

**ARTS + SCIENCES = POWERFUL REACTION**

When the arts and sciences come together, it's always a potent combination. But, when there's a brand-new arts center and a brand-new science center opening at the same time, it's not just altering the individual properties – it's changing the structure of the entire College. And, by all indications, the reaction is going to be huge.

With just a block between them, the Marion and Wayland H. Cato Jr. Center for the Arts and the new science center are both open for occupancy this month, with most departmental relocations scheduled over the winter break (see “On the Move,” inside, for details) and the first classes set to start on January 11.

“We're ready,” says Valerie Morris, dean of the School of the Arts. “I'm looking forward to seeing people's faces when they first walk in. They're going to be wowed.”

The five-story arts center is impressive. At just under 70,000 square feet, it provides not only some sorely needed space, but also a fresh, updated environment for faculty and students to study, create and perform. The second floor is dedicated solely to music and includes a bright rehearsal studio, a music library, faculty teaching studios and 19 practice rooms. The third floor is for the theatre department and features two movement studios, two dance studios and a lighting studio. The photography suite, located on the fifth floor, has a digital media/photography classroom, faculty studios with adjoining offices, faculty darkrooms and a gang darkroom accessible only through a black revolving door. The painting program is on the fourth floor, which enjoys 180-degree views of the peninsula.

“Imagine being in a painting class and having these views,” says Michael Haga, assistant dean of the School of the Arts. “There's so much inspiration out there waiting for you. And, look! You can see the new science center!”

At 125,000 square feet, the handsome new science building is hard to miss – and yet its multi-textured exterior doesn't reveal just how roomy it is inside. At its center is an atrium that's surrounded by skylights and opens up onto an expansive courtyard (taking up half the lot), which – together with the open floor plan and glass walls – gives the building an energetic vibe.

“It's a much better environment for our professors and our students to be in,” says Bill Lindstrom, associate dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics. “I think we're going to be very happy.”

An auditorium, the dean's suite, 100-level chemistry labs, chemistry research labs and some chemistry faculty offices occupy the first floor, and the third floor houses the upper-level chemistry labs, prep rooms, more chemistry faculty offices and research labs, computer labs, as well as an outdoor terrace overlooking Coming Street and a greenhouse overlooking Calhoun Street. The second floor includes the Lowcountry Hazards Center, the S.C. Space Grant Consortium offices, GIS labs, computer labs and a natural history museum featuring fossils of creatures indigenous to South Carolina.

“The museum is going to be really unique, and it will be open to groups of schoolchildren and the general public, so it will offer a lot to the city as a whole,” says Lindstrom, adding: “At night it will be lit up, so people will look up and see this giant sloth when they're going down Calhoun Street. That'll be really neat.”

The benefits of being situated directly on Calhoun Street aren't lost on the School of the Arts, either.

“Calhoun is really the education corridor – from the county library to MUSC – so this just puts the College's face out there even more,” says Haga, adding that the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art's new home on the first floor “really engages the community.”

Morris agrees: “The gallery is so much more visible now, and it's going to see a lot more foot traffic. I think that's going to be a great thing for the College.”

Both buildings certainly provide great things for the College – for its current students and faculty, for students and faculty recruitment and for showcasing itself as the exceptional institution it is.

“Finally, we have a first-class building and first-class equipment that match and show off the first-rate education that we provide,” says Lindstrom. “It's going to help us do a better job of promoting the whole College, both regionally and nationally.”

And, of course, that's just the reaction the College is hoping for.
HE'S BEEN KNOWN TO PEDAL
through the cold rain of Slovenia just to unwind. He's cycled up and down the steep hills of Umbria simply for a little R & R. He's even biked the massive Alps of Austria for a bit of leisure. But as hardcore and exhausting as it all sounds — David Cohen insists it's really very comfortable.

"People think these things are strenuous all-day excursions that have you racing up and down mountains for 80 miles a day, but they're not," says Cohen of the bicycle tours he and his wife enjoy taking through the back roads of Europe. "We typically go 35 to 45 miles a day, and just set our own pace. It's very relaxing."

With the itinerary, routes, accommodations and quite a few indulgences prearranged by a company specializing in bicycle vacations, these tours are definitely designed to be laidback and carefree. Bicycles and helmets are provided for the 14-16 people on any given trip, and there are vans that carry their luggage from one inn to the next.

"These guys are like your own personal porters. They completely spoil us," says the dean of the library and of the School of Languages, Cultures, and World Affairs — adding that there's always someone around to fix a flat tire or rescue a fatigued biker. "They're there to make sure nothing gets in the way of you having an incredible time. It's really quite luxurious in that respect."

And, it seems, in a number of other respects, as well.

"You wake up in a quaint little inn overlooking the vineyards and olive groves, get up and review the route over breakfast, ride for three hours through the Tuscan countryside, maybe stop for an olive oil-making demonstration before you get to a restaurant that serves regional cuisine," explains Cohen. "After lunch you can explore the village or just lounge around and take in the scenery, and then you might ride for another hour or two before getting back to the inn for a wine tasting or cooking classes or whatever. It's a lot of fun."

Still, it's the biking that he enjoys the most.

"There's something to be said for being out there, on the ground, breathing the air, and really seeing a country from that point of view," says Cohen, who has biked through Austria, Slovenia and several regions of Italy. "You're hitting places that you'd otherwise not go. You get off the beaten path, so you get access to real people going about their daily lives. I think that's something that you don't always get as a typical tourist."

Of course, the typical tourist also avoids some other things — like mountainous terrain and inclement weather.

"It can be hard. But you get stubborn — you don't want to be the first guy in the van, so you do it, and you have a good time," Cohen says, recalling a route through Tuscany that was mostly straight up, sometimes straight down. "I remember that trip as being awful and grueling and strenuous, but it also sticks out in my mind as wonderful. You could just see for miles and miles. Those views made it worth the extra effort."

For Cohen, that extra effort includes some extra training — for example, adding some rides on the Blue Ridge Parkway and across the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge to his regular routine of biking Lowcountry trails once or twice a month. Still, he insists that it doesn't take an athlete to enjoy bike tours.

"There's a tour for every level, and, really, anyone with a pair of padded biking shorts will have a good time," he says. "It's just a very, very pleasant way to spend your day — the perfect breather from 'real life.'"
David Cohen Pedals off the Beaten Path

“People think these things are strenuous, but it’s very relaxing.”

He’s even biked the massive Alps of Austria. “Of course, the typical tourist also avoids the path that you get access to real people you’d otherwise not go. You get off the beaten path, so you get access to real people and real things.”

Still, it’s the biking that he enjoys most. “You wake up in a quaint little inn in the Tuscan countryside and you’re setting them up for success for generations to come.”

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And, of course, uncovering such opportunities is Ben-Yisrael’s specialty. “I’m just a big-picture person,” she says, explaining that the more she learns about different programs and their needs, “the more connections I can make and the more opportunities fall out of the sky. And it’s all for the betterment of the College.”

Still, it’s not the College that gets Ben-Yisrael up and going every day. It’s the lives she’s changing.

“I love the success stories – knowing that you’ve changed someone’s future, you’ve changed the whole culture of their family, that you’re setting them up for success for generations and generations to come.”

And those are the kinds of windows that can never be closed.

Wilson, executive vice president of student affairs, adding that the grant makes up $880,000 of the nearly $1.1 million the Division of Student Affairs has raised for its various programs in the past two years. “Our division is beginning to step into the world of fundraising, and we’re really excited to see our efforts benefit the College and, most important, our awesome students.”

Qualifying students start benefiting from the McNair Program during the spring semester of their sophomore year, when they first begin working on their research projects. By their senior year, they’ve presented their research, secured funding for it and applied to at least three graduate programs.

“Getting a Ph.D. is no joke – just getting there is a marathon. This is like boot camp,” says Ben-Yisrael, adding that McNair scholars are eligible for special graduate scholarships upon completion of the program. “For most of these kids, this is the only opportunity they’re going to get.”

And, for many, it’s a chance they never thought they’d have.

“It’s really exciting to see them starting to realize that they have dreams – and the opportunity to fulfill them,” says Ben-Yisrael. “It’s like discovering a hidden treasure.”

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GARDENER’S PICK

Nandina

AKA: Heavenly bamboo, Nandina domestica.

ON CAMPUS: Found along the north side of Rutledge Rivers Residence Hall and the Cistern Yard’s western perimeter.

DESCRIPTION: This drought- and shade-tolerant shrub can survive for decades with no care, spreading slowly to form large clumps of lightly branched stems with delicate, lacy foliage that reaches soft greens in summer, purplish bronzes in fall and fiery crimsons in winter. Late spring/early summer brings pinkish- or creamy-white blossoms, followed by shiny red berries that provide winter food for birds.

TIPS: Plant in full sun for best colors and in groups for the most berries. Use hand pruners, never hedge shears – and prune each stalk to a different height. To renew a neglected plant, cut 1/3 of its main stalks to the ground annually for three years. Pluck berry clusters for holiday decorations.
ON THE CATWALK
Scooter Barnette and the FATCATS Stride Toward Better Health

WE ALL COULD USE OUR OWN personal cheerleaders from time to time – someone not just to root for us and applaud us, but to motivate us, encourage us and even challenge us when we need it most. And – while our families, friends and colleagues may ordinarily do a fine job of providing the support we need – sometimes it helps to get that extra push from someone unexpected. Someone, for example, like Scooter Barnette and the FATCATS team.

“The whole point is to give them the information, opportunity and support they need to get healthy,” says Barnette, senior instructor of health and human performance, who last spring started the FATCATS program to encourage staff and faculty to eat better and increase their physical activity. “We meet once a week to walk around the arena and weigh in, but it’s that structure – that consistency of the weekly weigh-in – that gives them the accountability that they need.”

And, although the weekly weigh-ins are private, those FATCATS who’ve lost weight do get listed on the “Hooray List,” which goes out in a weekly e-mail.

“It’s such a little thing, but I’m telling you, they love it,” says Barnette, adding that studies show that joining a group is an important factor in weight loss. And, with some FATCATS losing 10–12 pounds during the semester-long sessions, it certainly seems to be working.

“It definitely keeps us motivated,” says Sue Atwood, human resources specialist and the spring 2009 FATCATS “biggest loser.” The program has helped her not only lose weight and keep it off, but also control her blood pressure and cholesterol, strengthen her bones and improve her mood. And she’s not alone.

“The results I’ve seen are increased energy levels, weight loss, decreased cravings for junk food, and I am more relaxed,” says Margie Gamble, a human resources benefits counselor, adding that she’s also made some significant lifestyle changes: “I walk an average of three miles a day, and my eating habits have improved.”

Cheryl Williams, legal residency coordinator in the Treasurer’s Office, has seen the same kind of across-the-board improvements: “I’m cooking healthier meals for myself and my family, and exercising on a more consistent basis on my lunch hour – and at home using Wii Fit.”

The biggest change, however, is the FATCATS’ attitudes toward exercise.

“The revelation that they can have fun while exercising is a real breakthrough for a lot of them, I think,” says Barnette. “That’s one reason I encourage walking over higher-impact exercises. It’s just as good for them, and there’s less chance of burnout.”

It also provides a social outlet – something that many FATCATS appreciate.

“My favorite part is walking and talking with the other team members. Exercising in a group is much more enjoyable, and it helps to have others encourage you as you strive to meet your goals,” says Williams. “It gives you an opportunity to establish relationships with others on campus that you may not have been able to otherwise. We have become like family.”

Still, this family is always looking for new members.

“Come on and join! It’s fun, and you are getting fit and healthy while meeting new people,” encourages Thelma Gadson, data coordinator in institutional advancement. And, she suggests, bring along a colleague: “That way you won’t have to walk alone.”

It might just be the extra push you need. ☺

The next FATCATS session begins January 14, 12–1 p.m. For more information, contact Scooter Barnette at barnettes@cofc.edu or 3.6747.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

• In November, the windows and shutters continued to be removed from the east and south sides of Randolph Hall and are currently being assessed, structurally rehabilitated and prepared for painting in a stable and controlled environment. The construction phasing plan for the repairs to Randolph Hall, Towell Library and Porters Lodge includes approximately three months of scaffolding per location.

• At Craig Union, where the old cafeteria is being converted to an admissions hub, the door frames, side lights and interior windows were completed, as was the drywall on the interior partitions, in November. The stained concrete in the courtyard is being placed, and the above-ceiling work – including ductwork, sprinkler piping and electrical wiring – is being tested. Painting with LEED-quality, low-VOC paints will begin soon, and cooling equipment for the catering kitchen will be installed during the winter break.

ON THE MOVE

• Moves to the new Marion and Wayland H. Jr. Cato Center include the music and theatre departments (second and third floors, respectively) and some of the studio art faculty (fourth and fifth floors).

• The Arts Management Program is moving to the Albert Simons Center for the Arts.

• Moves to the new science center include the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry (third floor), the School of Sciences and Mathematics dean’s offices (first floor) and the Lowcountry Hazards Center and the S.C. Space Grant Consortium (second floor).

All contact information has remained the same.
SAVE THE DATE

SOTTILE HOUSE TREE-LIGHTING CEREMONY
This 24th annual celebration will feature Santa Claus, the children of the N.E. Miles Early Childhood Development Center and the College’s wind ensemble and concert and gospel choirs.
WHEN: Wed., Dec. 2, 4-5 p.m. for Santa and holiday treats; 5-6 p.m. for tree lighting and music
WHERE: Sottile House yard
FEE: None
CONTACT: Betty Craig, 3.5500, craigb@cofc.edu

FACULTY AND STAFF HOLIDAY CELEBRATION
Eat, drink and be merry – and maybe even take home a door prize from this annual celebration.
WHEN: Fri., Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m.
WHERE: Silcox Center
FEE: None, tickets required for admittance
CONTACT: Alexa Thacker, 3.6673, thackera@cofc.edu

CHANUKAH IN THE SQUARE
Bring your appetite and your dancing shoes to this fourth annual celebration, featuring live music, hot latkes, a jump castle and more.
WHEN: Sun., Dec. 13, 4-6 p.m.
WHERE: Marion Square
FEE: None
CONTACT: Enid Idelsohn, 3.5682, idelsohne@cofc.edu

It may have been on the Starbucks menu since October, but you’re pretty sure it’s still too early for an Eggnog Latte, and – despite what’s on the airwaves – you’re not quite ready to “deck the halls” just yet either. Maybe it’s the daily grind or, perhaps, the 70-degree temperatures, but so far you’re just not feeling it. And, of course, you’re not alone – the holiday spirit can be a terribly elusive thing for all of us. Thankfully, however, Regina Semko always has it pinned down.

“The pins get everyone in the holiday spirit,” says Semko, who – as a self-described “walking Advent calendar” – every year dons however many holiday-themed pins correspond with the date, starting December 1. Last December 2, for example, she wore two snowflakes; by December 5, she was wearing a gingerbread man, a Christmas tree, a wreath, a bell and a poinsettia; and by December 20, well, you can imagine the embellishment! “It starts to weigh me down a little bit,” admits the assistant to the dean of the Graduate School, who started the tradition in the 1980s. Since then, her collection of holiday pins has continued to grow, filling her wooden box to the brim with broaches representing anything and everything remotely holiday: candy canes, carolers, reindeer, candles, stockings, holly, angels. “I have metallic ones that are more classy, and then there are the colorful, plastic ones that the children love,” says Semko, picking a cloth star and a felt snowman out of the bunch. “I kind of like the handmade ones, like these – and I like the ones that are a little out there,” she adds, selecting a green-haired troll dressed like Santa. “He’s a conversation starter.”

The pins certainly trigger a lot of conversations – and, Semko hopes – a lot of cheer, as well. “Just pulling out the box helps put me in the mood every year,” she says – although, she admits it doesn’t always come easy. “It can be pretty time consuming. I have to either put them all on the night before, or wake up a half an hour early. There is a lot of commitment here!”

But it’s all for a good cause: “Spreading the holiday cheer. So, next time you’re in need of a little boost, Semko says, don’t hesitate: “Just take a look at my chest!”

NEWS BRIEFS: News You Can Use
• Crazyhorse, the College’s literary journal, was named one of the “12 Literary Journals Your Future Agent Is Reading” by Writer’s Digest.
• Since 2008, the Division of Student Affairs has raised nearly $1.1 million, including $100,000 for the Department of Public Safety, $66,980 for Counseling and Substance Abuse Services and $10,000 for the Center for Civic Engagement.
• The Department of Computer Science was awarded a $35,000 ExxonMobil grant for developing a geological-data archiving/sharing system.
• All personal websites maintained on the College’s old server will be relocated to the new server on Mon., Jan. 4. Employees whose addresses begin with spinner.cofc.edu should e-mail webmaster@cofc.edu.
• The College’s soccer camps are offering employees’ children (ages 4-12) $10 off the 2009 winter soccer clinic at Patriots Point Athletic Complex, Dec. 21-23, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Register at cofcsoccercamps.com and enter coupon code 70221. For more information, contact Kevin Dempsey, 4.5583 or dempseyk@cofc.edu.
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GUESS WHAT?
Thanks to everyone who participated in the last photo quiz, and congratulations to Diane Miller, administrative assistant and internship coordinator for the Historic Preservation and Community Planning Program, who was the first to guess that the object in question was part of the exhibition featuring Aldwyth, a South Carolina artist, at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art. Specifically, the photograph pictured the cigar box representing the letter $ (thus Superman, the shark, and the spoon) in “Cigar Box Encyclopedia (B),” a collection of 26 cigar boxes, each illustrating a different letter of the alphabet. The traveling exhibition, titled Aldwyth: work v./work n. Collage and Assemblage 1991-2009, will be at the Halsey Institute through January 9, 2010, when the artist will be presenting a closing lecture and signing the exhibition catalog in the Recital Hall of the Albert Simons Center for the Arts at 2 p.m. For more information, contact Rebecca Silberman, silbermanr@cofc.edu or 3.5680.

Send your submission to lutza@cofc.edu by Friday, January 15, 2010. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff. One submission per person, please.

What do you have planned for the winter break?

PARISSA TADRISI
Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies
“I will be flying back to California to spend the holidays with friends and family, and I’m looking forward to meeting my new niece. I am also attending the Modern Language Association convention with the department chair to interview job candidates. This winter break will be a mix of work and fun.”

JACK HUGULEY
Director of Alumni Relations
“On Christmas Day we will travel with our son, daughter-in-law and grandson to be with my wife’s family in Conway. Then we will travel to Birmingham, Ala., to spend a few days with my daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. Then back to Charleston in time for the annual New Year’s Day celebration with the Hibernian Society. Rest is not an option.”

DEBBIE CANNON
Procurement Officer
“I found a great price on a seven-day cruise, so my daughter and I will be somewhere in the Caribbean on Christmas Day. No cooking for me this year!”