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EDITORIAL

MOTIVATION IN SHORT SUPPLY THESE DAYS

Videographer Jake McMahon says Americans spend too much time procrastinating and not enough being productive. Read more inside.

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NEWS

STUDENTS POLLED ABOUT HEALTHCARE

Many OCCC students don't have healthcare coverage — about 31 percent of those polled. Find out more about the Affordable Care Act and what it means to you.

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SPORTS

POST SPRING BREAK SPORTS PLANNED

Intramural Sports Assistant Matthew Wright says he has a number of events ready to roll after spring break. Turn inside for more.

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COMMUNITY

ENGINEERING CLUB HELPFUL TO MEMBERS

Club President Anthony Norton says he wants to help students prepare for transfer to a university and network for later jobs. Read more on page 10.

COMMUNITY, p. 10



OKLAHOMA CITY COMMUNITY COLLEGE PIONEER

FEB. 27, 2015

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COVERING OCCC SINCE 1978

Lab time



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Biotechnology major Christopher Payao works on a lab assignment in OCCC's Biotechnology lab Feb 18. "I'm setting up Bradford standards so I can make a standard curve and compare it to my unknown proteins to find a concentration," he said. To learn more about the Biotechnology program at OCCC, visit www.occc.edu/biotech.

Leadership class to continue in the fall

President Paul Sechrist says the program he founded will carry on after he retires July 1

CLAYTON MITCHELL
 Sports Writer
sportswriter@occc.edu

OCCC's President's Leadership Class will continue this fall for the fifth time, even with the upcoming presidential change, said the class's Instructor of Record and Student Life Director Erin Logan.

The class, taught by OCCC President Paul Sechrist and Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services Marion Paden,

gives students a unique opportunity to learn about leadership from other community leaders, Logan said.

"The purpose of the President's Leadership Class is to allow a group of students the opportunity to learn leadership from not just the college leadership, but from a leadership perspective as a whole," she said.

"They learn transferable leadership skills that allow them to be a leader in any capacity of their life ...," she said. "They're learning skills they can [use]."

"The point of the class is to make better leaders, by letting students find their own leader-

ship style."

Logan said one of the ways the class helps students develop their own leadership is by introducing them to and having them interact with local community

leaders.

"We bring in guest speakers from the community that are influential leaders in many dif-

See **CLASS** page 9

Evening transportation offered by EMBARK Link

LAUREN DANIEL
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Students who would like to stake evening classes but have no reliable transportation are in luck as EMBARK Link Service is now making several

scheduled evening stops at the OCCC campus, said Kendra Fringer, Student Life coordinator.

"We know that our evening students, in the past, didn't have transportation or didn't have the ability for transportation,

See **EMBARK** page 9

OPINION

EDITORIAL | In the time it takes to tune into Netflix daily, a person could learn a foreign language

Americans not motivated enough

As a white American male, my life has been amazing (not that I care). In the 22 years I've been alive, I've had zero obstacles to overcome. There are Kardashians who have worked harder than I. Literally, the only thing standing in the way of my success is myself.

I am in my fourth year of getting my two-year associate degree. I have failed three or four classes

because I didn't feel like doing some of the work. I made straight As in school when I was younger. One day, for some bizarre reason, I got lazy. I've been lazy ever since.

I'm ashamed to admit that, but I'm not the only one in this situation. Many of us are riding yachts on a chocolate river to Amazing Futureville. Instead of firing up the engines and driving the boat, however, we're all taking naps on the deck.

Meanwhile, there are other people on the river passing us in tiny canoes. They are paddling their hearts out because they have to. Soon, these people will all fill up Amazing Futureville and there will be no room left for us. Sure, we'll start driving our boats so we can win the race. Later. Maybe.

My family is poor by most people's standards. I

have a good job, though, and the government helps me out with my education. I've never been without food or shelter. If I got good grades, I could go to an amazing university. I don't try to get good grades, though. I hate myself for not trying, but not enough to actually try. So I hate myself for not trying. So why try when I hate myself so much?

Motivation is a first-world problem. Undeveloped nations don't have people like us. When someone is pointing a gun at your grandmother, you're extremely motivated whether you decide to do what the gunman says or say goodbye to granny and run to a place safe for appropriate grieving.

Motivation is hard to get. The reason, by the way, is Netflix. A month of cheap food costs roughly \$200. A month of rent in a decent apartment is \$500 a month. For the luckier ones, bare bones insurance is \$100 a month. Good Internet is roughly \$100 a month. Netflix is \$8 a month. That means for less than \$11,000 a year, a human being can have every conceivable pleasure and necessity of existence.

Nscreenmedia.com did some research into the matter. "... Only 45 percent of the people that reported using Netflix were actual subscribers. The rest were family and friends using the subscriber's account. This implies that average usage per user could be more like 40 minutes."

Even if a person claims to watch only the average

Horror Games.



amount, that's 40 minutes a day of being soothed by commercial-free excellence.

Beyond Netflix and Hot Pockets and Dr Pepper and a warm bed, there is not much more a person needs to be kept as docile as an old dog. If they began offering free Netflix in prison, about a billion people would commit murder tomorrow.

Netflix symbolizes the final step we've taken toward absolute decadence. It will only be obsolete when movies are things we can literally walk into. With 40 minutes a day, a person can learn a new language, write letters to congressmen, and develop sexy hiphop abs. For the unmotivated, Netflix needs to be canceled and removed like a tumor.

—JAKE McMAHON
VIDEOGRAPHER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR | Mumps, measles, rebecca shot recommended for anyone born after 1957

State health department encourages measles vaccinations

To the Editor:

The Oklahoma State Department of Health is urging Oklahomans to ensure household members and loved ones are vaccinated against measles.

OSDH is encouraging preventative measures and reminding everyone vaccination is the best way to protect against measles. In 2014, the U.S. saw 644 cases of measles, the most cases since measles was eliminated in 2000. As of Feb. 6, there have been 121 people from 17 states reported to have measles.

"One out of 10 Oklahoma toddlers has not received the first dose of measles vaccine," said Dr. Terry Cline, Commissioner of Health. "We strongly recommend that parents make sure their children receive the first dose of measles vaccine on time. These toddlers who haven't received the vaccine are at risk for measles."

Measles can be prevented by the combination MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. Toddlers can receive MMR as soon as they reach their first birthday. Oklahoma state law requires measles vaccine for all children attending childcare and school in Oklahoma. Adults born in 1957 or later who have not already been vaccinated should get at least one dose of MMR vaccine.

Measles is a highly contagious respiratory disease which can lead to pneumonia and other complications, especially in young children and adults over 20. The disease also can cause serious problems in pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems. People with measles can spread the virus up to four days before the onset of the rash until four days after the rash starts. Anyone who suspects

they may have measles should contact a healthcare provider immediately.

MMR vaccine is available for no charge for children who do not have insurance, children whose insurance doesn't cover vaccines, those eligible for SoonerCare and Native American children at local county health departments. Some county health departments also have the MMR vaccine available for children with insurance. It is important to bring an insurance card. Check with a local county health department for more information.

For additional questions about the measles vaccine, contact a healthcare provider or a local county health department.

For more information, visit www.ok.gov/health.

—OKLAHOMA STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

PIONEER

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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

BOOK REVIEW | 'Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki' too much fluff, not enough plot

Murakami falls short with novel

Haruki Murakami is a name that will either create an instant connection or won't ring a bell at all.

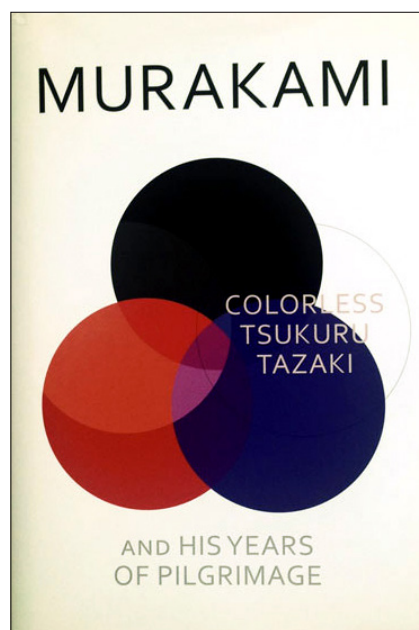
The 66-year-old Kyoto, Japan, born writer now enjoys a celebrity status in the literary world, no longer only a cult-favorite.

His latest book, "Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage" takes a departure from his usual surreal style and deals with some issues that are closer to real life than almost any of his other works.

Tsukuru Tazaki is a guy who builds train stations, and is a typical Murakami-esque loner. He lives in an apartment by himself, and enjoys jazz and classical records with whiskey. Tsukuru used to have a great group of friends in high school, calling his squad "inseparable," but suddenly, one day, his friends completely halt all communication with him.

The book deals with Tsukuru's quest to determine why his friends cut off contact with him so long ago, and how it has affected his life in more ways than he may realize.

As an avid Murakami reader and fanboy, this novel left me feeling a bit empty at the end. Murakami's best-known works are unique because of a specific



brand of surrealism and weirdness; weirdism if you will.

Though there are some books of his ("Norwegian Wood"), that employ realism and are actually enjoyable, "Colorless Tsukuru" feels more like a walkthrough of everyday things with no real climax or ultimate resolution.

Murakami also is famous for his cliffhanger endings, but I just didn't feel like I had read a quality story after I had finished "Colorless." There was too much fluff and not enough plot. Despite Tsukuru's own discoveries throughout the story, his character seems utterly boring and stuck.

This isn't to say there aren't good things about this book; Murakami's writing itself is almost always more interesting and beautiful than anything he actually writes about.

His writing is probably most comparable to Hemingway's if he were a stay-at-home dad.

The Murakami faithful will eat this up, just like anything he puts out, but I think they (myself included) are eagerly awaiting more.

Rating: B+

—SPENCER GRANT
ONLINE WRITER

NETFLIX ORIGINAL REVIEW | Each week, viewer left wondering fate of characters

'House of Cards' U.S.-style a winner

The Netflix original series "House of Cards" produced by David Fincher ("Gone Girl," "The Social Network") in 2013 is an American adaptation of the 1990 British TV miniseries "House of Cards."

The British version centers on Francis Urquhart, a fictional Chief Whip of the Conservative Party, who schemes to become Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

In the American series, the drama occurs in present-day Washington D.C., and Francis Urquhart becomes Frank Underwood (Kevin Spacey), a South Carolina Democrat and House majority whip who uses Southern charm to hide his wicked nature.

Embittered at not receiving an appointment as Secretary of State, Underwood plots to make himself president by whatever means necessary.

Whether he is blackmailing a Congressman or manipulating the press, Underwood shows us that no risk is too great and no one too small to be part of his game.

The relationship he cultivates with the young re-



porter, Zoe Barnes (Kate Mara), is one of the highlights of the show.

She uses him to unveil the inner workings of Washington and he manipulates her to leak damaging stories about his opponents for his own sinister purposes. The relationship becomes dangerous for both of them when Barnes starts to uncover some of

Underwood's schemes.

Even more remarkable is the relationship between Underwood and his equally ambitious wife Claire (Robin Wright).

Spacey and Wright subtly portray a couple who see even their love lives as political tools. They are open with each other about their love affairs, but beneath the calm surface, there is an undercurrent of jealousy and regret that makes the relationship poignant.

Most of us try to be good people in our everyday lives but it is fun to watch this couple do terrible things.

Each time, the viewer gets the thrill of wondering if the characters will get away with their scheming, or if the house of cards will finally come crashing down.



Apple tracker free, better than Fitbit

Lately I've seen an increase of people trying to be healthy. It's a great concept, but they usually only do one thing. That thing is buy a Fitbit — a \$100 piece of rubber they're convinced will make them skinny.

I once thought the Fitbit was cool too. It tracks pointless things like steps taken, calories burned, hours slept, distance traveled, active minutes and quality of sleep. Several of these seem like something you could calculate yourself or just another way to describe what it does.

Most people also don't realize you have to record your calories within the app. It doesn't just magically understand what you eat.

Plus, all of your stats are synched to a computer or cell phone using Bluetooth. Why not just use an app on your phone?

Well, the joke is on everyone who has a Fitbit and an iPhone, because you have a built-in Fitbit on your iPhone. Now, I will warn you, it doesn't make a social statement while hanging on your wrist, but it's free.

When you updated to iOS 8, the Apple HealthKit app magically appeared on your phone. At first, I wasn't a fan, but now I use it on a daily basis.

Instead of tracking pointless information, it allows you to keep track of important information like blood pressure, weight, active calories, and exercises you've done. You have to enter most of the data yourself, but it's not difficult at all and actually makes you more aware of what you're doing to your poor body.

My favorite thing about the app is that it keeps track of how many steps have been taken every day, as well as walking and running distances. Your buddy, Apple, is always walking with you.

The app makes cute little graphs and gives a visual to show how out of shape you are for the day, week, month, or even year.

It's a great tool to track your progress and is far more practical than an expensive bracelet that will do the exact same thing.

—LAUREN DANIEL
ONLINE EDITOR

"House of Cards" returns for a third season on Netflix Feb. 27.

Rating: A

—AMAR MOLINAS
WEBMASTER

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

EVENT REVIEW | Hold state Capitol on a college campus and see who shows up

Lawmakers' indifference shows at Higher Ed Day

Higher Ed Day — a day the state Legislature throws open its doors, welcomes voters and colleges from across the state, and strains itself to feign interest in our concerns.

I found it absurd that Higher Ed Day is shared with Home-school Day at the Capitol. But I suppose it's fair that legislators hear equally from those pursuing higher ed and those who decry the merits of formal education.

I witnessed homeschoolers far more actively engaging their representatives than college students.

I watched (what I assume to be) families of religious fundamentalists who've opted for curriculums of their own, opposed to science and a free exchange of ideas, chatting with congressmen while many of us were bunching up in comfortable cliques and



commenting on statues. Suddenly I understood Oklahoma law-making much better. I saw the usual Capitol processions too. Under-age debutantes in short dresses and bright lipstick were toured about the hallowed halls, paraded past salivating, middle-aged congressman. Were they being acclimated to the ways of the power structure so they can serve as proper arm candy when the time comes?

I saw teenage boys in thousand-dollar suits and weird, puffy hair-dos brought by handlers to legislators who could assess that their future replacements are being properly groomed for their positions. These are the observances that stack up to reveal the human-centipede that our political system has made out of democracy.

commenting on statues.

Suddenly I understood Oklahoma law-making much better.

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Were they being acclimated to the ways of the power structure so they can serve as proper arm candy when the time comes?

I saw teenage boys in thousand-dollar suits and weird, puffy hair-dos brought by handlers

Higher Ed Day is a nice show but after the bread and circus passes, it remains evident that our state's congress mostly votes along the lines dictated elsewhere.

The illusion of accessibility to our reps was further obliterated when a week later, the House committee overwhelmingly voted for the destruction of Advanced Placement History classes. So much for the importance of education.

Higher Ed Day is a grand concept. Forgive me if I'm not convinced our legislators will hear the concerns of college students over the rustling of lobbyist's dollars and the lure of improving their NRA ratings.

Host Higher Ed Day on a campus and see how many congressmen visit the places they affect with their legislation.

Rating: C

—JORGE KRZYZANIAK
SENIOR WRITER

PROGRAM REVIEW | Prequel to the movie 'Psycho' shows weird relationship between mother, son

'Bates Motel' fills in missing gaps

I was never the type of person to watch a television series with even a slight commitment, but that was before Netflix controlled my life.

I have watched every season of "Breaking Bad," "American Horror Story," and now, I'm working my way through "Bates Motel."

"Bates Motel" is a sort of prequel to Alfred Hitchcock's movie "Psycho," which is incredibly intriguing.

Though many people have watched the movie and know how it ends, it doesn't spoil any details in the series.

The show is drawn around three main characters — Norman Bates (Freddie Highmore), his mother Norma Bates (Vera Farmiga), and Norman's half brother Dylan Masset (Max Thieriot). The three have very separate storylines with different antagonists, which don't always have anything to do with the main story of Norman Bates becoming a psycho.

The show takes the original storyline of "Psycho" and fills in a bunch of blanks, like how Norman obtained Bates Motel, why he's a psycho, and how it all began — even his taxidermy hobby.

I think one of my favorite parts of the show is how

it allows you to forget Norman's severe condition for brief moments, where he's behaving like a normal teenage boy.

His mother, Norma, is trying her best to keep the business of the Bates Motel running, as she tries hiding the incidents Norman creates. Meanwhile, Dylan

Masset, Norman's half brother, is just trying to find his purpose in life since he has never been properly loved by his mother.

And Norman is just living every day as an awkwardly goofy, nice kid looking for love in all the wrong places.

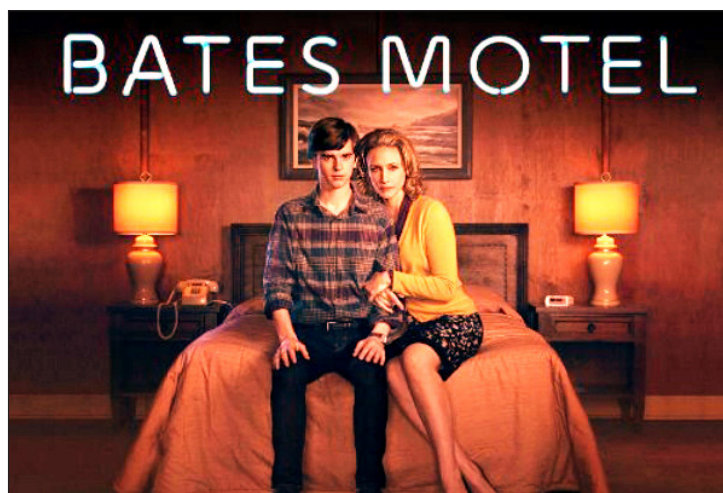
I'm pretty sure he's in love with his mother and there's a weird sexual tension throughout the show.

It's all hunky dory when Norman is being normal and hanging out with friends, but viewers are quickly reminded of how weird the show is when Norman and his mother hang out.

As Norman Bates said, "a boy's best friend is his mother." They don't call him psycho for nothing, folks.

Rating: A

—BRYCE McELHANEY
EDITOR



TOP 20 MOVIES

Weekend of Feb. 20 through Feb. 22
www.newyorktimes.com

1. *Fifty Shades of Grey*
2. *Kingsman: The Secret Service*
3. *The Spongebob Movie: Sponge Out of Water*
4. *McFarland, USA*
5. *The DUFF*
6. *American Sniper*
7. *Hot Tub Time Machine 2*
8. *Jupiter Ascending*
9. *The Imitation Game*
10. *Paddington*
11. *Still Alice*
12. *The Wedding Ringer*
13. *Black or White*
14. *Seventh Son*
15. *Project Almanac*
16. *Birdman*
17. *Selma*
18. *Whiplash*
19. *The Theory of Everything*
20. *Big Hero 6*

Broadway star coming to VPAC Theater March 7

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Watching a Broadway legend in Oklahoma could be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Watching a Broadway legend in OCCC's Visual and Performing Arts Center is an opportunity people should take advantage of, said Donald Johnson, founding artistic director for Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre.

Patti LuPone will perform "Coulda, Woulda, Shoulda ... Played That Part" from 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 7.

Johnson said the show includes LuPone performing selections from roles she wishes she could have played, would have played, could still play, should have played, and famous roles she did play.

He said the show will be something the state has never seen before.

"It's her in a one-woman show on stage with a piano. It's just an evening of virtuosic Broadway talent," he said.

"It is literally unprecedented in Oklahoma history. This is the first time she's

ever come to Oklahoma. This is going to be an exciting development for our entire community, as well as, of course, City Rep to be presenting an artist of that caliber."

LuPone has had roles in many Broadway shows, including Regina in the original Broadway production of "Regina," Fantine in the original "Les Misérables," and Mama Rose in the "Revival of Gypsy."

Her career extends far beyond theater, Johnson said.

She has won multiple Tony awards, multiple Grammy awards, and an Ol-

ivier Award. She also has made appearances on numerous television shows. However, Johnson said, she's best known for her roles on Broadway.

"She was in the Oscar winning film 'Driving Miss Daisy,' and has a lengthy film career beyond that, had her own hit television series, 'Life Goes On,' and has been a regular in television and other series," he said.

"She just had an extraordi-

nary career across all phases and all mediums.

"She recently performed her one-woman show at 54 Below, the nightclub studio in New York."

The show is being hosted by City Rep. The professional theater has been around for 13 seasons and presents straight plays, comedies, dramas, musicals, new work and classics.

"This is our big fundraising event for the year," Johnson said.

Tickets go on sale Wednesday and are priced at \$150, \$100, \$75 and \$50. They are available online at www.cityrep.com or tickets.occc.edu, by phone at 682-7579 or in person at the OCCC Box Office.

For more information about LuPone, visit www.pattilupone.net/bio.html.



Patti LuPone

Stolen iPhone, fence damage reported to campus police

LAUREN DANIEL
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A stolen phone and damage to OCCC property were reported to campus police recently.

At approximately 5:30 p.m. Feb. 9, OCCC student, Taylor Aillo, 18, reported her white iPhone 5 had been stolen. She said she accidentally left it in the Social Science Center restroom and when she went back to

retrieve it, it was missing.

Campus Police reviewed security footage, but were unable to identify a suspect.

Damage to a fence on the west side of campus was reported at approximately 1:28 p.m. Feb. 8.

Officer Gordon Nelson was on patrol in Parking Lot B when he was approached by a Tru-Green employee who told him about the damage.

Nelson said a fence panel had been separated from

the corner post, and that the fence appeared to have been altered by something or someone. He said there were footprints next to the damaged property.

A few days later, Nelson reviewed area security footage and saw a subject walking along the fence on Friday, Feb. 6. The footage showed the subject tried to gain entry and eventually started kicking the fence, which separated the corner post and panel.

Additional information is available in a supplemental report that was requested but not provided.

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.

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.

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'Rocky Horror' cast prepares for March shows

HARRISON LANGSTON

News Writing Student

Goofy, entertaining, and thought-provoking. These are some adjectives assigned to "The Rocky Horror Show," which will be performed on campus for two consecutive weeks in early March.

Others have described the production as an experience packed full of unadulterated enjoyment and madness.

OCCC's theater and music departments have joined ranks to present their adaptation of the widely famous cult classic by Richard O'Brien.

"The Rocky Horror Show" is a humorous musical that is a tribute to science fiction and horror B movies of the late 1940s through the early 1970s.

It tells the story of a recently engaged couple who get caught in a rainstorm after their car breaks down. They find themselves in need of assistance and enter the home of the mad transvestite scientist Dr. Frank N. Furter.

About six years ago, OCCC staged "The Rocky Horror Show" to sell-out audiences, theater Professor Brent Noel said. Some people came in costume, brought props and interacted with the cast members.

Noel is the producer of this adaptation. He said he is confident people will enjoy the show this time around.

"[The cast is] a good mix of students and people from outside of OCCC," Noel said.

Director Jon Haque is experienced in this field. He is the business director at Oklahoma City Repertory Theatre Company and has received Emmy Awards for his work, according to the City Rep website. He has worked with OCCC before on various projects.

Theater arts major Daraja Rae Stewart, 18, is playing the role of Janet, the heroine of "The Rocky Horror Show." This is only Stewart's second play, she said, her first being "Little Murders" last semester.

After almost six weeks of rehearsal, Stewart said, she is still somewhat nervous about the upcoming performance.

She said her hardest struggle is opening herself up to others and making herself vulnerable. However, she said, she has bonded with the cast and has become comfortable.

Stewart praised Haque's role as director.

"He is fabulous and amazing," she said. "He makes all of the cast members feel important."

Stewart said the most interesting moment was when Haque had the cast strip down to their bathing suits in order to bond with one another.

She described the production as "very colorful and huge."

Like Noel, Stewart believes that people will "absolutely love the show."

Stewart will play opposite Larz Hoban, a community member who portrays the central character, Dr. Frank N. Furter. Janet's fiancé Brad is played by Dillon Griffiths, an OCCC student.

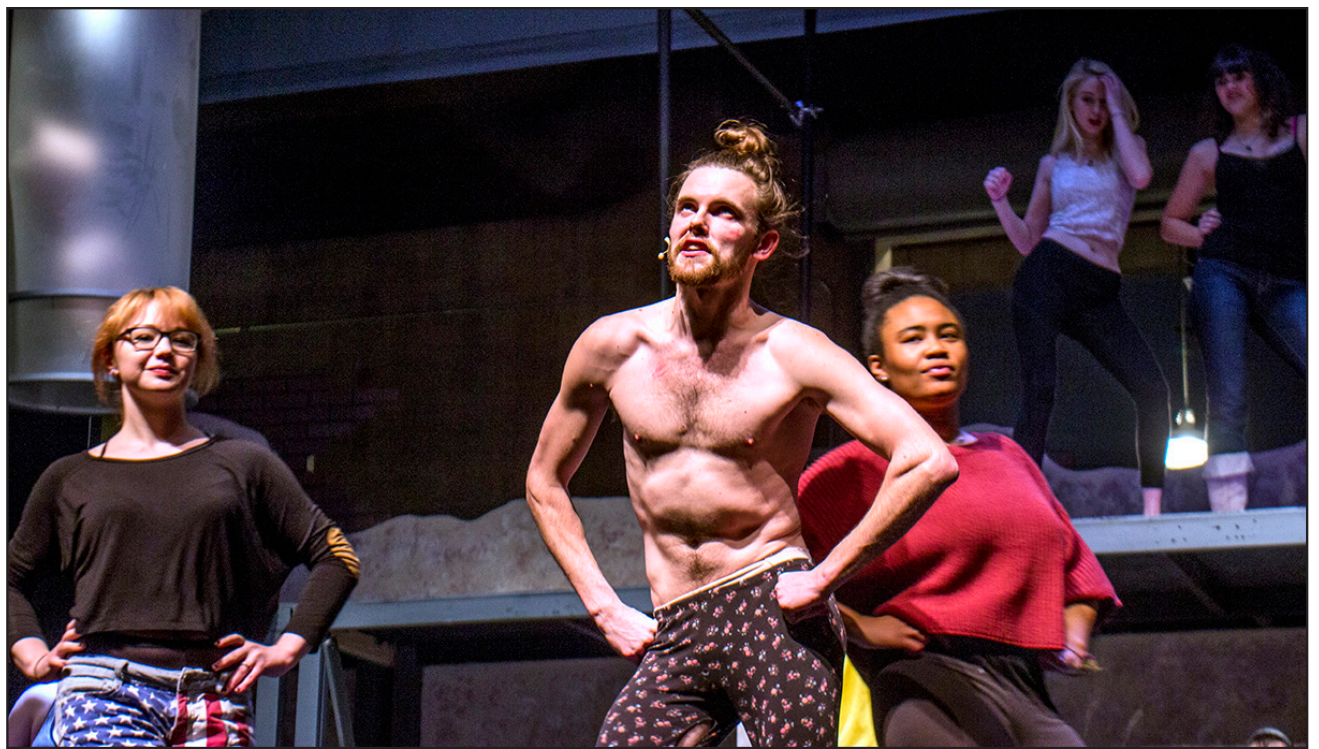
While it is true that "The Rocky Horror Show" is a fun musical, it also deals with deeper topics, such as human sexuality, tolerance, normality and other adult themes, Noel said.

The show is recommended for mature audiences only.

The play will be staged at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5, and again on Saturday, March 7. A special midnight performance is scheduled for Friday, March 6.

The show will run at 7:30 p.m. the following Wednesday through Friday, March 11, 12 and 13.

All performances will be held in the Bruce Owen Theater in the Arts and Humanities building.



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Diversified studies major Megan Rich (left), community member Larz Hoban (center) and theater arts major Bethanie Hamilton (right) practice a dance sequence for the upcoming March performances of "The Rocky Horror Show." Hoban portrays the central character, Dr. Frank N. Furter.



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Theater arts majors Daraja Rae Stewart and Dillon Griffiths rehearse a scene with other cast members from "The Rocky Horror Show" on Feb. 24. Stewart and Griffiths play Janet and Brad.

Tickets are \$5 for students and \$15 for the general public.

Tickets can be bought online, in person at the OCCC box office located inside the Visual and Performing Arts Center Atrium, or at the door, based on availability.

For more information, email Noel at bnoel@occc.edu or Stewart at daraja.stewart@my.occc.edu.

OCCC students speak out on healthcare

JORGE KRZYZANIAK

Senior Writer

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With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, most Americans are now required to maintain health care coverage.

This will be the first year that Americans who are able to afford health care but have chosen not to purchase it will be penalized with government fines under what's referred to as the "individual mandate."

In a recent poll of 220 OCCC students, 31 percent said they have no healthcare insurance.

"I have four kids and it's just too expensive," said Allied health major Tania Lebron.

Lebron said if she or her children get sick, she goes to the clinic and pays out of pocket.

Biology major Dakota Arms said he has healthcare provided through his parents.



"After I don't qualify for coverage under my parents, I plan on buying my own healthcare," Arms said.

Haley Bremerman and Michele Estep, both nursing majors, said they have insurance through their parents.

"Hopefully when I graduate and get a job, those benefits will come through," Estep said on what her plans will be for

future health care.

Open enrollment for health care coverage through the government health care marketplace in 2015 has closed.

For those who do not have health coverage yet, there may still be the option to be covered under Medicaid or other programs or they may qualify to enroll through the marketplace's Special Enrollment Period. Individuals can sign up for informational email updates at

HealthCare.gov.

Student Support Services Director Lisa Fisher said while OCCC provides a number of services for its students, helping them procure healthcare coverage is not one.

"We don't have specific information about health care — not that's handed

out through our office."

However, she said, Student Support Services does put out a Community Resource Guide to help point students toward various types of useful off-campus resources.

"There's information about health care and prescriptions available in the community," she said.

She said students may qualify for the Sentry Student Security Plan, a health insurance plan enumerated in the Resource Guide but not officially endorsed in any way by Student Support Services.

The Resource Guide is available at www.occc.edu/support/Community.html. It refers students to local services covering a spectrum of needs from adoption to gambling treatment.

Among the services listed are multiple healthcare options.

Student Support Services is on the first floor of the Main Building. To contact the office, email sss@occc.edu or call 405-682-7520.

To find out more about the Affordable Care Act, visit www.healthcare.gov.

Affordable Care Act FACTS

— In March of 2015, it will have been five years since the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was signed into law.

— The full language of the law is viewable online at <http://housedocs.house.gov/energycommerce/ppacacon.pdf>.

— The ACA is 955 pages long as it was approved by Congress and signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010.

— Recognized perhaps more by its nickname "Obamacare," the merits of the law have been widely debated and attempts for a total repeal of the Affordable Care Act have been made in every congressional session since its passage.

— A White House Fact Sheet reveals that the Affordable Care Act has decreased the number of uninsured Americans.

— Millions have signed up for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace at www.healthcare.gov/get-coverage, and three million young adults have been covered through the resulting extended coverage of their parents' plans.

— Since passage of the Affordable

Care Act, Americans can no longer be dropped from their coverage because of pre-existing conditions or because of lifetime or annual caps in benefits. This is a tenet of the act that went into effect immediately once it was signed into law.

— The Affordable Care Act has benefitted the existing coverage of millions of Americans, allowing them to access preventative services like cancer screenings and vaccines without incurring any out-of-pocket costs.

— The Health Insurance Marketplace has put more insurance plan options in one place, providing Americans the opportunity to compare more coverage options before committing to buy.

— Under the Affordable Care Act, all Americans who are able to afford health insurance but choose not to, must qualify for an exemption or pay a fine.

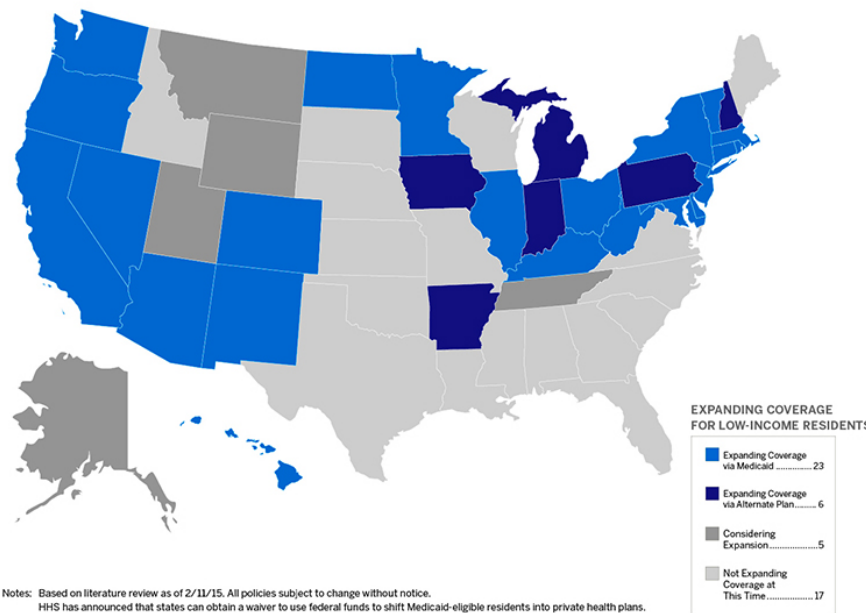
— Information about qualifying and applying for exemptions is available at www.healthcare.gov/fees-exemptions/exemptions-from-the-fee.

— www.whitehouse.gov

"The Supreme Court ruling on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) allowed states to opt out of the law's Medicaid expansion, leaving each state's decision to participate in the hands of the nation's governors and state leaders.

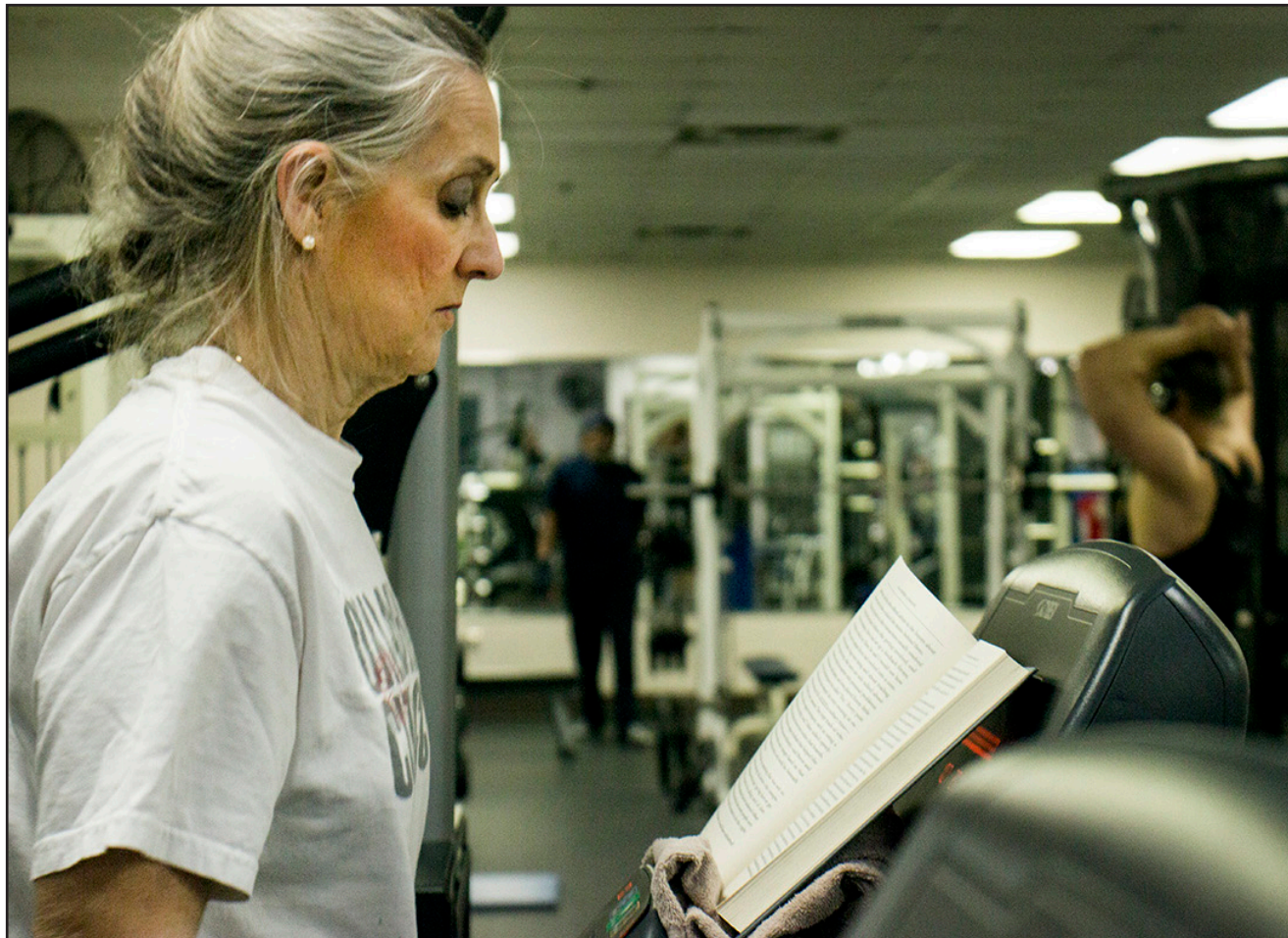
"The Daily Briefing and American Health Line editorial teams have tracked where each state stands on the issue since the ruling, combing through lawmakers' statements, press releases and media coverage. In this latest iteration of our Medicaid map, we've determined each state's position based on legislative or executive actions to expand coverage to low-income residents using ACA funding." — www.advisory.com

Where the States Stand on Medicaid Expansion
28 States, DC, Expanding Coverage—February 11, 2015



SPORTS

Multi-tasking



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Accounting professor Myra Decker reads a book while using a treadmill on Feb. 18 in OCCC's Wellness Center. "I'm reading 'The Power of Many' by Meg Whitman," she said. Workout equipment at the center can be used by students free of charge with a valid OCCC ID. The Aquatic Center pool and gym also are free for OCCC student use. For more information, visit www.occc.edu/rf/wellness.

SPORTS | Volleyball, dodgeball among sports to be added to lineup

Intramural options planned after spring break

CLAYTON MITCHELL
Sports Writer
sportswriter@occc.edu

OCCC's Recreation and Fitness department's current focus is getting students into the gym through activities such as intramural sports, said Sports Assistant Matthew Wright.

"We're going to really try to get the intramurals going after spring break, having three or four options every week for students to participate in," Wright said.

Earlier this semester, he said, basketball practices tied up the gym almost every weeknight. Since that sport has ended, Wright said he plans to offer more sports.

"I'm planning for a couple more sports to add after spring break," he said.

"If you just check the website the rest of this month, I'm probably going to have it all posted before March starts."

One new intramural sport recently announced is volleyball. It will begin March 9 and last through April 13, Wright said.

He said teams will play each night from 6 to 9 p.m., and

would have a season format similar to the intramural basketball.

"We'll do a season and if the turnout during the season is really good, then at the very end, we'll do an end-of-the season tournament — just like with the basketball."

Intramural sports have been a great way to make new friends and get active for student Max Ivie. In his first semester at OCCC, Ivie said he has already participated in intramurals.

"I just moved here and that's how I made friends," he said. "It's fun just getting to be active out here."

Wright said as well as the addition of new sports to the Intramural mix, an upcoming dodgeball tournament will be moved from its current dates of March 5 and 6 to a later, currently unannounced date, after spring break.

"I have it scheduled during the NAIA swim meet," Wright said.

"I know in here it's going to be all hands on deck, so I'm not going to be able to focus on intramurals that week. So it's definitely going to have to be pushed back."

For more information, contact Wright at 405-682-1611 ext. 7684, or at matthew.j.wright@occc.edu, or contact the Recreation and Fitness department directly at 405-682-7860.



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.

Class: OCCC students can develop helpful leadership skills

Continued from page 1

ferent disciplines,” she said.

“We’ve had everybody from (former Lt. Gov.) Jari Askins, who ran for governor several years ago, to Bruce Lawrence, the CEO of Integris Hospital, to Pam Newby, the founder and CEO of Special Care, which is one of our service agencies that helps children with disabilities.

“We try to find leaders from all aspects of the community and introduce them to the students.

“Have them learn and ask questions one-on-one with different types of leaders, which you can’t teach [with] a textbook.”

OCCC student Seth Boss took the class in the fall 2014 semester. He said the opportunity was valuable.

“I think that, in the grand

scheme of things, the networking, the connections you make with other people in the school, are the biggest things,” he said.

“The people who taught us, that’s another huge thing. They would teach us different barriers of leadership that we would encounter and they just taught you where to take your leadership next.”

Logan said unlike most classes at OCCC, this class requires an application, with certain criteria being required for acceptance.

“There’s an online application the students have to fill out; I need two letters of recommendation emailed directly to me from faculty or staff members at OCCC; they need to have a 3.0 GPA, completion of English Composition I or equivalent,” she said.

“And then at least 15 hours

at OCCC.”

Logan said students accepted into the class will receive financial benefits from OCCC as a reward for their participation.

“We pay for eight hours of tuition and their fees for fall semester, plus \$425 for books,” she said.

“Then, in the spring semester, as long as they’ve successfully completed all eight of those hours, they get six hours of tuition and fees, and \$425 for books as well.”

Sechrist said he hopes the new president will teach the class, just as he did.

“I’m there almost every week, to actually be the instructor that the students see as the instructor of the president’s leadership class,” he said.

“It gives me an opportunity to, at least once a year, interact very closely with 25

students, and make sure that the president knows what’s going on in the classroom, and ... understands the students’ perspective of OCCC.

“The President’s Leadership Class could be just that in name, if they chose to continue it, but it would be my hope that the new president would be involved.”

With his retirement date of July 1 drawing near, Sechrist said he hopes the class he initiated will continue during the tenure of the next president beyond the fall semester.

“While there aren’t any guarantees, I think there’s a good chance that the class will continue,” he said.

“I won’t be here to teach it like I normally am, but at least Dr. Paden and Erin Logan are committed to making sure that there’s a class.”

Boss said anyone interested in the class should apply.

“If the scholarship is not enough to convince them, they are going to be creating a connection with two of the most outstanding leaders in our college,” he said.

“There’s a lot of things that come from doing and stepping outside of the comfort zone, and not thinking, ‘Oh, it’s too much work.’

“It wasn’t an easy class, but what I gained from it was a lot of experience, and a lot of connections.”

Applications for the class must be emailed to elogan@occc.edu by 5 p.m. Friday, March 13.

For further information or questions, contact Logan at elogan@occc.edu, or call the Student Life office at 405-682-7523.

EMBARK: Evening transportation van adds two OCCC stops

Continued from page 1

because there weren’t routes here for evening,” Fringer said.

“This now allows our night students to have another option to get to campus.

“It just opens up more doors and options for our students to [be part of] activities and classes here at night.”

Unlike the buses that stop at the college throughout the day, EMBARK Link Service uses vans, contracted through the Airport Express company.

The vans will make scheduled stops at OCCC at 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m., 9:30 p.m., 10:30 p.m., and 11:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, Fringer said.

EMBARK Link stops also are scheduled each hour on Sundays starting at 7:30 a.m. with the last van running at 6:30 p.m.

The Link service then connects to the fixed 011 route, which goes by the way of South Robinson, High, SE and SW 29th Street, SW 15th, Meridian and Reno; and to the fixed 23N route, which goes to stops

at Broadway, NE 13th, North Kelley, NW 23rd and North Rockwell. The fixed routes run hourly from 7 p.m. until midnight Monday through Saturday.

EMBARK Customer Relations and IT Manager Michael Scroggins said students can pay the regular bus fare of \$1.75 per trip when the Link van stops at OCCC for transportation to one of fixed routes.

Students also can make reservations to be picked up by the Link service for \$3.50.

However, Scroggins said, the company only accepts payment with cash or Value Cards, unlike the scheduled stops, which accept bus passes.

“The Link gives you a little more flexibility so that way if you’re a little too far for walking distance to a stop, you could call and make a reservation,” he said.

“It does cost a little more, but it has been a worthwhile venture for several people.

“If they’re going to make a reservation though, I do recommend that they don’t call

just when you need it. Call in advance, because they could be booked already. The schedule only allows for so many reservations in order to keep that schedule for the designated stops ...

“I would probably say you need to make sure you call at least 24 hours in advance, just to be safe.”

Scroggins said students can find tools at the EMBARK website to make their public transportation experience easier, such as a trip planner, schedules and maps of the routes.

He also encourages students to download the app called EMBARK Connect, which can help students plan trips and gives real-time bus estimations.

Bus passes can be purchased at the OCCC Bookstore at a significant discount — \$35 instead of the normal \$50. Day passes also can be purchased for \$4 each.

For more information about EMBARK Link, visit


<http://embarkok.com>.

For more information, contact Student Life at 405-682-

7523 or visit http://embarkok.com/assets/files/schedules/LINK_2015.pdf.

EMBARK Link

Weeknight & Sunday Service



Four Zones Serving the
Oklahoma City Metro Area

On weeknights and Sundays, EMBARK Link provides transportation in a defined area of Oklahoma City (see map on back). Anyone can use EMBARK Link - simply hop on at any stop.

EMBARK Link operates under a dual fare set, based on the following:

- Trips that are reserved or use curb-to-curb service.
- Trips that begin and end at a designated stop.

If you have questions or need assistance planning your trip, call 688-6552.

LINK Connections
Link now connects with weeknight

Routes 011 and 23N! Look for the red Nights schedule for service information.

Fares
Please use exact fare. The driver does not carry change.

EMBARK Link (at designated stop) Unlimited passes are accepted for non-reserved trips beginning and terminating at a designated stop. Special patron fares do apply.	\$1.75
EMBARK Link (reservation/curb-to-curb) Unlimited passes and special patron fares cannot be used for reservation or curb-to-curb service. Only cash fare or Value Cards will be accepted.	\$3.50

Contact

Customer Service	688-6552
Call Center Hours Monday - Friday Sunday	Noon - 12 am 7 am - 7 pm

EMBARK
embarkok.com

To Make A Reservation...

- Call 688-6552 to make a curb-to-curb reservation
- Reservations for non-published stops must be made no later than 4 pm the day before or by 4 pm Friday for a Sunday ride.
- Reservations may be made up to 7 days in advance.
- A Subscription Trip (standing reservation) may be scheduled if the trip is from the same origin to the same destination at the same time at least three (3) days per week.

To Cancel Your Trip...

- Call 688-6552. A subscription trip must be canceled at least 2 hours in advance of scheduled pick up time.
- Please be ready 5 minutes before your appointment. Drivers will not wait.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Shedding light on a subject



ETHAN COOPER/PIONEER

Film and Video Production majors Kylie Esco and Nat Hoonsan light an orange for their Cinematography II assignment in OCCC's Visual and Performing Arts Center. "We're using a series of lighting techniques to manipulate the dimensions of the orange," Esco said.

COMMUNITY | From networking to transfers, organization provides guidance

Engineering club helps students

KATIE AXTELL
Community Writer
communitywriter@occc.edu

The Engineering Club is a professional club that helps build networks in the engineering community as well as helping students transfer to other engineering programs at other universities, said club President Anthony Norton.

"Our number-one purpose is to build networks within the engineering community back to the campus [to get] outside companies interested in the OCCC engineering program, and to get our members exposed to what goes on locally in an engineering aspect."

Club members and mechanical engineer majors Matt Feisal and Barry Bosnyak said the club has been beneficial to them.

"It has helped me in terms of building networks to be able to use outside of here once I move on to [the University of Oklahoma] ...," Feisal said. "Also to help for getting a job once I graduate. It's giving me contacts in the field."

Bosnyak said relationships built with other students through the club also help drive home the reason for seeking an engineering degree.

"... It helps solidify in your head 'OK this is a lot of work, but yeah, this is what I want to do'."

Norton, also a mechanical engineer major, said the club will be doing a couple of demonstrations this semester to show how the engineering process works, along with bringing in guest speakers and offering a tour of the engineering facilities at OU.

"We have a club field trip set up to go tour the OU engineering facilities as well as speak with some of their faculty and advisers in the engineering program," he said.

Norton said the trip will take place from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Friday, March 27. Transportation will leave the OCCC campus at noon, he said.

Norton said the club also helps members of the engineering department with scholarship and transfer processes.

"We are in contact right now with [Oklahoma State University] to send somebody over to talk to us about the transfer process, scholarship opportunities that may be available, and just how to basically smooth out the whole thing so you have to go through as few hoops as possible to go to the college that you want to," he said.

Feisal said, each semester, a transfer representative from OU and industry professionals speak to the club.

"Even former students [come] to talk about what they did to get through school and what they're doing now for their job."

The Engineering Club's next meeting is at 12:30 p.m. Thursday, March 12, in the Engineering Lab located in MB 1T1.

Questions and comments also can be posted to the club's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/occcengineeringclub.

For more information, contact Norton at anthony.a.norton@my.occc.edu or engineeringclub@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.

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.

Chili cook-off fundraiser scheduled for March 4

A chili cook-off and bake sale is scheduled at 11 a.m. Wednesday, March 4, outside the Communications Lab on the first floor of the Main Building. The cook-off is a fundraiser hosted by the Faculty Association Scholarship Committee. For more information, contact Ann Raia at ann.f.raia@occc.edu or Tricia Sweany at tricia.l.sweany@occc.edu.

'OCCC's Got Talent' invites submissions

Students, faculty and alumni will need to upload audio and video clips at www.occc.edu/talent by March 6 to enter "OCCC's Got Talent." There is a \$5 application fee. For more information, contact Randy Cassimus at rcassimus@occc.edu or the FAN club at fan@occc.edu.

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. Attendees 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 invited. For more information, contact Student Life at studentlife@occc.edu or 405-682-7523.

Ministries series meeting March 9

Christians on Campus will host a "Solid Ground" ministry series meeting at 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 9 in room AH1C3. For more information, email christiansoncampus@my.occc.edu or Kaie Huizar at kaie.huizar@gmail.com.

Tickets on sale for Patti LuPone concert

Patti LuPone will be performing at 8 p.m. at the VPAC on Saturday, March 7. Ticket prices vary from \$50 to \$150. For more information, contact the Cultural Programs office at culturalprograms@occc.edu or 405-682-7576.

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



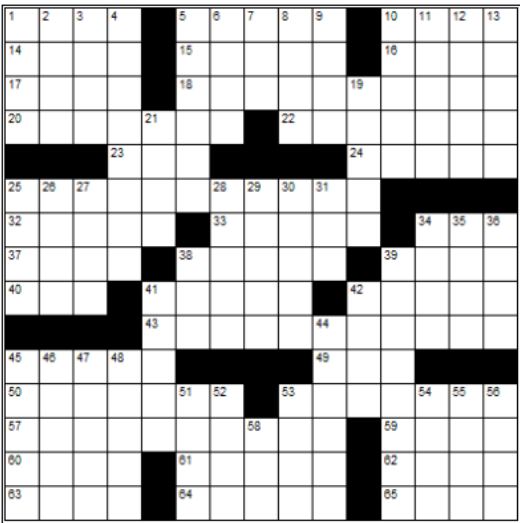
Allison Bonds
Photography

(405) 818-6818

WEEKLY CROSSWORD

ACROSS


- 1. Among
- 5. Young kangaroos
- 10. Seating sections
- 14. Fail to win
- 15. Anoint (archaic)
- 16. Askew
- 17. After-bath powder
- 18. A coming into being
- 20. Burdensome
- 22. Souvenir
- 23. Estimated time of arrival
- 24. Nosed (out)
- 25. Intuition
- 32. Infant's illness
- 33. Range
- 34. American Sign Language
- 37. French for "State"
- 38. Unit of weight for gems
- 39. Hint
- 40. Former North African ruler
- 41. Mimicking
- 42. Breasts (slang)
- 43. Charm
- 45. Noodles
- 49. Buffoon
- 50. Dissented
- 53. Denoting a numerical order
- 57. Bulwarks
- 59. Back of the neck
- 60. Tall woody plant
- 61. Habituate
- 62. Biblical garden
- 63. Flower stalk
- 64. Kingly
- 65. Back talk



DOWN

- 1. Countertenor
 - 2. Groan
 - 3. Small island
 - 4. Run-down
 - 5. Panther
 - 6. 1 1 1 1
 - 7. Poetic dusk
 - 8. The original matter (cosmology)
 - 9. Arid
 - 10. Deserved
 - 11. Unpaid
 - 12. Scribbled
 - 13. Church council
- 19. Catkin
 - 21. Ear-related
 - 25. Chilled
 - 26. Memo
 - 27. Kill
 - 28. Another time
 - 29. Mountain lakes
 - 30. Insect stage
 - 31. Not in
 - 34. Maguey
 - 35. U-boats
 - 36. Not more
 - 38. Consumer Price Index
 - 39. Detains
- 41. Flooded
 - 42. Tiny sphere
 - 44. Tidbit
 - 45. Verse writers
 - 46. Not together
 - 47. Binge
 - 48. Clan emblem
 - 51. Pitcher
 - 52. Accomplished
 - 53. Gumbo
 - 54. Nil
 - 55. Mimics
 - 56. Focusing glass
 - 58. Carpet

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For breaking news:
<http://pioneer.occc.edu>

Whirling Dervishes performance draws large audience

HICHAM SALIM
News Writing Student

An audience of more than 900 people came to the Visual and Performing Arts Center Theater Feb. 6 to see a company of Sufi Muslim performers known as the Whirling Dervishes of Rumi.

In the audience was Steve McLinn of Edmond, who described himself as an artist and a musician. He said the Whirling Dervishes of Rumi were great the last time he attended their performance at another Oklahoma City area college, so he wanted to see them again.

McLinn said he felt a connection with the dervishes because it was a great mystical performance coming “from the heart.”

“That’s the path, and that’s the way to spin out of self,” McLinn said. The goal is to reach the Absolute Divine and thus purity.

“That’s the reason why I am drawn to them,” he said.

The organizer of the event, Ersin Demirci, praised the large crowd and promised them a joyful evening. He then explained Sufism and its grand master Rumi, a poet and mystic who lived in Konya, Turkey, around the 13th century.

Professor Dann J. May, of the Wimberly School of Religion at Oklahoma

City University, explained the program of the evening which included a reading of poems by Rumi.

The poems were accompanied by a Turkish musical instrument called the “Ney,” which provided almost mournful sounds, and two other instruments called the “Kanun” and the “Saz,” played by three musicians dressed all in black, plus a lead singer.

May then gently eased the audience to the main event of the evening, the entrance of the dervishes, three men dressed in white gowns, tall brown Turkish hats, and black capes.

The dervishes slowly removed the black capes and walked toward the center of the stage with their arms crossed, hands softly touching their shoulders.

Under the musical sounds of the Ney, the Kanun, and the Saz, the dervishes started rotating in synchronized harmony at the center of the stage.

The dervishes accomplished four consecutive spiritual dances, where their necks became slightly bent, a sign that the ego is no longer involved.

In this posture they reach the status of a crystal clear human being ready to shine and spread love and an unconditional service to all beings without any discrimination, according to Sufi tradition.



Professor Lecturer Ori Z. Soltes, of Georgetown University, told the audience that “dervish” is an Arabic-Persian word meaning someone who follows the Sufi Muslim ascetic path. Sufism is a Muslim religious order known for having taken the vows of extreme poverty and austerity just as the “mendicant friars” did in Christianity, and also similar to Buddhist monks.

“We are proud to bring this significant cultural celebration all the way to Oklahoma City,” said Demirci, executive director of the Dialogue Institute of Oklahoma. The institute is an organization that promotes mutual understand-

ing, respect and cooperation among people of diverse faiths, according to its website, www.dialogueok.org.

“The event was a big success,” Demirci said.

“The focus was on the shared values of humanity, rather than our differences, which help foster a deeper understanding and empathetic acceptance in central Oklahoma.”

The event concluded with the musicians performing one last epic song.

Afterward, the performers shared some moments with a few curious spectators who asked all sorts of questions which were gladly answered.

Physical Therapy Assistant program deadline is March 6

JESSICA F. MCCLUNG
News Writing Student

The deadline to apply to the Physical Therapy Assistant program this fall is noon Friday, March 6, said Program Director Jennifer Ball.

The OCCC PTA program was the first one accredited in the state, Ball said.

“There are six PTA programs to choose from in Oklahoma.

“We are unique in that our PTA classes occur in the late afternoons and early evenings. Also we have a required anatomy class with a cadaver, which provides a unique learning opportunity. We are the only PTA program in our state with this opportunity.”

She said OCCC’s program has excellent graduation and licensure pass rates.

The program accepts 20 students each year based on preference points, Ball said.

OCCC has approximately 60 to 75 qualified applicants each year. The 20 students with the top point totals are invited to join the fall class of PTA students.

The remaining students are placed on a waiting list in order of points, Ball said. If a student declines his or her spot or becomes ineligible, the next student is offered a spot until all 20 spots are filled.

This process will continue until the first day of class.

“My suggestion to students is to strive to get as many points as you can,” Ball said. “If you are on the waiting list, don’t stress. Students are welcome to call admissions to check on their status up until the first

day of class.”

Preference points are earned with test scores, grade point average, classes completed with a grade of A or B, and observation or work experience.

Like all OCCC health-care programs, the PTA program is highly competitive, Ball said.

There is a shortage of PTAs in Oklahoma which increases the demand for licensed professionals in the field, she said.

As of 2013, starting salaries for new graduates were \$30,000 to \$35,000, depending on the setting in the state of Oklahoma.

“Being a physical therapist assistant means that a person likes to work with people of all ages, especially our aging population,” Ball said. “A PTA is organized, a good communicator, empathetic to others,

and knowledgeable about the human body and conditions that affect the human body.”

PTA is a very rewarding occupation, she said. It does require clear communication with the patient and family members, the supervising physical therapist, and the medical team.

Ball said the goal is for students to be prepared mentally and physically to embrace this career.

“My advice to prospective students is to observe physical therapy to ensure this is a career they are interested in,” she said.

This is advice she gives to all students considering the PTA career path.

Though the deadline for fall 2015 is looming, Ball said students who are interested in applying for fall 2016 can get

a head start on preparation by looking over the requirements and making sure they can meet them.

Ball offered suggestions to those students.

“Take classes early that earn preference points,” she said. “Any classes taken in the summer or fall of 2015 will be completed in time to factor in preference points.”

Applications for this program are available the first Monday in July. The deadline to apply is the first Friday in March of each year for a fall entry to the program. The application can be found online at www.occc.edu/pta.

For more information regarding the program or application process, contact Ball at 682-1611, ext. 7305, or jball@occc.edu.