We want to hear from you

Share your news and success stories with other College of Fine Arts and Communication alumni. If you have news to share, please send it to sharon.forret@lamar.edu.
The Showcase of Southeast Texas takes the field this fall

The LU Marching Band, nicknamed “The Showcase of Southeast Texas,” will delight audiences this fall with military-style shows, tributes to Texas, rock 'n' roll classics, and much more as football returns to Lamar University.

Fans are in for a real treat and some fun surprises when the LU Marching Band takes the field. Before every home game, the band will progress from the music department's home in Brooks-Shivers Hall through campus and across the bridge over Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to the football stadium.

The pregame performance will showcase a military style of marching, including block formations, and more traditional marching songs. It will also feature a tribute to Texas that segues into “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

The band's halftime show will feature the more contemporary corps style, which allows for any type of music, such as pop, classical, and traditional. Formations may be pictures, shapes or lines.

Scott Deppe, Lamar's director of bands, was hired almost two years ago to form the marching band in preparation for the 2010 football season.

"It's been a lot of recruiting, and a lot of hard work, but I'm pleased with how well it's all coming together,” Deppe said. “It appears that we have students from almost every Southeast Texas high school in the band, so it really will be the 'Showcase of Southeast Texas,' which is the slogan the students themselves selected and voted on.”

continued on page 3
Welcome to the summer 2010 newsletter for the College of Fine Arts and Communication (COFAC). Summer is a busy time for our college as we gear up for the return of the marching band this fall to accompany the revived football program at Lamar University. Known as “The Showcase of Southeast Texas,” the LU Marching Band promises to delight audiences far and wide. We also anticipate the increased number of students the marching band will draw to both music and dance.

We are very proud to report that last academic year COFAC had the largest number of majors it has had in the last 10 years. We also led the university for percentage of enrollment increase from the previous year. Our 14.1 percent increase was the highest among all the colleges.

Our graduate programs continue to grow and do well, and our faculty members continue to gain national recognition through publications, conferences, performances and awards.

We are very excited about the renovation of the music building, which will be complete by year’s end. The music department should return to the renovated building in January 2011.

COFAC had an extremely successful year with all of our productions and the work in our clinics and in deaf education. The Lamarissimo! concert series celebrated its milestone 20th anniversary year, while the new Department of Theatre & Dance wowed audiences with a world-premiere production, avant-garde plays and groundbreaking dance choreography.

We look for this tradition of excellence to continue in the 2010-11 academic year as Lamar Theatre launches the new “Bard on the Bayou” artistic series, which will introduce young audiences to Shakespeare's classic works, starting with “The Tempest.” Exciting classical and contemporary musical performances and outstanding visual arts exhibitions round out the fine arts event calendar for the upcoming year. To learn more about these and all our events, visit us on the Web at www.lamar.edu/cofac or call (409) 880-8137.

Finally, we are very grateful for the support of the college’s advisory council and Friends of the Arts. These groups have helped us make our way through challenging economic times.

Russ Schultz
Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
Lamar University

The Dean’s Corner
In addition to recruiting students, Deppe has hired a director of athletic bands who will be officially in charge of the marching band and the pep band. Ryan Smith, a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University, assumes duties Aug. 1 and will be on hand over the summer to attend band rehearsals.

“We’re lucky to have Ryan join our staff,” said Deppe. “He brings a wealth of talent and energy to the position. He’s going to be the true lifeblood of the marching band.”

Travis Fife, director of marching percussion, rounds out the marching band team. Fife is in charge of the drum line. He will score and arrange all of its music.

The band’s home debut will be on Saturday, Sept. 11 when Lamar takes on Webber International University from Florida.

Keith Carter profiles Beaumont in Texas Monthly Magazine

Lamar University art professor and photographer Keith Carter was featured in the June 2010 issue of Texas Monthly magazine. The special issue, titled “Where I’m From,” compiled the essays of prominent Texans, including writers, artists and politicians. Carter contributed a 10-page photo essay on Beaumont and the Southeast Texas region.

“It was interesting to me to write about my hometown,” said Carter, “but I didn’t do it from a tourist-bureau perspective. I wrote about why I stay here and what I have enjoyed about this region since my boyhood.”

The issue includes Carter’s photographs of Beaumont landmarks such as Babe Zaharias Park, the Maury Meyers Bridge and the Crockett Street Entertainment Complex. Carter’s striking images make these recognizable locations seem magical and exotic.

“When the editor called me to ask if I’d be involved in the project, I was honored to participate,” said Carter. “This was a chance to share our area with the rest of the state.”

Carter is the recipient of the Texas Medal of Arts and holds the endowed Walles Chair in Visual and Performing Arts at Lamar. His work has been exhibited widely in more than 100 solo exhibitions in 13 countries. His art is included in numerous private and public collections, including the National Portrait Gallery, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Houston’s Museum of Fine Arts, the George Eastman House and the Wittliff Collection of Southwestern & Mexican Photography.

“I try to take my culture and my hometown with me wherever I go,” said Carter. “The natural diversity of people in Southeast Texas has always interested me—the overlapping folklore, music and religious aspects. We have a gumbo culture that has shaped me as an artist. Nowadays I travel widely, but I always take this place with me.”

Le Grand Bal brought ‘A Night in Casablanca’ to Lamar

Lamar’s Friends of the Arts presented Le Grand Bal, a gala evening of art, fine dining, dancing and entertainment on Saturday, March 27, 2010. The black-tie event honored “The Renaissance of Lamar University,” because of the noticeable changes that have taken place at Lamar in the last 10 years and their impact on the community. Le Grand Bal is the major annual fundraiser for the College of Fine Arts and Communication.

Albert Nolen (pictured, above, with Melanie Dishman) chaired the 2010 event. Activities included a reception and silent art auction from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Dishman Art Museum and a gourmet buffet, dancing and entertainment from 8 p.m. to midnight in the Montagne Center.

This was a special year in Le Grand Bal history because instead of an influential person or couple, the honoree was be Lamar University.

“The Bal chair each year is in charge of selecting the honorees, and Albert wanted to recognize Lamar for all its changes over the last 10 years,” said Russ Schultz, dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication. “While Lamar has always been an important part of the community, in the last 10 years we’ve received significant recognition for the cultural well-being and economic development Lamar brings to this area. So many aspects of the community are enhanced because Lamar is here. Le Grand Bal wants to put a spotlight on Lamar with this honor.”
Industrial Carillon concert features Grammy-winner Libby Larsen in ‘Living Composer Series’

Industrial Carillon, Lamar University’s new-music ensemble, featured Grammy Award winner Libby Larsen as special guest for the final concert in the 2009-2010 “Living Composer Series.”

Larsen is one of America’s most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of more than 400 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and more than a dozen operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. USA Today has hailed Larsen as “the only English-speaking composer since Benjamin Britten who matches great verse with fine music so intelligently and expressively.”

“Libby has composed beautiful, engaging, and sometimes witty music for some of the finest world-class soloists and ensembles of our time,” said Nick Rissman, director of the Industrial Carillon and associate professor of music at Lamar. “Her Grammy Award, for instance, was for a recording she produced with the late, great soprano Arleen Auger.”

“We are extremely honored to have her here,” Rissman continued, because “under the dictionary entry ‘American Post-Modern Music,’ it probably says ‘See Libby Larsen.’ Beginning in the late ’70s, she, along with others, began to offer a more lyrical alternative to the severe ‘modernism’ practiced in concert halls and conservatories. More lyrical yes, but no less sophisticated.”

The Industrial Carillon was established to entertain, enlighten and challenge listeners with new, diverse concert music representing a variety of styles and cultures. The “Living Composer Series” is presented with support from Mobil Oil Federal Credit Union.

Libby has composed beautiful, engaging, and sometimes witty music for some of the finest world-class soloists and ensembles of our time.

Endowed Scholarships

The College of Fine Arts and Communication is indebted to Homer Walles, who passed away last year, and his wife, Jane, for establishing in 1989 an endowed Chair in the Visual and Performing Arts. Homer, a long-time Friends of the Arts board member, generously provided for the college in his estate by increasing the endowment in the Homer and Jane Walles Scholarship in Fine Arts. Other recent scholarships (since 2007) for the college include:

• Fox 64 – Beaumont TV Scholarship
• Paula & John Lovoi Scholarship in Speech & Language Pathology
• Nell & Terry Morris Scholarship in Fine Arts
• Helen Caldwell Lock & Curtis Blakey Locke Regents Memorial Scholarship in Communication
• Nita Mixon Scott & Edna Taylor Duckworth Presidential Scholarship in Visual and Performing Arts
• Ruth Kaigler and D. Rex Goode Scholarship in Theatre
• Ruth Kaigler and D. Rex Goode Scholarship in Music
• Ruth Kaigler and D. Rex Goode Scholarship in Art
• Charles R. Matthews Scholarship in Marching Band
• Mary Alice Callahan Memorial Scholarship in Dance
• Marie Concerta Cloninger Presidential Scholarship in Theatre
• Fred Hartman and John Blair Memorial Scholarship
• Dr. Raul S. Ornelas Memorial Scholarship in Trumpet
• Ashley LaBiche/YMBL Memorial Scholarship

Each year, private support such as these scholarships provides the funding that creates the college’s margin of excellence. Given the current economy, private giving is more critical now than ever, and your generosity is all the more appreciated.
HullabaLU! – a new and exciting Lamar attraction – will bring an evening of vaudeville revelry to Southeast Texas on Thursday, Aug. 19, 2010. The variety show will feature community performers in an evening filled with song, dance and comedy acts. Allison Golias Getz will chair the event. Judy Sebesta, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, will direct the show, with musical direction by Betsy Hines. The festivities begin at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres, followed by the performance at 8 p.m. in the University Theatre, located at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Pkwy and East Lavaca on the campus of Lamar University in Beaumont. Tickets are $50 a person and all proceeds benefit scholarships for theatre and dance students. For tickets or more information, call the Department of Theatre & Dance at (409) 880-8037 or visit us online at lamar.edu/theatre.

Lamar Theatre tackles the classics with ‘The Burial at Thebes’

The Department of Theatre & Dance concluded its 2009-2010 season in April with The Burial at Thebes, Irish poet Seamus Heaney’s recent adaptation of the classic Greek drama, Antigone, by Sophocles. “Classical Greek theatre gets restaged quite often for a number of reasons,” said Joel Grothe, visiting instructor and director of the play. “Perhaps the main reason being that the themes still resonate with audiences today—in Antigone, you have conflict among family, betrayal, characters making tough political decisions, and politics pitted against family.”

The classic drama, in which Antigone fights to bury her brother Polyneices against the edict of her uncle Creon, the new king of Thebes, concludes Sophocles’ trilogy of Theban plays.

One of the reasons Grothe selected Heaney’s translation is because the language is so beautiful. “He’s an incredible poet, and the language of the play is modern poetry, but it’s also very accessible. It translates well for performance.”

Speech and Hearing awarded grant to benefit patients with Parkinson’s

The B.A. & E.W. Steinhagen Benefvolent Trust, managed by Capital One trustees, awarded an $8,400 grant to Lamar University’s Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences to fund speech-therapy services to treat patients for the voice changes that often accompany a diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease.

Parkinson’s disease is a progressive illness that results in disorders of movement that can impact the speech muscles. “When Parkinson’s affects someone’s voice, it can become very breathy and quiet. Their words may be slurred and hard to understand,” said Alana Kozlowski, assistant professor and clinician.

Kozlowski uses a specialized program known as Lee Silverman Voice Training to work with patients. “Lee Silverman Voice Training is proven to change speech in patients with Parkinson’s,” said Kozlowski. “It is an intensive program – physical therapy for the voice.”

Participants in the month-long Parkinson’s at Lamar (PAL) Program attend sessions at the Speech and Hearing Clinic four days a week and complete daily “homework” assignments of various vocal exercises. “It has been marvelous. Simple but effective,” said Pat Long, a former school-teacher and a patient in the program. “It’s wonderful to talk to people now and know that they can hear me and understand me. I am so thankful for Dr. Alana for coming out to the Parkinson’s support group and telling us about this program.”

The PAL project was designed so residents in Southeast Texas with Parkinson’s disease could have immediate access to an evidence-based voice program with proven results. “We’re looking to fill a need both now and in the future,” said Kozlowski. “This treatment was not being done in our area. But now, by offering it at Lamar University’s Speech and Hearing Clinic, we are able to assist our patients and to train our students in this technique. Right now we are training 14 clinicians who will one day graduate and take jobs in the Golden Triangle. They will all be able to provide the Lee Silverman Voice Training.”
or Vickie Dionne, recipient of Lamar University's 2009 Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award, volunteer work is an inherited trait. “My parents were always involved when I was growing up, so it was very natural for me to be active as well,” said Dionne, associate professor of audiology at Lamar.

The Rogers family established the Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award in 1979 to encourage Lamar University faculty and staff members to volunteer their services and talents to benefit the community. Regina Rogers, representing the Rogers family, presented the awards during a program in the Dr. Richard L. Price Auditorium in the John Gray Center on the campus of Lamar University.

“For Vickie Dionne, recipient of Lamar University’s 2009 Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award, volunteer work is an inherited trait. “My parents were always involved when I was growing up, so it was very natural for me to be active as well,” said Dionne, associate professor of audiology at Lamar.

The Rogers family established the Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award in 1979 to encourage Lamar University faculty and staff members to volunteer their services and talents to benefit the community. Regina Rogers, representing the Rogers family, presented the awards during a program in the Dr. Richard L. Price Auditorium in the John Gray Center on the campus of Lamar University.

Vickie Dionne receives Lamar’s 2009 Rogers Community Service Award

“I’ve known the Rogers family since I was a child,” said Dionne. “They’ve always opened their hearts to the community. Regina is an unbelievable lady, and she gets it from her parents.”

Dionne, one of the most experienced audiologists in Southeast Texas, devotes a significant portion of her volunteer work to the speech and hearing community. Her efforts with Lion's Club International’s Hearing Aid Reclamation Program has provided quality, used hearing aids to a number of low-income individuals. She is also an active member of Sertoma International, a civic organization dedicated to hearing health issues. As a chairperson and member of the Safe Ears program, Dionne has educated more than 800 children in the Golden Triangle area about the dangers of loud noise and its consequence of noise-induced hearing loss.

“Vickie is very deserving of this award,” said William Harn, chair of the Department of Speech and Hearing. “She freely shares her time and expertise as one of the most respected and experienced audiologists in our area. In addition, as a Lamar graduate herself, she is very dedicated to the university. She’s been extremely active in recruiting students and works many of the open houses at Lamar. She’s given up a lot of Saturdays for that.”

“Vickie has been a valuable volunteer, helping with the annual Radiothon and Telecast in many aspects,” said Emily Sonier, director of Children’s Miracle Network-Southeast Texas. “Her leadership in our community is exemplary, and she has been a vast source of information to CMN in helping many children in this area who are hearing impaired.”

Dionne earned a doctorate of audiology at Pennsylvania College of Optometry. She holds a master of science from Lamar.

“I’m humbled to receive the Julie and Ben Rogers Community Service Award,” Dionne said. “This is just stuff that I do, not stuff that I ever expected to be honored for. I am very humble and appreciative of this honor.”

Voice students earn first place in competition

The Greater Houston Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) held its annual competition in April at the University of Houston. Participants in the event consisted of almost 200 competitors and more than 30 teachers from the greater Houston area. Lamar University voice students earned five first place awards, five second place awards and four third place awards, as well as having two students named as semi-finalists. Lamar voice instructors for these students were Isabelle Ganz, Debra Greschner, Kerry Jennings and Angela Pickering.

First place winners include: Jonny Cochran, Friendswood; Adam Piper, Norfolk, Va.; Phillip Gay, Beaumont; Hannah R. Klauss, Beaumont; and Mary Purington, Beaumont. Second place winners were Laramie Gilbert, Beaumont; Hillary Gray, Nederland; Brandon Rhodes, Beaumont; Magon Loring, Beaumont; and Brian Gibbs, Houston. Third place: Quintin Coleman, Beaumont; Ali Gay, Beaumont; Reagan Gear, Lumberton; and Josh Tarwater, Suffolk, Va. Lorin Kirk, Beaumont, and Kelly Plunkett, Lumberton, were semi-finalists in the competition.
In planning the 2010-11 performance season, faculty from the Department of Theatre & Dance searched for a theme that they felt they could use to connect to their audience members. “We thought with the recession and the loss of jobs, the most obvious choice would be ‘working,’ or the ‘work-life,’” said Judy Sebesta, department chair. “It turns out we didn’t carry the theme through all of our shows, but it did provide a valuable springboard for thinking about the season.”

The season opens in September with Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, a modern classic which depicts, among other things, the trials and tribulations of Victorian women as they try to find an identity for themselves through work outside the home.

Working, a musical by Stephen Schwartz based on Studs Terkel’s best-selling book of interviews with American workers, will close the season in May. The musical paints a vivid portrait of the everyday lives of common men and women. Pop, rock, folk and gospel underscore this pertinent exploration of the landscape of American jobs and the people who perform them.

“Working is my directing debut at Lamar, so I wanted to have a personal connection and feel very passionate about the show,” said Sebesta. “I was in a production of Working, and it was one of my favorite productions that I’ve been involved in. We’re also thrilled to present a work by Stephen Schwartz, who a lot of people will recognize as the composer of Wicked.”

A desire to connect to the diversity of the audience led the faculty to choose A Lesson Before Dying by Romulus Linney, based on the novel by Ernest J. Gaines. Dying is about a young black man condemned to death in 1948 Louisiana.

The 2010-11 season will offer a variety of dance styles in both the fall and spring dance concert. Choreographers present a variety of dance works, with styles such as ballet, jazz, modern, tap, musical theatre, improvisation and hip-hop. The dance concerts, which have been performed to sold-out audiences, will continue to bring in guest artists and feature student choreography.

Rounding out the season is a special treat for Southeast Texas audiences: the new Bard on the Bayou series. Premiering in February, the first offering in this new artistic series will be William Shakespeare’s The Tempest. Our next newsletter will bring more details on this exciting new series and the special guest artists who will be involved with the first production, director Nathanael Johnson and Tony Award-winning scenic designer Scott Pask.

For more details on these productions, including times, dates, and tickets, visit lamar.edu/theatre, or call (409) 880-8037.

### Work hard, play Bard

In planning the 2010-11 performance season, faculty from the Department of Theatre & Dance searched for a theme that they felt they could use to connect to their audience members. “We thought with the recession and the loss of jobs, the most obvious choice would be ‘working,’ or the ‘work-life,’” said Judy Sebesta, department chair. “It turns out we didn’t carry the theme through all of our shows, but it did provide a valuable springboard for thinking about the season.”

The season opens in September with Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, a modern classic which depicts, among other things, the trials and tribulations of Victorian women as they try to find an identity for themselves through work outside the home.

Working, a musical by Stephen Schwartz based on Studs Terkel’s best-selling book of interviews with American workers, will close the season in May. The musical paints a vivid portrait of the everyday lives of common men and women. Pop, rock, folk and gospel underscore this pertinent exploration of the landscape of American jobs and the people who perform them.

“Working is my directing debut at Lamar, so I wanted to have a personal connection and feel very passionate about the show,” said Sebesta. “I was in a production of Working, and it was one of my favorite productions that I’ve been involved in. We’re also thrilled to present a work by Stephen Schwartz, who a lot of people will recognize as the composer of Wicked.”

A desire to connect to the diversity of the audience led the faculty to choose A Lesson Before Dying by Romulus Linney, based on the novel by Ernest J. Gaines. Dying is about a young black man condemned to death in 1948 Louisiana.

The 2010-11 season will offer a variety of dance styles in both the fall and spring dance concert. Choreographers present a variety of dance works, with styles such as ballet, jazz, modern, tap, musical theatre, improvisation and hip-hop. The dance concerts, which have been performed to sold-out audiences, will continue to bring in guest artists and feature student choreography.

Rounding out the season is a special treat for Southeast Texas audiences: the new Bard on the Bayou series. Premiering in February, the first offering in this new artistic series will be William Shakespeare’s The Tempest. Our next newsletter will bring more details on this exciting new series and the special guest artists who will be involved with the first production, director Nathanael Johnson and Tony Award-winning scenic designer Scott Pask.

For more details on these productions, including times, dates, and tickets, visit lamar.edu/theatre, or call (409) 880-8037.

### Board members share their wisdom with students

Film director and producer Kelly Asbury and national television sports announcer Bill Macatee recently shared their time and talents with Lamar students. Asbury and Macatee are both members of the College of Fine Arts and Communication’s advisory board.

A Lamar alumnus, Asbury has served as an artist on many films, including “Shrek,” “Toy Story,” “Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas,” “Beauty and the Beast” and “Little Mermaid.” He is currently directing a new animated film “Gnomeo and Juliet.” Among his credits are Oscar-nominated films “Shrek 2” (2004) and “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron” (2002).

Asbury answered questions and shared his experiences with LU students and high school students from the Beaumont school district. Incredibly talented and dedicated to his art, Asbury also gave a lot of credit to his Lamar art teacher, the late Jerry Newman, for advice and direction that helped him secure a spot at the Art Institute of California. Asbury attended Lamar 1978-1980.

A 1978 graduate of Lamar University, Bill Macatee got his start at Beaumont’s KBMT-12. He has worked with CBS for the past 12 years, anchoring their golf and tennis coverage, among other things.

Macatee spoke to broadcast and film majors about his professional career in broadcasting and the journey that took him to CBS. He advised students to be self-starters, stating, “Don’t wait for opportunity to come to you, because it won’t.” Instead, students should take every chance they can get to practice their craft, have confidence in themselves and instill confidence in others that they can do the job, and finally, to be prepared with a tape or portfolio of their work to be able to show people: “this is what I can do.”