

Volume 14, Issue 3 MARCH 2011

SIFE Wins Regional Awards

By Phil Ferguson, SIFE Advisor

This has been a productive year for VHCC SIFE. Over the course of fall and spring semesters, the VHCC SIFE club completed ten business/community-outreach projects, ranging from budgeting workshops with school children to used bicycle refurbishing projects with prison inmates.

This spring, the club traveled to Concord, North Carolina to compete in the 2011 SIFE Regional Competition. They received two awards. First, they were awarded "second runner-up" for the overall quality of the club's projects. Also, VHCC SIFE received a "Club 40" award for having more than forty students actively participate in at least ten hours of service this academic year. Overall, seventyfour different VHCC students participated in SIFE this year, completing over 1,000 hours of service. VHCC SIFE was also awarded a topicspecific prize for their "Chain Gang" bicycle recycling project, which partners with the Northeast Correctional Facility in Mountain City, Tennessee in the collecting, refurbishing, and distribution of used bicycles to families in need for Christmas.

With the competition behind them, the SIFE team will now concentrate on the completion of their most complex project to date, an on-campus coffee shop. Wolf Grounds will be a student-run, non-profit business, located in the lower lobby of the LRC building. The business will be "green" in all possible components. It will only serve organic products, such as coffees, teas, and snacks. It will only use reusable cups, sleeves, etc. Also, it will be powered by solar panels and the water will be heated by bio-thermal units. The shop will be a symbol of environmental sustainability. Construction will be completed this summer and the grand opening will be August 2011.

VHCC SIFE would like to thank all of its project partners for making this a successful year.



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to adunham@vhcc.edu.or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution.

Virginia Highlands Community College www.vhcc.edu or call 276-739-2400

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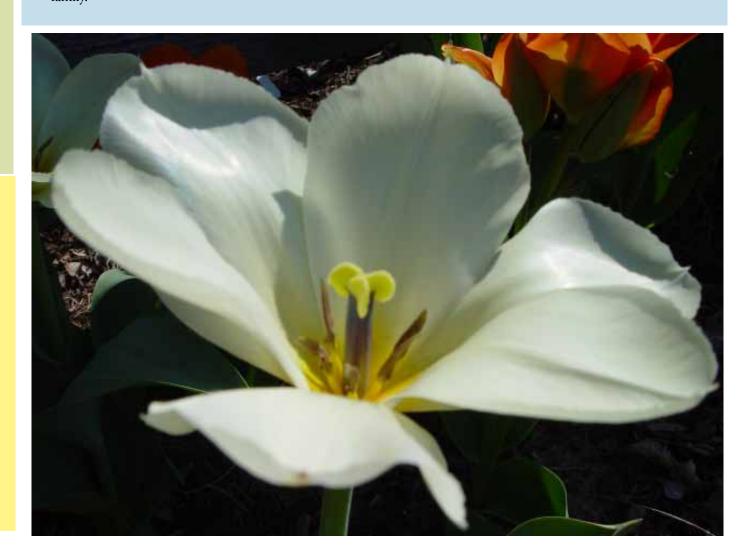
Yard Sale Collects \$2,000



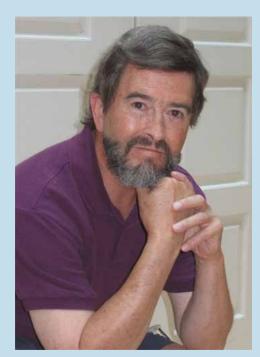




Anxious shoppers gathered outside the VHCC Buildings & Grounds Facility before sun-up on Friday, April 1, to be the first in line for the Nikelle Hagy Benefit Yard Sale. Clothing, sporting equipment, household appliances, toys and other items donated by faculty, staff and students raised \$2014.42 for Nikelle, the VHCC's web designer who is currently recovering from a serious illness. If you missed the yard sale but would like to help, you may make a contribution to the Nikelle Hagy Fund at First Bank & Trust. All contributions will be give directly to Nikelle and her family.



Nationally Honored Poet Visits Campus



By Barbara Manuel, VHCC English Instructor

Between March 21and March 24, 2011, noted Tennessee poet, Bill Brown spent a week providing poetry workshop and instructional experiences for English students at Virginia Highlands Community College. After working through a poem by Cathy Smith Bowers entitled, "Learning How to Pray," Mr. Brown told the students, "I want each of you to remember that you can be successful in life regardless of your past circumstances." These words resonated throughout the classroom from his lips to the ears of fascinated VHCC students. Not only did he conduct writing workshops to instruct students on the power of writing and reading poetry, Bill Brown also inspired students to believe in themselves and the unique potential they each have inside. Tom Dickerson said, "What I learned from him was more than he knows. It was not so much about poetry, but more about the power of words."

Mr. Brown led students through a process of poetic discovery. This process worked to move students from a position of indifference to a place of connection. "Poetry has never grabbed my attention like it did in this workshop," said Cassie Smith. He helped students break down the barriers they might have built up against poetry over the years by directing them to find the "keys" in each poem to aid in unlocking the meaning. Kayla Spencer said, "I enjoyed learning about how to use different emotions or actions to get across a stronger meaning. It made me want to do that more in my everyday writings." Bill allowed students to respond personally to each poem he presented and then encouraged discussion to highlight various reactions. Mr. Brown said, "The fascinating thing about this process for me is that no matter how often I teach these same lessons, I inevitably learn something new from the students." This humble, teacher's perspective radiates from a man who has taught in a wide range of settings from an academic magnet school for middle school students in Nashville to an inner city high school up north to Vanderbilt University.

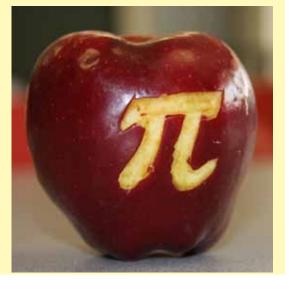
VHCC student response to his presence on campus was overwhelmingly positive. "I went to the poetry workshop expecting some lame, monotone person. Little did I expect that I would be writing something in a short time that would reconnect me with my past," Shane Chafin said. Many students attended sessions they were not required to attend for class credit because they were so inspired by his instruction. Rupali Shah said, "I had a wonderful experience with the poet, and if I get another chance I will surely attend another lecture on poetry." The time Mr. Brown spent on the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College guiding students to examine poetry in a way they had never experienced before will have an enormous impact not only on their education but also on their lives. Jay Patterson summed it up best, "I walked out of that class feeling a lot better than I did walking in, and it wasn't because class was over."



Calculus Students Celebrate Pi Day

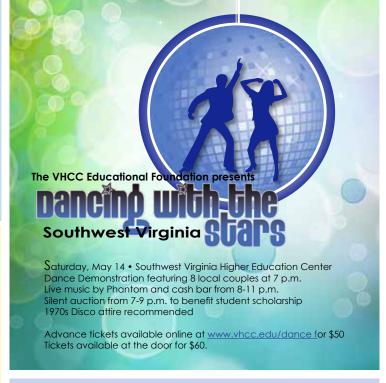
What is pi? Mathematicians know that pi is 3.14 or 22/7. To celebrate this mathematical constant, students in Pansy Waycaster's calculus took time to research the true meaning of pi and then to participate in a pie baking contest.

First celebrated in 1988 by Physicist Larry Shaw, pi day became a nationally recognized celebration in 2009 through a non-binding resolution of the U.S. House of Representatives. Nationwide, Pi Day is celebrated on March 14 (3/14), but VHCC students waited until returning from Spring Break and enjoyed their celebration on March 22.





Penny Wars netted \$770 for the Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol-Washington County, the charity of choice for the VHCC Law Enforcement Club. All student clubs were invited to participate in this event, which allowed them an opportunity to solicit pennies for their favorite cause.



VRS Durable Power of Attorney

Virginia Retirement System (VRS) members may wish to consider filing a VRS Durable Power of Attorney (VRS-901) which allows a person to take actions on their behalf in the event they can no longer handle their own affairs.

The authority granted by the VRS-901 is limited to matters relating to the employee's VRS record only. If an employee becomes incapacitated, the agent can:

- File and sign an application for disability retirement
- Name or update the employee's beneficiary or survivor
- Request information about the employee's benefits
- Take other actions such as setting up a direct deposit, submitting a change of address or filing tax withholding

Another option is the Authorization to Discuss VRS Account Information (VRS-900) which allows an employee to name one or more individuals to speak to a VRS representative about VRS benefits and account information.

It does not allow individuals to take actions on his or her behalf. If an employee files a VRS-901, there is no need to file a VRS-900 naming the same person to contact VRS about the member's information. The VRS-901 extends that authority.

Both forms are available on the VRS web site at www.varetire.org under the Forms tab.