

BC and the community are fighting for...

## Freedom from the demons of illiteracy

by Libby Enloe  
Clarion Co-Editor

Reading used to be a hinderance for BC sophomore Dino Locklear but with the help of faculty in the Learning Center, he says it isn't such a problem anymore.

"I wish I had caught my reading problems before I came to BC," says Dino. "When I came here," he explains, "I started out at a third grade reading level. I'm up to a seventh grade level now."

Dino says that his grade point average has risen every semester and that he owes it all to BC's Learning Center. "With the reading lab and people like Naomi Gibbs," he says, "I can read and comprehend things better." Dino says, now he enjoys reading. "It makes it more exciting to read when you can comprehend everything."

Dino wants to let other students know that help is available if they need it. "There is a reading test that takes 35 minutes," he says. "It's a vocabulary and reading comprehension test. You do as much as you can." Dino urges students to take the test first to let them know exactly where their weaknesses lie. He also tells students to take a reading class and to use the computers in the Writing Lab.

Dino encourages other students not to give up. "Just because they need help in reading doesn't mean they can't get help," he says "They can get help. If I can, anybody can."

Dino Locklear is one example of the many students who have come to the right place for help, according to Naomi Gibbs. Gibbs, the former director of BC's Learning Center, is on leave of absence and is studying at Appalachian State University. She says the purpose of the Learning Assistance Program here at the College is to get students reading on a college level. "We've seen as much as a five full grade levels of improvement in some students," she says.

"What we work on is mostly reading comprehension and building vocabulary. We're not talking about learning disabilities," she says, "Only about two percent of students who can't read have learning disabilities. It is a natural inclination to label those students who have low reading comprehension levels as 'learning disabled'."

In looking at the problem of



Scott Barnes

Sept. 30-Oct. 7 is Literacy Awareness Week in Transylvania County. For its part, Brevard College is hosting the Community Convocation on Literacy, Wed. Oct. 3. Students are invited to attend an open journalism class featuring the guest appearance of Time Warner Co-CEO, Richard Munro, 10-11 a.m., room 118 MG. In addition, lunch that day will be served on the lawn of Coltrane Commons to make room for the convocation in Myers Dining Hall.

illiteracy and marginal reading levels of high school and college students, Gibbs says, "I do feel that the blame is placed on the public school system." She continues, "I also feel that in the past 30 years, public schools have been in a state of transition. They're having a hard time adjusting."

Gibbs also recognizes parents' rolls in their children's education. "A lot of priorities get shifted in homes today. There isn't enough reading going on." She also says that most of what people read today, (magazines, newspapers, etc.) "are written on an eighth grade reading level. College textbooks are written on a college reading level."

Gibbs stresses that this problem is not unique to BC. "We see it at almost every college in the nation."

The Learning Assistance Schedule (see page 3) offers 96 hours per week, up from last year's 48, of help and referral in any subject area.



Time Warner, Inc. Co-CEO J. Richard Munro, the former publisher, general manager and business manager of Sports Illustrated, will speak here 10 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 3, at an open journalism class for students in MG 118.

The issue of literacy will be addressed at a Community Convocation on Literacy to be held at Brevard College, Wednesday, Oct. 3. The featured speaker will be the Co-Chairman and Co-CEO of Time Warner, Inc, the owner of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, *Money*, *People* and *Sports Illustrated* magazines.

The address, to be given at a special 12:30 p.m. luncheon meeting in the Myers Dining Hall on the campus of Brevard College, will be the highlight of the week-long Literacy Awareness Week, Sept. 30 - Oct. 7.

A college and community literacy committee has invited over 600 Western North Carolina educational, governmental, business, civic, and church leaders to hear the address by J. Richard Munro of Time Warner, Inc.

Munro will be joined by Helen Crouch, President of the Literacy Volunteers of America, and Leonard Hall, a Brevard resident who is on the board of directors of the Literacy Volunteers of America.

"The College has undertaken this ambitious project," says BC Director of Public Information Jock Lauterer, "out of our concern over the illiteracy problem. By increasing the awareness of and understanding about this problem, we believe we can have an impact in this area."

The City of Brevard has proclaimed Sept. 30 - Oct. 7 as "Literacy Awareness Week." Lauterer adds, "In addition, the United Nations has proclaimed 1990 as 'International Literacy Year.'"

It is no accident that the College be chosen as the site for the Community Convocation on Literacy. Brevard College, whose motto is "Learn So That You May Serve," is requiring a minimum of 30 hours of service for graduation, beginning with this fall's entering freshman class.

The Literacy Awareness Week committee is targeting the five-county area of Transylvania, Henderson, Buncombe, Haywood and Jackson Counties.

John Richard Munro is chairman of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for Time Warner Inc. He assumed the post after stepping down as co-chairman and co-chief executive officer of the company.

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