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Staff Reporters: Jordan Geary, Rebecca Keese, Iain Salazar Faculty Advisor: T. Chebuhar

BACK STORY OF A BACKDROP - THE SAN DIEGO RESERVOIR

By Iain Salazar

You walk by it everyday. At 4.5 acres it's hard to miss. It's the focal point of the campus and home to many species of wildlife, including 13 Canada Geese, who enjoyed their stay so much they've indefinitely postponed their migration. It once provided the campus drinking water. Some people refer to it as "The Campus Lake." Others call it a pond. Its official name is the San Diego Reservoir. It's one of the reasons why Columbia, according to college literature, has a reputation of being "one of the most attractive community colleges in the Nation," according to college sources.

The reservoir is a man-made lake. But it wasn't built by the Columbia College developers...at least not entirely. It was planned by miners in the 1850's. Dug by Chinese laborers, the San Diego Reservoir



San Diego Reservoir - photo by Iain Salazar

is part of an interconnecting ditch system that feeds into New Melones. The source of the campus lake's water comes from Lyons Reservoir, which is fed from Pinecrest Lake.

The lake's original purpose was to store water that could be used for gold excavating techniques, such as sluicing and placer mining. The effects the reservoir made on the surrounding landscape can be seen in the strange rock structures known as the "Labyrinth," found inside the Segerstrom Arboretum along the nature trail on campus. Nowadays the reservoir stores water and balances flow on the ditch system, as well as providing water via the San Diego Ditch to the Columbia Nursery.

In 1968 Columbia College came into existence. The miners who lived on the proposed campus site had long disappeared, save for one - Leland Davis, who still had a claim on the reservoir and the surrounding land. The old homesteader made a deal with the college - If they built a house on campus where he could live out the remainder of his days, he would hand over his claim. *continued page 6...*

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Laureen Campana, Columbia College's Nurse

Why You Should Know Her

By Jordan Geary

Laureen Campana RN NP MPH, Columbia College's health services coordinator and college nurse always



Laureen Campana, RN NP MPH

has programs which will directly affect every student's health. However, few students seem to know who she is, or where she is.

This doesn't necessarily mean that they don't take advantage of her services. The "health service

vending machines," says Campana, "get as many as 400 hits a semester." She must keep these stocked, so Campana makes her rounds almost every day and checks or restocks everyone of the three located on the campus.

She wasn't always the school nurse. Back when Campana was working in an intensive care unit, Columbia College had a network of substitute, part-time nurses. Campana changed that when she moved here and took the job of the college's health services coordinator and college nurse, seven years ago.

Campana didn't just come for the job. She loves it here, and actually grew up in Murphy's. At the end of her last year in high school, Campana moved away. Eventually she ended up in San Francisco, where she and her husband had their first daughter.

After her daughter was born Campana's family decided that the area she grew up in would be the best place for them. When she moved back, in 2000, it had been some 20 years that she had lived away from her home town.

Now back home, with a job she loves, Campana is proud to be a part of Columbia College's health services program.

"We're probably the smallest college out of 108 community colleges that have a school nurse model" says Campana with a smile, and "we even have a mental health worker."

Not only that, but things are being improved on all the time. For example, Campana plans to have her office in Juniper 2 renovated.

Some students don't even know there is a campus nurse. When one student was told that the location of the health services office was right next to her math class, she replied "I didn't even know it was there."

Campana and Erlene Keller, LCSW, the mental health professional on campus, share Juniper 2. Even though the location of Campana and Keller's offices may not be known by all, Campana still gets plenty of visits and she's been getting ready for more for the last seven years.

Her first day here she took inventory of her new medical office and its supplies. All the supplies fit onto a small two foot section of the exam room's bookcase, remembers Campana. There was also one chair, one exam table, one scale, one stool, a "few meds," one blanket, a few sheets, and a couple pillows, and one fold-away cot, according to Campana.

The fold-up cot was a story in itself. Campana recalls when her patients, "had to sit in one spot, or it would fold up on them." She used to tell them not to move, and to call her if they were thinking of getting up.

Years have passed and Campana doesn't worry about her medical equipment hurting her patients anymore; she has a new cot now, one that hangs on an exam room wall. It's stiff and can be used as a stretcher if needed, she said.

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There is also an exam bed for patients to lie down without the fear of being folded up. The old chair, which came with the office, has been replaced with one containing more padding, and the shelf has been stocked with medical supplies; so much so, that she now has to have a supply closet, says Campana.

As a result of one of the classes Campana has taken, she is now a "certified smoking cessation counselor" with "lots" of knowledge to help people stop smoking," she said.

"I don't have the patch," says Campana, "I have quit kits." These are kits she gives people who are willing to stop smoking in order to assist them in their transition.

Smokers are only a small percentage of the medical issues Campana faces every day. The medical issues she faces most often are first aid, health counseling, and questions.

Anything that comes her way, Campana gives



Laureen Campana in her Juniper 2 Office

it her all. For example, when one student came to her recently with a twisted ankle, Campana wrapped it, gave the student a pain reliever, and crutches, then drove her to and from her next classes.

"I love working here," says Campana. And work she does. There are over 100 medical pamphlets covering the whole left wall of the office, many of them new this year. She gives every student who comes in, a first-aid kit, she designed.

Although there are a lot of changes in Juniper 2, some things never change. For one, Campana still has the "seasonal décor from the original nurse." Anyone who walks into Campana's office will see one of the original pieces. It's a "witch," complete with garlic, assumed as a spice to place in her caldron, and one very witch-like face and costume.

The following are just some of the health services offered to students at no cost.

- Registered nurse visit for minor illness, minor injury, education and health counseling
- Mental health provider visits
- Tuberculosis screening
- Lab tests for pregnancy, anemia, blood sugar, strep throat & more
- Birth control counseling
- Condoms
- ibuprofen, cold, cough, allergy and other over-the-counter medications
- Pocket first-aid kits
- Extensive selections of health pamphlets
- Referrals to low-cost or free community health services
- Information on student health insurance

Want more information? Contact Campana at 588-5204, or drop by her office, Juniper 2. The hours are Mon. - Wed. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Thurs. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. and closed Friday. ♿

Middle College in Full Swing - Multi-Tasking an Education

How 30 Sonora High School Students Started College Halfway Through Their First School Day.

By Jordan Geary

Seven junior and 23 senior, Sonora Union High School District, SUHSD, students are still going to high school, but in a very unconventional way. They are not on independent study and they didn't move. They were selected, out of 54 applicants, to go to college part time, and be part of a brand new program between SUHSD and Columbia College. The program is called "middle college," says Anastasia Conlin, the solo middle college teacher. The local middle college program was started this year by local educators, and it's creating a whole new option for its students.

It's allowing students who are unhappy with high school, and or want to gain college credit to take, a high school-level class with Conlin, and some college classes from Columbia College, therefore letting the students finish their last two years of compulsory education while attending Columbia College part-time.

The program, "has been in process for at least three years," said Dr. Joan Smith president of Columbia College, in an e-mail, "and began with a dialogue between Dr. Jim Riggs, former Columbia College president and Rob Gaskill, superintendent of the Sonora Union High School."

"The community has rallied to get this program off the ground," said Conlin in an e-mail, and "all involved hope these opening years are successful."

"The high school and college have made a two-year commitment to the program," says Conlin.

That commitment started during fall semester, when its students sat down in the Manzanita conference room for their first class.

"I like her class a lot, she's a very good teacher... the perfect teacher for the job," said middle college student and senior Kevin Blansit.

The middle college class meets Monday through Friday, 8 - 11:30 a.m., according to Blansit. After class, the students, "can take any class [they] meet the requirements for," says Blansit.

With options such as this with a program that

has never before been offered in Tuolumne County, the middle college program has been, "getting the attention of schools in the foothills," says Doug Lau, director of marketing & public relations for Columbia College, even though "middle college is not a new concept statewide."

Like many other colleges with this type of program, the partnership hopes to grow, next fall to have two teachers and 60 students.

But that's a long way off and the strategic planning committee says it has a lot of work to do.

For example, "a final decision about mid-year adds has not yet been reached," said Conlin, but "we are encouraging all interested students to begin the application process."

The planning committee in charge of the new program, was formed sometime after the

conversation between Riggs and Gaskill.

The major players in this committee are Drs. Dennis Gervin, Lynn Martin and Mario Cordova who represent Columbia College, along with Gaskill; Jim Roeber, principal of Theodore Bird High School; Terry Clark, principal of Sonora High School; and Charlene Dambacher, counselor at Sonora High School, according to April's Insite Publication, Columbia College's president's report.

Since this planning committee was formed, many letters and news releases have been issued in order to define the perfect student for the program. Middle college organizers say the program is for students who have "little or no interest in school; lack study, organizational and time management skills; and want the freedom and independence of the adult world," according to Riggs.

They are students who are "bright, intelligent and demonstrate strong leadership qualities," according to Insite. Riggs, one of the program's leading supporters, has also described the middle college program as, "an innovative alternative that targets talented but underachieving students."



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Some of these descriptions have not been received well by middle college participants, says Blansit. It may be because these students take just about every class that full-time college students take. There're "taking a huge range of classes, from yoga and weight training to anatomy and statistics," says Conlin.

The program isn't for everyone though, "a handful of students decided, at the last minute, to drop from the roster," said Conlin.

"But were quickly replaced," said Blansit. The students that stayed in the class tend to see a class that starts like many high school English classes do, with a vocabulary word. Then the class will move on to a daily writing assignment, after that the class will study government, economics, or English.

They don't have any guest speakers, but they do have good class discussions, says Blansit, "Conlin sometimes has to guide us, but we generally have very focused discussions ... [they're] very fun [and] you can get very deep into the material."

The students do more than talk and according to Blansit, the class is in the process of making a documentary about their groundbreaking program.

"The class is working with Columbia student Gregg Simmard," said Conlin.

They are also working on a, "government simulation project ... designed to teach students about the complexity of government structures and functions," says Conlin.

"I feel lucky to be their teacher," says Conlin. "These young people deserve an educational environment that better serves their needs."

An environment, that Riggs hopes will, "form the foundation for their future academic and career choices."

If anyone is interested in learning more about the middle college program or wants to apply, they should contact Anastasia Conlin at conlina@yosemite.edu or Colleen Lindsay at Sonora High School. 🐾

CROSS - COUNTRY

By Rebecca Keese

He's a feisty, witty, kind-hearted aging man who loves to run. He's a high school physiology teacher and cross country coach of nearly 40 years. Who is this noble community icon you ask? Tony O'Geen, or "Oge" as many of his former students and team members know him.

Oge is, and has been, the coach of Columbia College's Cross Country team for the past three years. At the beginning of this year cross country season, Oge walked Columbia's campus distributing flyers in an attempt to promote the sport. As a result, the team gained one new member.

When asked why such little interest exists in participating in cross country, Oge smiled and said, "People are busy." This year the cross country team at Columbia College consists of eight runners. Last year there were six. Oge shared, "The hardest thing is getting recruits!" Oge is a huge proponent for health through exercise, running without question, being his passion.

"Hard work and consistency" are strongly encouraged for all Oge's students and athletes alike. This year's final cross country conference meet was October 26th in Fresno. The season's hard work paid off for two runners who qualified for the Nor-Cal meet. Brian Forbes and Lauren Sword went to the state meet in Folsom on the Nov. 3. At the Nor-Cal meet, Sword finished 82 of 109 and Forbes finished 61 of 112 runners.

Oge reflects on this year's season and comments, "Everyone's improving!" 🐾



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The College agreed, and in a manner of speaking, “jumped” his claim. Hence the origin of the Columbia mascot name “Claim Jumpers.”

Ross Carkeet, retired forestry and natural resources instructor, remembers Davis fondly - “He knew his local mushrooms, enjoyed his wine, and would drop in on my classes with mushrooms and tidbits of information around campus.”

As construction started, and the college began to take shape, it was proposed an island would be a nice centerpiece for the reservoir. Columbia groundskeeper Ken Lucas, who retired a few years ago, was up to the task. He came in with a tractor and dug the pond, enlarging the reservoir and creating the familiar island we see today. The lake has played host to many types of animals, some native, some not. It has become home to invasive species such as bullfrogs, and suspected of housing red-eared slider turtles – your common pet store turtle. Native species include tree frogs and a “species of special concern” for the California Department of Fish and Game - the Western Pond Turtle.

Ospreys roosting in the pines have also been spotted, and have been known to put on a good show for students in recent years, dive-bombing for fish in the lake. Other birds commonly sighted on the lake are the western grebe, red-headed mergansers, wood ducks and the belted kingfisher.

Carkeet and Columbia instructor Jack Tune have also influenced some of the lake’s wildlife and topography - planting cattails and introducing bluegills, catfish, and bass to the lake. “I was a student of Ross Carkeet’s at the time of the fish planting project,” remembers Tune. “That was 1969, I believe. We netted the fish from ponds west of Sonora, and then transported them in milk cans back to the college. I’ve always been disappointed that we didn’t plant fish native to California, but at the time we were in a hurry to get something growing in the lake.”

Unfortunately, something else grows in the lake that the college is not in a hurry to have - the Brazilian invasive weed known as elodea. Biology Instructor Micha Miller has been charting the algae growth in the lake since 2003 and his measurements show the algae and elodea, are indeed flourishing. But this is nothing new to the lake.

“The algae and elodea issues have been with us since day one,” said Carkeet. “In the past we hired a contractor with a large flotation mechanical harvester to remove the aquatic plants. This process was expensive and provided us about 10 years of relief.”

The college is working in conjunction with Tuolumne Utilities District, which operates the reservoir, to decide whether to treat the water with a herbicide that would slowly kill the elodea and preserve the aesthetics of the lake. Carkeet is wary of this approach.

“The majority of science staff has historically avoided recommending chemical (herbicide) treatment of the lake for aquatic plant removal, because of the sensitive ecosystem and significance of the lake as a campus focal point,” said Carkeet. “Perhaps this viewpoint is changing in favor of a ‘quick fix solution’, and if so, I believe herbicide use in the lake is environmentally risky and undesirable.”

All this talk of algae and herbicide might make it difficult for a student to imagine that the lake once provided drinking water for students.

Years ago the lake had a filtering and purification system that provided drinking water for the campus. Twelve years ago it was switched to water from TUD via a pipeline from New Melones Reservoir.

“Folks on campus used their bottled water for years until we switched over to the pipeline water” remembers Carkeet, “The lake water never tasted very pleasant.”



Photo by Gerald and Buff Corsi

Gene Womble, Executive Chef, Strives for Success

By Rebecca Keesee

He busily moves around his office. Students flow in and out of the room asking questions about baking temperatures and settings. He is calm in a world of culinary chaos as he sips on soda from a glass goblet. He wears traditional black and white checkered pants and a blue jean, double-breasted chef's coat, embroidered with his name and position, "Gene Womble, Executive Chef." Womble smiles through his square glasses and excuses himself momentarily from his office. Upon his return, he is again bombarded with "how to" inquiries from his students. Still, he remains calm.

Womble has held the position as the Hospitality Management Program Coordinator at Columbia College since January 1997. Aside from holding the position as hospitality management program coordinator, Womble expanded his roles as board member of Columbia College Foundation and vice president of the Yosemite Faculty Association.

One of the Foundation's main objectives is generating funds for students in need of financial assistance who are enrolling at the college. He said, "The foundation is here for students who have a strong interest in success." Working with 50 adjunct instructors on the Yosemite Faculty Association,



Gene Womble, Executive Chef

together they strive to improve issues of contractual relations, such as budget and enrollment.

As executive chef of the hospitality department, Womble explains one of his responsibilities is to ensure the success of the culinary program. After ten years at the college, he is smiling and affirms, "This is what I want to do, and I am doing it. I love my job."

Womble has years of educational experience. He graduated from San Francisco City College with an associate's degree and transferred to Cal State Stanislaus in Turlock, where he earned his bachelor's degree. Womble is working on his master's degree in educational administration. Prior to his employment with Columbia College, Womble worked as a food service director in Turlock for 16 years.

Womble stated his favorite part of the program is being able to make a difference, and enabling students to succeed. He shared, "I hope that Columbia College makes differences in one's life, for whatever reason one might be here." Looking forward, Womble hopes for continued growth in the hospitality department at Columbia College, "expanding successes and offerings." ☺

Womble said, "As you live your life, never let good be good enough as you reach for success."

ASK THE NURSE

School nurse Laureen Campana answers questions from the Columbia College community.

Have a question?

Contact her at 588-5204 or stop by her office in Juniper 2.

I didn't even know we had a nurse on campus.

Yes, I work out of the Health Services Office in Juniper Building Room 2. Come on by and check out what I have – it's all yours really. Part of your health fee pays for me and everything in the office. I have free little pocket first aid kits, lots of over-the-counter drugs (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, antacids, claritan and more) also free. I can take care of any minor cuts, scrapes or burns you may have, and I can tell you where to go if you have an injury or illness that is more than I can fix up. You can rest on my comfy exam table if you need to, complete with blankets and pillow and even a relaxation tape to take you to the beach for a while.

My marriage is breaking up and I need to talk to someone but I don't know where to go.

Can you help?

Health Services sponsors the services of a mental health counselor on campus. These visits are private and confidential and FREE to students at Columbia. Every Wednesday and Thursday Earlene Keller LCSW sees students in a private office by appointment. She is a mental health counselor who regularly helps students with a variety of concerns including marital problems, depression, stress, alcohol problems for yourself or family, returning from the war, anger issues and much much more. If you are concerned about anything talking with Earlene is a good place to start. She is on campus and free. You can call the Health Services Office to make an appointment – 588-5204.

I ran out of my asthma medication and need it but I don't have health insurance right now and can't afford to go to the doctor. Any ideas on what I could do?

I hear this kind of dilemma a lot. Lots of people don't have health insurance right now. Well, there is a place you can go for help that is free. Sonora Regional Health Center supports a Health Van. This van is staffed by a nurse practitioner (NP). It is parked in front of Wal-mart every Monday and Friday from about 9a.m. – 3p.m. All visits to the van are free. The NP will be able to write you a prescription for your medication, which you would still need to pay for, but the visit would be free. Look for this same van on campus in the near future! We hope to have it here once a week soon.

I moved here from out of the area. I need to renew my birth control pills but I can't find a Planned Parenthood near by. What should I do?

You are right, the nearest Planned Parenthood is in Modesto. What we do have in Sonora is a service offered by the Tuolumne County Public Health Department called Family Pact. Family Pact is low cost or free family planning services. At the health department they can do annual exams for women and provide birth control. They also can do testing and treatment for sexually transmitted disease for men and women and anonymous HIV testing. You can call them for an appointment and more information at 533-7400 – ask for the Family Pact program. Good Luck!

Best in Health,
Laureen Campana
588-5204
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