Another Successful Student Association Carnival

The Student Association (SA) held their Second Annual Carnival on Saturday, September 22, in the parking lot at the main campus. Students arrived in droves to play games, eat cotton candy, dunk their instructors and staff, and win great prizes—all for free! Among those who took a swim in the dunk tank were Student Services Director Gordon Dutrisac, game instructor Christopher Erhardt, and art instructor Jazno Francoeur. They were all good sports and did not seem to mind getting a little wet. Courtesy of Chris Erhardt, Bento Box, a local teriyaki restaurant, was also present, handing out free food. The grand prize, a free copy of the video game Rock Band, went to Cameron Jacobson. SA is very pleased with the turnout, feeling that events like this help to keep the student body, now portioned over two campuses, together. Everyone is looking forward to the next annual carnival, wondering who else might take a turn in the dunk tank.

- Lindsay Jones

Master Chief Comes to DigiPen

On Monday, September 24, DigiPen was pleased to partner with Microsoft to host the Seattle Pre-Launch Party for the highly anticipated new Xbox 360 game, Halo 3. The event was attended by over 120 hardcore Halo fans, who came to check out the latest installment from Bungie Studios. A number of DigiPen students were lucky enough to be drawn randomly to attend the festivities. The Seattle event was coordinated with similar events in five other cities, allowing players from the different locations to play against each other. Based on the reviews of the attendees, it looks like Bungie has a huge hit on their hands!

- Raymond Yan
Kay Widmer
Student Counselor and
Disability Support Service Coordinator

Since September 2006, Kay Widmer has provided counseling for DigiPen students. She holds a B.A. in Psychology from Seattle Pacific University and an M.A. in Psychology, with an emphasis in Mental Health Counseling, from Western Washington University. Kay is a state-licensed mental health counselor and has over five years of experience supervising counseling programs and working as a therapist for individuals and families.

Doing clinical work in a college setting has always been Kay’s dream. During her graduate program at Western, she worked at the Counseling Center as an intern counselor. While at Western, she learned that she enjoys working with university students who need some guidance to overcome various obstacles. This was when she realized that she would like to become a college counselor.

Although she characterizes her primary approach as cognitive/behavioral, the orientation she takes with a certain client depends on the situation and client’s preference. As Kay describes it, “I focus on their strengths and assets in the process of finding possible reasonable solutions.” Input from a client shapes the specific treatment plan, since she values the people she works with as “effective resources” in the counseling process. “Being a former international student myself,” she says, “puts me in a position to empower my clients because I understand difficult situations and could provide emotional support.” Kay believes that she has the ability to make people feel comfortable. “Sometimes talking to a mental health counselor is a challenging task in itself,” she admits, “so I try my best to welcome students and to show my appreciation that they are visiting my office.”

As the Student Counselor, Kay provides professional, individual mental health counseling to DigiPen students. She also consults with faculty and staff members when they have concerns regarding students. In her role as the Disability Support Service Coordinator, she arranges class and test accommodations for students and ensures that the Institute is providing all the access students need to become successful. Kay truly enjoys interacting with DigiPen students and her co-workers. “I feel so satisfied when I can make students feel safe to talk about their issues and explore possible solutions to their problems,” she admits.

DigiPen’s Literature Club

The Literature Club at DigiPen fosters student creative writing. Every style is covered, including poetry, short stories, screenplays, scriptwriting, and so forth. Starting next month, members of the Literature Club will contribute pieces to the DigiPen newsletter to showcase student work from our group and the student body at large. We will also have periodic interviews with industry professionals, industry news, and general reviews.

At the end of the school year, the Literature Club will produce its first literary/arts journal composed of the best creative writing and sample art produced during the year. The Literature Club meets every Thursday at 4:30 P.M. in Bach (Main Campus). Feel free to contact us at litclub@digipen.edu for more information.

Although we already have a diverse group of members, we would love to have more from any class and degree. Below are biographies of current members of the club.

Jordan Nguyen - 2nd year R.T.I.S.

My name is Jordan and I’ve been casually writing fiction for almost five years now. I have a simple and minimalist style, and I tend to create unique or uncommon scenarios and situations. I’m heavily influenced by anime and manga, but inspiration can strike me anywhere. Currently, I am working on a novel-length fantasy and hope to have a novel published sometime in the future.

“Storytelling is like being God to a few unfortunate individuals.” – Ferinus

Sean Dayé Gubelman - Senior R.T.I.S.

I used to hate writing. It frustrated me to no end to have to write an essay for school. I had this problem with words where one or two would come out, I would consider them, erase them, then repeat indefinitely. It took me until halfway through high school to figure out that my issue was with this withholding of words. Nowadays, I just let my brain connect directly to my fingers and review them when my hands stop moving. Most of my own writing happens when life hits me hard enough to seat me with a pencil and pour out the thoughts. Writing is not my casual pastime, it is one of my necessities.

Jami Lukins - 2nd year B.F.A.

I’ve always liked reading and writing, but my passion for the art of writing and publishing really took off when I joined my high school yearbook. I became editor-in-chief my senior year of high school and basically ran the yearbook class. I write for role play at least twice a week, and I’m also writing a novel (not that it will ever be finished with the DigiPen workload). I’ll be overseeing the Literature Club’s submissions to the newsletter.

David Ly - 3rd Year R.T.I.S.

I’ve grown to love the literary arts because of how strong words can be when written or spoken properly. Anyone can have an idea, but it’s how you’re able to convey it to others when an idea is realized. I’m still working on my use of the language. I tend to read fantasy and sci-fi, but I’m not limiting myself to just those genres. I also read classic literature, poetry, mythology, and fiction.

Sakai Dozier - 2nd year R.T.I.S.

I am currently considering a transfer to the art program. My writing career consists mostly of amateur fiction in the realm of sci-fi. At current, I am editing...
Jenna Smith

Jenna is a junior in the B.F.A. program and has a background in fashion design, art history, and English literature. Some of her favorite artists include Edgar Degas and animation director Craig McKracken, while she finds the writings of Francis Bacon thought-provoking. Her piece “Gutted” depicts Blvd Square and her robot buddy A.M. Curri, two main characters from her Channel Square series.

Sarah Markley - 2nd year B.F.A.

My name is Sarah Markley. I am an incoming sophomore in the B.F.A. program, but I’ve gone through three years in the art/design program at Western Washington University. I also minored in creative writing while I was there. I especially enjoy prose, though I have done some poetry and scriptwriting. Concept art is especially my passion. Though small in stature and disarming, the stuff that comes out of my head can be outlandish! I love animals, biology, mochas, playing games with my friends, and movies, plus I’m in the throes of the Harry Potter bug. I’m also working right now on new art for Run Like Hack, a DigiPen game.

Important Dates

- **Oct. 25**: Final day to receive a “W” on transcript for Fall Semester withdrawals; 50% refund; withdrawals from the Institute after this date will receive “F” grades on their transcripts. October 25 is the last day to drop a class for Fall Semester.
- **Nov. 12**: Veterans Day observed – no classes
- **Nov. 20**: Balance of tuition for Spring Semester due
- **Nov. 22-25**: Thanksgiving – no classes
- **Dec. 10-14**: Final Exams
- **Dec. 14**: Fall Semester ends
- **Dec. 15 - Jan. 1**: Winter Holidays – no classes
- **Jan. 2-6**: Intercession – no classes
- **Jan. 7**: Classes begin – Spring Semester
- **Jan. 13**: Last day to add classes for Spring Semester; withdrawal deadline for 90% refund
- **Jan. 18**: Final day to drop class without academic penalty
- **Jan. 21**: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – no classes

Final Withdrawal Date

Students should not forget that October 25 is the final day to receive a “W” on their transcripts for Fall Semester withdrawals. Students withdrawing by this date will receive a 50% refund. Those withdrawing from the Institute after this date will receive “F” grades on their transcripts. October 25 is the last day to drop a class for Fall Semester.

School Closures in November

The Institute will be closed November 12 for Veterans’ Day. DigiPen will also be closed November 22 through 25 for Thanksgiving.

Company Days

DigiPen’s Career Services Department has scheduled the return of Company Days. Last year this program was very successful and assisted many students in lining up jobs before graduation. Companies participating in the program provide information about their company, information about job and internship opportunities, and overviews of the latest trends in the industry. Company Day sessions are open to undergraduate students of all years.

DigiPen Podclass

October’s PodClass concludes our coverage of the Casual Connect 2007 Games Conference in Seattle. Continuing where she left off in September, host Omaha Sternberg interviews Chris Early, General Manager for Games for Windows Live at Microsoft, about what it is like for a company that has been doing traditional games to move into the casual games business. Additionally, Ms. Sternberg and Andy McColluch, the Art Director at GameHouse, will discuss the creation of art for casual games, comparing this to art for traditional games.

Listeners can subscribe to the podcast via iTunes or can go to DigiPen’s website. If you have a topic you would like to hear about on the podcast, please email your suggestions to podclass@digipen.edu.
Club Days

This year, DigiPen Student Services hosted its first Club Days event on September 18 and 19. A number of clubs were present to recruit new members, including Student Association, Literature Club, Audio Freaks Music Club, and Board Games Club. The Club Days were organized in the style of a progressive ice cream social. Each group was given a component – ice cream, bowls, toppings, spoons – to an ice cream sundae, and as students explored each table, they were able to create their own ice cream sundaes. As a result of this great event, a list of all clubs registered with Student Services will be made available on SRS.

- Lindsay Jones

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Student Association: President’s Corner

Between writing my last piece for the newsletter and this one, Student Association threw its Second Annual Carnival. For those of you who missed it, the event was held on Saturday, September 22. Games, the dunk tank, and the cotton candy machine made their appearance once again. Quite a few students left with free swag, all donated by local companies. Something new to the carnival this year was the entertainment wandering around. We had volunteers doing magic tricks, blowing bubbles, painting faces, and making balloon animals. On top of this – and a surprise to even SA – we had catering! Professor Erhardt helped us out by hooking us up with Bento Box for some of our attendees. My personal favorite part of the event was seeing the staff bring their families out to enjoy the festivities. It is always nice to see that our faculty and staff have lives outside of DigiPen. The Carnival seems to finally be growing into the event we originally envisioned it to be.

On top of the success of the Carnival, SA hosted the first Open Forum of the year. Having split our Open Forums between the two buildings seemed to be very successful. Not only did we break the record attendance at the programmer building, but at the Open Forum at the Art Campus, we also had more artists attend a single Open Forum than ever before! It was a great opportunity to bring information to the students through more outlets, and I know the members of SA had a blast meeting all our new students face to face.

What happens after Open Forum? With concerns coming straight from the students, we now have a lot of work ahead of us. One of the issues we have been working on since the first day back at school is to extend school hours until midnight again, something many students ask me about every day. Solving this and similar issues is our job, so we love to hear your concerns. We know a lot of you cannot make it to Open Forums or do not know where to find us around the school. You can email sainfo@digipen.edu and ask us, “Hey, what kind of stuff are you guys working on right now?” or “Fix this broken contraption!” If you still want to find out more, SA is starting a monthly email list that will include dates for Open Forums and other events, as well as information about what we are currently working on within our internal meetings. Our Treasurer Terry will be writing it, and for those who know this funny man, you can guarantee it will contain a few laughs. Just shoot us an email, and we will sign you up.

With the fall season upon us, I am reminded that DigiPen Halloween is right around the corner. This event is my favorite, and I love to tell the new students about the ridiculous costumes and skits DigiPen students are capable of turning out. The competition will be fierce this year, as students fight for the fame and glory of winning categories like Best Homemade Costume and Best Group Costume. Remember: someone is going to win a free trip to the Nintendo store... and it could be you.

And with that, I leave you with a thought to ponder: Claude Comair in the dunk tank.

- Brittany Aubert

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Forrest Söderlind
Production Animation/Senior

As a young lad in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Forrest Söderlind, a senior in the B.F.A. program, began his long career in the gaming business while playing Oregon Trail, Number Munchers, and Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego? on his elementary school’s Apple II. From there he moved on to Commodore 64, eventually peaking with six 486 DX2’s running different flavors of Linux and Windows. After working for a company that serviced Netscape users, he attended a tech school for computer programming. Since this was before 2000, “they thought that preparing students for COBOL was the best thing,” Forrest recalls. Wanting more than an understanding of the business side of programming, he moved to another tech school to study computer animation. After seeing a news story on CNN that described DigiPen as a “boot camp for game designers,” he came to DigiPen in 2004, where he is currently a senior in the B.F.A. program.

“Art has always been a huge part of my life, and it felt natural to mix technology and art,” Forrest says. DigiPen has been the perfect environment for him to blend the two. His experience here has taught him that individuals must work hard to prove themselves in the industry. “I think many students believe that making games isn’t too difficult,” he states. “However, they quickly learn that it is hard work and requires dedication and passion to produce a story that will be interesting to tell and will look great at the same time.” He identifies his sophomore year as one of his highlights at the Institute. Despite the 100-hour work weeks, he enjoyed forming a team with classmates Travis Hayes and Pat Jandro. Together they made a short Flash film, “Welcome to DigiPen,” which documented their experience at the Institute. “To this day, students still come up to let us know how funny it is or how truthful it is,” he says proudly.

His experience at DigiPen has taught him that one needs to do more than simply work hard. Forrest advises his peers to also “work smart.” He believes that one of the most important lessons he has learned at DigiPen is how to take criticism in a positive way. “Sometimes it’s as simple as learning which criticism to listen to and which criticism to leave behind,” he recommends. Additionally, his time at DigiPen has helped him to learn that industry artists make art for everyone. “We are used to making art for ourselves and pleasing only ourselves,” he says, “but the industry focuses on making art for a broader range of people and interests. Sometimes this is a hard lesson to learn.” Looking back on the trajectory of his life so far, he wishes that he had spent more time drawing, painting, or sculpting. “Traditional art is the foundation to anything we do in 3D,” so he advises others to try to work in the traditional art mediums every day.

Forrest has also found time to pursue a variety of other interests. He snowboards in the winters, and has traveled throughout Scotland, England, and Eastern Europe. Forrest spent Christmas of 2000 on a humanitarian mission to South Korea to help Patch Adams in a home for handicapped adoptees. “Since I don’t speak any Korean, I focused on the kids who were drawing with crayons and communicated that way,” he recalls. “It was a challenging but rewarding experience.” He also has a passion for heavy metal, including grindcore, gore metal, thrash, speed, industrial, and experimental. He estimates that he has seen around 400 live shows. Forrest has founded an entertainment company and released a record with his own band, for which he sings lead.

After graduation, Forrest expects to work at a game company or film company, depending on who has the best offer. “I have an inherent passion and desire to entertain and educate people, and I believe that this technology is a fun way to do it,” he feels. “Animation and games have a way of making people excited.” He notes that games and animations reach a global audience and in new and different ways. “High schools and colleges are adopting many popular games as learning devices, which is fantastic because they are using something that many people once thought was a waste of time.” Forrest is excited about the new direction that education is charting with the help of these new technologies, and he would like to continue being a part of it.