

i n t o u c h

Western Nevada Community College Foundation
Alumni News

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Perseverance Pays Off for Mo Draper

Robotic machinery, intricate computerized technology with connections around the globe, and a breath-taking, pastoral work setting with views of the Sierra – it's a “dream come true” for this former casino worker by summer and ski buff by winter. How did Mo Draper make the giant leap from the ski slopes to the high-tech world? With hard work, courage, determination, and excellent guidance and instruction at WNCC.



Mo Draper

Mo's journey, which ultimately led to a degree in engineering, took several turns along the way. At first, tiring of the casino life, he wanted to work on hardware. "Fixing things that were broken" was an interest he had since childhood. He enrolled at WNCC in the electronics technology program, graduated in 1986, and was honored as class valedictorian with a 4.0 GPA. Mo looks back at the guidance he received in 1984 from professors Richard Arrigotti and Mike Hardy, who urged him to take calculus-based math courses and pursue a degree in engineering, but he declined at the time. Instead, he accepted a job with Cooper Industries as a medical robotic technician. A hostile takeover of Cooper led Mo back to the Carson Valley in 1991, where he was hired as an electronics technician at Bently Nevada. Mo then decided his professors' advice made sense – he wanted to become an engineer. He began his engineering quest by working the Bently night shift and attending WNCC by day. After completing the freshman and sophomore requirements for WNCC, he transferred to University of Nevada, Reno for his final two

years, continuing the same grueling schedule of work at night and school by day, this time including a daily commute to Reno. He graduated from UNR school of engineering with a 3.86 GPA and an outstanding scholar award.

Mo's determination and success in transferring all WNCC credits to the UNR benefited students following in his footsteps. When professors Robert Collier and Aniruddha Mitra wanted to start a pre-engineering program at WNCC, they asked Mo to sit on the task force to share his transfer experience, which ultimately helped future engineering students transfer from WNCC to UNR with ease.

Mo could not speak more highly of his education at WNCC. In discussions with colleagues who also began their education at WNCC, the unanimous opinion was, "We felt we were better prepared than other students, particularly in calculus, physics and chemistry." Mo says, "The access to instructors is much greater at WNCC than larger four-year institutions, the classes are smaller, and the curriculum is identical at half the cost." He also believes that the instructors are dedicated and supportive of the

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WNCC Observatory Opens with "First Light"

The "First Light" grand opening celebration of the Jack C. Davis Observatory at Western Nevada Community College began on Thursday, May 15, with a perfectly-timed full lunar eclipse. The \$1.3 million observatory opened to the public and will provide a research-level facility for WNCC students and the community. WNCC Astronomy and Physics Professor Robert Collier conceptualized the observatory idea 13 years ago and admits to being almost overwhelmed by the generosity of the community, the complexity of the project and the educational opportunities the observatory provides for students.

Given the level of equipment in the observatory, the research possibilities are extensive. Inside are three telescopes, all with cameras. One is equipped with a spectrograph, which can collect data from the stars. Outside is a robo-dome with a telescope for studying the sun. Nine workstation-grade computers and a laptop inside the observatory have access to the telescopes. The telescopes and computers are connected to a large overhead TV screen and a plasma TV screen, so entire classes can view the stars from their desks. In addition, a Campbell Scientific research-grade weather station is installed outside the observatory. This solar-powered instrument will collect weather data and send it to the Desert Research Institute in Reno, where it will be analyzed and uploaded to the World Wide Web and accessible to Internet users. DRI will use the data for its regional weather database studies.

In a second visit

to Carson City to support the observatory, former astronaut Buzz Aldrin attended the celebration. Aldrin spoke at the First Light ceremony and visited the Nevada State Prison to talk with the men who sculpted the rock sculptures for the Planetary Walkway. Most Americans who were at least of school age can remember where they were on July 20, 1969, when Buzz Aldrin became the second man to set foot on the moon. Many have called that moment the crowning achievement of the 20th century.

On Saturday, May 16, Dr. Geraldine Peters, Research Professor at USC Space Sciences Center, gave a fascinating, free lecture on "The Active, Hot Stars of the Night Sky." The lecture covered the evolution of hot, massive stars - most of the "bright" stars we see fall into this category.

The three-day festivities also included observatory tours led by the Western Nevada Astronomical Society, the opening of the bids for the 2002 V-Rod Harley-Davidson motorcycle and a Harley-Davidson fashion show.

As stated by Dr. Carol Lucey, president of WNCC, physicist and astronomy teacher, "The observatory will support instruction in the area of introductory astronomy. Astronomy is a gateway science...interest in astronomy is almost hardwired into humans. Interest in it has been part of all human cultures and civilizations for as long as there have been human records." With the new observatory, anyone interested in astronomy can take advantage of the astronomy classes being offered each semester at WNCC. In Professor Collier's words, "...you'll really see how great this facility is when we start teaching students in it. It's an absolute treasure for WNCC and the community." ☺



Robert Collier



CAMPUS CHAT

is on the Air!

Television viewers in the WNCC service area now have a chance to catch up with the latest news about WNCC from the comfort of their living room. "Campus Chat" is now airing on four cable access networks in Carson City, Douglas, Fallon and Reno. The lively half-hour show updates viewers on new programs, people at the college, building projects and services to the community. Helaine Jesse, vice president for Institutional Advancement at WNCC, hosts the show.

SCHEDULE

Carson City - Carson Access TV • Channel 10, Wednesday - 7 p.m., Friday - 7:30 p.m.

Douglas County - Community Access TV • Channel 26, Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, 7:30 a.m. & 7:30 p.m. • Sunday, 7:30 a.m. & 7:30 p.m. • Monday at 7:30 a.m.

Fallon - Fallon Cable TV • Channel 25, 2nd Monday & Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m.

Washoe County - Sierra Nevada Community Access Television • Channel 16, Tuesday, 6 p.m.

Western Nevada Musical Theatre Company

Presents

THE BEST OF BROADWAY ... RIGHT HERE AT HOME



West Side Story

Leonard Bernstein's masterpiece finds two young lovers caught between warring street gangs. The phenomenal score (Tonight, Maria, America, Cool, One Hand One Heart, Somewhere) will be lavishly accompanied by guest artists from the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra. Don't miss this extraordinary musical experience in Carson City.

June 13-22 • Carson City Community Center

Pajama Game

Sparks fly when the new superintendent of the Sleptight Pajama Factory falls for the lovely head of the grievance committee. A bright and brass score highlights the labor union's relentless race for their seven-and-a-half cent raise.

September 26-October 5 • Carson City Community Center

Hello Dolly!

Matchmaker extraordinaire Dolly Levi decides to fast talk her way into a love match of her own in this ebullient and irresistible story of the joy of living. The score glitters with happy songs in this happily-ever-after ménage of romances.

**November 8-23
Carson City Community Center**

CALL 445-4249 FOR TICKETS

PRODUCTION TEAM: Sandi Richman, Mike Greenan, Anne Hansen, John Hawkins, Michelle Legras Peltier

three

CLASS CORNER

SHELINA PATTERSON – ('01 AGS & AAS) Shelina is planning to attend UNR for her bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Congratulations to Shelina and her husband on the arrival of their new baby girl!

Tour Franktown Estates & Support Foundation

Enjoy a visit to five beautiful homes in the Franktown Estates at Thunder Canyon when the WNCC Foundation hosts a tour on Thursday, June 12. The tour will be from 4-7 p.m. with wine tasting and hors d'oeuvres from 6-8 p.m. in the Franktown Grill at Thunder Canyon, a private golf and country club in Washoe Valley. The tickets are \$35 and



include the tour and reception. Proceeds will benefit special projects sponsored by the Foundation. Tickets/information 445-3240

2003 WNCC Greater Nevada Credit Union Golf Classic

WNCC will tee off its sixth annual Golf Classic on Monday, Aug. 11, at Washoe Valley's Thunder Canyon Golf and Country Club. This will be a unique opportunity to play a beautiful, exclusive private golf course, and the tournament is expected to fill up quickly. The



\$150 entry fee includes golf, continental breakfast, refreshments on the course, door prizes, goody bag, and barbecue. There will be "closest to the hole" and "longest drive" trophies as well as chances to win prizes for a hole in one on the three pars. Business signage sponsorship opportunities are available.

To join/questions 445-3240

Alumni Relations Committee



The WNCC Alumni Relations Committee is dedicated to maintaining a communication link between alumni and WNCC, to heighten alumni awareness of the growth and improvement of WNCC, and to encourage their participation in that growth and improvement.

Graduates!

Send us your news for Class Corner. Tell us what's happening in your life ... promotions, marriages, children, milestones. *Please type or print clearly.*

check if address is new

Name _____ (Maiden) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Home phone _____ Business phone _____

Year of Graduation _____ Major/Emphasis _____

Notes _____

Send to: in touch • 2201 W. College Parkway • Carson City • NV • 89703
Fax: (775) 887-3127 • e-mail: richmans@wncc.edu

Surgical Technologist Program Begins

WNCC's new Surgical Technologist program began in April with a full class of 16 students and three instructors drawn from the regional health community.

The Certificate of Achievement in Surgical Technologist is designed for those seeking a health career in operating room care. The program provides competency-based classroom, laboratory and clinical instruction. Upon completion of the program, students will be eligible to take the National Certification Examination for Surgical Technologist.

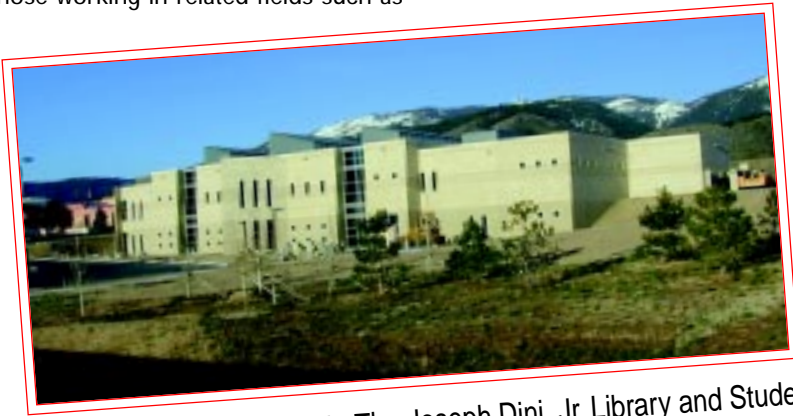
WNCC's Director of Allied Health, Dr. Judith Cordia, says, "This is an excellent career for someone who is technically inclined and wants to work in a hospital atmosphere. Many of our students in the first session came from the ranks of certified nursing assistants, and those working in related fields such as

radiology and physical therapy."

Classroom and laboratory work include instruction and practice in operating room techniques, infection prevention and control, care of surgical patients, and human anatomy and physiology. Clinical instruction takes place in area hospitals and other acute care settings. Clinical experiences include more than 400 hours of supervised, hands-on acute care experiences in scrubbing and assisting with a variety of surgical procedures. Students may be required to attend classes or clinicals during daytime as well as evenings and weekends.

The next session of the Surgical Technologist program begins January 5, 2004. The college will accept applications for that session beginning June 15 through September 15. ☺

Information/Application Forms:
call 775-445-3296



NEARING COMPLETION - The Joseph Dini, Jr. Library and Student Center will be open this fall at WNCC Carson City. Students will enjoy group study rooms, student lounges, a weight room and game room, as well as an "Internet corner."

MO DRAPER

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students' success.

"When I was feeling like I couldn't do it any longer with college during the day and working at night, they convinced me that I could do it," Mo said. "Some of those professors were Robert Collier, Mike Hardy, Mark Dorio, Rich Arrigotti and Michael Sady."

"For a boy who grew up loving to take things apart, this is a really fun job," he continued. With a crew of ten engineers reporting directly to him, Mo and his team create custom sensor designs

for rotating machines. The designs are operating all over the world from the Arctic to Asia.

Mo offers advice to people who want to change their career later in life but are afraid. His fear was that he would be the oldest student in class. He states, "It doesn't matter if you're the oldest person. You're making a difference in your life." He adds, "I have a fabulous life due to the head start I got at WNCC and all of the support from my wonderful wife, Mary Ann."