Psychology professor Kim May explains the importance of being in the right place at the right time.
editor’s note

WELCOME TO THE NEW LOOK AND FEEL OF THE PORTICO. Redesigned to better address the diverse interests, concerns and pursuits of the College’s staff and faculty, the new format includes shorter, more convenient tidbits of must-know information, a calendar of events and a variety of fun, interactive quizzes and contests.

Now printed on 30-percent post-consumer waste and 50-percent total recycled fiber, the Portico may seem completely different. At heart, however, it has not changed. It remains a celebration of the people who call the College “work” – and, with this community always at the forefront, it continues to provide opportunities for us all to get to know each other better.

Now more than ever, the Portico is your publication – and I’m looking forward to hearing what it is you have to say.

Alicia Lutz

WHEN IT RAINS...

There’s a reason the College has at least four – and possibly as many as 50 – old cisterns scattered across campus. There’s a reason the College spent $418.27 ($317.80 for 55,400 bricks and $100.47 for labor) in 1856-1857 to build the Cistern behind Randolph Hall. And there’s a reason the College began reinstating the tried-and-true water-harvesting method over the summer: When it rains, it pours – especially in Charleston.

RAINCHECK. The newest cistern on campus, a 1,100-gallon stormwater-harvesting barrel, was installed behind 26 Coming Street over the summer to collect rainwater from the political science building’s roof and use it for irrigating the adjoining gardens during dry spells. Not only will the pressurized system save the College some 15,000 gallons of water (around $1,000) a year, but it will also reduce stormwater runoff and the pollutants carried into our waterways.

HOLDING WATER. After many long years, the College’s original Cistern is once again collecting fresh rainwater, which will eventually be used for irrigation. This summer, new pipes were installed at Randolph Hall and the mud and gunk were sucked out, uncovering a wooden bucket that had been submerged in the water and mud for decades. The inadvertent discovery – which will be properly preserved and archived – could predate us all.

WATERWORKS. Trenches were dug, lampposts were relocated and brick paver walkways were removed in the Cistern Yard over the summer. The end result is a newly landscaped area with new irrigation, new underground conduit for wiring outdoor events and new lighting for the trees and buildings. Most notable, however, is the new brick paver work, which was laid without mortar to allow rainwater to filter down to the soil below, thus reducing runoff.
It’s probably safe to say that none of us will ever find a treasure-filled tomb here on campus. Poke around in Egyptologist Peter Piccione’s office, however, and you’ll quickly see that there are fortunes to be discovered here. “I’ve got more things in my office than a doctor’s office and a geology lab put together. It’s chachka-ville!” says the associate professor of history, adding that “it’s all to keep the students interested and not dreading coming to the office.” And, if the scorpions and mummies don’t do the trick? “I also keep soda in the fridge for them.”

A moaning mummy with red-glowing eyes startles passersby from its station in the office foyer.

The “Grateful Dead Nefertiti,” a souvenir from none other than South of the Border in Dillon, S.C.

A M ousterian hand axe made by Neanderthals during the middle part of the Old Stone Age (the Middle Paleolithic period) – and found by Piccione in the desert west of the Nile River.

Forget the skull and the Lucite-encased scarab beetle from Egypt: The biggest curiosity sitting atop Piccione’s desk is the small coprolite – or prehistoric fossilized excrement – from Egypt’s desert hills. “Yep, it’s doo doo in stone from a prehistoric (probably extinct) creature,” he says. “I kid you not.”

A full-size replica of the Rosetta Stone, made out of Styrofoam by Piccione himself.

Jars of sand from the Temple of Amun in Karnak (left) and the Theban tomb of the high priest of Amun (right): just two of the dozens Piccione has collected during his travels. “I’m like a vampire: I have to carry my soil with me,” he laughs.
You’ve got to have real talent to tour with Sly and the Family Stone. You’ve got to have significant skill to open for Alice Cooper, Jefferson Starship and Bob Seger. You’ve got to have true confidence to perform in front of 10,000 people.

And you’ve got to have really big dreams to look back and wonder what could have been – if only you’d had a little luck.

“We thought, if you just do one big show, and you’re good – and the crowd likes you and makes

May (second from left) with Xebec in 1974. The band’s album, *Calm Before the Storm*, is available by searching “Xebec Band” on iTunes and Napster.
some noise – someone’s bound to notice you,” says Kim May, guitarist and sometime writer and vocalist for the 1970s Southern rock band Xebec. “But we eventually realized that there’s a lot of luck involved, too. That’s at least as important as talent and skill.”

May’s big-time dream of being a rock star started – as did many like it – when he first saw The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show. He picked up a tennis racket, started to “play” it, and, within a week, the 10-year-old was taking his first guitar lesson (this time on a real guitar). Then, almost a decade later, he set about turning fantasy into reality again, dropping out of college after one year to pursue his dream.

“I just decided to go for it,” says the psychology professor, who moved to Oklahoma to help form Xebec in 1971. “I’m glad I did.”

During its 11 years together, Xebec became legendary in and around Tulsa, but, within a year of producing its first album, the band parted ways.

“We realized that the likelihood we’d be in the right place at the right time in front of the right people who had the means to give us the right deal was very, very small,” says May, who enrolled at the University of Oklahoma the following fall, and immediately began studying statistics.

“Now I use what I learned – that there’s no correlation between talent and earnings – to teach my students about correlation coefficients,” he laughs, adding that his students are always curious how he “went from a musician to a statistician. The truth is I don’t know. The only thing I can think of is that to be a good statistician and musician both, you have to think abstractly.”

Regardless of how May thinks, he certainly sounds like a musician.

“Kim’s a great, great blues guitar player – everyone wants him to sit in. And he has a great blues voice – raw, gritty and soulful,” says Tom Ross, chair of the psychology department, who also rocked his way through college and has been partnering up with May for over 10 years to play in local venues as the acoustic duo, the Blues Doctors.

“The most fun gigs are when you have an enthusiastic, appreciative audience,” says May, who these days enjoys the biggest, most loyal crowds when he joins the notorious blues singer and harmonica player, Smoky Weiner, and his band, the Hot Links – a staple on the Lowcountry blues-rock scene for 13 years. Although there are a number of Hot Links that rotate in and out for Smoky’s gigs at clubs, weddings, the Lowcountry Blues Bash and Piccolo Spoleto, May has been playing with the band part time from the very beginning.

“Smoky has developed a really good fan base over the years. People come out to have a fun time listening to danceable rhythm and blues-type music – and that makes it a lot more fun for me than bar gigs, where you’re just a hood ornament,” says May. “That’s why I always enjoy the gig at Bowen’s Island: You know the audience is going to pay attention because they came to see you specifically.”

In that way, May has come a long way from opening for Alice Cooper or Jefferson Starship. And, from here on out, he’ll always be in the right place at just the right time. ☮

“Kim’s a great, great blues guitar player. And he has a great blues voice – raw, gritty and soulful.”

- Tom Ross, chair of the psychology department
As the Patriots Point Athletics Complex facilities and grounds manager, what’s a typical day at work like for you?

There is no such thing as a typical day here. Our schedule is based largely on our teams and their schedules. We are responsible for all the buildings, fields and grounds at Patriots Point, the intramural fields on James Island and some maintenance at Dixie – so we could be fertilizing, spraying, mowing, painting, setting up for a game, cleaning up after a game or working on irrigation, drainage or repairs to buildings and equipment. Some days I might just be pointing everyone in the right direction, but I believe in doing whatever it takes to get things done right, and I’m not very good at sitting still, so I like to be involved. Every day is different. That’s what makes this such a great job.

What’s the most rewarding part of your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is working with my fantastic staff and all the coaches, student athletes and Athletics Department and Physical Plant staffs. It is a fun environment to be a part of. I think I have the best job at the College.

How do you see your role at the College?

I consider us (myself and my staff) the “Team Behind the Teams.” We do the behind-the-scenes work. Everyone sees the manicured fields, painted lines, stencils and a well-maintained facility. No one sees the work on all the equipment and buildings and the unending list of to-dos that we do to make our facility great. We are the go-to department for the athletic teams. No matter what anyone needs, we can assist and correct virtually any problem.

You coach your daughter’s soccer team and have played soccer for 32 years, including four years (1986–1990) as Clemson’s goalkeeper. What was it like when Clemson won the NCAA national championship in 1987?

Winning a national championship is very difficult to describe. You never think that it will actually happen, but when it does, you almost don’t know how to feel. It is an overwhelming rush of emotion. After working so hard for many years to be successful in a sport and then finally hitting the pinnacle, it is truly an amazing feeling. It still gives me chills thinking about it.

After we won, well, let’s just say the celebrating went on for about a week (which was also right during finals). Fortunately, all the professors were very accommodating with rescheduling our exams. I guess they understood and appreciated what had happened, or they just knew we wouldn’t be in the right frame of mind to take an exam!
**september**

<< Catch *Lafayette: The Lost Hero*, a documentary featuring adjunct history professor Robert Crout, on South Carolina ETV, Sept. 13, 10 p.m.

**5**  
**CONCERT WITH DAVID TEMPLETON**, Assistant Professor of Music  
8 p.m.; $10  
Simons Center, Recital Hall  
Info: 3.5927

**6**  
**FACULTY JAZZ ENSEMBLE**  
8 p.m.; $10  
Simons Center, Recital Hall  
Info: 3.5927

Approximately 823 current employees were in attendance at the College’s first Faculty/Staff Back-to-School Picnic in 1993.

It may seem a bit early to start thinking about all the tasty treats you’ll get to sample during the holidays, but – trust us – the holiday season will be here before you know it. That’s why we’re encouraging you to pull out the very best of your holiday dessert recipes now.

**What’s the hurry?** The tastiest, yet healthiest, dessert recipe sent to lutza@cofc.edu by Sept. 23 will be prepared and served at the Fresh Food Company in December. The winner and a friend will get a free lunch that day – compliments of ARAMARK!

For contest rules and restrictions, visit portico.cofc.edu/recipe-contest.

**12**

**13**

**22**

**23**

**august**

**18:** Faculty/Staff Back-to-School Picnic:  
12–1 p.m.; Carolina First Arena; Info: Alexa Thacker, 3.6673 or thackera@cofc.edu

**27:** Grand Opening for Admissions and Dining Services: 3–4 p.m.;  
Craig Hall; Info: Debbie Counts, 3.5670 or countsd@cofc.edu

**30:** Microsoft Office 2010 Familiarity Session: 9–10:30 a.m.;  
Stern Center, room 206; Info: 3.3375 or office2010@cofc.edu

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Which computer science faculty member was recently elected chairperson of the Association for Computing Machinery’s Special Interest Group on Computer Science Education?

Kay Smith, associate vice president for the Office of the Academic Experience, was recently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, where she will be doing what from fall 2011 to spring 2012?

Director of Public Safety Paul Verrecchia was installed as president-elect of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Officers Administrators at its 52nd conference, where he was also presented with what?

Deposits to employees’ Cougar Cards can be made at the self-service center in the copy room on the first floor of the Addlestone Library with cash only, or in Cougar Card Services with cash, checks, money orders and any credit/debit card but what?

College staff and faculty get a special rate of $6/day by calling 302.2288, entering CofC beside “Company” when reserving at park-go.com or simply presenting their Cougar Cards upon arrival at what local parking lot?