



College of
the Mainland®

COM News

AUGUST 2009

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COM vocal arts group back from Austrian trip



Mainland Chorale at performance in Salzburg, Austria on June 26, 2009.

The College of the Mainland Vocal Arts recently returned from a nine-day tour of Austria, Hungary and Germany that included performances in Eisenstadt, home of Franz Haydn and Salzburg, the birthplace of Mozart. According to Dr. James Heffel, COM musical director, playing to packed houses in the towns where Haydn and Mozart once performed was the high point of the trip.

"We received standing ovations at both performances," said Heffel, "The group sang excellently and the audience was very appreciative. We even received a proclamation from the Lord Mayor of Salzburg for our performance there."

The Mainland Chamber Chorale, as they were listed in the programs, performed authentic American style music that included Broadway tunes, film, folk, traditional, pop, contemporary and sacred, according to Heffel. Although the group included choral music classics on the program, the Europeans really enjoy hearing authentic American music sung by Americans, he said.

The 15-member chorale was accompanied by spouses and friends with plenty of time for sightseeing. Heffel said that aside from the sightseeing, the COM singers visited places where much of the classical music they sing originated.

"We stood in St. Stephen's Cathedral in Salzburg where Mozart performed over 200 years ago," Heffel noted, "That was amazing."

The vocal arts program at COM is open to everyone and the group usually performs two local concerts each semester. For more information call Dr. James Heffel at ext. 200.

Cosmetology needs a name

Cosmetology welcomes suggestions for a name for the COM Cosmetology salon. Feel free to pass on those suggestions to Katie at krobles@com.edu. Look for details on the progress.



U.S. Air Force Musicians to perform at COM

Dimensions in Blue, the jazz ensemble from the United States Air Force Band of the West, will be presenting a concert on Monday, August 17, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the COM Learning Resource Center. The performance is free of charge and open to the public.

This group performs a wide variety of music ranging from the classics of Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Woody Herman, to the more contemporary sounds of Rob McConnell, Bob Mintzer and Frank Mantooth. The band can also recreate the look and sound of the 1940s Glenn Miller Army Air Corps Jazz Band.

The members of the band are highly skilled professional musicians coming from colleges and universities all over the nation to serve in the U. S. Air Force.

While the performance is free, tickets are required to guarantee a seat. For tickets to this event, visit the College of the Mainland Fine Arts Office Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Seating is available to those without tickets 15 minutes prior to the performance. For more information, call ext. 348.



Grounds Crew Recognized

Members of the COM grounds crew were recognized by President Elam at the recent Board meeting. Dr. Elam cited the landscaping work by Oscar, Michael, Galen, Stephen, Byron and Troy—all master gardeners. Way to grow, guys!

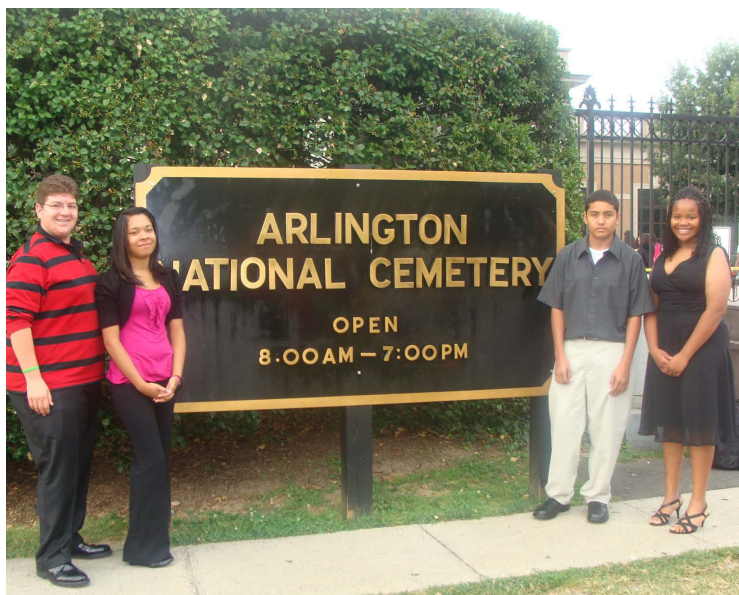
Pictured, left to right, are: Byron Williams, Galen Hayward, Stephen Downey and Troy Terrell. Not pictured are Oscar Hernandez and Michael Settler.



Upward Bound Students in D.C.

To close out the Upward Bound Summer Academy, College of the Mainland-Upward Bound selected 20 program participants to travel to Washington, D.C., on July 19-22, 2009. While in Washington, D.C., students and staff traveled to various educational and cultural sites throughout the area. Some of the stops on the tour included the Smithsonian Institution, National Holocaust Museum, national Memorials, the White House, U.S. Capital, Mount Vernon and Arlington National Cemetery. In addition, the Upward Bound students were given private tours of George Washington University and Howard University. Students were selected for the trip based on participation and academic achievement throughout the year, as well as participation in the six-week summer academy hosted at College of the Mainland. The Upward Bound program provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance.

The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed for their precollege performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate that participants complete high school and enroll in and graduate from college. College of the Mainland Upward Bound serves La Marque, Dickinson and Hitchcock High School.



Kudos to Tracy Orr Winner of 2009 NISOD Excellence Award

Tracy Orr, COM's 2008 Instructor of the Year, was recently honored by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) with its 2009 Excellence Award.

Tracy, who has been teaching at COM 16 years, is very active in community service.

"I have always been community minded," he says. "I used to help with community projects during my high school days in Illinois. I have always enjoyed helping others and getting involved in worthwhile projects," he adds.

As an adviser to the COM biology club, he inspires his students to



become involved, too. The club, along with others, participated in several clean-up projects on Galveston Island following Hurricane Ike.

"I am very passionate about both the environment and animal rights. I think we all need to pitch in and keep our environment safe and clean. I am a great supporter of "spaying and neutering" to keep the animal populations in check.

"I am also passionate about teaching and our education system. I feel our students should have fun as they learn. I incorporate humor into all of my teaching methods. I want students not only to learn from me, but also enjoy being in class."



Cosmetology students with Mr. Farouk Shami (center)

Cosmetology visits maker of the Chi flat iron

Earlier this summer, the Cosmetology Department took a field trip to tour the Farouk USA manufacturing plant in Houston. Farouk Shami, pictured with the cosmetology students, is the man whose company makes the very popular CHI products along with many others. He is an icon in the Cosmetology field as he started as a hairdresser and has made a billion dollar company that includes products from shampoo and styling products to color, and even tools like blow dryers and flat irons.

During the tour the students and staff viewed new hair care products under development and saw where wet lines were produced and bottled.

"It feels like we are at Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory," quipped one student.

Farouk recently expanded his facility to bring all work to the United States rather than outsource jobs to Asia. His company plans to bring 1,000 new jobs to Houston this year, and an estimated 4,000 jobs over the next four years.

Mr. Farouk Shami spent about half an hour with the COM students, sharing his story and encouraging students with their careers.

"It was an amazing experience for all," said instructor Jamie Powell.



Katherine Rodriguez, COM alum

For Katherine Rodriguez, earning an associate of applied science and an associate of business administration degrees at COM put her on the path toward her CPA and a career in banking. Today, the executive vice president and chief financial officer at Moody National Bank, stays connected to COM through her work with the COM Foundation.

"I enrolled at COM right out of high school and I was both a part-time and full-time student," she said. "Some of the accounting courses that I had taken at COM helped me to sit for the CPA examination."

Katherine, who received a COM-Unity scholarship while at COM, says her instructors were what she remembers most.

"There were so many great instructors. I particularly remember Dr. Urbina who taught history, Melvin Williams who was my accounting instructor, and the late Ouida Sanmann, my humanities teacher. They were all compassionate people who offered much encouragement."

Today, Rodriguez encourages others with her work on the COM Foundation board. "I wanted to participate in volunteer opportunities that share the vision of higher education for everyone, as it has been shared with me."

With the Foundation she helps raise thousands of dollars each year for student scholarships. In 2007, she chaired the Foundation's Victims Fund drive that raised \$200,000 for scholarships named in honor of the 15 victims of the 2005 BP explosion.

Katherine Rodriguez remains committed to her vision of education for everyone as she and her husband raise their two daughters.

"My greatest accomplishment is making my parents proud by continuing my education and seeing their faces at graduation."



Future Newsletters

- What activities are you involved with outside of COM? Other than wearing a caped body suit, driving a Batmobile or fighting crime in Gotham City, tell us about any unusual hobbies you have or what you do to unwind on weekends. We just might use it in our After Hours section. We will watch for the Bat signal.
- Please send suggestions for future employee newsletters to marketing@com.edu and put "Newsletter Suggestions" in the subject line.

Set the Record Straight

To foster better communication President Elam answers questions from faculty and staff on issues of concern.

1. Who is on the chopping block? I've heard that several employees were on the list.

There is no chopping block. We have already submitted the renewal list to the Board. Anybody not being renewed would have already been notified.

2. Is COM ever going to get a VP of Student Services?

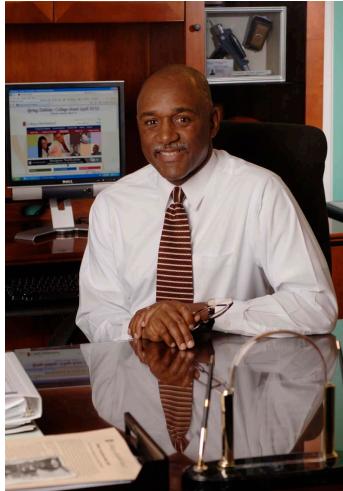
Yes, you will be hearing more about it in the near future.

3. I heard several employees gave an unfair ruling in a certain employee case because they didn't like the employee. I don't know if Dr. Elam will know much about this as Dr. Durrence handled this issue.

I have no information regarding this point. However, I understand that the BOT voted on this case as is appropriate to College policy.

4. Why does the Outdoor Club get to use student dollars to pay for club t-shirts, meeting snacks and trips? The club consists of a majority of community members and only two students. One student is an employee who took a music class and the other is a current student (I'm not sure as of today if student is still enrolled).

The Outdoor Club has been in existence for more than 25 years evolving from a class to a club supported by both students and community. The community members pay \$15 membership fee that covers their t-shirt and access to the club newsletter that is now primarily sent electronically. All trips are paid by each community member and students pay half the fee with the other half coming from club funds. There is minimal money spent on occasional snacks with club funds.



5. Why isn't it required for employees to have mandatory updated computer training? I ask this question because my two supervisors, after five years, still do not know how to turn their computer off (yes, "off"), add attachments to e-mail, use the MS Outlook calendar, use programs other than MS Word or even change their ink cartridge in their office printer (and I'm talking about the small printer that comes free with the computer).

As we move toward developing into world-class institution, I plan to institute various programs that will require computer technology and training to operate and/or participate. It's my hope that all employees will avail themselves to the training who need it.

6. When I attended New Employee Orientation (a year after I had already been employed at COM), I didn't learn anything. I took it upon myself to walk around campus asking different people how things were processed. Hopefully by now, I'm doing things right, but how will I know?

We are planning to expand the New Employee Orientation to occur monthly. In months where we have fewer than three new employees we will have an abbreviated version.

Every employee has a supervisor and it is a good idea to make sure you are meeting your supervisor's expectations of your job. If you haven't done so, sit down with your supervisor and have him/her outline his/her expectations. From time to time ask how you are doing. Therefore, when evaluations roll around, you will not be surprised with your performance evaluations.

7. Who approves the Director of Recreation's events for the CE Schedule if the interim VP of Student Services does/will not?

Every area has a hierarchy of approvals. The Department submits to the Dean for approval and the Dean submits to the Vice President for approval. I am not sure what your question is so I cannot offer an appropriate response.

8. Is a dress code going to be implemented on campus?

As we move toward a world-class institution we must set guidelines and standards for business apparel. I believe it is important to be able to distinguish between employees and students on campus. Employees should wear ID badges or name tags at all times particularly while on campus so that students/customers know who to go to for help.

I believe we should live by example and in many corporations and businesses appropriate attire is required.

COM is a business and we must have some standards and guidelines that direct our appearance. We will not require everyone to dress alike or have a uniform outside instructional and other areas that already require it.

If you have a question you would like President Elam to answer, please submit your question to your council president.



Birthdays

Look who's having a birthday in August!

Becky Miles	Director of Student Financial Services.....	08/02
Joann McNeill	Administrative Assistant, Media Services.....	08/02
Michele Betancourt	Faculty, Social & Behavioral Science.....	08/02
Lisa Kress	Faculty, Performing/Visual Arts.....	08/05
Janet Wortman	Director of Distance Education.....	08/06
Ronald Collins	Maintenance, Journeyman Electrician.....	08/07
Jennifer Williams	Administrative Assistant, Teacher Education.....	08/07
Gina Castro	Coord. of Publications, Marketing.....	08/08
Qing Li	Faculty, Social & Behavioral Science.....	08/08
Dwight Kothmann	Professional Trainer, Continuing Education.....	08/11
Donna Bohmfalk	Faculty, Nursing.....	08/11
Frank Barbuto	Administrative Assistant, Adult Education.....	08/13
Jerry Bryant	Faculty, Physical Education Academic.....	08/14
Cynthia Kater	Disability Support Specialist, Counseling & Disability..	08/14
Byron Williams	Groundworker.....	08/14
Leslie Richardson	Faculty, Math/Science.....	08/15
Martha Crain	Professional Trainer, Information Tech. Services.....	08/15
Kristi White	Instructional Designer, Continuing Education.....	08/16
Juanita Aguirre	Child Development Specialist.....	08/17
Ricky Ertell	Counselor, Nursing.....	08/17
John Kiefer	Faculty, Performing/Visual Arts.....	08/18
Vernon Ewell	Police Officer.....	08/19
James Stallings	Faculty, Humanities.....	08/19
Chandra Iwasaki	Web Support Specialist, Distance Education.....	08/19
Terry White	Faculty, Humanities.....	08/20
Ja Margaret Lowery	Faculty, Nursing.....	08/21
Cheryl Brown	Custodian.....	08/21
Rose Shirey	Faculty, Academic Success.....	08/21
Maryann Urick	Director of Recreation/Student Activities.....	08/22
Susan Meadows	Administrative Assistant, Public Service Careers.....	08/23
Denise Parrish	Buyer, Purchasing.....	08/23
Aurea Carrera	Faculty, Nursing.....	08/24
Gailon Slaughter	Administrative Assistant, Physical Ed., Academic.....	08/24
Mini Poston	Records Specialist, Admissions.....	08/24
Marvel Jackson	Systems Analyst, Information Technology Services...	08/24
Ellen Chicon	Faculty, Cosmetology.....	08/25
Margaret Cussen	Instructional Designer, Distance Education.....	08/27
Tracy Orr	Faculty, Math/Science.....	08/27
Jameeka Williams	Advisor - Academic, Public Service Careers.....	08/27
Arlinda Billington	Faculty, Nursing.....	08/29
Judy Pryor	Administrative Assistant, Foundation.....	08/30
CB Wilborne	Bookstore Manager, Bookstore.....	08/31
Rita Jones	Human Resources Generalist, Human Resources.....	08/31



Your Achieving the Dream (AtD) Update

for August 2009
from your AtD Core Committee

What is Achieving the Dream?

Achieving the Dream is a national initiative to help more community college students succeed by earning degrees or certificates or transfer to other institutions to continue their studies. The initiative is particularly concerned about student groups that have faced the most significant barriers to success, including low-income students and students of color. While there have been other efforts in the past to help these students succeed, this relatively new, multiyear initiative examines data to determine COM's needs and then chooses, implements and analyzes research-based "best practice" strategies to enable more students to advance successfully toward their educational goals.

What are we doing at COM to help our students succeed?

At COM, we are working to improve student success through several interventions, including:

- a first year experience course (PSYC 1300) that focuses on helping students develop the self-management and self-awareness skills necessary to achieve success;
- a shift in the academic advising model to connect students with faculty mentors;
- professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to learn more about how to be effective with students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles; and
- interventions that enhance student engagement, including efforts to help faculty and staff learn student names.

What's in a name?

Research indicates that a student is more likely to be retained if another student and/or campus personnel knows his/her name. A group becomes a community when its members learn each other's names. Learning and remembering a student's name also shows respect for that student.

We know that students are more likely to be retained if they have personal connections on campus, so this fall let's work on ways to learn our students' names to help promote student success!

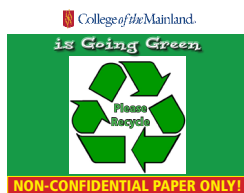
Name that student

On Monday, August 17, at 1 p.m. in LRC 255, Pam Millsap and Stacey Henderson will show you a variety of ways to learn your students' names and help form our campus community. It will be fun and informative and it will not involve reciting the lyrics to that 1965 hit, The Name Game by...now what was her name?...Shirley... Shirley....bo Birley....Ellis! Look her up on Wikipedia if the name does not ring a bell.

Let's all make our students welcome

We expect to have many new students at COM this coming semester. Let's make them all feel welcome so they stay connected to their new COM community.

COM is Going Green!



Get one of our COM is Going Green! recycling boxes for your department from COM Press, ext. 238/618. Confidential papers should still go in the Iron Mountain Shredding Bins. If you need help getting your recycling to the bins, contact Nunzio, ext. 474 or e-mail narcidiacono@com.edu.

Location of Bins

1. Parking Lot A, in front of the Student Center Cafeteria driveway.



2. Parking Lot C, in front of the PE building.



3. Off of Parking Lot E, before you get to parking Lot D. At the end of the Maintenance Building in the Voc Tech and Auto Parking Lot.



What can I bring?

Books*	Mail
Textbooks*	Folders
Newspapers	Fax and copy paper
Magazines	Colored paper
Office/school papers (staples ok)	Phone books
Catalogs	* All books should go to the library.

What should be excluded?

Anything that you feel is personal or confidential

Boxes	Metal
Plastic	Sticky notes
Glass	Any other trash not already listed

For questions or more information on [COM's Going Green Project](#) contact Nunzio Arcidiacono, ext. 474, Kathie Goldfarb, ext. 204 or Kathy Park, ext. 201.

Did You Know?

Every time we recycle paper to the recycling bins COM gets money. Ultimately one of the goals of this program is to fund scholarships for our students.

Marketing goes green

Tell us how you're making the world a greener place. E-mail Gina at gcastro@com.edu.

Jim Higgins: At home we have two recycle bins the City of Friendswood provides both of which take paper, cardboard, glass and plastic all mixed in. We fill up both each week, too. We recycle plastic grocery bags at Walmart but have started bringing our own reusable bags grocery shopping. Radio Shack takes our old rechargeable batteries. We use a shredder for some mail and personal documents and when we have a bag full of confetti paper we put the bag in the recycle bin. We have two compost bins in the back yard and recycle leaves, grass, vegetable and fruit peelings into great gardening soil. We also recycle old clothes and household items to Goodwill and DAV in Alvin.

Gina Castro: At home I used to put a plastic grocery bag on the door to put all recycling for Friday trash day. Since a lot can be recycled, I purchased another kitchen trash bin just for recyclables. I also use all of my lawn clippings and put them around the trees. Clothes and household items are donated to Texas Paralyzed Veterans or MI Lewis in Dickinson.

In the office, all paper (and that's a lot!) and plastic bottles goes into a box dedicated for recycling.

Kari Drake: I take the paper to the recycling bin near the Student Center. I was taking the plastic to the HEB at I-45 and 646 but the last time I went the bin was gone. I need to find a new place to take it.

At home, in addition to my regular trash can, I have three other trash cans set up PAPER, ALUMINUM and PLASTIC. I bring the paper to COM. The aluminum I give to my nephew who recycles it for gas money somewhere in Alvin and the plastic is stacking up until I find a place to take it. I keep reusable shopping bags in my car to use whenever possible. Old clothing is either used for rags, goes to the Goodwill drop box or Lighthouse Ministries in Bacliff. When I moved the old TVs and big items went to the Goodwill truck that was sitting behind Specs on Bay Area Boulevard.

Lana Pigao: We use the big green recycling bin that the city gave us and it is always packed; we try to recycle everything! We also bring plastic grocery bags to the store bag recycling bins and try to use reusable bags when we remember. We have signed up for online billing so that we're not creating more paper waste. We also donate clothes and household items.