Ain’t No Mountain High Enough

Godfrey Gibbison can conquer it all.
**NO BOOKENDS.** A really good book can suck you in, take you with it, remove you from everything else. And, when it’s done, a really good book can leave you feeling more than a little lost. Where do you go from there? The English department’s Little Free Library would be a step in the right direction. Located in the Kennedy House garden at 26 Glebe Street, the brightly colored book-sharing library is there for anyone in the campus community to stop by, pick up a book and either leave a book or return the borrowed book later. So, when you get to the end of a good book, trade it out at the Little Free Library and let someone else get lost in it for a while. That way, the best books never end!

**SAFETY BLOCK.** As part of its Data Loss Prevention efforts, Information Technology is now quarantining and blocking transmission of emails that contain credit card and/or social security numbers. Using security controls, the automated, electronic DLP system scans both incoming and outgoing emails and their attachments for sensitive information, and – if detected – quarantines the message and notifies the sender. After 14 days, the message is purged from the DLP system. For more information – including how to transmit sensitive information safely and securely through the College email encryption service – visit it.cofc.edu/security/dlp or contact helpdesk@cofc.edu.

**HERE’S A HINT.** The College’s mesmerizing campus may be our workday world, but – nestled between the city’s major thoroughfares – it remains something of a hidden gem: Visitors strolling down King Street simply don’t know what a treat there is right around the corner. With the opening of College Corner last semester, however, they at least have a hint. Located on King and George streets, the shop not only entices visitors to campus by providing video and information, but also sells high-end College of Charleston gifts. Built in 1855, the store was originally owned by German grocer John Meyer and, from 1960 to 2014, was home to Barton’s Toys, Candy and Gifts. But – let’s face it – to us, it’s always been the corner of the College. Now, everyone else will understand why.

**WORK OUT FOR THE BEST.** The George Street Fitness Center pilot program for employees has been extended and the time restrictions removed. To get full access to the cardio equipment, machines, weights, benches, lockers and showers any time during open recreation hours, faculty and staff just have to go to campusrec.cofc.edu, follow the Marketplace link to Facility Memberships and purchase a GSFC employee pass for $50/period. The current period ends May 8, the summer period runs May 11–August 14, and the fall period runs August 17–December 18. Go ahead: Commit to stay fit!
The College was ranked the 75th smartest public college in America by Business Insider Inc., No. 4 among public colleges in the South that offer master’s degrees by U.S. News & World Report and No. 15 of 50 in the 2015 College Choice Ranking of Southern Regional Universities.

Travel and Leisure named the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art the best art gallery in Charleston.

The National Science Foundation awarded Jim Bowring and his team $570,000 over the next three years to develop cyberinfrastructure to look at data for climate change, sea-level change and volcanic activity.

Karen Ann Myers, associate director of the Halsey Institute, was one of three finalists in the 701 Center for Contemporary Art Prize 2014 for her paintings and was named one of the New Superstars of Southern Art by Oxford American.

The following faculty members received Fulbright awards to research and lecture abroad: Jack DiTullio (biology) in Naples, Italy; Christine Finnan (anthropology and teacher education) in India; and Dinesh Sarvate (mathematics) in Uganda.

Funding requests for Staff Professional Development opportunities requiring commitment within the next four months are due April 1. For more information, visit president.cofc.edu and follow the Staff Professional Development link, or contact Elizabeth Kassebaum at 3.5500 or staffprodev@cofc.edu.

The Staff Advisory Committee to the President wants to hear your ideas, recommendations, opinions and even complaints, so let yourself be heard: Email sac@cofc.edu or the staff Listserv (staff@cofc.edu), visit sac.cofc.edu and click on Suggestion Form or log onto the community forums at community.cofc.edu and post to the Staff Forum.

When planning an on-campus conference, complete the form at go.cofc.edu/itform at least 10 days in advance to ensure IT is aware of the dates, location, IT needs and requirements. If presenters need IT support, request the technician meet with the presenter at least 20 minutes prior to the session. For more information, contact the Helpdesk at 3.3375 or helpdesk@cofc.edu.

For help updating a College Web application or site to conform to the College’s new website design, contact the Helpdesk at 3.3375 or helpdesk@cofc.edu.

Employees are eligible for 20% off of admission to the South Carolina Aquarium. When purchasing tickets online, use the promo code cofc15, or you may present the promo code at the aquarium’s ticket window.

A list of notaries on campus can be accessed under the Employee Quick Links section of the MyCharleston employee page.

SAV THE DATE

MARCH 27
PORTICO COFFEE HOUR
Enjoy a cup of coffee, some breakfast treats and the company of the other people who call the College “work.” The first 10 people to drop in will get a Portico mug and two tickets to the April 10 Cougars baseball game against Elon University.

8:30–9:30 a.m.
Liberty Street Fresh Food Company, Faculty/Staff Dining Room
Info: theportico@cofc.edu

APRIL 11
BEEHIVE BUILDING
Learn about the role of native pollinators and build a bee hotel.

10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Dixie Plantation, Student Garden
Transportation is available: email studentgarden@cofc.edu to reserve a spot
Info: Victoria Vazquez, 3.0484

APRIL 18
RELAY FOR LIFE
Walk for a cause at the CofC Relay for Life – which will include activities for the whole family – benefiting the American Cancer Society.

12:00–10:00 p.m.
The Citadel, Johnson Hagood Stadium, 68 Hagood Ave.
Info: Lauren Whitfield, lauren.whitfield@cancer.org, 284.6194
<FIELD DAY.> When Laurie Volkmann published an open letter on her blog thanking Peyton Manning for being a good role model to her children, she never imagined the post would go viral. She never thought Manning would actually read it. And the communications adjunct certainly never dreamed she and her family would be invited not just to open the American flag on the Sports Authority Field at Mile High in Denver – but also to meet Manning at the Broncos’ team hotel. “ARE YOU FREAKIN KIDDIN’?” she wrote on her Facebook page after the trip. “All kinds of awesome.” Since her viral blog post, Volkmann has been a regular writer for the Mile High Report, the Denver Broncos’ blog for SB Nation. Check it out at milehighreport.com/authors/laurie-lattimore-volkmann.

VOICE YOUR CHOICE. The new term for the Staff Advisory Committee to the President starts July 1, with the names of the new divisional members and the at-large candidates announced shortly. The at-large election will take place March 23–30 and its results will be announced April 2. To vote in the at-large election, go to the Staff Advisory Committee Ballot section under the Employee tab on MyCharleston and click on Staff Advisory Committee Ballot System. Under Current Elections, click At-Large Representatives, hit Continue and then read about and choose a candidate. It couldn’t be easier to make yourself heard. For more information, visit sac.cofc.edu.

BE OUR GUEST. Charleston hotels can be booked for College visitors and guests at special discounted rates. Just follow the Plan a Visit link on the College’s homepage and then click Places to Stay and then Discounted Lodging. For each night’s stay booked through this system, the hotels give the College a percentage of the revenue. Now, that’s a good host!

TAKE AIM. Last fall, the College launched the MyCougarCampus Project, which implements AiM, an integrated workplace management software solution. AiM is being built on the College’s space database information and will become a unified system of record for many of the management functions for the physical campus. The Space Management Module is going live this spring and will serve as a unified system for all space information and reporting. The project will take roughly 24 months, and – once complete – AiM will streamline daily operations and ultimately lead to more efficient business processes, better planning, more transparent decision making and quantitative operational cost savings. For more information, visit space.cofc.edu/mycougarcampus.

A BEER BUST. It’s not your beer-goggles: That really is the bust of Paul Roof, adjunct in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, depicted on the Holy City Brewing Chucktown Follicle Brown label. As a sponsor for the Holy City Beard and Moustache Society – which Roof founded in 2007 – the brewing company released the American brown ale last summer to commemorate the society’s fifth annual Southeastern Beard and Moustache Championships. This year’s championships will be at the Music Farm at 7 p.m. on May 23, and the event supports the Center for Women’s Lowcountry Women with Wings program. So come on out! It’s all in good spirits!
**Yammer Time**

The people who’ve used it can’t stop talking about it. They yammer on and on about it. And the College’s Information Technology Division hasn’t even officially launched it yet.

**Yammer**, the new social network, should be unrolling across campus later this year, giving College faculty and staff a new forum to communicate and exchange ideas.

Popularly described as a corporate version of Facebook, Yammer is what’s known as an “enterprise social network,” and only available to a particular group of people with common interests or pursuits – in this case, those who are employed by the College.

“It’s a place for collaborating, sharing ideas and basically interacting with your colleagues in a community,” says Andrew Bergstrom, the College’s director of Web strategies.

The College has experimented with a beta version of Yammer for about a year since the College’s Faculty Education Technology Committee suggested using the social network. Bergstrom says that most users are pleased to find that you can access Yammer through a Web browser, a mobile device or email. In other words, come Yammer time, we’ll all be yammering on and on together.

To get started now, sign up with the beta version at yammer.com/cofc.edu.

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**Planted in Memory**

It’s not just any old flower. It’s usually the first flower – the bright burst of spring starting to stir. It’s a sign of renewal, new beginnings, hope.

The daffodil means something to all of us – but, when it’s part of the Daffodil Project, it’s so much more than a flower. It symbolizes the yellow stars that Jews were forced to wear in the Holocaust – and it commemorates the children who died in it.

With the goal of planting 1.5 million daffodils to honor the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust and for children who suffer in humanitarian crises around the world today, the Daffodil Project is a worldwide living Holocaust memorial created by Am Yisrael Chai, a nonprofit Holocaust education and awareness organization in Atlanta. Since the project began in 2010, 187,177 daffodil bulbs have been planted in its name across the world – including right here on campus.

Last November, students from the Jewish Student Union/Hillel joined the Grounds Crew in planting a total of 1,500 bulbs: 300 Salome daffodils along the back of Rivers Green and – in front of the Addlestone Library – a mass of 600 Carlton and 600 Ice Follies daffodils.

“I hope this is something that can become an annual event,” says Paty Cowden, the College’s grounds supervisor, who introduced the campus to the idea last year. “I think it is a lovely and meaningful gesture to honor the memory of those who lost their lives, as well as the survivors. It’s also a way to bring some early spring color to the campus.”
Fast Play
Whatever you do, don’t call it a birdie. It’s just a bird. Or you can call it a shuttle, or even a shuttlecock, if you must.

In the world of competitive badminton, players like Rachel McKinnon don’t have time for extra syllables — they like to keep the terminology short and sweet.

“It’s pretty much the fastest sport,” says McKinnon, an assistant professor of philosophy who began teaching at the College last fall.

Of course, knowing the lingo will only get you so far. With a shuttle coming off an opponent’s racquet at speeds up to 300 mph, you have to be nimble and brave to stand a chance of winning a rally. That means training incessantly, playing smart and possessing cat-like reflexes: requirements that don’t faze McKinnon one bit.

Very little does, in fact. Case in point: Her favorite training exercise is challenging three opponents all by her lonesome self.

In that situation, she says, “you shouldn’t be able to win. You’re always under pressure.”

As a teenager in Victoria, British Columbia, McKinnon was a provincial badminton champ entertaining thoughts of embarking on a professional career in the sport. When a car accident resulting in severe injuries sidelined her at age 16, however, her chance for professional badminton glory slipped away.

But McKinnon kept on, eventually becoming a competitive player again as she completed bachelor’s and advanced degrees in philosophy across the country, with stops at universities in Victoria, Halifax, Waterloo (Ontario) and finally Calgary, where many of Canada’s top badminton players live and train.

And badminton was hardly the only contest in which she thrived. During her years as a student, McKinnon accrued some considerable poker winnings, mostly in online games. In fact, after earning her master’s degree, McKinnon even took a break from schooling and played poker professionally for two years.

“That was my primary income for eight years,” says McKinnon, noting that poker winnings are not taxed in Canada.

Such money has helped finance McKinnon’s badminton’s expenses, which are significant. The costs of coaches, court fees and travel expenses add up, as does equipment, which is prone to wear. McKinnon laments how her badminton shoes with special rubber soles wear out within months, high-strung racquets regularly break and shuttles of cork and goose feathers rarely survive an entire match.

“Some of us try to buy in bulk,” says McKinnon. “If a friend goes over to China, they’ll bring back a box. I’m not kidding!”

So, if you’re heading to China any time soon, you might consider picking up a box of what McKinnon says is the most precious commodity: high-quality birdies — ahem, birds.

Whatever you do, don’t call them birdies.
Godfrey Gibbison spent his childhood farming in the rural mountains of Jamaica, selling vegetables and walking six miles to and from school. So, for him, climbing toward a distant goal is as natural as breathing.

And that’s exactly what he’s been doing at the College ever since 2012, when he became dean of the North Campus – working tirelessly to revamp the North Charleston campus, erect its new building and establish a home for the new School of Professional Studies.

It was quite an ambitious undertaking, but Gibbison — now the founding dean of the School of Professional Studies — saw it as a mountain that needed to be climbed.

Growing up as the youngest of seven children in the thin air of Jamaica’s high-altitude ranges, Gibbison started working on his family’s small farm parcels the moment he could walk and scatter a few crop seeds into a trench. The cabbage, corn, yams, peas, cassava and other staples that the land’s red soil produced were the family’s primary source of income. Between the planting, weeding, fertilizing and harvesting, the farm required constant attention, and Gibbison was often kept home from school to toil in the fields.
“There was nobody in my family or my village who was not used to doing back-breaking work,” he says, recalling the rudimentary hoes and machetes they used to work the land and the regular treks he’d make to fetch water from a reservoir two miles away — returning with full buckets balanced on his head.

While farm life was difficult, it was Gibbison’s ticket to a better life. He was able to pay tuition at a semi-private high school by selling produce from the farm at a Saturday market eight miles away. And that was a feat in and of itself.

“You might come home that day having lost money,” says Gibbison, who had to either hitch a ride into town on the back of a newspaper delivery truck or secure his burlap sacks full of vegetables on the roof of a rickety public bus and pay for the ride.

It all paid off, and he got a good high school education. It was the foundation he needed to first get his bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of the West Indies and then his master’s and doctoral degrees in the United States. He went on to teach economics first at Centre College in Kentucky, then at his alma mater back in Jamaica and then at Georgia Southern University before landing at the College.

Charleston might be his home now, but part of Gibbison is forever defined by his modest upbringing in the mountains of Jamaica — threads in his character and personality will always tie him back to that life: He is a green thumb who can resurrect a dead leaf. He enjoys exercise and running, never forgetting all those miles he logged as a boy. He is a bargain shopper who — taught to barter and haggle in the produce market as a kid — refuses to pay full price for anything.

And then there’s his tenacity and determination.

“I have never accepted the word can’t,” says Gibbison.

Indeed, where some may see an uphill battle, he always sees an opportunity to climb.
Dragon boat racing is a water sport that originated in China over 2,000 years ago. The 20 paddlers in the colorful 48’ vessel – which is rigged with decorative Chinese dragon heads and tails – paddle to the beat of the drummer, who faces the paddlers and drums out what is known as the “heartbeat of the dragon.” At the rear of the boat, the sweep steers the boat.

Wilson first heard about dragon boat racing when a DBC member spoke at a luncheon she attended at Halls Chophouse. By the end of the five-minute talk, she was hooked.

“The guest speaker talked about how she was invited to go paddling, and she was just so intimidated by it, but the group made her feel so good that she finally did it,” Wilson recalls. “When she said, ‘I can’t do that,’ they said, ‘Do what you can.’ When she said, ‘I don’t know how,’ they said, ‘We’ll show you.’ When she said, ‘I’m not strong enough,’ they said, ‘That’s what the team is for.’ She knew she wasn’t being judged, and she knew she could trust these people. And I thought, I want to be a part of that!”

And so, one cold, wet Saturday morning, she went to Brittlebank Park and stood on the bank of the Ashley River wondering exactly what she was doing there.

“I was freezing my but I knew I couldn’t complain, because they’re all cancer survivors, and they were all doing it,” laughs Wilson. “Once I got out there, it was exhilarating. It was a little strenuous, and I was sore afterward, but it was worth it.”

Since that day back in February 2014, Wilson has paddled in several local races as well as in Cocoa Beach, Fla. There, her team had three races: the 250, 500 and 2,000 meters.
“After the short distances, we thought we’d die on the 2,000 meter, but our pace was actually the same,” says Wilson. “You hit that wall, and once you get through it, you just go. You’re working together and you don’t want to let people down, and — even though your arms feel like rubber — you just keep half an eye on the people in front of you and half on the strokes (that’s the first pair of paddlers; they set the pace), and you just keep moving your paddles through the air, through the water, back into the air.”

Due to a back injury, Wilson recently moved from paddler to sweep — and she has no complaint; she’s just happy to be out on the water with the crew.

“I love being out there in nature with these people working together, in sync,” she says. “When everyone is paddling together, you hear the paddle as it comes into the water, you hear the paddle as it comes out of the water. You hear that feathering swish. It’s so calming.

“It’s a wonderful, peaceful, grounding feeling to be in the midst of nature, in the water, in the air.”

And when the dolphins are out there, it’s just exhilarating. It’s a wonderful, peaceful, grounding feeling to be in the midst of nature, in the water, in the air.”

Even back on land, the DBC community — which some have dubbed a “floating support group” — keeps that feeling alive.

When, for example, a member fell ill again and was in treatment for 100 days, the DBC community rallied to her side, taking on 12-hour shifts to care for her during her recovery.

“That’s just the kind of community this is,” says Wilson, noting that DBC is also an advocate of healthy living, holding prevention and teambuilding events, offering public fitness programs and supporting other local organizations focused on community health.

“Dragon boating is so much more than just a sport.”

Indeed, it really does seem that dragon boat racing’s got it all.
PEOPLE ALL OVER CAMPUS ARE STANDING UP FOR THEIR HEALTH.

With more and more awareness of the health risks of sitting too much – and more and more headlines like “Sitting Is the New Smoking” – stand-up desks are gaining converts everywhere, including at the College.

Proponents say eschewing chairs has helped sharpen their focus and improve their productivity at work, too.

Political science professor Chris Day began using a stand-up desk when a friend suggested it might help him recover from a back injury. “There’s a huge difference in health and productivity,” he says. “It’s made a measurable difference, and my life is better.”

Between work commutes, computer-based desk jobs and too much time on the couch, the average American is sedentary for several hours each day. Evaluating how much time she spent sitting throughout the day, Karee White, assistant director in the Office of New Student Programs, made the switch to a stand-up desk about a year ago.

“I try to live an active lifestyle, and the stand-up desk contributes to that,” White says. “I definitely feel much healthier standing.”

Vijay Vulava (pictured above), associate professor of geology and environmental geosciences, began using a stand-up desk several years ago in an effort to alleviate back pain.

“I am very glad I made the change,” he says. “My productivity has also improved, not just because of less discomfort, but also because I can freely move about in my office while working or when meeting with students and colleagues.”

Andrew Bergstrom, director of Web strategies, has also found that using a stand-up desk helps promote teamwork with his colleagues.

“It allows me to move around my office without constantly getting up and down,” says Bergstrom. “It improves collaboration when meeting in my office as we move from the desktop to the dry erase board.”

Adjusting to a stand-up desk can take a few days or more, depending how much of the day a person spends doing deskwork. Vulava suggests that those whose jobs are mostly confined to deskwork will want to keep a chair handy for occasional breaks.

Another adjustment is the potential awkwardness of being the only person in your department using a stand-up desk. While skeptical co-workers might ask you if someone stole your chair – there’s something to be said for being a trendsetter.

Which is why more and more people are taking a stand.
It may sound far-fetched, but they say that dogs and their owners resemble one another – and there’s actually a good amount of research showing that it’s true! In fact, several studies have found that, shown photos of various dogs and owners, people consistently linked dogs to their correct owners at greater rates than chance would dictate. So, how do you compare?

Can you match your colleagues with their canine counterparts?

**WESTERN BERKELEY CAMPUSES**

- **CHRISTA POPARAD, LIBRARY**
- **BILL KOPROWSKI, BUSINESS**
- **JENNIFER AMOS, REGISTRAR’S OFFICE**
- **SONYA ALLEN, PARKING SERVICES**
- **MARY PERSON, INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH, PLANNING AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

**ANSWERS:** A) Brady, B) Lucy, C) Rommie, D) Ices, E) Lil Bit, F) Jake
CONGRATULATIONS TO SGT. TRAVIS PIGOTT in the Department of Public Safety, whose name was drawn at random from those staff and faculty members who correctly guessed that the object in question is the swing arm in the Sottile House’s hallway doorframe. Once draped with heavy curtains to stop drafts and regulate interior temperatures, the rods now serve as a decorative reminder to be thankful for central heating and air.

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, May 1. The names of those who submit the correct answer will be entered into a drawing for a free T-shirt from the College of Charleston Bookstore. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff.