Adult Education — “the quiet behemoth”

During the spring session, the US Congress House Resolution 1472 stating the Congress “supports the designation of National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, including raising public awareness about the importance of adult education and family literacy.” September 8, 2010 marked International Literacy Day declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003 to inaugurate its Decade of Literacy, to support literacy efforts around the world.

This September, College of the Mainland marked these national and international celebrations much as they have every fall for 40 years by continuing classes for our adult students in our Adult Basic Education, GED preparation and English as a Second Language.

The Adult Education Department is a quiet behemoth within the College. More than 100 teachers and support staff, predominantly part time, served more than 2,300 students seeking GED or English classes in 2009-2010. And the expectation is that this number will continue to grow. “Classes started four weeks ago and we already have more than 200 students on our waiting list. This is definitely going to be a busy year,” said Josh Hayes, Director of Adult Education.

Adult Education partners with dozens of churches, community groups, schools and social service agencies to recruit and educate those throughout Galveston County who lack the ability to read and write, to do math or speak English well enough to meet their personal and financial goals. These courses occur at 24 locations from Clear Lake to Galveston Island. On any given week day, as many as 54 classes are providing these critical basic skills programs to our neighbors.

Last year, a record number 160 adult education students completed their GED. “The challenge is the demand and need around us,” Josh observed. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 15 percent of Galveston County residents do not have a high school diploma or a GED, representing more than 26,000 potential students. And when one considers that more than 19,000 people lack the ability to speak English proficiently, the demand for these programs becomes clear.

The Adult Education Department operates four open enrollments each year, the next being the week of October 11. If you know of someone who needs to learn English or would like to study for their GED, have them call ext. 8130.

Students must be 18 years of age or older, have a government issued picture ID and commit to three classes per week for nine weeks.

Kiefer featured in guitar journal

John Kiefer was the featured composer in the most recent issue of Soundboard: journal for the Guitar Foundation of America. The feature included san saba – an original multicultural classical guitar solo, photo and an article mentioning COM. This summer John attended the GFA convention in Austin Texas and performed with the guitar orchestra, as well as participating on master classes and workshops.

A new book of original pieces for electric guitar (etudes electric) was recently published by Mel Bay Publications. This is John’s fifth book with Mel Bay. The books are available at amazon.com and many other places here is a link: http://www.amazon.com/Etudes-Electric-John-Kiefer/dp/0786682108/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1282748111&sr=8-1
Chapa promoted to lieutenant

Sylvia Chapa is one of COM’s police officer patrolling the beat (10-4, copy that) and checking up on departments for any concerns or safety. Initially employed as a part-time officer in 2002, Chapa became a full-time employee in 2005. She was promoted to lieutenant September 2010 when the position opened after Lt. Willie Huerta retired. Her experience includes more than 10 years in law enforcement and 23 years in security.

Chapa earned a Master’s from the University of Houston-Clear Lake in Behavioral Science and holds many police officer certifications from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officers Standards (TCLEOSE) including Master Peace Officer and Mental Health Officer.

“I enjoy my job because I work hard at combating the criminal element. I care about those who are victimized no matter what the level may be.” Chapa explained. “Most importantly, being a police officer I can help and protect people. That’s part of who I am.”

COM Police Chief, E.W. “Butch” Carr describes Chapa as “a tremendous asset to the department and the college.” She worked the evening shift since 2002 and quickly became the training officer for all new officers hired in the department. Carr added, “Officer Chapa received the department’s first annual Officer of the Year award for 2007-2008.”

Chapa wants the campus to know that the police department is there to help them and to keep them safe. Even though they write citations, which according to Chapa, really annoys most people, it only constitutes a small portion of what we do. “We may not always be the best-received department, but it is our job to put our lives on the line for everyone. That is a serious oath that COM police officers take and live by.” Chapa said.

If you don’t know this about Sylvia, she has a duck farm. About five years ago she found three orphaned ducklings on campus after a careless and speeding driver killed their mom. She had no knowledge about ducks but her nature to protect came out. She has learned the hard way about caring for ducks. In less than 24 hours she was in love with the “sweet creatures.” She spent countless hours with these three ducklings, often riding on patrol with a plastic box in the back seat while she worked her extra jobs. That was just the beginning, Chapa now has a large duck family after rescuing the ones that were injured or abandoned. Chapa hopes the campus appreciates these little creatures and would like help in keeping them safe.

COM Foundation Fashion Expo to Raise Funds for Scholarships

Join the College of the Mainland Foundation and celebrity fashion models for the 2010 Fall Fashion Expo and Luncheon, scheduled for 11:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 14, in Texas City’s Nessler Center located at 2010 5th Ave. North in Texas City.

Theme of the event is “Celebrating the Changing of the Seasons,” and includes fashions from Four Seasons in Dickinson, Sydney’s Boutique in Texas City and Kohl’s in League City.

“The event is fun,” said Foundation executive director Monica O’Neal, “but the purpose is serious. Perhaps the best way to improve a young life — and a community — is through education. In that regard, proceeds from the expo are an investment in the future of Galveston County.”

Individual tickets are $40 each; sponsorships are available.

To purchase tickets or obtain more information, call Judy Pryor at ext. 8508.
Birthdays

Monica O’Neal Director of Foundation ........................................ 10/2
Sally Austin Executive Administrative, VP College & Fin Svcs ...... 10/3
Lori Boyd Financial Aid Specialist, Student Financial Serv .......... 10/3
Edward Handwerk Faculty, Instructional Admin ........................ 10/3
JoAnn Lee Custodian .......................................................... 10/4
Asha Stephens Faculty, Math/Science ....................................... 10/4
Lisa Templer Vice President, College and Financial Services ...... 10/4
Ethel Freeman HR Generalist, Human Resources ...................... 10/5
Sarbrina Vincent Laboratory Assistant, Instructional Tech Lab ...... 10/5
Kim Farson-Carden Admin. Assistant, Business and Computer Educ.. 10/6
Bob Young Faculty, Social Behavioral Science ......................... 10/6
Rob de los Reyes Assistant Director, Performing/Visual Arts .... 10/7
Jeff Oakley Director of Gulf Coast Safety Institute .................... 10/7
Amanda Bezemek Costumer, Performing/Visual Arts ............... 10/12
Joyce Palmer Administrative Assistant, Performing/Visual Arts .... 10/13
Joshua Hayes Director Adult Education .................................. 10/15
Wayne Crandall Program Coordinator, Adult Education ............ 10/18

Lanis Neugent Director, Learning Center-North County ............ 10/18
Frank Scheidler Internal Auditor ........................................... 10/18
Cissy Bodmer Accounting Specialist, Financial Services .......... 10/20
Fred Martorell Shipping/Receiving Clerk, Purchasing .............. 10/20
Stacey Henderson Faculty, Social Behavioral Science ............. 10/20
Lodie Salazar Administrative Assistant, CHS .......................... 10/22
Howard Hardy Custodian ...................................................... 10/23
Mike Kukuk Director of Contract Training, Continuing Ed ....... 10/24
Tammy Morin Child Development Lab Assistant ........................ 10/25
Rafael Naranjo Faculty, Social Behavioral Science .................. 10/26
Erika Sollosi Librarian .......................................................... 10/26
Marianne Friedell Faculty, Academic Success ......................... 10/27
Michelle Kettler Director of Counseling ................................. 10/28
Jerry Duncan Faculty Bachelors, Industrial Technology .......... 10/29
Curtisha Wallace Faculty, Academic Success .......................... 10/29
Shalice Maza Administrative Asst, Advisement/Testing Services .... 10/31

Online Auction through Oct. 15

Visit www.com.edu/hhs/auction.cfm to bid on beautiful artwork. If you would like to donate, please contact Gina Castro at gcastro@com.edu for more information. All proceeds will go toward the Hispanic Heritage Scholarship that helps students pay for tuition and books.

Don’t forget to take chances on the $100 worth of scratch-off tickets.
Visit or call any of these offices for tickets:

Ciro Reyes Student Center, Room 212 ext. 8273
Marilynn Kish-Molina M/S Bldg., SM 119 ext. 8328
Tige Cornelius Gym ext. 8421
Rosie Rojas President’s Office, Admin. Bldg. ext. 8271
Gina Castro Appomattox Square, Ste. 16 ext. 8243
Cissy Matthews Public Service Careers ext. 8461
Lodie Salazar Blanca Comeaux ext. 8169
Oscar Hernandez Martin Perez
Robert Castro Katy Robles
Tech/Voc Building LRC, Suite A ext. 8212
Maintenance Bldg. ext. 8318
Admissions ext. 8653
Tech-Voc/Child Care Lab School ext. 8605
Cosmetology ext. 8114
COM Biology Club Adopts a Beach

More than 60 COM Biology Club members participated in the recent GLO (Texas General Land Office) “Adopt-A-Beach” Clean-Up. Members cleaned a fishing and canoe launch area on Galveston Bay at the end of 8-Mile Road on Galveston Island. They collected nearly 2,000 pounds of trash over a three-hour period.

New exhibit begins Oct. 18 in COM Gallery

College of the Mainland Art Gallery will present artist Mari Omori’s installation titled “Akari Kami Mori: Illuminare” from Oct. 18 - Nov. 18.

The artist will be on hand to discuss the works at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 27, also in the Art Gallery.

The gallery is open to the public 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, or on other hours by appointment.

For more information, contact the Art Gallery at ext. 8348.

Why would you want to use the COM Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline?

At Georgia Tech University in Atlanta an employee used a university credit card more than 3,800 times for more than five years making personal purchases of more than $316,000. Fake receipts were created and false accounting entries were made to conceal the theft. At American University in Washington, D.C., an employee stole nearly $400,000 of checks over six years that were made out to the university's Law Review Journal. The employee opened a joint bank account using the university’s name and taxpayer identification number plus the employee’s home address. University checks were then deposited in the account with funds used for personal expenses.

The Association of Fraud Examiners, headquartered in Austin, Texas, credits tips as the most common detection method for incidents of fraud, waste and abuse. The most common source for tips is employees, catching nearly three times more incidents as any other form of detection. The COM Hotline is an easy and confidential way to report tips. Keep in mind, CED (LOCAL) requires employees to immediately report suspected fraud or financial impropriety, a good use for the Hotline.

The COM Hotline can be found at www.com.edu/hotline. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the Internal Auditor, Frank Scheidler, at ext. 8695.
ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.  
(unless otherwise indicated)

**Through Oct. 14**
COM Fine Arts Gallery presents
Hide and Seek by Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak
For information, call ext. 8354.

**Oct. 4 • 3 - 4 p.m.**
United Way Kick-off
Build Your Own Ice Cream Sundae and Pledge
Student Center
For more information, call ext. 8616 or 8131

**Oct. 4 • 6 - 8 p.m.**
PACT Information Meeting
Appomattox Square, Ste. 4,
For more information, call ext. 8610.

**Oct. 5 • 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.**
Hispanic Heritage Month
Dr. Gabriel Rodriguez
“Robotic Surgery”
Learning Resources Auditorium, L131
For information, call ext. 8328

**Oct. 6 and 7 • 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.**
Blood Drive
Student Center Sun Room
Make your appointment online at www.giveblood.org or just stop by. Free t-shirt to all donors.

**Oct. 7 • 12:30 p.m.**
Hispanic Heritage Month
Carlos Calbillo
“Hispanics in the Film Industry”
Learning Resources Auditorium, L131
For information, call ext. 8308.

**Oct. 8 • 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**
Leadership in the 21st Century
Presented by Dr. Dotti Jones
Free seminar.
For information, call ext. 8365

**Oct. 12 • 12:30 p.m.**
Hispanic Heritage Month
Dr. Norma Perez
“Hispanics, Fastest Growing Population Underrepresented”
Learning Resources Auditorium, 131
For information, call ext. 8243.

**Oct. 14 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**
COM Foundation 2010 Fall Fashion Expo/Luncheon
Nessler Center, 2010 5th Ave. N., Texas City
Tickets: $40
For information, call ext. 8508.

**Oct. 15 • 3 - 8 p.m.**
Hispanic Heritage Month
Celebrating Local Hispanic Artists
Displaying art, jewelry, etc.
COM Gym
For information, call ext. 8437.

**Oct. 15 • 6 - 9 p.m.**
Hispanic Heritage Month
Celebration
COM Gymnasium
Fun • Food • Entertainment
Online Auction ends
Scratch-off Lottery Ticket Raffle ends
For information, call ext. 8243.

**Oct. 18 - Nov. 18 • 9 a.m - 5 p.m., Mon. - Thurs.**
COM Fine Arts Gallery presents
Mari Omori’s installation “Akari Kami Mori: Illuminare”
For information, call ext. 8348.

**Oct. 18-29 • Evening classes**
Commissioned Security Officer Classes
Cost is $165 for in-district residents
$170 for out-of-district. Materials are included.
For information, call ext. 8258.

**Oct. 19 • 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.**
Breast Cancer Awareness
Mrs. Wanda Bass, survivor
Learning Resources Auditorium, L131
For information, call ext. 8445.

**Oct. 19 • 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.**
Digital Mammograms for COM Employees
Mainland Medical Center
For information, call ext. 8447.

**Oct. 19 • 6:30 p.m.**
Collegiate High School Information Meeting
Learning Resources Auditorium, L131
For information, call ext. 8169.

**Oct. 28 • 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
United Way Carnival
Annual Duck Race
For information, call ext. 8616 or 8131.

**Oct. 28 • 8 p.m.**
COM Electric Guitar Ensemble presents
Monster Musik
Fine Arts Recital Hall, F-117
For information, call ext. 8545.
**Set the Record Straight**

**Q** How do you determine pay increases for employees who have been given additional responsibilities? It seems this is not consistent across campus.

**A** Rules governing pay increases for fiscal year 2010-2011 were based upon what category and change took place. A two-step increase was given to those whose duties and responsibilities increased, which is different from being given more work and also different from a reclassification. Individual positions that were reclassified received a pay adjustment equal to the greater of 7 percent or placement on the pay scale according to years of experience or education. Nevertheless, reclassifications were implemented in accordance with the Reclassification Policy.

**Q** Who is the director of HR?

**A** There is no Human Resources Director unless the term is used loosely to refer to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources.

**Q** If a person is hired to do a specific job and later it is determined that the person hired does not have the skills or knowledge to carry out all the requirements of the job, is it normal college procedure or policy to allow that person to continue in their current position and be given an increase in pay, as well as hire an additional person to carry out their duties?

**A** No, it is not procedure or policy. Recently, it was determined that after a few months, a new hire did not have the necessary skills and after a failed performance plan and adherence to proper procedures, employment was terminated.

**Q** Dr. Elam promised to stop allowing college employees to be moved from one position to another without the position being posted. Why is the college continuing with this practice? Recently there have been departments on campus where employees have been moved into different and, sometimes, new positions, and yet other departments are required to post their positions. There seems to be a double standard on campus, what is the college policy on employees moving into different departments?

**A** Let me clarify, I promised no full-time positions would be filled permanently without a search. I have kept that promise. Lateral transfers are allowed under the current policy and that still offers employees opportunities for advancement. Also, employees may be moved/reassigned (on occasion) without changing classification. In any event, all of these changes are made in the best interest of the institution. We do hire employees on temporary basis when it is in the best interest of the College.

**Q** Travel funds have been cut for all departments and we have been told that only travel that is considered essential to College operations will be funded. Yet the Board of Trustees has a travel budget of $35,000 and all seven members are traveling to Canada to attend the annual ACCT meeting. How can the College and the BOT justify such an expense? Yes, attending such a meeting is important for professional development reasons, but wouldn’t it be more cost effective to send one or two members who can then share what they learned with the other members?

**A** Although $35,000 is budgeted for this year, this is $10,000 less than last year’s Board travel budget. The Board still will not spend the entire amount. Each board member has committee responsibilities with their association. At these conferences they go to their committee meetings and one person couldn’t go to all committee meetings. In spite of this, only four trustees will be attending the conference.

**Q** The Executive Director of Diversity and Equity will be attending the ACCT annual meeting, for which the college is footing the bill, to be there when Mrs. Matthews accepts the ACCT Regional Equity Award. How is this travel essential to College business? Is this not just a paid vacation for a job well done and if so, shouldn’t all the employees who wrote this report get to go to the conference as well? Fair is fair. If she goes, what will she bring back to the institution justifying the huge expense?

**A** Last year the College was nominated for the STAR award with the potential of receiving a national award. The individual employee responsible for coordinating the College response attended the meeting. Is it fair that we not allow the individual responsible for coordinating the College application for the ACCT award to attend? Nevertheless, Ms. Bush is not going, nor is she attending the conference.

**Q** Dr. Elam said College of the Mainland still needed to be “right sized.” How many more folks/employees does he want to or feels we need to eliminate? He has said we have too many chiefs, but the “Directors” just keep getting added on. The Organizational Chart is still too encumbered with Chiefs, what is he planning to do about that? And more importantly, when?

**A** No employee has been terminated or laid off to get the College to the right size. We have reduced positions in every category including middle management positions. In October, I will present to the Board specific plans that will identify the right size for COM. This information will also be made available to the College and the public.
A lot of time and effort has been spent by
some on the new Planning Council. Why hasn’t
the rest of the campus been allowed to even
see this? Recommendations have been made to
Dr. Elam as per convocation yet the rest of the
campus besides those on this Planning Council have
to all appear at something? Why is that? This goes against
time and involvement he so often advocates.

The Planning Council recommendations are
on the I-Drive. Please feel free to view them at
your leisure. I have accepted the recommendations
with budget implications. The recommendations
that deal with departmental issues were approved
also and they are being disseminated to the
appropriate departments to be implemented. All
of the recommendations have been accepted and
approved.

Are staff and faculty going to be able to
take college leave to attend conferences or
professional development if they feel it is
important and want to spend their own money and
have been turned down for college travel funds
approval?

Yes, you will be able to go, but there are
two differences. If the employee believes the
professional development is in their best interest
then they must use their personal leave. If the
supervisor/director determines it is the best interest
of the College, then institutional leave will be
granted using institutional funds. Remember
all leave requests other than sick leave must be
approved by your supervisor.

Our department understanding is that you
must have permission from your VP to work
overtime. So what happens when a customer
or a student comes by your office at the end of the
day? Sometimes, not very often, an adjunct will
need assistance also. For around three weeks at the
beginning of the semester and at the end of the
semester I never get off on time. I just believe that if
you have a customer who comes in or if someone is
on the phone, you still should stay and help. I have
asked to get off early or take a longer lunch because
of the working over and I am told no. What is your
suggestion since we must be approved by the VP to
work longer?

We make every effort to serve all of our
customers regardless of closing time. Document
any overtime immediately and pass it on to your
supervisor so appropriate compensation can be
awarded. Classified employees are not expected
to work beyond scheduled work hours without
appropriate compensation. If a classified employee
is working beyond their scheduled work day
because of serving our students and customers and
is not being compensated by the supervisor, the
appropriate VP should be notified.

I think many of the members of the COM
staff would like to know what is going on. We
hear rumors of reorganizations, but nothing
official. What happened to ‘transparent’ and
‘communication’? Keeping staff informed?

This information was shared during
Convocation, however, I am aware that many
employees couldn’t attend. Therefore, the updated
Organization Charts are available on COM’s
website. They are also printed in the front of the
new budget books.

The AVP of HR is introducing a woman as the
HR Director. Why do we need a director when
we have an AVP? Wasn’t the AVP hired to do the
duties of an HR Director? If we need a director, why
didn’t we just hire one instead of an AVP? And are
we going to be fairly posting the position or will this
be another temporary to full-time hire?

There is no Human Resources Director at this
time. There are plans to hire an HR Director.
The position will be advertised and recruited
according to policy. The HR Director position
was created as a reclassification of the vacant HR
Generalist position.

Why did the AVP of HR get a raise? I’ve heard
it’s because she is expanding her duties to
include benefits. But I remember the HR
position posted to include benefits. How do you
explain giving her a raise to do a job she was hired
do in the first place? How do you give a person
a raise who hasn’t worked here a year? She hasn’t
proven she can do the job yet?

Yes, the AVP of Human Resources received
a raise. The position picked up additional
responsibilities and duties. She received the same
as the others did that were entitled to receive the
additional funds.

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