Star of the Month:
Marilyn Comer—A Success Story of a Different Kind

In many ways, Marilyn Comer is a typical Star of the Month—intelligent, outgoing, successful; however, the resemblance stops there for this 56-year-old mother of three and grandmother of four. Hers is a story of choices, not circumstances.

The daughter of highly educated parents, Marilyn chose family over education, opting to skip college after graduating high school, marry, raise children and be a stay-at-home, home-school mom. So when her third child went to college, she thought about going to college herself, but the “fear factor” kept her from taking action until her son challenged her.

Marilyn's son, Rob Comer, attended Lone Star College-Tomball, where he studied economics and became Texas Regional Phi Theta Kappa vice president. He knew his mother would thrive at LSC-Tomball, so he offered to pay her COMPASS test and enrollment fees. The rest, as they say, is history.

Marilyn continued challenging herself, becoming a chapter and Texas Regional Phi Theta Kappa president, Honors Presentation scholarship winner, Academic Excellence and Outstanding Leadership awards winner, LSC-Tomball All-Texas Academic Team nominee, and Inkling Magazine contributor (a short story and a poem in the same issue). She is setting her sights on graduating summa cum laude and getting an English degree from either the University of Texas, Arlington or University of Houston.

To be sure, there have been bumps along her journey to become a professional fiction writer. Algebra almost derailed her; she would lock herself up and study until dawn to no avail until a friend started attending the tutoring center. An epiphany soon followed her friend’s example—“If what you're doing isn’t working, change it!” Marilyn went to the tutoring center, mastered algebra and was soon nominated for an academic achievement award by her mathematics professor Melinda Coleman.

The best part of her LSC-Tomball Experience? The collegial relationship with her professors. “At my age, they’re as much peers as authority figures,” she said with a grin.
Community College Day in State Capitol

Students and faculty from Lone Star College-Tomball attended Community College Day in Austin on February 5. In addition to attending the morning rally with Dr. Richard Carpenter (Chancellor of the Lone Star College System), Texas State Senator Kel Seliger (chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee), Dr. Bill Holda (president of Kilgore College), and more than 1,000 fellow students and faculty members, the LSC-Tomball contingent met with Texas State Representative Cecil Bell and the legislative assistants for Texas State Representative Allen Fletcher, Texas State Representative Debbie Riddle and Texas State Senator Dan Patrick. The students discussed two important issues with the representative and legislative assistants: outcomes-based funding and legislation that would allow concealed handgun license holders to carry concealed firearms on college and university campuses. They also enjoyed an informative tour of the capitol and were recognized from the House floor by Representative Bell. The students returned energized, informed and encouraged.

LSC-Tomball Men’s Soccer and Basketball Teams “Got Game”

It may be early, but the Lone Star College-Tomball Club Sports Men’s Basketball and Soccer teams are starting off the spring 2013 season strong. Wellness Center program coordinator and Club Sports coordinator Paul Dempsey is proud of the performance of the teams, as are men's basketball head coach Chris DeJesus and men's soccer head coach Tim Grove. To date, the basketball team is 5-0 (with an average win margin of 25 points per contest) and the soccer team is 3-1…go Timberwolves!

Shalynne Foster—A Woman with Focus

When Shalynne Foster first entered Lone Star College-Tomball for the fall 2012 semester, she already knew she wanted to work for a non-profit organization. So, she chose to major in business management knowing that a strong business foundation would serve her well.

When the chance to combine her aspirations and major presented itself, Shalynne was determined to seize the opportunity. Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) president Bruce Hillegeist visited Shalynne’s macroeconomics class to make a presentation on the Tomball economy and during the course of the presentation mentioned that GTACC was considering creating an internship position. “Immediately, I sought to figure out how I could fill that position. “

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Jonathan Sprinkles—Making Leaders at LSC-Tomball

On February 6, award winning motivational speaker Jonathan Sprinkles spoke to Lone Star College-Tomball students about how to L.I.V.E. (leadership = Integrity + vision + excellence) like a leader. Hosted by the Student Activities Board and the Office of Student Life, Sprinkles' quick wit and down-home style quickly captured the attention and imagination of the audience, revealing the secrets and strategies for influencing peers and earning respect.

LSC-Tomball Mardi Gras—Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!

It might not have been the French Quarter on Fat Tuesday, but Monday, February 11 the Lone Star College-Tomball Commons was filled with the smell of a crawfish boil, the lilt of Cajun music and the sound of laughter as revelers ate, danced and decorated masks in the spirit of Mardi Gras. Sponsored by the Student Activities Board and Office of Student Life, the free celebration rocked the room for two hours and delighted students and employees alike.

Rotaract/Rotary Club Returns to LSC-Tomball

Community outreach is a highly held principle at Lone Star College-Tomball, so it was only natural that LSC-Tomball would welcome a relationship with the service club Rotary International and open a Rotaract chapter on campus. Rotaract is organized by Rotary clubs to promote leadership, professional development, and service among young adults ages 18-30. Sponsored by economics faculty professor Joseph Cahill and assistant professor Renato Davia and supported by Tomball Rotary Foundation director (and LSC-Tomball biology professor) Dr. Frank LSC-Tomball Mardi Gras—Laissez les Bons Temps Rouler!

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For Michael Weems, playwright, actor, writer and administrative assistant to Lone Star College-Tomball President Dr. Susan Karr, 2013 is already shaping up to be a great year. Leading theatrical publisher Smith & Kraus included his one-act play “She’s Bound to Know” in its anthology “The Best Ten-Minute Plays 2013”; the Cultural Arts Playhouse (Long Island, New York) selected his two short plays “Love Birds” and “Bathtime Baritone” for inclusion in its Starving Artists Series; and the Obsidian Art Space (Houston Heights, Texas) hosts the world premiere of his full-length play “Okay, Better, Best” March 12 – 29.

LSC-Tomball Political Science Internship Program a Success

Lone Star College-Tomball students Camila Escobar and Hunter Simonsen are currently serving as state and federal interns, respectively, as part of the LSC-Tomball GOVT 2389 political science honors internship course—a program (facilitated by political science professor and honors political science internship coordinator Dr. Virginia Haysley) designed to promote greater civic engagement. Camila will be interning for Representative Allen Fletcher, District 130 of the Texas House of Representatives, and Hunter will be interning for Congressman Michael McCaul, Texas 10th District Representative in the United States House of Representatives. This course is designed to place eligible students in the offices of elected representatives to not only give them practical work experience, but so that they may gain greater knowledge of the political process itself. Duties will vary; the interns will do routine office work as well as more analytical and advanced tasks. In the end, the interns will gain knowledge in the daily operations of a representative's office that includes constituency service, the legislative process and communication. Hunter agrees, “This internship is an incredible opportunity to see our government in action...while gaining a real and tangible sense of the values and beliefs our community holds...to better understand where and how changes in our government can best take place and to see up close the framework that keeps our nation running.”

LSC-Tomball Employee an Accomplished Playwright

2012 – 2013 Chancellor’s Faculty Technology Innovation Grant Awarded to Two LSC-Tomball Programs

“The purpose of the Chancellor’s Faculty Technology Innovation Grant (CFTIG) is to support pioneering faculty in the development, deployment or implementation of new and emerging technologies into teaching and learning to increase student success.”

Lone Star College-Tomball faculty garnered two of the three CFTIG awards made this year. “Grant for Renewable Energy Education Needing Students Who Produce Alternative Clean Energy (G.R.E.E.N. S.P.A.C.E)” is a joint project between Antonius Bom, LSC-Tomball professor of engineering technology, and Dr. Daniel Kainer, LSC-Montgomery professor of biology. “21st Century Classroom” is a collaboration between Dr. Jackie Thomas, Jr. (assistant professor of Education), Latoya Hardman (associate professor of developmental studies/English) and Caroline Jamroz (assistant professor of developmental studies/English) of the LSC-Tomball developmental studies, English, languages and mathematics (DSELM) division.

Accolades
The G.R.E.E.N. S.P.A.C.E. project consists of constructing a solar/wind turbine hybrid system to run LSC-Montgomery’s biorefinery operations. LSC-Tomball students from the solar photovoltaic class and the wind turbine class will design and install the system, and LSC-Montgomery biology, geology, chemistry and physics students will use the system to further their work in biomanufacturing and alternative energy research.

The 21st Century Classroom changes the way faculty approach developmental education, focusing on a potential mismatch between traditional teaching environments and the demand for students to be critical thinkers with strong communication and collaboration skills. The classroom features the use of innovative classroom configurations, innovative, research-based technology to engage, encourage, value and support students, and a reframed curriculum that prepares students for academic, personal, and professional success.

**Sabbatical Recipients Announced**

Dr. Margaret Jelinek Lewis, professor of psychology, and Earl Staley, art professor and program co-coordinator, have been named Lone Star College-Tomball 2013 sabbatical leave recipients.

Sabbatical leave is a professional growth opportunity designed to increase the value of the recipient's sustained contribution to the Lone Star College System. Eligible employees submit their proposal for review by a system-wide committee which makes recommendations to the chancellor for approval.

Margaret’s sabbatical will consist of conducting research focused on finding ways to encourage students to be more connected to the community while teaching students to practice real-world applications of the course material. Additionally, she will research creative ways to use technology within the classroom to connect students to current events and new information, using that research to reorganize classes and better utilize current technology and information access to develop a set of courses that connects students to their communities in both high-tech and hands-on ways.

Earl’s sabbatical project involves returning as a visiting fellow to The American Academy in Rome (Italy) to further his knowledge of Classical, Renaissance and Baroque art, and to refine his painting technique, creating works in watercolor and acrylic using Rome and other places in Italy as source material. Additionally, he will gain firsthand knowledge of the enormous changes in art history uncovered in Rome during the last decade (all of which have led to a reevaluation of art history as taught from current textbooks) and incorporate that information into his teaching curriculum.

**Spotlights**

**Melanie Younger—A Life of “Firsts”**

Professor of biology and veterinary technology Dr. Melanie Younger has made a life of being “first”: first LSC-Tomball biology faculty member when the col-

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The daughter of two college history teachers, Melanie was born to teach. “I love the interaction with students…to see ‘the light come on’ in their eyes…to see the students get excited about learning.”

When not teaching biology, clinical pathology, and vet tech medical terminology, the happily married mother of three (grandmother of one) is a diehard college sports fan (especially basketball and football), but what else would you expect from a member of the Ohio Wesleyan University Athletic Hall of Fame?!

**Paul Dempsey—Honesty and Intensity**

When you first meet Lone Star College-Tomball Wellness Center program coordinator Paul Dempsey, you can't avoid getting caught up in his honest and intense enthusiasm—from overseeing the Wellness Center and its health programs to overseeing the coaches and all club sports teams, his eagerness shows in everything he does.

Detroit born and Texas raised, Paul's road to LSC-Tomball started at the University of Houston, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in kinesiology, and it continued through Houston's Lanier Middle School, where he coached football, basketball and track as well as taught health and physical education for four years.

An avid sportsman himself, Paul finds his greatest rewards in working with people, having “the opportunity to change people for the good.” Nowhere is this more evident than in Paul's love for club sports. “They come here to play sports first, and take classes second. But after two years they end up with an Associate of Arts degree when they really just came for sports. It impacts their lives not for
just two years…for them to earn a degree is a great feeling. The coaches, players and I are all a big family brought together by a common thread, for love of the game.”

Recent Events

LSC-Tomball Theatre Department Production of
I Never Sang for My Father

On February 21 – 23, the Lone Star College-Tomball theatre department presented its production of Robert Anderson's “I Never Sang for My Father” (the department's entry into the 2012 – 2013 Texas Community College Speech & Theatre Association (TCCSTA) State Play Festival February 27 – March 2). The scene above features John Price as “Tom Garrison,” Kelsey Finstad as “Margaret Garrison” and Tyler Galindo as “Gene Garrison.”

LSC-Tomball Eco Club & Phi Theta Kappa
Hold Wetlands Trail Clean-up

The Lone Star College-Tomball Eco Club and Phi Theta Kappa once again teamed up for their semi-annual Wetland Trail Clean-up project on February 22. The two student groups and assorted volunteers picked up debris along the nature trail located on the north side of the campus. The nature trail leads to the Spring Creek wetlands. According to Brandon Lowery, biology associate professor and Eco Club sponsor, the students have good reason to take care of the nature trail. “It’s difficult to find a real nature trail in the city,” Lowery said. “It’s one of the awesome resources we have here in Tomball, and it’s a very valuable resource we have on campus.”

Community Partnerships

LSC-Tomball Joins All Kids Alliance

Always on the watch for new ways to connect with the community, Lone Star College-Tomball (LSC-T) has entered into a partnership with All Kids Alliance.
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GTACC First Friday Luncheon

The Greater Area Tomball Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) held its First Friday Luncheon in Lone Star College-Tomball’s Beckendorf Conference Center on February 1. At the event, GTACC Chairman Lamar Casparis recognized LSC-Tomball for being the first organization to become a member of the Chairman’s Circle, which is a new program recognizing significant partnerships between the chamber and local organizations. The chamber also introduced their new intern, LSC-Tomball student Shalynne Foster. The keynote speaker for the luncheon, Tomball Mayor Gretchen Fagan, gave her “State of the City” address, which demonstrated the many ways that Tomball is growing and will continue to grow.

Magnolia Foundation Dancing Umbrella Parade

Lone Star College-Tomball employees participated in the Magnolia Foundation’s “Mardi Gras on the Stroll” event, which included an umbrella parade, on February 9. Left-to-right: LSC-Tomball revelers Jeff Board, PC technician III, OTS; Jeff Peno, PC technician III, OTS; Lynda Bancroft, manager, division operations, HKNST; and Sharon Alewine, specialist III, ROaDI.
GTACC Chairman’s Ball

The Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce (GTACC) held its annual Chairman's Ball February 8, honoring 2012 Citizens of the Year Grady and Sandra Martin (the first “couple” recipients) and GTACC leadership. The assembled business and community leaders joined GTACC chairman Lamar Casparis in paying homage to the Martins’ numerous contributions to the Greater Tomball area (including their tireless labors on the Tomball German Heritage Festival) and recognizing the leadership’s selfless work in the name of the community.

Kicking up their heels at the GTAAC Chairman’s Ball were (from left to right) Mike Dannenbaum (director of facilities & plant, LSC-Tomball), Patrick and Dr. Lisa Morales (dean, academic initiatives & partnerships, LSC-Tomball), Sandra and Grady Martin (2012 GTACC citizens of the year), Dr. Susan Karr (president, LSC-Tomball) and Joe Karr, Dr. Cindy Casparis (dean, HKNST division, LSC-Tomball) and Lamar Casparis (GTACC chairman).

LSC-Tomball a Welcomed Addition to Tomball Elementary School “Math and Science Night” Equation

On January 24, Lone Star College-Tomball Honors and Psychology Club students led more than 72 kindergarteners through fourth graders through the scientific method during Math and Science Night at Tomball Elementary School (TES). Psychology associate professor Dr. David Beaulieu and LSC-Tomball students created a thoughtful experiment that involved taste-testing reduced fat and regular Oreos and graphically displaying the results; psychology professor Dr. Margaret Jelinek Lewis and science lab coordinator Sue Freed engaged students, their parents, and TES faculty and administrators with “skeleton man,” “muscle man,” and various live and plastic brains, hearts and lungs. Throughout TES halls, attendees were “buzzing” about the LSC-Tomball exhibit and TES staff repeatedly mentioned how excited they were about the college’s unique exhibit. Coordinated by the Office of Initiatives and Partnerships in conjunction with the Tomball Education Partnership Council, this event established a productive community partnership and enabled college students to play a leadership role in math and science education.

Shalynne Foster
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Shalynne’s duties range from routine tasks to event coordination, whatever is needed to assist the GTACC. “I get to experience first-hand the ins and outs of what makes a business tick, and not just any business—the business that dedicates [its] success to Tomball.”

After LSC-Tomball, Shalynne hopes to be accepted at the McComb School of Business at the University of Texas, Austin, where she plans to earn both her Bachelor and Master of Business Administration degrees.

Monique Lee
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with… [she always] makes herself available if you need her assistance for anything.”

The honor aside, the mother of two teenage daughters finds the greatest reward of her job is, “Getting it done, seeing the results of what you’ve been working on and seeing when the students really appreciate it.”
Upcoming Events

Registration for Summer I & II and May Mini-Mester Begins
March 6

Mid-Semester Break
March 11–17

Second 8-week Classes Begin
March 18

PTK Induction Ceremony
March 19 at 7 p.m.
Beckendorf Conference Center

Scholarship Reception Banquet
March 26 at 4 p.m.
Beckendorf Conference Center

Spring Holiday
March 29–31

To see the most current events, visit LoneStar.edu/Calendars