



insider

Staff News for Santa Rosa Junior College, March 19, 2004

Faculty Fund For Advanced Studies Award Applications Now Available

Applications for awards from the Faculty Fund for Advanced Studies (FFAS) are now available at the Academic Senate Office and are due by noon on April 5. All who have served as full-time faculty for at least two years are eligible. FFAS helps fund projects when other funding sources are not available, or can supplement conventional college funding sources. The premise of FFAS is that everyone benefits when instructors continue to learn and grow in their own disciplines. Over 100 SRJC faculty members participate in voluntary payroll deduction to help make FFAS Awards available to their colleagues. Voluntary payroll deduction authorization forms will be distributed in the next few weeks. Stay tuned for information on the annual Soup Fest celebration on April 28 at Safari West, when grants will be presented.

SRJC Forensics Team Wins State Awards

Four members of SRJC's Forensics Team and a speech instructor/forensics coach returned from the California Community College State Championships held in Concord March 13-14 with the following awards:

Nicole Beyries and Vanessa Medina won silver medals in Team Parliamentary Debate. (Nicole Beyries is the daughter of Speech Instructors Ken Beyries and Vi Epperson.)

Nicole Beyries also won a bronze medal in Lincoln-Douglas Parliamentary Debate and just missed earning a medal in extemporaneous speaking by one point.

Kevin Steeper won a silver medal in Lincoln-Douglas Parliamentary Debate.

Leslie Crebassa won a bronze medal in Impromptu Speaking.

Finally, Joanne Babin, adjunct Speech Instructor and longtime Forensics Coach, was awarded the President's Service Award to recognize her hard work, dedication and contributions to the forensics community over the last 10 plus years. Way to go, Joanne!

Judith Thorn Honored with Carlson Award

Judith Thorn, Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies Instructor, was honored with the Elizabeth Carlson Award at the Women's History Luncheon held on March 5 at SRJC's Culinary Café. Judith was presented with a plaque and poetry books, that contain some of Carlson's poems.

The Elizabeth Carlson Award was established "to commemorate the qualities in Elizabeth that live on today in other women." Elizabeth Carlson was a beloved employee at SRJC from 1974 to 1997. She passed away in January 2000.

Each nominee for the award demonstrates "a passion for creative expression, service to the college, leadership abilities that may extend to the community, dedication to students, serving as a role model for women students, faculty, and staff, and overall positive energy within her sphere of influence."

JUST GO! To Benefit Foundation Scholarship Fund

REACH Air Medical Services will host the Third Annual Dr. McDonald JUST GO! Run/Walk on Sunday, April 18 at 8:30 a.m. The event will take place at the Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport. Events include a 10K run, 5K run and 5K walk. The course will take runners and walkers through scenic country roads, rolling hills and vineyards and back to the REACH Air Medical Service Base. First place prize for the event is a 30-minute helicopter ride immediately following the event. All proceeds raised will go directly to the SRJC Foundation's John L. McDonald Paramedic Scholarship Fund. Registration is \$20 in advance and \$25 the day of the race. All participants will receive a T-shirt and are encouraged to tour the REACH base and the aircraft between 9 a.m. and noon. For more information, call 575-6886 or go to www.reachairambulance.com.

"High Tea" Celebrates Women Faculty & Staff at Petaluma

The second annual "High Tea: Celebrating Petaluma Campus Women" was held on the Petaluma Campus March 11 to commemorate Women's History Month. Petaluma



women faculty and staff members were honored for the unique ways they contribute to the high quality of the Petaluma Campus. College Skills Instructor Cheryl Dunn said, "This year each woman brought her own special china teacup." Festivities included a solo music piece played by Chinese student Thong Huang on the pipa, a traditional Chinese string instrument, and a book exchange. There was a silent auction of women's artwork that raised \$282 for the new Judy Stedman Scholarship Award. The event included fine china teacups and teapots, silver spoons, beautiful linens, exquisite tea sandwiches and cookies, and a variety of special teas. The event also included a poetry reading and an award ceremony honoring nine women.

"We had the opportunity to share the talents and special qualities that each one of us brings to our campus," said Cheryl. Awards presented were:

Cynthia King, Business Services
Behind the Scenes Award

Lilea Flores de Juarez, Student Services/
Counseling – Helping Hand Award

Susan Jaderstrom, Business Office
Technology – Publications Award

Cheryl Dunn, College Skills/Tutorial
Feminism First Award

Katy Dang, Library Services
Good Humor Award

Sara Long, Admissions, Records & Enrollment
Development – Student Advocate Award

Kirsten Lindstrom, Life Sciences/Biology
Excellence in Teaching Award

Kimberlee Messina, Modern and Classical
Languages – Visionary Award

Nikona Mulkovich, Behavioral Sciences
Above and Beyond Award

Employee of the Month John Mercer

Congratulations to John Mercer as SRJC's Employee of the Month. Ken Fiori, Director of Computing Services, introduced John, a Senior Programmer Analyst in Computing Services, at the March Board of Trustees meeting, presenting a unique and fun electronic overview about John. John received an EOM plaque, SRT season tickets, vouchers from the Culinary Café, and other gifts from his colleagues.

"John is genuinely dedicated to making Computing Services the best department at SRJC. He deserves the recognition as Employee of the Month because he has been a tireless servant of the District for over 20 years. He loves his work and does everything in his power to enhance the reputation of SRJC," emphasizes Ken.

As a Senior Program/Analyst, John's key responsibilities include maintaining the District's personnel and financial systems; supporting users in the Accounting, Payroll, Personnel, and Purchasing departments; designing and programming custom enhancements to systems; providing primary programming support to Financial Aid and Scholarship; and developing database systems for Student Employment and the Career Center.

According to Ken, what makes John such an outstanding employee is that he loves a challenge. "When he discovered that the instructional computer labs needed an automated system to keep track of students, he went home and over the weekend developed a prototype solution. After demonstrating his new design to lab coordinators, he refined and improved it. Today it is being used in the majority of our labs as a tool to collect attendance and produce reports used by instructional staff." Gina Waggoner, Personnel Specialist in Human Resources, agrees: "John is a vital part of the College, working behind the scenes to ensure the accuracy and completeness of campus data. He uses creativity, innovation, and technological knowledge to help us work smarter, not harder."

One of many other creative, time saving solutions John has identified for departments is an automating manual process for Human Resources. "John developed a customized report that allows us to manipulate data efficiently. His solution allows us to take thousands of records and consolidate them into a highly concise reporting tool. This is a very big deal to Human Resources and outside reporting agencies. John's report will make us more productive," notes Gina. "John is extremely dedicated to the College and is very responsive to the needs of the departments. He is always available to lend a hand."

When asked what people would be most surprised to learn about his work, John points out that he relishes fixing things. "John is not only a great programmer, he is also skilled at fabricating parts with his personal machine shop. He has crafted modifications to the computer room floor and out computing racking system. He has repaired what we thought was 'end of life' equipment, saving the District thousands of dollars in replacement equipment. He is always willing to offer his expertise in areas outside of his assigned programming tasks," Ken says of John's innovative problem-solving methods.

Clearly, what John likes most about his work is the creativity. "I like it when someone complains that 'the system' won't do something and then figuring out an elegant solution." John attributes his success at SRJC to truly liking what he does. "I like creativity, cleverness, and craftsmanship. Programming allows you to combine all three without getting your hands dirty. I enjoy much autonomy, which allows me to efficiently design and implement solutions to problems presented." He notes that his greatest accomplishment at SRJC is "building on previous accomplishments, which programming allows you to do. Each project seems like the greatest when it's finished, until the next project comes along and I can make something even better." His greatest challenge on the job is "balancing the sometimes conflicting needs of the departments I work with and keeping up with the constantly changing IT field."

John Mercer was born in Manhattan, New York, and moved to Sonoma County in 1973. He graduated from Montgomery High School and received an associate in science degree at SRJC. He was employed as a machinist, CNC operator, and contract programmer before becoming a permanent SRJC employee in 1981 as a Computer Operations Specialist. John became a Programmer in 1985, a Programmer/Analyst I 1986, and was promoted in 2000 to Senior Programmer/Analyst. John has served on the College Council for many years and as President, Vice President, and negotiating team member in SEIU.



John actively supported the "Yes On Measure A" campaign, including driving a one-ton flatbed truck with a huge "Yes On Measure A" sign 70 miles a day for months. John's hobbies include "building things, tinkering, and doing home improvement projects. I especially like electrician work and precision conduit bending. I've got an extensive home workshop. I also like to do Windows programming in Visual Basic at home during the winter when it's too cold to work in my workshop." John's wife Caroline is SRJC's Manager of Career Development Services, his sister Linda Close is SRJC's Business Services Specialist. John also has a cat named Assad and a dog name Boady.

On being selected Employee of the Month, John commented "After all these years, is this some kind of cruel hoax?" "John is a fiercely passionate employee who has dedicated himself to the highest standards of programming excellence. He expects perfection from himself and expects his coworkers to strive to his high standards. He has an exceptional ability to analyze every detail of a problem and anticipate both the expected and unexpected. When he takes on a new task he works tirelessly until the program works the way he expects," Ken says.

Congratulations, John, for being selected Employee of the Month, an honor that reflects years of dedicated service and a job well done!



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