Star of the Month: Jovanni Ruiz — Family, Focus and the Future

The U.S.-born son of Mexican immigrants, Lone Star College-Tomball “Star of the Month” Jovanni Ruiz possesses values, goals and aspirations that are both a mirror and an extension of those of his parents. Jovanni and his younger sister grew up in Houston with very little money, but through his parents' example, he understands the necessity and value of hard work. Despite carrying a 17-credit load this semester, the 19-year-old Waller resident works weekdays and weekends in the family's commercial and budding retail nursery businesses.

All too familiar with the alternative, Jovanni is adamant about the value of education. “Go to college. At least get a two-year or vocational degree before going to work. Your choices are limited with just a high school education now.”

Currently a member of the LSC-Tomball political science internship program (working for Representative Allen Fletcher of the Texas House of Representatives, District 130), Jovanni has his sights set on a law degree, after which, he hopes to find a career in politics. To be sure, he wants to be successful and enjoy the benefits that come with it; but it's obvious Jovanni also has a sense of responsibility...to return the investment his parents made in him and to provide others with the same opportunities the U.S. has provided his family.
LSC-Tomball 3rd Annual OTA Halloween Carnival

Halloween is a special time for children, and on October 25 the Lone Star College-Tomball occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program made it even more special for families of children with special needs. The goal of the carnival (an academic assignment for OTA students) is to provide an innovative learning opportunity where children with special needs and their families can come together and share a community experience.

This year’s carnival featured a pirate cove, mystery maze, photo booth and quiet room, in addition to cookie decorating, games, crafts, candy and prizes.

LSC-Tomball Students Volunteer at Head Start Family Day

For Lone Star College-Tomball alumni Shawn Runion and Rachel Lagen, Walt Disney World has become the happiest place on earth … to work. After an exhaustive interview process that evaluated thousands of applicants from across the country, Shawn and Rachel were accepted to the Disney internship program and will be attending Disney College before performing their new roles with the Magic Kingdom. Disney College will allow them to explore their strengths and interests, network with industry leaders, meet fellow students from across the nation, learn transferable skills such as teamwork, and further develop their career path. Details about their specific roles are yet to be determined, but will no doubt prove to be a rewarding experience.
Accolades

LSC-Tomball Excellence Awards — Honoring Commitment

Each academic year, the Lone Star College System Excellence Awards are given to outstanding faculty and professional support staff, at each campus, who consistently go above and beyond job duties, exemplifying the professional excellence of an LSCS employee. The following Lone Star College-Tomball employees have been recognized by their students and colleagues as outstanding models of engaged and committed employees (all pictured left to right):

Full-Time Faculty Winners
Christine Bradford
Professor of Geology
Pamela Womack
Professor of Developmental English
Dr. Mari-Carmen Marin
Professor of English
Brandon Lowery
Professor of Biology/Environmental Science

Adjunct Faculty Winners
Rachel Payne
Developmental English
Jesus Amezcua
Accounting
Vivian Rogers
Human Development
Tomoko Inoue-Baker
Japanese

Professional Support Staff Winners
Jacquelyn Shepherd
Administrative Assistant I, Vice President of Instruction
Marisue Freed
Biology Lab Coordinator
Kayla Marshall
Administrative Assistant I, Vice President of Student Success
Karen Davis
Office Administrator, Facilities & Plant Operation

Wetland Trail Clean-Up

“Always leave a place better than you found it.” The Lone Star College-Tomball Eco Club demonstrated its commitment to this belief when it held its semi-annual Wetland Trail Clean-Up on November 15. Each spring and fall for the past seven years, students have joined together to pick up debris along the nature trail (located on the north side of the LSC-Tomball campus). And that’s a good thing, says Brandon Lowery, LSC-Tomball biology professor and Eco Club sponsor, “The wetland serves as an excellent area to bird watch, enjoy nature, and it’s a great place to use as a teaching tool.”
Mini Grants Nurture Big Ideas

The Lone Star College Foundation mini grant program provides grants ($500 – $2,500) annually to assist employees at each of the colleges and the system office to develop and implement projects not normally funded through the regular budgetary process — in other words, seed money to test new, imaginative, out-of-the-box ideas prior to rollout and formal funding. And while there are no official parameters for the projects, there are expectations that they promote the goals and objectives of LSCS and the colleges.

Congratulations to the following 2013–2014 LSC-Tomball mini grant recipients:

21st Century Performing Arts Center/Theater Technology — Students with “hands-on” experience using equipment and software used in the professional world have a greater chance of being hired after college than students with only theoretical experience. From this premise, Gary Cooper and Sherri White developed a plan to incorporate the latest lighting, sound recording, and editing technology into the technical theater classroom.

Making the LSC-Tomball Campus into a Birding Hotspot — This project will further the campus interest in birds by formally establishing the LSC-Tomball campus as a “Birding Hotspot” as defined by the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology. Dr. Frank Willingham, Doug Boyd, and Brandon Lowery will set up a real time video camera to watch bird nesting locations and will contribute their scientific findings to Cornell’s ongoing study of bird migration. This project will provide many learning opportunities for LSC-Tomball students while encouraging the general public to be a part of documenting birds on campus.

Michael Weems — A Man of Letters and Words

In addition to being Lone Star College-Tomball President Dr. Susan Karr’s administrative assistant, Michael Weems is an accomplished playwright (not to mention writer and actor), who has garnered several honors for his theatrical works. Most recently, two monologues from Michael’s play “A Common Martyr” were selected for publisher Smith and Krauss’ “Best Men/Women Stage Monologues 2014” anthology.

Spotlights

Wayne Hemingway— Encouraging students since 1940

When Hugh “Wayne” Hemingway, Lone Star College-Tomball adjunct developmental mathematics professor, “retired” in 1980 at the age of 61, after a teaching career that began in 1940, he and his wife moved to Houston from New York.
Jersey to be closer to their children and to continue teaching at a local private school. In 1989, Wayne joined the staff at LSC-North Harris, and 11 years later joined the staff at LSC-Tomball, where he’s been for the last 14 years.

When asked for the secret of his longevity, Wayne credits “youth and clean living.” He loves interacting with students and finds his greatest teaching pleasure in helping them get beyond their math issues. “I love teaching these folks because most of them have had trouble with math … then the light bulb goes on,” he said with a smile.

In addition to inspiring students, the father of three, grandfather of six and great-grandfather of 11 enjoys his family, his model trains and possibly retiring … when he gets old.

Bryan Dorris — Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Modest and easygoing, Bryan Dorris, Lone Star College-Tomball HVAC maintenance technician III—electrician, is a common sight on campus. When he’s not maintaining, repairing or upgrading life safety and electrical systems, Bryan works with LSC-Tomball professor Antonius Bom’s engineering technology classes, discussing various aspects of electrical systems and demonstrating the art of conduit-bending.

A licensed journeyman electrician with 28 years of electrical contracting and service experience, Bryan has been at LSC-Tomball for three years, though he actually worked on much of the original campus 25 years ago as a contractor. He enjoys the change of pace that working at LSC-Tomball offers him. “What I like most about my job is that I do something different every day. I love the variety,” he said.

In his spare time, the married father of five and grandfather of one enjoys riding his motorcycle, boating, fishing and following his favorite sports teams, the Rockets and the Texans.

Recent Events

Lone Star College-Tomball Founder’s Day

Twenty-five years in the making, Lone Star College-Tomball’s Founder’s Day observance on November 19 was both a celebration and commemoration of a very important event in both the college’s and community’s history. Held in the Beckendorf Conference Center, the program began with LSC-Tomball President Dr. Susan Karr welcoming community officials, employees, students and com-

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PSSA Employee of the Month

Elizabeth “Beth” King — There’s No Place Like Home

As far back as high school, PSSA Employee of the Month Elizabeth “Beth” King wanted to be a part of Lone Star College-Tomball. “It was my number one choice,” she recalled. While earning her associate degree, Beth worked part-time for the college in the counseling office, where she began learning the institution from the inside out.

After two years at Landry’s Restaurants Inc. in the accounting department, Beth missed the camaraderie and family atmosphere of LSC-Tomball and returned in 2007 to work in the office of the dean of student development. From there, she moved around until ending up where she really wanted to be, advising and counseling. “I love helping students with registration and guiding them through the online search and registration process … the ‘teaching’...
New Faces

Debra Burgh
Staff Assistant II
Health Sciences

Jennifer Watson
Advisor I
Advising

Robin Krath
Officer
Campus Police

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community members, and sharing about the bond that has developed between the college and community it serves. Following Dr. Karr, Dr. Lisa Morales, LSC-Tomball dean of academic initiatives & partnerships, introduced the day’s attending dignitaries. Joining Drs. Karr and Morales in marking the day were Holli Strong, field director and representative for U.S. Congressman Michael T. McCaul, who presented the college with a proclamation from the 113th Congress; State Representative Debbie Riddle, who presented the college with a proclamation from the Texas House of Representatives; Tomball Mayor Gretchen Fagan, who presented the college with a proclamation from the City of Tomball; and Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce President Bruce Hillegeist, who praised the relationship between the college and the chamber. After a rousing performance of “Timberwolf Nation” by LSC-Tomball students and employees, founding employees Ed Albracht and Dr. Bob Eubank, along with LSC-Tomball Shipping/Receiving Clerk Rich Burkey, closed the ceremony with a touching rendition of Conway Twitty’s “Hello Darlin’” while enjoying refreshments.

Veterans Day — A Day of Gratitude and Remembrance

The November 11 observance of Veterans Day on the Lone Star College-Tomball campus was comprised of three elements selected by LSC-Tomball veterans. First, a banner was set up in the Commons where students could write comments or a letter of thanks to veterans of any war. Second, two large posters from the Texas Veterans Commission (courtesy of Houston veterans counselor Philip Kraus) were also set up in the Commons, one listing mortality and survivor statistics from all American-involved wars and one listing the names of the last surviving veterans and dependents of each war going all the way back to the American Revolution, plus a count of the number of veterans, children, parents and surviving spouses from the Civil War to the Gulf War, including peacetime. Third, an information booth located in the Commons was stocked with brochures from the Texas Veterans Commission and handouts from resources in the Harris and Montgomery County area for veterans and their families in need of assistance with food, housing, medical issues and other essentials.

“A Night on Broadway” at LSC-Tomball’s PAC

Lone Star College-Tomball’s Performing Arts Center was filled with show tunes on November 2 as featured guest artist Eric Skiles, professor of theater/humanities and artistic director of theater at LSC-Kingwood, performed selections from some of American theater’s most popular musicals during “A Night on Broadway.” The program also featured performances by Dr. Lisa Morales, LSC-
LSC-Tomball COTE Lecture Series Presents Back-to-Back Successes


October’s “Historical & Personal Reflections of the Camino,” presented by Dr. Vanessa Gilbert-Cronen, LSC-Tomball associate professor of sociology, looked at the historical background of pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in medieval times, as well as Vanessa’s own experience as a “peregrina” on The Way and some thoughts on the sociological significance of pilgrimage in the modern world.

November’s “Tools of the Trade: Managing Your Reputation On- and Offline,” presented by Nicole Finkbeiner, LSC-Tomball executive director of college relations, was a step-by-step tutorial on how to manage your image within your profession and throughout the Internet. Strategies for networking, developing name recognition, utilizing professional and social media, and affecting search results were just some of the topics discussed.

The next lecture, “Beyond ‘The Real World’: Analyzing Race in Reality Television,” will be presented February 2014 by Dr. Janie Filoteo, LSC-Tomball professor of sociology; details (as well as additional series topics and dates) can be found at LoneStar.edu/tomball-lectureseries.

26th Annual “Scarlet Scamper” K-9 Fun Run — A Morning of Friendly Competition

The competition was friendly but fierce at the 26th Annual “Scarlet Scamper” K-9 Fun Run. Sponsored by VCA Telge Road Veterinary Hospital, VCA Spring Animal Hospital, VCA Tomball Veterinary Hospital and Lone Star College-Tomball Veterinary Technology Student Organization (VTSO), the October 26 canine costume contest and one-mile run around the LSC-Tomball campus was broken down into four weight groups: 1–20

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Tomball interim music program coordinator and dean of academic initiatives & partnerships; Patti Brownfield, Tomball Intermediate School choral director; and LSC-Tomball students Rebecca and Rachel Lagen, Aaliyah Colen-Marshall, Justin Broughton and Shawn Runion.

LSC-Tomball 25th Anniversary Music Extravaganza — A Celebration of Song

Twenty-five years ago, community, administration and employees worked together to open the doors of Tomball College to 1,750 eager students. On November 13, 7:30 p.m., Lone Star College-Tomball opened the doors of its Performing Arts Center (PAC) to recognize that milestone with a musical extravaganza. The program featured an assortment of musical styles and genres — from classical to spiritual to contemporary. The selections were performed by the LSC-Tomball 25th Anniversary Community Choir, under the direction of Dr. Lisa Morales; Tomball Intermediate Choir, under the direction of Patti Brownfield and Carissa Vance; and Concordia Lutheran High School Chamber Singers, under the direction of Michael Palomaki. The evening’s accompanist was Karen Brewer, LSC-Tomball adjunct music faculty member.

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pounds, 21–40 pounds, 41–60 pounds, and 61+ pounds. Thirty-eight people/dogs participated in the run, with trophies awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in each weight category as well as one overall Grand Champion, won by Drago (and his owner, Michael Wilson) with a winning time of 6 minutes 38 seconds. Twenty-five dogs participated in the “Best Costumed” competition, with trophies going to winners in each group. In 2008, the VTSO decided to add “Scarlett Scamper” to the event’s name, K-9 Fun Run, in honor of late, six-time canine winner Scarlett Younger.

LSC-Tomball Philosophy Reading & Discussion Group — Opening Minds for 14 Years

On November 21, the Lone Star College-Tomball Philosophy & Discussion Group met and discussed renowned philosopher, cultural theorist and novelist Kwame Anthony Appiah’s new book, “Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.” As has been the case for the group’s 14-year history, the discussion was open to any and all interested in the topic. “We meet as often as we wish; these days about once a semester — though I need to stress we place ourselves under no time table. Sometimes we have met more often; sometimes less. The group is quite informal,” said Dr. Michael Capistran, Lone Star College-Tomball professor of philosophy and group moderator.

LSC-Tomball Participates in 48th Annual Tomball Holiday Parade

It might have been a cold and rainy day on Saturday, November 23, but that did not chill or dampen the enthusiasm of Lone Star College-Tomball personnel as they represented the college in the 48th Annual Tomball Holiday Parade. The LSC-Tomball cohort included the LSCS Mobile Go semi-trailer, LSC-Tomball Math professor Patty Zachary driving Trevor the Timberwolf mascot in her Smart Car, various LSC-Tomball employees handing out stickers for the college’s upcoming free family event, Holiday Fest, and LSC-Tomball President Dr. Susan Karr, who both judged and walked the parade.

Psychological First Aid Training

Lone Star College-Tomball has always believed in proactivity, that an ounce of preparation is worth a pound of damage control. That’s why on October 25 it presented the Red Cross’ “Psychological First Aid (PFA): Helping Others in Times of Stress” training program. Sponsored by the student success department and behavioral intervention team, the purpose of the PFA training program was to enable participants to provide basic care, comfort and support to people who are experiencing trauma-related stress. Identifying the signs of stress, giving immediate support to those who may be experiencing stress, and obtaining additional professional support when needed were just some of the topics discussed.
Country Air — LSC-Tomball’s Small Business of the Year

Congratulations to David and Alice Arevalo, owners of Country Air, Lone Star College-Tomball’s Small Business of the Year. Each year, members of the Lone Star College System Small Business Development Center Advisory Council select and recognize successful small businesses that make an impact in the local community and on the economy. Nominees were gathered from the community, and 18 finalists were selected, three finalists from each of the six college service areas, on the basis of leadership, entrepreneurial spirit, business growth, and contribution to the community. All 18 finalists were first recognized at a luncheon on October 16, and then the winners – one from each of the six college service areas – were recognized at the 2013 27th Annual Small Business of the Year awards banquet on November 14.

LSC-Tomball Highlighted at GTACC First Friday Luncheon

The Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce First Friday Networking Luncheon, held on November 1, highlighted Lone Star College-Tomball’s music program as well as two of the college’s outstanding faculty members. The luncheon opened with Dr. Lisa Morales, LSC-Tomball interim music program coordinator and dean of academic initiatives & partnerships, and Eric Skiles, professor of theater/humanities and artistic director of theater at LSC-Kingwood, performing a song from “Into the Woods” to promote their November 2 “A Night on Broadway” performance at the LSC-Tomball Performing Arts Center. During the Teacher of the Month portion of the program, Dr. Karr honored Catherine Olson, professor of English, and Melinda Coleman, chair and professor of mathematics, as two of LSC-Tomball’s outstanding faculty.

Business Success Seminar Series — Effects of the Affordable Care Act

Lone Star College’s Small Business Development Center (in conjunction with Lone Star College-Tomball Community Library; Greater Tomball Area, Greater Magnolia, Magnolia Parkway and Houston Northwest chambers of commerce; and the Tomball Economic Development Corporation) held the final installment of its three-part Business Success Seminar series November 1 in the Lone Star College-Tomball Community Library. “Affordable Care Act, You and Your Business, and HR Law Concerns” (presented by Michael Starzyk, J.D., and Paul Rinnan, J.D., of Starzyk & Associates, PC, employment law specialists located in The Woodlands) addressed the many ways the Affordable Care Act will affect businesses and answered questions about its implementation. The seminar was followed by a discussion of the latest developments in employment law and a general Q&A.

Dr. Pawsitive Visits LSC-Tomball Vet Tech Program

The audience looked on as renowned dog trainer Anthony C. Bruins (also known as “Dr. Pawsitive”) discussed and demonstrated techniques from his highly acclaimed book, “The 5-Minute Dog Trainer” (www.drpawsitive.com), at the Lone Star College-Tomball Veterinary Technology Building on November 26. Anthony also discussed his unique approach to solving and preventing dog behavior problems, what to do in the event of a dog attack, and what to look for when selecting a pet.

PSSA Employee of the Month

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aspect of helping students,” she said.

Beth also loves cross-stitching and spending time with her family (especially her four nephews), but her guilty pleasure is “boyband” cruises — she’s already sailed with New Kids on the Block and Backstreet Boys, and looks forward to her next high seas adventure at the end of the semester.
Upcoming Events

Winter Mini-Mester begins
December 16

Winter Holiday Break
December 19 – January 1
Closed

Spring Classes Begin
January 13

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