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Hamed Named Virginia Professor of the Year

Kevin Hamed, assistant professor of biology at VHCC, has been named the 2009 Virginia Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The award was presented to Hamed on Thursday, Nov. 19, during a luncheon at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, D.C.



"We are extremely

proud of the many outstanding contributions Professor Hamed has made to the biology program at Virginia Highlands," said VHCC President David Wilkin. "We applaud the Carnegie Foundation for recognizing him with this prestigious award, and congratulate Professor Hamed for his continued commitment to students and his enthusiasm for scientific research."

Hamed joined the VHCC faculty in 2003 after eight years as Nature Center Manager at Bristol's Steele Creek Park. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in biology from Tennessee Technological University and East Tennessee State University, respectively, and was awarded a 2009 Virginia Community College Chancellor's Faculty Fellowship to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee. As a doctoral student, he is continuing his extensive research on Appalachian salamanders.

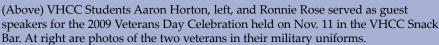
The U.S. Professor of the Year Award Program was created in 1981 by the Carnegie Foundation to recognize faculty members for their extraordinary dedication to undergraduate teaching. Winners are chosen for their impact and involvement with students, scholarly approach to teaching and learning, contributions to education in the institution and community, and support from colleagues and students.

In nominating Hamed for the award, VHCC Vice President Deborah C. Clear lauded his efforts to involve students in research conducted outside of the traditional classroom setting. His students often participate in research projects in the region's woods and wetlands, she said. And, she added, Hamed accompanies a group of honor students to the University of Southern Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory during Spring Break each year to study ocean plants and animals. The USM laboratory is used by students throughout the nation, but VHCC is the only community college to conduct a week-long study there.

"VHCC students are not the only ones who benefit from Mr. Hamed's teaching excellence," Dr. Clear said in her nomination letter. "In fact, he routinely participates in summer camp programs for at-risk youth in our region, presents community lectures on a wide variety of topics, judges science fairs, mentors Eagle Scouts, and participates in a long list of events led by area naturalists. These projects are in addition to his busy teaching schedule."

Hamed is a member of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, and several professional organizations in both Tennessee and Virginia. He is widely considered an expert on Appalachian salamanders, and his research has been published in a variety of peer-reviewed science journals. He and his wife, Misty, live in Bristol, Tenn.







VHCC Vets Share Military Memories

VHCC Student Aaron Horton spoke for the 23 million U.S. veterans still living today by asking the campus community to remember the sacrifices made by our nation's veterans – even when they no longer wear a military uniform.

"After you've been out for a while, you've gained a little bit of hair, a goatee, maybe some earrings, whatever, and all of a sudden no one recognizes you as a vet anymore," he said. "It doesn't mean you've changed or that anything is different. The sacrifices were still made at that time and they continue to be made afterward. ... Just keep in mind that at some point a veteran did what they needed to do to get you to where you're at. We'd appreciate it if you'd do what you can to help us continue on with our lives after the military."

Horton's comments came during the annual Veterans Day celebration attended by students, faculty and staff.

A veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Horton spent time in Korea, Diego Garcia and Saudi Arabia during his 7 ½ years of military service. The most difficult part, he said, came in late 2001 when he was deployed to Saudi Arabia and his wife, also an Air Force veteran, was sent "in the opposite direction in direct support of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

"Calling up family and friends at 2 o'clock in the morning and letting them know that you're leaving and you don't know where and you don't know for how long - that makes for a very long conversation," he said.

Horton was medically discharged from the Air Force following a spinal cord injury and is now enrolled in the computer aided drafting & design program at VHCC.

My time got cut short," he said. "But,

when I walk with a cane, I walk with it proudly."

Ronnie Rose, a U.S. Army veteran, also shared his military memories during the celebration. Rose joined the National Guard while still in high school and later transferred to active duty. He spent time at Fort Polk, Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Knox, and Ford Irwin. Following his active duty service, he reenlisted in the National Guard's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment in Kingsport, Tenn.

"I have quite a few veterans in my family – all the way from World War II and up," he said. "My father was in Vietnam, and I've always known that I would be in the service."

A graduate of Powell Valley High School, Rose has a welding certificate from Mountain Empire Community College and is currently enrolled in VHCC's computer aided drafting & design program.

Congress first began recognizing the contributions of military personnel in 1938 by establishing Armistice Day to recognize those who had served in World War I. The holiday was extended to all veterans in 1954 and the name was officially changed to Veterans Day.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 23 million vets still living today includes nearly 120,000 who are currently stationed in Iraq and 68,000 who will be deployed in Afghanistan by year's end. Only one American veteran of World War I is still living today. Frank Buckles, who drove ambulances in England and France, is 108 years old and lives in West Virginia. Following his World War I service, he fought in World War II and was taken prisoner by the Japanese.

Choir, Madrigals and Guests to Perform Handel's Messiah

The Virginia Highlands Community College Choir, the VHCC Madrigal Singers, and several musical guests from throughout the community will usher in the holiday season with a special performance of Handel's Messiah on Tuesday, Dec. 8, at Abingdon United Methodist Church.

Special guests for the 7:30 p.m. performance will include continuo players Schery Collins and Ruth Brown, Jud Barry on oboe, musicians from the Symphony of the Mountains, brass players from Emory & Henry College, and VHCC Percussion Instructor Jay Oberfeitinger. Several VHCC alumni are also joining the performance.

"It has been such a joy working on this fabulous score with these students, madrigal singers, alumni and friends," said VHCC Assistant Professor of Music Beth Smith. "The instruments, choirs, and soloists will make this concert one that no one should miss."

Admission to the concert is \$4. Audience members are also encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item, which will be donated to a local food pantry.

For additional information, please contact Smith at bsmith@vhcc.edu or (276) 739-2454.



Students interested in careers as cake decorators got a taste for the job - and a cupcake - while attending the Talent Search Career Carnival on Nov. 11. The annual event provides students with a hands-on introduction to various jobs and encourages them to plan early. Dozens of business leaders and hundreds of 8th graders attend the event at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center.

Free Credit Report Available Annually Helps Reduce Identity Theft

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act requires each of the three nationwide credit reporting companies to provide a free credit report to an individual, upon request, once every 12 months.

The three companies- Equifax, Experian and TransUnion- have set up one central service for ordering the free annual reports. The service may be accessed online at

www.annualcreditreport.com or toll-free at 877-322-8228. Individuals should not order free credit reports directly from the credit reporting agencies.

The Virginia Credit Union has included an extensive section on credit information at http://www.vacu.org/Learn/Credit.aspx that includes a direct link to the online service for requesting free credit reports.

Credit reports are an important tool in money and credit management for all consumers. In addition, they are of increasing importance in discovering and monitoring incidents of identity theft. Regular review of credit reports is well worth the minimal investment of time required.

VOGA Gives Scholarship to Engineering Student



Jeffrey A. Straw, an engineering student at Virginia Highlands Community College, recently received a \$2,500 scholarship from the Virginia Oil and Gas Association (VOGA).

VOGA provided the scholarship in memory of Bob Wilson, the longtime director of the Virginia Gas and Oil Division of the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy and the late husband of Helen Wilson, a retired VHCC faculty member.

"We felt it was important to select a recipient from VHCC to honor both Bob and the contribution his wife

has made to students at VHCC over the years," said VOGA President Jerry Grantham. "This seemed like the perfect way to honor Bob and support the new engineering program."

Straw is currently enrolled in the Engineers PRODUCED in Virginia program at VHCC, which was created in cooperation with the University of Virginia.

The program allows VHCC students to complete an Associate of Arts & Sciences Degree in Science, with a specialization in Engineering. Following completion of this two-year program, students may transfer to the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center or directly to the Charlottesville campus to complete a bachelor's degree in Engineering Science from the University of Virginia

Bake Sale Promotes Gender Equity

Male students who attended a November bake sale sponsored by the VHCC IMPACT Club were charged a higher price for cupcakes and brownies than their female cohorts.

Most didn't complain, though, when club members explained that the event was aimed at drawing attention to salary disparities. Club members said that data generated by the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that women employed full time earn about 80 cents for every \$1 earned by men. And, they added, woman are less likely to be hired or promoted because employers fear their family responsibilities will get in the way.

And while the bake sale drew attention to the issue, club members said voters can affect change by choosing candidates that support gender equity, questioning the status quo and helping others understand the disparities that exist.

IMPACT is dedicated to promoting open communication within the college and throughout the multicultural community through educational and cultural activities. Beth Page and Karen Copenhaver serve as club advisors.

VHCC

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

Para la ayuda en español, llama por favor (276) 739-2436

Koats for Kids Closet Accepting Donations

The annual VHCC Koats for Kids closet is once again seeking donations of warm clothing including warm coats, jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, gloves, mittens, and other garments that protect against the cold. All sizes are needed and will be available at no charge for students and their families.

Donations may be taken to Project EXCEL in ISC-122 or ISC-126.

Those in need may choose up to three items from the Koats for Kids Closet located near the Dressing Room used by the Theatre Arts Department near the rear entrance of the Learning Resources Center, LRC-608. For additional information, please contact Mike Fillnow at mfillnow@vhcc.edu or (276) 739-2405.