The annual Classified Staff Field Day on Thursday, April 26 brought employees from throughout the New River family to the former Excel Homes plant in Ghent for a day of fellowship, professional development and team building.

As participants arrived, they were encouraged to play “New River Bingo,” a game that involved finding employees who fit descriptions such as “Has attended at least one New River Graduation” or “Has served on the New River Board of Governors.” It was a great way for everyone to get acquainted and learn a bit about the college.

Before the formal program began, Classified Staff Council Chair Mary Igo invited all attendees to introduce themselves and tell a bit about their job at New River. Each person also was asked to name their favorite movie, which was a great ice breaker (literally), because participants were shivering in coats and sweaters throughout the day due to a last-minute lack of heat in the building!

(continued on next page)

ABOVE (L-R) Roger Spinks, lead trades worker on the Nicholas County Campus; Melanie Slone, student recruiter based on the Beckley Campus; Janie Smith, administrative secretary on the Beckley Campus; and Nikki Swiger systems programmer based on the Nicholas County Campus, attempt to re-assemble a “sculpture” made of plastic pipes as part of a team building exercise. They were allowed to ask questions of other team members who were not blindfolded, but who could only communicate with them using a variety of noisemakers.

AT LEFT, Mary Igo, workforce education program specialist on the Nicholas County Campus and chair of the Classified Staff Council, offers assistance to Missy Blankenship, accounts payable/benefits representative in the Business Office, as she puzzles over her “New River Bingo” game card.
The rest of the morning was devoted to an update on travel forms, policies and procedures by Susie Atkins, administrative associate to the vice president for finance and administration; a challenging team building exercise facilitated by Dr. Robin Asbury and Tine White of West Virginia Workplace Education; and a session on mentoring and supervising student employees featuring Leah Taylor, director of Human Resources.

Following the lunch break, participants could choose from break-out sessions on Identifying Drug Use in the Workplace/School, Resume Writing, Cultural Diversity or Interview Skills.

Attendees received New River canvas brief cases, and a number of nice door prizes were distributed throughout the day. Igo noted that there were a large number of people in attendance who had worked for the college less than a year.

"This is one of my favorite activities to plan at the college," Igo commented. "Staff field day has been the best opportunity for us to meet new employees and get to know our veteran employees better. I look forward to seeing all staff, faculty, and administrators at the event next year." She acknowledged the hard work of Lisa DeLilly, Lori Midkiff, Susie Atkins, Grace Griffin and Beverly McCutcheon in organizing and managing the event. She also thanked Robin Asbury, Tina White and Leah Taylor for their invaluable assistance.

Enjoying a coffee break are (L-R) Stephanie Gaiser, Workforce Education administrative associate on the Beckley Campus; Anita Stapleton, allied health instructor on the Beckley Campus; Jason Garris, database technician on the Beckley Campus; and Amanda Kincaid, office assistant for the Title III program on the Raleigh County Campus.

Among those attending from the Nicholas County Campus were (L-R, seated) Brigette Neil, program specialist; John Hamon, trades specialist; and Roger Spinks, lead trades specialist. Standing in the background is Lori Midkiff, executive secretary to Dr. Spring.
DONNA HAWVER NAMED A NATIONAL FINALIST IN NEW CENTURY SCHOLARS COMPETITION

Donna Hawver, a student on the Greenbrier Valley Campus, has been named a national finalist in the New Century Scholars competition. As a finalist she will receive a $1,000 stipend and will be featured in USA Today along with Rondah Lowe, who was selected as West Virginia’s 2010 New Century Scholar, as reported in the last edition of Transitions.

Hawver is majoring in Hospitality and Tourism Management with an emphasis on event management planning. She has worked full-time while pursuing her degree. She will graduate in May and aspires to work at a golf resort in the South. The Lewisburg resident is married with one daughter and three stepchildren. She was recently named to the board of the United Way of Greenbrier Valley and has been volunteering with the Volunteers in Tax Assistance program. Through her church she is involved in mission work in Haiti.

Sponsored by the American Association of Community Colleges, Phi Theta Kappa, The Coca-Cola Foundation and the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, the New Century Scholars program is an extension of the All-USA Academic Team, a program which recognizes the top achieving community college students in the country. Hawver and fellow All-West Virginia Academic Team members Rondah Lowe and Ella Dorsey will be honored by Governor Manchin in a ceremony in Charleston on Friday (April 9). Dr. Spring will also attend to participate in honoring these outstanding students.

Correction: In the article about the blood drive on the Nicholas County Campus, Carol Friend was erroneously identified as Nancy Friend. Many apologies for the error.
STUDENT FINDS ARTFUL INSPIRATION FOR RESEARCH PAPER

Give Julie Gordon credit for creativity. Her teachers certainly did. Faced with a paper to write for Judy Stennett’s research class and a PhotoShop project due in Nathan England’s digital media class, the Greenbrier Valley Campus student managed to meld the two into a unique expression of her knowledge of both subjects, garnering her high marks from both instructors.

In the research class, Gordon was assigned to write about an accomplished author. She confesses that she selected E.E. Cummings from the list because of his “disregard for proper English and correct spelling.”

Her initial idea was to discover how she too could get away with ignoring the rules of grammar, but in her research she discovered that his unusual style has a purpose, and in her report she talked about why he wrote the way he did.

Her inspiration for pairing the English and art projects came from one of her fellow Fine Arts majors who was contemplating doing the research paper on Greek writings because it would complement studying Greek art in Art History. The digital media assignment was to blend two images together in PhotoShop and then add an additional seven images to build on the base. Gordon began with a photograph of Cummings and then added other images associated with the poet, such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, a city he loved and where he often worked and visited. Her choice of prism colors in the piece was inspired by his line, “The symbol of all art is the prism.”

“I’m not really good at rote memory, but I feel I know him because I worked with his portrait, Gordon says. “He’s an artist as well as a writer, and I’ve also used pieces of his art in my own images.”

Gordon used the digital image as the title page for her research paper. Through her research she gained a real appreciation for Cummings’s sense of humor. “He interested me because he was funny,” she says. “He just threw in funny things so you’d know how smart he was. He had a great wit.”

A busy mother of three, Gordon is in her fourth semester at New River, and is thoroughly enjoying the experience.

“I hated high school, and my parents didn’t encourage me to go to college,” she says. “My three younger sisters put themselves through school, and now that my youngest child is six, I am able to go back.” She adds that with three kids, it would be impossible for her to go away to a four-year college to earn a degree.

“Community college allows you to get an education and have a life,” she says.

Thanks to Judy Stennett for suggesting this article. Suggestions for stories about interesting students, faculty or staff are welcomed. Please contact Barbara Elliott, bellio@newriver.edu with suggestions.
The Center for Workforce Education sponsored a two-day thermal imaging training course for energy auditors, weatherization professionals, insulation contractors and home inspectors on March 23 and 24. The course included 16 hours of classroom and field training. Taking a break from the classroom are (L-R) Bret Monroe of Kennebunkport, Maine; Ed Martin of Fairmont; Greg Perry, coordinator of the training program for New River; Mike Cain of Parkersburg; David Dyer of Chelyan; John Cain of Waverly; and Bill Bihler of Beaver.

**REFSLAND AND DAVIS ARE PRESENTERS AT STATE MATH TEACHERS CONFERENCE**

Dr. Lucie Refsland, professor of Mathematics on the Greenbrier Valley Campus, and Dr. Shirley Davis, associate professor of Mathematics on the Beckley/County Campus, were presenters at the WV Council of Teachers of Mathematics state meeting for math teachers, K–16, on March 19 and 20. Approximately 400 teachers attended from all over the state.

Refsland conducted two sessions. The first was “Modeling Mathematics Using Everyday Items,” a workshop for pre-service teachers from WVU, Marshall, Fairmont, Glenville State and Bluefield State. She demonstrated how to use items such as beans, egg cartons, thumbprint and plastic plates to model mathematical concepts.

Refsland’s second presentation was “Using a Geoboard for Developing Understanding of Area and Perimeter.” Davis’s session was directed to elementary teachers and demonstrated a strategy for teaching math word problems in reading class since reading is the biggest problem!