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Korematsu Day Event Focuses on WWII Japanese American Experiences

BRTC's "Fred Korematsu Day" observance January 30 included a special film preview showing by Houston filmmaker Vivienne Schiffer, along with presentations by Dr. Charlotte Power and Dr. Jan Ziegler. Schiffer is currently working on a full-length documentary on the "Relocation" of Japanese Americans at Rohwer, Arkansas. Rohwer, where Schiffer's family lived, was the site of one of the ten "relocation camps" hastily constructed for the purpose of incarcerating those of Japanese descent in the wake of Pearl Harbor. Approximately 70% of those held in the camps were



Vivienne Schiffer, Author and Filmmaker

American citizens.

Korematsu was one of the few Japanese Americans to refuse to go into an incarceration camp voluntarily. In 1942, after his arrest and conviction of defying the government's order, he appealed his case all the way to the Supreme Court. In 1944, the Court ruled against him, arguing that the incarceration was justified due to "military necessity," Dr. Power told the audience.

In 1983, key documents that government intelligence had concealed from the Supreme Court were uncovered. These documents consistently
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Important Dates

- February 12**
LETA Blood Drive
- February 23 & 26**
Diabetes Academy
- February 25**
Ain't I a Woman! Performance
- February 26-29**
Digital Photography Class
- March 1**
Symposium: Orchards, Landscaping, and Vegetable Gardens
- March 8-9**
Arkansas Folklore Society Meeting
- March 9**
BRTC Foundation Gala
REACH Sites Open

Declining Enrollment is Nationwide Trend

Enrollment in community colleges around the country is declining or remaining flat, and Black River Technical College is no exception to that trend. According to Dr. Michael Sullens, VP for Student Services, the Spring 2013 enrollment of 2282 represents a 3.7% decrease from the same time period in 2012 when enrollment of 2369 was a 4.1% decrease from 2011.

History shows that community college enrollment skyrockets when the economy tanks. That's never been truer than

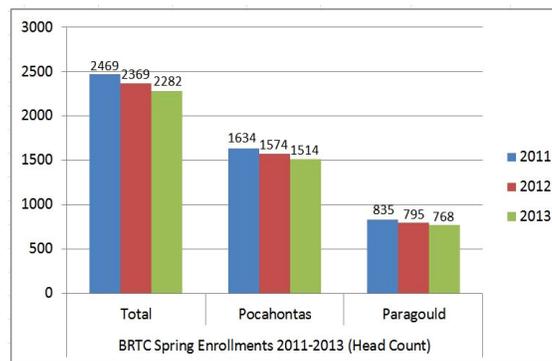
during the past several years as students across Arkansas and the nation flooded their local campuses in record numbers. BRTC was part of the record enrollment surge as numbers steadily increased from 2007-2011. However, for the past two years, BRTC and the majority of community colleges have experienced a decline or a leveling off.

Higher Ed officials have several theories for this recent trend, including funding cuts and a shift in educational objectives. Students can't afford not to work and recent

changes in federal aid are not favorable to a part time student, as the length of eligibility has been shortened to encourage students to attend full time and complete their degree in fewer semesters. Students have to prioritize when it comes to taking classes or paying the electric bill.

Enrollment in general education courses, as a whole, has decreased as individuals are looking for occupational skills they can use to find gainful employment in a short period of time. And because of the gradual improvement to the economy, some students are deciding to skip college altogether in favor of working.

The goal of increasing enrollment numbers has shifted as colleges are working to create a culture of completion by focusing on student retention. This effort is part of President Barack Obama's call to increase by 5 million the number of students graduating from community colleges by 2020.



Hillcrest Students Tour BRTC

A group of Hillcrest High School Agri students recently spent a day touring Black River Technical College. The tour is one of many led by BRTC Recruiter Rhonda Foster throughout the year for area high school students.

The Fire Science and EMT/Paramedic facility in Walnut Ridge was the first stop for the group who then traveled to the Pochontas campus to visit the Automotive Complex and other departments including Welding, Machine Shop, Electricity, Aviation, and LETA (Law Enforcement Training Academy). The group also ate lunch in the BRTC cafeteria and viewed a video presented by Foster.

The purpose of campus tours, according to Foster, is to allow area high school seniors to see the campus and learn about the programs and other opportunities available at BRTC. "We want to show students what BRTC has to offer," said Foster, "and encourage them to make BRTC their first choice when planning for college."

Approximately 17 students took the tour and were accompanied by Hillcrest counselor Marnie Johnson and Agri teacher Randy Nicholson.



Gary Meier, Machine Shop instructor, talks to Hillcrest Agri students about the Machine Shop program.

Cummings Awarded In-Steard Scholarship

Carmen Cummings of Shiner, Texas, has been awarded the In-Steard Scholarship (Scholarship To Encourage the Advancement of Diversity) for the Spring 2013 semester at Black River Technical College. The scholarship in the amount of \$500 is awarded each semester to a minority student.

Cummings is a 1995 graduate of St. Paul High School in Shiner and plans to pursue an Associate of Arts in Teaching degree with an emphasis in Math from BRTC, then transfer to Arkansas State University to pursue a Bachelor's in Teaching degree.



Carmen Cummings

For more information on the In-Steard Scholarship, contact Natasha Rush at 870-248-4000, ext. 4019.

Korematsu Cont'd from pg. 1

showed that the Japanese Americans had committed no acts of treason to justify the mass incarceration. With this new evidence, a San Francisco federal court overturned Korematsu's conviction. Korematsu remained an activist throughout his life, and in 1998 was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by then-President Bill Clinton.

The audience included members of Dr. Power's Arkansas History class, as well as members of Serendipity, and a number of community guests. Schiffer's mother, Rosalie Gould, former mayor of McGehee, Arkansas, has played a central role in preserving art and artifacts from Rohwer. She recently donated these to the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in Little Rock.

Ziegler, who provided an overview of the expulsion and incarceration, explained that while researching on the subject for her doctoral dissertation several years earlier, she had come to know Gould, who opened to researchers and other visitors her home and her extensive collection of art and artifacts. She said the opportunity to link up with Schiffer for the Korematsu Day observance had happened by chance a few weeks ago.

Schiffer's documentary film will explore the role of Rosalie Gould and examine the culture clashes of the state of Arkansas in conjunction with the Japanese American experience, where Rohwer Relocation Center and nearby Jerome Relocation Center became two of the state's largest cities almost overnight when they opened in the fall of 1942. Her 13-minute preview includes footage of Rohwer as it appeared when it opened, as well as footage of what remains today. Also included are clips of some of the formerly imprisoned Japanese Americans recalling the experience.

In a related activity, Schiffer was a special guest the evening before the observance at a dinner attended also by Bill Johnston, son of former Rohwer Relocation Center Director Ray Johnston. Bill Johnston recalled his own personal experiences as a second and third grade boy going to school at Rohwer Relocation Center where his parents lived.

Turnout is Good for PTK Blood Drive

BRTC's Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) sponsored a blood drive January 22-23 on the Pochontas campus. According to Shana Akers, PTK Advisor, the American Red Cross collected 66 pints of blood during the two-day event, just four pints short of their goal of 70.

"PTK sponsors a blood drive several times per year, approximately every two months," said Akers. "On average, the Red Cross collects around 70 units during each visit, or 35 units per day."

"The first day we remained open until 7:00 p.m. instead of the originally scheduled closing time of 4:00," said Jim Neeley, Red Cross Mobile Unit Assistant. "People kept arriving to donate and we were not going to turn anyone away."

"Despite being just a little shy of our goal, we are very pleased with the turnout," noted PTK Advisor Karen Liebhaber. "We appreciate all who took the time to donate."



Jim Neeley, Red Cross Mobile Unit Assistant, prepares to take blood from Jessica Alls, a Phlebotomy student at BRTC.

Buxton Uses Woodturning Skills to Make Gifts for Others

What began as a simple desire to learn the art of woodturning led Dr. Gary Buxton, instructor of English at Black River Technical College, to get involved with a project that supports American servicemen and women in a unique way.

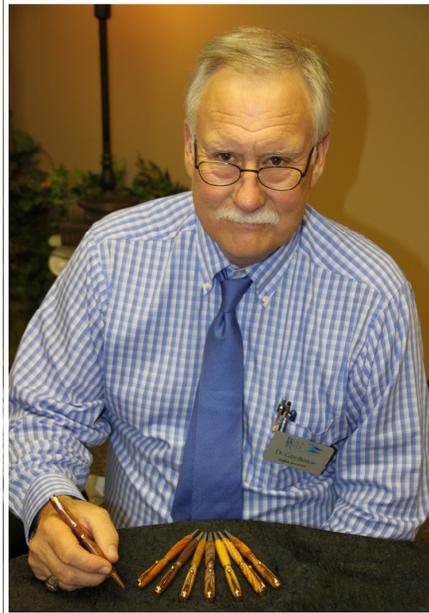
About two years ago, Buxton decided to pursue his interest in woodturning, a form of woodworking using a lathe. He began by making bowls for fun. His experience then led to making duck calls. Once the duck calls were mastered, pens became his next pursuit. It was through his newfound passion for pen making that he discovered a project called "Freedom Pens," a volunteer organization that ships custom made pens to service men and women serving in the Middle East.

"I began making pens because I thought they were neat and would make good gifts," Buxton explained, "especially if made from wood with historical significance. I made my first pen about a year ago using wood from an old elm tree on our property that had died and had been cut down. The grandkids called the tree 'our property' because they had always played on it. I decided to cut some wood from that tree and use it to make pens for them as a keepsake. I also made pens for all of the other family members out of that wood as well as other woods on the farm."

It was after making a few pens that Buxton discovered "Freedom Pens" and decided it was a project he wanted to get involved in. According to the website, <http://freedompens.org/>, the goal of the project is to provide beautiful writing instruments for the military stationed in foreign countries. Every Freedom Pen that is delivered will serve as a constant reminder to the troops that they are not alone and will have continued support until they return home. It's a way of showing care for and support of the troops beyond just saying thank you. Each pen has to be made from woods found in North America. To date, 147,151 such custom made pens have been shipped to the Middle East through "Freedom Pens" and 25 of those were made by Buxton.

how to put on the CA glue, Buxton replied - "Very quickly!" The mechanical parts are ordered from a supplier and pressed into the pen once turned.

"With pens, the wood is very thin and you have to insert metal tubing inside before turning," Buxton explained. "You also have to use bushings to get the wood cut to fit exactly with the nib and top. I often use CA finishing glue (super glue) to finish the pens." When asked once



he may decide to sell items to help recoup expenses, but right now he's just enjoying doing it for special gifts – keepsakes to pass on to kids, grandkids, family and friends.



Dr. Gary Buxton shows samples of the pens and duck calls he has made with cherry, elm, osage orange, pecan, oak and walnut woods.

"Occasionally, there are mishaps," he continues, "pens and pieces that come apart, wood that cracks. You just have to throw them in the fire and start over. But, even with the mishaps, I really enjoy it. It's therapeutic."

The next woodturning project in Buxton's future is a chess set for the den in his home. "I have the plans, but I haven't started on it yet. One of these days!"

"I have experimented with several different

Stacey Awarded Foundation Scholarship



Bridget Stacey

Bridget Stacey of Pocahontas has been awarded a BRTC Foundation Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 for the Spring 2013 semester. Stacey is currently pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice at BRTC with hopes of one day becoming a crime scene investigator or juvenile probation officer.

Stacey is a 2003 graduate of Pocahontas High School and has one child. She is the daughter of Wayne and Marie Villemaire of Pocahontas.

For more information on Foundation Scholarships, contact Natahsa Rush, Financial Aid Officer, at 870-248-4000, ext. 4019.



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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

Enrollment statistics are in. In most categories BRTC, like most Arkansas community colleges, is down, although only slightly below four percent. Discussions among the Arkansas community college presidents and chancellors indicate the prime causes include: new federal restrictions on Pell Grants and Guaranteed Student Loans; lack of state aid to fund needed student success/completion programs; and lack of a "college-going" culture.

My focus in this column will be the new federal restrictions on Pell grants and federal student loans. During the past congressional session, we are all

aware of the fiasco of the "fiscal cliff." This climate and the pressures that existed created a situation all too often recently practiced in Congress—difficult and complex decisions being made hastily, without all of the facts, but highly political.

In one effort to reduce federal spending Congress increased restrictions on qualifying for federal grants and loans. A primary restriction was reducing the amount of time that a college student was eligible for federal aid. This discriminated most noticeably against community college students, as two thirds attend part-time. Having to attend part-time is due to family obligations, working full or part-time (if not both), transportation issues, etc., and these are oftentimes caused by economic issues. These issues necessitate extending the time it takes to achieve their degree. Add to this that half of students who receive a baccalaureate degree attend community college in the course of their studies. Since many of our students are forced to attend college part-time they are now experiencing their federal aid being stopped when they are short of completing their degree...keeping them from earning higher wages, and thus contributing to our region's economic development.

This decision by Congress is expected to reduce

the amount of funds needed to finance the Pell grant and federal loan programs. But it is costing us as taxpayers exponentially more than it is saving us. Let me explain this in local terms. According to a recent scientific regional economic impact study of BRTC, IF a BRTC student completes their course of study, the student will receive an average return of \$7.50 in income for every dollar they put into BRTC. If that doesn't get your attention, then consider that for every BRTC student that COMPLETES a course of study, the overall economic and social benefit to every taxpayer in Arkansas is \$22.60 for each dollar of taxes (that's you).

Such decisions by Congress, combined with continued reduced state funding and the state's current refusal to restructure the Lottery Scholarship, are ending the hopes for a better future for a significant number of our students. Not only is this not fair to them—it isn't fair to you, as it will directly affect the economic prosperity of our region's future. The BRTC Foundation's recent fundraising efforts have helped save the future of more students than ever before—but they need you, if they are to help others that have been cut off of a future due to circumstances beyond their control. To give our students an opportunity for a better tomorrow will be our decision—you and me. Let's make a difference...so they can. Contact the BRTC Foundation at 248-4000, ext. 4185—today.