Bill Schulte joins foundation’s board

Bill Schulte and his family moved to the Dryad area of western Lewis County after he retired from the US Coast Guard. Schulte had logged a distinguished 24-year career, retiring with the rank of Commander.

With his service career behind him, Schulte and his family weighed their settlement options based on finding a community where they could be actively involved in a variety of pursuits, keep their five youngsters engaged in the region, and it needed to provide the intellectual and spiritual base that would serve them into the future.

To suggest that the family found all its need met in the pastoral hills and swales of Lewis County would be to grossly underestimate the case. Schulte and his family have had a positive impact on nearly every organization they’ve touched.

Bill Schulte’s most visible commitment to the area has been his election to the Board of Commissioners of Lewis County, District 2. He took office at the beginning of 2009, and has been described as a thoughtful, moderate public servant, especially in terms of local government efficiency, positive economic development through natural and human resources, and a sensible goal of floodwater mitigation in all parts of the county.

Schulte has been an outspoken proponent of the need for top-quality education for both academic and career pursuits to create economic recovery as quickly as possible—and has singled out Centralia College as a personal focus.

Schulte is in a particularly strong position to understand the value of a solid education in virtually every pursuit. All of his five youngsters are already in college or will be entering one soon, although Schulte himself didn’t receive his own bachelor’s degree (Environmental Science) until after retiring and moving to this area.

Schulte is also a big booster of the “Running Start” program at Centralia College. His eldest son, Alex, entered the program as a high school junior from Pe Ell and was accepted two years later as a junior at UW. This June Alex will graduate with a degree in mechanical engineering.

“Having those two years of college completely paid for was a godsend for our family,” Schulte said. “I’m hoping my other son, Joseph, will get the same opportunity at Pe Ell High School.”

His three daughters are presently in college around the country. Heidi is in the master’s program in Public Health at the University of North Florida, daughter Beth is attending the Air Force Academy at Boulder, Colorado, and daughter Danielle is a student at the Colorado School of Mines.

Given his family history and his recent record as an involved supporter of conservative causes in the region, Bill Schulte appears to be a particularly promising addition to the hard-working foundation Board of Directors.

Giving generates donor satisfaction

A gift to the Centralia College Foundation in your will may be most satisfying, and some kinds of future gifts pay you—and your estate—dividends in the present.

A single bequest, for example, may be earmarked by the donor for a specific cause such as scholarships or faculty and program, or may be leveraged to provide all or part of a perpetual scholarship.

Supporters may receive recognition through membership in the foundation’s exclusive “Legacy Society,” and from special benefits reserved for members. If you are planning to put Centralia College in your will—or you already have—please contact the foundation.

A more immediate alternative is available though the foundation’s Annuity Program. The annuity provides a fixed-rate cash return on that portion of your estate given to the college though a structured gift annuity. The annuity strategy is especially popular as a life-income arrangement for older donors, enabling them to live comfortably while still sharing a part of their estate with the future.

Whatever your gift wishes, contact Julie Johnson at (360) 736-9391, ext. 516, or at jjohnson@centralia.edu to discuss your participation in a will, gift annuity, or any of the foundation’s diversified giving programs.
Recognizing Successful Students

Jair Juarez benefits from scholarships

Jair Juarez, in his second year at Centralia College, is the first in his family to attend college. He is able to attend because he received two scholarships (Tanaka Family and Maggela Olivares Hornby).

“During my first two years at Rochester High School, I was very unsure of what school I would attend after graduation. I loved the idea of going to college but I just didn’t know how to get there,” said Juarez. He received a visit from members of the college’s Latinos Unidos Club and was convinced he could overcome obstacles and make it into college. That visit, he said, opened his eyes to what he could do if he set his mind to it. The scholarships made higher education possible by opening the doors to an exciting educational opportunity.

Once enrolled, Juarez proved he belonged, building a solid 3.8 grade point average, strong enough to get him into the college’s Honors Society.

Jair is making the most of this educational opportunity. He is president of the college’s Latinos Unidos Club, which helps make Hispanic men and women aware of the value of education and provides an inviting reception to many who otherwise would not think about attending college.

Juarez is also recognized as a Coca-Cola All-Washington Academic Team member, one of two from Centralia College and one of sixty honorees from around Washington state. This team of student high achievers, which includes Centralia College student Jeffery Lowdermilk, will be honored in March during ceremonies on the South Puget Sound Community College campus.

Juarez is another example of how your support of the foundation does make a difference in the lives of Centralia College students.

Charlie’s Piano

Concert set for March 27

Piano virtuoso Charlie Albright is bringing his immense talent to the Centralia College Corbet stage in Washington Hall for a performance that will also showcase the new Charlie Albright Grand Piano. Charlie’s much-anticipated performance will take place Saturday, March 27, beginning at 7 p.m. A limited number of remaining tickets are available through the Centralia College Foundation. Remaining tickets cost $25 but you are urged to call soon since tickets are going quickly.

The Keys to Success campaign to pay for the piano is underway although the piano has already been delivered to the college.

The campaign has raised more than $82,000 of the $100,000 campaign goal for the piano, according to Dr. Helgi Heidar, campaign chair. A local philanthropist recently stepped into the breach to increase the total substantially.

Robert H. and Doris O’Neill have made a $35,000 matching contribution to the new piano fund.

Charlie, a Centralia College graduate, is presently studying simultaneously at Harvard and the New England Conservatory.

If you wish further details on the Charlie Albright Keys to Success campaign or want to make a donation to the piano fund, please check us out on the Web at: <http://www.foundation.centralia.edu/> or calling the foundation office at 736-9391, extension 290.
When he received his AA degree in general science from Centralia College in 1969, Jerris Hedges couldn’t have known how far he’d go or what a mark he would leave in his wake. His goal was to make positive changes in the world.

From groundbreaking research leading to the development of the pacemaker to serving as an initiator of the standardization of emergency room procedures, Hedges, dean of the John A Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii, is certainly leaving his legacy. And for his accomplishments Hedges is the college’s 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient.

“Dr. Hedges’ accomplishments are extraordinary,” said Dr. Jim Walton, college president. “He helped standardize emergency room procedures and wrote the manual for ER medical care that is in use around the world. He was a major researcher in the development of the pacemaker. His work has doubtless been responsible for the saving of countless lives and he’s not done yet. We are very proud to have him as our 2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award recipient.”

From the very outset, Hedges intended to have a powerful, positive impact on the world through his study and lifetime work.

“I have a drive to make a positive change in the world,” Hedges. “And so far I’ve been given that opportunity.” The monumental changes Hedges has wrought with that opportunity must leave the observer in awe.

Hedges was born at the original St. Peters Hospital in West Olympia and grew up on a small beef farm outside of Littlerock. He graduated from Rochester High School an hour’s bus ride from the rural ranch.

Centralia College and the Centralia College Foundation teamed to recognize the Latimer family for its support of the capital campaign. The recognition included the artistically framed photo held here by Dr. Jim Walton. The Health and Wellness Center (gym) mezzanine, pictured behind the Latimers, has been named in honor of the Latimer family.

The foundation is engaged in a capital campaign to raise $3 million to help provide resources for the Science Center, Health and Wellness Center and the planned TransAlta College Commons. The campaign is well over the $2 million mark. For information on how you can support this campaign, including possible naming opportunities at Centralia College, please contact Julie Johnson at the Centralia College Foundation, 360.736.9391, extension 290.
Providence Centralia Hospital announced a $50,000 contribution to the Centralia College Foundation capital campaign and a $50,000 donation supporting nursing education at Centralia College.

“We believe this is an investment in the future of this community,” said Providence Centralia Hospital Chief Executive Cindy Mayo. Mayo and Providence Southwest Washington Chief Executive Medrice Coluccio each started their careers in health care as nurses.

The $50,000 for the capital campaign will help purchase materials for the college’s new Science Center, which houses the Registered and Licensed Practical nursing programs. The gift sets the stage for a yet-to-be identified naming opportunity for Providence Centralia, according to Steve Ward, vice president for Finance and Administration at the college and executive director of the foundation.

The other $50,000 will be placed in an account in the Providence Centralia Foundation to fund scholarships for Centralia College nursing students. The Sister Carolyn Koreski Nursing Scholarship Fund, named for long-time Providence Centralia sponsor Sister Carolyn Koreski, will be established.

“We are pleased and honored to have the level of cooperation that exists between the college and Providence and the contribution by Providence is fantastic,” said Nola Ormrod, who leads the college’s nursing programs.

The hospital and college have had tremendous success working together since the college began its LPN program in the mid-1950s. Nearly 1500 students have trained at the college since the inception of the nursing program and hundreds have worked at the hospital during clinical rotations. Centralia College was among the first two-year colleges in the state to open an LPN program.

Since 2003, when the college added the RN program, about 50 RNs have been hired into residency programs and represent about 20 percent of the nurses currently working at Providence Centralia.

The Centralia College Foundation is in the midst of a campaign to raise $3 million to purchase equipment and other resources that cannot be purchased using state money. To date, the foundation has raised more than $2 million toward its goal.

Centralia College science programs were given boost when U.S. Congressman Brian Baird announced that a federal appropriation of $375,000 has been made available to purchase science equipment for the college. Science faculty will refine its equipment priority list and work toward purchasing modern scientific tools.

“We were contacted by Congressman Baird’s office and asked to come up with ways he could help us improve the quality of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education at Centralia College,” said Dr. Steve Norton, science faculty member.

“This appropriation, and the support that we are receiving from the Centralia College Foundation, will go a long way toward improving the already strong STEM programs at Centralia College,” said Norton.

“With 21st century tools our students will move beyond learning about facts to being active participants—scientists,” said Norton. “With this new equipment, it will be easier for our students to design interesting experiments, carry them out, and evaluate the results.” Across the nation and at Centralia College science labs are being redesigned to encourage students to be actively involved in the process of science.

Three former Centralia College student-athletes became the newest members of the college’s Sports Hall of Fame. Pictured from left are: Mike Merriman, ’62, Basketball/Tennis; Rick Conroy, ’65, Basketball/Track and Field; and Jill Johnson, ’97, Women’s Basketball /Softball. The three were inducted Feb. 20 during a ceremony at the college.

“The Hall of Fame features outstanding men and women who have excelled in sports,” said Bob Peters, the college’s athletic director.
Not many people get excited about rocks. Pat Pringle, Centralia College’s earth sciences professor, however, has a passion for them. You might imagine his reaction to the generous donation to the college made by local author LaVonne Sparkman (see alumnus profile in this newsletter) of more than 1,000 rocks and minerals. The collection includes petrified wood cuts polished by her father, Ben Wood, and features rocks and minerals from around the world.

“LaVonne has had a keen interest in rocks and minerals, and it’s absolutely awesome that she donated this collection—It will serve as an incredible teaching tool,” said Pringle, a volcanologist who has spent much of his life studying rocks. “We now have a diverse collection of beautiful and some rare rocks and minerals. Some can be categorized as gem, or near-gem quality or are delicate, so they’ll be kept in a display case. Students can see and touch the building blocks of our planet and of our universe.” Pringle said that students will have a unique experience working with this comprehensive collection. “It’s one thing to see a photograph and read about the rock or mineral in a textbook, but when geology students can pick up the mineral or rock, turn it over, and explore it, they can much better understand the processes that created them. And there are some unusual specimens here.” Pringle said that one thing that makes the collection so neat is that it is cataloged, meaning that LaVonne Sparkman noted where each of the specimens came from. “It’s important to know where they were found because that can give us clues about the geologic activity that helped create the minerals. The Sparkman collection, he said, will improve the quality of science education for students at Centralia College.

Popular Advantage workshops return to Centralia College

The Centralia College Foundation, in cooperation with Providence Centralia Hospital and West Coast Bank, will reprise the productive “Advantage” workshops for professionals, business people, and retirees.

The latest edition—Advantage 2010—takes place on Friday, March 26, at Washington Hall on the Centralia College campus. The all-day workshops deal with health, financial management, business, and technology at several levels, depending on the needs of each attendee.

The Advantage conference is free to pre-registrants who may sign up by phone, online, mail, or in person. Pre-registration deadline is Friday, March 19.

The morning kicks off with registration and a mini-health fair beginning at 8 a.m. in Washington Hall, on the Centralia College campus at the corner of Washington Ave. and Walnut St. in Centralia. Attendees will be welcomed to the event at 9 a.m. in the Wickstrom Studio Theatre.

For the morning and afternoon sessions workshop participants may choose from business, technical, or money matters that specifically target their needs. Subjects include business development, retirement planning, physical fitness for seniors, and using social networking to connect with friends and family.

Following the morning workshops there will be a complimentary lunch furnished for those who pre-register for the conference.

Keynoter for Advantage 2010 is John Curley, formerly a host of “Evening Magazine” on KING-TV and a popular motivational speaker.

Those interested may pre-register by calling (360) 736-0722; go online to <http://foundation.centraila.edu> and clicking on Advantage 2010; mailing an application to West Coast Bank at P.O. Box 990, Centralia WA 98531; or visiting the bank at 1100 Harrison Ave., in Centralia.

Coming events in the life of the foundation

March 18: Foundation Night at the Oly Club, 4 p.m. – close.
One-half of proceeds benefit the foundation.

March 26: Advantage 2010, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

March 27: Charlie Albright Benefit Concert, 7 p.m.
Benefit performance by acclaimed pianist and Centralia College alumnus.

May 14: Rotary Tri-Club Auction, 6 p.m.
Fund-raiser for the TransAlta College Commons multi-purpose room.

May 20: Professional Training Day, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

June 3: Capital Training celebration, 5 p.m.

June 11: Distinguished Alumnus Award celebration, events during the day.

June 11: Commencement, 4 p.m., reception following.
LaVonne Sparkman

Centralia College alumnus records east county history

It’s always delightful to feature a Centralia College alumnus in the foundation newsletter. We are constantly astonished at the variety of pathways our grads have taken, and what wonderfully colorful examples they represent.

LaVonne M. (Wood) Sparkman, a native of East Lewis County, springs to mind as a perfect example of the diversity a person can find in these parts.

Sparkman was born in Salkum and attended the town’s two-room schoolhouse through her first six years. World War II provided a two-year diversion while LaVonne’s folks worked at the Naval Ammunition Depot in Bremerton, after which they returned to the home place at Salkum. Sparkman went to Mossyrock High School, where she graduated as Salutatorian of the class of 1947.

The writer-in-waiting went off to Willamette University while her parents moved to Morton and built the Morton Convalescent Home. They would operate the facility for a dozen years.

LaVonne met Elmer Sparkman in Mineral and the pair fell in love. They were married in 1949, by which time she had developed a deep interest in the history of the backwoods towns and hamlets that dotted the logging country. They had two children; Lanette Marie (Sparkman) Walter, of rural Chehalis, and Jay LaMar Sparkman, who now lives in Clackamas, Oregon.

Sparkman worked at the Morton Journal for three years but eventually moved into writing only local history. From that career choice, Sparkman’s love of history grew rapidly.

She had some articles and light verse printed, but felt she needed more precise education to properly frame the fascinating stories she put into her series of popular local histories. So she entered Centralia College and earned her Associate in Arts degree at the same time her son Jay got his degree.

Sparkman began to realize just how quickly the most important personal snippets of homestead history were being lost and in 1969 began interviewing people and recording their life stories.

Her third history of the east county was Where the Big Bottom Begins—Randle History, a work that included stories and photos collected by Irma Boyer.

Sparkman published her fourth and broadest history of East Lewis County. BEFORE IT’S GONE: Old Timer’s Tales as Told to Lavonne M. Sparkman was an immediate hit but simply couldn’t hold the volume of fascinating material she had collected.

Sparkman has been slowed somewhat in recent years, but plans to release PICTURE THIS: A Look at the Old Days and a mostly pictorial history of Kosmos in the immediate future. The “Kosmos” piece should be out in time for the old town site reunion this coming summer.