

# PIONEER



**Contract meeting:** Members of the faculty attended to be trained on the new policies in the Al Snipes boardroom. *Trey Bell/Pioneer*

## OCCC employees bound by yearly contracts

**TREY BELL**

Editor

editor@occc.com

New employee contracts and policies, one of which includes an extension of employees' introductory periods, will take effect at OCCC as of July 1.

The new contracts were created in an effort to place all regular full-time and part-time employees under the same policy.

Temporary and student employees do not

receive employee contracts, and adjunct employees receive their own specialized contract.

Human Resources Vice President Angie Christopher conducted a training session Wednesday, June 22 in the Al Snipes Board Room to help employees become familiar with the changes.

Christopher spoke about the new contract and its main provisions. She said the contracts are effective from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

One of the provisions being changed in the new contracts is the new employee

introductory period. It has now been extended to one year from the previous six month introductory period.

"We thought we would extend this time to really get to know somebody," Christopher said to her audience of about 40 employees. "Six months is a short amount of time, especially with all of the work that we have. So I think a year really gives you time to evaluate their work."

Christopher also stated that employees may

See **CONTRACTS** Page 9

## Muslim students fearful after Orlando terror attack

**Students concerned about hate crimes and harassment after Pulse night club shooting.**

**ELIZABETH BONILLA**

News Writing Student

Muslim students at OCCC say they are outraged and frightened for their safety after a nightclub shooting shortly after 2 a.m. in Orlando, Fla., recently.

The shooter, Omar Mateen, 29, claimed the lives of 49 people and injured over 50 at Pulse, a gay dance

club. No current OCCC students were harmed in the attack.

During the attack, Mateen reportedly placed a call to 911 in which he pledged his allegiance to ISIS.

The shooting came shortly after the start of the Ramadan holy month, a time where Muslims strictly devote themselves to their faith. Diverting their focus from worship and fasting, Muslim students on campus now say they fear the shooter's actions may incite hate crimes against them.

Arta Shajee said she was verbally attacked while on the road recently.

She said she saw a man in a car, whom she

thought might have been gay, looked angry as he shouted something inaudible at her while she was driving home.

In spite of her concerns for her safety, Shajee is focused more on the emotional challenges the LGBTQ community is facing.

"The gay community is very hurt right now. My deep sorrow is with those victims and their families," she said.

Samara Altaie, a nursing major, said there are many who already have a negative impression of

See **ISLAM** Page 9



# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

**EVENT REVIEW |** Hot days and cool music graced Muskogee music festival

## G Fest brings big names, big crowds

For a brand new festival, G Fest's debut, set at an old air field, just two miles from downtown Muskogee, was an impressive one.

Home of Oklahoma's Music Hall of Fame, the fest didn't disappoint. With bluegrass band Old Crow Medicine Show opening Thursday night, the country-themed weekend welcomed a multitude of acclaimed acts and artists.

I was prepared to be surrounded by hot music and good friends for the weekend, but not for heat-stroke-inducing temperatures.

I arrived at the festival Friday afternoon to temperate conditions, but as the sun rose directly overhead, everyone fled into the big white festival tents covering the four different music stages for shade. Over sixty musicians from around the state and surrounding areas were invited to play the shaded stages.

It was hard to think straight in the 105-degree heat. So, within two hours, my friends and I had to leave to find air conditioning at a nearby hotel to pull ourselves together.

Thankfully, the sun dipped back down behind some clouds for an extended amount of time, cooling the festival grounds and all those who dared to spend the weekend in such conditions.

We returned at 6 p.m., ready to take on the festival once again.

By sunset, the heat slowly diminished, and as wind carried the music, spirits rose.

Around 7 p.m. I made my way over to the Currentland Stage to hear Kyle Reid and the Low Swinging Chariots. The Chariots shook things up by playing jazz at the heavily country-centered festival.

Anyone who has seen Kyle Reid play would agree that it is hard to refrain from tapping your feet and bobbing your head when hearing his 1920s reminiscent swing.

As Reid wrapped up his set, hundreds of people began to pool around the main stage, eagerly awaiting the night's headliner, the Avett Brothers. I made my way over just as they began their first song.

The crowd was full of energy and excitement. It was my first time seeing the Avett Brothers live, and certainly will not be my

last.

The audience danced and sang along loudly for the entirety of the three-hour concert. The Avett Brothers, clothes drenched with sweat, joined the crowd in the hopping up and down as they played their fastest songs.

By the end of the night, I was nothing short of exhausted and in need of a shower. I felt comfort in knowing that everyone else at the festival was in the same condition.

The fun of it all did not stop when the music did, though.

Campground jams and picking circles lasted well into the night. It was 5 a.m. when I heard the last strum of a banjo at a nearby campsite.

Most of the campers were falling asleep as the sun began to rise on the very last day of the festival.

The thrill of the music and the camaraderie of camping with hundreds of other music lovers was enough to overshadow the brutal heat of the weekend. Before I finally fell asleep at 8 a.m. Saturday, I decided that I was most definitely coming back for next year's event.

G Fest's 2017 plans are in the works. With such a promising first year, I expect bigger acts and even bigger crowds to come.

It is safe to say that G Fest's successful turnout would make anyone proud to be an "Okie From Muskogee".

**Rating: A+**

—GRACE BABB  
STAFF WRITER

Kyle Reid  
and the Low Swinging Chariots.  
*Grace Babb/Pioneer*



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## COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

TELEVISION REVIEW | Series of drama, suspense available on Netflix

### ‘Murder’ thrilling and entertaining in new season

She’s feared, worshipped, powerful and criminal law majors want to be her.

Professor and defense attorney Annalise Keating (Viola Davis), star of the television series, “How to Get Away with Murder” represents the most violent criminals. And, she will do whatever it takes to defend her clients and ensure their freedom, even if it means breaking her moral code.

Every semester the professor chooses four intelligent, quick-minded and driven students to work as associates in her law firm.

But this semester, Keating took to one particular student but chose five students to take under her wing.

Viewers will be questioning her intentions.

What does Keating see in Wes Gibbins (Alfred Enoch), the student who can barely answer simple law questions? This is a student who, with some luck of the draw, barely made it into her class.

Without giving away too much, know that Gibbin’s character is the cause of many of the surprise twists in this T.V. series.

Over-achiever Micheala Pratt (Aja Naomi King), pretty-boy Connor Walsh (Jack Falahee), soft-spoken Laurel Castillo (Karla Souza) and class-clown Asher Millstone (Matt

McGorry), are the four others who eventually become the root of Keating’s headaches as they often get into serious trouble.

As the show progresses, the small group begins to turn to each other for help and comfort when Keating seems to lose her mind.

Not only does Keating have to clean up messes her students make, but she has her past to worry about.

She seems to have it all, including a successful career, a loving husband and the opportunity to educate and mold the minds of the brightest in her class.

So why is she having an affair with a local Philadelphia detective? His being in her life is barely scratching the surface of Keating’s skeletons.

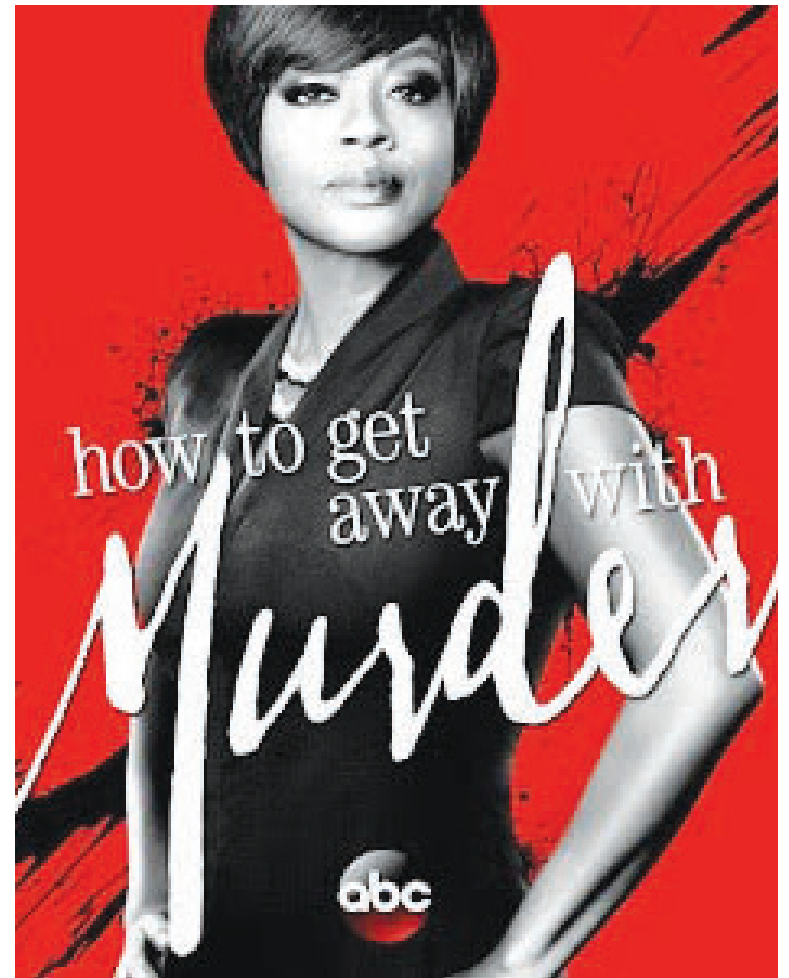
“How to Get Away with Murder” will give the right dose of drama and suspense. With an ever twisting and turning plot, the show is sure to keep viewers interested.

It’s definitely worth giving the show a shot.

The series airs on ABC and has two seasons on Netflix.

**Rating: A+**

—ERIKA FIERRO  
ONLINE EDITOR



TELEVISION REVIEW | Show about hackers mimics real-world social movement

### Clandestine characters make for intriguing TV tales

It’s usually difficult to make a movie or TV show about hackers.

It’s hard to make a visually appealing story about characters who spend most of their time sitting in front of computer screens staring at code.

In the past there were generally two ways to handle this problem: make something similar to the classic 1995 film “Hackers” –universally praised as the most realistic hacker movie ever (this is sarcasm)– or don’t make a movie about hackers.

“Mr. Robot” finally offers another option.

Sure, not everything about “Mr. Robot” is accurate, but the writers have clearly done their homework.

“Mr. Robot” has been recognized with surprise, and praise by IT professionals for doing a better job than previous attempts to accurately portray the technical side of computer security in film or television. This is remarkable because it is also fun to watch.

The show centers on the life of Elliot Alderson (Rami Malek), who by day is a shy and intelligent em-



ployee at Allsafe Cybersecurity with his close friend, or she may be his ex girlfriend Angela Moss (Portia Doubleday). The show is ambiguous on this point.

Alderson’s private life is a confusing mess, and is hard to write about without spoiling the plot, but it is safe to say that Elliot spends his free time hacking

and doing other things he probably shouldn’t –It’s a bad idea to date your drug dealer, folks.

Things get complicated when Elliot gets involved with a highly secretive hacker group called fsociety, led by a mysterious character named Mr. Robot (Christian Slater), who have plans to take down an evil corporation that just happens to be the biggest client of Alderson’s employer, Allsafe.

Members of the group use a mask with the face of the Monopoly Man as a symbol. The mask is strongly reminiscent of the Guy Fawkes mask used as a symbol by the real world group Anonymous, and the two seem to share a similar world view.

There is a lot more to the show, but saying anything would spoil the surprise so you should just check it out yourself. Season one is available on disc from Netflix and from Hulu. Season two begins on USA July 13.

**Rating: A+**

—AMAR MOLINAS  
WEBMASTER



**Committee:** (Left) Equal Opportunity Director Regina Switzer, Professional Development Coordinator Dana Culton, Administrative Assistant Raelynn Ortiz, Police Officer David Madden and Student Life Assistant Director Kendra Fringer. *Victor Pozadas*

# OCCC introduces diversity initiative

**JAKE FOURCADE**  
News Writing Student

“Diversity is about valuing people and what they bring to the table,” said Regina Switzer, director of Equal Opportunity at OCCC as she spoke about a new college initiative to make the campus more diverse.

Starting in Fall 2016, OCCC will launch its initiative aimed at emphasizing diversity at all OCCC campuses and areas.

“It is more than numbers. It is about creating an environment where diversity thrives,” Switzer said.

She said the initiative will not be focused solely on recruiting more students from different cultures and

backgrounds. Rather, the focus will be on preparing students for their encounters in today’s multicultural world.

In a recent meeting of a committee working on building the diversity initiative, made up of staff, faculty and administrators, members discussed keys to success and obstacles.

Among the keys to success was making sure all faculty and staff are on board with the initiative.

Switzer said to bring everyone on board, the college must prioritize making diversity part of the daily life at OCCC. She said the success of the initiative will depend on the efforts of everyone on campus.

The initiative would also encourage diversity to be

more connected to the course curriculums, she said. Switzer admits, however, that more diverse curriculum is not a guarantee since it is an academic matter that college faculty must decide upon.

Also discussed at the meeting were obstacles to the success of the initiative.

Among these, cynical faculty and staff who are content with the status quo were mentioned.

Switzer said the diversity initiative, while still in its early stages, is well timed after national tragedies such as the June 12 Orlando, Fla., nightclub shooting.

In the wake of such event’s Switzer said it serves as a time to “send a message that we are supportive of the LGBTQ community.”

# PolitiSci professor awarded for excellence

**MIRANDA VANMETER**  
News Writing Student

OCCC Political Science Professor Sharon Vaughan, received OCCC’s President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching recently for her work in the Social Sciences Division.

Vaughan’s award was presented during this year’s spring commencement ceremony along with a prize of \$1,000.

In her acceptance speech, Vaughan said, “I am so fortunate because by the time I went to graduate school and taught my first class at UT Austin, I knew I had done the right thing. And, that passion that I have for teaching is just something that I hope I never lose.”

Former acting Vice President of Academic Affairs Anne DeClouette, who presented Vaughan with the

award, described her as “a compassionate, inspirational, caring, well-read, engaging professional.”

The award is presented every spring to a member of OCCC faculty who is nominated by students or other staff at the college, DeClouette said.

She noted some of the criteria for nomination for this award include a high degree of professional competence, effective teaching methods, clear, accurate and effective communication, enthusiasm and a strong commitment to teaching in general.

Susan Tabor, Social Sciences Division dean, said Vaughan is incredibly deserving of the award. Tabor said she considers Vaughan a great instructor because she strives to keep her classes current and relevant.

Vaughan is committed to seeing her students succeed, even checking on them in their absence, Tabor said.



**Sharon Vaughan**

# School Pride: OCCC on parade



**Above:** English Professor Markus Zindelo represents OCCC during the OKC Pride parade June 26.

**Below Left:** The parade route along NW 39th St.

**Below Right:** Cate (no last name given). *photos by Victor Pozadas*



# School Pride: OCCC on parade



**Above:** Left to Right (Back Row) Sandra Cassimus, Alumni Relations Coordinator Randy Cassimus, Mr. Reeve, Prof. Markus Zindelo, Prof. Stephen Morrow, Raelynn Ortiz. (Center Row) ESL Instructor Elizabeth Reeve, TRiO Assistant Director Amanda Finch, Helen Oppen, Sarah Fish, Prof. Jeremy Fineman, Professional Development Coordinator Dana Culton and Grants and Contracts Director Joe Swalwell. (Front Row) Aaron Cardenas, Derek Scarcella, Equal Opportunity Director Regina Switzer, Police Officer David Madden and Upward Bound Office Assistant Meranda Garrett.

**Right:** Supporters line NW 39th St. in OKC. **Below Left:** Professors Stephen Morrow and Markus Zindelo greet friends Comm. Lab Supervisor Nick Webb, Sam McKee and Sydney Rost during the parade.

**Below Right:** Officer David Madden drives while Administrative Assistant Raelynn Ortiz, Prof. Jeremy Fineman, Sarah Fish, and Helen Oppen celebrate.

*photos by Victor Pozadas*



## SPORTS

# Rowers still not sunk after defeat at regatta

TRAVIS FORSYTH

Sports Writer

sportswriter@occc.edu

The OCCC traditional rowing team's rocky season continues as Row Triple C finished in fifth place at the regatta during the Stars and Stripes Festival June 25 in Oklahoma City.

The team was off to a fast start in the first 100 meters, coming tied for first place. Disaster struck however, when a teammate's oar got stuck under water, a common incidence known as "catching a crab" to rowers. This crab caused the team to fall 19 seconds behind – time they never recovered.

"Not bad, we caught a crab and after that, we fell apart," said Coach Jehlan Beavers.

Compared to last year's success, when Row Triple-C took first place, this year's team, composed of new and seasoned rowers, has faced some regressions.

The team plans to return to the water and will meet during the July 4 weekend to discuss the new training schedule.



**Rowers:** (From Left to Right). Brandee Wilson, Professor Traci Boren, Erin Peden, Phillip Bueno, Rosanna Toney, Natalie Jones, Salim Khan Srabon, Leslie Franco. Markus Zindelo/Pioneer



## Camps keep kids moving in summer

FOREST MYERS

News Writing Student

The Recreation and Fitness Department's Wellness center is a buzz with loud music and laughter as Oklahoma City Community College's children's recreation camp continues through July and August.

Sports and Recreation specialist Matthew Wright said the recreation camp is designed to keep children engaged through the summer months.

"We play all different kinds of fun games to keep them active and running around," Wright said.

Participation in the full-day camp costs \$110 per week. The half day camp is \$65 per week.

Wright said parents can choose either the 8 a.m. to noon session or the afternoon session running 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Several extra activities are offered this summer, including martial arts lessons for an additional \$15 per week. Dance classes are \$15 for children in the summer camp and \$50 for non-campers.

Before or after camp care costs an additional \$10 per week.

For more information, contact Matthew Wright at 405-682-1611 ext. 7684 or visit [www.occc.edu/rf/summercamps.html](http://www.occc.edu/rf/summercamps.html).

# Contracts: introductory period extended

*Continued from Page 1*

request a written evaluation after the end of the first six months.

She also spoke of the termination policy associated with the introductory period.

“A supervisor can recommend termination at any time during the introductory period.”

Christopher mentioned that the terms of the contract do not apply to employees in the introductory period.

Despite the new termination policy, OCCC is still adhering to the positive discipline process, college policy 2019.

“This is the policy that governs when a person is having disciplinary issues, what you’re sup-

posed to be doing as supervisor, what rights and privileges are available to you, all of those things,” Christopher said.

“When anyone is being terminated, or preparing to be terminated, the supervisor comes to Human Resources, ‘I have an employee,’ you know, ‘and they’re not performing the way they need to perform,’

“One of the first questions I’m gonna ask them is ‘where is your documentation?’,” Christopher said.

She said an employee’s tardiness, poor performance, and insubordination must be logged just as before in order to be terminated.

“I’m a lawyer, and if you don’t document it, it didn’t happen,” she joked.

The changes now provide that employees outside of the introductory period who do not

receive a 30-day termination notice may request a pre-adverse action hearing, and employees within the introduction period may request a formal grievance process if they contest the termination.

Only regular and part time employees receive employee contracts. Student, temporary and adjunct employees will not receive the new employee contracts, and are, therefore, not bound to them.

“We thought we needed to make all of our employees under the same status,” Christopher said. “Regardless of whether you’re exempt, non-exempt, if you’re a regular employee everyone is going to be treated the same.”

To learn more about the new employee policy and contracts, contact Christopher at ext. 7890 or by email at [angie.r.christopher@occc.edu](mailto:angie.r.christopher@occc.edu).



# Islam: associating violence hurts all Muslims

*Continued from Page 1*

those who practice Islam, and Mateen’s actions only make matters worse.

“Muslims will have to endure a negative image from the media while the shooter is long gone,” Altaie said.

She said she fears she will be singled out by others for her religious beliefs and that her head covering might attract hateful comments and dirty looks from people.

“I wear a Hijab so you can tell what my religion is immediately. I have a physical and obvious way to tell that I am a Muslim,” Altaie said. “I get targeted easier than someone who doesn’t wear a Hijab”.

Altaie urges non-Muslim students to educate themselves about Islam and not to believe everything the

media is telling them.

She said she encourages others to ask her questions about Islam and to “ask and not assume.” She also encourages Muslim students to try and be understanding during tense times.

“I advise everyone not to take dirty looks personally ... Just be patient and be good Muslims by loving each other and educate each other,” Altaie said.

Hasna Armihy, a nursing major, voiced her outrage at Mateen, ISIS and the shooting.

“Muslims during this month are close to God. We clean up our souls,” Armihy said.

She said while Mateen might have been known to be of Muslim faith, his actions do not represent Islam. “Nowhere in our holy book does it say we have to

kill people, even if they are homosexuals. He is just using Islam to cover for what he did,” Armihy said.

“We just need to stick together and keep praying for the people we lost. Keep doing what we are doing and keep defending our religion. Our religion is not what people think,” she said.

Altaie agreed that the pain inflicted by ISIS and Mateen is not representative of Islam. She said associating acts of violence with Islam hurts all Muslims.

“I hate that (ISIS) call themselves Muslims because we all become categorized with them. I’m disgusted by it,” she said. “I live here in America and I don’t even know who they are, but they still affect me in a very negative way. Our lives are miserable because of them,” Altaie said.

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# CAMPUS COMMUNITY



**Fish tour:** This fish lives in the aquarium on the second floor of the main building. *Jorge Krzyzaniak/Pioneer*

## Best Friends: a poem from creative writing students in Upward Bound

By Jordyn, Yessinia, Rachele, Cing, Tammy, Dennis, Savannah and Devon

Social media brought us together;  
a taste in music perked our connection.  
The lyrics sparked familiar themes;  
conversations began to grow.  
Early afternoon and late night scripts;  
perpetual questions, an unbreakable bond.  
A collage of spirits, our souls engaged;  
distance prevailing, our common foe.  
Hidden behind technology's face;  
hearts yearning to beat as one.  
Reality pervades a longing encounter;  
two ships pass through the edge of night.  
The silence of messages born by dreams;  
anxious thoughts awaken my universe.  
The moment in time of destiny fulfilled;  
a portal awaits us.....

## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

### The Capitol Steps, July 16

With a combined 62 years of House and Senate experience, The Capitol Steps returns to OCCC at 8 p.m., Saturday, July 16, in the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

The Capitol Steps is a satirical commentary performance about politics.

Tickets are available at the OCCC theatre box office or at [tickets.occc.edu](http://tickets.occc.edu).

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

**Please email your event to [editor@occc.edu](mailto:editor@occc.edu) or drop by the Pioneer office located in AH 1F2.**

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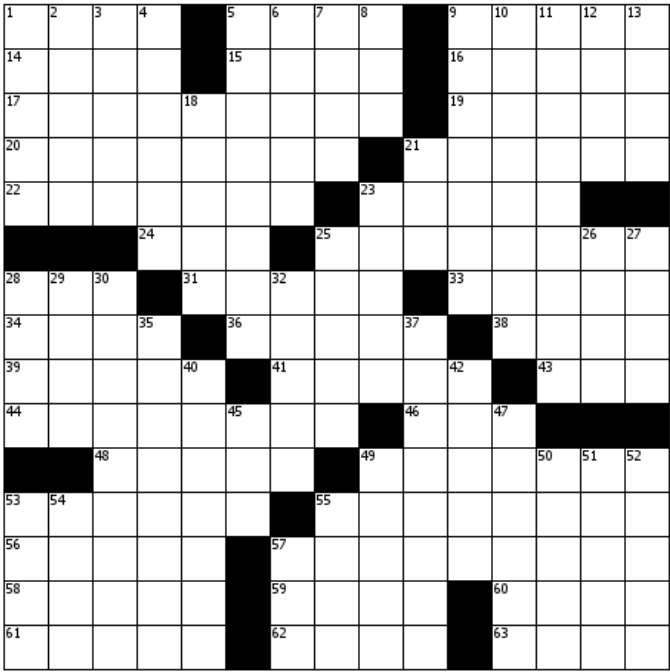
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WEEKLY CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1. Compete in logrolling
  - 5. The L train?
  - 9. Child's play
  - 14. Tenor's standout
  - 15. Article for Mozart
  - 16. Harper sitcom
  - 17. Untouchable one
  - 19. On a scale of one \_\_\_\_
  - 20. Certain mibs
  - 21. Bit of broccoli
  - 22. Resigned response
  - 23. Rocky Rockies ridge
  - 24. N.Y. neighbor
  - 25. Parts of a series
  - 28. Uncommon sense
  - 31. Prudential's purchaser
  - 33. Like 007, not Austin Powers
  - 34. "The Time Machine" people
  - 36. Marsh plant
  - 38. Revenuers
  - 39. When they're proper, it's capital!
  - 41. "Out on a Limb" singer Marie
  - 43. Call off
  - 44. Bar choice
  - 46. Radio code sound
  - 48. Decorative toiletry cases
  - 49. Planted roots?
  - 53. Annexing
  - 55. Practical world situation
  - 56. Reaction to "Take my wife, please!"
  - 57. Coupled
  - 58. Sales circuit
  - 59. Bride's time, often
  - 60. Adams of "The Ernie Kovacs Show"
  - 61. Pointed a finger at, perhaps
  - 62. Musher's vehicle
  - 63. Fortune seeker?



- Down**
- 1. Deep, as a tone
  - 2. Plenty sore
  - 3. Elmer, Anne and Grantland
  - 4. Town in many oaters
  - 5. Reconciles differences
  - 6. More companionable
  - 7. Lennon's in-laws
  - 8. A really good place to sit?
  - 9. Unsophisticated
  - 10. Old West event
  - 11. Place for Quasimodo
  - 12. Zip-\_\_\_\_doo-dah
  - 13. Type of leg
  - 18. Daughter of Juan Carlos
  - 21. Calendar abbr.
  - 23. Take \_\_\_\_ from history
  - 25. The rear of rear, perhaps
  - 26. Square
  - 27. "\_\_\_\_ Me No Flowers"
  - 28. Poetic nights
  - 29. Hog feed
  - 30. Dispensed, as beer from a keg
  - 32. Nice heads?
  - 35. Put through Hell Night
  - 37. Won over
  - 40. Knocked for a loop
  - 42. Supermarket part
  - 45. Sharp, erratic turn
  - 47. Spanish diacritical marks
  - 49. Catherine de Medicis, e.g.
  - 50. Electron tube
  - 51. Miss Klinker
  - 52. Shelve
  - 53. Prefix meaning "field" or "soil"
  - 54. Word with anchor or off
  - 55. Julia of Hollywood
  - 57. Cribwear, informally

<http://pioneer.occc.edu>

**Nothing Will Ever Be the Same.**

Smoking gave me throat cancer at 39. Now I breathe through a hole in my throat and need this machine to speak.

—Rosaldo Martinez

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# College takes part in its first Pride parade

VICTOR POZADAS  
News Writing Student

Storm clouds loomed overhead and burst into torrential rain, but the storm only added to the excitement of gay pride as Oklahoma City Community College participated for the first time in the Oklahoma City Pride parade last Sunday.

A group made up of students, faculty, staff and administrators represented the college at the event. They drove and rode on a college float, while others walked alongside it handing out candy and cheering.

Regina Switzer, pride float coordinator and Equal Opportunity director, said she was equally excited for the parade and for OCCC's first appearance at the event.

She said "It's a bit awkward because people are watching you, but we got over it quickly and had some fun."

Switzer expressed her gratitude to everyone who joined the event from the college.

"It was a moving experience" Switzer said.

The OCCC float (a white college pickup) was adorned with a "Now Is Power - Together We're Better" colorful logo. A half-dozen college representatives sat in the bed and waved while being driven by OCCC Police Officer David Madden.

They moved along the parade route from NW 42nd and N. Classen Boulevard all the way to NW 39th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. All the while, children screamed and ran to get candy from Art Professor Jeremy Fineman, English Professor Stephen Morrow and Randy Cassimus Alumni Relations and Community Development associate director, who were handing out Charms Blow Pops.

"It's really exciting," pride float committee member and coordinator of Professional Development Dana Culton, said.

Spectators offered OCCC participants, including Grants and Contracts Director Joe Swalwell, bottles of water and thanked the team for participating in the parade.

As the parade got closer to its destination, near 39th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, flashes of lightning shot through the sky and thunder roared over the dance music blasting from the floats. The crowd of hundreds, who were jumping and screaming near the metal gates that lined the streets, roared in response.

RaeLynn Ortiz, administrative assistant to the vice president of Human Resources, who rode in the OCCC float said she became emotional during the parade.

"When we were gearing up and we were ready to go and started moving, the crowd wasn't as big as I thought," she said. "So when we turned that corner (39th Street) and everybody just started screaming and yelling for us, I literally, I kind of feel stupid for saying this, I almost started crying."

"It was an overwhelming feeling of just amazing support, amazing love, amazing, just, generosity and



**RAIN ON MY PARADE:** OCCC participated in the OKC Pride parade in June. *Victor Pozadas*

I had to catch my breath," she said.

Almost everyone seemed to be catching their collective breath when the rain started falling.

Another who was excited was broadcast journalism major Aaron Cardenas who said he has been an active ally in the LGBTQ community for years and was glad to see that OCCC was making its first appearance.

"My favorite thing, although I am dealing with a bit of a head cold now, was the torrential rain down-pour," he said.

"You would have assumed that everyone would have abandoned their posts for shelter, but everyone cheered the rain on and stood with the marchers as we pushed through," he said.

"I wanted to stand by my LGBT peers as they have stood beside me," Cardenas said.

The rain kept falling but did not scare away attendees including Nicholas Webb, Communications Lab director.

Although Webb and throngs of others cheered the college as they passed by, not everyone was appreciative, however.

The event was also occupied by people who oppose the LGBT community and OKC Pride movement.

Preachers and people with opposing views held signs and talked through megaphones as they shared their warnings, "God abhors homosexuality," and "Mourn... repent for your sins."

Alan Maricle, a preacher who said he represented the Abolitionist Society of Norman, held his sign and spoke to anyone who would listen. He also walked around with a small group attempting to spread his message.

Maricle said he believes U.S. culture is slowly losing grasp of what is normal. He warned the oversexualization of pride is ruining people's faith.

"Men march nearly naked down the street, fondling sex toys, women run around topless, and people make out and perform other lewd acts in public," Maricle said.

"The fact that I can look around at the pride parade and see numerous little children being exposed to this kind of crass and openly celebrated grossness is as sickening as it is grievous, and drives me to great sorrow."

The OCCC float participants wore athletic or summer heat appropriate clothes. Nowhere around the OCCC float were topless women nor sex-toy wielding men.

Cardenas said he was aware of the protesters, but chose not to acknowledge them.

"I believe everyone is entitled to their First Amendment right and as long as no one is hurting anyone, I don't have an issue," he said.

"I take comfort in the fact that these protesters are drowned out by the love and support and cheers of the community."

Switzer also took note of the protest.

"As long as their protest or demonstration is civil, they have every right to do that. As an institution we respect everybody's opinion. That's what diversity means," she said.

"As long as it doesn't border on disrespect, because it's the respectfulness that we aim for. That's civil discourse, and they're entitled to it."

"We all have our journeys," she said.