

Red Fox Flier



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March 2002

MECC's student publication

Student Diplomats: Challenging Tomorrow's Leaders

The Mountain Empire Student Diplomats is a campus organization designed to promote leadership, volunteerism, good citizenship, and teamwork. While attaining their educational goals, Diplomats serve the College by assisting with a variety of projects and events. As ambassadors for the college, Diplomats conduct campus tours, assist with registration, speak with prospective students, and represent the campus at various meetings and events. Often seen as liaisons between the community and the college, Diplomats are role models for others, and they exemplify the best that MECC has to offer. Through creating and implementing service projects, Diplomats learn to give back to the college and the community.

Membership in the Mountain Empire Student Diplomats is open to any MECC student who demonstrates leadership potential, an enthusiasm for MECC, and a willingness to share his or her individual talents and skills in order to build a cohesive group. Students must have completed one semester at MECC before



The Diplomats' most recent community service project was a "Tools For Schools" drive. Needed school supplies were collected and donated to Appalachia Elementary School. Pictured are (l to r) Carolyn Helms, Diplomat Sponsor; Brittany Howard, Diane Maness, and Chris Massey.

becoming eligible for the Diplomats (dual-enrollment credits are counted), and maintain a cumulative 3.0 average. Participation in the Diplomats is a competitive process, so all candidates must be nominated by a current Diplomat or an MECC faculty/staff member, fill out an application form, and participate in an interview.

For more information, contact Carolyn Helms, ext. 316, Reg St. Clair, ext. 238 or Bonny Copenhaver, ext. 309.

Appreciating Diversity • Seeking Unity

Mountain Empire
Community College

FREE Tax Assistance

Does the tax law, credits, and deductions puzzle you? Free help is available through VITA, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, sponsored by MECC again this year.

Help with basic income tax returns will be offered February 11 through April 15 by MECC's Accounting students, trained by the Internal Revenue Service, and Professor Jim Bates, C.P.A.

VITA offers free assistance to people with special needs, including those with low or moderate income, disabilities, non-English speaking and older taxpayers, who file Form 1040 EZ, Form 1040A, or a basic Form 1040 Federal tax return.

Taxpayers who use this service should bring this year's tax package, wage and earnings statement (Form W-2) from all employers, interest statements from all sources (Form 1099), a copy of last year's tax return, if available, and other relevant information about income and expenses. On-line fil-

ing will be completed while you are present. If you have a refund and wish to have it directly deposited in your checking account, information from one of your checks will be needed (bank routing number and checking account number).

This MECC service learning activity is being offered to those taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$25,000 or less, who reside in the MECC service region, (Lee, Scott, Wise, and Dickenson Counties and the City of Norton).

For more information or to make an appointment, contact Jim Bates at 523-2400, ext. 241.

FREE Virginia Income Tax Filing

As part of an initiative to provide customers more choices and more convenience in filing state taxes, the Virginia Department of Taxation has developed free Internet filing of state taxes. Go to <http://www.tax.state.va.us> and click on *iFile for Individuals*.

MECC to Host 26th Annual John Fox, Jr. Festival

By Amanda Clark - aclark01@me1.vccs.edu

Community members are busily preparing for what will hopefully be another successful John Fox, Jr. Festival. The festival, which is currently in its 26th year, was begun to introduce the area to writers. Although formerly a two-day event, the festival eventually evolved to last only half a day.

Jamie Buckles explained this transformation. "It works out well as a half-day event because the public can attend without worrying about interference with work or school," she commented.

The John Fox, Jr. Festival, which is sponsored by MECC's Foundation and the Cultural and Humanities Committee, offers numerous opportunities for the community.

One such offering is the Lonesome Pine Short Story Contest, sponsored by Lonesome Pine Arts and Crafts, Inc. Buckles stated, "I would encourage everyone to participate. We have a great deal of entries from high schools and middle schools, but not many from MECC." The contest, which is currently in its 15th year, consists of categories for adults, high school students, and middle school students.

Prizes will be awarded to contest winners at the festival, where they and others who attend the ceremony will have the opportunity to listen to guest speakers.

Each year, two speakers are chosen to make presentations. One speaker is generally a writer, while the other speaker is a historian. The visiting writers usually meet with the public and sign copies of their works. "Most people bring their own copies for the authors to sign, but there will be copies available at the festival as well," Buckles assured.

This year's speakers promise to be as interesting as orators of the past. Author Lisa Koger and Dr. Charles F. Bryan, Jr. (of the Virginia Historical Society) will speak at the festival. The ceremony is scheduled for April 11 at 10 a.m. in the Fugate Auditorium of Dalton-Cantrell Hall.

The Red Fox Flier is a monthly MECC student publication. Contributions to this publication should be delivered to R207.

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Capital Punishment- Is it the answer?

By Chris Russell - makemsayugh@hotmail.com

A very controversial issue is whether or not capital punishment is the answer for criminals. The more common name for capital punishment is the death penalty. The argument of capital punishment is whether or not the system really works without making mistakes. Or whether capital punishment is an answer to keep criminals from committing certain crimes.

Argument:

A strong case can be made for the principle of capital punishment. The argument in favor is based on justice and the nature of the moral community, in which they respect the life and liberty of others. Those who commit vicious crimes forfeit their rights as well as life itself. Capital punishment is both constitutional and morally right. It wouldn't make sense to let someone convicted of a murder the chance to commit another.

On the other hand you have a very strong case against capital punishment. Does the system really have the right to decide whether an individual deserves or does not deserve to live. The death penalty is one punishment that cannot ever be reversed. With capital punishment you have a great risk of killing an innocent person. If you are poor or a minority then it is a great possibility that you do not have a chance to have a fair trial and will become a victim of the system. Also the death penalty costs more than a criminal's entire life imprisonment.

A review of death penalty judgments reported that the system is broke. Over the last 23 years the error rate is 68%. In the matter of life and death, we are getting the wrong answer 2 out of 3 times. With that in mind we need a moratorium on capital punishment until we figure out why the system is not working. There is no justification in killing someone if we are not sure beyond a reasonable doubt in the system that errors within itself.

Some sites to find out more about this topic:

<http://www.d.witmer.tripod.com>

<http://www.aclu.org>

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/execute.htm>

The Many Uses of Coke

By Justin Mullins — jmullins0001@me1.vccs.edu

The content of this article may shock the users of this worldly product. The product is the beverage known as Coca Cola. A slim amount of the public is aware that Coke contains a pH of 2.8, "So what does that mean?" We are consuming something along the lines of cleaner injected with sweet flavorings. The average Joe may wonder why is he saying this? What is the purpose of the article? The following facts will define what Coke is all about.

The Facts Jack:

1. In many states (in the USA) the highway patrol carries two gallons of Coca-Cola in the truck to remove blood from the highway after a car accident.

2. You can put a T-bone steak in a bowl of coke and it will be gone in two days.

3. To clean a toilet: Pour a can of Coca-Cola into the toilet bowl and ... Let the "real thing" sit for one hour, and then flush clean. The citric acid in Coke removes stains from vitreous china.

4. To clean corrosion from car battery terminals: Pour a can of Coca-Cola over the terminals to bubble away the corrosion.

5. To remove grease from clothes: Empty a can of Coke into a load of greasy clothes, add detergent, and run through a regular cycle. The Coca-Cola will help loosen grease stains. It will also clean road haze from your windshield.

So the next time that you pick up a beverage of your choice and/or some form of snack food it would be wise to do some type of research to see exactly what you are eating and the capabilities of the product. If Coke can do all of that to the items mentioned above, imagine what it could do once consumed by something organic.

Russell joins RFF writing staff

Name: Chris Russell

Age: 23

Hometown: Pennington Gap

Graduated: Lee High School

MECC: General Studies and Police Science

Goals: Transfer to UVA-Wise for Bachelor's Degree, and then transfer to the Appalachian School of Law

Hobbies: Writing poetry, drawing, and playing and writing music

Chris Russell



Live & Learn

By Amanda Clark
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LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

I love springtime. It's that time of year when the world seems to come alive again. The flowers bloom, the birds sing...and, might I add (before this starts to sound like an episode of "Barney and Friends"), students and faculty get nine days off for spring break.

I don't know about anyone else, but when I get free time, I don't know what to do with it. Going on vacation this year is definitely a strong possibility. The problem is, where?

If you're tired of going to places that are crawling with tourists, I would like to suggest a few alternate choices:

1. Plan a road trip. Try to see a few unusual sights along the way. For example, check out the World's Largest Ball of Twine or the World's Largest Non-Stick Frying Pan.

2. Are you tired of cold weather? Then go to sunny Hawaii or exotic Mexico. (But try to avoid tourist-magnet locations such as Cancun or Acapulco.) You're guaranteed to have a "buen tiempo" (good time)!

3. Is the weather not cold enough? Visit anywhere in the southern hemisphere, where fall is just beginning. If it's frigid weather you want, Alaska is an excellent choice.

4. Create your own adventure. Have you always wanted to go sailing? Do it! Have you ever wanted to bungee jump? Try it! (Just in case, though, make sure your insurance is paid up.) Not only will you not have to wonder about the activity anymore, you'll also have an interesting story to share with your friends and family.

5. For those who cannot (or don't want to) go on vacation, pamper yourself. Treat yourself to that movie you've always wanted to watch or that restaurant you've always wanted to try. Allow yourself a little "me" time during the day, when you can do things you want to do, whether it's taking a nap or reading a good book. The decision is yours.

Now that I've given you a few suggestions, start planning yourself an awesome spring break. Just relax, have fun, and let the good times roll!

The Race to be Human

By Chris Russell - makemsayugh@hotmail.com

What is racism? Well, the definition I found in the dictionary reads, "The belief that a particular race is superior to others" or "Discrimination or prejudice based on race."

The reason I decided to write about this topic was because it's a major problem facing society today. It's a problem that most of us try to overlook, but as hard as we try it will not go away that easily. Why are people racist? Have you ever wondered what makes a person racist? Well my opinion is that some people fear things that are different as to what they think is normal. These people think they're normal and anything different from them are a threat to them and society. These kinds of thoughts make stereotypes. A stereotype is labeling a person based on opinion or conception. Stereotypes are not looked at in a positive way either. Most stereotypes we have are made upon a negative opinion of a person or thing. This is a basis of what is called racial profiling. "Racial profiling" occurs when the police target someone for investigation on the basis of that person's race, national origin, or ethnicity." These are just some

of the different types of racism at work in our society today.

Why do we ignore racism? Well mainly we ignore the issue because most people act like it doesn't exist. Some people try to ignore it because they don't know how to deal with the problem. Some people are so proud of their own differences they do not want to except anyone else's.

How can we erase racism? Well first we have to accept that there's a problem that needs to be fixed. We have to open up to the idea that just because a person is different does not mean they are a bad person. We could start teaching our children at an early age so they will be receptive to the issues we are facing today.

Now with the idea in your mind, how can you help to erase racism? A start is just by learning about it.

Here are some great sites to check out:

www.aclu.org

www.aranet.org

www.positive-youth.org



Hemingway's

By Justin Mullins —
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Looking At You Kid!

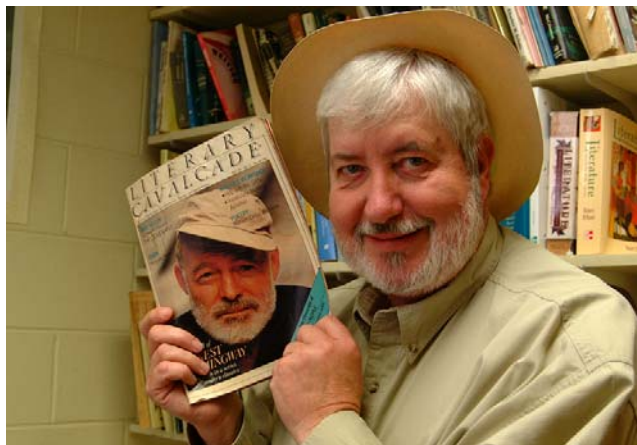
Life is what you make of it. Some take full advantage of their unique opportunity and others let the gift float away like dust in the wind. Our very own Mr. Van Rose of MECC knows how to enjoy life and how to make his previous summer vacations ones to remember. For the past few years he has traveled to such places as New York City to watch a Broadway play starring Kevin Spacey and to Baltimore, Maryland, to visit the home of Edgar Allan Poe. This coming summer he plans to carry on his literary crusade to Key West, Florida, to be a part of the Hemingway Days Festival. This event will be held from July 15-20 of 2002. Most importantly he plans to enter the famous Hemingway look-like contest.

If you have not noticed, Mr. Rose holds an uncanny resemblance to the late Earnest Hemingway. A few years back he first realized the resemblance at a Sloppy Joes restaurant in Covington, KY. There are only two Sloppy Joes restaurants in the world and the other one is in Key West, Florida. The restaurant in Key West became one of Hemingway's hangouts when he moved there in the 1920s. He made conversation with anyone that would make it; and he bought anyone a drink that would take it. All in exchange for their undying attention to what he had to say. Both restaurants are full of memorabilia of the great writer. Mr. Rose entered the Covington restaurant



wearing a pair of shorts, a white hat, and a summer shirt. He gazed into the mirror and it was obvious that he resembled the great Earnest Hemmingway. The customers dining at the restaurant were looking at him as if he were Hemingway. Mr. Rose's wife Sheila had a V-8 moment! And loudly whispered to Mr. Rose the suggestion to be a part of the Hemingway contest.

Mr. Rose describes the contest as a bunch of Papa Hemingway's arm wrestling, strutting their stuff on stage, taking part in drinking contests, and donning traditional Hemingway attire. The good professor's favorite Hemingway stories are *Island in the Steam*, and *The Sun Also Rises*. He also enjoys the works of Faulkner, Eugene O'Neill, Shakespeare, and a score of other great writers. Mr. Rose stated, "My resemblance to Hemingway may be no more than George Costanza's similarities to Andy Sipowitz. It might be nothing more than the white hair and the beard and the propensity to knock back a shot of quality booze". Mr. Rose presented me with two summer suggestions. To go to Broadway and be a stage hand or to write for *The Kansas City Star*, where Hemingway first wrote as a cub reporter. This advice made an immediate impact on me by our famous Hemingway look-like, who knows how to style and profile in July.



By Jessica Genco

Ask a Counselor

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GAIN Program Counselor

Jessica Genco, Program Counselor for the Student Support GAIN program, writes this column to address issues related to current mental health, your questions and answers regarding mental health, and discussion of ways mental health impacts your academic success. The "Ask the Counselor" forum allows students to submit questions, with the questions and answers posted sans the identifying information.

Genco is a Licensed Professional Counselor in Virginia and a Nationally Certified Counselor. If you would like to submit a question, please email her at jgenco@me.vccs.edu. Questions remain confidential. They may be used for a question and answer format, but with names omitted, of course.

SAFETY IN CYBER RELATIONSHIPS

Question:

I was lonely and started talking with someone I met over the Internet. We had so much in common. He asked me to meet him in person and I agreed. At first there was a lot of physical attraction between us. Before I knew what was happening this person became a monster with all kinds of problems they had cleverly hidden from me over the Internet!! Our relationship quickly became destructive and dangerous for me. With police intervention, this person finally left my home. I feel violated, guilty and very ashamed. I had heard about other negative Internet relationships, but I never thought it would happen to me! How and why does this happen?

Lost in Cyber Space

Counselor's response:

We have probably all heard about an online relationship which led to the meeting of kindred spirits or one's "soul mate". Online dating has become very popular and a number of online dating services have been created to target the population who prefers online love and companionship (Jerin & Dolinsky, 2001).

There are characteristics unique to cyber relationships. Usually, high intensity is established early. There tends to be an altered sense of time. Cyber relationships move quickly from initial greetings to deep disclosures. The latter is precipitated by a premature degree of trust. Sometimes the level of disclosure creates an intense sense of intimacy that typically would not occur as quickly in a traditional relationship. As a result, when the relationship ends (for whatever reason) feelings of shame, isolation, self-doubt, and guilt are increased. A self-questioning begins—"Why would I do something like that?", "My friends suspected this person was not being truthful – why didn't I listen?", "I knew the warning signs but I didn't think this would happen to me.", "How could I endanger myself and put others at risk by inviting a complete stranger into my home?"

Why do people enter into cyber relationships?

Ease of communication - the Internet is accessible and inexpensive

Anonymity - many feel more comfortable with experimentation if they are anonymous

Lack of available/suitable companions in geographic location

Shyness - dating with a sense of concealment and safety facilitates interaction.

Fantasy - Cyber relationships inherently possess a degree of fantasy. The ability to create an online image is alluring to some people. While not all present false information, it is

not uncommon for people to present an ideal self. The ability to present a facade of a fantasy person instead of what is reality (some individuals post pictures of someone other than themselves). No truth in advertising protection in cyber dating.

Like other relationships, these are subject to problems. When things go wrong, most people are able to part amicably but some are victimized in ways similar to traditional relationships.

Dangers similar to traditional relationships

- unsolicited phone calls, gifts, and letters
- stalking
- vandalization
- physical harm

Victimization specific to cyber relationships may involve

- threatening email and/or obscene email
- spamming
- flaming (online verbal abuse)
- physical harm once the individuals meet (being beaten and raped are not uncommon occurrences)

Cyber Relationship Safety

- 1) NEVER give out a physical address (home address) or home telephone number.
- 2) If a meeting is planned, meet in a public place, tell a friend where you are going & when you expect to be back.
- 3) After the meeting, do NOT go home with the individual.
- 4) Do not allow the person access to financial accounts (checking, savings, check cards, credit/charge cards). Yes, this really happens!
- 5) If a visit is planned, do not leave your children in the care of this person (yes, this actually happens too!).
- 6) If stalking occurs after the end of a cyber relationship, do not hesitate to report the behavior to police and take legal action if necessary.
- 7) Always use an anonymous server account such as Hotmail or YahooMail - never use an account that gives your full name or a server specific to an area (such as Mountaint or Optidynamic) because a person could actually learn your geographic location based on your ISP.

In Virginia, cyberstalking laws prohibit harassing contact through the use of e-mail and/or other electronic transmission.

For more information on cyber relationship safety, go to www.cyberangels.com. It is an excellent source of information on cyber relationships.

Reference: Jerin, R. & Dolinsky, B. (2001). You've got mail! You don't want it: Cyber-victimization and on-line dating. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 9(1), 15-21.



By Justin Mullins —
jmullins0001@me1.vccs.edu

Movies are in some ways similar to a book. They both tell a story and have a creator behind the visual art. The book may be cheaper to produce but sometimes the reader struggles to visualize the actual scene. That is where the movie comes in; it is a book that comes to life. This March, focus your eyes on the silver screen or the literary

works of your liking. My opinion is that a movie should be your weapon of choice. The previous statement should land my face on every English teacher and author's personal dartboard for the next few years.

On March 4 *We Were Soldiers* arrives to the theater scene. The movie features Mel Gibson in the starring role with a decent supporting cast of Barry Pepper, who has been in such films as *The Green Mile* and the HBO movie *61*. Also co-starring is Chris Kline of the *American Pie* fame. The plot is that in November 1965 Lt. Col. Hal Moore (Gibson) and 400 of his men find themselves in an ambush by Vietnamese Soldiers. He gives constancy and brilliance to each character that he has portrayed throughout his illustrious career. Only the great Denzel Washington rivals him in that department. My opinion is that war movies are a dying breed and just a fad that is fading.

On March 8 is the date that *Time Machine* will make its worldwide debut. The movie is based on a novel by H.G. Wells. The main character is Alexander Hartdegen, which is played by Guy Pearce. He has starred in films such as *Memento* and *The Count of Monte Crisco*. Obviously the movie is about a time machine and a man who ultimately travels 800,000 years into the future, where the last vestiges of humanity, the Eloi, are threatened by the cretinous, subterranean Morlocks. My opinion is that the movie lacks the ensemble cast so Pearce has to give a great performance for this movie to have a solid storyline. Though the visual effects shall astonish and amaze the audience.

On March 22 *Blade 2* will hit the theaters. The plot is a new blood virus that turns humans and vampires alike into monsters called Reapers and leads vampire hunter Blade (Wesley Snipes) to form an unlikely alliance with a group of vampires called the Bloodpack. This movie should be predictable but rake in a lot of money the first week or two in the box office.

Check out next month's issue for the summer previews that will not disappoint anyone that has a fetish for cinematic entertainment. Try not to think of me as *Justin* the movie reviewer, think of *Justin* the hero or some sort of Jedi master.

PTK to Attend Local, International Conventions

By Amanda Clark - aclark01@me1.vccs.edu

Energy is running high for Phi Theta Kappa members as they prepare to attend both the regional and international conventions, held in March and April respectively.

Members from the Virginia region met March 1-3 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Bristol. The convention is co-sponsored by Alpha Delta Psi (MECC's PTK chapter), Alpha Theta Upsilon (Southside VA CC), and Alpha Gamma Rho (VA Highlands CC).

At the convention, members continue their study of the 2001-2002 Honors Topic ("Customs, Traditions, and Celebrations: The Human Drive for Community") and make related presentations. Group activities such as storytelling and trips to Barter Theater and the mall were also scheduled.

However, the 84th Annual International Convention will be even more exciting. This year, the convention is based at Nashville's Opryland Complex, where members from all 50 states, Canada, and even abroad will participate in a wide variety of activities.

Among the scheduled speakers is Bonnie St. John, who, despite an almost lifelong amputation, managed to win an Olympic gold medal in skiing and later became a White

House staff member. On the political spectrum, liberal James Carville and conservative Newt Gingrich will engage in a debate, during which students may be allowed to ask questions.

Not all of the convention is work, however. Also on the agenda are a Taste of Tennessee luncheon, two dances, a political rally/ice cream social, and outings to the Opry Mills shopping mall and the Country Music Hall of Fame. The hotel is also within walking distance to the current Grand Ole Opry building, where live shows will be conducted each day.

Indeed, the next few months will be an adventure for Phi Theta Kappans. From the local to the international levels, they will learn new things, meet with old and new friends, and learn what being a member of Phi Theta Kappa truly means.

(PTK is the community college international honorary society.)

**Check MECC's snow schedule
by calling 523-7495.**

Campus Calendar

March & April

To be prepared for MECC's spring semester events, mark your calendars today!

- March 1 LAST DAY TO TURN IN **GRADUATION APPLICATIONS**
- March 5 GAINing Excellence seminar, **Interview Skills**, at 12:15 p.m. in G220.
- March 6 LENOWISCO's **Mobile Health Unit** will be parked behind Robb Hall from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- March 11-15 Spring Break — **NO DAY OR EVENING CLASSES!**
- March 17 St. Patrick's Day
- March 19 GAINing Excellence seminar, **Resilience: Not a Shampoo, A State of Mind**, at 12:15 p.m. in G220.
- March 21 Student Services workshop, **Stress Management**, at 2 p.m. in G143
- March 25 Last day to withdraw without penalty, or to change from credit to audit
- March 26 Claudia Stevens performs **An Evening With Madame F**, based on survivor accounts of music performance in concentration camps, at 12:15-1:15 p.m. in the Goodloe Center
- March 28 1st day of Passover
- March 31 Easter Sunday
- April 2 GAINing Excellence seminar, **Career Exploration**, at 12:15 p.m. in G220
- April 3 LENOWISCO's **Mobile Health Unit** will be parked behind Robb Hall from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- April 5 Personality Styles, 1:00 p.m., G143
- April 9 GAINing Excellence seminar, **The A-D-D-ed Component: Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)**, at 12:15 p.m. in G220
- April 12 Last day to make-up incomplete grades from fall semester
- April 16-18 Spring Fling, 12:15-1:15 p.m. (more information in April/May issue of Red Fox Flier)
- April 23 GAIN Luncheon
- April 25 Graduation Practice, Fugate Auditorium
- April 25 The Virginia Opera in **Encore**, 12:15-1:15 p.m. in the Goodloe Center

WATCH FOR GAINing EXCELLENCE SEMINARS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. Feel free to bring your lunch.

Women's History Month

In honor of Women's History Month, Jessica Genco, GAIN Counselor, will be doing a seminar on Margaret Sanger - The Woman Rebel, Public Health Worker, Social Reformer, and Fighter for Women's Rights in G220 at 12:15 on March 21. For more information on Women's History Month, go to: <http://www.nwhp.org/whm/themes/themes.html>



“Madame F” set for March 26

“An Evening with Madame F” explores the life and death experience of music performance in concentration camps, drawing upon survivor accounts, including that of Fania Fenelon, who performed in the Women's Orchestra at Auschwitz. The performance will be held at 12:15 pm in the Goodloe Center.

Troupe to Perform “Rapunzel”

The Troupe, MECC's drama club, will perform “Rapunzel: Uncut” from Thursday, March 21 to Saturday, March 23 in the Goodloe Center.

Thursday's performance will begin at 12:15 p.m. and admission will be free to all faculty and students. The Friday and Saturday performances will begin at 7 p.m. Admission fees are the following: **Adults—\$3, Senior citizens—\$2, Students—\$1 (with presentation of a valid student I.D.), Children 12 and under—free.**

If schedule changes occur, please see the bulletin board next to Joel Bailey's office (G235). If you are interested in becoming a drama club member (no experience necessary), please contact Joel Bailey at jbailey@me.vccs.edu.

Contributed by Amanda Clark.