

Staff profile: T.E.E.N. program assistant Jamie Baker also sings, acts, and fishes

Quarter break begins Friday, 3/23 (Faculty Day) and runs through next week.

Baseball begins Saturday 3/25 at Chemeketa, noon, and plays Tuesday, 3/27, at Olympic at 4 p.m.

Fastpitch and golf seasons open next weekend.

Program assistant Jamie Baker has worked at Centralia College for 14 years, most of it in the Child and Family Studies division. Prior to joining CFS, Jamie was a student and student worker at the college. She may be better known on campus as an actress and singer, but Baker's real enthusiasm is for the TEEN program in which she works.

Baker was born in Ft. Worth, Texas, moved to Santa Barbara, California as a youngster, and moved again to Clatskanie, Oregon. It was in Clatskanie that she graduated from high school, married young, started a family, and it is the place she calls home. "I graduated from Clatskanie High," she smiled. "So did my mother-in-law, my husband, and my son." She admitted there were side adventures and other short-term moves, but the family always gravitated back to the pleasant Columbia River town in Oregon.

Her husband, Myron, was first and foremost a cowboy. "We moved down to Solvang, California at first," she recalled, "because he got a job on a cattle ranch." He would serve a hitch in the Marines and return as a cowpuncher to Moses Lake and the Boistfort Valley. "Meanwhile, I worked in a couple of paper mills," Baker explained, "until the paper business went bad."

Baker was in a dislocated worker program when she first arrived at Centralia College. It was during her input evaluation that Baker realized what her best career choice would be. "I always thought I'd be good working with kids," she said. "The past couple of decades have proven that to be the case."

Getting into the field proved a bit more difficult than she had expected. "Employment Security paid my first year of tuition," she reported. "But nobody told me the next year was my responsibility." She fortunately got a job as secretary to student government. "That paid my second year," she laughed. "So I got myself elected as vice president of ASCC and got another year of tuition."

She earned her AA in Early Childhood Education, by which time she was working in a CFS parenting class. When the TEEN program was developed in the fall of 1993, Baker was among the first to join the staff.

Baker is now program assistant for the TEEN program, serving parenting and pregnant young women earn their high school diplomas as they learn the critical skills needed to be a parent. The program serves 12 school districts and Baker's

responsibilities include contract oversight and truancy issues among the students in the program. She has found the work especially satisfying. "I think now I was put on the earth to work with teens," she again laughed. But she says that watching a teenage mom become a good parent, with a knowledge of how much she affects her baby, is among her greatest rewards.

When not at work, Baker may be found acting in a play—she's been in ten CC productions—singing in

the CC choir, fishing her "secret spots" on the Columbia River, and enjoying her grandsons, aged 5 and 3. "With my background in childhood education," she said, "we really have some great times together."



Jamie Baker has spent 14 years in Child and Family Studies, nearly all of that in the award-winning TEEN program.



The Muse

"America believes in education: the average college professor earns more money in a year than a professional athlete earns in a whole week!"

—Evan Esar—



Birthday Party Dates

GARY HILL	3/23
ERICH FROMM	3/23
STEVE QUEEN	3/23
VIKI DRAPER	3/24
LISA CARLSON	3/24
FATTY ARBUCKLE	3/24
BELA BARTOK	3/25
ROBBIE FROST	3/26
SANTI RAPHAEL	3/28
STEVE WILCOX	3/29

Huzzahs and cheers to all our celebrants this week. Wish each your best when you see them. Root beer with spring chicken and dumplin's for everyone!

April: Math Awareness, Stress Awareness, and National Soft Pretzel Month Coincidence? We think not!

Thanks to Dan Taylor for letting us know April is "Math Awareness Month." You may have noticed it's not called "Math Appreciation Month." This newsletter is sometimes accidentally read by high school students, though rarely. The careless juxtaposition of "math" and "appreciation," however, in the presence of a HS junior may cause confusion sufficient to bring on an infarction.

Dan says the theme this year is "Math and the Brain." Well, duhhhh.

So let's see. "Thirty Days hath September, April, June..... Yep, April is a short month, but long enough to become as aware of math as most of us will ever care to be.

Actually, mathematicians have recently modeled biological processes to study neurons, methods for improving MRI imaging, and developed algorithms for diagnosing tumors in the brain. The mathematical community is changing the face of their science, and next month really is the time to gain some awareness of the profound discoveries that are taking place. Nobody said you have to understand them!

(Note: your *Update* editor thought an "algorithm" was a dance step peculiar to the immediate past US vice president.)

Centralia College's Teen program wins Juvenile Court system award

The Centralia College TEEN program—a function of Child and Family Studies—has been presented a special appreciation award from the Lewis County Juvenile Court system. The single annual recognition goes to a program, person, or agency that has significantly aided the work of the court in supporting area young people and keeping those same people out of the court system.

The Juvenile Court, like law enforcement, social services, and other similar resources, prefers to work with programs that offer opportunities for youngsters to receive positive guidance and assistance. Prevention, those agencies maintain, is vastly preferable to punishment and rehabilitation after the fact.

The Centralia College TEEN program (Teens Entering Education Now) was established in 1993 as part of the Child and Family Studies division. Primary objective of the program is to provide services such as counseling, education, and practical training for teens that are pregnant or already parenting babies. There are about 30 students currently enrolled in TEEN classes. The outcome for each student is to hopefully earn a high school diploma while they learn positive parenting techniques to help them care for their children.

"Along with pregnant or parenting teen mothers, we also serve at-risk teens," said Nancy Grzadzielewski, TEEN Counselor. "We get some of the teen fathers in the class, but usually only two or three a year."

The primary concern of the program, however, is the young mothers and mothers-to-be. "They will have the primary, full-time responsibility for their babies," Grzadzielewski explained. "Yet they seldom have good parenting role models, and they are almost always in the most critical social period of their lives. Teens are notoriously selfish," she continued, "so learning parenting skills isn't something they even considered just a few months earlier." Most girls during their teen years would rather be partying than taking care of a baby, but Grzadzielewski says many of them soon learn to accept the responsibility and begin acquiring the skills necessary.

The high school diploma they will earn in the program can make them more employable and able to support the new baby.

The TEEN program at Centralia College serves a dozen local school districts and provides services to students from those districts under a contract arrangement. TEEN services are also available at Centralia College East in Morton.

Besides building experience as mothers and receiving individual attention from the TEEN program staff and counselors, the students attend a full schedule of academic, practical, elective and other high school courses. The TEEN program also features special classes and guidance in health, fitness, and nutrition that help both the young parents and their babies.

"More often than not," Grzadzielewski noted, "a teacher, counselor, or other TEEN staff inadvertently becomes the young mom's role model. We might be the first adult they have had to whom they can relate. It's a big responsibility," she continued, "but it's an enormous reward when the youngster starts showing signs of a new maturity and finally is able to really connect with their growing infant. It makes all the heartaches worthwhile."

For information on the TEEN program, call ext. 341.

Isn't it the truth?

