

# VHCC newsletter

## VHCC Adopts Notification

Students and community members can now register to receive emergency alerts from Virginia Highlands Community College through VHCC Alert, an emergency messaging system that sends alerts via cell phones, email accounts, pagers, and other electronic devices.

VHCC and community colleges across Virginia have joined Roam Secure Inc. to provide emergency alerts and notifications during times of emergency or crisis. When an incident occurs, registered users will immediately receive updates, instructions, contact information, and other important details.

“We have worked hard in recent years to improve safety, anticipate emergencies that could occur on our campus, and develop a plan for responding to these incidents,” said VHCC Vice President Paul W. Conco. “This is one more step to ensure students, employees, parents and community members receive alerts and critical information in a timely manner.”

Once an account has been established, each registered user can sign up for alerts via multiple devices. New users also can register by sending a text message to 411911 and using keyword VHCC. Alerts will be sent by an authorized designee on the VHCC campus during such emergency situations as a fire, an accident that blocks roadways or hampers utility services, or life threatening situations. VHCC also will use the system when the regular class schedule is altered or the college is closed because of inclement weather.

The service is offered free by VHCC, but

wireless carriers may charge a fee to users who receive messages.

To register for VHCC Alert, please go to <http://alert.vhcc.edu>.



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](mailto: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](http://www.vhcc.edu)

or call  
276-739-2400

Para la ayuda en español, llama por favor

(276) 739-2436



(Left to Right) Wyatt Chadwell and Kenzie Anderson of Virginia High School practice skills learned in the Upward Bound summer program that is exploring songwriting and storytelling. Instructor Gill Braswell, a songwriter and performer who has appeared in several Barter Theatre production, is helping students discover their creative sides.

## Upward Bound Students Explore Songwriting

Johnny Cash and Hank Williams may not be on a typical list of great American writers, but Upward Bound students studying on the VHCC campus this summer have been greatly inspired by their words.

They're studying songwriting and storytelling, examining the writings of others and how powerful words can be. They're also learning how to convert stories to songs and ways to get the creative juices flowing.

Gill Braswell, a songwriter and actor who has appeared in several Barter Theatre productions, is teaching the class. Some days are spent in the classroom putting words to music, while others are spent exploring music history through field trips.

One trip took the class to The Burger Bar, a Bristol diner that is rumored to have been one of the

places on Hank Williams final route home the day he died. Students enjoyed burgers there and talked about the music legend's works.

They also have visited the ETSU Bluegrass Program and have plans to travel to Nashville, home of the Grand Ole Opry, and Memphis, a city legendary for the blues and Elvis.

Upward Bound is a federally funded program that provides qualified students with assistance in completing high school and transitioning into college. Counseling, tutoring, help applying to college, and a variety of other services are provided to program participants.

About 70 percent of VHCC's Upward Bound students have graduated from college since the VHCC program was established in 1999.

## Fuel Costs Prompt Class Schedule Changes

In response to student concerns about rising gas prices, VHCC has altered its class schedule for Fall 2008 to include longer blocks of classes that meet less frequently.

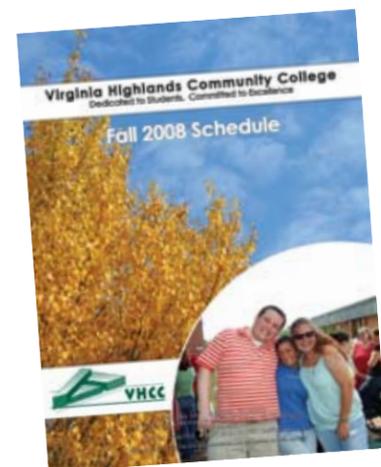
Classes that originally were slated to meet on Monday, Wednesday and Friday will now meet for a longer period of time on Monday and Wednesday only. Fridays will be reserved for classes that meet only once a week. There will be no changes in evening classes, distance education courses, or those scheduled to meet on Tuesday and Thursday.

“Our goal was to create a schedule that would allow students to take the classes they need without driving to campus as often,” explained Dr. Deborah C. Clear, vice president of Instruction and Student Services. “Because we don't have housing on campus and all of our students commute, they have been particularly impacted by the increased cost of fuel.”

Students who pre-registered for Fall Semester will be notified if the schedule changes impact them, she said, adding that staff members are available to help students find suitable alternatives.

VHCC originally planned to adopt the new schedule for Spring Semester 2009, but decided to expedite the changes after consulting with students.

The new schedule is available at [www.vhcc.edu/schedule](http://www.vhcc.edu/schedule) and printed copies are available on campus.



## Library Work-Study Encourages Reading

Paul Pratt loves to read and wants to share his enthusiasm with others.

"I'm trying to get people back into books," he explained. "We're such a technology based society now. I want people to discover authors they aren't familiar with and enjoy their books."

And so Pratt, who works as a work-study student in the VHCC Library, approached Library Director Deb Robertson about creating an author-of-the-month display near the circulation desk. With the help of other students, he created a list that includes both literary greats and contemporary favorites.

"They were randomly selected," he said. "I think we have a good mix."

The first display is planned for July and will feature author James Patterson, one of Pratt's personal favorites. The VHCC Library currently has a number of his books available, Pratt said, so that numerous people can enjoy his writing throughout the month.

Pratt said he hopes his displays, which will change each month, will entice members of the campus community to explore the books available in the Library and spend some time reading for pleasure.

## EMT Program Earns Accreditation Nod

The Southwest Virginia Paramedic Program recently was awarded continued accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

CAAHEP accredits programs representing 18 allied health professions recognizing over 2,000 allied health education programs in more than 1,400 institutions. This prestigious achievement signifies that the program meets the highest standard of educational quality. The program was initially accredited by CAAHEP in 2002.

The Paramedic program is a joint venture between VHCC, Mountain Empire, Southwest Virginia, and Wytheville community colleges. Bill Akers, director of the program, attributes its success to excellent instructors and coordinators. The spirit of cooperation among the colleges' administrators has also been vital, Akers said.

Each student who completes the first two semesters of the program may become certified as an Emergency Medical Technician – Intermediate. Students also have the option of completing the entire five-semester program, which leads to an Associate of Applied Science degree in EMS Technology and an opportunity to become nationally certified as an EMT-Paramedic.

EMTs are trained to stabilize critically ill and injured persons in the out-of-hospital setting, including patient assessments, advanced airway and ventilation procedures, and cardiac electrical therapy. They administer various medications, and most are skilled in tactical rescue techniques.



## HVAC Students Ace Competency Exams

VHCC students enrolled in the Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration program recently surpassed state and national averages on industry exams that measure overall competency and proficiency in refrigerant handling.

The Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Institute's Industry Competency Exam includes 155 questions that test students' knowledge in basic and specific operations including air conditioning, air distribution, heat pump operations, gas heat, and oil heat. VHCC students outperformed their peers throughout Virginia and the nation in each of these sections.

Additionally, VHCC students surpassed the national pass rate on the Environmental Protection Agency's Refrigerant Handling exam, passing 35 of 36 sections. This test leads to certification, which is now required under the Clean Air Act for technicians who perform maintenance, service, repair or disposal of any appliance that contains refrigerant chemicals.

"Environmental regulations and technological advances continue to impact the air conditioning, heating and refrigeration industry," said Associate Professor Jim Kroll, who leads the VHCC program. "These national exams ensure our program is keeping up and that our graduates have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful."

VHCC offers a two-year Air Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration program that leads to an Associate of Applied Science degree. The program includes both classroom instruction and hands-on training in a 4,500-square-foot laboratory.

## Scholle Corp. Wins Partnership Award

Scholle Corp. of Chilhowie has been recognized by the Virginia Department of Education for its "Pay for Knowledge" program, a training program administered in partnership with the Center for Business & Industry at VHCC.

The Office of Career and Technical Education Services for the Virginia Department of Education presented Scholle with its Southwest Regional Business and Industry Partnership Community College Award during an awards ceremony on June 16. VHCC's Center for Business & Industry (CBI) nominated Scholle for the award.

First implemented in 2001, Scholle's program provides a bump in salary for employees who complete training and gain certification in one or more job functions within the plant. The program is designed to provide employees with the training needed to be proficient at their jobs. Additional incentives are provided for those who complete cross-training and gain multiple certifications.

CBI has assisted Scholle in its "Pay for Knowledge" Program by evaluating employees prior to testing, preparing them for testing, and administering the ACT WorkKeys System tests. Those who achieve certain benchmarks are awarded a Virginia Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential that indicates an individual possesses core skills needed in today's workplace.

Scholle employs packers, machine operators, inspectors and maintenance workers at its Chilhowie plant, which manufactures syrup bags for the Coca-Cola Corp.

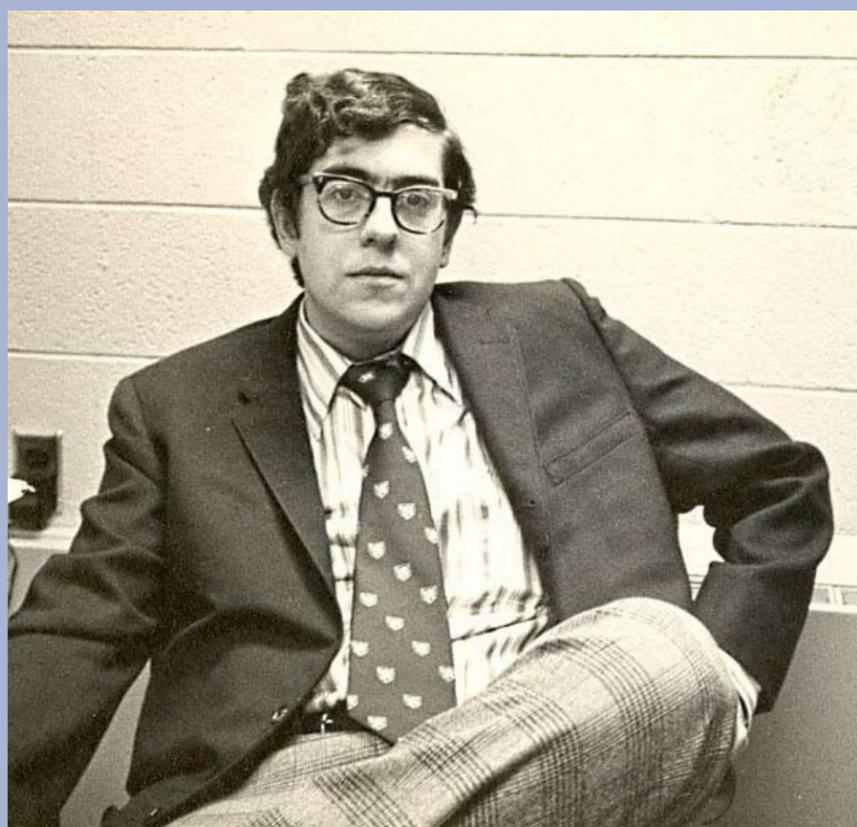
## Article Outlines Office Safety Measures

Warning! Hazardous Area! Construction site or manufacturing plant, right? How about an office? In addition to traditional office exposures, changes in office technology in the last 25 years have introduced an array of employee injury and illness sources. In most cases, the types of injuries are the same, but contributing factors have increased and are more varied. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) about 76,000 office workers nationwide receive disabling injuries every year.

The most frequent types of incidents are falls, either from heights, such as chairs, stairs, or ladders; tripping; or slippery surfaces. Strains from overexertion, striking or struck by objects, being caught in or between objects, and falling objects are all common sources of injury in an office setting. However, many injuries are also the result of contact with electrical equipment or appliances.

This article, prepared by the Office of Workers Compensation, contains simple yet valuable tips for improving office safety.

To access the article, please click [here](#).



## FROM THE ARCHIVES



Always a man of panache and unique style, David Collins was a true fashion plate in the 1970s and one of the few men on campus who could combine plaid pants, a striped shirt and a boldly printed tie. The horn-rimmed glasses and slightly rumpled hair complete the look.