

# The benefit of knowledge: Simpson employees take advantage of Tuition Remission

By Jennifer Whitham

More than just 20-somethings living in the dorms and eating at Pfeiffer can be seen in classrooms at Simpson College.

A number of Simpson employees occupy seats in a variety of courses, spanning the list of available majors. The opportunity for employees and their immediate family members to take classes free of charge is offered thanks to the Tuition Remission Program.

Through adult learning there are currently 10 Simpson staff members taking advantage of this program for their own professional development and personal knowledge. Whether their goal is to finish their degree, further their career or both, these staffers-turned-students are dedicated and determined individuals.

Walter Pearson, director of adult learning says he sees this as a valuable and worthwhile benefit for employees.

"We have a very well educated workforce. Even so, the strength of our academic program and academic core makes people more liberal minded and thus better employees," says Pearson. Adding, "These are people who are wonderful learners, their incentive is for the purpose of learning. Getting their degree is often secondary."

This is certainly true for Todd Little, director of Hawley Academic Resource Center. Since fall 1999, Little has completed six of the nine courses required for a computer science certificate and hopes to finish his studies in this area by the

summer of 2003. Most of the courses Little has taken have been offered in the evening but he has completed a couple of courses offered during the day.

Little, who has a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts in education with an emphasis in post secondary student services, has a longstanding motivation for pursuing this certificate.

"Computer science has always been an

Nicole Darling, assistant director of student activities/intramurals, is another staff member devoted to furthering her education through Simpson.

This past summer, Darling signed up to attain her education certificate. This is something Darling wanted to do while an undergraduate at Central College, but it didn't work out for her at the time. She graduated from Central with a Bachelor of Arts degree in exercise science with an emphasis in health promotion.

For Darling, who just gave birth to her and husband Jason's first child in March, the most difficult obstacle is finding time for classes, studying and being a wife and new mom.

"Finding enough time to devote what I feel needs to be applied to class, while holding down a job and being a parent is a little difficult," says Darling. That is why Darling is pursuing her certificate by taking just one class per semester.

Regardless of the juggling of schedules and the time commitment, Darling says it is worth it to her.

"It is a very important opportunity to be able to take classes either during the day or at night for free. I think employees should take advantage of it whether looking to change careers or to expand their knowledge."

Anyone interested in learning more about the Tuition Remission Program for employees should call or stop by the adult learning office in Hillman Hall.

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*Walter Pearson, director of adult learning*

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interest of mine and since I work at an institution of higher education where courses are available I looked at it as an opportunity to further my own education," comments Little.

His pursuit of a computer science certificate has also proven directly useful in Little's position at Simpson.

"Through taking courses I've been able to provide tutoring in the beginning levels of computer science," says Little. Which of course is an obvious benefit for the director of Hawley Resource Center, where so many students go to seek out tutelage and assistance in specific courses.

Little adds that he has been pleased with how flexible, supportive and accommodating the college and his department have been in his decision to take courses.



Proctor

# Radio memories

By Nicolas Proctor, assistant professor of history

There is a romance to radio. It addresses a single sense, yet within that limit it ranges from a screech to a coo. The sounds of the world can come out of your speakers, but predictable corporate formats have reduced most of radio to an irritating, syncopated murmur. It persists as a buzzing in your ear, but little more.

Listening to corporate radio is akin to eating a corporate meal. You are a consumer. You are consuming a product. It is not good, but if you are in a hurry, you can easily choke it down. In this spirit, most stations play bland, committee-approved music that is lacquered with a sheen of faux teen rebellion by mid-level executives who insist that they “really love the music,” while endlessly reshaping and homogenizing their product because they “really need a new Aaliyah.”

As a tow-headed Arkansas youth, I assumed that this sort of corporate dreck, earnest (if repetitive) classical, vapid country, and dinosaur rock represented the entirety of the musical spectrum. Sure, I read about the wild sounds of the Jazz Age in the stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald and looked at art inspired by bebop, but I never actually listened to jazz.

Indeed, my first exposure to blues and R&B was from a Hollywood film, *The Blues Brothers*. Fortunately for me, it featured musical numbers by several great performers. Lightning Hopkins was impressive, but I watched Aretha Franklin agog.

Who was this woman?

What was this music?

Why had I never heard it before?

These revelations came in the midst of my hometown’s introduction to MTV. Sadly, with the exception of a weekly show called *120 Minutes*, their program-

ming closely resembled that of the mainstream radio stations. MTV’s play list soon grew smaller, and smaller still until it became a sort of boyband infomercial.

Then I went to college. Imagine my delight when I discovered that the campus had a small radio station (I had not noticed the whisker-like aerial during my abrupt and truncated campus tour). The transmitter was small and puny so a friend and I had no trouble getting a one-hour show. My contributions were limited because I only owned three albums: *The Blues Brothers* soundtrack, Miles Davis’ *Sketches of Spain*, and *Authentic Sound Effects Vol. 7: Automobiles and Firearms*. As a result, we relied heavily on his collection of corporate rock.

This grated on the fourth year art major who had a show immediately before ours. One day, as she was leaving, she tartly asked, “will you play some ska for me?” It was one of those questions that is not looking for an answer.

I was curious: “What’s ska?”

“It’s like reggae, but faster.”

I expressed some interest so she loaned me two of her CDs. When I listened, I recognized some signatures of the ska sound from the soundtracks of various movies, but the liner notes and the lyrics introduced me to a varied trans-continental subculture based upon music.

The determined interracial politics and strident anti-Thatcher stance of English ska, the feedback loop between American R&B and Jamaican dancehall DJs, and the interplay between ska and punk rock all revealed doors to worlds that I never suspected existed.

England had racism? They didn’t like Maggie?

Jamaican dancehalls? Caribbean music before Bob Marley?

Punk rock informed by something other than the nihilism of *The Sex Pistols*!

How could this be?

For a first-year college student these were weighty and consciousness-expanding questions.

I started listening to more shows.

Most of them were awful. So I pulled albums—vinyl LP albums—out of their dusty sleeves and played them. I played them if I liked them. I played them if I didn’t like them. Most of these were awful too. This led me to an unsettling conclusion: *most of college radio is awful*. This is sad, but true.

I persevered and played hours of wretched sounds. Fortunately, a pattern developed: for each hour I spent listening to the clanging efforts of talentless hacks and mopey visionary nonsense, I usually found something that was, at the very least, interesting—a thread. Most of these led to skeins of mediocrity, but a few revealed pathways to music that conveyed me to other worlds: the *rocksteady* of Jamaica in the 1950s, the *swing* of the big band era, the burgeoning *electronica* of the rave scene, and the twangy notes of *redneck underground*—a place where Hank Senior ruled and whiskey was still a chaser for heartbreak.

I recognize that my college radio experience relied on a number of slippery variables (generous, sassy, musically savvy girls and well-stocked back catalogues of old vinyl are not easy to come by), but my heart grows heavy when I see the ease with which members of our community dismiss KSTM.

Clearly, it is not a tool for recruitment, but so what? It is one of the fragments that makes Simpson College a learning community rather than a bunch of people with a curriculum and a sports program.

## NEW FACES



Nelsen



Thomas



Tilka



Walker



Norris



Condon



Smith



Hicks

**Neal Nelsen '01** has joined the athletic department where he will be working with athletic trainers. Prior to his hire at Simpson, Nelsen was a substitute physical education teacher at Norwalk.

**Charles Thomas**, who will graduate from Simpson in '03, has been named telecommunication and network technician in the information services office.

**Ashley Tilka** has been hired as assistant director of annual giving and alumni programs in the department of college advancement. Tilka worked as calendar editor at *Cityview* prior to joining the Simpson College staff.

**Andy Walker '02** has joined the athletic department as assistant baseball coach and recruiting coordinator.

**Michael Norris '02** has been hired in the admissions office as an admissions counselor for southwest Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas. Previously, Norris worked at Wells Fargo Financial at the corporate office in West Des Moines.

**Sandy Condon** has joined the admissions staff as a receptionist. Before coming to Simpson, Condon worked as an office manager at Taylor'd Financial Services and before that she was a senior human resource

administrator at Principal Financial Group for 24 years.

**Ken Smith** has joined the student development staff as area coordinator for Kresge and Barker Hall. Prior to his hire at Simpson, Smith was a residence hall coordinator at Iowa State University.

**Pat Hicks** has joined the athletic department as part-time secretary. Previously, Hicks worked as media secretary at Indianola High School.

## CALENDAR

### OCTOBER

**Oct. 18-20-** Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro," one of the world's greatest operas, in production featuring student cast and chorus under the direction of Robert L. Larsen. Friday and Saturday, Oct. 18 and 19 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Oct. 20 at 2 p.m., Pote Theatre in the Blank Performing Arts Center. Tickets \$12/adults, \$8/non-Simpson students (18 and under).

**Oct. 22-** Trio Indiana, a faculty/artist clarinet trio from Indiana University will present a program of chamber works for clarinet at 7:30 p.m. in Great Hall.

They will also present a master class at 4:30 p.m. in Lekberg Hall.

**Oct. 22-** The Still Point Theatre Collective presents, "Haunted by God: The Life of Dorothy Day", a play about Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker Movement in Camp Lounge at 7:30 p.m.

### NOVEMBER

**Nov. 1-29-** Group Exhibitions: "The Perfect Fit"

- Nick Cassway, painter Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- James Rosenthal, painter Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- Daniel Schimmel, painter Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Steven Wise, painter Rogers, Arizona

**Nov. 5-** Ako Abu-Samad, the founder and CEO of Creative Visions in Des Moines will present a program titled "Making a Real Difference with Your Life" in Camp Lounge from 6 to 8 p.m.

**Nov. 5-** The Simpson College Jazz Ensemble will present its fall concert under the direction of Michael Duke at 8 p.m. in Lekberg Hall.

## LIFE AFTER FIVE



Johnson

### A look at life with Jeremy Johnson

**Title:** admissions counselor, southeast Iowa

**Joined Simpson staff:** August 2001

**Likes most about job:** "Being back on campus and supporting the college I went to. Being able to give back to the college and being around athletic events and other college events on campus."

**Interests:** golf, collecting sports memorabilia, watching sports on television and attending sporting events

## THE CORNERSTONE

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*THE CORNERSTONE* can be found on the world wide web at <http://www.simpson.edu/alumni/publications/corner/cornerstone.html>

## FOOTNOTES

Professor of music **Ron Albrecht's** new CD recording titled "Silver" with flutist Sandra Wacha is now out and available by contacting him or at the book store. The CD features beautiful music for flute and piano with wonderful melodies and harmonies.

**James Kim**, instructor of music, has been selected and invited as one of 18 conducting fellows for the Chicago Conducting Workshop and Masterclass, which will be held from Oct. 10-13, in Chicago, IL. This is the first choral/orchestral conducting workshop presented by the Chorus America and the Chicago Symphony Association for emerging professional conductors in the US and Canada. In addition to a roundtable discussion with Daniel Barenboim, music director of the Chicago Symphony, James Kim will also work with six internationally-acclaimed conductors and with performing forces such as Chicago Symphony Chorus, Civic Orchestra, Chicago College of Performing Arts Orchestra during the intensive three-day workshop.

**Robert Larsen**, professor of music, conducted a seminar on audition techniques for singers and a masterclass for singers and pianists at the University of Texas at Austin on September 28.

The U.S. department of the interior U.S. geological survey's information and technology report 2002-0004, "A Field Guide to Amphibian Larvae and Eggs of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa," was written by **Jeff Parmelee**, assistant professor of biology, Melinda G., Knutson, and James E. Lyon, with illustrations by Simpson college student Pearl Podgorniak. This research report was published in June 2002 and appears in professional journals around the world.

**Steve Rose**, associate professor of education, received an honorable mention award in the adult general category for the poem "Windsock to the Seasons" published by Lyric Iowa, 2002. A piece entitled "Teacher preparation and supply" he's written for the "Your Turn" section of the September 02 *American School Board Journal* was published. Rose attended a working conference sponsored by the Iowa State Education Association on August 26. The task was to align the ISEA adopted standards for teaching with the state-mandated "Iowa Teacher Standards" using the Charlotte Danielson Model as template.

**Brian Steffen**, associate professor of communication studies, has been appointed to the national advisory council for the Student Press Law Center in Washington D.C. The SPLC is the leading national organization advocating student free-expression rights at private and public schools, colleges and universities.

**David Wolf**, instructor of English, had six poems published in the September issue of "Short Stuff," a journal devoted to poetry in short forms.

**Tobias Winright**, assistant professor of religion, presented a paper, "From Death Penalty to Life: The Liturgy as a Source for Reform" (with Dr. Allyne Smith), at the conference, "From Death to Life: Agendas for Reform," at the University of Notre Dame, sponsored by the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, on Saturday, Sept 28. Also, he presented three workshops on "Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace" at the Basilica of St. John in Des Moines on Wednesday, Sept 18, Wednesday, Sept. 25 and Wednesday, Oct 2.