

Red Fox Flier



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MECC's student publication

Support for Troops

MECC plans to acknowledge the dedicated service of our students, employees, and family members in the National Guard units being called to active duty. Support will be given to those service men and women in the form of cards, letters, and care packages.

The bulletin board located outside Educational Talent Search in Godwin Hall has been reserved to post names and addresses of activated military personnel who wish to receive correspondence. The board will also be used to post correspondence and photos received from our service people to keep the college community informed of their daily lives.

If you would like to contribute names, addresses, or photographs of activated troops, contact Lisa Woliver at lwoliver@me.vccs.edu or extension 333. Lisa will inform the college community via bulletin-board postings as to what items are needed for care packages, how the project is progressing, and other important information concerning "Enduring Freedom".

MECC students in the Big Stone Gap National Guard called to active duty in January are Thomas Frantz, Arthur Smith, Demus Stanley, Sidney Flanary, Michael Short, Jason Shepherd, and Shannon Dutton.

See related story on page 2.

Who is the MECC student?

See how you fit the statistics: There are almost 4,800 MECC students taking credit courses and another 3,000 taking non-credit courses each year.

In fact, one out of every 13 local residents enroll in credit and non-credit courses at MECC.

Twenty-five percent are enrolling for the first-time, 30% are full-time (12 credit hours or more) and 70% are part-time. Thirty-nine percent are age 18 to 21, but the average student age is 30 years. Sixty-five percent are female and 35% are male. Two percent are minor-

ity, which is the approximate percentage of minorities in Southwest Virginia.

Over 50% of students receive financial aid, which is the highest percentage in the Virginia Community College System. Seven percent are high school dual enrollment students and 30% enroll in one or more distance education classes.

Twenty-three percent are majoring in the College Transfer program, 27% are in occupational-technical degree programs, 6% are in one year certificate programs, 11% are in career studies certificate programs, and 33% are not majoring in a program. This latter group includes the dual enrollment students, persons upgrading skills, or taking a personal interest class.

Appreciating Diversity • Seeking Unity

Mountain Empire



What You Can Do

Wondering what your family, your business or your civic, scout or church group can do for members of the Virginia National Guard's 189th Engineer Co. as they prepare for deployment, possibly to the Middle East?

"Care" packages containing items from home that soldiers just can't get in the field are going to be a great way to offer support, the unit's Family Readiness Volunteer Coordinator Ginger Eldridge, of Big Stone Gap, said. "What we will be sending are the kinds of little things that make it a more comfortable when you're away from home. I wanted to get a list before they left, so we would be sending things they really needed, or would really use," she said.

Personal items soldiers put on the list include: Baby wipes, deodorant and shampoo; Toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss and mouthwash; Laundry detergent in tablet form and clothespins; Feminine hygiene items including Tampax Regular/Super, Playtex tampons and Always pads with wings; Chapstick, sunscreen, aloe vera sunburn relief cream; Chewing gum, Tic-tacs, Lifesavers and other hard candy; Icy Hot, moleskin for blisters, Band-Aids; Tylenol and other pain relievers, over-the-counter medicines for diarrhea and upset stomach, pill form preferred; Cough drops, Vitamin C drops, throat lozenges; Q-Tips, pocket packets of tissues, disposable cameras; Anti-bacterial wipes, liquid hand sanitizer in plastic bottles.

Soldiers would appreciate any of the following food items: Tea bags, instant tea, hot chocolate, coffee in tin cans; Any food items that don't have to be refrigerated, such as beef jerky, granola bars, Little Debbie Snack Cakes, Fruit Roll-ups and similar products; Beanie Weenies, potato chips such as Pringles or brands that come in cardboard tubes or cans, pretzels; Crackers, Cheese Whiz, Nutella, peanut butter and jelly combos and similar snack spreads, all in plastic jars; Welch's juices in the cans - regular, not extra sugar; Little boxed juices (similar to those used for kids' lunch boxes), Kool-Aid and Gatorade mixes; Fruit cocktail, applesauce and other small canned fruit cups, pref-

erably with pop-tops; Writing paper and envelopes, ball point pens with black ink; Tobacco products of all types.

Care packages were boxed and shipped with the soliders, but the potential long lag time in shipping means the next round of packages needs to be ready to go as soon as the soldiers reach their destination point.

Eldridge said three local churches have agreed to serve as drop-off points for donated items, which will be stockpiled to ship when the soldiers find out where they will be assigned after Ft. Eustis.

Those locations and contact telephone numbers include :New Hope Assembly of God, Big Stone Gap, 523-3392; Spirit and Truth, Big Stone Gap, 523-4876; Coeburn Trinity Life Center, 523-1573.

In addition to purchasing items, monetary donations are being accepted to help pay shipping costs for future rounds of "care" packages and other expenses, Eldridge said.

The Family Readiness Program is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers, Eldridge said. A bank account has been established at Powell Valley National Bank, she noted. People who want to donate should make checks payable to "Family Readiness" for the 189th Engineer Co., she said.

Due to variations in her work schedule, Eldridge asks that those with questions leave messages for her at the National Guard armory in Big Stone Gap at 523-8245. She said she will return messages as her work schedule permits.

NOTE: This is an excerpt from a story which ran in The Post newspaper on January 21, 2003.

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

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Campus Calendar

February and March

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

- February 7 Student Services Workshop, **Stress Management**, at 2 p.m. in G152
- February 13-14 In-Service Days - **NO DAY OR NIGHT CLASSES**
- February 14 Valentine's Day
- February 18 GAINing Excellence Seminar, **Family Budget Management**, at 12:15 in G220.
Presenter is Peggy Rusek
- February 21 National TRIO Day
- March 3 DEADLINE FOR GRADUATION APPLICATIONS
- March 4 GAINing Excellence Seminar, **Leading in the Workplace, Part I**, at 12:15 in G220.
Presenter is Connie Rhoten
- March 6 ProArt presents **The Thuringer Salonquintett in *Sprintime in Vienna*** at 12:15 p.m. in the Goodloe Center
- March 10 Student Services Workshop, **Personal Style and Career Choice**, at 3 p.m. in G152
- March 11 GAINing Excellence Seminar, **Leading in the Workplace, Part II**, at 12:15 in G220.
Presenter is Connie Rhoten
- March 16 St. Patrick's Day
- March 17-21 SPRING BREAK - NO DAY OR NIGHT CLASSES
- March 24 Last day to withdraw without penalty, change from credit to audit
- March 25 ProArt presents **Claudia Stevens in *In The Puppeteer's Wake*** at 7:30 p.m. in the Goodloe Center
- March 25 GAINing Excellence Seminar, **Teamwork: Skills for Life and Work, Part I**, at 12:15 in G220. Presenter is Connie Rhoten
- March 27 ProArt presents **Violinists Marc Ramirez and Olivia Hajioff in Duo Concert** at 12:15 p.m. in the Goodloe Center

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

Graduation Applications

Graduation Applications for Spring/Summer 2003 are available in Enrollment Services/Registrar. The deadline to apply is **March 3**.

No Classes

There will be no day or night classes on:

February 13-14 (In-service Days)
March 17-21 (Spring Break)

Live & Learn

By Amanda Clark
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“A Random Act of Kindness: It Couldn’t Hurt”

Have you ever held the door open for someone? Did you ever take the time to thank your bus driver before disembarking? Have you ever smiled at someone you didn’t know? If so, you’re guilty: you have committed what I like to call a random act of kindness.

You can probably remember the last time you had a day when nothing went right. Your car wouldn’t start, you failed a test, or perhaps experienced a number of other things. You probably felt pretty upset, right? But you may recall if someone did something to lift your spirits, whether it was through a smile, a hug, or even letting you out in traffic when the roads are crowded.

The fact is: a kind gesture can go a long way, and both you and the receiver benefit from the exchange. The other person’s spirits are lifted, even if only for a moment. *Your* mood lightens because, well, random acts of kindness simply have that side effect. If you ask someone who has performed such an act how he or she feels, you will probably get this reply: “I feel...good.” Although “good” is not the most descriptive adjective, perhaps in this case it fits.

Another wonderful thing about compassionate gestures is that they don’t have to be major to make an impact. You can touch the lives of others in so many ways, whether you’re working at a food bank, tutoring at your school, giving lost motorists directions, or taking the time to listen to a friend who needs to express his or her feelings.

To quote an old proverb, “A few kind words can make the difference between giving up and going on.” You may never know just how deeply you have touched someone’s life, but don’t you owe it to yourself—and to them—to try? So go ahead: smile at a stranger. Give someone a sincere compliment out of the blue and watch the person’s face brighten. Before long, you could become a “serial offender”! Try to commit a random act of kindness. It couldn’t hurt.

Some Obstacles Can Be As Small As An Inch

By Kenneth Davenport
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The physically challenged are faced with many barriers in their daily activities. Non-disabled people take their ability to walk over almost any obstacle for granted.

The main cause of the problem is public unawareness. The majority of people are not disabled; therefore, they do not see problems that don’t affect them. People, myself included, have a hard time putting themselves into a disabled person’s shoes. We all see things from our own perspective

and not from others’ who have different needs and concerns.

For example, the public is unaware that a one inch gap in a sidewalk or ramp is enough to flip a person in a wheelchair. People are generally not aware that many doors are too hard for the disabled to open, and that access is limited in many public buildings, parking lots, and residential housing.

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the changes that need to take place for the physically challenged. A big part of the solutions for this issue is knowledge in the community.

Ask a Counselor

By Jessica Genco

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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.

Cultivate Your Support System - Cultivate Your Success

Did you know that having a support network and system can affect your academic success (as well as mental and physical health)? Research suggests that having a support system acts as a buffer in times of stress and may actually inhibit the development of physical or mental illness.

What is a support system?

A support network consists of all the people with whom you have contact who may provide support to you at some time or another. A support system consists of those individuals within the network who have **actually provided support to you** and can be counted on to do it again. The network size is the *quantity* of support while the system is the *quality* of the supports. Think for a moment about who you feel you can count on in times of stress. Support is multi-dimensional and can take several forms: instrumental, social, or emotional.

Types of Support Systems

Instrumental supports involve things that people do for you: helps with studying, childcare, carpooling, information-sharing and general guidance, and material assistance (loaning or giving of funds or resources when in need).

Social supports are things done with another person(s): family involvement and sense of belonging, community involvement, involvement with friends, involvement with classmates, and participation in various life roles such as student, employee, spouse, parent, child, sibling, etc.

Emotional supports involve feelings shared with another person(s): a sense of connection and feeling cared about, a sense of being valued, a feeling that another person understands your feelings and that disclosure will not lead to criticism but instead empathy, and the ability to trust at least one person.

These are not all the ways that others may provide support, just a few examples.

A Self-Assessment

For further examination of your supports, read the following statements and list as many people as you can for each blank.

"If my car broke down, I would feel comfortable calling _____ to help me out." (instrumental)

"If I needed an emergency loan, I would hate to ask, but _____ would be willing to help." (instrumental)

"If I wanted to go to a concert, _____ would go with me" (social)

"Right before a big exam, _____ (possibly a group of people) would get together outside of class to study, socialize (let's be realistic here!), and snack." (social)

When I feel really stressed and I want to give up, I know I can talk to _____ and he/she will listen. (emotional)

"I have at least one person with whom I can trust sharing my true feelings. That person is _____" (emotional).

What it all means

So, what do your answers reveal? If there are any places where you could not name one person, that might be an area you want to develop or cultivate. Building resilience (your capacity to successfully bounce back from adversity, stress, and change) depends on cultivating and maintaining your personal resources. One very important resource is your support system. Other resources may be spirituality or personality traits. They are beyond the scope of this article. The basic idea about support systems is that the more connection and interdependence a support system yields, the better buffer it provides against stress and illness. Stress is an inevitable part of life. It is necessary for survival and serves as a powerful motivator. It is when the stress is perceived as excessive that it creates problems which can negatively affect the immune, endocrine, and cardiovascular systems, ultimately leading to illness.

How does it all relate to academic success? Lack of support could mean the difference between completing your academic goals as opposed to having to withdraw from classes. It could make a difference in your class attendance (which affects your grade), your attitude (which affects your grade), and affect your outlook (optimistic or pessimistic). Insight is an important first step in solving problems. If you read this, thoughtfully considered the self assessment, and realized the need for a few changes, you have made an effort toward building your personal resources. If you would like further assistance on setting personal growth goals and making them happen, check with a campus counselor for information and/or referral.

References: Pilisuk, M. & Parks, S. H. (1986). *The healing web: Social networks and human survival*. University Press of New England. Hanover: NH

Giordano, B. P. (1997). Resilience – a survival tool for the nineties. *AORN Journal*, 65(6), 1032-1034.

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. John Donne (1572-1631), English Poet

The Campus Corner

Happy Over-Commercialized Day!

By Sarah Jane Gilliam
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Greetings and Salutations old friends! The Campus Corner is back in action. And what better topic to start off the month of February than that age-old, romantic commercial celebration of love? That's right! There is nothing that says "I love you" to that special someone more than a stuffed gorilla that sings Barry White songs on February 14th. Valentines Day!

But the endless celebration of stupid commercialism doesn't stop there! You can buy your loved one a 3 1/2 foot tie-dyed frog wearing a crown and holding a heart that says "Prince Charming." What man doesn't want to be compared to a royal amphibian? And don't worry men, you haven't been left out in the buying for your female companions! Every store known to man has for your convenience, stocked at least two aisles completely with no-brain gifts like over-priced candy in ugly, ugly tins because who doesn't like chocolate? Remember, every woman wants to go up at least one dress size after the first of the year! In the past even your friendly local MECC-Mart, oops I mean the Bookstore has stocked its shelves with overpriced balloons, stuffies, dvds, cds, figurines, clothing and all the best goodies in capitalism.

Remember folks, you musn't forget your loved one on February the 14th...I mean people actually break up if they forget to get their significant other something for Valentine's Day, the only day of the year designated to tell special people that we love them. What would happen if we FORGOT VALENTINES DAY? The horrific possibilities are endless! Your girlfriend might not speak to you for a month! It might mean that because they didn't know what the date was that they don't love you anymore! What if they pack up, leave and never come back because YOU forgot Valentines Day? Tsk, tsk. Goodness knows we don't want to be in that category! We'd better hurry up to the local jewelry store before there's nothing left to buy come the 14th!

This celebration of commercialism, I mean love, has got me feeling all warm, fuzzy and happy inside (I don't think it's nausea...)! In fact, it seems almost ridiculous that we would take only one day a year and set it aside to specifically celebrate commercialism, I mean love! Yes, we should celebrate love more often! In fact we should specifically set aside a day (or maybe even more than one!) to honor those "special" people who make our day a little bit

brighter...maybe like, oh, I don't know...people who write humorous news columns! Perhaps we should just pick a day, say the day you read this, to go out and buy a hideously overpriced, expensive gift for your favorite school columnist, and say, just leave it with one of the Red Fox Flier Supervisors for that person! I bet they would love things like size 7 shoes, Billy Joel, Elton John, and David Bowie albums, maybe some movie tickets, gift certificates (for those of you who just aren't shoppers) or even cash if you don't feel like going to the store. What a great way to say "Thanks, We love you!" Wow! I can feel that love really is in the air! In fact, I think I'm gonna go buy my favorite columnist lunch right now!

Please send comments, questions, and suggested topics to: sarahjanegilliam@hotmail.com



“Smallpox: Serious Threat or Unnecessary Concern?”

By Amanda Clark

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The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 left an aftermath of questions, fears, and concerns. One concern in particular is the possibility of a future terrorist attack, this time using a biological weapon, such as smallpox. Once considered eradicated, the disease is now provoking numerous discussions by the public and precautionary measures by the U.S. government.

Smallpox is an acute, contagious, sometimes fatal disease caused by the variola virus. Essentially, two types of smallpox (variola major and minor) exist, but variola major is the most common.

Symptoms of the illness occur in several stages. Initially, the person may experience head and body aches, fever (usually 101 to 104 degrees F), malaise (a vague feeling of ill-being), and sometimes vomiting. This stage, which usually occurs seven to seventeen days after exposure, generally lasts two to four days.

Although the person can be contagious during this phase, he or she is the most contagious after the appearance of the rash, which emerges as small red spots on the tongue and in the mouth. Thereafter, the person is considered contagious until the last smallpox scab falls off, leaving pitted scars on the skin.

Generally, direct and prolonged contact with infected persons, body fluids, or contaminated objects such as bedding or clothing can spread the virus. It is rarely transmitted through the air in enclosed settings such as buildings, buses, or trains. Smallpox is also unlikely to be carried by insects or animals: humans are the only known natural hosts of variola.

Although smallpox is potentially fatal in 30% of cases involving variola major, no treatment for the illness exists. The vaccination is also not currently available, although the Center for Disease Control (CDC) stated there is enough vaccine to immunize everyone who might need it if an emergency arises.

The vaccine is administered by using a two-pronged needle dipped in the vaccine solution. The needle is then used to quickly prick the skin

numerous times, which generally results in a sore spot and two or three drops of blood. The vaccination is considered successful if a red, itchy bump appears at the site in three or four days. Despite the appearance of the bump, a person CANNOT get smallpox from the vaccination.

Unfortunately, not everyone can be vaccinated. The vaccine can be especially dangerous for pregnant women, due to the risk of fetal infection. Also, people who are breastfeeding, have weakened immune systems, have (or have had) skin conditions such as eczema, are under 12 months of age, or are allergic to the vaccine and/or its components should not be vaccinated unless they have been exposed to smallpox.

Currently, exposure is considered only a possibility, but the U.S. government is taking necessary precautions. In addition to having a sufficient amount of the vaccine, a detailed nationwide response plan has also been developed to vaccinate people quickly and contain an outbreak if one arises.

For more information on smallpox, log on to: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox>.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Studies in the 1960s show that 15 to 49 of every million people vaccinated for smallpox for the first time will suffer serious side effects, some of them life-threatening. The vaccinia virus used in the vaccine can also threaten elderly, infants or anyone with weakened immunity who comes into contact with those who are vaccinated.

The Bush administration plans to vaccinate 440,000 frontline health care workers within the next four to six weeks and then begin vaccinating 10 million additional health care workers, police officers, firefighters and other emergency personnel by late summer. The program for health care workers is voluntary. Mandatory vaccinations of 500,000 military personnel began in December. The administration plans to make the vaccine available to the general public next year, but for now, it is not recommending it.

Many hospitals are refusing to participate in this voluntary vaccination, including Medical College of Virginia Hospitals in Richmond. Although the primary issue for most hospital officials is the safety of the vaccine, some say unresolved issues over funding must be addressed before they can decide whether to proceed. Hospitals, which already must cope with a nursing shortage, are concerned about the cost of replacing nurses who might become sick from the vaccine. Other hospitals are considering furloughing vaccinated employees for up to three weeks to assure that they don't spread the vaccinia virus to any patients.

Methodical Theory of Coolness

By Justin Mullins

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Surely if you're capable of thought, especially in post-modern society, you have observed and experienced this flip of a coin concept. The almighty question has bruised egos, crushed self-esteem, and unpurified the purest souls. What is this emotionally damaging concept? The word cool is merely juvenile, very teen-fad; almost Saved by the Bell like! But, ladies and gentleman! Readers of the Red Fox Flier, I am taking this juvenile word, grabbing it by the horns, and pile-driving it to the depths of hell.

Everyone in this unfair world has struggled at some point in his or her life to fit in. On the lonely rainy nights when our egos have suffered a beating, we stop and wonder if we measure up as a human being. Maybe you were rejected in some aspect from the dating game, social gatherings, or on the work front. You may ask yourself this, Am I cool? What is wrong with me?

Nothing is wrong with you as a person. From someone's point of view your looks might resemble Richard Nixon or to someone else, Mel Gibson.

We all have different tastes/fetishes/desires. Let's use three cultural icons for example, The Fonz, Vin Diesel, and Michael Jordan. While the respected names might represent prime examples for "coolness 101", they're still flawed. You the reader might be puzzled by my remarks, wondering the purpose of this piece and gawking like Fat Albert at a Shoney's buffet, "Hey, hey."

My theorem of coolness revolves around perspective and perception. Society's post-modern world consists of stereotypical groups such as jocks, skaters/punk, and redneck/roughneck. Their definition of cool originates from their point of view. For instance someone who society labels as athletic or "jock" are Kings of the World in their own respected groups. If you're not associated with their lifestyle, their social group will not see you in the same light. Not that jocks or any other group hate those who differ. Belief is other people who do differ won't mesh as well or be thought of in the same manner.

So you see coolness is a matter of perception. Without the people who help define who you are, your status quickly declines to the level of a Republican, best defined by Bob Dole. Hopefully this article will matter to some, make a difference to others and make someone's day not as bad.

Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA)

By Carl Smith

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What would you say to have the chance to step back in time to the days of kings and knights? Being able to wake up in the morning being able to learn first hand how they lived, acted, and fought? You would be able to dress the part and live it without having to leave any of the creature comforts of the 21st century. Now what would you say to it if I told you that you had to look no further than Wise?

My name is Lord Miggogin Augustus from the Shire of the Burning Stone, located within the Kingdom of Meridies. However, my mundane name, as you may know, is Carl. I am part of a group called the SCA, and if what I have said so far interests you then by all means read on.

The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) is a non-profit, international organization dedicated to researching and re-creating pre-17th-century European history. The SCA was founded in the 70's sponsored by men and women who believed that chivalry was not dead and enjoyed history. To set themselves apart from other historical groups they decided to dress the part. Having a fun time doing it and others seeing this, it did not take long for it to catch on. It did not stop there however. Dressing the part was fun but what else did they do back then that they could recreate. Next thing you know all manner of events started popping up. Everything from fighting to arts and sciences soon became available to members.

In the SCA there truly is something for

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SCA - Continued from Page 8

everyone. No matter what you are interested in, so long as it has a base in medieval history, you can find someone who knows about and is willing to teach you. It could be anything from cooking, to brewing, sewing, camping, hunting, archery, you name it. If you are looking for something more there is my personal favorite, the fighting.

Now we do not just start up random acts of violence just because someone spilled our drink. We have rules that must be adhered to, or you simply will not be allowed to join the party. Proper protection must be worn and every fight must be marshaled to ensure that you are safely beating on one another. Both Heavy (think Braveheart) and Light (Rapier, Three Musketeer) fighting is available so just because you are not a brute does not mean you cannot play.

Joining the SCA is easy and all that is required are three things.

1) A membership. 2) Clothing and a name related to the period in time that interests you. 3) Showing up.

One thing you will notice at an SCA event will be the respect everyone holds for one another. In this way I will create an environment that everyone feels comfortable in. A Knight is as much your brother as the King, even if this is your first event. Everyone works to the same goal of helping one another and putting on an event that all are welcome to come and partake in. In this way everyone benefits as a person and grows as an individual.

At an event everyone does their best to stay in period. Women are addressed as “My’ lady” and men are “My’ Lord”. We do have royalty so you may meet a prince or a king; just make sure you bow when you meet them. If you have proven yourself worthy and a good fighter then you may find yourself being knighted. Knights are distinguishable by the white belts they wear as well as their chains and spurs. Any title or position you could find in a court of royalty can be found, and you have the ability to attain them. So what would you like to be? A Knight? Perhaps a Baron? It’s really up to you as to what title you want to attain, and then to go after it.

Everything you have read here is celebrated at one major event called Pensic.

Once a year thousands of people come from around the world to meet in Pennsylvania.

Merchants and tents are as far as the eye can see. Every moment of the day there are major battle with thousands to each side, just like they use to back then. This usually goes on for about two weeks or more. No matter where you go in the world there is an SCA group there and someone will have been to Pensic.

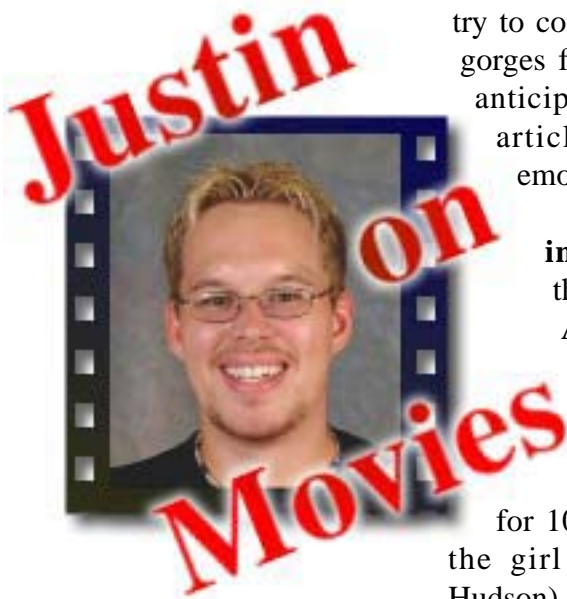
Many people have asked me and others I know why we do this. There are many different answers to this but one stands out above all others. It is the same reason it was started in the first place. Chivalry is not dead.

If you would like to learn more, then it’s only an email away. You can contact the local Seneschal Lady, Kai O’Dubhlaoich. In case you missed that you can get a hold of the head of the local group, Rhonda Dooley. Make sure you title your email as SCA so as to ensure that it gets to her. The email address is: ladykai1@yahoo.com

Or if you like you may go to the SCA web site at www.SCA.org.



Carl is a General Studies major. He moved from Florida and lives with his wife, Miranda, in Clintwood. Carl was in the US Air Force. His interests include medieval history, paint ball, photography and writing.



By Justin Mullins
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Readers of the Red Fox Flier, I bring thee movie previews for the month of February. So please

try to control yourself as foam gorges from the mouth as the anticipation for my newest article takes over your emotional well-being.

How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days arrives in theaters on February 7.

A ladies man/player (Matthew McConaughey) bets his friends that he can stay in a relationship for 10 days. Unknowingly the girl he picks up (Kate Hudson) tries to dispose of him like Clarissa Flockhart trying to lose weight.

Shanghai Knight premieres in theaters on February 7. The two stars, Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson, adventure to London in

the late 1800's. Hopefully the comedy will outshine the first of the series.

The Life of David Gale debuts February 21. The film consists around Dr. David Gale (Spacey), a college professor and advocate for the elimination of the death penalty, falsely accused of murder and on death row. The movie also stars Kate Winslet as a reporter who visits Gale on death row.

I would remiss if I didn't mention the films **Old School (Feb 21)**, and **Daredevil (Feb 14)**. **About Schmidt** and **Adaptation** should make strong Oscar runs.

As always I am The King of the World and your very own personal Jedi Master.

FREAKS AND GEEKS AMONG US

Freak of the Month: Marf Alert!

By Sarah Jane Gilliam
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Students of Mountain Empire beware! Did you know that there is a Marf among you? You'll find a 6 foot tall, wide-eyed being with large hands and feet wandering the corridors and classrooms of Phillips-Taylor hall! She has been on this planet for 22 years. Her name is Erin. Erin is a Marf.

Marf is common terminology for a person having a rare condition known as Marfan's syndrome. Marfan's Syndrome is a heritable disorder of all of the connective tissues in the body. This causes it to affect many different organs, such as the eyes, heart, lungs, skeleton, and blood vessels. It is estimated that as many as 200,000 Americans have Marfan's Syndrome.

Marfan's Syndrome has been most closely related to former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln.

It has been long debated as to whether the President did in fact have Marfan's Syndrome. President Lincoln exhibited many of the stereotypical characteristics of a person with Marfan's syndrome. These characteristics include a tall frame, long, lanky limbs, large hands and feet, and "spider fingers" for their extremely long fingers. However these are only physical characteristics.

Most characteristics of Marfan's Syndrome are non-visual. As a stereotypical Marf, Erin has most of these characteristics as well as the visual ones. "I'm blind and I have a fake eye," laughs Erin. What she means by this statement is that because Marfan's Syndrome affects connective tissues, the

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lenses in her eyes were detached at birth (this is not the case with all Marfs). Because of this, Erin has had lens replacement surgery in her right eye to improve her vision, however she is still legally blind and does not drive. Erin also has one of the most common signs of the Marf. She has a heart defect known as a mitrol valve prolapse, as well as an enlarged aorta. These defects are detected by a test known as an echocardiogram. Marfs should have yearly echos to make sure that their aorta is not dilating.

"One of the big things about Marfan's Syndrome is that it limits your abilities to do most things. People with Marfan's Syndrome shouldn't play sports or participate in physical activities due to their heart and eye conditions." Aside from physical difficulties, Erin has problems with everyday tasks, such as reading and sitting or standing too long. In the world of Marfs, Erin is unique. "Most people inherit Marfan's Syndrome from a parent, however it is possible for a chromosome (15) in what is known as the fibrilin gene to mutate and cause the disorder. This is an extremely rare occurrence, but no one in my family has tested positive for the Syndrome. I was a surprise Marf!"

Erin is a Clerical Assisting student at Moun-tain Empire. She is a member and participant in the MECC Drama Club, The Troupe. For the past four years she has been a participant in the outdoor drama, The Trail of the Lonesome Pine. This month she will be assisting in advertising February as National Marfan's Syndrome Month. For more information on Marfan's Syndrome visit the national site at www.marfan.org.

Are you unique? Ever do something really different that makes you stand out in the crowd? Send me your story! If you think you or someone you know would be a good candidate for the Freak or Geek of the month, email me your suggestions or stories at sarahjanegilliam@hotmail.com



Student writer Sarah and Erin.

Disclaimer: In using the term "freak", the definition we are going by is an eccentric or nonconformist person, especially a member of a counter-culture (www.dictionary.com). This term is not meant to be offensive to the public or the person profiled in the article. This article has been published with the permission of the person profiled.

MECC Graduate becomes Certified Legal Assistant

Kim Parsons, a graduate of the Legal Assisting program, has passed the Certified Legal Assistant examination. Kim works in the Greg Kallen Law Office in Big Stone Gap.

Kim joins a distinguished list of graduates from the Legal Assisting program who have passed the CLA exam.

Upcoming Pro-Art Performances

All programs to take place in the Goodloe Center
Admission is free to all students, faculty, and staff with college identification

The Thuringer Salonquintett in Springtime in Vienna March 6, 7:30 pm

The Thuringer Salonquintett transcends all notions of “classical” and “popular” music. The quintet combines impeccable, spontaneous musicality with fun and innovative programming.



Claudia Stevens In The Puppeteer’s Wake March 25, 7:30 pm

In The Puppeteer’s Wake is a searing true account of Jewish “boat people” during the early years of World War II - of the harrowing escape by the performer’s father “Max” from Nazi Europe on the illegal ship “Katina” and of his mother, who followed him by sea a year later. It tells of desperation and heroism, sabotage and deception - and of a stricken man who created a marionette play out of a grisly tale.



Marcolivia in Duo Concert Violinists Marc Ramirez and Olivia Hajioff March 27, 12:15 pm

Marcolivia is a violin and violin/viola duo which performs unique programs of both well-known masterpieces and unusual literature. Marcolivia formed in 1997 and has toured throughout the U. S., Canada and Japan.



Mary Kathleen Ernst, Pianist in American Women Composers: Their Lives and Contributions April 3, 12:15 pm

Mary Kathleen Ernst has been hailed by critics as a pianist who “clearly rates among the best.” Since her recital debut at age 10, she has won critical acclaim for performances at major concert halls and music festivals internationally.

