New Semester, New Faces
By Alex Soberman

Putney- The Spring 2010 class of Landmark College arrived on campus this past week full of optimism for their academic future, but wary from previous college experiences. According to orientation leaders, approximately eighty percent of the new Landmark class transferred from other colleges and universities, while the other twenty percent are starting college for the first time. All of these new students are here to address an issue they have with learning. Some have AD/HD, others suffer from Dyslexia, or have verbal issues. Their goal is to find the proper learning tools to help them succeed in both the classroom and the outside world.

While Landmark has its specialized programs and educational systems, in many ways it is like any other college. Students must learn to live as part of a new community. For some, that might mean giving up some of the privacy they were afforded at home or at other schools by having a roommate and sharing common spaces like bathrooms and lounges. For others, it’s making new friends who share a common issue or story.

Spirited conversations can be found in the dining room of Middle Hall, where the entire Landmark community takes most of their meals, or perhaps in the Crow’s Nest area of the student center, where late night games of Risk bring former strangers together as friends.

The Spring class of 2010 is here, and ready to make both an impact on themselves, and on the Landmark community.

Fun Discovered on Landmark Campus! Students Amazed!
By Elizabeth Borah

Landmark students, both new and seasoned alike, often complain about the lack of fun on campus. Especially in winter, it’s tough to find things to do in Brattleboro when you’re unfamiliar with it, or even things walking-distance away in Putney itself when there’s snow on the path. Thankfully, there are a handful of groups and individuals on campus who want to do away with your seasonal ennui!

This semester, the CAB and student clubs have a great number of events up their off-campus trips, like a super-cheap movie night at the local cinema. To check out such events and their dates, simply log on to your LMC Intranet page and click the link for “Calendar: Student”. Or talk directly to Emily North, the Director of Student Activities, in the Student Center game room: she’ll be more than happy to explain any of the events in more detail if you’re curious or confused.

If you want to take the next step and get involved in planning what happens here, join CAB itself or just drop in to their meetings on Wednesday nights.

Besides what is scheduled by the Campus Activities Board, one can also find events

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Explore Our Surroundings

By Dexter Brown Rogers

Putney - For many in our student body, campus can feel enclosed at times. It can certainly bring on side effects undeniably comparable to feelings associated with claustrophobia that is, in turn, deadly to a good learning environment.

I am currently in search of possibilities that will relieve the repetition in our daily lives at Landmark. We must jump out of the box, explore possibilities, take initiative and escape the monotony. Kick off your weekend on February 13 and 14 and watch as world class skiers make the only 90 meter jump in New England at the Harris Hill ski jump on Cedar Street in Brattleboro Vermont. Come join this local tradition that has been going on since 1922!

Also in Brattleboro, you can drop by the Underground where they have a sign up sheet for you to be able to attend or host a glass party! Share your favorite glass tobacco pipes with new found friends. You could also stay in town and take a look around and checkout Mystery on Main Street and envelope yourself in a mystery, suspense or a true crime novel.

After your Brattleboro experience head for Bellows Falls and have a smashing good time at the second annual Mardi Gras/Valentine’s Ball! Fifteen bucks includes dinner, live music and dancing from 7:00p.m.-12:00a.m., all proceeds benefit Black Sheep Radio 100.5 (a personal favorite local station of mine). If you’re 21, there is also a cash bar.

The point is get up and get out. There is life outside Landmark campus; you just have to take the initiative and find it!

Indoor Soccer Preview

By Parker Longo

This past fall Landmark College had one of the most successful seasons of recent memory thanks to a well balanced number of crafty veterans and nifty newcomers. The team ended the year with an 8-2-1 record and achieving the highest goals for average and the lowest goals against average in LMC history according to the December 3, 2009 edition of Shark Bites Landmark College Athletics newsletter.

With the start of indoor soccer only days away, I tracked down some members of the team to get an inside preview of the upcoming season. After graduation and all the transfers it is going to be hard to repeat the success the outdoor team had. With last season fresh in their minds Hobbs Karg and Jean Pierre (JP) Hendrix are looking forward to the start of the season yet don’t see a promising future ahead of them.

When asked why the future is dark and gloomy, Hobbs said “that most of the players on the team are entering their last semester at Landmark and will be focusing on their academics instead of trying to win games.” JP added, “I definitely will be.”

With a need to replace the offense they had from last season, Hendrix says “it is hard to tell whether or not we are going to be able to find someone to assist Min Brown in the offensive zone until the season starts.” Karg thinks “there is a possibility they may find someone who is going to be able to put the ball in the back of the net within such a large incoming class, but since indoor is not as publicized as outdoor that one player may not even know that he or she has the opportunity to play during what should be the off-season for most soccer players”.

The team will hold its second practice this Friday night February 5, 2010 at 6:30pm in the Click Center. The practice is open to any LMC student. Feel free to join the team.
WLMC: Seldom Heard Tunes
By Christopher Goode

Some people never notice it, but Landmark College does have a radio station. Sure, you can’t hear it in your car, but if you’re on campus, you’ve got access. 24/7, WLMC is streaming live over the intranet, and there isn’t a student on this campus who doesn’t have the means to hear it.

WLMC is young, with this semester’s crop of DJs being only the fourth yet, but it’s a quickly growing group. From a starting count of 6 DJs the first time the class was offered, the number is at 17 now. Eric Matte, the radio instructor, attributes this growth to the program’s opportunity to express oneself in a hands-on, creative manner.

The radio program is somewhat atypical of a college program, as here at Landmark College, students receive credit for their participation in the certification class.

Talking with Geoff Burgess, we found out that expansion of the program is right up there in the minds of the administration of the station. Podcasting was floated as one way to expand WLMC’s bubble beyond the limits of campus. And while it’s not the prime plan, discussion about a broadcasting tower continues even now. Though expensive, Matte expressed interest in covering part of I-91.

But even now, any Landmark student can listen. Just log into the intranet, click on the WLMC Radio link on the left, and go ahead and click on the broadcast link. Live or pre-recorded, you’ll have a taste of your fellow students’ labors to listen to. Those wanting to get a show should talk to Eric Matte and take the radio class.

Class Offers Humor, New Take on Learning Disabilities

By Christopher Baeckstrom

With an introduction to the class presented through an imaginary slideshow, Professor James Baucom set his sights on providing an informative but fun class on learning disabilities. Offered Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1:30pm to 2:45pm, the seminar focuses on learning disabilities from numerous angles, both historical and current. While the majority of the coursework will consist of reading and understanding articles and books, the syllabus does promise some semblance of field work involving “attending a conference or outside presentation, visiting local schools, and observing LD students in the classroom,” said Baucom.

Homework for the class appears to be directed towards careful consideration of the reading rather than rote memorization of the facts. That said, the three major tests and weekly quizzes weigh the heaviest in the grading at 35%, while two major essays and five single page reflections come in second with 25%. The coursework is capped off with a creative media project designed to teach others about learning disabilities.

As with many classes at Landmark, an emphasis is placed on attendance. However, for the students in this class, an extra incentive has been added with the offer of gaining two additional points towards their final grades if they can maintain perfect attendance. The philosophy of reward instead of punishment sets the tone for the class, as it is somewhat more relaxed than one would expect from a college course. While there are still standards that must be adhered to, the

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happening weekly on campus at all times of day. For instance, the Community Service and the Anime and Manga Club both meet (individually) on Thursday nights at six thirty.

More interested in sports? Try snow hockey or intramural sledding this February! Again, to find out the dates for these upcoming programs, check out the student calendar, and keep an eye on your weekly email digest for impromptu events!

And if you’re truly unable to find anything scheduled, just wander into any dorm’s lounge: often there are movies being watched or games being played which you can join in on. It’s a great way to make new friends or just meet up with old ones.

Clearly, all our complaints of campus boredom are now unfounded. With this many opportunities to enjoy your college’s offerings, you may never be bored at school again!

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environment is lighthearted and understanding when it comes to disabilities. A prime example of this is that when reading aloud in class students are allowed to “pass” if they feel uncomfortable or unable to read the material.

The class is taught by Professor James Baucom who has several decades of experience teaching students who have learning disabilities. He has obtained a B.A. in English from the University of North Carolina and a Masters in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He was one of the founders of Landmark College, and for a period was its Director of Education. He served as Landmark’s Academic Dean from 1988 to 1997.

LMC Changes Smoking Policy

By Griffin Dean

Ten smoke friendly locations will replace the 25-foot smoking policy during the coming year, according to Student Affairs administration sources.

Michael Luciani, Dean of Students, stated that the President’s Council has accepted the new policy. “We are currently determining where those areas are and how to enforce them,” Luciani said.

The goal of the policy is to limit unwanted exposure to secondhand smoke. Campus health and administration officials feel that the 25-foot policy wasn’t effective enough. The change will “provide opportunities to smoke but better fits the spirit of the policy,” Luciani said.

The student body responded to the policy change with mixed opinions. Student James Callahan, who normally smokes while walking between classes, said, “It’s really inconvenient.” Others like student Sarah Holmes welcome the change.

“I’m excited,” Holmes said. “I can walk around without getting smoke blown in my face.”

Liz Cooper, a nurse at Landmark who runs the “Smoking Cessation” addiction recovery program on campus said “a certain level of inconvenience will deter people from the habit.”

In the spring semester of 2009, Mrs. Tricia Stanley, Resident Dean of Frost Hall, presented the policy to the Student Government. “This is not only a student issue but a staff issue too,” said Stanley. The Wellness Committee and Debate Class were also driving forces.

The policy change is the latest development in a long line of policy changes.

As recently as 1997, students were permitted to smoke in their rooms with their roommate’s consent. In 1999 Frost Hall opened. It was the first smoke free hall on campus. A year later all dorms were smoke free and the smoking policy as it stands today was implemented.
Backpage Interview: Kathy Burris

By Samatha Leyenson

Kathy Burris is a faculty member and specialist in assistive technology at Landmark College. Many students with language based learning disabilities are introduced to these tools by Kathy. These software programs can be used to help with organizational frameworks for writing papers, dictation and speech synthesis, to having your textbook read to you by your computer instead of having to read the text yourself.

Kathy Burris is a great resource for all the LD students at Landmark. She never imposes these tools on anyone because everyone’s profile is slightly different, but instead helps students explore and establish which tools work best. If you have an LD, I would urge you to make an appointment with Kathy to determine which tools might help make your academic experience a little easier. She approaches each student’s needs with creativity, intelligence and kindness that puts even the most anxious or discouraged student at ease. Kathy is a knowledgeable resource and invites LD students to make an appointment to explore program options for their use assistive software. I interviewed Kathy last week to talk about her work and how she helps students.

Q. What is your current role?

A. I am the Assistive Technology Coordinator and Educator, which involves very focused work with students, faculty, and staff in the field of AT. I see people usually for at least an hour at a time, so we can go more deeply into our work together. Sometimes it is also possible to get to know students better. My job involves hands-on training, public demos and lectures, travel for a variety of conferences, creating videos and handouts, writing publicity when necessary, and conducting research, sometimes with groups, on new software and hardware.

Q. What do you find most rewarding about your job?

A. Discovering and sharing tools that can assist students in finding a happy medium between improving both the quality and the efficiency of their work at the same time!

Q. Can you tell me a story about how a student's use of assistive technology changed their perspective with regard to their school work?

A. There are many good stories! One involved a high school student from Arizona who was here for our 3-week high school program in the summer of 2008. He was very sociable, and popular with the females, so by the second week of the program he had more than one girlfriend, but had not produced a bit of homework. He was highly intelligent and verbal, with a well-developed vocabulary when he spoke. But like many with dyslexia, when he tried to put his thoughts in writing, he could not spell or get his thoughts down fast enough to write or type them by hand.

I talked with both his teacher and advisor and after a few attempts, finally got him to come in for an hour’s worth of training on Dragon Naturally Speaking. The next night (after just an hour of training), he sat down at a computer in a lab where I was helping other students during academic prep, and proceeded to produce a six page, double-spaced paper on Helen Keller in a couple of hours, using Dragon…The next morning, he turned it in as a first and final draft!! Needless to say, his English teacher, his parents, and I were all thrilled!

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When I followed up with him a year later, he was still using Dragon and agreed to provide a testimonial for Nuance, the company who created Dragon, for a case study they conducted on using Dragon at Landmark College.

Q. What do you think are the limitations of the current products in use?

A. I think the #1 limitation is that though there are text-to-speech products for just about every need, at this time there is not one that covers just the basics that most LMC students request, without also providing functionality they don’t need. Also, text-to-speech products sometimes have a difficult time keeping up with changes in operating systems, browsers, hardware (including handheld devices), and publisher’s formats, so they can feel a little unstable to someone who may require them for all or most of their reading tasks, both offline and online.

I also think that while default voices used in text-to-speech programs have greatly improved over the years, the most human-sounding voices are rarely defaults in the major text-to-speech programs. There are higher-quality voices available, but users must purchase them separately for $30-$35 each.

Q. Do you know how many students use assistive technology software on campus? Do you get any feedback from those students?

A. It is difficult to know exact or even ballpark figures for AT use on campus, as many students use it intermittently until they decide to use it permanently or not at all.

I do receive feedback in a variety of ways, including during individual appointments, classroom visits, AT overviews, anonymous surveys, casual conversations and through teachers, advisors, and parents Opinions vary widely from “I couldn’t get through school and life without [Dragon, Read & Write Gold, Kurzweil, etc.]” to “it’s too cumbersome or unreliable,” or “the learning curve is too high, I’ll stick with what I know.”

With a program like Dragon Naturally Speaking, a student’s opinion may vary based on previous experience. A common factor is whether or not they have used an earlier, less sensitive version. Often these students need encouragement to try the newer version and to a person, they are always very pleasantly surprised.

If students see Dragon demonstrated by an “expert,” then try it themselves, they may not realize that there are varying degrees of training involved between Dragon and themselves, depending on their individual speaking style, any speech impediments/accents they may have, and their degree of self-discipline. Using a dictation program is not simply about knowing where all the buttons are and how to use them, as in other programs. For the student who understands this, sees a real need in their life for this kind of tool, and is willing to give it a try, it can be especially useful for lengthier papers and sensitive personal communications.

Kathy Burris can be contacted at x6892 or kathyburris@landmark.edu, and her office is EAB206. Look forward to more information about Assistive Technology in future issues.