Get Connected to CougarAlert

When the first cell phone rang in the meeting, it wasn’t with the usual reprimanding looks or even empathetic embarrassment. Instead, the people around the table gave nods of approval.

Within seconds, the conference room filled with a symphony of cell phone melodies, e-mail chimes and text-message rings. People scurried to their PDAs, phones and computers, flipping them open, thumbing their keypads and announcing with excitement, “I got it!”

What the members of the Emergency Notification System (ENS) Implementation Team “got” were trial-run “CougarAlert” messages, sent to them with the click of a button only seconds before that first ring. CougarAlert messages – sent through the College’s new emergency notification system – will be used to communicate with the campus community in the case of an emergency. The system was enabled last month by the ENS Implementation Team.

“The team has moved through product evaluation, procurement and implementation very briskly to enable this service,” says IT’s Director of Programming and Networking Marcia Moore, who co-chaired the team with Mike Robertson, the College’s senior director of media relations. “It has been an incredible experience to have such cooperation and excitement about this mass-notification solution.”

The solution the team selected, Connect-ED, sent its first message in early 2001 and is used by more than 200 higher education institutions.

“Connect-ED has a proven track record,” says Chief Paul Verrecchia, director of public safety and chair of the Emergency Management Team.

“When we gave them hypothetical situations, they knew how to handle them. It’s comforting to know that our communication service has been tested in every conceivable emergency. It really is a great tool.”

This tool allows the College to communicate with students and employees through voice messages to home, work and cell phones; text messages to cell phones and PDAs; written messages to e-mail accounts; and messages to teletypewriters and telecommunication devices (TTY/TDD).

“This multi-media solution helps us act appropriately and swiftly under emergency conditions,” says Moore. “We’ll be able to inform students, faculty and staff about the event and, more importantly, provide instructions meant to keep everyone as safe as possible.”

Able to reach 400,000 recipients in fewer than 30 minutes, Connect-ED will contact all phone numbers entered into each employee’s CougarTrail account, as well as their College e-mail address, an additional e-mail address if one is entered, and a text message to cell phone numbers that are acknowledged during the testing phase of the system. The system uploads contact information nightly, but employees must update their own information through CougarTrail.

“It is crucial that you ensure your information is up to date at all times,” says Robertson. “Without the right information, the system can’t do its job.”

The college community needs to log onto CougarTrail and update their information under “Update CougarAlert.” Please note: This is not the same as the “I.C.E. (Emergency Contact)” section, which stores information about whom to contact should you have a personal emergency. If you supervise employees who do not have access to a computer, please work with them to update their information. A CougarAlert test message will go to all employees and students on Reading Day, December 4.

CougarAlert voice messages will come from 843.725.7246. You are advised to program this number into your phones with Caller ID, so that you will recognize and answer the call in an emergency situation. Text messages will come from 231.177. You must opt in to text messaging by responding “Y COUGAR” when you receive the trial CougarAlert text message on Reading Day.

CougarAlert e-mail messages will come from cougaralert@cofc.edu. To make sure that the message is not blocked or sent to your “Junk” folder, you are advised to add this address to your list of allowed addresses in your e-mail accounts.

For more information about updating your emergency contact information, call human resources, 953.5512. Students with questions about updating their emergency contact information should call the registrar, 953.5968.
PUTTING MILES IN THE BANK: John Pawlowski Shows His Commitment at the Chicago Marathon

John Pawlowski knew the Chicago marathon was going to be a challenge. What he didn’t know is that it would be a matter of survival.

“I saw more people go down in this race than all the races I’ve run,” says the head Cougar baseball coach, who already had six marathons under his belt when he ran the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon, which received attention in the national news last month when it was cancelled mid-race due to hot, humid weather. “The heat will just zap the energy right out of you, and I really went into survival mode.”

And, with a reported 40 hospitalizations and 1 death during the course of the race, it’s a good thing he did.

“By the time I finished, the police were making people stop running,” Pawlowski says. “They didn’t have the medical personnel to handle it, and there wasn’t enough water for everyone. It just wasn’t safe, so they did what they had to do.”

And so did Pawlowski: He stayed focused, maintained a safe pace and finished the race in 3 hours and 57 minutes.

“It was bittersweet because I didn’t post my best time, but it was an unbelievable experience,” he says. “It was by far the toughest race I’ve run, but it was such a great atmosphere, and the spectators were great. People came out of their houses with ice trays for the runners; one lady hooked up her garden hose and soaked down anyone who wanted it. There were so many people lined up along the streets – cheering and yelling. I must have given high-fives to 50 kids. It was like a running parade.”

It’s this experience, this excitement, that Pawlowski likes about marathons. But, even more than this, he simply loves running.

“I have a passion for it,” he says. “People ask me why I run, and I say, ‘Because I can.’ You have to have some way of relieving the stress of everyday life and everything you go through; this is how I relax at the end of a tough day.”

Besides, Pawlowski continues, “running affects every aspect of your life. The rewards are enormous; you just have to work for it. You have to put the miles in the bank.”

And Pawlowski has certainly done that ... in more ways than one.

Not only does he run at least an hour every day, but the 26.2 miles he ran in the Chicago marathon translated into almost $11,000, which went straight to the Cougar baseball program’s bank. Through his fundraiser, called “Run Coach Run,” sponsors either pledged a dollar (or more) for every mile that Pawlowski completed in Chicago, or donated a flat amount to the cause.

“I figured I was running so much, I might as well do something for the program while I was at it,” he says.

With the original goal of raising $10,000, Run Coach Run was a success, and Pawlowski hopes it can be more and more successful every year that he runs a marathon. (He plans on running a different marathon every year.)

“It will just give me a little extra incentive to keep going,” says Pawlowski.

Whatever it takes. After all, you never know when it could be a matter of survival.
THE PERFECT STORM: Eileen Baran Lines It Up

Sometimes everything just comes together as it should. For some, it depends on the alignment of the stars. For others, it’s a matter of being in the right place at the right time. For most of us, however, it takes a firm commitment, some hard work and a lot of enthusiastic support.

For Eileen Baran, founder and director of Crisis Assistance Response and Education (CARE), it was all of the above. “CARE is really a result of the perfect storm,” says Baran, who first saw the need for a volunteer program at the College in 1989, when she was the director of women’s Greek life. “Everything lined up perfectly. The need was there, the intention was there, the people and the resources were there. This is before victim’s assistance programs were available on college campuses and before victim’s rights were recognized in the South Carolina constitution. It really goes to show how forward thinking this college is. We’re really very lucky.”

Since then, CARE has earned a reputation for being one of best programs of its kind. It has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice; it operates the 18th of the nation’s 29 chapters of “One in Four,” an all-female group promoting awareness about sexual violence against women; and, last semester, it hosted NV Day (No Violence – No Victims), an effort for which Verizon Wireless’ HopeLine program donated $8,000. It’s this kind of success that, over the years, has led other schools to solicit Baran’s help in establishing their own programs.

“But it just hasn’t taken off at other places,” she says. “This college is so different. We have a really unique catch system. The success of our program relies on all the staff and faculty and the greater campus community. It’s the best example of teamwork I’ve ever seen.”

The success of a student is also a team effort, and when a crime gets in the way of that success, the entire campus community jumps into action. Whether the student’s situation is first noted by the police, public safety, health services, undergraduate services, residence life or faculty – CARE is there to make students aware of their options and to help remedy their immediate and long-term issues.

“I serve as the air-traffic controller,” Baran says. “I help the students get what they need so that they can move beyond their situation. Maybe they need a little help in class, maybe they need to get out of a lease, maybe they need to work a different shift, maybe they need a restraining order – we try to broker something for them.”

Whether the victim needs to talk to a counselor, a parent or an attorney, Baran and Robin LaRocque, CARE’s other certified victim assistance specialist, know how to make it happen. “Being a victim of crime is not a simple process,” says Baran. “When crime happens to college students, think about what’s on the line. Think about the impact of someone taking away their control or entering their safe zone. Think about the life skills it takes to pick up the pieces. The immediate fall-out is just the beginning. CARE is there for the long haul. We’re constantly keeping tabs. We want to see them cross that stage, and we want to see them do it with a sense of closure and self respect. That’s when we know we’ve done our job.”

It’s a job that Baran does with passion. After all, there’s nothing like seeing your commitment, hard work and support come together just as it should.

WHERE TO PLANT: Filtered sun; evenly moist soil; along walls or fences.

TIPS: Prune in spring and fall to shape plant and control growth; propagate from cuttings in summer.

GARDENER’S PICK

Abutilon Hybridum

AKA: Flowering maple, Chinese lantern, parlor maple.

ON CAMPUS: Found in front of Buist Rivers Residence Hall; on the east side of Theodore S. Stern Student Center, near the pool entrance; and along the greenhouse fence.

DESCRIPTION: Shrub with maple-shaped leaves grows up to 10’ tall and tends to spread; pendulous flowers bloom periodically throughout the year; flowers differ in shape, size and color with each cultivar.
PUPPY LOVE: Just What the Doctor Ordered

Not all of us can be loved wherever we go.
Not everyone can make people feel better just by walking through the door. And not many have the instinct to love without reason or condition. It takes a rare breed. Unless, of course, you are a dog.

“Dogs won’t judge you,” says Caroline Hunt, professor of English. “A dog isn’t going to be fazed by any of the things that make us uncomfortable about ourselves or others.” That’s what makes them so helpful in settings like homeless shelters, nursing homes and hospitals, as well. With the rise of national and local associations like Therapy Dogs Inc., Southeastern Therapy Animal Resources (STAR) and K-9 Care Unit, dog therapy has become more and more common – especially, it seems, among College of Charleston employees.

Hunt, Sonya Allen, Norine Noonan (dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics) and Bill and Bobbie Lindstrom all volunteer with their registered therapy dogs in various capacities around the Charleston area.

“We all go to different places, just depending on our dogs,” says Allen, parking manager in business and auxiliary services. She and her Great Pyrenees, for example, make regular visits to a Summerville nursing home. “Stormy loves everyone, but her giant size makes her well-suited to a hospital or nursing home. She stands high enough to comfortably rest her head on a bedside or in the lap of someone in a wheelchair.”

Other dogs are more suited to schools, women’s shelters or even hospices.

“Each dog has a different personality and a different talent,” says Hunt, explaining that her “small, scruffy” dog, Toby, walks into a hospital waiting room and “works the room like a politician,” while Sabrina, her German shepherd, “goes straight for the person in the most pain. I can’t see that someone is hurting on the inside, but she can tell. She’s very intuitive.”

Intuition, however, is not a requirement for therapy dogs.

“They just have to be outgoing, friendly and bomb-proof, by which I mean that, if something goes awry, they can stay on target,” says Hunt. “And they have to have some kind of appeal.”

That appeal, it seems, comes pretty naturally for most dogs.

“The faces of people light up when they interact with our dogs,” says Bill Lindstrom, associate dean of the School of Sciences and Mathematics. He and Bobbie, director of the Center for Disability Services, visit disabled, abused and challenged children with their mini schnauzer, Winnie, and their toy poodle, Daisy.

“There’s something about a dog that causes people to forget their own situations.”

That distraction, that relief, is something that people can’t always provide one another. But the Lindstroms, Hunt, Allen and Noonan are doing everything they can to offer it. And that makes them a very special breed.
SAVE THE DATE

WELLNESS WORKSHOP, PART I: EAT RIGHT FOR LIFE
Get healthy now and maintain healthy eating patterns throughout the holiday season and beyond. This is the first of three wellness sessions and is lead by Dr. Ann Kulze.

When: Wednesday, November 7, 6 p.m.
Where: Robert Scott Small Building, Admissions Information Center
Fee: None
Contact: Jenny Fowler, 953.6526, fowlerj@cofc.edu

CAMPUS SAFETY WALK
Tour the campus and gather information from public safety about staying safe.

When: Thursday, November 8, 6 p.m.
Where: In front of the Stern Student Center
Contact: Cpl. Vernica Parker, 953.5609, parkerv@cofc.edu

UNLEASHING YOUR RIGHT BRAIN
Discover your creative abilities in this workshop based on Michael Gelb’s How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci.

When: Friday, November 9, 9:30-10:45 a.m.
Where: Human Resources Conference Room, Lightsey Center Basement
Fee: None
Contact: Linda McClanaghan, 953.8238, mcclenaghanl@cofc.edu

All information is subject to change. Please verify times, places and registration requirements with listed contact.

They may not have king-sized beds or even their own private bathrooms, but there’s one thing that the students who live on the interior side of Liberty Street Residence Hall have that none of us will ever have: a view of the 130’ long, 14' tall mural on the south wall of the new George Street parking garage. A gift to the students from the building’s developer, the painting by Doug Panzone ’03 portrays the meeting of the right and left brains. On one end, the sciences are represented by Einstein, an astronaut and swarming beetles, butterflies and birds. On the other end, the arts are represented by Louis Armstrong, Shakespeare’s quill and a twisting, weaving dragon. In the middle is the perfect union of technology and the arts: the iPod. The mural definitely gives residents a privileged view – and, really, what more could they possibly want?

NEWS BRIEFS: News You Can Use

- The Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art is hosting the work of Studio Art Chair John Hull and Printmaking Professor Barbara Duval through December 7.

- Flu shots are available November 5–8 in the Office of Student Health Services from 9 a.m.—12 p.m. and 2–4 p.m. The cost is $20, payable on-site by check or in the Treasurer’s Office by cash or credit card (please bring your receipt to health services). Please remember your College ID. Additional dates will be added if needed. For more information, contact Jane Reno-Munro, 953.5520 or munroj@cofc.edu.

- Staff and faculty are invited to submit poems, haiku, short plays, prose and artwork for Polyphony, the College’s multilingual literary magazine. Submissions must be in any language other than English and should include the English translation. Send submissions to milchevam@cofc.edu by December 3. For more information, contact Maggie Milcheva, 953.1995.

- Deposit your old cell phones and used ink cartridges in the labeled boxes on the first floor of the Stern Student Center, the Rita Liddy Hollings Science Center, Maybank Hall and the political science building (114 Wentworth). The proceeds will be used by Project Harambee to rebuild an orphanage in Kenya and to supply aid to Kenyan children with HIV and AIDS. For more information, contact Jessica Lancia, 953.8114 or lanciaj@cofc.edu.
What in the world?

Thanks to everyone who participated in last month’s photo quiz, and congratulations to John Hartman, administrative specialist in alumni relations, who was the first to guess that the object in question was the live oak in front of the John Rivers Communications Museum on George Street. The “truck-eating tree” (so dubbed by Kathleen Wurscher, administrative specialist in Physical Plant) has been hit by many trucks over the years, garnering it a lot of empathy on campus. The remnants of the offensive trucks may protrude from its trunk, but the oak has stood up to it all.

Take a look at the picture above. The object can be found on campus. Do you know what and where it is? The first person to submit the correct answer will win a tasty lunch for two at Liberty Street Fresh Food Company, compliments of ARAMARK. Good luck!

Send your submission to lutza@cofc.edu by Friday, November 16, 2007. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff. One submission per person, please.