

The Oak Leaf

A publication for LSU Alexandria employees

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It's the Generals

It's official: LSU Alexandria's official mascot is the "Generals."

The recent decision by the LSU Board of Supervisors paves the way for university officials to begin a search for an appropriate logo and character to go with the new mascot. Chancellor Robert Cavanaugh said the first step will be to get a logo developed. Input will be requested from professional designers and members of the LSUA community.

Cavanaugh expects to have a logo in place this fall. Meanwhile, there's no big hurry to develop an actual mascot -- the figure that will appear at games and other events.

The search for LSUA's first mascot was tedious. The university wanted a name that would effectively represent LSUA, its students and community that it serves. A committee gathered input from LSUA and community residents. The choice was narrowed to three: The Generals, Mighty Oaks and the Rapids. The Generals was chosen because of Central Louisiana's military history and because a significant number of students are serving or have served in the military.



Play Ball

Chancellor Robert Cavanaugh throws out the first pitch at a recent Aces game. Dozens of LSUA employees, including Brandi Rabalais and Celeise Cruise, (photo at left) attended the LSUA Night at the Aces game.

ESP dinner theatre kicks off season

LSU Alexandria's Empty Space Players' production of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" continues this weekend.

Performances are at the Hearn Stage of the Kress Theatre in the Rapides Foundation Building, 1101 Fourth St., Alexandria.

"The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)" has been called "an irreverent, fast-paced romp through the Bard's plays." Another review described the comedy as "a high-speed roller-coaster type condensation of all of Shakespeare's plays."

Participants in LSUA's production are Donald Caplan, John David Hebert II, Seth Currie, Jenna Fontenot, Ann McDowell, Lisa Mayeux and Tory Mayeux.



The director is Timothy P. Saucier of Pineville, who begins this fall as LSU Alexandria's technical director of theatre. Producer is Rhonda Shook, LSUA's theatre director.

The show opened Aug. 3. The remaining performances are Aug. 10-13. Dinner begins at 6:30 p.m., with the play beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Dinner includes Apple Cider Beef Stew, Rustic Bread, cheese, English tea and bread pudding.

General admission is \$20 with the meal or \$10 without. Admission for LSUA students with an ID is \$15 with the meal or \$5 without. Admission for other college students, senior citizens and LSUA employees is \$18 with the meal or \$8 without.

Reservations are required. Call 473-6573 or 473-6581 to reserve a ticket.

Spotlight on ...

Meet Rhonda Shook, director of theatre

Q: What do you do at LSU Alexandria?

A: My official titles are Director of Theatre and Assistant Professor of Communication Studies and Theater. That's a lot to put on a business card. I prefer Theatre Goddess.

Q: How long have you been here? What is your education background?

A: I am starting my third year at LSUA. Before that, I taught English, performance and speech at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. I have a B.A. in English from the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Ark., my home town. I have an M.L.A. in English and Drama from Arkansas Tech, and a Ph.D. in Speech Communication with a concentration in Playwriting from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Pretty good for a high school drop-out.

Q: What is your theatre background?

A: I wrote my first short story, "The Bird and the Machine," about halfway through first grade. Before that, I didn't know how to spell, so I was understandably frustrated. After earning my GED, I enrolled in college with the intention of majoring in nuclear physics, but every time I wrote something, the English department gave me money. I won the poetry award one semester, the fiction award another semester. By the time they gave me the essay award, I had given up every dream of becoming wealthy. I was a writer.

I was never involved in theatre in high school, or even college until about halfway through my masters program. I needed an elective and "Feminist Playwrights" was offered in a fortuitous time slot. I read "Trifles," a Susan Glaspell play in which the main character never appears onstage. I was so amazed at the technique that I had to try it for myself, so I wrote my first play, "A Hen Party With Meatloaf." Dr. Ardith Morris, Director of Theatre at Arkansas Tech, read it and gave me her honest response: "It's a bad sitcom." Great.

I would have given up on the spot, but Dr. Morris



Rhonda lives in Alexandria's Garden District. She grew up on an 80-acre ranch in Clarksville, Ark. She is married to photographer David Rackley. Daughter Alexandra attends the University of Arkansas at Conway, and her son, Tyler, will be a junior at Clarksville High.

stopped me. "There's a *however* here," she said. "HOWEVER there is some amazing dialogue here. You just need a plot." So, I worked on the plot. And worked. And worked. My once-tiny one-act changed titles and morphed into a full-length play that became the central part of my thesis. *To Know A Veil* sold out opening night and ended with a standing ovation. There was no going back.

Since then, I have written over 20 plays. All have been produced; many have had multiple productions. The most popular, *Thunderstruck in Possum Grape*, will inaugurate ESP's 2006-2007 season.

Most people think writing is glamorous. Think again. I don't know. Maybe people like Danielle Steele are beautiful when they write. I can imagine her, lounging on a chaise, a boa around her neck, smoke curling luxuriously from a cigarette in a long, slender holder. I can imagine it; I just can't relate to it. I go on writing binges. Hunched over a keyboard, I live on Diet Coke and sunflower seeds. I avoid sleep for days. I emerge with a script looking – not radiant and ethereal – but more like Quasimoto.

Q: Tell us about the ESP season.

A: The Empty Space Players are going to have an ambitious year. We start with dinner theatre in August, then we are planning two major shows in the fall

(*Thunderstruck in Possum Grape* in October, and *The Colored Museum* in November). In the spring, we are showcasing student work in playwriting, acting, and directing. We will have a children's show, and the annual Shakespeare production. Anyone can participate in ESP productions. I try to cast theatre majors first, then LSUA students. After that, auditions are open to faculty and staff, as well as members of the community. If you aren't interested in acting, you can participate by building sets, or running sound and lights. You might want to organize props or manage the box office. There is something for everyone in theatre.

Campus Clipboard

Continuing Ed moving to Bo Nipper Building

The Continuing Education Department is moving to the Weldon “Bo” Nipper Building located at the end of Tower Road behind the Children’s Center.

The move will be the week of Aug. 7. The department was previously located in the white house on the corner of Middleton and Tower drive.

Continuing Education’s contact information will remain the same. Reach them at 473-6495, or fax at 473-6559.



Say that again

“This is an exciting day for us. I think the Generals reflects our proud military history as well as honoring those who are serving now.”

-- **Dr. Robert Cavanaugh** in an interview announcing the selection of “The Generals” as LSU Alexandria’s new mascot.

“Four weeks may seem like a long time, but it passes quickly.”

-- Recruiter **Shelly Kieffer** in an interview about the importance of applying early for financial aid.

“Richard (Gwartney) produced some of the most innovative shows I’ve ever seen. I can never put into words how much I learned from him as an actor.”

-- former LSUA theatre student **Gary Hilborn**, about people who have influenced his acting career.

“I will miss you all.”

-- **Kathy Gunn**, to her colleagues at LSU Alexandria

Welcome to our new employees

Daniel Williams is our new Web Services Coordinator.

Sue Cathey is the new PK-16 coordinator.

Amy Maricle is a new Associate Teacher for the Children’s Center.

Joining LSU Alexandria from the Alexandria Museum of Art are **Billy Outlaw**, Coordinator of Facility Management; **Natalie Walker**, Coordinator of Museum Education; **Cherry Davis**, Administrative Coordinator 2; and **Carolyn Reid**, Coordinator of Art Express & Curatorial.

Congratulations to members of the LSU Alexandria family who participated in the recent New Play Festival 2 in downtown Alexandria. The festival showcases writing, directing and acting by local talent, and LSUA was well-represented. Hats off to **Belle Rollins**, **Shelly Kieffer**, **Esther Blood**, **Tim Saucier** and **John Hebron** and graduates **Ozell Piper**, **Jessica Double** and **Sheila Hudson**.

For those of you who haven’t heard, Media Relations Director Kathy Gunn is leaving her position this month. Part of Kathy’s duties were to write and edit the Oak Leaf, a publication for all LSUA employees. A search for her replacement is under way.

Coming up

Fall Faculty/Staff meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 15
Coughlin Hall Auditorium

7-8 a.m. Just How Healthy Are You? - Free Health Screening - Nursing Lounge
Fasting required. Do not eat or drink after midnight the night before the screening.
Blood pressure, Total Cholesterol (HDL) and (LDL), Triglycerides, Glucose, Body Mass Index.
Refreshments will be available following blood work.

8:15 a.m.	Sign-in.
8:30-9:30 a.m.	Faculty/Staff Meeting
9:30 a.m.	Staff return to work
9:35 a.m.	Election of faculty representative and alternate to LSU Board of Supervisors
9:45 a.m.	Break
10 a.m.	Advising Session
Noon	Adjourn

Aug. 16-17 Registration
Aug. 21 Classes begin
Aug. 21-24 Welcome Booths

LSUA employees are encouraged to work a booth. To sign up, contact Mary McCampbell at Ext. 4418 or mmccampbell@lsua.edu.

Weight Watchers at Work: Join the At-Work Weight Watchers group every Thursday in August. Meetings are noon to 12:45 p.m. in Bayou Robert Room. The cost is \$12 a week. Contact Mary McCampbell at Ext. 4418 for more info. Coming soon: A new 17-week program will start after Labor Day.

Coming up: The United Way campaign will kick off again this fall. Last year's contributions exceeded expectations. Let's make this year's donations even greater. Donation cards will be distributed soon.

