11-7-2012

We Are...Marshall, November 7, 2012

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Recommended Citation

http://mds.marshall.edu/mu_newsletter/367
Profile: Amy Saunders

When Amy Saunders graduated from Marshall with two degrees in psychology, little did she dream that one day she’d return to her alma mater to help students develop and maintain more healthful lifestyles.

During her 10-year tenure, she’s been overseeing Student Health Education Programs, first as the coordinator and, in a change of title, now as the director. “The program oversees health and wellness issues that impact students. The office focuses on public health issues that affect students, like infectious disease, vaccine-preventable diseases, sexual health issues and substance and mental health issues as well. Our goal is really about prevention!”

The program sponsors numerous prevention and educational programs. “We work closely with many community agencies, such as the Cabell Huntington Health Department. Together we sponsor vaccination clinics at orientation and throughout the year to make sure students’ vaccines are up to date,” she says. “The office does a great deal of substance abuse prevention programs as well. Prevention programs are extremely important to help decrease substance abuse disorders for our students now and in the future. Unfortunately, some of our students come to campus with already established substance abuse disorders and sometimes students get in trouble with drugs or alcohol after they come to campus. It is our job to provide assessment, brief intervention, treatment and referral when necessary.”

It’s a small office, just Saunders and three graduate students, but their work spreads across the Huntington campus and beyond. Now conveniently located in the wellness suite on the first floor of the Marshall Recreation Center, Saunders is eager to spread the word about the wellness and prevention aspects of her program. “The Rec Center staff members are wonderful to work with and we coordinate many programs together,” she says enthusiastically. “We partner on the Student Fitness Challenge each semester, to increase exercise, and the Annual Alum Run. Our goal is to prevent problems and keep students healthy. We want them to start exercising early in their lives. Decisions, habits and behaviors that students make now can have long-lasting effects down the road for them.”
Data gathering on health issues is an important part of her job, she says. “We conduct several surveys to assess students’ health behaviors. We conduct the National College Health Assessment every two years, which gives information about fitness, nutrition, sleep, substance abuse, mental health and a host of other wellness areas. Since we are a small office, we use data to target our educational and prevention efforts on trends that are affecting our students.” Saunders also oversees the Marshall Wellness Coalition, which consists of students, staff members and community agencies. The Wellness Coalition uses Healthy Campuses 2020 to set goals and objectives. This framework assists the members with selecting strategies in different health areas. Saunders is also a member of several such community coalition groups and serves on their boards as well.

Her job requires a lot of networking both with campus and community groups. She works closely with a number of community and state-wide partners including the Cabell County Substance Abuse Prevention Partnership, Governor’s Highway Safety Office, Cabell County Tobacco Prevention Partnership, WV Collegiate Initiative to Address High Risk Alcohol and particularly the Cabell Huntington Health Department, for which she has high praise. “They are all wonderful people to work with and they have assisted in providing programs and services to our students. We all work really well together.” Her program also partners with several campus groups as well. “We’re always looking for opportunities to partner with departments on campus. For example, we’re currently working with the Geography department on a GIS mapping project. We’re mapping violent crime data in Huntington and alcohol outlets to see if there is a relationship. We did a similar project a few years ago and the data showed a relationship between alcohol outlets and crime data in our community.”

Since her days as a student and even since she joined the MU staff, she’s seen many behavioral changes. “Since I was an undergraduate, there’s been a big decrease in tobacco use. People used to smoke in buildings on campus, in restaurants and bars and that’s been a very big change on campus and in the community. Most of our students are tobacco free today. Most have been happy with those changes and still want more changes in tobacco policy.” She points out recent efforts to curtail tobacco on all Marshall’s campuses. In October, she and other committee members met with the Student Government and presented data and listened as the pros and cons of a tobacco ban were discussed. Student Government eventually voted to advocate a tobacco-free campus.

Right now she’s excited about an upcoming project. “We received a grant to build a lactation room for students, staff and faculty. We’re hoping it will be completed sometime this semester.” The funding didn’t quite cover the entire cost so the university is assisting with additional funds for the project. The space will be located on the second floor of the Memorial Student Center and will allow women to express milk or nurse their babies in private. They’ve already had pumping equipment donated, and, Saunders says, “This is going to be a wonderful resource for our breast-feeding mothers and their babies. We plan on partnering with campus departments to use this resource to promote breastfeeding and the benefits to our students, staff and faculty.”

And when it comes to wellness, Saunders aims to practice what she teaches. She’s an avid walker. “I’m not a runner, I love to walk, it’s my favorite thing to do.” She tries to get in at least
30 minutes a day when possible. With three active boys (ages 7, 4 and 20 months) and their varied activities, staying busy is no problem at all. The whole family, husband Kurt Geveke—a Marshall graduate — and the boys Noah, Carter and Will, love the outdoors. During the school year they can be found at one of Noah and Carter’s sporting events. The family loves traveling and visiting zoos, parks and museums. They also enjoy weekend road trips to visit Amy’s siblings in Pittsburgh and Martinsburg. In warmer weather, you can find them hanging out on the family boat at a local lake or at the beach. “We love being outdoors! We go to the playground, the park or just all hang out in the backyard.”

For several years Saunders worked at Prestera and eventually supervised therapists who were placed in middle schools to provide treatment for mental health disorders. She is using her psychology skills today when counseling students on substance abuse disorders, so “I feel like my education and job experience really prepared me for this job,” she says. “We strive to prevent illnesses and substance abuse issues by trying to get students to reduce harmful behaviors. Nationally there is a trend to look at mental health and substance abuse as public health issues. I’ve also seen many great changes since I was here as a student and since I became an employee. Every year we have a new student population and each year is a new beginning. The students may think they’re invincible, but in fact the choices they make now can have long-term effects down the road. That’s why we want to interact and intervene if necessary. Our whole goal is to keep our students healthy.”

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Marshall Theatre to present ‘The Arabian Nights’ starting Nov. 7

Marshall University’s Francis-Booth Experimental Theatre will transcend time and space this week as the Marshall Theatre Alliance puts on their performances of Mary Zimmerman’s award-winning adaptation of “The Arabian Nights.”

Performances begin Wednesday, Nov. 7, and continue through Saturday, Nov. 10. They pick back up Thursday, Nov. 15, and go through Saturday, Nov. 17. All shows begin at 8 p.m.

Nicole Perrone, assistant professor of theatre at Marshall, said a play such as “The Arabian Nights” provides an invaluable learning opportunity for the students.

“In an educational theatre setting, we’re always looking for shows that will provide the right kinds of challenges for our students,” Perrone said. “This show relies on the strength of the ensemble—most of the 17-member company remains onstage throughout the performance. Each actor sings, dances, plays a musical instrument and performs many roles.”
Perrone also mentioned the importance of costume and stage design for helping the audience believe they have left Huntington behind and, in this instance, traveled to Bagdad.

Nicole Peckens designed costumes for “The Arabian Nights” as part of her senior capstone project. Peckens started in the theatre industry at the age of 13 and came to Marshall with professional experience, but she said this production provided new challenges.

“I’ve been designing for about 12 years,” Peckens said. “I was an apprentice for four years, earning my stagehand certification. I also spent two years as an intern working as a designer and stitcher designing four shows a season and helping to build 15 shows per season. I am particularly proud of this design, not simply because it is my senior capstone, but because it provided me an opportunity to learn a great deal about a fascinating culture, and pushed me to new heights. I always believed costumes bring the last bit of life into a character.”

Perrone said music is also an important part in bringing the play to life for the audience. They used the lyrics provided by the playwright, but it was a Marshall student that provided the sounds.

“Emily Pritchard composed all original melodies, accompaniment and underscoring,” Perrone said. “There is also a tremendous amount of dance and movement, which the students and I crafted together. This show is performed ‘in the round,’ meaning the audience will be seated on all sides of the playing space. This gives the show an intimate feel and enables the audience to be very close to the action. For the students, however, it has been a unique challenge. Being aware of your entire space, not just the space in front of you becomes extremely important.”

This is the first production for which Pritchard has composed the music and she said it has been a nerve-racking, but fun experience.

“This is my favorite show I’ve done,” Pritchard said. “When I got the script, I went through the whole thing and marked any place music was noted in the script. My father is a music teacher back home and he let me borrow some of his authentic instruments and even helped compose some songs.”

Pritchard said the audience may only see the show for a couple of hours, but it takes her hours just to create one song.

“It usually took me around two hours to compose one song that I liked,” Pritchard said.

Perrone said she looks forward to seeing the combination of costumes, music and acting on opening night. She also said parents should be aware the production may not be appropriate for young children, as Zimmerman made a point of choosing the funniest and saddest, yet most erotic, of the “Thousand and One Nights” stories. She said it is a tribute to the art of storytelling and the audience will be surprised by how many places the story can take them.
In Memoriam: Ted Massey

Ted Massey, who worked 37 years in higher education, 28 of them at Marshall where he was the Associate Vice President for Finance, died Nov. 5. He was a 1968 graduate of Dunbar High School and a graduate of West Virginia State College and the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies (now part of Marshall). He began his career with the West Virginia Board of Regents, then worked at Morris Harvey College and the West Virginia College of Graduate Studies before coming to Marshall. He retired in 2008 and then worked part time for two years at Mountwest Community and Technical College.

He is survived by his wife, Cora, who is executive administrative assistant to President Kopp; as well as a daughter, son, stepdaughter, three grandchildren, a stepgrandson, two nephews and a niece. Donations in his memory can be made to the to the American Cancer Society, 301 RHL Blvd., Charleston, or HospiceCare of West Virginia 1606 Kanawha Blvd., Charleston.

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Annual Memorial Service to take place next Wednesday

Mo Lajterman lives in New Jersey and visits Marshall University maybe once every couple of years. Yet, he and all of the Lajtermans, including Mo’s brothers, Tito and Abe, have a long-distance relationship with Marshall that Mo describes with one word – family.

Mo Lajterman and his brothers will return to Marshall on Wednesday, Nov. 14, for the annual memorial service celebrating the lives of the 75 victims of the 1970 Marshall plane crash, including the Lajtermans’ brother, Marcelo.

The service starts at noon on the Memorial Student Center plaza. The public is invited to attend the event, which is conducted by the Student Government Association.

This year’s visit will be different for Mo Lajterman. He won’t be in the memorial service audience; rather, he’ll be on the stage as the featured speaker.

“It was very shocking when I got the call from (Athletic Director) Mike Hamrick; I never expected it,” Lajterman said. “I’m very honored and very emotional about it, but I had to take a couple of days to think about it. But now, I’m looking forward to it.”

Lajterman and his brothers have made the nine-hour drive from New Jersey to Huntington a few times in recent years. They usually spend much of their time on the road talking about Marcelo.
“I’m a very emotional person,” said Mo, who was 17 when the plane went down. “I’m not a professional speaker. I try to speak from the heart. It was such a tragic accident and it still feels like it was yesterday. We still cry over it. But these trips to Huntington help. We feel really close to our brother when we make these trips.”

The trips didn’t happen for many years after the crash. In fact, Mo came to Huntington for the first time – by himself – in 2000 for the premiere of the documentary, “Ashes to Glory.”

“I didn’t know a soul,” he said. “Now, we feel like Marshall’s our home.”

Marcelo Lajterman was 19 years old when he died in the crash. He was a kicker for the Thundering Herd in 1970. Although it has been 42 years since the crash, the Lajterman family makes sure that Marcelo’s name lives on through the Marcelo Lajterman Memorial Scholarship Fund.

The Marshall University Foundation Inc. announced establishment of the scholarship in 2008. In 2010, members of the Lajterman family presented the foundation with a check for $23,000 to endow the scholarship. Marcelo wore number 23 on his Herd jersey.

The crash on Saturday, Nov. 14, 1970, occurred at about 7:47 p.m. when a DC-9 jetliner, returning Marshall from its football game at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., clipped some treetops just short of Tri-State Airport and went down. Victims included 36 Marshall football players, nine coaches and administrators, 25 fans and the crew of five.

“The Student Government Association is esteemed to have the privilege of organizing the annual Memorial Ceremony again this year,” said Student Body President Ray Harrell Jr. “My chief of staff and the planning committee have done an excellent job with this year’s program and we are hopeful that it will serve to honor the victims of this terrible tragedy and their families. I hope that members of the Marshall and Huntington communities will take an hour out of their day to join us for this special event.”

In addition to Lajterman and Harrell, others who will speak in the memorial service include President Stephen J. Kopp, Athletic Director Mike Hamrick, Football Coach Doc Holliday and a representative from the Marshall Alumni Association.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin, Sen. Joe Manchin, Rep. Nick Rahall and Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito have been invited to attend and speak.

The service will conclude with the placing of the memorial wreath at the Memorial Fountain. The fountain will be silenced after the laying of the wreath and remain silent until next spring.

Photo: The photo of Marcelo Lajterman, one of the victims of the Nov. 14, 1970, plane crash, was taken from Marshall’s 1970 football media guide. His brother, Mo Lajterman, will speak at the 2012 memorial service for victims of the crash.
Marshall and St. Joseph Catholic Grade School in Huntington are teaming with the United States Marine Corp Reserves in supporting a drive to collect toys for needy children in the 2012 Toys for Tots regional campaign.

Monday afternoon at St. Joe, about 80 students in grades K-2 joined Sgt. Victor Arroyo, coordinator of the campaign, and Kelly Sweetman, director of military affairs at Marshall, in a countdown that officially got the campaign under way. It will run through Dec. 7, with distribution to follow. The campaign covers 20 counties – 14 in West Virginia, three in Ohio and three in Kentucky.

Toys for Tots collects new toys to give to children, ages toddler to early teens, who otherwise would do without during the holidays.

“Our goal is 4,000 kids and 15,000 toys,” Arroyo said. “That way each kid receives three toys.”

This is the third consecutive year in which Marshall has teamed with Toys for Tots and St. Joseph in the Toys for Tots campaign. The Marines presented each of the St. Joe students participating in the kickoff with a cup, pencil, ruler and commemorative coin for their hard work the past two holiday seasons.

“It has become something we all look forward to doing each year. This is about community pulling together,” Sweetman said of St. Joe’s participation in the campaign. “The St. Joe kids do a tremendous job each year collecting toys and handing them out.”

Counties included in the campaign are Wayne, Lincoln, Logan, Cabell, Putnam, Kanawha, Mason, Jackson, Roane, Calhoun, Gilmer, Clay, Braxton and Boone in West Virginia; Gallia, Lawrence and Meigs in Ohio; and Boyd, Greenup and Lawrence in Kentucky.

Huntington-area drop-off locations include:

- Huntington, WV Housing Authority Family Resource Center, 2920 Marcum Terrace, Marvin Gray Family Center Gym
- Medicap Pharmacy, 4352 5th St. Rd., Huntington
- Sun Tan City, 2957 5th Ave., Huntington
- Sun Tan City, 360 Diederich Blvd., Ashland, Ky.
- MU Memorial Student Center (beginning Wednesday, Nov. 7)
Arroyo, who was the assistant coordinator last year, will run this year’s campaign out of the Teays Valley reserve unit.

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*Photo:* Cpt. Steven Dodson, left, listens as Sgt. Victor Arroyo, coordinator of the Toys for Tots campaign, talks with St. Joe students about the campaign. Photo by Liu Yang/ Marshall University.

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**Modern Languages Film Festival continues tonight, tomorrow**

The 2012 Modern Languages Film Festival continues this week with the two remaining films to be shown today and tomorrow in Drinko Auditorium 402. The films are free and snacks will be served.

*Hula Girls* (Japan), which will be shown at 5 p.m. today, is a heartwarming comedy about coal-mining daughters who take a once-in-a-lifetime chance to escape their monotonous lives only to become unwilling heroes to their depressed mining village as well as to the whole of Japan. This award-winning film is based on a true story.

*Ladron que roba a ladron* (to rob a thief) (Mexico) 5 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8. Two thieves reunite to rob a rich infomercial guru who makes his money selling worthless health products to poor Latino immigrants. When none of their affiliates want to go undercover as workers in his home, the men recruit real immigrants to pull off the heist from within.

The films are organized by the Department of Modern Languages and sponsored by the Center for International Programs.

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**Cyber safety summit rescheduled for Nov. 28**

Marshall University’s free cyber safety summit, originally scheduled for Oct. 30 but postponed because of weather conditions that day, has been rescheduled to Nov. 28 beginning at 10 a.m., according to John Sammons, assistant professor of
Integrated Science and Technology and director of the Appalachian Institute of Digital Evidence.

The summit will take place in the Memorial Student Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It is for adults, college students and younger students aged 12-14.

During the sessions, participants can learn how to prevent cyber bullying, keep themselves and their families safe online, handle the dangers of social media, keep their information and computers safe and identify scams. In addition, they can find out how and why criminals target them and more.

The event is sponsored by the Department of Integrated Science & Technology, the FBI, and the Appalachian Institute of Digital Evidence.

To reserve a seat, e-mail sammons17@gapps.marshall.edu.

College of Fine Arts to collect items for Cabell County school pantries

The College of Fine Arts will host “Pack the Backpack,” an event to collect items for Cabell County school pantries, Tuesday, Nov. 13, on the Huntington campus.

Jaye Ike, special projects coordinator for the College of Fine Arts, said students from the college’s Student Leadership Council have organized this initiative in an effort to help stock the school pantries. The students will collect items like nonperishable food, toiletries, bedding and more from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Memorial Student Center.

Theresa Rapp, career specialist at Huntington High School, said that donations are greatly appreciated.

“I want to assure you that every single donation, regardless of the size, is certainly needed and appreciated by the students at Huntington High School,” Rapp said.

“Every day I encounter a student in need of food or personal care items such as shampoo, deodorant or soap. I am very grateful that the MU students are extending their support to the community at Huntington High. What a blessing!”

For members of the council, this is an effort to give back to the community that surrounds the campus.

“We believe as the College of Fine Arts Student Leadership Council that giving back to the community is not only a necessity, but that it builds and fosters a spirit among COFA students.
that cannot be accomplished in any other way,” Bradlee Jordan, theatre student and SLC president, said. “When we heard that some schools are trying to ramp up their pantries before Thanksgiving break so they can send items with students who will otherwise go without, we were pleased to be part of the solution.”

SLC member and music student Shey Dillon agrees.

“As artists, musicians and students, we feel it is very important to give back to the community that supports us and this wonderful university,” Dillon said. “No one is more in need or deserving of this gesture than the many children of Cabell County who go without so many basic necessities. We hope that we can set an example that others will follow.”

Martha Evans, principal at Guyandotte Elementary, said she tries diligently to remind her students of the historical bond that they have with Marshall University and that this event is another example of that bond.

“By an act of the Assembly of Virginia in 1809, what is now Guyandotte was established as the county seat of Cabell County,” Evans said. “The founding fathers of this community built a school and when their sons had completed the standard education offered there, they wanted more for their sons, so they established ‘Hometown Academy,’ which eventually became Marshall Academy, the forerunner of Marshall University. Therefore, Guyandotte exists at the very heart of Marshall University and we continue to respect that heritage.”

“I want our students to realize that connection,” she said. “I want them to know that if college is the path they want to follow – they can. We want them to connect with Marshall, and eventually attend. My goal is for them to know that they can pursue a college education.”

For more information, contact Ike by phone at 304-633-9251 or by e-mail at jaye.ike@marshall.edu.

‘Sisters in the Struggle’ topic of final Civil Rights lecture Tuesday

The final lecture in a series that brought distinguished scholars to Marshall and which centered around the long civil rights movement in the U.S., will feature Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas, who will speak about the unique experiences of women and their contributions to the civil rights movement. She will also discuss the way the civil rights movement led to greater activism among women.
The lecture begins at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 13, in Marshall University Foundation Hall, Home of the Erickson Alumni Center, and is free to the public.

Collier-Thomas is the author of numerous books including the award-winning *Sisters in the Struggle: African-American Women in the Civil Rights Power Movement*.

Dr. John M. Glen, a scholar of Appalachian History and author of *Highlander: No Ordinary School*, spoke yesterday about the importance of the Highlander School and other interracial collaborations in Appalachia during the civil rights movement.

This series has been sponsored by the West Virginia Humanities Council and the College of Liberal Arts, the Center for African-American Students’ Programs, Multicultural Affairs, the Department of History, and the African and African American Studies program.

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**Sharing GIS technology with community purpose of GIS Day 2012**

Marshall University will celebrate GIS Day 2012, an international, annual, one-day event designed to share with and showcase Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology for the local community, on Wednesday, Nov. 14.

GIS Day 2012 activities at Marshall are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and are sponsored by the geography department, integrated science and technology department, and the Rahall Transportation Institute. Activities will take place in room BE5 on the lower level of the Memorial Student Center and in Corbly Hall. They will include undergraduate and graduate research posters, a keynote speech from Ranger Frank Sellers from the National Park Service, and activities for students from Spring Valley and Chesapeake high schools. Those students will participate in Google Earth, ArcGIS and GPS contests.

Dr. James M. Leonard, a geography professor and director of the Geography Department GIS Lab, said about 40 high school students are expected to attend, and about 20 Marshall students will submit posters.

“And, we expect perhaps an additional 35 Marshall students will show up to view the posters and attend the talk by Ranger Sellers,” Leonard said.

Leonard said Sellers, a ranger at New River Gorge National River, is expected to talk about Chief Justice John Marshall’s 1812 expedition through the Allegheny Mountains to find a canal route between Richmond, Va., and the Ohio River. Marshall traveled the New and Greenbrier rivers on this expedition.
The GIS Day events will begin in BE5, where undergraduate and graduate posters will be on display throughout the day. After an introduction in BE5, the high school students will move to Corbly Hall 332 for two contests – ArcMap and Google Earth.

At 11 a.m., Sellers will present his work in BE5, with lunch following from noon to 1 p.m. That’s when the GPS contest starts in BE5, although high school students will be walking around campus looking for items as part of the contest. The wrap-up will be around 2 p.m. in BE5.

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Sociology and Anthropology speaker series continues today at 4 p.m.

The Sociology and Anthropology Speaker Series continues today, Wednesday, Nov. 7, when Dr. Richard J. Chacon, an associate professor of anthropology at Winthrop University, speaks in the Shawkey Dining Room of the Memorial Student Center (2E28). The presentation and discussion will run from 4 to 6 p.m.

Chacon’s presentation is titled “Conservation or Resource Maximization? Analyzing Subsistence Hunting Among the Achuar of Ecuador.” In this presentation, he will discuss findings from his extensive anthropological fieldwork experience among the indigenous peoples of South America.

Chacon has conducted anthropological investigations throughout Latin America, documenting the subsistence patterns and belief systems of the Yanomamö of Venezuela, the Yora of Peru and the Achuar (Shiwiar) of Ecuador. He has also examined ritual violence among the Otavalo and Cotacachi Indians of Highland Ecuador.

The presentation is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Dr. Brian A. Hoey at hoey@marshall.edu.

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Chamber Choir to present fall concert Sunday

The Marshall University Chamber Choir, under the direction of Dr. David Castleberry, will present its fall concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 11, in Smith Recital Hall on Marshall’s Huntington campus.

The performance will feature works by Mozart, Brahms, Vaughan Williams, Villa-Lobos and others, Castleberry said.

The Chamber Choir is a select 40-voice ensemble whose recent accomplishments include a 10-day tour of France last spring, during which they performed at Paris’s famed Cathedral of Notre Dame and received standing ovations throughout a tour that included additional concerts in Sarlat, Domme, and Nice. A CD compilation from the performance tour will be released later this fall.

Castleberry said membership includes many students preparing for careers in music, but is open to students all across the campus by audition.

“The choir upholds a high standard of excellence each year because of the students who commit themselves to reach as high as they possibly can,” Castleberry said. “When you hear them sing, their qualities of focus, dedication and joy in making music are obvious.”

Sunday’s concert will last approximately one hour. It is free and open to the public.

The next issue of We Are…Marshall will be distributed Nov. 14, 2012. Please send any materials for consideration to Pat Dickson by noon, Nov. 12.