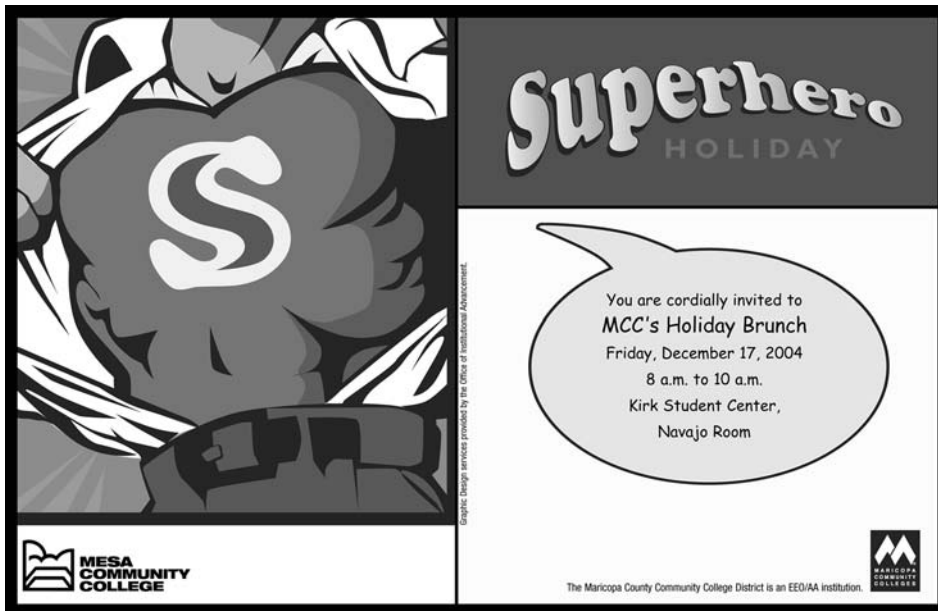


continued from front, *Writing Project*

Some of the interviews stirred vivid memories. "These girls put me through an emotional wringer," said volunteer Dave White, flashing a broad smile. One of his student interviewers responded quickly: "We just brought out the good stuff."

Jonelle thinks it's beneficial to get students outside the classroom. "Learning takes place in the world," she said. "Maybe the students will realize that what we do in the classroom is only a part of learning." The project also provides an opportunity for students to apply all of the skills they have learned in the fall semester.



Newsbytes

- MCC will be closed December 24, 2004–January 2, 2005.
- Due to the holiday closure, the paycheck that would normally be distributed on December 24, 2004 will be delivered two days early on December 22, 2004. The December 22 check will still cover a normal two-week pay period. The next check will be distributed on our regular pay date, January 7, 2005.
- All employees except faculty return to work on January 3, 2005.
- First day of accountability for faculty is January 7, 2005.
- Spring 2005 classes begin January 15, 2005.

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Writing project connects generations, makes past come alive

A conversation between generations can sometimes be described as a thunderous clash, but in mid-November, the interaction between English 101 students and lifelong learners from New Frontiers was more akin to lightning. Sparks of recognition and reminiscence charged the atmosphere in the Paul Elsner Library as several teams of two students and one volunteering senior conversed in quiet corners.

English faculty member Jonelle Moore and New Frontiers liaison Marie Allen created an opportunity for students to interview seniors who have lived through historical events and learn about how the events affected them personally. From this interview, the students write a narrative; then they research and write about the event. Finally, the students write a third paper that integrates the narrative with

the research, attempting to explain the historical influences on the person or the person's generation. The Office of Continuing Education has agreed to publish the papers and distribute them to the students and New Frontiers volunteers in Spring 2005.

True to their belief that learning continues beyond retirement, New Frontiers volunteers expressed enthusiasm for the concept. "As a former English teacher, I think this is an excellent project," said Pat De Blake, a committee chair for New Frontiers. Pat's colorful life provided grist for the mill to new writers. After 22 years in a Catholic convent, Pat joined the Peace Corps at 55 and

taught for two years at the first Teacher's College in Botswana, Africa.

continued on back, see Writing Project



MCC first community college in U.S. to receive Blue Star Memorial Designation

MCC is proud to be the first community college campus in the United States on which a Blue Star By-Way Memorial Marker has been placed. A Blue Star Marker honors and commemorates the men and women who serve in America's armed forces. The marker, which will be installed on a marble pedestal in the Veterans Rose Garden, will be the seventh such designation in the State of Arizona.



Irene Jensen, the president of the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., was responsible for working to get the placement at MCC. "I have a great

"I have a great appreciation for the freedoms that are enjoyed in the United States of America."

appreciation for the freedoms that are enjoyed in the United States of America. For this, we owe much to those who have worn, are wearing, and will wear the uniform of our armed services. Placing a Blue Star Memorial Marker on this important site expresses this message that has been enunciated by the Federated Garden Clubs across the nation since shortly after WWII."

The National Blue Star Memorial program was conceived by the National Garden Clubs as a living tribute to service men and women. As veterans returned home from World War II, the concept of living memorials, rather

than stone monuments, grew among garden clubs across the nation. Originally conceived in 1945 as a ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every state in the union to be called Blue Star Memorial Highways, the scope of the program was extended in 1951 to honor all who have served or will serve in the nation's armed forces – not just WWII veterans. The program extended once again in 1981 to include By-Way Markers such as the one to be installed at MCC.

LOCATIONS OF OTHER BLUE STAR MARKERS IN ARIZONA

- * NOGALES
- * FREDONIA
- * DRAKE
- * TUCSON
- * PHOENIX
- * MOHAWK

Another *first* for MCC

Mesa Community College (MCC) is the first community college in the state of Arizona that offers an industry-recognized Web certification program. MCC is also the first Authorized Training Academic Partner with CIW in providing the full training program in Master Certified Internet Web Designer according to Mary Zimmerman. Mary is CIW's Educational Support Representative for Prosoft Training, which is the international company that develops IT certification curriculum.

The CIW program is the world's largest and fastest-growing Internet certification. CIW certifications are endorsed by the International Webmasters Association and the Association of Internet Professionals. Together with these associations, CIW promotes a Worldwide Educational and Certification Standard for Web Industries in 106 countries.

The CIW Internet skills certification will be offered for the first time in the spring 2005 semester. For more information about this program please contact the Business Department at 461-7725.

Happy Holidays

Supporting our troops for the holidays

Eight boxes full of holiday and personal hygiene items, reading materials, and handheld games are on their way to our troops in Iraq thanks to the efforts of Irvin Smith. Seconds after flipping on the evening news in mid-October, Irvin, Computer Equipment Bench Technician at MCC at Red Mountain, recognized the person being interviewed. The man was a former platoon leader Irvin had served with in the Marines 12 years ago during the first Gulf War.

Watching the dialogue made Irvin realize how fortunate we are to have someone like his friend and many others away from home protecting us so we can enjoy our freedom. Through Camp Pendleton Public Relations, Irvin was able to find out that his friend is now a Gunnery Sergeant enlisted in Iraq and serving with the Marines 5th Division. Wanting to do something to support our troops, Irvin organized a donation drive. Faculty, staff,

and students from Red Mountain campus donated the items and helped package them for the troops. Veteran's Services at the Southern & Dobson campus supported the effort by paying for the postage.

Irvin was touched by the overwhelming support. Hopefully, the troops will also be touched and will feel our genuine respect and appreciation for their service to our country.



Eight years assessing students...taking the next step

For the past several years, annual student assessments have effectively documented the impact of the MCC college experience on student learning. Now student assessment is moving to the next level, utilizing the assessment results to improve MCC's programs.

Peter Brown, residential faculty in the Biology Department, said that focusing on the assessment results is what the Results Outreach Committee (ROC) is all about. Student assessment results not only measure students' improvement but also identify their strengths and weaknesses. The ROC wants to facilitate improvements across the curriculum that will address the areas where students are weakest.

One such area is higher-level cognitive skills. "We need to give students more complex assignments that will involve critical thinking and problem solving," Peter said. "Higher-level skills like writing are more complex and can't be taught in just one class."

English Department chair Donella Eberle recalls the day that Peter Brown and Dean of Instruction Gail Mee met with department chairs to call for proposals. Dean Mee announced that grants were available for projects that respond to the needs identified in assessment results.

"If we are going to assess and then study the assessments," Donella said, "we need to address those areas where we are missing the mark."


The English Department accepted the challenge and proposed a project that stretches outside the English class to improve students' writing skills. Volunteers interviewed 30-40 faculty from various disciplines to learn how they use writing in their classes, what frustrates them about writing assignments, and how they think the English Department could be of assistance. Based upon faculty responses, the department created three fall semester writing workshops for instructors in disciplines other than English. "Our primary goal was to try to respond to the assessments that we have been doing with our students for so many years," Donella said.

The ROC continues to search for new ways to improve MCC's programs based upon student assessment results. "We will have another call for proposals in the spring," Peter said. "We are developing a ROC website to share what some of the instructors are doing in their classes."

Assessment Week



Feb 23-28, 2004

"show me the learning"



- Information Literacy
- Arts & Humanities
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Scientific Inquiry
- Numeracy
- Cultural Diversity
- Workplace Skills

During Assessment Week, we conduct a variety of activities to assess student learning and determine the effectiveness of our college programs.

Math conference shows degrees of versatility

What do computer scientists, educators, public relation specialists, and game theorists have in common? Degrees in mathematics. MCC students attending the Arizona Mathematics Undergraduate Conference (AMUC) in November had an opportunity to learn about the many careers and internship opportunities available as well as present their own work and projects.

“The goals of the AMUC and the MCC Math Club are to create more awareness of what’s out there by exposing undergraduate students to topics and careers in Math,” stated Adam Avilez, Math Club Advisor. “Math is one of the most versatile undergraduate degrees you can have. Employers find math majors appealing because of their ability to think logically and learn new information.” AMUC attendees witnessed first hand the versatility of math degrees, benefiting from

presenters in careers such as Environmental Science and Public Relations. The Public Relations professional noted that her background in math helps her structure the way she forms arguments and presentations.

MCC students Mike Monroe and Micah Mangione were among the conference presenters. Mike Monroe’s presentation on *Error Correcting Codes* examined the math behind encoding and transmitting data. Micah Mangione presented *The Angel and the Devil Problem*, a chess based game created by Princeton’s John Conway.

In its second year, the MCC Math Club has approximately 20 members and attracts

students of all ability levels. The club meets every two weeks and hosts 3 presentations per semester. For more information on the Math Club, contact Adam Avilez at 461-7787.



Micah Mangione presents *The Angel and the Devil Problem*.



Math Club vice-president Heber Romo converses with club president, Jeff Freeman.

Showcasing Student Success

Civil Disobedience? Geological Perspectives? What’s happening on the Red Mountain Campus? It’s the semi-annual Student Success Showcase, featuring student projects from most disciplines and covering a variety of topics. In its third showing, this semester’s event involved approximately 125 students displaying multidisciplinary posters, projects, videos, and electronic poster presentations. The highlight of the showcase was an evening reception featuring the musical talent of a MCC student vocalist and guitarist and ten honors presentations, including presentations on *Civil Disobedience* and *Geological Perspectives*.

The Student Success Showcase was created last year. Faculty looking for a way to display student scholarship and creativity came up with the idea of holding a showcase featuring projects created to fulfill requirements of various courses. The event is held at the end of the fall and spring semesters on the Red Mountain campus. With each passing semester, the event gets bigger and better!

