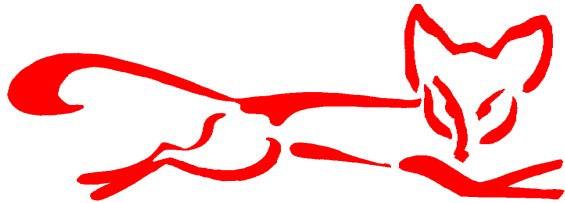


# Red Fox Flier



No. 82  
February 2008



Mountain Empire Community College's student publication

## MECC AmeriCorps

By Shea Shuler and Sue Graham

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 21st, MECC AmeriCorps members participated in the 12th Annual Keep the Dream Alive event in Wise, VA. Sponsored by the University of Virginia at Wise along with other community groups, the event included a dinner, a commemorative candlelight

march along Main Street, and a moving service. The evening began at the Church of God, with MECC AmeriCorps members assisting with set-up, registration and helping the guests. Just after dark,



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Appreciating Diversity • Seeking Unity



# Sexually Transmitted Diseases

By Carrie Whiten  
Student, Respiratory Therapy Program

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) remain a major public health challenge in the United States. While substantial progress has been made in preventing, diagnosing, and treating certain STDs in recent years, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that approximately 19 million new infections occur each year, almost half of them among young people ages 15 to 24. This document summarizes national data on trends in three notifiable STDs — chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis — that are published in the CDC's report, *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2006*. These data, which are useful for examining overall trends and trends among populations at risk, represent only a small proportion of the true national burden of STDs. Many cases of notifiable STDs go undiagnosed, and some highly prevalent viral infections, such as human papilloma virus and genital herpes, are not reported at all.

Chlamydia remains the most commonly reported infectious disease in the United States. In 2006, 1,030,911 chlamydia diagnoses were reported. Most chlamydia cases go undiagnosed and it is estimated that there are approximately 2.8 million new cases of Chlamydia in the United States each year. Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that can easily be cured with antibiotics, but usually occurs without symptoms and often goes undiagnosed. Untreated, it can cause severe health consequences for women, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy, and infertility. Complications from chlamydia among men are relatively uncommon, but may include epididymitis and urethritis, which can cause pain, fever, and in rare cases, sterility. Because chlamydia is most common among young women, CDC recommends annual chlamydia screening for all sexually active women under age 26, as well as older women with risk factors such as new or multiple sex partners.

Gonorrhea is the second most commonly reported infectious disease in the United States, with 358,366 cases reported in 2006. Like chlamydia,

gonorrhea is substantially under-diagnosed and under-reported, and approximately twice as many new infections are estimated to occur each year as are reported. While gonorrhea is easily cured, untreated cases can lead to serious health problems. Among women, gonorrhea is a major cause of PID, which can lead to chronic pelvic pain, ectopic pregnancy, and infertility. In men, untreated gonorrhea can cause epididymitis, and painful infection in the tissue surrounding the testicles that can result in infertility. In addition, studies suggest that presence of gonorrhea infection makes an individual more likely to acquire HIV, if exposed.

Syphilis, a genital ulcerative disease, is highly infectious, but easily curable in its early (primary and secondary) stages. If untreated, it can lead to serious long-term complications, including brain, cardiovascular, and organ damage, and even death. Congenital syphilis can cause stillbirth, death soon after birth, and physical deformity and neurological complications in children who survive. Syphilis, like many other STDs, facilitates the spread of HIV by increasing the likelihood of transmission of the virus. The rate of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis — the most infectious stages of the disease — decreased throughout the 1990s, and in 2000 reached an all-time low. However, over the past six years, the syphilis rate in the United States has been increasing. The rising rates are driven largely by cases among men who have sex with men. The rate of P&S syphilis among men has risen 54 percent over the past five years driving overall increase in syphilis rate for the nation. Over time, the disparity between male and female case rates has grown considerably. The P&S syphilis rate among males is now nearly six times the rate among females, whereas the rates were almost equivalent a decade ago.

In conclusion, prevention of STDs requires annual screenings for sexually active men and women with multiple sex partners and the use of contraceptives. It is important for sexually active persons to be educated of the signs and symptoms of each STD in order to treat and prevent spreading of the disease. Of course, the best way to prevent STDs is to practice sexual abstinence.

# Explorations Arts Competition

Now accepting submissions for 2007-08!

CASH PRIZES in

•Short Story •Poetry •Personal Essay •Drawing •Painting •Photography - B&W and Color

FIRST PLACE: \$50 SECOND PLACE \$30 THIRD PLACE \$20

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Thursday, FEB. 14. 2008

GUIDELINES: Read Carefully!!

1. Only current or former MECC students may enter. All entries must be original and unpublished. (Students may also submit stories to the Lonesome Pine Short Story contest at the same time.)

2. Students may enter up to 5 poems, 1 short story, 1 personal essay, and up to three photos or drawings in each category. Students may enter more than one category.

3. Students must submit 2 paper copies in the written categories: one WITH the student's last name in one corner and one WITHOUT. Written submissions MUST be typed in Microsoft Word and SUBMITTED ON DISK OR CD as well. \*\*Failure to submit the disk WILL result in disqualification.\*\*

4. Submissions must be accompanied by the submission form available in the library, the Arts and Sciences Div. Office, or online at [www.me.vccs.edu](http://www.me.vccs.edu). Only one submission form is required per student; if you're entering multiple categories, just list the titles under the appropriate section of the form. The submission form should be attached to your submissions. Entries will NOT be returned—keep a copy!!

DRAWING/PAINTING/PHOTOGRAPHY instructions:

1. For drawings and paintings the 8x10 is the ideal size, but judges will consider anything up to 18x24 inches. All visual submissions should be in a protective cover with your name and a title for the work on the back.

2. Paintings may be oil, watercolor, or mixed media and MUST be dry when submitted.

3. Drawings may be graphite, charcoal, chalk or dry pastel, oil pastel, acrylic, pen & ink, or collage combined with charcoal, graphite, or pastel, as are mixed media using these acceptable mediums.

4. For all photographs, 8x10 is the ideal size but judges will consider up to 11x17. If you are submitted photography from a digital camera, the requirements are 300 DPI, and you must submit the photo on a disk or CD-ROM in either JPEG, TIF, or EPS, as well as a PAPER COPY.

Entrants are responsible for picking up work after contest!!

Submissions are to be turned in to the Wampler Library located upstairs in Robb Hall. Don't forget the submission form! For more info, contact Rita Quillen at [rquillen@me.vccs.edu](mailto:rquillen@me.vccs.edu) or ext. 352. Be a part of MECC's award-winning arts magazine!!



# Certified Phlebotomists

MECC recently received notification that the following students successfully completed both their written and practical certification exam with The National Phlebotomy Association. Congratulations to these newly certified phlebotomists.

Victoria Barker  
Misty Cardon  
Ashley Gilliam  
Brandon Moore

Jody Cain  
Briana Carty  
Jacquelline Jordan  
Lori Olinger

## BCM & Hearts of Faith News

MECC has at the very least a hundred friends in Johnson City at the Quillen Veterans Administration Center. Over Christmas break, we made our third trip to visit with our friends who so faithfully served our nation. We are getting some names and faces together now and real friendships are beginning. It is especially exciting to see our own MECC students who are serving their country now compare experiences with those who have served before. Of course we had Christmas gifts and hand and body lotions, stuffed animals, toys and puzzle books. A big hit with our VETS were the handmade Christmas cards that our students in the Gain Lab had collected from area school children. Our morning was spent caroling up and down the halls and delivering our gifts. After lunch we went back to do some extended visits with some of the residents. We are already planning our next visit. When some of our students began dancing to the livelier carols, Activities Director Kurt Matheson came up with the idea of having a Wheel Chair Dance perhaps close to Valentines Day.

We also hope for a VA visit during Spring Break. Our Collegiate Minister Jim Collie went back after Christmas to set up a toy train display on behalf of our club.

Please come join us each Thursday at Activity Hour in Godwin 225. You'll find a caring community and friendly faces and often lively discussions. Our Virginia Leadership Conference is coming



up March 28-29. Look for our signs each Thursday in Holton Hall and Godwin, Everyone is welcome!

*Submitted by Jim Collie.*

## GAIN Seminars for February

DATE	SEMINAR	ROOM	TIME	PRESENTER
Feb. 7	TI 83/84 Calculator Seminar II*	G118	12:15-1:15	Sylvia Brown
Feb. 8	TI 83/84 Calculator Seminar II*	G214	12:15-1:15	Sylvia Brown
Feb. 12	Editing/Proofreading	G220	12:15-1:15	Vickie Ratliff
Feb. 14	TI 83/84 Calculator Seminar II*	G118	12:15-1:15	Sylvia Brown
Feb. 19	True or False: Evaluating Information Resources for Accuracy	G220	12:15-1:15	Mike Gilley
Feb. 21	True or False: Evaluating Information Resources for Accuracy	G220	12:15-1:15	Mike Gilley

GAIN Seminars are free and open to all students.

\* All calculator seminars are limited to 20 students per session. Please sign up for these seminars in the GAIN Lab.

# John Fox, Jr. Literary Festival

The MECC Foundation announces the 32nd Annual John Fox, Jr. Literary Festival to be held on Wednesday, April 2nd from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Goodloe Center. This year's event will be dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Fox's novel, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. The Festival will feature readings by featured authors Gwyn Hyman Rubio and Kathy Shearer, as well as the announcement of the winners of the John Fox, Jr. Festival poetry and short story contests in the middle school, high school, and adult categories.



**Gwyn Hyman Rubio**  
Photo by David Stephenson

Rubio is the award-winning author of the New York Times best seller and Oprah's Book Club selection *Icy Sparks*. Her second novel, *The Woodman's Daughter*, has also received critical praise. Rubio's collection of short stories, *Sharing Power*, was nominated for a Pushcart Press Editor's Book Award, and her short story "Little Saint" received the Cecil Hackney Literary Award for first prize in the National Short Story Competition. The author lives in Versailles, KY, with her husband of 30 years, Angel.

Shearer has lived in southwest Virginia for more than 30 years, and is the author and publisher of a number of books focusing on the coalfield region. She operates the Clinch Mountain Press from her home in Emory, specializing in oral histories, memoirs, poetry, and vintage photography from the Appalachian region of Virginia. She is the author of *Wilder Days: Coal Town Life on Dumps Creek* and *Memories from Dante: The Life of a Coal Town*, and is currently working on a community history of Cleveland, VA.



**Kathy Shearer**

Festival attendees are invited to join the authors for lunch, following the festival, at the John Fox, Jr. Museum. The museum was Fox's actual home, and has been maintained as it was when he lived there. The cost of this year's luncheon is \$20 per person and seating is limited. Reservations can be made by calling Nikki Morrison at 523-2400, ext. 416.

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## Lonesome Pine Short Story and Poetry Contests

The 21st Annual Lonesome Pine Short Story Contest, sponsored by Lonesome Pine Arts & Crafts, Inc., and the 4th Annual Lonesome Pine Poetry Contest, sponsored by the MECC Foundation, will be held in conjunction with the 2008 John Fox, Jr. Literary Festival. This year's contests will be dedicated to the 100th anniversary of Fox's novel, *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine*. Community members are invited to participate in each contest with categories for adults, high school students in grades 9 through 12, and middle school students in grades 5 through 8.

Stories submitted for the short story contest must be 1700 words or less. Stories and poems should be typed and bound with a paper clip (not staples). Only one entry in each contest is allowed per author.

All entries must include a cover page with the writer's name, complete address, daytime telephone number, alternate telephone number, title of the entry, number of words in the story or poem, and the age category. In the high school and middle school categories, the cover page should also include the name of the school that the writer attends. The writer's name must only appear on the cover page, while the title of the story or poem should appear on both the cover page and the first page of the story or poem.

The deadline for all submissions is 4:30 p.m., March 7, 2008. Winners will be invited to accept their awards at the John Fox, Jr. Festival on Wednesday, April 2nd.

Entries should be mailed to Lonesome Pine Short Story Contest or Lonesome Pine Poetry Contest, Attn: Nikki Morrison, Mountain Empire Community College Foundation, 3441 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219.

Contestants who want a copy of the winning entries, or would like their submission returned, should include a large self-addressed stamped manila envelope with adequate postage. For a complete list of contest rules or more information, call Nikki Morrison at 523-2400, ext. 416.

# Lindsey Wilson College Office on Campus

First came the convenience of acquiring a bachelor's or master's degree in counseling through Lindsey Wilson College on the MECC campus. Now, students enrolled in the program or those interested in finding out more about these opportunities have an advisor conveniently located at MECC.



**Beth Boggs**

Beth Boggs is Lindsey Wilson's new Enrollment Coordinator. Her office is located in Robb Hall, Room 207, with hours Monday thru Friday from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. She can be reach at 523-2400, ext 301 or call her cell phone at 276-708-1975. Boggs can also be contacted at boggsb@lindsey.edu or bboggs@me.vccs.edu.

According to Tommie Ann Saragas, Regional Enrollment Director for Lindsey Wilson College, "The interest in the LWC programs has been incredible. The students that began the undergraduate and graduate courses in the fall report that the experience has been positive and 'what they have been waiting for.' By partnering with MECC, Lindsey Wilson can deliver its strongest programs and continue to meet the mission of enabling higher qualified mental health professionals to serve in the Appalachian Mountains."

LWC's School of Professional Counseling is offering a Bachelor of Arts in Human Services and Counseling and a Masters of Education in Mental Health Counseling and Human Development to southwest Virginia. All of the course-work is taught in a live instruction format on MECC's campus in Big Stone Gap.

Faculty from Lindsey Wilson travel to MECC each weekend to teach classes on Friday night and Saturday. This delivery method ensures a personal experience for each student, and allows the instructors to build strong professional relationships with the students and community.

Financial aid is available and there are no out-of-state tuition costs. In fact, as a display of the degree of commitment to our community campus students, LWC decreases tuition by nearly half of the price per credit hour as on the main campus.

LWC is located in Columbia, KY. There are currently twelve community campuses located in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia. The programs are supported further by the placement of a full-time Coordinator at each local campus. Lindsey Wilson is committed to becoming a member of the host communities and anticipate long-term relationships with each partnering campus. Ryan Vitatoe, Director of Enrollment, has been quoted as saying, "We are in this for the long-haul. We are going to kick off our shoes, put our feet on the coffee table, and make this home."

Saragas continues, "I have had the opportunity to work in the MECC service region since March of 2007, as well as to teach the currently enrolled undergraduate students. It has been an exciting adventure and I have built relationships that I cherish. The staff at MECC has been overwhelmingly helpful and encouraging. The students are eager to learn and are looking forward to receiving their degrees in December. LWC and MECC are helping these folks change their lives and communities. It is truly a blessing to be a part of the journey."

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## 3 Reasons to Complete Your Degree at MECC

**Articulation Agreements:** MECC has agreements with many of Virginia's colleges and universities and other colleges outside the state, such as ETSU, to help you easily transfer your community college credits.

**Guaranteed Admission Programs:** Graduate from MECC's Transfer program and enter a 4-year college or university with junior status when you meet eligibility requirements. MECC, through the VCCS, has guaranteed admission agreements with many of Virginia's top colleges and universities.

**Transfer Grant:** Graduate from MECC with an associate's degree and eligibility criteria and get a \$1,000 grant when you transfer to a Virginia four-year college or university. An extra \$1,000 is available if you major in engineering, math, science, nursing or teaching.

# Interview Software Available in Career Service

Perfect Interview™ Multi-User, a job interview preparation software, is available in the Career Center. The software is designed to help students prepare for successful interviews. More than just a mock interview, the software includes a webcam for immediate feedback and review. A description from the company's website:

## How Perfect Interview™ Works

Perfect Interview™ Multi-User is an innovative multimedia software package complete with over 1,500 interview questions, answers, and hints, which have all been professionally produced on digital video. After logging on, the user specifies the type and length of interview that he or she wants to practice. Specific question categories can also be selected. The interview begins, and the questions appear on the computer screen in full-motion video and sound. The user must answer on the spot, just like in a real interview.

The included Logitech® digital video webcam

automatically records and plays back the user's response, thus providing immediate feedback. This innovative Video Capture feature provides the user with a clear understanding of how he or she might appear to a prospective employer. The recorded responses can be saved on the system for subsequent review and evaluation, and can even be emailed to recruiters or other interested parties.

Only Perfect Interview™ offers Positive Modeling Responses for every interview question. Our Positive Modeling videos provide examples of how to respond to each interview question in a positive and appropriate manner. The feature is particularly useful for candidates who are undergoing a transition from one culture to another -- for example, from academia to the business world. And this feature is available only with Perfect Interview™.

Contact Jessica Genco at [jgenco@me.vccs.edu](mailto:jgenco@me.vccs.edu) or 523-2400, ext .343 to schedule an appointment.

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## Job Shadowing

Not sure about a college or career plan? Make the most of your spring break!

Career Services Spring Break Job Shadowing Program

- Get a first-hand look at the workplace
- Make valuable networking contacts
- See how classroom learning can be applied to real-world situations
- Get a better understanding of what is involved in a career choice

For more information, contact Jessica Genco (H107, [jgenco@me.vccs.edu](mailto:jgenco@me.vccs.edu), or ext. 343) in Career Services by **February 22**. Participating students must attend one mandatory orientation meeting.

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## Transfer Day

Wednesday, February 6

10:00 am - 1:00 pm in Holton Hall

Are you planning to transfer?

Do you have questions about admissions, financial aid, or scholarships?

Get your questions ready and stop by and talk to an admissions representative, fact-to-face!

Colleges from all over the state and region will attend. Colleges confirmed (as of Jan. 14) are: Bluefield College, Carson-Newman, East Tennessee State University, Emory & Henry, Ferrum, King College, LMU, Lindsey Wilson, ODU, Radford, Tusculum, UVA at Wise, Virginia Military Institute, and Virginia Tech.

For more information, see Carolyn Helms in Student Services, Holton Hall.

# W. H. and Callie Anne Coughlin Clark Master Teacher Award

The MECC Foundation will be awarding the third W. H. and Callie Anne Coughlin Clark Master Teacher Award to an outstanding teaching faculty member at MECC in the spring of 2008. This award not only recognizes outstanding teaching, but also provides the honoree a cash award of \$1,500.

Nominations for the award can be submitted to the Foundation Office by students, college employees, alumni and members of the community. Each nomination should include a cover sheet and a narrative about the nominee, based on the four criterion listed below. The deadline for nominations is March 31, 2008. Nominations will be reviewed and judged by the President and his staff. The recipient will be announced at the annual Celebration of People Program on May 15, 2008.

## I. CRITERION FOR JUDGING THE NOMINATIONS

Four criteria have been identified for judging the nominations. All nominations must provide substantial documentation of the faculty member's outstanding teaching and outreach in supporting students (Criterion 1) and address at least one of the Criteria 2-4. Criteria 2-4 provide evidence of a faculty member's commitment to the broad mission of the community college, "above and beyond" the faculty member's instructional role.

### CRITERION 1: TEACHING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Describe the faculty member's innovation in instruction, commitment to student engagement and success, use of effective methodologies for teaching at-risk students in and out of the classroom, commitment to continuous improvement in instruction, commitment to professional development, and student evaluations and assessments.

### CRITERION 2: CONTRIBUTING TO ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Describe the faculty member's contributions to his/her academic discipline, such as achievements in professional associations, development of publications, presentations at conferences/seminars, and awards.

### CRITERION 3: SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE

Describe the faculty member's leadership and service to the college, such as chairing committees, leading institutional initiatives, and representing the college on VCCS committees and panels.

### CRITERION 4: SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Describe how the faculty member's activities have demonstrated and extended the college's commitment to community service. Activities might include leadership in community and civic organizations, efforts to engage students in service learning, significant volunteer activities, or other activities to strengthen the college's connection to the community.

The cover sheet should include the following information:

(Check category of the nominator – please mark all that apply)

- Student
- Administrator
- Classified staff member
- Faculty member
- Community member
- Alumnus

Name

Address

Phone number

Send nominations to: Attn: Donna Stanley, Mountain Empire Community College Foundation, 3441 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219.

For more information, contact Donna Stanley at 523-7493 or [dstanley@me.vccs.edu](mailto:dstanley@me.vccs.edu).

# Red Fox Fliers Finish Season Undefeated

The MECC Red Fox Fliers finished their first football season with a decisive 8-6 victory over the Lord Fairfax Fauntleroy for an undefeated 5-0 season. The Fliers' last game, like the first four, was played as an "away" game on the muddy Lord Fairfax Fauquier campus with a small crowd of Fauntleroy fans. Cheered on by their enthusiastic president, Dr. John "Mr. Clean" Sygielski, and an impressive pep band, the Fauntleroy took the opening kick-off and drove down the field for the first score. The extra point was missed wide to the left, which left the first period score 6 - 0. The Fliers couldn't do anything with the ensuing kick-off and it was 3 downs and a punt. The Fliers defense stiffened and the first half ended with no additional scoring. The defensive struggle continued through most of the second half until, late in the 3rd



quarter, the Fliers got their first break of the ball game. The Fauntleroy's outstanding quarterback, Lester "Call Me Mister" Tibbs, mishandled a snap from a shotgun formation and the resulting fumble was recovered at the Fauntleroy's 30 yard line by the Fliers. Six plays later, capped by a 15 yard touchdown scamper by Fliers' tailback, Anthony "Skillet" Likker, the Fliers tied the game. After a strategic Fauntleroy time-out to freeze the kicker, the Fliers' extra point snap was bobbled but picked up by the kicker, William "Toe" Jamb, who out-raced two desperate defensive

backs to the corner of the end zone. The two-point conversion put the Fliers into their first and only lead of the game. Coach Kidding noted later that "our defense held them off and our offense managed to run some time off the clock and we were able to hang on for the win."

The victory ensured the Fliers a place in the post-season VCCS tournament. MECC athletic director, Carolyn Sumpter, got a congratulatory call directly from VCCS Chancellor and Football League Commissioner, Dr. Glenn DuBois, who informed her that the Championship game would be in Richmond on Saturday, February 9th, against the only other undefeated VCCS football team, the Rappahannock Community College "River Rats." Ms. Sumpter expressed her thanks to the team and to the many fans who have supported the team throughout this first football season. "We are looking into hiring busses to get as many fans to the Richmond game as possible," she reported. "We'll let people know about arrangements as soon as we know."



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## Just For Fun

1. What are the two missing numbers in the series below?

\_\_, \_\_, 3, 3, 7, 7, 2, 3, 6, 5

2. See if you can figure out what these words have in common:

Assess, Banana, Dresser, Grammar, Potato, Revive, Uneven, Voodoo

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1. 4, 3 - The numbers are the number of letters in the words of the question.  
2. In all the words listed, if you take the first letter and place it at the end of the word and then spell the word backward, it will be the same word.

**ANSWERS:**

## Fox Chow



By The Red Fox

February is such a short month it seems like it is March before you know it. February is known as the month for lovers. Have you ever wondered why the month for lovers is also the shortest month of the year? This year February 14 is not only Valentine's Day, but the deadline to enter the Explorations Arts Contest (see page 4 for more details). Get your creative juices flowing and enter this year. Below is an excerpt from the 2007 first place winner of the short story section. To read the entire story and others or to see previous drawing, photo, etc. winners, go to the Explorations page ([www.me.vccs.edu/explorations/index.html](http://www.me.vccs.edu/explorations/index.html) or click on the students page and find Explorations listed under Student Publications).

### A Splendid Life

By Loretta Dorton

Ruby Grace Sweet is wiping off the red-checked tablecloths on the tables in the main dining room. There is another smaller seldom used dining room upstairs beneath a sloped timbered ceiling. When she is finished wiping off the tablecloths, Ruby Grace will refill all of the salt and pepper shakers.

Then if it isn't too crowded, and it never is, she will sweep and mop the floors of the restaurant where she has been working since moving back to her hometown of Clintwood, Virginia. The name of the place is, "The Front Porch," but, there is no longer a front porch, the town council forced the owner to remove it because it was too close to the street. There is one man sitting in the corner reading a newspaper and drinking a cup of coffee. Refills on coffee are free.

While she works, Ruby Grace hums a song by Allison Kraus, and thinks about her daughter Jessie. Jessie is twelve years old, and in the sixth grade, she should be in the seventh grade, but she lost one year while Ruby Grace was traveling with the band.

Ruby Grace is waiting for her big break; she has been waiting since she graduated high school, fifteen years ago. While she waits to be discovered,

she works as a waitress; she's good at it because she's a people person, unlike her mother Charlotte who seems to hate everybody.

Ruby Grace knows moving around so much has been difficult for Jessie, especially in school. She's a smart kid, a tom-boy who prefers jeans and tee shirts to anything else. She doesn't make friends easily.

This move to Virginia has been particularly hard on Jessie, what with starting another new school and getting to know her grandmother Charlotte. Jessie saw her grandmother only once before, when she was four years old. Ruby Grace only called Charlotte on her birthday; or at Christmas, or when she ran out of money.

Ruby Grace is starting to think it was a mistake to move back to Virginia, a mistake to move in with her mother. Under the circumstances though, she thinks she really had no other choice. When she asked Charlotte for a loan so that she could record a demo of her singing, Charlotte agreed with two conditions: Ruby Grace had to move back to Virginia with Jessie, and live with her for one year; and she could not tell Jessie the truth about her father. After the year is up, if Ruby Grace still wants to pursue her singing career, Charlotte will loan her the money.

Jessie doesn't know about the agreement between her mother and grandmother. Ruby Grace knows if she told Jessie it wouldn't make any difference to the girl. She was happy in Florida. For the first time in her life, she had a close friend; his name was Orbin and he rented one of the trailers in the court where they used to live.

Orbin is sixty-five years old; part Seminole Indian and Jessie thinks he hung the moon. Orbin taught Jessie how to fish, how to change a tire, and how to track wild animals through the swamp.

Don't forget, if you need any help, just ask. Please don't assume no one can help you with your problem. We have counselors and tutors ready to help at any time. Contact Student Services or the GAIN Center.

Would you like to see your writing published? Send us your articles, poetry, essays, etc. The deadline for the March issue is **February 11**.

# AROUND CAMPUS

## VT ENGAGE

To honor those lost on April 16, 2007, last fall Virginia Tech announced a new volunteer initiative called VT-ENGAGE ([www.engage.vt.edu](http://www.engage.vt.edu)).

*Our mission is to encourage everyone everywhere to do volunteer work as a way to give back to the community. Virginia Tech students, faculty, and staff are being asked to perform at least 10 hours of service before the end of the spring semester - for a combined total of 300,000 service hours. Virginia Tech alumni have agreed to match this goal. Please join us in our mission of service - living out our university's motto since 1896: Ut Prosim, That I May Serve.*



MECC student organizations wish to support this program and honor those lost with our own local volunteer service campaign. MECC's VT ENGAGE **Kick-off is scheduled for Tuesday, February 5 at 12:15 pm.** Computers will be set up in the lobby area of Holton Hall for students to pledge community service volunteer hours; a power point presentation on VT ENGAGE will run; and pens, pins, and decals will be provided by VT for each person who makes a pledge.

At the beginning of our Spring Fling program, we will acknowledge those from MECC who participated in VT ENGAGE in a remembrance of the April 16 tragedy.

For more information, contact Student Services.

## In-Service Day

Friday, February 15, is In-Service Day. There will be no day or evening classes that day.

## Spring/Summer 2008 Graduation

Students completing program requirements for graduation at the end of Spring 2008 and Summer 2008 semesters should apply for Graduation.

Spring/Summer Application for Graduation packets will be available from Enrollment Services/Registrar (Godwin 161) from January 30 – March 3, 2008. Applications not received by the designated deadline may not be processed until the following term.

## “I” Grades

Students who received a grade of 'I' in any course during Fall 2007 semester must have their course work completed and submitted to their instructor by Friday, April 11, 2008.

Failure to comply with the April 11th deadline may result in the grade converting to a grade of 'F.'



## Brown Bag Discussions

There will be a series of Brown Bag Discussions on Banned Books in the Wampler Library each month. Bring your lunch and join in.

On Thursday, February 7, 12:15-1:00 pm, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut will be the topic. The discussion leader will be Kyle Scanlan.

## Happy Valentine's Day

Don't forget your sweetie on Valentine's Day!

Remember your MECC Bookstore has all your Valentine's Day needs!

Free on-campus delivery Valentine's Day!

