

SECOND FRONT

Learning Disability: Not a Handicap

By Mike Tansey
Staff Writer

What is a learning disability? Well, a learning disability is a disorder that can affect anyone. Having a learning disability makes it harder for a person to learn in a variety of ways. One particular learning disability is dyslexia, which causes people to see some letters or words backwards. Other disorders may cause difficulty with numbers, writing, memory retention or comprehension. Each person suffering from the disorder may have different kinds of disabilities.

People who have learning disabilities look normal to others. That's why the problem is called "invisible." Famous people with learning disabilities include: Tom Cruise, Thomas Edison and Bruce Jenner.

Most people assume that a person with a learning disability would not go to college. However, they are wrong. Gardner-Webb has several students with learning disabilities. Two of them are junior Anita Ashburn and senior David Koch.

What accounts for their college success? The Noel House of Handicapped Services provides aid for the learning disabled. The services can be readers, books on tape, tutors, notetakers, or aid with study habits.

Koch said having a computer has been a big help to him. Koch had problems with spelling, writing, and grammar errors.

Using a word processor, he can check his spelling errors. This lessens the pressure. Having structure and organization is also important to him, as for many students with learning disabilities. Koch has made a turn around from a 1.8 GPA to a 3.3 with the aid of the supporting services.

Ashburn has been able to do better with the services provided. She was asked if she could succeed without the services. She said yes, adding that it would have taken longer and been more frustrating. Having a learning disability also affects course work. For example, Ashburn doesn't like Biology, and her disability doesn't make it any easier. To overcome this, she had a tutor for Biology. She said, when she likes a subject, she becomes motivated enough to overcome her problem so she doesn't need a tutor. In addition to tutors, she has notetakers. This way, she can concentrate on lectures without worrying about notes.

Koch and Ashburn are not ashamed of having learning disabilities. Koch said he is not going to let a learning disability pull him down or keep him from reaching his goals. In fact, he has a motto which his wife and mother-in-law repeat to him, "You can do it!" Ashburn hopes to be an advocate for people with learning disabilities. Even though these students have learning disabilities, they're both striving to reach as high as they can go. They are both planning to pursue their masters.

Former US Congresswoman at Dimensions

By Amy Sharpe
Staff Writer

On Feb. 25, Gardner-Webb received a very high honor by having Shirley Chisholm as the guest speaker at Dimensions. Her insight and motivational skills aroused many rounds of applause from the students. Chisholm's life has been filled with many obstacles which she has conquered.

In 1950, she began achieving her political success in the Brooklyn boss-run Democratic clubhouses. She climbed from local clubhouse worker to NY State Assemblywoman in Albany on to be the first black woman to be elected to the US Congress. In 1972, Chisholm made history by seriously campaigning for the Democratic party nomination for president. She achieved these things by focusing on her goal to put the needs of the people before political expedience.

Chisholm is the author of two books: *Unbought and Unbossed*, her autobiography, and *The Good Fight*, the story of her 1972 bid for the presidency. In 1982, Chisholm announced that she would not seek reelection to Congress. Since that time, she has been writing, teaching, lecturing and travelling around

the nation in hopes of creating peace, prosperity and equality for all Americans.

In her Dimensions address, Chisholm spoke about the goals she set in her life and her determination to exceed those goals. She stressed the importance of a close relationship with God and using God-given strength to overcome all obstacles.

Chisholm is an inspiration to everyone. She noted in an interview afterwards, that her inspirations were Harriett Tubman and Sojourner Truth. She said she doesn't look at the world to see only colors and differences. Instead, she looks and sees only Christians and non-Christians, and with Christians, there should be no colors, she adds.

Gardner-Webb College Department of Fine Arts Concert and Recital Schedule

Thursday, March 19

Concert Choir Performance
Dr. Phil Perrin, conductor
8 p.m. in the Dover Theatre.

Sunday, March 29

Faculty Lecture Recital
Patricia Harrelson, soprano
3:30 p.m. in the Dover Chapel.

ACOA Cares

By Amy Sharpe
Staff Writer

Isolation, dependent personalities, confusion, fear of abandonment. All of these are characteristics of Adult Children of Alcoholic Parents (ACOA). ACOAs live a childhood that is filled with confusion. Alcoholic parents give children messages such as "don't feel," "don't get close," and "don't trust." Children have to live guessing what they think a normal family is. These children become people pleasers and lose their identity and their childhood at the same time.

GWC graduate Brenda Pearson understands what children of alcoholic parents experience. She has experienced it herself, and that is why she became the leader of a support group at GWC. Pearson was involved in a support group and was able to see her problem and solve it. Now, she feels she must do something to help others. "I believe in helping others and sharing my experiences with them. It makes my life make more sense," she says.

The group is small right now, but Pearson credits this to a denial stage. "It is normal for ACOAs to experience denial," she said. "They can read characteristics and still within themselves believe that they have not been effected by their environment. Many believe that once they get away from their parents, their problems are over. That just isn't the case."

The support group's meetings begin by each member of the group identifying the problems that ACOAs face. Then they review the solution, which is to become your own loving parent and to try to get in touch with your inner child. The group then goes over a 12-step program that helps them to overcome their problems and reach the solution. Pearson says that the group focuses on God and trusting him to help them overcome.

For ACOAs, isolation is one of the hardest problems to overcome. "For as long as I can remember, I never walked into a crowd of people and felt like I belonged there," Pearson said. She stressed that no one experiences a feeling of isolation when they attend this group because every person there knows and understands what the other is feeling.

Junior Chris Bortnick is an ACOA and a member of the support group. He says that the group has been a big help. "I used to not be able to talk to people about my problem because they did not know what I was going through. Now I can express myself, and it's a big relief."

For those who are Adult Children of Alcoholics, Pearson says she has a message for you. "Believe it or not we have fun in here and we laugh. More importantly, we have learned to laugh at ourselves and that is a relief."

Pearson said that the group's meetings are open to all GWC students.