vote in the primary, but as long as the application is sent in and postmarked before the 24-day deadline, they can participate in upcoming elections,"

Ziriaux said.

To become eligible to vote in the state runoff election Aug. 28, unregistered voters need to send in an application by Aug. 3. To vote in the general election Nov. 6, the deadline is Oct. 12.

OCCC College Republicans President Zach Sumner said it takes no time to become registered.

"It's so simple," Sumner said. "You just print out the form, fill it out and send it in. Super simple, super convenient."

Ziriaux said he urges Oklahoma citizens to become registered. He said voting is a right that should be taken advantage of.

"I think Americans too often take the right to vote for granted ..." he said. "It's a right that men and women have fought, bled, and died for."

"They give us the freedom to vote for our government so it's very important, in my opinion, that the citizens of the United States take responsibility and get out there and vote."

For those who are registered and plan to vote, the traditional assigned polling place may have changed.

Every 10 years, the re-drawing of district lines for the U.S. Congress, State Senate and State House of Representatives are conducted to ensure equal district

populations, Ziriaux said.

"Following the redistricting process of 2011, many voters had to be assigned to different polling places."

For voters who have not voted yet in 2012, we encourage them to confirm their precinct assignment and polling place," Ziriaux said.

For more information on voter registration in Oklahoma, visit the Oklahoma State Election Board website at www.ok.gov/elections/Voter_Registration.

The 411 on voting

Eligibility

A person who is eligible to register to vote must be at least 18 years old, a U.S. citizen and a resident of Oklahoma.

How to Register

Fill out a voter registration application available at your County Election Board, post offices, tag agencies, libraries and many other public locations. You also may download an application form. You must sign and date the oath printed on the form. When you sign the voter registration application form, you swear that you are eligible to register to vote.

Changing Your Registration

If you need to change your name, your address or your political affiliation, you must fill out another voter registration application form. You may change your registration at any time with one exception. You may not change your political affiliation during the period from April 1 through Aug. 31, inclusive, in any even-numbered year. The last day on which you may change your political affiliation before the closed period is March 31; the first day on which you may change your political affiliation after the closed period is Sept. 1.

Voter Identification Card

You do not become a registered voter until the county election board in the county where you reside has approved your application. When your application is approved, the county election board will mail a voter identification card to you. Your voter identification card lists your name, address, political affiliation and the polling place for your voting precinct. When you receive your voter identification card, look at it carefully and report any errors to the county election board immediately. Keep your voter identification card in a safe place and always take it with you when you go to vote.

When to Register

You may submit your voter registration application form at any time. However, voter identification cards cannot be issued during the 24 days prior to an election. If your registration application is received by the county election board during the 24 days before an election, you will not receive your voter identification card until after the election. If you will become 18 during the 60 days before an election, you may apply for voter registration between 25 and 60 days before the election.

For additional information about voting in Oklahoma, contact your local county election board or the State Election Board at 405-521-2391 or info@elections.ok.gov.

— www.ok.gov/elections/Voter_Registration

IS IT IMPORTANT TO VOTE?



"I think it's important so everyone has a decision in who the president is. A lot of people complain about what's not right and what they don't like but you can't really complain unless you put your two cents in."

—TINICKIA ROBINSON
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
FRESHMAN



"A big problem is a lot of youth think, 'What's the point? Why should I vote if someone much bigger than me is going to vote against what I think?' But the fun topic is whether or not the electoral college works — which it doesn't."

—JOHN BOONE
UNDECIDED FRESHMAN



"It's black and white. You either express your right to vote, or you don't. The bottom line is you need to. It's very important. I don't know how to explain it, but it is."

—ALBERTO BORREGO
ENGINEERING SOPHOMORE

CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

SPORTS

SPORTS | Soccer camp brings kids kicking and screaming

Summer youth sports continue

MITCHELL RICHARDS

Sports Writer

sportswriter@occc.edu

Coach Alli Cummings is not easy to intimidate—even when surrounded by two dozen pre-teen soccer players. She was one of the leaders when the OCCC Recreation and Fitness Center recently hosted their soccer camp as one of the many youth sports camps offered this summer.

Students from the ages of 6 to 12 enjoyed the week-long camp held at the soccer fields on campus.

The campers were playing various small-sided games as Alli Cummings, one of the coaches, looked on and gave instruction.

Cummings said there were 22 kids in her 6-to-9 age group, and another 15 in the 10-to-12 age group.

“It’s hard getting them to keep their hands to themselves. Other than that, it’s a good group of kids,” Cummings said about the challenges of coaching 22 children at a time.

Respect and sportsmanship are two important aspects taught at the camp.

One of the players fell and hurt herself during a drill and both teams stopped to make sure she was all right, then clapped for her when she got up to keep playing.

Cummings works for the Recreation and Fitness Center and has never played soccer, but doesn’t let it slow her down from being heavily involved in the soccer camp.

The campers enjoyed a beautiful sunny morning, playing on the green soccer fields along Faculty Circle.

The campers were busy enjoying the games and each other’s company, laughing and encouraging each other along during the drills.

One of the campers, Braxton, 7, normally plays on his recreational soccer team the Wildcats. Braxton said his favorite part of camp was “learning from the coaches.”

Braxton said he has been playing soccer for three or four years and prefers playing defense over offense.

Another camper, Brooklyn, 7, said her favorite part of camp was the opportunity to “get to learn.”

Brooklyn proudly wears pink soccer cleats and is a member of the Jag-



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Kristaffer, 9, jumps cones as part of a fitness obstacle course on June 14 in the OCCC gym. Soccer was the emphasis for the youth camp for the week. Children ages 6 to 12 enjoyed the week-long camp held on campus.

uars recreational team.

She said she didn’t know how long she has been playing soccer, but she loves playing defense.

Most of the day’s activities included small-sided, two-on-two games and scrimmages.

The Recreation and Fitness Center is hosting youth summer camps throughout the summer, each highlighting a different sport.

Future sports include baseball, golf,

“It’s hard getting them to keep their hands to themselves. Other than that, it’s a good group of kids.”

—ALLI CUMMINGS
SUMMER YOUTH CAMP COACH

swimming and volleyball for a cost of \$35-55, according to the Recreation and Fitness Center website. Many of the campers are participating in multiple sports camps.

For more information about upcoming camps, visit the Recreation and Fitness Center’s website at occc.edu/rf or call 405-682-7860.

UPCOMING INTRAMURALS EVENTS

June 25 - June 29: Youth Golf Camp. For more information, call the Wellness Center at 405-682-1611, ext. 7310.

July 9 - 13: Youth Competitive Swimming Camp. For more information, call the Recreation and Fitness Center at 405-682-7860.

July 16 - 20: Youth Volleyball Camp. For more information, call the Recreation and Fitness Center at 405-682-7860.

July 16 - 20: Youth Soccer Camp. For more information, call the Recreation and Fitness Center at 405-682-7860.

July 23 - 27: Youth Cheer and Dance Camp. For more information, call the Recreation and Fitness Center at 405-682-7860.

July 23 - 27: Youth Flag Football Camp. For more information, call the Recreation and Fitness Center at 405-682-7860.

All event news is due
Monday by 5 p.m. for
inclusion in the next issue.
Email
sportswriter@occc.edu.

Have sports news you
want to share?

Email Mitchell at:

sportswriter@occc.edu,
or call 405-682-1611,
ext. 7676

THE PIONEER SPORTS PODCAST

WITH
MORGAN BEARD
AND
BRANDON WILLIS
LISTEN WEEKLY AT
[WWW.OCCC.EDU/
PIONEER](http://WWW.OCCC.EDU/PIONEER)

Computer misuse and theft top crime

JOEY STIPEK

Special Projects Reporter
staffwriter4@occc.edu

Computer misuse and grand larceny top this week's crime report.

On May 30, OCCC Police Officer Gordon Nelson responded to a call about a person viewing inappropriate material on a library computer. According to the report filed, when Nelson arrived, Library Services Director Barbara King said a man had been viewing inappropriate material on one of the library's computers and pointed out the man, student Pearl Robinson, 57.

An open records search in Oklahoma's State and

Violent Crime Registry shows Robinson is a registered sex offender.

Nelson and OCCC Police Officer Clifford Evans approached Robinson after looking at the computer monitor and confirming he was viewing inappropriate material.

Nelson instructed Robinson to turn off the computer and provide identification.

Robinson complied with Nelson's request and was subsequently escorted from the library without further incident.

A grand larceny theft occurred on campus in parking lot A on June 5 according to a report also filed by Nelson.

Nelson responded to a possible theft of a compressor

from the back of a pickup. Witness Josh Walker said he is familiar with the truck and confirmed the theft.

"It was very peculiar to see someone take equipment from the back of the truck," Walker said.

Walker described the suspect as a white male, wearing blue jeans, a white T-shirt, and a baseball cap, with scruffy facial features, between 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall, in his late 40s to early 50s.

He said the suspect drove off in a dark blue Nissan Xterra with a newer body style with two Life Church stickers on the rear window.

Walker said he notified the Life Church South Campus of the crime.

He said he "would like to see the suspect brought to justice."

Raise: OCCC regents approve modest employee raises

Continued from page 1

we're pretty much ecstatic."

Thurston said he has another reason to be happy about the raises.

"The market for jobs at the collegiate level is always tight but after the recession revenues in general went off a cliff — took a nosedive — we were supported by (federal) stimulus funds for two years.

"But when the stimulus ran out, things started to look a little more bleak. So we're happy to see it start to turn around."

Thurston said he sees an on-going raise as a good sign for the overall economic situation.

"I don't think the college would have done this if it wasn't sustainable. This administration prefers to take small, conservative steps. They could have done it a couple years back, before the recession really hit, but they didn't.

"And a lot of community colleges did keep hiking up faculty and staff salaries and benefits, and got into some trouble when the recession hit.

"But I think the college did a good job, seeing the coming storm and planning to weather it."

Scott Hader, math lab assistant, said the raise is "great."

"I realize they haven't been able to get us raises for the last couple of years and it's wonderful to get one now."

“Every bit helps but a 25 cent per hour raise isn't really going to help that much.”

—SCOTT HADER
OCCC MATH LAB ASSISTANT

But Hader said he knows the raises won't immediately make things better.

"The issue is inflation and trying to keep up with everything — especially for those of us who have student loans, and are trying to pay them off."

Hader said he hopes the raises become a more common occurrence.

"Every bit helps, but a 25 cent per hour raise isn't really going to help much. But if that's 25 cents a year, every year, then we can get back to a point where it's enough to help."

In fact, Hader said he'd prefer a series of yearly incremental raises over a single large raise, "unless the large raise was just ridiculous, like 10 to 15 times as large as the small raise."

"If it would put us all up at a big increase that could support us through further inflation, then yeah. But since that's not really feasible, I'd rather take small but steady raises."

Randy Coates, business and finance professor, spoke along similar lines.

"It's nice to be appreciated," he said, "but while that raise on adjunct pay makes the college competitive with other colleges for adjunct pay, it doesn't make

being an adjunct a viable full-time job."

Adjunct, or part-time professors, received a \$15 increase, bringing their

pay rate from \$655 per credit hour to \$670 per credit hour.

Coates said while the money is a factor, it's not the only factor.

"I enjoy teaching and passing on what I've learned in 40 years in my field. I'm retired and adjuncting provides a nice supplement to my pension and Social Security.

"While I probably wouldn't be able to keep teaching if they stopped paying me tomorrow, I recognize that you can't make a full time living doing nothing but adjuncting.

"So that raise is appreciated, but to adjuncts it's just a little more money in the supplement to whatever it is they do for a living," he said.

Cathy Bowman, Macintosh computers technician, said she's happy about the raise.

"It's nice to have. I wasn't expecting it, just like I wasn't expecting the stipend last year, so it's a nice surprise."

Bowman said she thinks the raise will help in the long term, even if growth isn't consistently sustainable from year to year.

"I mean, just look at retirement. For faculty and staff working toward a pension,

that's a percentage of income. So a raise means a bigger number any way you look at it."

Coates said overall the faculty and staff he's spoken to feel pleased about the way the administration is handling the budget.

"I'm really glad that President Sechrist and the rest of the administration has done such a terrific job of managing the

finances here at OCCC.

"It's probably one of the best financially managed institutions I've been associated with. And it's because of their good management that they're able to give us this little bonus, and we're glad to have it."

To view the latest college budget, including the salaries of college employees, visit www.occc.edu/pioneer.

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CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Making the cut



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

A worker for Skinner Masonry works on trimming and notching concrete masonry units for the new theater. Larry Barnes, Project Manager for OCCC, said the notching is necessary for I-beam placement.

COMMUNITY | OFI clinics offered throughout summer

Film Institute ready for action

NADIA J. ENCHASSI

Community Writer

communitywriter@occc.edu

OCCC's Oklahoma Film Institute is presenting OFI Cinema Clinics throughout the month of June this summer.

Gray Frederickson, artist in residence and instructor, said OFI originally began with Professor Rick Lippert in 1999 as a three week course of full immersion in the filmmaking process.

"It was the first time that any school in this part of the country offered a course on how to actually make a movie," he said.

However, Frederickson said the course was recently re-designed as individual clinics to allow people to enter the specific areas of filmmaking that most interest them. This method has proven to be more effective as it requires less time and tuition, as well. And, as a result of the success, it is being repeated again this year.

Clinics are held from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for three days in the Visual and Performing Arts Center. Thus far, clinics have included production June 7 through 9, script writing June 14 through 16, and directing

“

It was the first time that any school in this part of the country offered a course on how to actually make a movie.”

—GRAY FREDERICKSON

OCCC ARTSIST IN RESIDENCE

June 21 through 23.

Frederickson said they've gone well despite some glitches with registration.

"The first one went pretty OK," he said. "For my production class, we had a total of 11 people show up.

"Registration is a little tricky, though," Frederickson said.

"People can't seem to figure out how to sign up, so we've lost a lot of potential participants because of that."

In fact, the cinematography clinic that was scheduled June 25 through 27 has been cancelled due to lack of participants, he said.

Yet, the last of the clinics this semester will be editing and is to take place June 28 through 30 in the college's new state of the art Avid Editing Lab.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of non-linear editing on new Avid

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Loan Disbursement

Final loan disbursement date for the summer semester is June 22. For further information, contact the Financial Aid office at 405-682-7525.

Graduation Application Deadline

The graduation application deadline for summer 2012 is June 22. For more information, contact Records and Graduation Services at 405-682-7512.

Christians On Campus

Christians on Campus is hosting a Bible study session from noon until 12:45 p.m., June 25, in room 1C3. Everyone is invited to come. For more information, text or call James Kennedy at 405-314-7739.

New Student Orientation

Student Life will host a New Student Orientation session for the summer semester from from 2:30 to 5 p.m., June 27, in CU3. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet fellow students, take a campus tour, become familiar with available resources and services and more. For further information, contact Student Life at 405-682-7523.

Job Interview Tips Presentation

Student Employment and Career Services will be hosting a 30-minute Job Interview Tips presentation at 12:30 p.m. on June 28 in 1G7 of the Main Building. Attendees will learn how to prepare for potential job interviews by becoming familiar with professional interviewing etiquette; how to dress professionally; and "Optimal Interviewing," an online program featuring practice interview questions. For further information, contact Student Employment and Career Services at 405-682-7519.

Tuition Fee Waiver

Tuition Fee Wavier applications for the Fall 2012 semester are now available in the Financial Aid Office. Completed applications must be submitted before 5 p.m., July 20. For more information, call Student Financial Support Services at 405-682-7525.

All Highlights are due Monday by noon for inclusion in the next issue.

Email your event to communitywriter@occc.edu or drop by the Pioneer office located at AH Entry 2 in room 1F2.

Media Composers, the standard in the cinema and commercial industry, Fredrickson

Tuition for each clinic is \$300, and enrollment is necessary. Frederickson said registration is available online, by mail, and now even at the door.

"I tell people to just show up, and we'll figure out a way to get them in," he said. "And, so far, they have."

For more information, contact OFI at 405-682-7847.

CLASSIFIEDS

Pioneer classified advertising is free to all enrolled OCCC students and employees for any personal classified ad. Ad applications must be submitted with IDs supplied by 5 p.m. Fridays prior to the next publication date. For more information, call the Ad Manager at 405-682-1611, ext. 7674, or e-mail adman@occc.edu.

MISCELLANEOUS

BABY ITEMS FOR SALE: Fisher Price infant to toddler blue baby rocker w/ activity bar, barely used: \$20. Slightly used clean Jumperoo with accessories: \$50. Bright Starts baby activity gym, new: \$15. wickitiwack@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE: Limited edition wakeboard, still packaged: \$200; new, limited edition Jim Beam bean bag/cornhole toss game, \$150. 405-818-0083.

MUST SELL: 1995 Vulcan 750 171K (needs carb kit and fuel pump) and Vulcan 750. Both are parts bikes. Not running. \$1,000 for both. Text 405-532-6262 for more information.

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THIS WEEK'S PIONEER PUZZLE

Movie Actresses 1

Find and circle all of the Movie Actresses that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Jodie Foster won an Oscar.

A L C O N N E L L Y H T H D W
D A E E O S I A L N A B N A O
A N E R R I M N D O T L E V R
M E E I L O J G N T H U L I T
S H E R O O M E A S A N L S L
T C U S A C K Y M U W T A E A
G N I N N A F N R H A E I T P
H U N T E R N I O R Y B T C C
N E G S H K O U D I A E F U T
H Y O U E O R Q C C H B T B W
Y L H E G E M A M C A H K E A
C R N T T I Z P N I B C N N T
E E R S E A N A S E L N A I S
R L O E I L L O R O A E W N O
A F M D B B B T B S N D S G N

ADAMS, Amy	CUTHBERT, Elisha	LANE, Diane
ALBA, Jessica	DAVIS, Hope	LANGE, Jessica
ALLEN, Joan	DENCH, Judi	MCDORMAND, Frances
BARRYMORE, Drew	DIAZ, Cameron	MIRREN, Helen
BENING, Annette	FANNING, Dakota	MOORE, Demi
BERRY, Halle	FOSTER, Jodie	PALTROW, Gwyneth
BIEL, Jessica	GUGINO, Carla	PAQUIN, Anna
BLANCHETT, Cate	HATHAWAY, Anne	RICCI, Christina
BLETHYN, Brenda	HUNTER, Holly	SWANK, Hilary
BLUNT, Emily	HUSTON, Anjelica	THERON, Charlize
CLOSE, Glenn	JOLIE, Angelina	THOMPSON, Emma
CONNELLY, Jennifer	KEENER, Catherine	WATSON, Emily
CUSACK, Joan		

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OCCC GIVES CERTIFICATES TO 74 STUDENTS AT JUNE 15 CEREMONY

GED graduate, 45, says it's never too late

JOEY STIPEK

Special Projects Writer

Forty-five-year-old Weldon R. Johnson waited for the moment to walk across the stage and receive his high school diploma after dropping out of school 27 years ago.

On June 15, he received his GED certificate along with 73 other graduates at a ceremony held in OCCC's College Union.

With his wife and 6-year-old daughter in attendance, Johnson reflected on the reasons he dropped out of school so many years ago, which included being the product of a broken home, gang involvement and substance abuse.

"... I never knew [my biological father], and my stepdad who raised me was a military man," Johnson said.

"He was a weekend alcoholic. He would do things while we were growing up — he'd pull a gun out and set it on the table with three shells ..."

Johnson said his prior background and lack of education kept him from being able to get a job.

"I was unemployed," he said. "I couldn't get a job due to my past ... just being a heathen."

Johnson said he was prompted to change his life two years ago after an epiphany hit him one morning.

"I was woken out of my sleep by a voice, telling me to write a book, 'Heaven is Highering,'" Johnson said.

"You have to understand — me writing a book [after] only completing one credit of high school English didn't sound normal."

Johnson said after he finished a manuscript of his book he became acquainted with a publisher.

"I told God, 'I didn't know how to write a book' — I didn't even finish English. Why don't you get someone else to write it?"

Johnson said his publisher and editor, who later became his wife, urged him to go back to school to obtain his GED.

"You know if I can write a book, I can go back to school," he said. "I'm at a point in my life now where it's like, why not? I used to think four years was a long time but now after being a parent and raising children, four years goes by pretty quick."

Johnson started adult basic education classes at OCCC in September.

"I passed everything with flying colors except math," he said. "English



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Weldon Johnson with his wife Victoria and daughter Sara waited until he was 45 to get his GED. He said he is proof it's never too late to better your life.

was my worst subject in high school, yet English was the best grade I got."

The cost of obtaining a GED

Currently OCCC serves 3,000 students in 18 different locations across the metro area, including the newly renovated Capitol Hill Center and the Family and Community Education Center, making them the largest service provider for basic adult education in Oklahoma.

In an email interview, Community Outreach and Education Director Jessica Martinez-Brooks said Oklahoma is not providing matching funding for basic adult education in the upcoming fiscal year.

"We teach adults basic literacy skills so they can effectively communicate with their child's doctor, teacher, and their employers," she said. "We are creating better workers, better parents, better citizens."

However, she said, the program's growth must be curtailed because of the loss of state funding.

Vice President for Community Development Steven Bloomberg said OCCC receives funding for adult basic education traditionally in two ways.

"We receive money that flows through from the federal government to fund GED. In the past, with the exception of



CHRIS JAMES/PIONEER

Darin Morgan, with grandmother Carolyn, gets a last-minute touch up before walking across the stage to receive his GED June 15 at OCCC.

last year, we received money from the state," he said. "Our federal allocation actually went up because of the size of service center we are. I believe our allocation is about \$706,194."

Bloomberg said OCCC has no plans to cut services for GED. "... At the same time, without the \$205,000, we're also not expanding to the point we're like to either."

Bloomberg said considering the outreach OCCC has with adult basic education, the cuts are alarming.

"You want to make sure you do everything you can do to protect that,

because in many instances it's either us or nothing for a lot of those students."

Brooks said having a GED is more important than ever due to changes in financial aid. "... Beginning July 1, students will have to have a high school diploma or GED in order to receive and qualify for financial aid."

Bloomberg said obtaining a GED opens doors for adults seeking to better their lives.

"There's about 98 percent of companies that will accept the GED if it has a minimum qualification of a high school diploma," he said.

"Without the GED, that door is not open either.

"I always tell people that it opens doors. Without that step in your life, you cannot get through.

"That's why it's so important because it opens doors to so many other things for you as a student, a person, a parent, as a spouse. It's just so important.

"I just can't overstate how important it is for somebody to take that step."

Achieving Your Goals

Adult Basic Education Instructor Susan Bernard said she is inspired as an instructor by her students.

"It is always exhilarating when I get the news that one of my students has passed the GED test," she said. "I know that I have helped someone change his or her life for the better."

As for Johnson, he said he plans to start a restaurant directory information business and take a few business courses at OCCC.

"I love the food business. I love preaching and I love helping people," he said. "I want to feed the people."

Johnson said his advice is simple to anybody considering dropping out of high school or college.

"Don't quit. Don't wait until you're 45 like I did," he said.

"Four years is really not that long of a time. If you look back from four years where you are today — look at how much you've grown in that period of time.

Your education is for you. It's not for anybody else," Johnson said with a huge grin.

For more information about GED classes at OCCC, call 405-686-OCCC (6222).