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Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill Keynotes at Foundation Scholarship Luncheon

Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill was the keynote speaker at the Annual BRTC Foundation Scholarship Luncheon held April 5 in the Randolph County Development Center. The luncheon is held each year to honor scholarship donors for their generosity in giving and scholarship recipients for their continued efforts working to complete their college degrees. Gaskill acknowledged the donors for the opportunities they provide to the students and he praised the students for pursuing a college degree, even if through difficult times.

He also encouraged them to model the spirit of giving to future students when they have completed their degrees and are financially able to do so.

BRTC students Brittany Hembrey, Hunter Utnage and Angela Emmett served as student spokespersons on behalf of all scholarship recipients, and each expressed their gratitude towards the donors for assisting in their educational pursuits. Each student shared his or her personal experiences. These ranged from the struggles of balancing

time for studies and the need to work, the necessity of multiple jobs, and the difficulties of single parenting while being a student.

Ruth Ann Ellis, BRTC Foundation Chair, welcomed the

guests who then enjoyed a wonderful meal prepared by students in BRTC's Dietetics program. Scott Trammel, Foundation Board member, gave the invocation. Dr. Jan Ziegler, Vice President for Development, introduced the Kimbrough Choir that entertained the audience with four



Paragould Mayor Mike Gaskill

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Important Dates

- April 13**
LETA Graduation
- April 16-18**
HLC Site Visit
- April 24**
Country Feast
- April 26**
Student Awards Ceremony
- May 5**
Fun Before Finals
- May 10**
BRTC Graduation

Phi Theta Kappa Holds Spring Induction

On March 14 BRTC's Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society held a ceremony for 28 inductees in the Randolph County Development Center. Requirements for selection include maintaining a 3.5 grade point average or higher while enrolled in at least twelve college credit hours per semester.

Current PTK officers are John Milgrim, president; Chandra Camp, vice president of fellowship; Rebeckha Mae Cate, vice president of membership; Jason Moseley, vice president of service; Daniel Nix, vice president of fundraising-Paragould; A. Trent Morledge, recording secretary; Jamey Niswonger, vice president of communications; Karman Matthews, vice president of leadership;



Joy Callahan, vice president of fundraising-Pocahontas; and Rosalva Dilks, vice president of scholarship.

Those inducted include Joy Sue Callahan,

Chandra Lynn Camp, Chasidy Michelle Cates, Steven Jeffrey Cato, Michelle Denise Chesser, Brittany Rayann Collins, Raven J. Davis, Billy Wayne Dobbins and Shanna L. Fletcher.

Also inducted were Kimberly Dawn Golliver, William Robert Hankins, James B. Jones, Kathleene Michelle Jones, Rachel Ann Jones, Andrew Trent Morledge, Carlo Wilfredo Obregon, Sr., Johnny Michael Patrick, Trevor A. Poe, Jennifer Leanne Renfro, Kevin

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English Club Visits Faulkner Estate

Members from the Paragould and Pocahontas branches of the BRTC English Club journeyed to Oxford, Mississippi March 28 for a guided tour of the William Faulkner estate, Rowan Oak.

Faulkner, a Nobel-Prize winning author, is best remembered for his works *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, and *Light in August*. Students also had the opportunity to explore Oxford's historic downtown square and made a stop at Square Books to finish the day.

"Everyone had a great time," said Lisa Inman, English Club sponsor. "You can read Faulkner and discuss his work all day long in a classroom, but nothing compares to actually being in his house, walking through his garden, and being immersed in his vision of 'Southern Splendor.'"

"This was the first field trip for the new English Club," Inman noted. "Fortunately, enough money was raised through fall and spring fundraising activities to cover the expenses. I look forward to even bigger and better events for the English Club students in the future and already have some exciting ideas for next year."

For more information about the English Club, contact Inman at 870-248-4000, ext. 4131.55



Pictured in front of Rowan Oak are front row, left to right: Carlo Obregon, Kimberly Jackson, Madison Manly, Jason Moseley, Rosie Dilks, (second/ third row) Laddie Hunter, Melissa Messer, Elizabeth Collins, Lisa Inman, Christopher Cross, Michelle Duran, Michael Secrest, and Shelby Borst.

Paragould Mayor Cont'd. from pg. 1

songs under the direction of Joniece Trammel, Director, and accompaniment by Glenda Blasini. Members of the President's Leadership Club assisted at the event.

Dr. Wayne Hatcher, BRTC President, introduced special guests, including members of the Foundation Board and Board of Trustees. He, along with Ziegler, introduced the scholarship donors that include those who contribute through the Annual "Growing Strong" Campaign, the Annual IBERIABANK/BRTC Foundation Golf Tournament, and many privately funded scholarships. This includes many faculty and staff who give through the payroll deduction option. Support is also given to the Mary Sallee Single Parent Scholarship Fund including contributions from Entergy and Arkansas Department of Higher Education's Single Parent Scholarship Fund.

Anyone interested in making a donation to the BRTC Foundation Scholarship Fund may contact Dina Hufstедler, Office of Development, at 870-248-4000, ext. 4187.

Business Class Visits The Woman's Discovery Center

On Wednesday, March 28, seven BRTC students from Pocahontas, Imboden and Paragould along with Debbie Prichard, their instructor of Legal Transcription, visited The Woman's Discovery Center in Jonesboro, a nonprofit organization that assists women in attaining a career wardrobe at no cost to them.

Each student was furnished with one business outfit to be used for a job interview. The clothing is gently used business-appropriate clothing that has been donated by women who no longer need the clothing. Kristin Hubble and Eve Reed of The Woman's Discovery Center assisted the students in

choosing their interview outfits, and students at the Cosmetology School of Design Arts in Jonesboro provided hair and makeup makeovers to complete the professional appearance for an interview.

"The students were very grateful to The Center for this opportunity to receive an interview outfit as well as hair and makeup makeovers," said Prichard. "They will present a professional appearance when they go for interviews after graduation."

"What a delightful morning we spent with the students," said Faye Cox, Director of The Woman's Discovery Center. "We were so pleased to see the outcomes of the interview-ready makeovers and

could see their confidence levels rise. We wish them well as they graduate, interview, and move on to productive careers."

Prichard expressed her gratitude to Cox and the employees of The Center for providing this great service to the students. "This non-profit organization accepts gently-used women's business attire," Prichard explained, "and helps to outfit individuals with a full year's business wardrobe."

More information on The Woman's Discovery Center can be found online at: <http://www.thewomansdiscoverycenter.org/>.



Pictured in the 'before' photo at left are (l to r): Candace Ramirez, Vickie Broadwater, Norma Obregon, Debbie Prichard, Shirley Humphrey, Jenna Sandefur, Heather Dunlap and Kim Myrick. The group is pictured at right after their makeovers.



Obregon Speaks to Fellow Students about Mexico



Carlo Obregon

Last week, students in Rachel Koon's Principles of Sociology class at BRTC were educated and entertained by student

Carlo Obregon, a native of Mexico. "The class is currently discussing different practices and customs of other countries including such things as dating rituals, arranged marriages, religious practices, cultural symbolism, and class systems," Koons explained. "Mr. Obregon was asked to give a speech on how these practices in his native Mexico compare to those of the United States."

Obregon talked to the class about arranged marriage practices, the significance of Catholicism in his daily life as a child, the different class systems in his native town, and even how vastly different the jailing practices are as opposed to the U.S.

At the age of 14, Obregon was "arranged" to marry another girl from a nearby town. The pairing was orchestrated by his grandparents and the young girl's family based on their personalities and class status of both families. The young girl's family had been watching Obregon since he was a young boy

to learn about his personality. After years of observation, they decided his personality, along with his family's wealth, would make him a suitable match for their daughter.

At the time the marriage was announced, Obregon was courting another young girl whom he claimed to truly be in love with. His family was outraged by the relationship and demanded he marry the young girl they had "selected" for him. After a few months of dating the selected young girl, he made up his mind that he was not going to marry her. This decision was unheard of at the time and both families were outraged.

Shortly after his decision, around the age of 15, Obregon left his family's ranch in Leon Guanajuato and set out for the United States with a few friends. After a few failed attempts at gaining citizenship, he finally became a citizen of the United States and has been here ever since.

Obregon also discussed the class systems in Mexico. As mentioned prior, he was born into a very wealthy ranching family who had many servants and workers of the house. This, however, did not stop him from having "lower class" friends. He described how he got into serious trouble from his grandfather because he was caught delivering newspapers. His "lower class" friends at the time had various jobs around town, so he decided he wanted a job too. When he was caught, he was punished and ordered to never work that kind of job again because "those types of jobs were meant for the

lower class families."

Catholicism was part of the Obregon family's everyday lives. They went to church almost daily and that is where most of their social life occurred. Catholicism is still the primary religion in Mexico.

"The jailing system in Mexico is vastly different than in the United States," said Obregon. "The Mexican Jail System requires the inmates to pay for their incarceration on a daily basis, and the amount of money they are required to pay is based on the particular crime they committed. If they do not pay, they could go without a roof over their head and the possibility of no food or water." He went on to explain that there are no means of entertainment, books, or other recreational activities in the Mexican Jail System like there are in the United States. "They are strictly there for punishment!"

"Students were highly entertained and engaged by Mr. Obregon's lecture," Koons stated. "They asked many questions and found the information to be a great example of the class material. I appreciate Mr. Obregon for sharing his story."

Obregon is married to Norma Obregon, also a student at BRTC, and together they have seven children. Three of their children have also been students at BRTC. He is currently seeking a degree in Criminal Justice and "is a joy to have in class," said Koons. "He brings his cultural heritage and ideas to each class and helps give other students a better perspective of the Mexican culture."

PTK Induction

Lee Roberts, Sarah M. Rogers, Samantha Sue Saala, Taylor Rae Smith, Mandy Renee' Stowers, Courtney Michelle Troutman, Amy Jo Ward, Pieter Johannes Weise and Teddie Mechele Wiggins.

Alexandra Smith, Vice President, Oklahoma/Arkansas Region-Eastern District, was also present for the ceremony. PTK advisors are Dr. Linda Moss, Phillip Dickson and Ashley Hall.



Five members PTK along with advisors Dr. Linda Moss and Ashley Hall recently attended the PTK Honor Society Regional Convention at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma. The BRTC chapter received many awards including: Distinguished Chapter Advisor Award - Dr Moss; Paragon Award for New Chapter Advisor - Ashley Hall; Distinguished Chapter Officer Team Award; Distinguished Chapter Officer Award - John Rainwater; Distinguished Chapter Member Award - Jamey Niswonger; Website Award; Newsletter Award; Five-Star Chapter Development Plan; Five-Star Level; and the Travel Award for traveling longest distance consistently. Pictured sharing their awards with Dr. Wayne Hatcher, BRTC President (2nd from left), are (l to r) Jamey Niswonger, John Rainwater, Dr. Linda Moss, Pieter Wiese, Steven Cato and Jason Moseley.

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Walker Hired as Payroll Technician

Sonya Walker of Pochontas has been hired as Payroll Technician in BRTC's Department of Finance. She fills the position left vacant by Linda Leslie upon retirement.

Walker earned an Associate of Arts degree from BRTC and worked full-time from 1999-2004 in BRTC's Personnel and Payroll offices. She left in 2004 to join her husband Ronnie at Lakeport Plantation in Lake Village where she provided tours of the restored structure and worked with artifacts. She returned to BRTC in 2009 in a part-time position. In 2010 she became full-time Fiscal Support Specialist.



Sonya Walker



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BRTC Mission Statement

*Blending tradition, technology and innovation
to educate today's diverse students
for tomorrow's changing world.*

From the President's Desk



Dr. Wayne Hatcher

You will be seeing and hearing a great deal about "Time to Completion" in the coming months. This refers to a growing awareness that time can be the enemy when it comes to students completing their higher education degrees. Even though Arkansas is near the national average when it comes to college accessibility, and rates even more favorably with regard to affordability, our state is woefully behind the national average in the statistic of college completion and in the percentage of working age adults with college degrees.

As a result, our state and our college are looking closely at the amount of time a student must spend in college to complete a degree.

There are two primary areas of concern to the state: one is the number of remediation courses students require, which directly adds to the length of time it takes to graduation. Another is the number of credit hours required by each degree, and the need to standardize two-year degrees to 60 credit hours, and four-year degrees to 120 credit hours.

BRTC is progressing on both fronts to increase the likelihood our students will succeed in their quest for degrees.

The PACE Grant enables us to restructure or compress certain developmental, or remedial courses, so that students can complete these in only one semester, placing them in credit-bearing courses much sooner. We are exploring other steps, such as "chunking" some of these courses (competency and/or modular based), so that students can proceed at their own pace, then exit the course when necessary skill levels have been mastered. These are all processes that have proven successful in other states.

With regard to the number of credit hours required, we have already taken steps to reduce the

Hibbard Hired as Nursing Instructor

Jennifer Hibbard of Pocahontas has been hired as a practical nursing instructor for BRTC. She has worked for the past nine years in Labor and Delivery at Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould.



Jennifer Hibbard

Hibbard is a graduate of Pocahontas High School and received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro.

number of credits required for the Associate of Arts and some of the technical degrees as well. In certain hours, however, technical degrees. Without exception, BRTC is extremely diligent that in this restructuring we do not shortchange the students on quality and on necessary content elements. In the end, it must always be the students whose needs come first. whose needs come first.