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Keeping our friends and supporters informed about what's new and exciting at Rocky Mountain College

LIVING MUSIC

ALL ABOUT OUR STUDENTS



Janie Rife performed in the role of Giovanna in the Rimrock Opera production of Verdi's "Rigoletto".

Janie Rife sometimes finds herself mixing up her Italian accent with her Montanan accent. It's the collateral effect from her life as an opera performer.

Knowing Janie is to know a performer. Taking on vocal and flute performance majors, with a psychology minor, Janie spends a majority of her time living music at RMC.

Most recently, she 'lived' Giovanna in the Rimrock Opera production of Verdi's "Rigoletto".

"This is my seventh opera," she says. "My first was in 2009, it was Carmen, and after that I was hooked."

The seven operas in her repertoire explain the Italian seasoning on her Montana tongue.

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Becca Severson smiles as she enjoys the annual lighting of the Yule Log fire last year. This year's festivities will be held Dec. 1, 2011.

RMC PREPARES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

CHRISTMAS GLOW

The glow from the Yule Log fire, the glittering tree, the entertainment, and the warmth of the holiday season are a recipe for contented smiles when the College celebrates Christmas events.

Rocky Mountain College's 24th Annual Yule Log Dinner and Holiday Celebration, Dec. 1, 2011, begins with dinner at 5:30 p.m. in the Bair Family Student Center cafeteria. The traditional lighting of the Yule

Log by RMC's youngest student follows in Fraley Lounge at 6:30 p.m. The evening will also include entertainment provided by students and staff, the Christmas Tree Festival, the Gingerbread House Village, (featuring the creations of students), a hayride, and toasting S'mores. Those attending dinner are asked to bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to the Billings Food Bank and to please call 657-1018 to RSVP.

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



RMC RELISHES OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE OUR TALENT

INSIDER

BY MICHAEL R. MACE - *President*

If anyone doubts the value of a well-rounded education, one which includes a good grounding in the arts, that doubt would have been eradicated by the eloquent talk by our own Jim Baken, professor of art, who opened a two-day conference, "Art Trails: Ascent to the Rockies."

During Jim's lecture, he wove art history into art appreciation, art philosophy into art controversy, but, beneath it all, was the premise that art can "stir things up." It provokes consideration of other facets of living. It opens our minds as well as our hearts. Art elicits political discussion. Art makes us ponder science. Art opens up the world.

Surveys show that the best CEOs are not educated in business alone. Expertise in economics is accentuated by enlightenment that comes from music, theatre, literature, and art. Testimony to that was in the physical presence of the person who introduced Jim. Val Jeffries supervises 35 Holiday stores in five states, which requires expertise in management and finance, human resources and marketing. But Val also has an exquisite admiration for the arts. She is a business executive who also is immediate past president and a current

trustee of the Yellowstone Art Museum, which partnered with Rocky Mountain College to host this two-day conference held both at the College and at YAM.

I was proud to welcome a full house in Tech Hall for Jim's talk and the opening of a show featuring his work in the Ryniker-Morrison Gallery. The RMC-YAM collaboration is an example of how our College reaches out to serve the community. This inaugural conference featured a series of talks, tours, and discussions featuring artists, curators, and art historians. In addition to Jim, speakers included Dan Flores, author of *Visions of the Big Sky: Painting and Photographing the Northern Rocky Mountain West*; Molly Murphy, Oglala-

Lakota artist featured in the galleries; and John Giarrizzo, professor of art at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming.

We are proud and grateful to sponsors we secured for the conference -- Helori Graff, Susan Scott Heyneman, and Barb Skelton. They, like Val Jeffries, are more examples of business people whose lives are enriched by the arts and who seek to share that wonderment and education with others. Mike and Karen Fried -- Mike is a trustee on YAM's Board -- and Humanities Montana were also major sponsors.

Val made an excellent point when she introduced Jim. We should have all been paying tuition for how much we would learn in just an hour exploring the art world with Jim, she said.

This conference demonstrates the profound influence RMC exerts in the community. Our art exhibitions, theatre performances, and music concerts are an offering of talent we relish sharing with others.



An Art Trails attendee studies the work of Jim Baken, RMC professor of art, who kicked off the two-day conference, in the Ryniker-Morrison Gallery. The conference was a partnership between RMC and Yellowstone Art Museum. Val Jeffries (above, right), YAM's immediate past president and a current member of the YAM Board, introduced Jim Baken to a standing room only crowd at the opening day lecture series of Art Trails.

ALL ABOUT OUR STUDENTS: LIVING MUSIC

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"It's pretty easy for me to transition [from English to Italian]," she says. "I like singing in Italian particularly; it just suits the character and the music, and it would feel a little wrong singing Verdi in English."

Her character – the deceitful nurse of female lead Gilda – showcased Janie's voice. Opera is a medium that features vocalists in their natural state. Without the support of microphones, operatic singing forces performers to fine-tune their vocal range and color.

Singing in an opera also drives performers to push boundaries and convey a story to audiences who likely cannot understand the Italian vocals. For Janie, watching the

evolution of the story is her favorite part of a performance.

"I love staging," she says. "To watch it go from just standing in a circle singing to becoming a show is my favorite part of a production."

Not that she'll admit to disliking anything about the opera.

"There wasn't really anything I disliked about my character," she says. "I just wanted more of it."

When Janie would have time for 'more of it' is a mystery. Prior to her October 8 performance of *Rigoletto*, she played with the RMC band and sang with the College's choir and chamber choir. But even after the

day of four performances, Janie wanted more.

Fortunately, she has a lifetime to perform. After graduating from RMC, Janie plans to attend graduate school out-of-state before returning home to Billings.

"I'd like to perform as much as I can, but I'd also like to have a studio where I teach vocal and flute lessons, with students and recitals," she says. "Sounds like a good life for me."

Today, Janie Rife, operatic singer, flautist, student audiophile; tomorrow, Janie Rife, instructor, passing on her love of music and sharing her voice with the world.

GIFT SERVED DONOR IN LIFE; STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE

FOCUS ON FRIENDS

Richard Charles Lee, who died Aug. 27, 2011, was a model alumnus of Rocky Mountain College.

“He loved this institution and served it faithfully and well, from the time of his enrollment to graduation with the Class of 1960, until his death in retirement from a long and successful career as an educator in the public schools of Billings,” said Obert Undem, RMC director of planned giving. “He will be much missed and long remembered by all of us fortunate enough to have known and worked with him.”



*Richard Charles Lee
(Courtesy of family)*

Undem spoke at a celebration of Richard’s life service held in the Rocky Mountain College Chapel on Sunday, Oct. 16, and thought Richard’s legacy gift was worthy of sharing to demonstrate “how someone can ‘give back’ to the College that meant so much in his life.”

Richard was born in Detroit Lakes, Minn., lived in both Kent, Wash., and Winifred, Mont. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned to Montana and graduated from Rocky Mountain College with a teaching degree in both science and mathematics. He later received his master’s degree from the University at Weatherford, Oklahoma, in chemistry. While there, he also acquired his private pilots license.

He taught at Lewis and Clark Middle School and at West High School in Billings. Richard was a past member of the Billings Elks Lodge and the Rimrock Masonic Lodge No. 149. While in Billings, Richard was President of the Billings Education Association and worked with the Montana and National Education Association and was also a lifetime member.

After his father died in 1968, he took excellent care of his mother. They later moved to Albuquerque, N.M., where Richard continued teaching at St. Pius X High School. His mother, Cora, died in 1996 in Albuquerque.

Richard was a loyal volunteer at Lovelace Hospital, traveling and attending Christ The Ray Of Hope Lutheran Church, where memorial services were held. Surviving Richard is one cousin, Bill Schultz, and his wife, Cheryl, of Billings, along with Richard’s many friends.

Undem’s contact with Richard began shortly after he arrived at Rocky Mountain College sixteen years ago to assume the position of director of planned giving.

“Richard had already decided he wanted to make a planned gift to Rocky Mountain College, and it was my privilege to complete that gifting transaction,” he said.

His mother had deeded the family’s Billings home to Richard. In analyzing the options for its disposal, it was decided that for income tax reasons, it would be best not to sell the house. He decided to gift the house to RMC in exchange for a charitable gift annuity. That plan paid him quarterly income for the rest of his life. Such a planned gift provided a substantial charitable deduction for the current value of the gift that RMC would receive after his death.

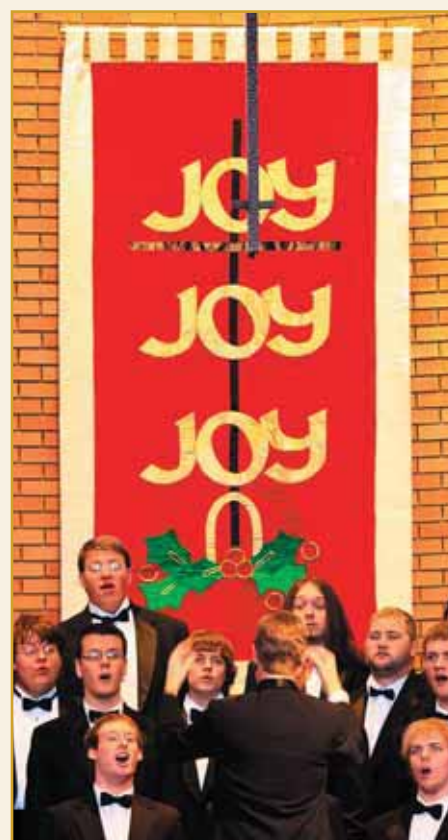
The house was valued at \$84,500 on November 1, 1994. Its tax cost was \$15,000. Richard was 60 years old at the time of the gift. The annuity paid 6.1%; \$5,154.50 per year; \$1,288 every calendar quarter, beginning January 1, 1995, with a prorated payment; the 1994 charitable deduction was \$39,018; his last annuity payment was received July 1, 2011. A total of \$86,869 in payments were received by Richard over his lifetime, plus the income tax savings from the \$39,000 gift in 1994 which, at a marginal estimated 25% income tax rate, approximated \$10,000. As of June 30, 2011, the remaining balance held in the annuity reserve account approximated \$71,500. When calculations are verified, that balance will be transferred into a permanent Richard C. Lee Scholarship Endowment Fund to generate income for future scholarship distributions expected to fluctuate between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per year in perpetuity.

“Richard would be enormously pleased with this incredible result for the support of future Rocky Mountain College students.

We are proud to be the steward of his extremely generous gift to the future. It is such an appropriate legacy for a respected and admired teacher,” Undem said.

LESSONS & CAROLS

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The banner proclaims what the choir brings to the annual Rocky Mountain College Lessons & Carols holiday concert, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. This year will feature the RMC Percussion Ensemble and a solo, with soprano Carolyn Coefield, RMC voice instructor, and pianist Jennifer Bratz, RMC assistant professor of music. The concert, under the direction of Dr. Steven Hart, will be held at 3:00 p.m., and again at 7:00 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, on the corner of 13th and Poly Drive, in Billings. The program is based on an old English tradition where the Christmas story is presented through choral singing, instrumental music, and the reading of Scripture.

JILL WASHBURN LEAVES 'FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOON'

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Sometimes the numbers make Jill Washburn's day.

From August 27 through Make A Difference Day October 22nd, 56 students volunteered at community events for Rocky Mountain College.

Those students logged in almost 160 hours pitching in to help on a variety of community service projects.

For a different cause – providing warm coats for homeless and needy families – RMC donated 29 warm coats.

For Canstruction, some 10,000 cans of food are donated for the Billings Food Bank and Family Services from the RMC-inspired event.

But the numbers only matter if they represent how many people are helped.

“The core of what I do is help people, so the numbers count when I think about how we could double the number of teams participating in Canstruction, which would double the amount of canned goods we could donate to hungry people,” she said.

Washburn graduated from Rocky Mountain College with a major in sociology – a non-traditional age transfer from Goddard College in Vermont – and quickly found a job with AmeriCorps. Part of her job is the Campus Corps leader; the other part is working with the American Red Cross of Montana.

“At Rocky, my job is to build a culture of public service, to get students to think about life as well as educational experiences,” she said.

Washburn said she feels the RMC education was exceptional and inspired her to follow it with the AmeriCorps employment.

“Part of my sociology degree meant doing an internship, which is where Red Cross entered my life. Since they are a nonprofit, my internship became eligible through Campus Corps, which helped cover books and some other student expenses. I was really grateful for that,” she said. “So it was a natural transition to a full time job when I graduated.”

Washburn worked on a wide range of community service, from organizing Seussville University, which is a literacy project, to helping with volunteer clean-up



Jill Washburn wears many hats as Campus Corps leader, but also for the Red Cross of Montana where she is disaster team chair for nine counties; a duty officer for Red Cross, coordinating disaster response; and a disaster instructor. (Photo: Courtesy Casey Page/The Billings Gazette)

of flood-ravaged towns like Roundup.

“I wore so many hats. I worked on Habitat for Humanity, Project Homeless Connect, and the Great American Cleanup. A bunch of us helped at the Billings Food

Bank with Thanksgiving, worked on the United Way Day of Caring, the Cardboard Box City, and National Public Lands Day with Audubon Conservation Education Center.

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Seussville University, a literacy project, was one of the community programs organized through Jill Washburn, RMC Campus Corps leader.

BTBJ IS AN EFFORT THAT HELPS FULFILL OUR MISSION

OUR MISSION

BY CARL A. HANSEN - *Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Rocky Mountain College*



One of the keynotes of my term as chairman of the Rocky Mountain College Board of Trustees will be increasing awareness of our mission, which I stated before, is beautifully succinct:

“Rocky Mountain College educates future leaders through liberal arts and professional programs that cultivate criti-

cal thinking, creative expression, ethical decision making, informed citizenship, and professional excellence.”

Accomplishing that mission requires teamwork across every endeavor, from academics to athletics, from the efforts of faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the College. Scholarships are an important ingredient to that recipe for educating future leaders. I was pleased to see scholar-

ships replenished at this year’s Black Tie Blue Jeans Scholarship Benefit.

This is always an entertaining evening, but it is, as *The Billings Gazette* stated in an article leading up to the annual event, “a party with a purpose.” Almost 90 percent of our nearly 1,000 students receive scholarships, and recognition of that fact by those who sponsored this event, bid for silent and live auction items, and made outright donations was satisfying. As our Honorary Chairs – John and Darla Jones – both pointed out when interviewed by KTVQ, “We’re not alums, but we believe in the mission of the school.”

John made another important point: “We think Rocky is a critical asset to this region, not just Billings but Montana, Wyoming, and the other areas.” And Darla underlined that by noting that because of RMC, Billings is “a great community to raise your kids in. We’re great supporters of Rocky Mountain College.”

So many people like John and Darla share that commitment to RMC’s mission. They demonstrate it by the long hours many of them contribute to organizing this event. Michael and Sherril Burke are not alumni either, but they were the working chairs supervising a host of committees with others who worked on this gala. Some of them are not alumni, but they, like John and Darla, understand how much good RMC does in the world they live in.

I thank all of you, those who made this event possible and those who attended. I know our students appreciate the financial support BTBJ represents, and I am confident when their turn comes to show support for the next generation, they will.

I will have the honor of being RMC Board Chair for the 25th annual event next year. It is not too early to start thinking and planning for that “silver celebration.”



RMC students Anne Wylie and Alex Wélge know the annual Black Tie Blue Jeans Scholarship Benefit helps them, so they are enthusiastic and energetic when they help drum up live auction bids during the gala event.



Billings Chief of Police Rich St. John, RMC '80 (left), and Billings Mayor Tom Hanel (right), join RMC President Michael Mace for an evening of scholarship fundraising.

WASHBURN: 'FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOON'

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While helping with those projects, Washburn is also the Disaster Team Chair for the Red Cross of Montana for nine counties; a duty officer for Red Cross, coordinating disaster response; a disaster instructor; as well as a facilitator for International Humanitarian Law, which educates people about the importance of the Geneva Conventions.

"She's hard to keep up with," said her supervisor, Blaire Martin Brush, RMC director of career services. "She's involved in so many good efforts."

That's what Kelly Edwards wished for when she recruited her. Edwards, now RMC vice president for enrollment services, was the transfer recruitment counselor in 2009 when Washburn came from Connecticut to Montana.

"It makes me happy to see how much she's accomplished. I think she's terrific," said Edwards.

Washburn credits RMC for the opportunities.

"If Rocky did not have this position, I would not be able to accomplish as much as I do because I would not have had it all tie in together with a place to work from, and a student-base to call on for volunteers," she said.

Her AmeriCorps term will be complete in June, which will mean looking for a new job, but she is confident her experiences will help her employment potential.

"I will be proud if a legacy of service remains when I'm not here. I hope that some day we will recognize community service as we do academic achievement. If a student has given 200 plus hours of service, giving back to the community, that should be commended," she said.

Washburn has a favorite saying she appends to her emails that comes from a Brandt Paul song: "Don't tell me the sky is the limit when there are footprints on the moon."

"I really believe that. When it comes to making others' lives better, we can always do more. I'm determined to always try," she said.

PHOTOS

Credit

Photographs appearing in Rocky Now, unless otherwise noted, are by Dave M. Shumway, RMC staff photographer and web content manager.



The RMC campus is lovely after a fresh snow. Students couldn't wait to take advantage of the winter wonderland.

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