President’s Corner

Pomp, circumstance, formal regalia, excitement, tears, smiles, cameras flashing. It all happens at graduation ceremonies, and WWCC’s graduations last weekend were no exception!

Our 41st graduation ceremonies, the Nurses’ Pinning and GED ceremony all went off without a hitch this weekend in spite of a few drops of rain at Clarkson on Saturday. Sunday’s cool, mostly sunny weather in Walla Walla kept indoor temperatures comfortable in the Dome for the two-hour ceremony. It’s a long day when you’re here for all three ceremonies and all three receptions, but it’s worth it!!

Each student is different and all reactions to the experience vary in degree from fear to ecstasy. But we’re doing something right. We’re offering our students the opportunity to make a difference in their futures by acquiring skills that make them eligible for better paying jobs that will provide for their needs. The looks on their faces this weekend mirrored their excitement and pride!

We are continually in tune with new and upcoming trends. We have a great track record of staying at the forefront of what’s happening in the work world. We pay attention to what jobs will expand and require employees trained in a specific field. And we provide the training that gives potential students an opportunity to move into these fields and better their chances of success.

There is no longer a valid excuse for not getting an education. Financial aid, dedicated staff, online classes (one graduate actually received her AA degree completely online) and a personal desire to succeed will help any students achieve his/her educational goals.

Students will quickly see why we say ‘WWCC—your best choice!’ Affordable, accessible, transferable—an enticing promise during these times of increasing prices in gas, food and (seemingly) anything that can be purchased. We truly are here for our customers—potential members of our 43rd graduating class of 2010!!!
**From Professional to Personal**

Roberto Z. Romero, Custodian

Roberto was born and raised in the small town of Pharr, Texas. “We moved around a lot to various places for work including Lubbock and Phoenix,” he said. “From there my mom and I traveled as far as Walla Walla for work. I was a full-time farm worker so I didn’t get the opportunity to go to school until the law changed and we were required to go so we moved back to Walla Walla. I started school in the 7th grade and went through high school.”

During this time, Roberto’s mother became very sick. “I took a job working nights at WWCC to help support her and take care of her,” Roberto remembers. “I took care of her during the day and my stepdad took care of her at night.”

After high school, Roberto enrolled in the auto body program at WWCC. “The instructor said I needed a tutor,” he says, “and my tutor said I read well but she thought I had dyslexia. I stopped going to classes but I did finish my two years in auto body.”

Roberto began working as a custodian in the 7th grade at Garrison and WaHi as well as the V. A. Medical Center. He also works for the SWCC security crew for the VA and WWCC. He continues in his custodial position here and on June 1 celebrated 35 years on the job!

“I got married in 2004,” Roberto says with a smile. “My wife Lanetta currently works at the Washington Odd Fellows home as a certified nurses assistant. She grew up in Walla Walla, graduated from WaHi and graduated from North Park University with a B.A. in Psychology in 1990. We have no children.”

When asked about his favorite movie, he said he enjoys watching drama and martial arts movies “because I like action.”

Roberto’s hobbies include gardening and yard work. “We’re growing a vegetable garden now and lots of flowers.”

For enjoyment, Roberto works for the fairgrounds in security during the fair, balloon stampede and other special events. He also enjoys doing handyman projects at home.

“My hobbies include art—drawing and photography which I want to learn more about,” he says.

Maybe Roberto will expand his drawing and photography hobbies when he retires—or should we say if he retires! We’re betting he’ll be here for a while—maybe going for a WWCC record of longest employed employee. But we’re glad you’re here, Roberto!

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**From Our Kitchen to Yours...**

Company coming, you don’t have much time and you need a dessert? Try this quick, refreshing cake for that hot summer backyard barbecue.

**Pineapple Summer Cake**

1 Angel Food Cake Mix
1 small pkg. Vanilla Instant Pudding
1 20 oz. can Crushed Pineapple
1 8 oz. Cool Whip
Fresh Strawberries (or berries of your choice—raspberries are great!)

Bake cake and cool to room temperature (or you can buy a cake). Combine vanilla instant pudding and undrained can of crushed pineapple. Stir and let sit for 3-5 minutes. Add Cool Whip. Cut cake into three layers. Frost layers with pineapple mixture. When ready to serve, garnish with fresh berries.

*(Can be adapted to diet conscious guests with fat-free pudding mix, no sugar added pineapple and Lite Cool Whip!)*
Wellness at Work

Weight Watchers

The WWCC Weight Watchers group began their third session June 4 with enough members for the 17-week program that includes free e-tools (a $12.95/month value). Weight lost and miles walked since the group started on October 31, 2007 is as follows:

581.5 pounds     1,427 miles walked

So if you think about it, WWCC has lost more than four FTE’s (Full-Time Employees) who walked south of Yuma, AZ to get away!! There’s still time to join. Contact Doreen at 4239 if you have any questions.

Walking for Your Health & Your Wallet

Walking benefits your health and your wallet, especially if you are financially responsible for any of your own health care costs such as co-pays for doctor office visits or medications. Research from the HealthPartners Research Foundation demonstrated that adults, especially those over 50, who remain active and exercise regularly will significantly reduce health care costs to both employers and employees.

Nearly as important is the skyrocketing price of gas. So park the car and make extra time in the morning so you can walk to work if the distance is doable. If not, get out your bicycle and bike to work. Figure out how much you’re saving and put it aside for a special purchase or occasion. Improving your health and increasing the dollars in your wallet—it doesn’t get any better than that!

Did You Know . . .

. . . Gretchen Baker, a high school Special Education teacher at WaHi, brings a class of students to the college from January through June in a career outreach program. “It’s such a positive experience for my students,” Gretchen wrote. “Some of them call themselves college students now and they are so proud to come out to WWCC.” She looks forward to next year’s class and their trips to our campus.

Condomences

Our deepest sympathies go out to Debbie Scharnhorst whose mother passed away early June 3 after losing a fight with cancer. Debbie is an Information Technology Technician II at the Clarkston Center.

Ethics Tip

RCW 42.52.160, Use of persons, money or property for private gain, states in part:

1. No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money or property under the officer’s or employee’s official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee or another.

Before you feel guilty about sending the occasional personal e-mail or using the phone to check on your family, know that the ethics board has adopted rules providing exceptions to this section for occasional or de minimis use.

What is “de minimis” use of state resources? A de minimis (minimal) use is an infrequent or occasional use that results in little or no actual cost to the state. An occasional brief local phone call to make a medical appointment or check on a loved one are examples of allowable de minimis use of state resources.

Certain uses of state resources are prohibited regardless of whether there is little or no cost to the state. It’s briefinfrequent and the use does not interfere with the performance of official duties. These uses are absolutely not allowed—not even if you are on break or it’s after hours. Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business, whether or not for profit, is strictly prohibited. That means you can’t even bring catalogs that have items in them for sale and leave them in the break room.

Summer Fun

For those of us who have to work through the summer, we might as well have some fun. So send me a photo of yourself (or drop one by Cathy Nelson’s desk) when you were between the ages of two and five. We’ll include it in The Insider and see if anyone can figure out whose picture it is. How about a Kudos Bar to the first person to guess correctly?