

ROCKY NOW

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

All About Our Students



Photo: Dan Burkhart, RMC

Trevor David, a sophomore aviation student, helped bring the ROTC program to Rocky Mountain College. David was delighted that a Black Hawk landed at RMC to help draw attention to the program.

Trevor David didn't come from a family with much military service in its history. He will be the first person in his family to graduate from a four-year, fully-accredited college, so joining the Army wasn't something that fit into his academic plans.

"I wanted to be a pilot, which is why I chose Rocky Mountain College," the Eureka, Calif., native said. "Deciding to enlist was just something I thought long and hard about and decided it was the right thing to do."

His parents attended two-year colleges; he had a grandfather who served in Korea.

"But no one wanted to make a career out of the military and graduate from a four-year college," he said. "I do."

When he decided to enlist, Army recruiters told him he might want to consider the Reserve Office Training Corps, or as it is universally called, ROTC, a program that dates to 1862 when land-grant colleges came into being under President Abraham Lincoln. Part of the federal funding for land-grant colleges depended on including military training.

The problem for David, a sophomore at the time, was the land-grant college offering ROTC was not the one he attended.

"I was told I would need to transfer to Montana State University-Billings," David said. "But I liked Rocky and didn't want to transfer, so I decided to see how I could get ROTC at Rocky."

(Please see **Faculty & Staff** inside)

SOLID GOLD!



Photos: Dave M. Shumway, RMC

More than 50 students volunteered to help with the annual RMC scholarship fundraiser. The students helped sell live auction items such as a trip to Cabo.

Rocky Friends Show Support for Students

The 23rd Annual Rocky Mountain College Black Tie Blue Jeans scholarship benefit proved that, even in stressful economic times, support for the College's students remains solid. Sold out, the event at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center was the scene for a successful silent and live auction that augmented donations for table sponsorships and Dollars for Scholars. "We have so much to be proud of at Rocky and that pride was demonstrated by everyone who helped our students," said Vicki Davison, RMC director of development. "This year's theme, 'Golden Futures,' sums up how we regard our students and an investment in scholarships for them ensures a better tomorrow," RMC President Michael Mace noted. "Our supporters can be certain that when they help build scholarships for our students, there will be good outcomes for all of us," he said.



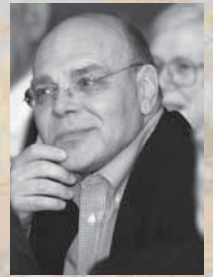
Jim and Janet Haar were this year's BTBJ Honorary Chairs and expressed their longtime interest in and devotion to the College.

(More on BTBJ in the Insider column)



Insider

By Michael R. Mace, President



RMC Supporters Give Best of Themselves

Writer H.U. Westermayer tells us of something that not many of us know, or if we learned it once, have forgotten. “The Pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts. No Americans have been more impoverished than these, who, nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving.”

The occasion we enjoy now is remarkable in contrast to its beginnings. As Rocky Mountain College president, I have so much to be grateful for and it is magnified this time of year. We just enjoyed an excellent outpouring of generosity from our annual scholarship benefit, Black Tie Blue Jeans (BTBJ). As I scanned the room, I saw so many longtime friends of the College. I was amazed and thankful for the steadfast support of these friends. My heart was warmed by the expressions I heard over and over from those attending of how proud they are of our students. We were blessed by those trustees and friends who made the event possible, notably Chris Dorr and Mary Underriner, who co-chaired this, our 23rd annual benefit. Our honorary chairs, Jim and Janet Haar, said they recognize that this College and its students are vital to the community. Yes, it was an evening of merriment, but principally it was an evening when people donated large sums to make sure students will be able to obtain the finest education possible.

Encouraged by BTBJ, I look forward to events that make this College worthy of the support it receives. This is the time

of year when RMC offers free public concerts in the community, helping to elevate the holiday spirit. On campus we anticipate the annual Yule Log dinner, when we all sit down together to break bread, count our blessings, and share the festive moments before we head home for the holidays.

One of my favorite presidents - Theodore Roosevelt, who made a memorable visit to our campus in 1918 - stated that we need to “remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds.”

Truer words were never uttered about what I witness from my office in Prescott Hall. I see donations made during tough financial times because there are people who, once helped themselves, want to make sure they compound that gift by making certain others have similar opportunities. I see students who already have learned the lesson, and welcome the chance to share their well-being with the community.

It proves what a famous American industrialist said. Harvey Firestone preached that, “You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself.”

That’s what I see happening here. We have so much to be grateful for and I am privileged and honored to be in a prime place to see it, to feel it, and to share it.



Scenes from BTBJ 20TEN



Photos: Dave M. Shumway, RMC

Heads wins! Dr. Hal Forseth was the winner of the popular heads-tails event. Runner-up, Andrew Willdenberg, RMC associate professor of computer science, congratulates him after he prevailed to win the Tag Heuer Aquaracer watch donated by Goldsmith Gallery Jewelers.



Elizabeth and Bill McNamer had their portrait taken in front of the backdrop featuring the Golden Futures theme.



Yellowstone County Commissioner Bill Kennedy and wife Mary enjoy dancing to Nye Express.



RMC's Drumline performed, setting a spirited tone for the evening's festivities.

Focus on Faculty & Staff

ROTC Program Succeeding at RMC

All About Our Students/*Continued from front*

Getting ROTC to RMC wasn't easy. Opposition to ROTC on college campuses still lingered from the Vietnam era. Opposition to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan still colored the mood of many faculty members.

"But, we overcame the obstacles to get everything in place and begin the program," said Capt. Paul Fowler, an Army ROTC assistant professor of military science.

"Many hiccups and hours were spent simply massaging the process in order to get the ROTC program on campus."

An important ingredient -- in addition to David's enthusiasm -- was the involvement of RMC faculty, particularly Dr. Matthew O'Gara, RMC assistant professor of political science. When O'Gara volunteered to be faculty liaison, along with Dr. Sam Hamm, RMC assistant professor of music, he wanted to know more about ROTC and what it had to offer. After a conversation with Capt. Fowler about an opportunity to attend Leadership Training Course

(LTC) during the summer, Dr. O'Gara decided to experience what ROTC students go through first-hand. He spent a week at Fort Knox, Kentucky. "I had never been in the military so



Photo: Courtesy ROTC

Dr. Matthew O'Gara spent part of his summer at ROTC boot camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky, so he would understand first-hand what kind of training students would be involved in as well as how the program would work on campus.



Photo: Dan Burkhart, RMC

Laura Barsotti enjoyed checking out the cockpit of a United States Army Black Hawk helicopter that landed on the Rocky Mountain College campus to help promote the ROTC program. Explaining the instrumentation is Army Staff Sergeant Roger Peterson, with the 189th Aviation Battalion, out of Helena, Mont.

I volunteered because I was anxious to see what they do," he said. "I also thought I should measure how much support we should give ROTC."

Dr. O'Gara was sold on the program and explained its benefits to faculty.

"The Army ROTC is amazingly generous with students accepted into the program. A full ROTC scholarship covers all student expenses and includes a pretty nice stipend so cadets don't have to work," he said.

ROTC scholarships range from 2-4 years and include 100% tuition and

fees, \$1,200 a year for books, and a cadet stipend of \$300 per month for freshmen, \$350 per month for sophomores, \$450 per month for juniors, and \$500 per month for seniors. Additionally, the program is set-up as open enrollment for freshman and sophomore students.

"Basically what I tell interested applicants is you can test drive the military and see if it is a good fit. If you like it, then apply for a scholarship

and let Uncle Sam pick up the tab for your education. If you don't, you can drop the course or simply not sign-up for it next semester. There is no obligation involved," Capt. Fowler said.

That kind of program works well with efforts to recruit and retain students.

"Rocky can attract these students and give them the kind of quality education that will make them

better and more effective military officers when they're commissioned," according to Dr. O'Gara.

"We teach leadership. Therefore, it makes sense to recruit responsible, confident, and competent future leaders. We don't want anyone that is not committed. The genius about ROTC is it affords students the opportunity to try it out first," Capt. Fowler concluded.

Trevor David's enthusiasm for the program is contagious. Already three more students have enrolled in ROTC.

Teaching Reading a Priority

When she's not focused on her math education major or contributing to the Battlin' Bears volleyball team's notable success this season, Ashley Coburn (in photo at right) often can be found helping youngsters in the Rocky Mountain College Reading Clinic. The Reading Clinic is a two-credit course "designed to provide our RMC students with hands-on experience in diagnosing and remediation of students having little or no success with reading," according to Dr. Jo Swain, RMC assistant professor of elementary education. Dr. Swain said K-12 students come on campus for 45-minute one-to-one tutoring sessions. Ashley, and other RMC students, diagnose a child's reading problems and design a program to remediate the

problems. "Parents have been very receptive to having this opportunity to get additional help for their child, and our students work with them to provide a home component outlining what parents can do to increase reading competence," she added.

Reading has become a great new focus for the RMC education program. The new 23-credit reading minor for K-12 education majors provides an additional endorsement to become a K-12 Reading Specialist, according to Dr. Stevie Schmitz, RMC director of educational leadership and distance learning. "The Reading Minor was created to provide our students



with increased knowledge and skills in the area of reading due to the federal accountability measures outlined in NCLB legislation. We felt this would give our students an added advantage in competing for teaching jobs," Dr. Schmitz explained.

Neighbor to Neighbor

RMC has a Positive Impact in Community

By Barb Skelton,
Chairman of the Board of Rocky Mountain College

When I looked around the room at our annual Black Tie Blue Jeans scholarship benefit, I was pleased to see many new faces joining many of us "old hands." We always need to be mindful that it is important to replenish the resources for supporting the College, and in particular, our students. It's reassuring to see that new people are discovering what an asset Rocky Mountain College is to the community and want to see its good works continue. It's inspiring to know new folks appreciate that someone along the line was a good neighbor to them and helped them, and that now it's time to make a difference themselves. It's so important because we are endeavoring to not only educate students but to elevate them, to make them understand that their efforts to help others are essential for building solid communities.

Those lessons are being learned. I looked at our online photo gallery recently and beamed with pride to see pictures of our students engaged in contributing in so many ways, from helping little children in reading labs to building homes through Habitat for Humanity. If you run into someone who complains Rocky does not do enough in the community, don't let that statement go unchallenged! Maybe sometimes our students' efforts are humble and not headlined, but they are always there. So, too, our staff and faculty pitch in, setting good examples.

Let me mention some specifics. In the last year (but often every year), our College hosted an Easter egg hunt for area kids; organized a bio-blight in Yellowstone National Park that identified more than 1,000 new species; presented a public horse show with costumed horses and riders; held a high school computer competition; opened the Ryniker-Morrison Gallery with a half dozen exhibits; sponsored a Peace Village for young people; helped build a house through Habitat for Humanity; put on a magic show at Chicks for Science; hosted public lectures by nationally-known leaders like CBS correspondent Dan Raviv and Gov. Christine Todd Whitman; hosted a dinner to celebrate famed artist Russell Chatham; gathered clothing for the Montana Rescue Mission; held the first ever Canstruction to gather food for the Billings Food Bank; reaffirmed our relationship with three denominations with the formal installation of a chaplain on our campus; organized a river trash clean up; presented new theatre performances; continued undergraduate research programs that benefit the community's knowledge of environmental issues; held several chili feeds to raise funds to fight cancer through our RMC Relay for Life team; hosted children for a trick or treat parade in the residence halls; and readied to present holiday concerts at the Babcock Theatre and in churches.

For the most part, these are free public events! We can be grateful this season for all the wonderful good works that

flow from the College cornucopia.

This is a dynamic college community performing admirable work outside campus.

We are good neighbors.

If you agree, will you help this College continue to make a positive difference?

Join me in supporting what we believe in - the worth of Rocky Mountain College. Any donation is appreciated and all will be used wisely and for a good purpose. That is what life is all about - being a good neighbor.



Scenes of only a few examples of RMC in the community, (top row, l-r): public installation of chaplain ceremony; Canstruction for Food Bank by RMC Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE); President Mace welcomes students from the summer peace village by Institute for Peace Studies. Second row, l-r: RMC hosts an evening with acclaimed artist, Russell Chatham; CBS International Correspondent Dan Raviv delivers a public lecture; annual Easter egg hunt; free RMC concert at Babcock Theatre; high school students compete in annual RMC computer science tourney. Third row, l-r: former RMC Art Professor, Robert Morrison, visits his daughter Barbara's show at Tech Hall gallery; RMC students and staff at Habitat for Humanity site; RMC Theatre presents plays at Billings Studio Theatre. Bottom row, l-r: RMC equestrian students spend hours preparing horses for public shows; RMC professors and students demonstrate chemistry magic at "Chicks in Science"; RMC hosted former EPA Administrator, Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, who delivered several public lectures.

Focus on Alumni & Friends

Alum Getting a Lot of Laughs

A Rocky Mountain College graduate, who is carving out a career as a comedian, credits his experience as a student for helping cultivate his sense of humor, his ability to market his talents, and his commitment to “giving back” to the community.

“I loved it here,” Lukas Keutla said when he recently visited campus. “I was always a class clown, but I got to work on it a lot when I was attending college here.”

Because he was performing impromptu stand up routines, he remembered his football coach making him perform in front of the team. He won the annual Mr. Rocky contest with his comedic sketches.

Now, as Lukas Seely – for his stage name, he dropped his last name and used his middle name – he is a rising star on the comedy circuit. This December he will be one of four comics chosen for the Showtime “Louie Anderson Presents” television special.

Seely has opened for comedians Dane Cook, Damon Wayans, Ron White, and Greg Giraldo, to name a few. He regularly performs at Giggles in Seattle and earned a spot at the Hollywood Improv.

“There are hundreds who want that shot, but I lucked out,” he said of the Showtime special. “And for the Hollywood Improv, it usually takes at least a year, more often two years, to get on there. I made it in four months, so that really built my confidence.”

Seely attended RMC from 2000 to when he graduated in 2004 with a degree in business administration and a minor in theatre arts. He also played football for the Battlin’ Bears.

“Running back and slot receiver,” he said. “Let’s say I was a better student and comedian than a gridiron hero.”

Seely frequently returns to Billings to organize comedy nights at Asian Nites (he will perform in November with Auggie Smith, another Billings comedian who appeared on Last Comic Standing and is a frequent guest on the Bob & Tom Show). He also booked Pauly Shore, whose movies, “Encino Man” and “Son in Law,” are cult hits.

“Billings isn’t a big market, but more and more comedians have



*Photo: Dave M. Shumway, RMC
Lukas Seely is making a successful career with his sense of humor.*

heard it’s a fun place to do stand up so I don’t have to sell it so hard to get them to come,” Seely said.

The Lukas Seely Presents at Asian Nites came about from his friendship with a classmate, Rachel, whose dad is John Dehler, owner of Asian Nites and donor for the new minor league baseball park that bears his name.

“He’s a really humble, nice guy and when I told him what I wanted to do, he didn’t hesitate to give it a green light,” Seely said.

Seely’s love of Billings stems from his upbringing by parents who immigrated from Laos. The youngest of six children – and the only one born in the United States – Seely said “hamming it up was how I could get attention.”

His parents, Sisavath and Khanthaly, operate a kiosk behind the Transwestern buildings, featuring his mother’s popular egg rolls. They convinced him to attend college when his dream after high school was to “head to L.A. and follow in the footsteps of my heroes, Adam Sandler, Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, and Chris Farley.”

That decision was a sound one. “I met some great people here,” he said. “Doc’ McDowell, Scott

(Please see Alumni & Friends on back page)

Coming Attractions

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19

The Rocky Mountain College Band and Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Anthony Hammond, will perform “Songs & Stories: Traditions New and Old” at the Babcock Theatre. The 7:30 p.m. concert, free and open to the public, will feature music by Bach, Tchaikovsky, Grainger, Vaughan Williams and Sakai. For more information: Anthony “Tony” Hammond, RMC visiting instructor/director of bands, (406) 238-7283 / email: tony.hammond@rocky.edu.

CONTINUING THROUGH TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

The juried Fall 2010 Rocky Mountain College Student Art Show continues in the Ryniker-Morrison Gallery in Tech Hall. Gallery hours are 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The students participating in the exhibit include currently enrolled students in the art, theatre and creativity classes. For more information: Sally McIntosh, RMC gallery director, 406-259-6563 / email: mcintoshart@imt.net.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25 – 28

Thanksgiving Break



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1

The annual Rocky “Yule Log Dinner” will be held at 5:30 pm in the Bair Family Student Center. There will be special entertainment, including a Christmas tree festival, magic, gingerbread house village, hay ride, s’mores -- all provided by students and staff -- with the traditional lighting of the Yule Log by the youngest student on campus. Please bring a non-perishable food item to be donated to the Billings Food Bank. For more information and to RSVP: Dean’s Office, 657-1018.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

The annual Lessons and Carols concert, under the direction of Dr. Steven Hart, RMC professor of music and director of the RMC Choir, will 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 concert is free and open to the public. For more information: Steven Hart, Ph.D., Professor of Music, Rocky Mountain College, 406-657-1115 / email: harts@rocky.edu.

Focus on Alumni & Friends

(Continued from previous page)

Severance, and Gerry Roe were cool professors. The lessons about giving back to the community stayed with me.”

A brief interlude after graduation working for Cox Enterprises – a diversified media company – convinced him that what he learned could help him earn, but the theatre arts part of his college career still tugged at him.

“I was making six figures, so I was successful,” he said about working for Cox, but whenever he traveled on business, his after-work hours were devoted to doing stand-up comedy.

“That’s what really excited me. It was scary, too, but thrilling,” he said.

It wasn’t long before Seely was attending Stand-Up Boot Camp, where big name stars provide inspiration and insight to comic careers. Saturday Night Live stars like Kevin Nealon and Jon Lovitz join some of the best newcomers in stand-up to nurture fledgling

comedians. The exposure paid off.

“You really get a mind set more than a routine of what you want to do. It’s figuring out who you are and how that’s funny,” he said. “That’s when I realized that I could enjoy the greatest freedom by being a comic. Freedom of speech! A comic can say just about anything and that’s really liberating.”

Seely also learned to clean up his act. “For Giggles, it’s family style entertainment, so you learn to be funny without using the ‘F’ word or make jokes about sex,” he said.

That lesson gave him a leg up with the Louie Anderson Showtime special.

“He told me to keep it clean. You don’t need to be dirty to be funny.”

Seely’s energy -- performing and producing -- would seem to have few limits. He is now preparing for a TV pilot he wrote called, “What’s in the Fridge.”

“It will be a cooking show where chefs have to create something really good by whatever they find in the fridge. I’ll be the host and try to make it funny,” he said.

Whatever he is doing professionally, he will also include his private interest in helping others. When a tornado devastated Billings, Seely hurried home to see how he could “pay back Billings for being such a great place for me and my family.”

He organized a disaster relief show and established a fund at Wells Fargo for contributions to go to families needing help after the Father’s Day storm that ravaged the city.

“I had comedian friends from Los Angeles and Seattle who were helping out. It wasn’t just me. It was all the comedians working together. It was kind of a small thing, but I just wanted to create more awareness.”

Seely would someday like to give back to his college alma mater, too.

“I knew there were always people behind me here, supporting me, and many of them - like alumni and donors who support the college - I wouldn’t even know, so it made me think that when I had a chance to do something good for others, I would.”

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