

NEWS & OPINION

PRCC students can gain hurricane assistance

POPLARVILLE - Pearl River Community College is committed to insuring that its students and their families who have been impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita receive all available assistance in meeting their educational expenses.

The Financial Aid Office has been notified that the Federal Government has made financial assistance available for students that have been affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

"Most of our students are from areas struck by Hurricane Katrina," said Peggy Shoemaker, Director of Financial Aid at PRCC. "We want students to stay on track towards their degree and resume normalcy as soon as possible, and these funds can make this opportunity a reality."

If students or their parents have been impacted by loss of income, employment, assets, or loss of res-

idence, etc; they may request a "Hurricane Relief Grant" application from their respective campus Financial Aid Office. The offices in Poplarville, Hattiesburg, and Hancock County currently have applications that are available for distribution.

These funds are available for the current semester (spring 2006), as well as the summer and fall semesters in 2006.

These funds are also available for high school seniors. Those seniors planning to attend either summer or fall semesters at PRCC may apply. Applications are being made available to the district high school counselor offices or students may contact the student financial aid office at PRCC.

"The first thing a student needs to do is have a completed Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on file with the financial aid office," said Shoemaker.

"This application can be found at www.fafsa.ed.gov or paper applications are available in the financial aid office or the high school guidance counselors' offices."

According to Shoemaker, the 2005-06 FAFSA must be on file for the spring and summer semesters. The 2006-07 must be on file for the fall semester.

"The FAFSA is required because these hurricane relief funds are only available for students who are federal aid eligible," she said.

These funds will assist students in meeting their tuition, books, supplies, fees, living expenses and other miscellaneous expenses for college.

Students who may not normally qualify for federal assistance may meet a special circumstance, such as the loss of income for the student or the parent, loss of residence; in these cases students may need to contact financial aid for more information.

To request assistance, call PRCC Financial Aid Office at 601-403-1029 or 601-554-5500.



Shoemaker



Pearl River Community College's "String of Pearls" dance team finished first in the pom category of the American All-Star Mississippi State Dance Championship held at Millsaps College in Jackson in February. Next up for the Pearls is the American Dance Teachers Society National Championship in Denton, Texas, on March 24-25. Archie Rawls is director of the "String of Pearls" and is assisted by coach-choreographer Kara Fleming. Teams include Emily Jopes, Brittany Bynum and Chastity McLemore (co-captain) of Picayune High School, Marissa Turcotte, Bonnie Myers, Felicia Ross and Ashley Ladner of Bay High School, Sunni Smith, Ciara Gunn, Sarah McLaney (captain) and Natalie Adams of Pearl River Central, Leila Fortenberry of Oak Grove High School, Natalie Smith of Poplarville High School, and Lauren Griffin of Prentiss Christian. In the photo, the String of Pearls are shown performing during halftime of a men's basketball game at Oak Grove High School.

Plans underway to form Student Alumni Foundation

By Paula Merritt

Coordinator of Alumni Services

What are the Development Foundation and Alumni Association? What does that mean to you?

The Development Foundation and Alumni Association here at Pearl River Community College plays an increasingly important role at Pearl River Community College.

The Development Foundation and Alumni Association were established in 1987.

The Development Foundation is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation that serves as the fundraising arm of the college, and it is used to raise private sector funds to enhance PRCC's efforts in continuing its tradition of quality education.

Through the generosity of alumni and friends, the Foundation has funded scholarships for over 3,700 students. Numerous students are able to attend Pearl River because of the generosity of PRCC's alumni and friends. The Foundation has fund-

ed a faculty development program, which allows our faculty to obtain ongoing professional upgrades.

The purpose of the Alumni Association is to promote interest in the general welfare of Pearl River Community College, its student body, faculty, staff, and alumni and to deepen the loyalty of the alumni and friends.

Within the Pearl River Community College Alumni Association are the following alumni chapters: Forrest/Lamar County, Hancock County, Pearl River County, and Marion/Jeff Davis County.

The purpose of these county chapters is to increase the number of social activities for the alumni, past and present parents, current students, and friends of the College.

This would allow for opportunities to meet, share common experiences, and network; henceforth, cultivating volunteer support and

alumni leadership for the college.

Together with the Development Foundation and Alumni Association, the chapters will strive to enlist non-active alumni.

Once again, we would like to organize a Student Alumni Foundation Committee. The S.A.F. shall be established to serve the students of Pearl River Community College by providing opportunities for them to play roles in fund raising, as well as in alumni chapter activities.

The S.A.F. will also serve as ambassadors between students, former students, faculty, staff, and residents of the PRCC district. The S.A.F. will be a vital link between alumni and future alumni.

Any student interested in becoming a part of the S.A.F. can contact Paula Merritt at 601-403-1193, or stop by The Development Foundation/Alumni House for more information.



Merritt



Safety, security are top priorities for students

By Dr. Adam Breerwood

Dean of Student Services

Over the course of my last nine years at Pearl River Community College, I have come into contact with thousands of outstanding young men and women.

I have shared in many memories and experiences that will last a lifetime. It is still that first year experience that I will never forget, and I am sure it will stay with me for the rest of my life.

It was during that first year in 1997 that I attended my first funeral of a student at Pearl River Community College.

I sat in the back of the church in deep sadness. I watched as members of his family came forward to the podium to speak of their sudden and tragic loss. I looked on as his mother openly wept and ask the unforgettable question "why? Why is my son of nineteen years gone?"

He was a healthy, vibrant young man with boundless potential that was gone in the blink of an eye. I remember thinking about my family. How would they react in that situation? I could not imagine making a decision that would cause them so much pain.

I watched as they closed that coffin for the final time and walked with the congregation as they laid him in the ground. It was over. His life, the life of his family and friends were gone as they knew it.

This was reality. This was the other side, the side you do not see in those bar rooms at night. This was a turning point in my life. No longer did I feel this could never happen to me.

This was not just something that I heard about, I was here witnessing the pain and agony that is associated with the unexpected loss of a loved one. This experience

was real, and one that I seldom share.

I write this open letter not only as the Dean of Student Services, but as a man who cares deeply about the well being of all of you.

I often have the opportunity to talk to students about problems regarding financial aid, admissions, athletic eligibility, dormitory life and even personal obstacles that for one reason or another pose challenges for their academic success.

I love working with young adults because I can see the passion in their eyes. The determination to succeed is evident in every classroom on campus. I have had the pleasure of being trusted by many of you about personal problems with family members or other issues not necessarily associated with the daily procedures of this institution.

Whatever the problem, whether school related or personal, this problem usually passes. One thing I have learned as Dean of Students is that people make mistakes and often these mistakes can be rectified.

Unfortunately, some mistakes are final. They can never be rectified. On occasion, one poor decision will end your life or devastate any plans you have for the future.

As the Dean of Students I feel this letter in necessary to express to you how much we care for all of our students.

I can assure you no decision is made by the administration without first discussing how it will impact all of you.

One issue we take very seriously is the safety and security of all members of the PRCC family. Many of you have noticed that after night classes we place barricades in all campus entrances except the main boulevard entrance.

This is an attempt to monitor all

incoming traffic. Our campus police officers have asked you to present your school I.D. card, and all of you have been very cooperative. I thank you for your cooperation and ask for your continued assistance. This is not an attempt to harass our students but another measure of assuring your campus safety.

This semester we have been awarded a grant by the State of Mississippi. The "Prevention of Underage Drinking" grant has allowed us to buy three breathalysers and also has provided us with financial means to pay for our police officers to man campus checkpoints.

These checkpoints will be periodically set up on campus. Students who are suspected to be under the influence of alcohol, or any other substance while driving, will be subjected to a breathalyser test at these checkpoints. I once again ask for your cooperation if this test has to be administered.

Please understand these implemented procedures are for your safety. I take my responsibility to you and the college very seriously.

I will have information on the dangers of drinking and driving and several other handouts on campus safety issues in my office in the next couple of weeks. I encourage you to stop by my office and pick up this information.

I ask you to make good decisions. Remember your family, friends, and all those loved ones before you consider a poor decision. It can happen to you.

The college experience is the best time of your life. I want you to enjoy your time here at Pearl River Community College.

I want you to make memories, make friends, and realize that these two years will lay a solid foundation for your future success in whatever you choose.

As always, my door is open for any of you.

Americans are merging into one color, and that color is Red

By Terrod Jackson

Dixie Drawl Staff Writer

Twenty-eight days just isn't enough! Why does black history month have to be the shortest month? That is exactly what famed rap artist Busta Rhymes said. I totally agree with him.

Black history month is for everybody! Our culture made a lot of things happen in this day and age. People don't realize that Garrett Morgan probably saved their lives multiple times. That's the brother who invented the stop light!

Let us not forget that "Every month is black history month."

New Orleans' popular radio station, Q93, uses this as a slogan every morning before their question and answer game "Three and it's free."

Black History classes are becoming more and more available. I can remember what my history teacher, Ryan Ruckel, said four years ago in World Civilization I: "This whole semester we are going to learn about old, dead, white

men."

He wasn't saying that to be mean, but it was a class without one sign of a brother. The other day in a classroom at Pearl River Central High, it almost made me feel great inside to see a banner that said, "Black History Month."

Student's are encouraged to partake nowadays. More and more students are swaying away from America's segregated past. The South has come a long way. Because of the way my forefathers were raised, color was a real issue. People of color had to do separate things with less rights. The problem has slowly resolved through

the years. A "white" person that I may have seen 14 years ago is now Thomas.

It irks me when people say the "N" word in the wrong context. Although it's not necessary, I do understand the "N" word when it is used in it's new context.

Yeah, I still get offended if an Anglo-Saxon person says the "N" word. I think that it is a part of my African-American culture. I wouldn't go as far as to say that it's OK

to use it, but I understand the new meaning of the word. It's simple: "N" word = "Dude." Phrases like: "That's my dude!" or "What's up my dude?" and "Dude, please!" are some examples of how this powerful word is used.

As time goes on, Americans in general are merging into one color: Red. We all have the same color blood. If Jesus sees red then, why can't we? In comparison to the past, this generation is indeed closer.

During Hurricane Katrina, I didn't hear any snide or racist comments. People didn't realize how good they worked together. "What? My cousin hugged and fed a white guy?" It made sense (in a sentimental way) to show that when it comes down to it, everybody is Red.

Before I started writing this story, I had a hard time because I see red most of the time. It's uncomfortable to try to sort and separate my friends in black or white categories. Even though I joke around with those common stereotypical shenanigans, my heart only sees one color and it's red!

Terrod Jackson is a sophomore student from Columbia.



Jackson

HEALTHWATCH: Alcohol lowers inhibitions and affects judgement

By SUSIE HALL, RN

PRCC Nurse

Alcohol is one of the most widely used drugs in our country and has a very high potential for causing physical and psychological dependence.

It is a central nervous system depressant that is rapidly absorbed from the stomach and small intestine and metabolized in the liver. The more you drink, the greater alcohol's affect will cause, and mixing alcohol with other drugs can be fatal.

Teenagers and young adults have the mistaken idea that "nothing bad will happen to me when I drink." Alcohol lowers inhibitions and affects judgement. It increases your chances of doing something that you will regret later, such as drinking and driving, having unprotected sex, causing property damage, being victimized by others, or victimizing someone yourself.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1,700 college students between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age die each year because of unintentional alcohol related injuries, and more

than 600,000 students are assaulted by another student who has been drinking. One in every three emergency room visits of college-aged students with serious injuries involves alcohol use. Pretty high statistics when it is illegal in every state to drink alcohol if you are under the age of 21.

But what happens if you do make it home after a night of drinking. Hangovers occur because the body has been robbed of necessary water and glucose. The brain has to have the right balance to function properly.

Symptoms of a hangover include headache, nausea, vomiting, shaking, diarrhea, and dehydration. You may still feel as if you are in a haze or just feel bad. Your thinking process and motor coordination can be affected for as much as ten to twelve hours after you've finished your last drink.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration conducted a national survey of more than 55,000 college students from approximately 132

two- and four- year colleges. 23.5% of students admitted to poor performance on a test or an assignment and 33.1% missed classes due to alcohol use.

College students are eight times more likely to miss a class or fall behind in their schoolwork than students who don't drink.

I watched a movie on Lifetime recently that showed a girl drinking coffee before she left a party to "sober up." This doesn't work. Alcohol breaks down in the healthy liver at the rate of .5 oz per hour. This is about half the alcohol content in one drink (One drink is equal to 12 oz. beer, 1.5 oz. hard liquor, or 5 oz. wine). Nothing will speed up this rate, not food, not caffeine, not water.

You shouldn't take acetaminophen (Tylenol) to ease the aches of a hangover. Acetaminophen is also metabolized in the liver and can increase your chance of serious liver damage if taken with or after alcohol. Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen may help with the headache,

but time is the only sure cure. The best way to treat a hangover is not to get one.

There are many counseling services for those who have trouble with alcohol. Alcoholics Anonymous has a chapter in Pearl River County. Call 601-798-2322.

Gulf Coast Mental Health provides chemical dependency counseling on a sliding scale fee basis. A.A. meetings are held on Mondays at 8 p.m. and Narcotics Anonymous meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 p.m. The number is 601-799-1511.

The PRCC Health Services Clinic has pamphlets and brochures on alcohol and drug use and will assist you in finding counseling services if needed. The clinic is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the fall and spring semesters.

The PRCC Campus Police department has purchased breathalysers and will periodically have roadblocks set up on campus to check for underage drinking and driving while drinking. The current legal limit for blood alcohol limits (BAL) is below .10%.

Know your limits and, if you drink, drink responsibly. And NEVER drink and drive.



Hall