Learning Branches Out

Beth Goodier discovers a new tree of knowledge in OAKS

Why, when it comes to Clayton Nagy, there's more than meets the eye.
IN THE AUGUST/SEPTEMBER ISSUE, we asked you to send in your recipes for tasty - and relatively healthy - desserts. It was a tough decision, to be sure; but with the tastes of the season, this delectable dessert has all the right ingredients to stand out above the rest.

Congratulations to Sue Atwood, human resources specialist, who submitted the winning recipe. Her dessert will be prepared by the chefs at ARAMARK and served at the Fresh Food Company on December 9. Now you’re cookin’!

Pumpkin-Pecan Pie with Bourbon Whipped Cream

1 9” pie crust, unbaked

**PUMPKIN LAYER**
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp ground cloves
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp salt

**PECAN LAYER**
- 1/2 c. dark brown sugar, packed
- 3/4 c. dark corn syrup
- 2 eggs
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 c. pecans, halves or pieces

**BOURBON WHIPPED CREAM**
- 1 c. whipping cream
- 3 tbsp sour cream
- 3 tbsp light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp bourbon

**PREPARATION:** Preheat oven to 425°.

**PUMPKIN LAYER:** In medium bowl, whisk all pumpkin-layer ingredients together. Set aside.

**PECAN LAYER:** In separate bowl, combine brown sugar, corn syrup, eggs, butter and vanilla and mix until smooth. Stir in pecans.

**ARRANGEMENT:** Spoon pumpkin mixture into unbaked pie shell; smooth top. Spoon pecan layer over top, being careful to keep layers separate.

**COOK:** Bake for 15 minutes, then reduce oven to 350° and bake pie 25–30 minutes longer or until filling is slightly puffy and pecan layer is just set. Cool on wire rack.

**BOURBON WHIPPED CREAM:** In large bowl, whip cream, sour cream and brown sugar until lightly whipped. Stir in bourbon. Spoon onto pie and enjoy.

To help us determine the best of your culinary creations, we turned to the students in Carwyn Sharpe’s Sports and Exercise Nutrition course, who analyzed the submitted recipes’ nutritional values and chose the five healthiest to be judged by the chefs at ARAMARK.
WE ALL UNDERSTAND THE ENCHANTED looks of tourists who’ve stumbled onto campus for the first time. We dodge around them in the Cistern Yard as they obliviously look around, pointing their cameras here and then there – not sure which beautiful thing they should be capturing first. No matter how long we’ve been working here, we all know what it’s like to be spellbound by the College’s beauty. And, let’s face it, sometimes we wish we were tourists, too!

That’s why, last October, we challenged you to break out your cameras and tour the campus with fresh eyes, capturing the beauty of the campus architecture for the first of the Portico’s series of amateur photography contests. What you came back with was confirmation not just of the College’s many picture-perfect architectural features, but also of the extent of talent and artistic perspective within our campus community.

Thanks to everyone who entered their work – and congratulations to Tom Gibson, director of the Center for Student Learning, whose photograph of the Pi Kappa Phi Bell Tower (pictured above) was Your Best Shot!

“The belltower image has a certain mystery, an implied narrative that exists outside of the frame,” says Mark Sloan, director of the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, who joined the panel of judges with Leslie McKellar, Portico photographer, and Michelle Van Parys, photography professor.

And that’s what makes it your best shot!

SECOND PLACE: Towell Library, by Tracy Bates, Student Computing Center Lab Manager

THIRD PLACE: Randolph Hall (high dynamic range imaging), by David Gentry, Psychology Professor

FOURTH PLACE: Sottile House Lobby, by Travis Pigott, Public Safety Officer

Think you might have a shot? Be sure to check upcoming issues of the Portico for details about the next challenge in our amateur photography contest series.
The eerie lens of his reflective goggles. The alien shape of his vented mask. The thick padding of his plated vest. The overall effect is menacing – even a little bit hostile. But once you start peeling away all that armor, it’s easy to see that there’s more to Clayton Nagy than meets the eye.

“I walk around like a plated lobster, because, you never know, today might be the day,” laughs the North Campus systems support specialist, who plays in large-scale paintball games (involving 2,000–4,000 people) across the country. With that many people running around shooting paint markers as fast as 300 feet per second, the protective gear seems more practical than aggressive. Besides, in his role as a medic, Nagy is hardly the aggressor on the field. Known in the paintball community as Doc on the Way, he’s widely recognized as a universal ally.
“I have a camera and a medic kit with me – so, when people see me coming, they know who I am,” says Nagy, who is also a skilled videographer, filming the paintball events and posting them for his fellow players (youtube.com/docontheway). “Even if they’re new to the field, people see the red band on my arm, and they know they can trust me as a peaceful role player.”

Although “the Geneva Convention does not apply” to him, Nagy definitely attracts far less fire than most players – mostly because he has the power to “heal” fallen players so they can get back in the game.

“The medic role appealed to my helpful nature of picking people up off the ground,” says Nagy, who started playing paintball as a kid with his dad and took on the medic role as an adult. “It fascinated me to think that people could travel hundreds of miles, and pay a lot of money, so they could run around, unable to defend themselves, and keep people in the game. That takes dedication and sacrifice, and that was the kind of player I wanted to be.”

And now that he’s been in that role for eight years – each year going to about four weekend-long games, which usually act out scenarios like historical reenactments or hypothetical battles, and often take months of online strategizing – other players can’t believe he’s not actually a medic.

“It can be surprising to find out what everyone does when they’re not pelting each other with paint,” he says. “But people are a lot more than just one thing. You just can’t slap a bias on anyone because of one thing they do – one role they play. There’s always another context.”

Outside the context of paintball, for example, Nagy is also a World War II reenactor, a part-time wedding videographer and a craftsman dabbling in origami and stained glass.

“I want to be more than a just a paintball jock who likes guns,” he says. “I want to be something like a samurai – with an enlightened sensibility.

When people think about stained-glass craftsmen, they think of someone with an elevated status. And so it does give me that enlightened sense. Not like, ‘I’m better than you,’ but like, ‘I’m trying to do something better for myself – to teach myself the accuracy, discipline and forethought I need to create art.’”

Although he has had a few lessons in stained glass, Nagy is largely self taught in the craft.

“It’s not as hard as you’d think. It doesn’t take the dexterity of a surgeon or the patience of a saint or the understanding of, you know, a philosopher. Once you get beyond the fear of wrecking something very beautiful, your breathing evens out and you start getting into the rhythm,” he says.

“You become an engineer, fitting together pieces that have to be supported somehow; you become a carpenter, cutting the frame; you become an artist, picking out the colors and designing something from a vision. It’s a fascinating thing, creating something out of nothing, taking a vision and making it reality. And, of course, when you’re done, everybody has to hold it up to the light.”

And what they see might just surprise them.
It won’t be the first time a professor has led her students out of the classroom for a little outdoor education. Indeed, for more than a century, perfect weather and spontaneous whim have prompted faculty to hold class under the live oaks in the Cistern Yard. But, under the College’s newest OAKS, taking learning beyond the classroom has never been easier – no matter what the weather is doing.

“OAKS makes expanding students’ learning scenarios a lot more convenient than it’s been in the past,” says Beth Goodier, chair of the communication department, who has been helping test the College’s new online course environment all semester. The new system is available to faculty now, and will go live for students in January. “I was so excited about all the different possibilities it offers – I just wanted to jump in and get started.”

Familiarizing herself with OAKS through the OAKS Faculty Technology Institute last summer as well as through a development course and online tutorials, Goodier has tried out most of the new tools, including the news feature, chat room, discussion forums, event schedule, quizzes, grade book and dropbox.

“I like it all, but the grade book is probably my favorite,” says Goodier. “Entering grades is 100 percent better than it was with WebCT, and, with OAKS, students can go in and see where they stand. That means I don’t have to answer 60 students who want to know what their grades are. That’s huge.”

It not only helps students stay on top of their classes and grades, but allows them to communicate with their classmates and their professor wherever and whenever they want.

“I think it will help build a sense of community among them,” says Goodier. “And, for me, the ability to communicate with a class regularly and efficiently is fabulous, too. It’s going to be great for everyone.”

Faculty may request their spring 2011 classes be added at any time – and online tutorials are also available now.

“Transition now. It’s easy to learn, and it will improve your productivity and make you more effective,” says Goodier. “If you can’t learn everything at once, just try one tool at a time. Find out what it can do for you and what it can’t.”

To get started, contact the Teaching, Learning and Technology (TLT) team in the Division of Information Technology.

“Just tell them, ‘This is what I want to do pedagogically, is there a tool for that?’ and they’ll help you find the best way to do whatever it is,” says Goodier. “You’ll be glad you did.”

To access OAKS, log onto MyCharleston and click on the OAKS icon at the top of the page. E-mail tlt@cofc.edu with OAKS-related questions or issues. For more information, visit blogs.cofc.edu/tlt/oaks.
In keeping with a tradition established in 1990, the Department of Public Safety is sponsoring a Salvation Army Angel Tree to benefit the children at the Housing Authority of the City of Charleston. To bring some holiday joy to a child in need, pick up an angel from the tree in the Public Safety office, shop for the items on the child’s wish list and return the wrapped gifts to Public Safety by Dec. 16. For more information, contact Trenita Manigault at manigaultt@cofc.edu or 3.7734.

Course evaluations are scoring better than ever now that the College has moved to a completely online course-evaluation process. To access course-summary reports (available shortly before the holiday break) and reporting-tool instructions, log onto MyCharleston, click on the Faculty tab and follow the links under Course Instructor Evaluation. For more information, contact Deanna Caveny, cavenyd@cofc.edu or 3.5527.
The U.S. Department of Education awarded the College a $2.3 million grant to help fund what new program for adults with intellectual disabilities? 

What department did Channel 5 deliver a Bojangles breakfast to last month after it was selected to be part of the Live 5 Breakfast Club? 

Employees who’ve had a change in their filing status (e.g., marriage, divorce, childbirth) during the 2010 tax year should submit what to the Office of Human Resources? 

What College employee was recently appointed to the board of directors of Charleston’s new International African American Museum? 

To get the seasonal flu vaccine from Student Health Services for $15, what do employees and their adult family members need to do?

Congratulations to Joan Newell, administrative specialist in the geology department, who guessed that the object in question was the 300 million-year-old fossil spiny sea urchin in the Creatures from the Past Natural History Museum on the second floor of the School of Sciences and Mathematics Building. The museum is open weekdays (except Wed.), 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

If you think you know what the object in the above photo is and where it can be found, send your guess to lutza@cofc.edu by Jan. 7, to be entered into a drawing for a T-shirt from the College of Charleston Bookstore, compliments of Barnes & Noble. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff.