

Horticulture students showcase skills

Robb Egan
Co-Photo Editor

Five Clackamas Community College students participated in a landscaping competition during the 27th annual Associated Landscape Contractors of America Student Career Days, held March 13-16 at Hinds Community College near Jackson, Miss.

Students from 51 different colleges and universities competed in this year's event, a combination job fair and student competition. Of the more than 670 students competing, CCC

students Kenny Chaffin, Taryn Kruger, Sorjen Simantel and Jen Whiting finished in the top 20. Each student was allowed to participate in up to five of the 15 events, which ranged from practical landscaping applications such as irrigation

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Bruce Nelson
Horticulture Instructor

construction to sales and other avenues of business.

"It's a great opportunity for our students to have fun, share ideas and information, and to meet

other students from around the country," said horticulture

instructor Bruce Nelson.

The event is held at a different college or university every year, and is sponsored by the ALCA for the purpose of showcasing career opportunities in the landscaping industry, while sharing the best landscaping ideas and practices throughout the United States.

"The companies who sponsor the event benefit because it gives them the opportunity to talk to and interview students educated and interested in the industry," said Nelson.

This year marks only the sixth year that CCC students have attended the event, and Clackamas is one of only a handful of colleges west of the Rocky Mountains to participate.



BRUCE NELSON Contributed

Horticulture students Kenny Chaffin (left) and Sorjen Simantel relax between events at the national ALCA competition in March. They placed among the top 20 contenders.

Mendoza broadens horizons

Language student and tutor cuts back on tutoring hours and class load, finds time for trip to France



SUMMER MENDOZA

Elisabeth Meyer
Feature Editor

Summer Mendoza, tutor and language student, said she's "taking a break" her last term before heading off to PSU, where she wants to double major in Spanish and Russian and possibly minor in French.

This term, she's only taking one class and tutoring Spanish and French about four hours a week. That schedule has given her enough time to take a short trip to France and study a little Romanian on her own.

Why Romanian? Why not? After all, she's been fluent in Spanish for years, speaks enough French to tutor second-year students, and she's currently taking Russian. She's tried German here as well. So really, it's high time she picked up another language already.

"I think anybody can add another foreign language," Mendoza said. "For myself, I know that being grounded in a second language before starting a third one helps."

Mendoza has been studying Spanish since her earliest opportunity in high school at Country Christian in Molalla. She said she started because she was fascinated by the history of Mexico.

"I grew up in Molalla. It wasn't racist or anything; there were just small horizons," Mendoza said.

After high school, Mendoza observed an ESL class, where she met her husband. Their four children speak English and Spanish, and Mendoza's daughter goes to Russian class too, where she copies down the characters into her notebook.

Mendoza has been tutoring first-year Spanish at Clackamas for three years.

"I found that teaching something to someone else really made me study harder," Mendoza said. "I really enjoy

clarifying things. The teachers here do an excellent job, but sometimes there isn't enough time in class."

The tutoring budget has gotten tighter since last year, and now the emphasis has shifted to "student need," Mendoza said.

"In the past I've had students that just wanted a little extra help," she said. "Now I'm seeing more students who are struggling. It's rewarding; otherwise I wouldn't do it."

"Tutors are just fellow students who may have a better understanding of the language," Mendoza said, urging students to not be intimidated by learning a language and seeking help to study.

Mendoza said one recurring theme in tutoring is introducing students to basics of English grammar.

"For whatever reason, we as Americans do not study grammar very much, or we study it and then forget. The biggest problem (in learning another language's grammar) is students not having a background, not knowing the vocabulary," she said. "They not only have to learn the (second) language, they have to learn about English."

"You find that people coming out of the ESL program often have a better understanding of English grammar than many native speakers," Mendoza said.

David Miller remembers Mendoza tutoring as long as he's been the foreign language department chair.

"Her Spanish is very good and very native-sounding," Miller said.

Miller noted that non-native-speaking tutors are more likely to clarify technical grammar points with an instructor. "The good thing about Summer is that if she doesn't know something, she'll come and ask," he said.

Earlier this term, Mendoza and old Clackamas friend Marilyn Fairbee went to Europe to visit their friend Jeannie Merrill, who is studying at the University of Poitiers in France.

"I'd been planning to visit ever since I found out Jeannie was going," Mendoza said. Merrill had introduced Mendoza to French, giving her a head start when she began French

classes. Mendoza recalled a previous trip to France with Merrill when people thwarted Mendoza and Merrill's attempts to speak French by responding in English.

"Jeannie would pretend she didn't speak English," Mendoza laughed, imitating her friend's put-on face of bewilderment. "Je ne comprends."

They spent five days in Poitiers, a town built on Gallo-Roman ruins, but hardly a tourist trap.

"People seemed more surprised that we were there," Mendoza said. "I was really happy to blend in, to be a citizen going to the grocery store."

Mendoza noticed that, if anything, French people were even more friendly than on previous trips.

"Paris has a reputation for being snooty, but people went out of their way to speak English," she said. "I saw things—somewhat volatile articles on magazine covers, but individual people treated us with utmost courtesy."

"My philosophy is, if you make an effort to respect another person's culture, the other person is usually respectful," she said.

"(Tutoring) is rewarding; otherwise I wouldn't do it."

Summer Mendoza
Student and foreign language tutor

Jordan cashes out, awaits long vacation

Bekah Finch
The Clackamas Print

Sue Jordan has collected model lighthouses for a long time. Unfortunately, she has only been able to collect them in Oregon, since she has been working since high school.

Maybe now that Jordan is retiring from Clackamas Community College, she will be able to expand her lighthouse search.

Jordan said that her time working at Clackamas has been "one of the most pleasant in my life." Jordan started out working in the general ledger and after three years moved up to payroll where she has worked ever since.

Working hard is definitely not new to Jordan. She spent 10 years at her first job, which was offered to her right after high school. She worked as a stenographer, but knew that it wasn't right for her. Working with the payroll is her niche.

Jordan said she will miss Clackamas.

"You spend all this time waiting and waiting to retire, and all of a sudden, it's here," she said. Jordan also said she wouldn't retire so soon, but "since I can, I may as

well," she joked.

Even though Jordan will be retired after this year, her husband still has a couple years to go. In the meantime, Jordan said she will probably do all the little things she has missed, "like sleeping in and staying up late." Jordan admits after having a routine for so long she will have to find some way to stay busy, but she doesn't plan on working or volunteering for work for a while.

Hopefully, though, the summer will bring some travel for Jordan and her family. So whether it's just visiting with the kids and grandkids, or seeking out new lighthouses, surely Jordan will be enjoying the next chapter of her life.



SUE JORDAN

Author to discuss Arab-American experience

Karen Hill
The Clackamas Print

Experiencing an unfamiliar culture. Facing life outside the mainstream. Living in the minority.

Author's Night, Wednesday, May 21, will deal with issues like those listed above. Featuring Arab-American author Diana Abu-Jaber, this event will give those interested a peek into a world outside their own.

During the evening, Abu-Jaber will read from her novels, speak of past experiences, answer questions and sell and sign her books.

The established Portland author has written two award-winning novels, "Arabian Jazz" and more recently, "Crescent." "Arabian Jazz" won the Oregon Book

Award and was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway award and "Crescent" won the National Endowment for the Arts award.

Abu-Jaber, whom English instructor Allen Widerburg describes as "a warm and wonderful person," enjoys writing based on her own life style and living experiences.

"Her novels deal with what family life is like in an Arab-American household," said Widerburg.

Abu-Jaber, who was born in Syracuse, N.Y., is a daughter to a Jordanian immigrant and an American mother. Although born in the United States, she spent much of her childhood in both the Middle East and New York.

"[Abu-Jaber's] writing helps us understand what it's like to be in

the minority," said Widerburg. "Because she has a foot in both worlds, she can help bridge the gap."

According to Widerburg, hearing the words and thoughts of Abu-Jaber may be just what is needed in times such as these.

"There's a great deal of prejudice right now," said Widerburg. "It's very important to understand not all Arabs are bad people. Her novels help us to humanize the whole experience and understand these people are humans just like us."

Author's Night takes place Wednesday, May 21 at 7 p.m. in the Gregory Forum. It is a free event, but a \$2 contribution to co-sponsor Friends of the Library would be greatly appreciated. For more information contact Allen Widerburg at ext. 2359 or 2284.