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EDITORIAL

ALL WAITSTAFF SHOULD BE TIPPED WELL

Photographer Ethan Cooper says regardless of the quality of service received, waitstaff should be given at least a 10 percent gratuity. See inside.

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NEWS

STUDENT LOAN DEBT NOT EASY TO PAY OFF

Editor Bryce McElhaney and Senior Writer Jorge Krzyzaniak take a look at how many years it typically takes to pay back student loans. Turn inside for more.

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SPORTS

DANCE CLASS OPEN TO ALL SKILL LEVELS

Even those with no dance background can join OKC Dance Crew, said Team Instructor Elizabeth Hobi. Learn more about the class inside.

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COMMUNITY

MILITARY CLUB WELCOMES ALL BACKGROUNDS

Helping military members, veterans and families get the help they need is the goal of the Military Student Association. Find out more about the club on page 10.

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PIONEER

OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FEB. 20, 2015

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COVERING OCCC SINCE 1978

Music makers



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Music majors Collin Crull and Chance Martin express their musical skills in OCCC's VPAC on Feb. 11. Martin said he and Crull were just "messing around." "This isn't real practice" he said.

AP history proposal sparks controversy

Professors disagree with bill that aims to change advanced high school curriculum

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One OCCC history professor believes while legislators are competent and can do their jobs, he also believes they should leave teaching in the classroom and allow him to do his job as well.

Some history and government professors on campus disagree

"I think most people who major in history do so because they find a story compelling, and I feel insulted. I believe these legislators are well-meaning, but they're mistaken."

—RAY MCCULLAR
 OCCC HISTORY PROFESSOR

with a proposed law that would withdraw funding for Advanced Placement courses in U.S. history taught in Oklahoma public high schools.

History professor Ray McCullar is one. McCullar said there are many good things to celebrate in American history, but that

doesn't mean the country has done everything perfectly.

"I think most people who major in history do so because they find a story compelling, and I feel insulted," McCullar said.

"I believe these legislators are well-meaning, but they're mistaken."

Oklahoma House of Representatives Education Committee members voted to ban Advanced Placement U.S. History courses from high schools on Tuesday, February 17.

The vote, 11-4, which carried the argument that the course teaches "what is bad about America," would prohibit the current state-funded AP history courses taught in high school, according to media reports.

Political Science Professor

Sharon Vaughan said Advanced Placement classes benefit students.

"Some of the best students I've had are the students who have completed AP History and the AP Government courses in high school," she said.

She said she knows this because she teaches introduction to American Federal Government, a freshman course required of all degree-seekers.

Vaughan said it's important for students to learn to look at both sides of things like American History to become critical thinkers.

"It's not always positive – you have to look at the good with the bad," she said.

See **BILL** page 9

OPINION

EDITORIAL | Writer says maybe restaurants should charge gratuity up front

Tip all waitstaff – good and bad

Not too long ago a customer at an Applebee’s refused to leave his waiter a reasonable tip because he felt the employee did not deserve the money.

The customer wrote on the receipt, “I give God 10 percent, why do you get 18?” and left the waiter no tip.

While I do not know the circumstances of what happened or how well the waiter did his job, I still



ETHAN COOPER

believe even if the waiter’s service wasn’t satisfactory, he should have at least received a 10 percent tip.

You would think in this day and age people would be more considerate toward others and treat everyone like a human being.

To some, a waiter is just another person to mistreat because they feel entitled to do so.

While the whole Applebee’s tipping fiasco happened a few years ago, people should still be reminded regularly on how to tip properly.

And those who never tip should consider doing so when they dine out at a restaurant.

Is anyone legally required to tip anyone?

Nope. It’s voluntary.

But waiters deserve money for giving you service, bad or good. Surprisingly some customers assume the price of their meal also covers the service they receive from waiters.

This is not true.

The money for the food is for the food. The tip customers leave behind is meant to pay for the service received by the waiter.

Under federal law, the minimum wage for tipped employees, like bartenders and waitresses, is just \$2.13 an hour.

Employers are supposed to make up the difference if tipped workers aren’t earning the state’s regular minimum wage when their tips and wages are combined.

Unfortunately this doesn’t always happen.

So the amount of money a waiter earns is varied by how busy the restaurant is and how well they are tipped.

While the majority of people want to tip generously, most folks just don’t know how. Customers should tip somewhere between 15 to 25 percent of their total bill when going out to eat at restaurants.

There are a number of tipping calculator apps online to choose from and easily add onto a smartphone.

Should a customer tip a server if the service was bad? Unless a waiter harasses a customer, he or she



should always receive a tip.

It’s unfair for a server to bend over backwards to help customers only to be rewarded poorly or not at all.

Perhaps waiters and waitresses should have their tips paid up front before the customer eats.

The waiter will then know just how much effort they should put into their service.

A \$1 tip? No problem. The customer will get \$1 service.

If you feel the experience was below adequate then a 10 percent tip will still pay for the service you were given, and the waiter’s time while still letting that person know he did a bad job.

—ETHAN COOPER
PHOTOGRAPHER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Consider making a donation to help with Trap-Neuter-Return drive

OK Humane Society’s feral cat program a worthy cause

To the Editor:

As an animal advocate, I’m happy to see a new trend in the state — the Trap-Neuter-Return program for feral cats.

The program, already being used by Oklahoma City Animal Shelter and Midwest City Animal Welfare, operates on the premise that euthanizing feral cats, protected under the state’s anti-cruelty laws, serves no good purpose.

“Animal control’s endless, cruel cycle is extremely costly to taxpayers,” according to a handout from MCAW.

“Feral cats needs are not being met by our current animal control and shelter system, because animals who are not adoptable are killed. Feral cats live outside but are killed in shelters. Even no-kill shelters are not

able to place feral cats.”

Midwest City’s shelter staff stresses that feral cats pose no threat to humans or wildlife.

“Feral cats are just as healthy as pet cats. The incidence of disease is just as low as in pet cats. They live healthy, natural lives on their own, content in their outdoor home.

“Studies show that the overwhelming cause of wildlife depletion is destruction of natural habitat due to man-made structures, chemical pollution, pesticides and drought — not feral cats.

“Trap-Neuter-Return does work. (It means) no more kittens. The population stabilizes and their lives are improved. The behaviors and stresses associated with mating, such as yowling or fighting, stop.

“The cats (also) are vaccinated before being returned

to their outdoor homes.

“Not only does Trap-Neuter-Return make good sense, it also is a responsible, humane method of care for outdoor cats.”

Feral cats don’t belong in shelters. They deserve a long, happy life just as any other animal. Please educate others about this program and consider making a donation to the Central OK Humane Society to help ensure all animals get a fair chance at life.

And pet owners, spay and neuter your domesticated animals as well. Shelters already are full of fur babies in need of forever homes.

For more information or to donate, visit www.okhumane.org/tnr.

—RONNA AUSTIN
OCCC EMPLOYEE

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Opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the PIONEER, the college or the publisher.

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 no more 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 <http://pioneer.occc.edu>.

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

MUSIC REVIEW | Everything about this film is 'on point'

'Birdman' captivates immediately

If you consider yourself to be somebody with taste or any appreciation for the arts, go see "Birdman."

The film hits hard and fast, blowing the throttle open immediately and burning the clutch to ash by the end.

Recommended to me by my least favorite roommate, I was nervous but in great need of a visit to the cinema, where I wouldn't feel guilty about not studying over a weekend.

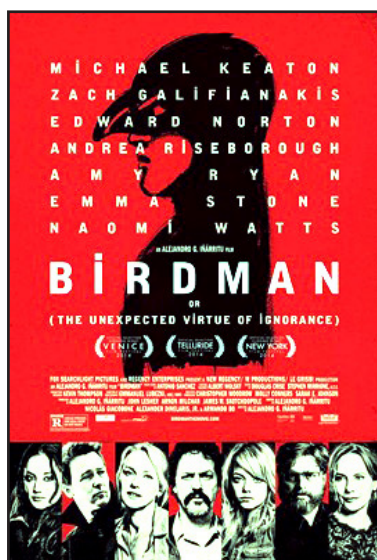
And oh was I nervous when I discovered the movie was about a washed-up actor putting on a play.

I've wasted \$7. My gut sank.

I've wasted \$7 on a movie surely decrying post-modernism, and espousing theater and the triumph of the human spirit.

But it took all of two minutes to get my attention, and I didn't get it back for two hours.

The cinematography, the cast, the pacing, the dialogue, the humor, the magical realism and even the emotional journey of the lead — it was all so very



on point.

Forty-five minutes into the film, a family joined our meager audience in the top row.

The parents were enjoying a conversation on their cell phones while their horde of children enjoyed running up and down the stairs, and in and out of the theater.

My request for an usher was ignored so I took it upon myself to yell "shhhhhhhhh" every time they opened their inconsiderate mouths.

The experience of "Birdman" would not be denied to me. Some time later, they left the theater.

The film was both classic and post-modern, dare I say, post post-modern, so aware it burned, so present I risked kidney failure to delay the screaming of my bladder.

Go see "Birdman."

Rating: A

—GRANT SWALWELL
PODCASTER

DESTINATION REVIEW | Walking trails are so steep, they offer some relief from crowds

Turner Falls beautiful any time of year

Boredom makes folks do funny things. Some drink, some take up interior decorating and some will actually read books for entertainment. There are a few other things to do, but not many.

This is how I wound up at Turner Falls Park.

February is normally a strange time to go hiking, but not in Oklahoma.

I decided I had to take advantage of the 74-degree weekend and go outside. Unfortunately, I was not the only one with this brilliant idea.

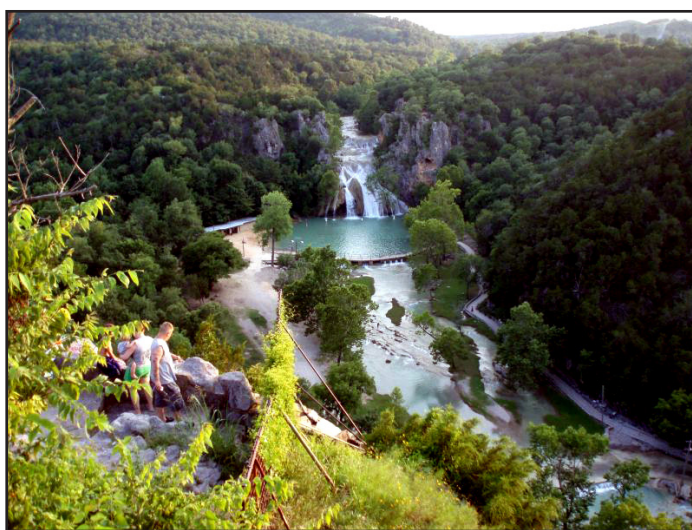
Turner Falls Park, as it turns out, is beautiful.

I had been to the Sulphur area dozens of times, but I had never seen this side of Oklahoma. Aside from all the dormant trees, it looked like paradise.

High hills and granite cliffs bank the hiking trails on both sides. At times, I felt like I was trekking through Middle Earth. Just when I started to feel complete oneness with nature, my gaze would stumble onto a group of giggling people with their phones on selfie sticks.

I was able to ignore it for short bursts. If I held my hand up in just the right way, I was able to see a majestic waterfall without noticing the skinny man posing with the selfie stick right in front of it.

As I wandered around, I spotted a squirrel. I care-



fully took out my bag of Cheez-Its and fed them to the majestic critter. I tossed them far away at first, then closer and closer until he was taking them right out of my hand. I did this in the middle of a crowd. Nobody noticed. They were taking selfies.

Another surprising element of Turner Falls is the trails.

These aren't what I'd call handicap-accessible. Some of these areas were extremely hard to reach without snapping an ankle. None of the steep hills had hand rails. I loved that part. The harder the climb is, the fewer kids you'll have to see at the top.

Aside from the crowds, Turner Falls is an awesome



Overdrive app acts as a library liaison

The screen of my smartphone is like a littered graveyard. Countless unused icons stand as the headstones of all the passing fancy apps that I tried and abandoned. Few apps have been able to hold my interest for long.

Then I came upon Overdrive, the one beacon of light upon a smartphone of darkness. It's the one thing about my phone I've found that's as useful as the ability to send GIFs of Alf playing a keyboard in response to every text message I receive.

Essentially, Overdrive is a library app. It functions as the digital middleman between you and whatever libraries you've become a member of. And yeah, I'm a nerd. I need a constant stream of books in my life.

With Overdrive I'm able to see what's new and what suits me at the various libraries I patronize, including OCCC's. But I'm also able to reserve books that I can pick up at my leisure. Most importantly, Overdrive is the app that allows me to download eBooks and mp3s from my libraries.

I take in one or two books on mp3 a week, the best of which are read by the authors themselves, and provide some further insight into their topics and processes. It's commercial-free listening during my commute each day.

Even when I power through absolute garbage of the written (and in turn, spoken) word, I'm better for it than if I'd sat listening to the music, advertising and vitriol that would otherwise be spewing from my car stereo.

Not every library has every book and some have a very limited selection of eBooks and mp3s. But library cards are free and you can sort of collect them all on your Overdrive app and allow yourself access to the most massive collection of literary work ever.

Overdrive is free and functions well. It's a rare gem in an endless sea of useless software. I don't think I'll be putting it to rest anytime soon.

—JORGE KRZYZANIAK
SENIOR WRITER

destination and a boredom annihilator.

One thing scares me, though. If it is this crowded in February, what is it like in June?

Rating: B

—JAKE MCMAHON
VIDEOGRAPHER

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

STORE REVIEW | Local grocery store best eatery in south Oklahoma City

Crest deli offers amazing, affordable food

Going to school at OCCC allows me to be on the south side of Oklahoma City on a regular basis.

In fact, I'm probably here more than I am in my hometown.

With that being said, I get hungry just about every four hours which makes me look more closely at my eating options in the area.

I have a taste for quality, but for a reasonable price. I can't afford to eat at a sit-in restaurant for lunch every day, or any day for that matter.

So making the right decision for breakfast, lunch or dinner is crucial.

Sure, I can get a delicious dog-food quality burrito from Taco Bell for a cheap price. Or I could get some decent burgers and fries from one of several Braum's located in the 10-mile radius of campus. And I could give up completely and decide McDonald's is what my life is worth that day.

But I've found a hidden gem in this jungle of fast-food confusion: Crest Supermarket located at 10601 S May Ave.

Initially, I was blown away by their immaculate store, local foods, fresh produce and excellent services. I just can't help but smile when the bag boy says



"paper or plastic?"

But, what really upped the bar for me at Crest Supermarket was the deli.

Usually when I think of delis, I'm reminded of frozen foods reheated to a crappy bland flavor that makes me feel like garbage instantly after eating it.

This food was different.

The quality is amazing, and the options are immense. I got a four-piece chicken strip dinner with mashed potatoes (with gravy, of course) and a side of mac and cheese.

I was getting worried as I watched them dip my plate, thinking there was no way it would be cheap. This was a deli designed for gods. They rang up the price, and I was in true disbelief when it came out to just around \$5.50.

As I exited the store, I wasn't sure of what just happened.

Did I just break a law? What universe am I in where I can get a huge meal for that kind of money?

If this is a dream, I never want to wake up. Also, the food was as amazing as it looked.

Rating: A++

—**BYRCE McELHANEY**
EDITOR

SERIES REVIEW | Review

'Peaky Blinders' an intriguing series

"Peaky Blinders" opens in Birmingham, England, in 1919, and centers around the Shelby family and their gang, the Peaky Blinders.

Arthur, played by Paul Anderson, is the war-scarred oldest brother and head of the family. But, it is the middle brother Tommy who viewers quickly discover is really in charge.

Season one centers around Tommy's dilemma about what to do with a secret stash of stolen guns that could raise the small Irish gang's fortunes or cause its ruin at the hands of the IRA, a rival gang, or the British government itself — all of whom want to recover the guns.

Watching Tommy, played by Cillian Murphy, intelligently navigate the web of intrigue is a pleasure, as is the performance of Sam Neill as Inspector Chester Campbell.

Neill brings a cool menace to the role as he plots to discover where the Peaky Blinders have hidden the guns.

A tense triangle emerges between Tommy, Inspector Campbell and Grace, played by Annabelle Wallis, a British spy in Campbell's employ who poses as a

barmaid to infiltrate the Peaky Blinders.

The plot turns sharply on this point as season one ends in a cliffhanger with an unexpected resolution at the beginning of season two that shows the epic scope of the show.

Set two years later, season two opens with Tommy and the Blinders on the verge of expanding their criminal enterprise to London, and the world of high-stakes horse races.

New rivals emerge in the form of brutal Jewish gangster Alfie Solomon played by Tom

Hardy, and Italian Darby Sabini played by Noah Taylor from "Game of Thrones."

Overall, I found "Peaky Blinders" very ambitious.

The BBC and creator Steve Knight are clearly trying to build an epic story that follows the rise and maybe eventual fall, of the Shelby clan.

The pacing can be a little choppy at times, but this is made up for by the beautiful period detail of the show, and the good soundtrack.

Rating: A-

—**AMAR MOLINAS**
WEBMASTER



TOP 20 MOVIES

Weekend of Feb. 13 through Feb. 15
www.newyorktimes.com

1. *Fifty Shades of Gray*
2. *Kingsman: The Secret Service*
3. *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*
4. *American Sniper*
5. *Jupiter Ascending*
6. *Paddington*
7. *Seventh Son*
8. *The Imitation Game*
9. *The Wedding Ringer*
10. *Project Almanac*
11. *Black or White*
12. *Still Alice*
13. *The Boy Next Door*
14. *Taken 3*
15. *Selma*
16. *Old Fashioned*
17. *Birdman*
18. *The Theory of Everything*
19. *Big Hero 6*
20. *Whiplash*

Tax filers facing new challenges this year

KATIE AXTELL

Community Writer

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Many taxpayers can expect to see some changes this year when they file taxes — mainly related to healthcare insurance and student expenses, said Accounting Professor Tamala Zolicoffer.

“There are four situations you can be in,” she said.

The first, she said, is a person who had full coverage all year.

“Second, [those who] are exempt — and there are about 10 different exemptions.”

Those include being a member of a tribe, having an income below a certain level, or being on Medicaid, Zolicoffer said.

“Then there are the people who got their coverage through the marketplace, or government website, and those who didn’t apply or have any coverage.”

It’s the last two situations that everyone needs to pay particular attention to, she said.

“When the person applied for coverage... the government subsidizes those premiums.

“When those people applied [through the Affordable Care Act] they told the system what they thought their income was going to be for 2014, so what the government pays and the person pays was based on the income and size of the family that was reported.

“Then, based on their income on their tax return, it figures out if the government paid too much or not enough of their premium.

“If the government paid too much, [that amount] gets added as a repayment on their tax bill,” Zolicoffer said. “If the government didn’t pay enough

then it goes the other way and goes on their refund.”

She said for those who had elected to have no coverage, the amount they owe is calculated when they file for a tax penalty.

This tax season, Zolicoffer said, she’s seen penalties from \$95 to \$300. She said next year will be worse.

“The penalty is subject to change drastically,” Zolicoffer said.

“The minimum penalty next year will be \$695 per person in your family. Apply immediately for [insurance for] next year.”

For students, Zolicoffer said, the American Opportunity Credit is still the same as in the past, but only applies for students in the first four years of school. Also, she said, tuition, books and supplies not covered by scholarships or grants can be used toward the education tax credit.

“The other education credit is the Lifetime Learning Credit — if you don’t qualify for the American Opportunity Credit.”

Zolicoffer said only tuition applies toward the Lifetime Learning Credit.

Zolicoffer said it is better if students have someone else prepare their tax returns.

“I always tell my students that it is worth it to have someone else prepare [their] taxes, and somebody reasonable, because the biggest thing that causes audits are errors — and when people prepare their own [taxes] the chance for errors is higher.”

She said having a tax preparer sig-

nature or an e-file lets the IRS know there’s a less chance of a return having an error.

She said the exception is someone who only has a W-2 and no other paperwork.

Students Cameron Langkamp and Katie Goodnight both did their taxes last year online using TurboTax.

“It is fast and easy,” Langkamp said. “It’s like plug and chug. You just put in the answers.”

Goodnight said her aunt helped her last year. This year, she also used TurboTax and agreed it was easy for her as well.

Rebecca Swihart, another OCCC student, went through H&R Block.



The screenshot shows the IRS website's 'Where's My Refund?' page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Filing, Payments, Refunds (highlighted), Credits & Deductions, News & Events, Forms & Pubs, Help & Resources, and for Tax Pros. Below the navigation bar is a search bar and a language selector. The main heading is 'Refunds'. A sub-heading reads 'Where's My Refund? - It's Quick, Easy and Secure.' Below this, there's a green box with an exclamation mark icon stating: 'Where's My Refund? is updated no more than once every 24 hours, usually overnight.' A blue box with a play button icon says 'When Will I Get My Refund?' and 'Play Video...'. Another blue box with a document icon says 'Taxpayer Bill of Rights' and 'What You Should Know'. Below these are three numbered steps: 1. 'When to check status...' (listing: Within 24 hours after we've received your e-filed tax return; 4 weeks after you mail your paper return; 'Where's My Refund?' is updated no more than once every 24 hours); 2. 'What you need...' (listing: Social Security Number, or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number; Filing status; Exact refund amount); 3. 'How...' (listing: Get your refund status at 'Where's My Refund?'). At the bottom left of the screenshot, there's a list of links: IRS2Go, What to Expect for Refunds in 2015, Faster Refunds with Direct Deposit, and Refund Information.

Visit www.irs.gov to find out the status of a federal tax refund. There, learn if your tax return has been accepted, approved and payment sent.

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OCCC ahead of schedule on energy savings

BRYCE MCELHANEY
Editor
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OCCC is on its way to reducing its energy use by 20 percent by the year 2020 — a requirement for all state facilities under Senate Bill 1096, said Energy Manager Bob Lally.

Lally said, so far, OCCC's total savings in the current fiscal year, compared to FY 2011-'12, is 13 percent — far above the expected 7.5 percent.

"Our November bill was the first bill that would reflect what we have done and already, we're showing considerable savings.

"Compared to last year's numbers — November and December last year to November and December this year — we have saved around \$90,000," he said.

Lally said there also may be opportunities to save the college money by addressing modifications to lighting and air conditioning.

"The trend (is), every month we're saving more



Bob Lally

and more," he said.

Lally said his main focus as Energy Manager is the behavioral base energy use on campus, rather than the performance base.

In laymen's terms, that means he is looking at human consumption as opposed to how efficient items that use energy are. And, he said, he is looking at employee consumption first.

"Right now I'm focused on the Facilities Management and Information technology — the people [who] work here, not the general students."

Lally said he is using the college's Base Automation System, or BAS, to help him make cutbacks.

BAS is responsible for turning off lights in unused rooms, Lally said, a feature he said would save the college a lot of money. The system is located in Facilities Management, Lally said.

He said he has already begun optimizing the system to take over during times the campus is shut down, such as weekends and holiday breaks.

"I come here on Sundays for four hours and I walk through [the campus] and see what's on and what should be off, because I know what the schedule is," he said.

Lally said when he began his position, there were a number of things being left on which should not have been. That has been rectified, he said, and the results are already being seen.

"Current energy savings — as compared to the same periods last year — resulting from just turning stuff off when not needed, are expected to be in the quarter million-dollar range for the first year," he said in an email.

Lally's job description states, "the Energy Manager works under the direction of the Vice President for Business and Finance, as assigned, to establish accountability for energy consumption at every level on campus. The Energy Manager is responsible for developing and monitoring the OCCC Energy Conservation Program as approved pursuant to OCCC Board of Regents policy governance and the OCCC President's guidelines for the purpose of reducing utility consumption."

According to an open record, Lally is being paid \$60,000 a year to make sure that happens.

For more information about energy conservation, contact Lally at 405-682-1611, ext 7756, or email robert.e.lally@occc.edu.

Students converge on Capitol, speak with lawmakers

JORGE KRZYZANIAK
Senior Writer
seniorwriter@occc.edu

When Oklahoma legislators welcomed college students from across the state to the Capitol on Feb. 10 for Higher Ed Day, OCCC students were prepared.

Political Science Professor Nate Vanden Brook said 15 to 20 students — about half the number of students registered to travel to the Capitol — attended informational seminars prior to that day.

In those sessions, students discussed talking points with which to approach their representatives and methods for communicating their concerns.

Firearms on campus and education funding were expected popular topics, Vanden Brook said.

"The students who were able to contact their representatives had good engagement with [them]," he said.

"They had a positive experience and started a good, positive dialogue with their representatives about the guns and funding issues."

Psychology major Christian

Castro said he attended Higher Ed Day to hear legislators talk about the issues that matter to him.

"I wanted to talk to (Sen.) Ralph Shortey about guns on campus," he said. "He's very pro guns on campus."

Castro said he was not pleased with the results.

"It was bad," he said, "Ralph Shortey is a rude man and never kept with his appointments.

"He actively dodged interviews and when I spoke with him in the hall he said that he already knew what he was going to vote for and that he wasn't going to rock the boat."

Not every student who'd prepared themselves for a day with their representatives got the opportunity.

Diversified studies major Derek Scarsella said she attended Higher Ed Day, ready to talk to those in her district.

"One representative was out sick that day and my senator was at lunch but I was able to make appointments to go back next week to actually sit down with them and discuss my concerns," she said.

Scarsella said she plans to discuss newly proposed guns-

"Anybody, at any time, can look up their representative or senator and go see them at the Capitol. They work for you."

—DEREK SCARSELLA
DIVERSIFIED STUDIES MAJOR

on-campus legislation with her representatives, as well as concerns about college funding when she meets face-to-face with them.

"As a community college student, I depend on Pell grants," she said. "And if tuition outdoes my Pell grants I'm looking at ... loans. [That] doesn't set me up well for my future."

Scarsella said she believes her representatives are accessible and she is excited to bring her concerns to them.

One group of students went to the Capitol for another type of interaction.

Theater major David Chen said he went with his Theatre for Social Change Class to demonstrate that theater can be used for more than entertainment.

"Art is more than just pas-

sive," he said. "We wanted to see what we can achieve with theater as an art form. Can we influence more? Can we create change?"

Chen said the theater group presented several exercises they perform in class to test the reactions of those around them.

"There's some things that people don't want to talk about or are very difficult to talk about," Chen said. "If we stage those situations, then we can get people to talk and that's the beginning of change."

Chen said he did not get the opportunity to meet with his representatives but he enjoyed his day at the Capitol and left with some sense of accomplishment.

"Art matters, obviously."

Other students traveled to the Capitol strictly for a special session held in the House chamber where guest speakers addressed students and legislators.

Former Lockheed Martin CEO Norm Augustine was the keynote speaker.

In his speech, Augustine addressed Oklahoma lawmakers, urging a deeper consideration of the ramifications of poor

school funding upon world competitiveness.

"It's not a formula for success," Augustine said.

Vanden Brook said he appreciated the message.

"I thought that the keynote speaker did a fantastic job ... and everyone else did a great job of addressing the students."

Political science major Monica Gordon said political science Professor Sharon Vaughan encouraged her to attend. Gordon said she wanted to learn more about why legislators want to cut the school budget and their reasoning for wanting to allow guns on college campuses.

"Really, I want to hear where their [heads are]," she said.

Vanden Brook said he encourages students to get in touch with their representatives and begin dialogues.

"Don't email them," he said. "Emails can be deleted."

He advised students to write letters and visit them at their offices.

Scarsella agrees.

"Anybody, at any time, can look up their representative or senator and go see them at the Capitol.

"They work for you."

\$10k loan may cost almost twice that in repayment

JORGE KRZYZANIAK

Senior Writer

seniorwriter@occc.edu

On average, two-year public college students accrue \$9,962 in federal student loan debt, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Those loans carry a 3.9 percent interest rate, meaning the total cost of repaying the loan can be anywhere from \$12,047 to \$16,161.

Angela Leal, Financial Aid assistant director, said the average balance can take 10 years to pay off for those only able to make the minimum monthly payment. Roughly one-third of OCCC students have student loans, she said.

Leal said students need to be wise about borrowing money that has to be repaid.

"If the student chooses the loan or has to take the loan, I recommend just taking the amount that they need," she said.

Students who have taken out loans have some options when it comes to repayment, Leal said.

Leal recommended students begin making payments on loans as early as they can.

She said although lenders don't expect payments while someone is still attending college, it's wise to start paying off the loan as soon as possible.

"If you're ready to start paying off your loan, you can contact your lender and you can start making payments even if you're in school and there's no penalty," she said.

"... Unsubsidized loans, [are] going to be collecting interest as [students are] going through school. So, they can always pay the interest as they go along and, in the long run, it will save them some money."

A graduated repayment plan also is offered, with

a monthly payment that grows from the initial minimum \$56 to minimum payments of \$168 in final months, she said.

This is another 10-year repayment plan according to studentloans.gov. Individuals making minimum payments toward this plan will pay more in interest over time. The total, 10-year cost of repaying a \$9,962 balance would then be \$12,562.

There are various other plans for repaying federal student loans wherein minimum monthly payments are based upon an individual's income. Those with higher incomes under these plans are required to make a larger minimum monthly payment, which can result in loans being paid down faster, thus accruing less interest.

Leal said even for those living on a sound income, waiting to begin payments on a loan could be a pitfall.

She said there are income-based repayment plans but paying down loans one minimum payment at a time is a long process even for those who make a substantial amount of money.

For instance, someone with a gross annual income of \$100,000 on an income-contingent repayment plan would be required to make minimum monthly payments of \$108 for 105 months, paying a total of \$11,792 for a \$9,962 federal loan.

Someone who earns \$39,749 annually (the median income in Oklahoma according to the U.S. Justice Department), could be paying off their loans more than three years longer than those making minimum payments on the standard repayment plan. Minimum payments would be \$75 to \$85 monthly but the total cost of repaying the same loan would be \$12,811.

A minimum wage worker in Oklahoma, working 40 hours each week for 52 weeks, is capable of earning \$15,080 in a year. Making just the minimum payments on the average federal loan of \$9,962 would take 25

years under the income-based repayment plan. Their cost at the end of the 25-year span would be \$16,131.

For those who earn less than \$75,000 annually, there is no way to pay the average federal loan (for two-year public college students) of \$9,962 in less than 10 years. The only way to pay less than \$12,000 for that loan is to pay more than the minimum monthly payment

The figures were found using the U.S. Department of Education's Repayment Estimator at <https://studentloans.gov>. The repayment plans apply specifically to federal student loans and may not be available for other types of loans.

Leal said students should consider alternate ways to pay tuition.

"Filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) qualifies students for grants and loans," she said.

"A lot of students do qualify for other types of financial aid like Pell grants and state grants that go along with the FAFSA. [Many] of students are able to pay for school with just the Pell grants."

Leal said some students qualify for tuition waivers.

"My suggestion is to seek out other possibilities — scholarships or tuition waivers, other forms of aid before taking a loan," she said.

For those who have committed themselves to student loans, Leal said, OCCC's financial aid office can be a valuable resource.

She advised taking advantage of free online resources as well.

"Students can find information about their loan debt through NSLDS.gov," she said. "It's a federal website that we use all the time."

"Students can go and see their current loan debt from all schools that they've attended."

For more information, visit the Financial Aid office, email financialaid@occc.edu or call 405-682-7525.

Profs offer advice for getting through college with little debt

BRYCE MCELHANEY

Editor

editor@occc.edu

OCCC Professor Jeremy Fineman, 38, graduated from East Carolina University in 2011 with a master's degree in ceramics.

Now, he said, he is paying off a large amount of student loan debt.

"I have a bunch of student loans from graduate school which are accumulated to a large sum of money right now," he said. "I'm in the midst of paying them off."

"I think it's somewhere in the vicinity of a 30-year plan."

According to nationaljournal.org, this may be a growing trend.

"Between 2005 and 2011, borrowers under age 50 added more debt on average than they paid off."

Fineman said it's important for students to know student loans have to be paid back.

"It's not free money," he said. "I think a lot of students ... have misconceptions about it — about not having to pay back ... student loans."

Fineman said it's a perception that should be clarified early on in the process so students will make wise spending decisions.

"... They should be factoring in textbook costs, not buying frivolous materials with it, not using it on anything but school, because you're going to have to repay it," he said.

Business and economics professor Michael Machiorlatti, 37, is working on his doctorate in Biostatistics at the University of Oklahoma but is paying out of pocket for his education.

Machiorlatti said he has only taken out one loan and that was for one semester. Otherwise, he said, he has paid for college by working or through scholarships.

"For undergrad school, I worked when I went to school, [and] I was

fortunate enough to have scholarships," he said.

Machiorlatti said he didn't qualify for financial aid. He received small scholarships for running track during school and worked.

He said a lot of thought needs to go into how to pay for an education and where it should be obtained.

"I think if students are clever about how they do stuff, and they don't think about things in such a linear fashion and also move into locations where education is a little bit easier to pursue, [an education] might be more attainable" he said.

"You might be able to [say,] 'If I stay in Oklahoma City, I have to take [out loans], but if I move into a bigger city, maybe after I finish my two-year degree, I could work for a company and they could pay for me to go to school,'" Machiorlatti said.

Fineman said paying off loans can be a slow process, but fortunately, he

qualifies for President Barack Obama's Income-Based Repayment plan, or IBR, making his payments more affordable.

Fineman said before accepting loans, students should check into the free programs available to help pay tuition.

"There's Pell grants out there that you don't have to repay," he said. "There's other sources of income. Go to your local religious institute, go to other places like that to get scholarships to help pay and defray some of these costs."

Fineman said he did not take advantage of these opportunities when he was in college because he was not aware of them.

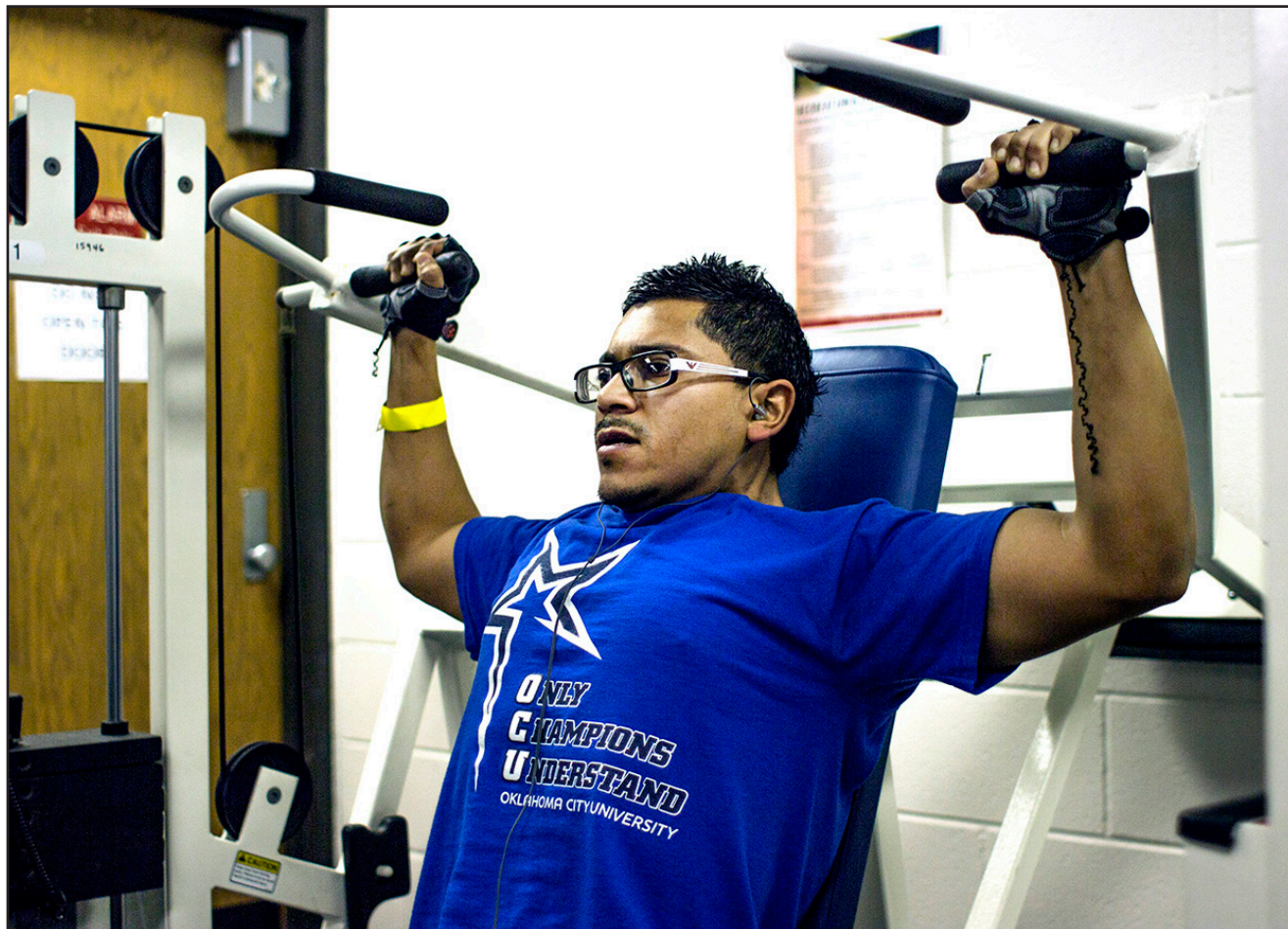
"(In) hindsight, I would have probably done it a little different," he said.

For more information about financial aid, contact OCCC's Financial Aid office at 405-682-7525. For more information about student loans, contact Sallie Mae at 888-272-5543.

For more about IBR, visit <https://studentaid.ed.gov>.

SPORTS

Free fitness



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Science major Lorenzo Ontiveros works out in OCCC's Wellness Center. "I'm working out my shoulder," Ontiveros said. The weight room, gym, pool and Wellness classes are all free to students with a valid OCCC ID. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/rf/wellness.html.

SPORTS | Instructor says OKC Dance Crew will learn contemporary moves

No experience needed for dance class

CLAYTON MITCHELL
Sports Writer
sportswriter@occc.edu

Beginning and experienced dancers alike have a chance to work out and showcase their dance moves with the OKC Dance Crew, said Team Instructor Elizabeth Hobi.

Hobi said that the class, which originally started as Power Nation Hip Hop, is now switching to a more contemporary jazz style.

Hobi said, with the help of choreographer Aubrey Weatherford, students from any dancing background can join the performance team.

"A lot of times people will get out of high school and they'll miss pom, or they miss cheerleading, or they miss their dance team," Hobi said.

Hobi said anyone can join the team, regardless of experience.

"It's for anybody who's interested,"

she said. "They don't have to have any background."

Hobi said another class she teaches, theatrical dance, also called Dance Theater OKC, is usually the class that attracts more experienced dancers, which is why the OKC Dance Crew was started.

"I've had this happen so many times, people are looking for a dance class, and they get in there and they don't realize that it's for people who've had a little bit of ballet and a little bit of training," said Hobi.

"They're looking for something that's more contemporary, that's got more pop. We're trying to offer more classes here like that."

Hobi said she would like to put together a dance program at OCCC.

"We really want to give the opportunity for dance," she said. "We have

social dance, we have West Coast swing.

"I teach the company class, theatrical dance and ballet barre."

Hobi said students are encouraged to come watch a class to see what goes on and decide if the class is right for them.

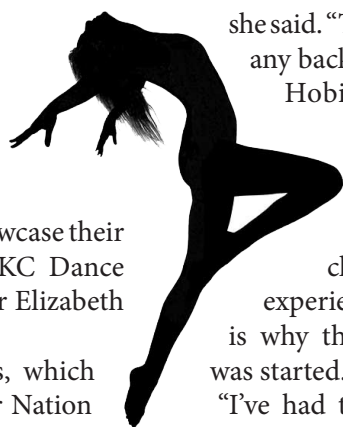
She said newcomers should not be afraid as they won't be alone.

"It's sad, because so many people want to do something, and they always think that they're gonna be the worst one in there, and it's just really not that way," Hobi said.

"You can always try a class and if you don't like it, you can just say, 'OK, it's not for me.' So there's no pressure."

All group fitness classes are free to all students, faculty, and staff.

For more information about this class, contact Hobi at elizabeth.hobi@gmail.com. For information on group fitness classes, contact Health and Fitness Specialist Carole Valentine at carole.m.valentine@occc.edu or 405-682-1611, ext. 7662.



EVENT NEWS

SPRING 2015:

- Students with a valid OCCC ID can use the Aquatic Center free of charge. The Aquatic Center features two pools, and an 18½-ft. deep diving well with 1- and 3-meter spring boards and 5-, 7- and 10-meter platforms. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/RF.

- OCCC Group Fitness classes are offered at a variety of fitness levels and are spaced conveniently throughout the afternoon and late evening hours. Classes are free to OCCC students with a valid ID. See more at www.occc.edu/rf/cr-group-fitness.

- The Recreation & Fitness Center is open to students, faculty, staff and community members. The center features a 15,000-square-foot gym with two basketball courts and one recreational volleyball court, a cardio room with three treadmills, two cross trainers and two recumbent bikes as well as a weight room featuring a complete circuit of Cybex equipment and free weights. Students with a valid OCCC ID can use the facilities free of charge. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/RF or call 405-682-7860.



Scan the QR code with your smart phone to be directed to a list of OCCC Intramural events, complete with the most current updates.

(Free QR code reader apps can be found online or in app stores on smart phones. Follow the directions for the app you download.)

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

Altercation in library, vandalism reported

JORGE KRZYZANIAK

Senior Writer
seniorwriter@occc.edu

Vandalism and a domestic disturbance were reported to campus police in the last batch of police reports recently received.

A reported disturbance drew police to the library on Tuesday, Jan. 29, for a possible domestic violence call.

A library staffer heard “something hitting a wall and then someone crying,” according to the report. Police located two students studying quietly in the room where the

disturbance had taken place. Police interviewed both. An unnamed 17-year-old female said she’d attempted to leave the room during an argument with her boyfriend.

She reportedly pushed her boyfriend after he had blocked the door. She said he then pushed her. She claimed to have been uninjured and completed a Domestic Violence Lethality Screen for First Responders.

Both parties were released from the scene. Witness statements were taken from both and security footage was kept as evidence.

One campus club’s flyers were reported to have been vandalized sometime between Jan. 19 and Feb. 2 but surveillance footage has failed to turn up those responsible.

Flyers for the Atheists, Agnostics and Freethinkers clubs were defaced on two separate club bulletin boards on the main campus.

“To go to hell” had been written on a flyer near the Wellness Center and “Jesus loves you” was reportedly written on a flyer near the Communications Lab.

Campus police were dispatched to inspect a case of

possible vandalism on Monday, Feb. 2.

An access control board at OCCC’s FACE Center, at 6500 S. Land Ave., was reported to have been tampered with days after being installed to replace a non-functioning board. The control board is used to unlock an electronically controlled door.

The police report states the board appeared to have been pried, broken and stripped of some wiring.

Police reviewed security footage of the area but discovered a power outage had destroyed all footage of the area

previous to Saturday, Jan. 31.

Some names were redacted from the reports under the direction of Marketing and Public Relations Director Cordell Jordan who said names are redacted “according to OCCCPD Standard Operating Procedures involving information released and information withheld.”

To obtain a copy of the procedure, email cjordan@occc.edu.

To contact campus police, call 405-682-1611, ext. 7747.

For an emergency, use one of the call boxes located inside and outside on campus or call 405-682-7872.

Bill: State Rep. Dan Fisher looking to change history course

Continued from page 1

McCullar said American history makes him think of family.

“Any family that thinks it’s a perfect family and insists on being family are probably going to become dysfunctional,” he said. “We’re not perfect, and the history of the United States is not a perfect record.”

History Professor Leslie Jones said history serves as a reminder to Americans that there is a lot to fix.

“Ultimately, history is not a romance novel,” she said.

“It has some ugliness and it has some amazing things. There’s a reason that we’re one of the most powerful countries in the world and that so many immigrants want to come here.”

Jones said the better educated people are, the better prepared they are. She used George Santayana’s quote ‘those who don’t know their history are doomed to repeat it,’ as an example.

“If we don’t know about the Tulsa race riots, if we don’t know about slavery, if we don’t know about the injustices of Native Americans, who is to say the next generation will not repeat some of those same mistakes that led to those events,” she said.

Vaughan said her goal as an educator is to produce critical thinkers. She believes taking away the AP History course would deny students the opportunity to become critical thinkers in the field.

Being a critical thinker means one can analyze and evaluate arguments based on reason and on evidence, she said.

“We want a balanced, educational experience so that we can look at all ... things,” she said.

“I just hope that this is a hopeful process.

“I know the students in my class here at OCCC are excellent students who have completed [the AP History course], and they seem to be very well-educated and critical thinkers,” she said.

Vaughan said she does not believe legislators should be in the business of selecting the books that are taught, because academic freedom is something educators all cherish.

“I don’t think it only applies to college professors,” she said. “I think it should apply to high school teachers, because they know their students.

“They’re in the trenches and they’re the experts in the field.”

McCullar believes those who think students are being

misguided in these history courses should take a history course themselves.

“I think we’ve become so polarized in our thinking that it worries me, frankly,” he said.

Film and Video Production major Guthrie Crull said he took many AP courses at Edmond Santa Fe High school, including AP American history.

“They don’t sugarcoat and tell you the ‘hooray America’ version of the story,” he said.

“I don’t know how you could be a true patriot unless you know the bad [stuff] we’ve done too.”

Crull said AP history courses are good for students who are intelligent and want to take the course seriously.

“I think it’s good for kids to be able to do that,” he said.

“There’s a big gap in the level of how much the kids in the classes care about what’s going on. I found AP classes have a lot more interaction between the peers and the teachers.”

Angela Shemwell, Computer Animation Major, didn’t take AP classes but said her brother did and it would be a mistake to change the curriculum.

“Putting someone of higher intelligence [who] just breezes through the regular classes is not going to be a challenge for

them and they’re likely to just say, ‘the heck with it,’ and not do it at all,” she said.

“I think those [who] can do well and exceed in regular classes should have the option of the AP classes. That’s what [they are] designed for ...”

HB1380 was authored by state Rep. Dan Fisher, (R-El Reno). Attempts to reach Fisher by phone were unsuccessful as of press time Feb. 19.

To read HB 1380, visit <https://legiscan.com/OK/text/HB1380>.

“If we don’t know about the Tulsa race riots, if we don’t know about slavery, if we don’t know about the injustices of Native Americans, who is to say the next generation will not repeat some of the same mistakes that led to those events.”

—LESLIE JONES

OCCC HISTORY PROFESSOR



CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Saving lives



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Engineering major Jesus Moreno donates blood on Feb. 11 during a blood drive held by the Oklahoma Blood Institute. Moreno said this was not his first time to donate blood. "I used to do this a lot back in high school," he said. For more information about donating, visit obi.gov.

COMMUNITY | Club's purpose is to bring help to veterans, active duty members and their families

Military Student Association active

KATIE AXTELL
Community Writer
communitywriter@occc.edu

Military service runs deep in Mary Allison's family. Allison, deaf education major, said her great grandpa served in World War II, her grandpa in Vietnam, her dad in the Korean War, and three brothers are currently in the Air Force.

Because of that, she said, she's happy to support the Military Student Association. She said it's good to have a group who supports the military.

The club's TLC representative LaDonna Wieland said one of her goals for the club is to help veterans, military members and their families with what they need.

"The main purpose is to bring support to military and their families," Wieland said. "We are an association dedicated to supporting our military families and helping where we can."

Wieland said she also hopes to bring in outside sources to answer questions and assist members.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to bring [in] representatives from the American Legion to help our veterans and families as needed to work within the community and find out what resources are available."

Nursing major Gabrielle Black said she's glad the club exists. Her great grandpa served in World War II.

"Anything of that nature and supporting anybody [in the military] is good to have," she said.

Wieland said she's trying to increase club membership.

"Approximately 15 people signed up at the campus club fair," she said, but said she hopes more will join as the group moves toward being more structured.

Both Allison and Black encourage those who need help to seek that from a support group such as the MSA.

Wieland said anyone with an affiliation to the military is welcome to the meetings and to join the club.

"... It's not just military members, veterans and current military," she said, "but family as well because we know how hard it is for the military

family members to be outside the box."

Wieland said she knows what is like on each level. "I come from a military background," she said. "I am third-generation female and several generations of military, period. I married military and my son is military."

Wieland said the club is working to set up meetings every other Tuesday.

The next meeting is 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. March 6, in 2N5.

For more information, contact Wieland at militarystudent@occc.edu or at ladonna.r.wieland@my.occc.edu.



CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Christians on Campus meet each Monday

Christians on Campus meets each Monday for Bible study. We look forward to seeing you for "Basic Words of Life and Truth." Meetings are from noon to 12:45 p.m. Mondays in the Arts and Humanities Center, Room 1C3.

Student mentoring session planned Feb. 23

A Student 2 Student Mentoring Tips session will be held at noon Monday, Feb. 23, in CU3. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Coffee and peace offered on Feb. 25

A "Coffee & Peace" ExCEL Series will be held at noon Wednesday, Feb. 25, in CU3. The meeting will cover topics on promoting diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Meet with The Leadership Council Feb. 26

The Leadership Council will meet at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26, in CU3. The meeting will be an opportunity for students to voice their opinions and thoughts to administrators. All students are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Adopt-A-Street event planned Feb. 27

Student Life is offering an Adopt-A-Street campus impact opportunity from 2 to 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 27. Registration is required with a limited number of spots. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Create Minecraft crafts at Southern Oaks Library

A Minecraft Crafts event is planned from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28, at the Southern Oaks Public Library, at 6900 S Walker Ave. All supplies will be provided. For more information, contact John Hilbert at jhilbert@metrolibrary.org or 405-631-4468.

Transportation offered to March 5 Career Fair

The Graduation, Employment, Transfer office will provide free transportation to the Greater Grads Career Fair from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City. Students interested in attending will need to register. For more information, contact the GET office at employmentservices@occc.edu or 405-682-7519.

Regional Food Bank the site of service trip

Sign up to attend a service learning trip to the Regional Food Bank at 8 a.m. Saturday, March 7. Registration is required with a limited number of spots. All students are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

All Highlights are due Monday by noon for inclusion in the next issue. Email your event to editor@occc.edu or drop by the Pioneer office located in AH 1F2.

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.

FURNITURE


FOR SALE: 19" CRT television in fair condition. Great for a gaming TV or in a child's room. \$25. Text 405-818-0083 for pictures or more details.

MISCELLANEOUS

FREE: Your ad here. Students can place non-business classified ads for free. No more than 7 lines. Submit your ad to adman@occc.edu with your name, student ID and valid phone number.

FOR SALE: This space for \$8 per week. Place your business classified today and reach thousands of potential customers. Up to seven lines. Call 405-682-1611, ext. 7674, or email adman@occc.edu.

IT PAYS to ADVERTISE



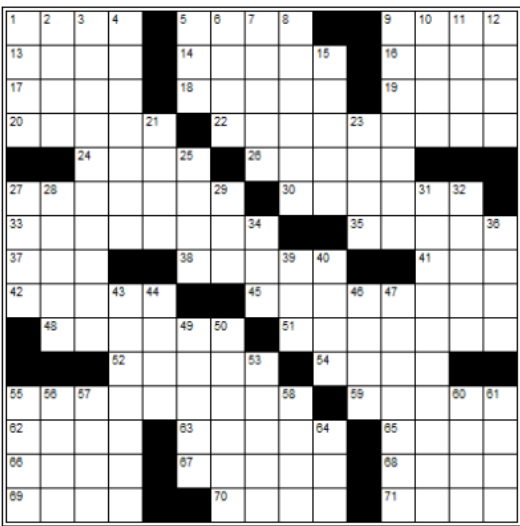
Allison Bonds
Photography

(405) 818-6818

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

ACROSS


- 1. Lather
- 5. Close
- 9. Man
- 13. Again
- 14. Keyboard instrument
- 16. Many millennia
- 17. Location
- 18. Crown
- 19. Alumnus
- 20. Precipitous
- 22. Iotas
- 24. Resorts
- 26. Negatively charged particle
- 27. Kneecap
- 30. Free
- 33. Scaremonger
- 35. Curses
- 37. Toss
- 38. Anagram of "Amend"
- 41. Liveliness
- 42. Quietens
- 45. Flogger
- 48. Intensify
- 51. A baby's room
- 52. A French dance
- 54. G G G G
- 55. Adjuvants
- 59. Gladden
- 62. Stinging remark
- 63. Queues
- 65. God of love
- 66. Wicked
- 67. Barges
- 68. Knights
- 69. Sort
- 70. Sea eagle
- 71. Achy




DOWN

- 1. Back talk
- 2. Module
- 3. Abhorrent
- 4. Cleaning device
- 5. Excluding
- 6. Anagram of "Sire"
- 7. Small terrestrial lizard
- 8. Eager
- 9. Deep purplish red
- 10. Relating to aircraft
- 11. Give temporarily
- 12. Terminates
- 15. Point of greatest despair
- 21. Inside of your hand
- 23. Incite
- 25. Slender
- 27. Gloomy atmosphere
- 28. Not silently
- 29. An Old Testament king
- 31. Showman
- 32. Contemptuous look
- 34. Explosive
- 36. Agile
- 39. A very long period
- 40. Medication
- 43. Readable
- 44. Petty quarrel
- 46. Tall woody plant
- 47. Futile
- 49. Iniquities
- 50. Beginner
- 53. Adult male singing voice
- 55. Assist in crime
- 56. A pioneer in electrochemistry
- 57. Trickle
- 58. Stitched
- 60. Unit of pressure
- 61. Being
- 64. South southeast

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FIRE

Foundation for Individual Rights in Education

Freedom of speech is a fundamental American freedom and a human right, and there's no place that this right should be more valued and protected than America's colleges and universities. A university exists to educate students and advance the frontiers of human knowledge, and does so by acting as a "marketplace of ideas" where ideas compete. The intellectual vitality of a university depends on this competition — something that cannot happen properly when students or faculty members fear punishment for expressing views that might be unpopular with the public at large or disfavored by university administrators.

The mission of FIRE is to defend and sustain individual rights at America's colleges and universities. These rights include freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience — the essential qualities of individual liberty and dignity. FIRE's core mission is to protect the unprotected and to educate the public and communities of concerned Americans about the threats to these rights on our campuses and about the means to preserve them.

FOUNDATION FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION
170 S. Independence Mall W., Suite 510
Philadelphia, PA 19106

www.facebook.com/thefireorg 215-717-FIRE (3473) <https://twitter.com/TheFIREorg>

Chili cook-off, bake sale planned March 4

DARLA KILHOFFER

News Writing Student

If you catch the scent of chili drifting around the commons area outside the Communications Lab around 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 4, you're getting a whiff of the Chili Cook-Off and Bake Sale, a fundraiser created by the Faculty Association Scholarship Committee.

Chili and hot dogs will be available beginning at 11 a.m. and will continue to be sold until the chili runs out, said Ann Raia, librarian and co-chair of the scholarship committee.

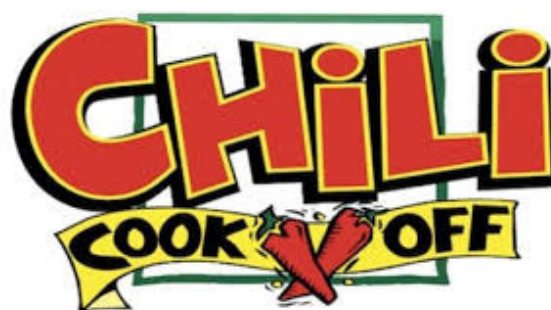
In addition, students and faculty will have the opportunity to bid on items from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. during a silent auction.

Baked goods also will be available for purchase outside the Communications Lab.

Whether you like to purchase chili by the bowl or poured over a hot dog, you had better get in line early.

"Last time we didn't even have a real end time because we just ran out," Raia said.

Each year, various faculty members donate chili to this event as they attempt to wow the judges with their particular recipes. The identities of the chili



chefs will remain anonymous as judges taste each recipe and select a winner.

"We have four faculty that we ask — we kind of try to get somebody from every division and spread it out a little," Raia said.

Tricia Sweany, the other co-chair and also a librarian, said the competition is lively.

"It's big within the faculty to see who's going to win because they're always trying to bump someone off the throne," she said. "They go all-out for it."

But this isn't just a friendly competition — fundraisers like this have allowed the Faculty Association Scholarship Committee to give away more than \$43,000 in student scholarships over the years.

"So we basically raise the money for the semester

and turn around, and divvy it out to the candidates that we select for the scholarships," Raia said.

Physics Professor Tad Thurston has a reputation of winning when it comes to the Chili Cook-Off.

"One year I went completely different and I made sort of a white chicken chili," he said.

Thurston said he is definitely going to bring a pot of chili this year.

"Yeah, it's a lot of fun," he said. "And it's cool because there's no overhead so every penny that we take in goes right to the student scholarships."

Donating a baked good is an easy way for students or faculty to participate in this year's event.

"We will start setting up around 8 a.m. on March 4," Sweany said in an email message. "So students can bring them to our table and let us know they have baked goods for donations for the chili cook-off, and we'll know what they mean."

"If they do want to bring something, it's usually best if it's easily pulled apart or in containers they don't want back."

If you would like to volunteer to work a booth or have more questions about the Chili Cook-Off and Bake Sale, contact Sweany at tricia.l.sweany@occc.edu or Raia at ann.f.raia@occc.edu.

Calling all performers for college-wide talent show

DARLA KILHOFFER

News Writing Student

Do you have a voice like Elvis Presley? Are you pretty good with a set of drumsticks? Have you ever wanted to show a crowd how talented you are?

Here's your chance — if you are also an OCCC student, faculty member, or alumni.

The Future Alumni Network is looking for people who have

flair to perform in the second annual OCCC's Got Talent, a scholarship fundraiser that showcases the many talents of the OCCC community, said Lisa Lasater, FAN club president.

"We as students raise money from the talent show which in return goes towards scholarships at OCCC that any student can apply for," Lasater said in an e-mail.

"We were able to raise enough money for four \$500 scholarships from last year's event, and our goal is to double that amount," she said.

As well as stiff competition, last year's contest revealed some rare skills.

Last year's winner was Marilyn Or, who performed yo-yo tricks, said Randy Cassimus, Alumni Relations and Community Development associate director. "I wouldn't say it was the weirdest talent we saw, but it was the most unusual."

Cassimus is staff sponsor of the FAN club.

Student Kodey Prewitt said he really enjoyed participating in last year's contest. His one-man band

"We were able to raise enough money for four \$500 scholarships from last year's event, and our goal is to double that amount."

—RANDY CASSIMUS
ALUMNI RELATIONS AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

performance earned him the Crowd Pleaser Award.

Cassimus said he hopes the contest also will have that award this year.

"It's only a \$5 application fee and you have the opportunity to win some cash," Prewitt said. "Yeah, it's a great cause and the alumni do a lot for the college."

A panel of judges — most of whom have a background in the arts — will determine the winner for the 2015 talent show, Cassimus said.

There also is a second way to win a cash prize, he said. An account will be created for those who are selected to be a part of the competition. The performer or group that raises the most donations for the OCCC Foundation Scholarship Fund through that account also will win an award.

FAN received about 50 talented applicants last year and gave away \$750 in prize money, Cassimus said. He said the show included a trio of rappers, a troupe of dancers and even a ventriloquist.

This event is open to people of all talents, Cassimus said, but applicants will be narrowed down to approximately 20 contestants.

Those who have a talent to show off can fill out an application at www.occc.edu/talent.

Cassimus said applicants need to upload an audio or video audition clip. He said those who have a video already posted on YouTube can attach that link.

"The audition clip does not have to be high-quality," he said. "It can be a video your friend recorded with an iPhone."



FILE PHOTO/PIONEER

In 2014, OCCC Records Office employees Janet McNeill and Crystal Witt, along with business major Tanya Bessell, won the second grand prize with their comedic rap about Records and Registration after they raised the most scholarship money.

"However, if someone needs assistance in recording their talent, they can come to the OCCC Marketing/PR studio on March 3.

"We will be there all day to help people record their auditions."

All applications are due by March 6.

For more information, e-mail Cassimus at rcassimus@occc.edu or contact FAN at fan@occc.edu.