Mark Swick gets a snap course in photography.
176 Lockwood.
The building is being renovated and added to the College’s IT and fire safety networks. The Controller’s Office, Office of Procurement and the Riley Center will move in upon completion in late 2016.

V Street Foods. It may look different, but the corner of St. Philip and Liberty streets is still all about food. Under construction.

The following work is expected to be completed this coming year: (1) renovations to Rutledge Rivers Residence Hall, which has been closed since 2013; (2) modifications to meet building codes and safety standards, and reconfiguration to add workspace for Residence Life maintenance staff in the Physical Plant building; (3) conversion into offices for the SLCWA dean and administrative staff at 11 Glebe Street. The renovation and three-story addition to the Rita Hollings Science Center is expected for completion in fall 2017. Funding is being sought for a state-of-the-art learning technology center next to the Addlestone Library on Calhoun Street.

In the 1970s, what was the name of the group of students who always sat in the back row of every class?

a. Backbenchers
d. Back Row Busters
b. Mud Miners
e. High Tailers
c. Giraffe Squad
f. Gator Gang

6,500
The approximate number of ID cards Cougar Card Services makes each year

15 minutes
Quickest need for student ID card replacement after issuance

Cougar Cash in a Click. Add Cougar Cash to your Cougar Card by logging onto MyCharleston and following the eBill link under the My Accounts tab. Once your eBill account is open, go to the eDeposits menu, select the current term, choose the Cougar Cash account and fill in your payment information. Electronic checks and all major credit cards are accepted. Online deposits are subject to a two-hour delay before they are available for use. For more information, visit cougarcard.cofc.edu.

Haunted buildings: f; 1970s Students: d.
**NEWS BRIEFS**

**APPLAUSE**

*U.S. News and World Report* named the College the fourth **best public regional university** in the South for 2016.

Senior education fellow **Terry Peterson** received the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the S.C. Arts Commission.

English faculty members **Bret Lott** and **Marjory Wentworth** have been inducted into the S.C. Academy of Authors.

**MEMOS**

Nominations for representatives for the **2016–17 Staff Advisory Committee to the President** may be made from February 1–12 by following the Elections link on sac.cofc.edu. Staff may vote in the divisional elections, February 29–March 11, and the at-large elections, March 21–April 1, through MyCharleston. For voting instructions and more information, visit sac.cofc.edu.

The **IT Helpdesk** now offers a walk-in service desk weekdays from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on the fifth floor of the Bell South Building.

Story ideas for *The College Today* may be submitted at today.cofc.edu/contact or to news@cofc.edu.

**Yammer** now serves as the central point of communication and collaboration for the College, replacing the faculty and staff Listservs and the community forums. Yammer allows users to subscribe to content, send messages directly to groups or individuals and create public or private groups for departments, project teams or special interests. To sign up, visit yammer.com/office365.

College employees can buy the newest version of **Microsoft Office** for their home computers for $9.95. For more information, visit it.cofc.edu, follow the Software link underneath the Computing Services menu and choose Microsoft Home Use Program.

Funding requests for **Staff Professional Development** opportunities are due by January 15. Funding will be considered for events occurring four months after that date. For more information, visit president.cofc.edu and follow the Staff Professional Development link, or contact Elizabeth Kassebaum at 3.5500 or staffprofdev@cofc.edu.

The next employee membership period for **George Street Fitness Center** is January 4–May 6. To purchase a $50 employee pass, visit campusrec.cofc.edu and follow the Marketplace link to Facility Memberships.

Tickets to **International Piano Series** concerts are $10 (50 percent off) for staff and faculty. Visit music.cofc.edu/concerts/international-piano-series for more information.

Employees are eligible for a 15 percent discount on purchases at the **west elm** furniture store on King Street.

**SAVE THE DATE**

DECEMBER 1

**30TH ANNUAL SOTTILE HOUSE TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

Get your photo taken with Santa and Clyde, snack on festive fare, make holiday crafts and sing along with the College’s Gospel and Concert choirs.

4:00–5:30 p.m.
Corner of Green and College ways
Info: Alexa Thacker thackera@cofc.edu, 3.6673

DECEMBER 2

**FACULTY/STAFF FAMILY NIGHT AT WOMEN’S BASKETBALL GAME**

Cheer for the Cougars as they take on Appalachian State, enjoy some free grub and try your luck in the holiday contests and games during halftime.

6:30 p.m., TD Arena
Free to faculty/staff and immediate family (ticket info TBA via email)
Info: Alexa Thacker thackera@cofc.edu, 3.6673

DECEMBER 4

**HOLIDAY DROP-IN WITH THE PRESIDENT**

Celebrate the season and enjoy refreshments, the company of your colleagues and the president’s beautiful holiday décor.

9:30–11:30 a.m. and 2–5 p.m.
President’s House, 6 Glebe St.
Pick up your ticket from the President’s Office through Nov. 25
Info: Alexa Thacker thackera@cofc.edu, 3.6673

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**SIMPLE CHOICES.** The Simple Selections Stations in Liberty Fresh Food Company and City Bistro offer menus that are free of seven of the top eight food allergies.

**DONE A SOLID.** Over the summer, Solid State Drives were installed in all the computers in the Addlestone computer lab. SSDs have faster boot times (3x!), lower noise levels, better reliability, longer lifespans and lower power consumption than traditional hard drives.

**IN THE 1920S, HOW DID UPPERCLASSMEN INITIATE FRESHMEN INTO THE COLLEGE?**

a. Dunked them in the manhole of the Cistern  
 b. Rolled them in grease and then rolled them in crushed oysters  
 c. Yoked them together with a rope and paraded them through town  
 d. Made them chant, “I am a rat!”  
 e. Made them sing, “Hail, Hail, the Gang’s All Here!”  
 f. All of the above

**SMALL CHANGE.** It doesn’t take drastic downsizing to cut costs around the office. In fact, just switching to smaller envelopes can make a big difference. Using 6"x9" letter envelopes instead of large flat envelopes saves $0.50 per piece by reducing the weight and changing the pricing category. Nine pages sent in a 10"x13" flat envelope will run you $1.40 – fold those same pages and put them in a 6"x9" envelope, and you’re looking at a mere $0.69. It all adds up!

**WHEN THE CITADEL STUDENTS CAME TO CAMPUS AND BURNED A “C” INTO THE CISTERN YARD, HOW DID STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE RESPOND?**

a. Stole their flag  
 b. Egged their campus  
 c. Burned “CofC” into The Citadel Green  
 d. Burned “ofC” next to the “C” in the Cistern Yard  
 e. Reported the students to the administration

**A LOT HAS CHANGED.** This block has transformed since 1892. College Lodge was built as the Downtowner Motor Inn in 1963, and the College acquired it in 1975.

**KEEP OUT.** We all want to make the world a cleaner place, and recycling is a great place to start, but there are some things that just don’t belong in the blue bins: Styrofoam, chip bags and candy wrappers, compostable plastic items (e.g., cups, silverware), leftover food and drinks, and plastic bags, coffee cups and silverware (Aramark’s utensils are compostable, but most are not). To keep the recycling stream clean, all these things should just be landfilled. For more information about recycling on campus, visit zerowaste.cofc.edu or contact Jen Jones at zerowaste@cofc.edu or 3.0749.

**MOVING FORWARD.** CARTA has revised the services operated on observed holidays and adjusted the schedule for Express Rte. 2, which now has a final morning departure of 8:10 a.m. from the Citadel Mall to downtown (eliminating the 8:35 a.m. departure) and a final evening departure of 7:43 p.m. from the corner of St. Philip and Calhoun streets to Mt. Pleasant. Be sure to visit ridecarta.com for important changes to your route.
Garden Variety

AT THE COLLEGE, EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK YOU’RE BOUND TO SEE SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL. The entire campus is more or less a garden, with lush landscaping lurking around every corner.

But for those who pay close attention, there are also secret gardens to be discovered in many of those corners. Next time you need a breath of fresh air, make your way to one of these serene spots and take time to stop and smell the roses.

A SENSORY GARDEN IN RIVERS GREEN
Located on the Coming Street-side of the Addlestone Library’s back patio, this garden promises to tickle all five of your senses. There’s mint for your taste buds; rosemary and lavender to rub between your fingers and release their aroma; spiky spartina grass, soft dusty miller and lamb’s ear for the touching; a gurgling water feature and wind chimes to soothe your ears; and, of course, many vibrant plants, such as yellow hibiscus and Mexican petunias, to gaze at with your eyes. The sensory garden will eventually feature a memorial to Cynthia Hurd, our beloved College librarian who lost her life during the June 17 tragedy at Emanuel A.M.E. Church.

WETLAND GARDEN OUTSIDE GRICE MARINE LAB
Graduate students Rebecca Balazs and Sharleen Johnson, with help from Grice Lab Manager Greg Townsley, organized the construction of a wetland garden at Fort Johnson last spring using wastewater produced by the new HVAC unit atop Grice Marine Lab. Water from the roof-mounted equipment is piped to a small lily pad–filled pond and then flows into the garden, which has been planted with native species. Still to be completed: a small bog garden filled with native carnivorous plants and interpretive signage.

RAIN GARDEN BEHIND 114 WENTWORTH STREET
Campus gardener Lexa Keane ’14 and student grounds intern Ben Winterberger installed a rain garden behind the political science offices at 114 Wentworth Street.

“The purpose of the garden is to reduce the amount of flooding in the area and to provide life in the process,” says Keane.

The roots of two banana trees planted close to the house help draw water away from the home’s foundation. Close by, in a retention pond area, there is another banana tree as well as bog ferns and bee balm. Keane and Winterberger also planted asters, echinacea, coreopsis and other plants to provide food for pollinators.
The Midnight Golfer

PETER ALAN SMITH IS ON THE UPSWING
Golf can be frustrating. You might be strong, fast, smart, agile and all-around athletic, but it doesn’t mean you’ll do well on the golf course. As the old saying goes, golf is “an ineffectual attempt to put an elusive ball into an obscure hole with implements ill adapted for the purpose.”

That observation, often attributed to President Woodrow Wilson, is a fitting sentiment for a lay player. However, even great athletes, golfers included, are frequently frazzled by the game. Consider slugger Hank Aaron, who quipped, “It took me 17 years to get 3,000 hits in baseball. I did it in one afternoon on the golf course.”

Then there’s Raymond Floyd, who won four major golf championships in his career, claiming, “They called it golf because all the other four-letter words were taken.”

OK, we get it. Golf is tough and bound to break your heart, no matter how many times you’ve played. Now imagine playing golf blind.

That’s what Peter Alan Smith, a.k.a. the Midnight Golfer, does nearly every week here in Charleston. That’s when he’s not working as a trust administrator for John Hancock Insurance or teaching a risk management and insurance class as an executive-in-residence within the College’s School of Business.

Smith, who began losing his sight as a teenager after being diagnosed with the degenerative disease retinitis pigmentosa, has turned out to be a talented golfer, routinely posting scores of 110 for 18 holes, which is better than many casual players who do have the aid of vision. And blindness, says Smith, isn’t always a disadvantage on the links.

“I don’t see the hazards,” Smith says of sand traps and water features. “I don’t think about them at all.”

Golf is only the latest adventure for Smith, who has also run marathons and been part of a tandem, high-speed bicycle racing team (he rides in the back, of course) — an experience he deems “a rush.”

He has also traveled abroad alone, bringing with him a precisely ordered stack of index cards detailing addresses and instructions. While enjoying a journey to Europe, for example, he would dole the cards out to cab drivers, concierges and security officers, advising them of his needs. This system worked for the most part, although he did get off at the wrong train stop once and was disoriented until finding some help.

While others might worry over the fate of the solitary blind traveler, Smith says his adventures are always safe and enjoyable so long as he anticipates problems, plans for them accordingly and then executes his plan.

And if it doesn’t work out quite as expected? “Just show up and see what happens is the way to go,” he says.

Because he lost his eyesight gradually, Smith was able to adapt his lifestyle in a way that meshed with the changing capabilities of his body. In the realm of athletics, sometimes this meant competing in events with a partner; other times it meant changing sports entirely.

“I always found a workaround to get me to the next thing,” says Smith, who graduated from Syracuse University and earned a master’s in international business relations from Harvard University.

Never has he allowed blindness to derail his plans. Instead, he’s made accommodations for his condition and forged ahead.

“I’m glad I didn’t accept any limitations,” says Smith. “We always talk about the downward spiral. Well, there’s an upward spiral, too. Success leads to success.”
Hashtag, You’re It

MARK SWICK SNAPS UP SUCCESS
Mark Swick didn’t have any more photography experience than the rest of us. He didn’t have some kind of exclusive subject or the privilege of private access. He didn’t claim to have a perspective that was particularly novel or witty or surprising or provocative. He didn’t even have a camera.

So, how did the amateur photographer end up with a solo show on lower King Street, a permanent display at a local restaurant, steady sales coming from his private website and over 8,000 active followers on Instagram? Hashtags.

“Hashtags really are a big part of it,” says the community liaison for the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program, whose Instagram gallery (@mnswick) ranks in popularity right up there with the official accounts of the City of Charleston (@charlestonsc) and the College of Charleston (@collegeofcharleston). “#Charleston is a popular hashtag to search; there are a lot of people who appreciate the Lowcountry landscape and architecture.”

That’s what struck Swick, too, when he first moved to Charleston in June 2012 and started exploring downtown neighborhoods on his bike, snapping photos with his iPhone here and there. He soon realized that his impressive backdrop made for some impressive images, and his bike rides started taking on purpose: to take pictures.

“I started chasing doors and windows everywhere I went, seeking them out in different neighborhoods and different communities,” says Swick, who soon had devoted his Instagram gallery just for Lowcountry landscapes and scenery.

It was that focus that gave him traction.

“It’s about knowing what you want to photograph, and in what style – that’s what makes it different from your everyday gallery,” he says. “Successful Instagram galleries have a very specific type of photography that interests a diverse group of people, and an editing style they can recognize. People want that continuity. That’s what they’re looking for when they follow you.”

To gain followers, Swick started following other Charleston photographers on Instagram, commenting on their photos often to drive them and their viewers to his page.

“I also use a lot of hashtags to reach out, join and build mini-communities,” he says. “And from there, it just thrives off of the random connections.”
The random connections Swick has made on Instagram have led to an entire new community of friends.

“There are so many really talented photographers in Charleston, and they’re eager to explain things and learn, too,” he says. “We started a Facebook page and started sharing photographs and techniques, and then we started meeting up. And that has blossomed into a really great community and really great friendships. I think meeting new people has been the best thing that’s come out of this for me; it’s helped me break outside of my comfort zone. And it’s given me a lot of different opportunities.”

It gave him the opportunity, for example, to create InstameetCHS, a series of events for novice and professional photographers and Instagram users to tour and photograph an area together. Since its start in February 2013, there have been nine InstameetCHS tours (including one that he hosted for Katie Wells’ Social Media students last fall), with anywhere from 30 to 50 people joining Swick to photograph various downtown neighborhoods, as well as Magnolia Cemetery and Drayton Hall. The photographs are then posted under the hashtag #InstameetCHS.

“It’s cool to see how other people process a street or a neighborhood,” says Swick. “We’re all there together, we’ve shared the same experience – but what we take away from it is so diverse.”

What Swick himself has taken away from the whole experience is just more and more opportunity. In the spring of 2014, he co-curated Charleston’s first-ever InstaGallery (@CHSInstaGallery). From thousands of submissions, 12 Lowcountry Instagrammers were chosen to show their photography in the Real Estate Studio on King Street.

It was in that same brick-lined shotgun space that Swick had his first solo show, complete with an artist reception and … sales! Add the chunk of change to the sales from his personal website and his display at Persimmon Café, and Swick’s doing pretty well for a guy who started off without a camera.

He did finally get a DSLR camera in May 2014, and has used it pretty consistently since then on his photography expeditions — generally a couple times a week.

Still, he says, “I’m a big proponent of mobile photography and the philosophy that the best camera is the one that’s with you.”

In other words, #usewhatyouvegot.
Even if you've never seen her perform — which is unlikely since she's an accomplished stage and film actor — you've probably heard her acting voice.

Joy Vandervort-Cobb, associate professor of African American theatre and performance, has been entertaining and soothing us with her honeyed voice since she first began teaching at the College in 1994. She's announced the names of thousands of graduates at commencement ceremonies and narrated dozens of College-produced documentaries and marketing videos.

But you might also hear her far from Charleston. In fact, that's her speaking softly in your ears on the walking tour at the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.

"Your first 15 minutes of the tour, my dulcet tones introduce you to our government," she says proudly, describing her acting voice as dark and smoky. "The first line made me know I wanted this gig desperately:"
‘E pluribus Unum ... out of many, one.’”

She loaned her chops for a program celebrating Muhammad Ali’s 70th birthday, which aired on CBS and ESPN. And her vocal narration skills are featured in the College-produced, Emmy award-winning documentary, Where Do We Go From Here?, which explores the Civil Rights Movement.

While Vandervort-Cobb has been told that stage actors often don’t make great voice actors, for her the two crafts originate from the same place. “My voice is a huge part of my acting, isn’t it? I mean, as an actor, it’s an entire package. Body, voice, brain, imagination, spirit. When I’m in the studio or working on the text I’m to voice, I do it in my actor head.”

Creating voices for different characters has always come naturally to her. When she was in the ninth grade, a teacher asked her to record herself reading several books as part of a grant project.

“It was the best,” she says. “She’d leave me in this room and give me the books, I’d push record on the biggest friggin’ tape recorder I’d ever seen, and I’d have a blast changing character voices in between the narrative that was in my natural voice.”

She’s been offered professional representation by an agent, and although that could lead to more well-paying gigs, Vandervort-Cobb says it would be hard to find time outside her College duties to take on more voice work.

Still, there are a couple of dream voice-over jobs she’d jump at: “I’d love to voice a cartoon or a national commercial that runs all the time! Know anyone who can hook me up?”

At the College of Charleston, we all have a unique voice – and we like to make ourselves heard. In addition to Joy Vandervort-Cobb, there are at least two Cougars among us who do voice-over work on the side.

Myra Whittemore ’96, adjunct faculty in the communication department, can be heard in corporate training videos, radio advertising spots, audio books and theater, including Charleston, the Musical. She has even been the voice for a video game character.

“I have a ‘flinty contra-alto’ sound with nearly three octaves in range, so there’s a variety of personas that fall into that range,” says Whittemore, who is represented by Coastal Talent. “This avocation is particularly fun for me, as I teach a range of classes, including Public Speaking, Message Design and Influence, Business Communication and Introduction to Rhetoric. The powers of intonation, style and delivery play an essential role in how people relate to and remember any given message.”

Teresa Smith, director for the Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services, is the voice for several industrial training videos and TV and radio commercials. Her most regular client is Benefitfocus, for their BlueCross BlueShield videos.

“I thoroughly enjoy Benefitfocus because they utilize blue/green screens that show different backgrounds and are very creative with interactive videos for their clients,” says Smith, who has attended the Atlanta Voice-Over Conference and studied with many voice-over artists. She is represented by Coastal Talent and also acts in commercials, theater, films, TV shows and other videos.
**COVERED.** Along with some of her students from the College’s N.E. Miles Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC), Mary White ’94 appeared on the May 2015 cover of *Teaching Young Children*, an international journal published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. In her 20 years as a master teacher with ECDC, White has taught in every class and currently co-teaches 4-year-olds and kindergarteners. Before that, she served as a graduate assistant with the program.

**CHOPPED.** Executive Chef Tonya Mitchell competed on *Chopped* (Food Network) last summer. Appearing on the episode, “Thrill of the Grill,” Mitchell tried to best three other chefs, serving swordfish with a watermelon salsa. At the College, Mitchell oversees nine campus dining locations, including City Bistro and Liberty Street Fresh Food Company. In February 2015, she earned the prestigious ProChef II certification from the Culinary Institute of America.

**ON EXHIBIT.** A series of exhibits of faculty publications has opened on the third floor of the Addlestone Library. You may find copies of each of these books in the stacks and they are available for checkout. Send recommendations for the next display to Claire Fund at fundc@cofc.edu.
Teach Your Children Well

IN THE WAKE OF THE TRAGIC SHOOTINGS AT EMANUEL A.M.E. CHURCH, Patricia Williams Lessane turned to a familiar routine for comfort: writing. The director of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture hammered out an opinion essay lamenting the fact that even houses of worship in the “Holy City” are not immune to violence and hatred.

Her op-ed, “No Sanctuary in Charleston,” was published in The New York Times, where it caught the eye of agents at In This Together Media, which works with authors to develop young adult novels.

The company had been toying with the idea of a book centered on the Lowcountry and asked Lessane to submit a sample scene. Drawing on her surroundings in Charleston and looking to her own children for inspiration, Lessane sketched the opening scene of a love story that centers on a 16-year-old African American girl whose mother is a CofC alumna and a physician. The boy she falls for, the son of a restaurant owner in downtown Charleston, is white.

Lessane has weaved elements of Charleston’s cultural heritage into her novel, including a scene in which the young girl sets out on a traditional Gullah spiritual “seeking.”

The manuscript is due by fall 2016.

SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE THINGS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS. Such was the case for the learning strategies instructors at the College of Charleston, who – after reviewing the objectives for the learning strategies course (EDLS 100) and realizing that there wasn’t a textbook that covered all the material they wanted to cover in class – decided to write their own.

The result is the 245-page Destination Success, which was published in July by Kendall Hunt Publishing. Providing a road map for students’ journey to academic success, this book covers everything from time management and study habits to career planning and health and, moving forward, will be used in all of the College’s EDLS courses. These not-for-credit courses are required for students on academic probation and provide resources for getting back on academic track. The hope is that other campuses will consider Destination Success for their academic recovery classes.

“I am excited to give other institutions around the country the opportunity to benefit from the expertise of our talented team of instructors,” says Michelle Futrell, director of undergraduate academic services, who – along with Melissa Thomas, director of the Center for Student Learning (CSL), and Mindy Miley, assistant vice president of new student programs - served as an editor for the book.

Writers and editors (above, l-r): Melissa Hortman, formerly with CSL, now at MUSC; Cristy Landis, AAPC advisor, adjunct faculty in theatre; Lindy Coleman, associate director, CSL; Shannon Farrelly, AAPC advisor; Meredith Gerber, counselor, Career Center; Kate Tiller, advisor, athletics; Mindy Miley; Genny Hay ’82 (M.Ed. ’85), associate professor, teacher education; and Melissa Thomas.
CONGRATULATIONS TO DAMARIS HILL-JONES, student records manager in the biology department, whose name was drawn at random from those staff and faculty members who correctly guessed that the photo showed the toes of the *Maiacetus inuus* fossil cast displayed in the Mace Brown Museum of Natural History’s *Evolution of Whales* exhibit.

**IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHAT THE OBJECT** in the above photo is and where it can be found, send your guess to theportico@cofc.edu by Friday, December 18. The names of those who submit the correct answer will be entered into a drawing for a free lunch for two at Liberty Street Fresh Food Company. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff.