

Student races toward finish line

Daniel Pharris, AMT, competes on SpeedTV's PINKS

TOPEKA, Kan. – Daniel Pharris' hands gripped the steering wheel of his bright orange 1980 Malibu station wagon as he waited for the race to begin.

The 19-year old Sikeston man wanted this win. Badly. For the first time, he was driving in a race that would be broadcast on SpeedTV's PINKS, and he wanted to prove he has what it takes to drive competitively.

His heart thrummed in his ears in tune with the revving engine beneath the hood of his car. His grip tightened on the wheel as he waited for the signal to go. He wasn't nervous – he was a seasoned driver after spending four years racing on drag strips in Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, Arkansas and Kansas – but he wondered if his car would have the power to make the competition eat dust.

"I knew what it had, but I didn't know if it would be enough," said Pharris, a student in LSTC's Automotive Technology program.

Pharris' journey to the PINKS race at Heartland Park in Topeka, Kan., was brief, intense, but worth it. Just days before the event, he found out he'd be competing on Oct. 7 against "Wild" Bill Meyer, a 65-year old Nostalgia Super Stock Racer well known throughout the United States.

Meyer was tough. Pharris knew he had to work fast to get his car into prime condition. He secured nearly \$10,000 in donations from local companies for parts; Race Parts Direct was his major sponsor. With the help of friends he beefed up his station wagon with a 406 small block Chevy engine for 600 horsepower. He strengthened the roll cage, made cosmetic changes and added a button on the shifter to enable nitrous oxide for the extra power he was certain he would need.

"We didn't want to show up to a gun fight with a rubber mallet," Pharris said, adding he had five bottles of nitrous oxide



drag racing form. The loser loses the title to the vehicle. Pharris put a lot of effort into that car – and his sponsors were counting on him. He didn't want to come in second.

Race one. Engines only. Pharris, who couldn't get first gear to work, lost. It was disappointing, but that was okay. He had four more races to go. He wasn't out yet.

Back to the starting line for race two. This time nitrous oxide was an option. Pharris

gunned the engine. At the signal to go, he sped away. He hit the button to trigger the nitrous oxide – and zoomed past Meyer.

One to one. The men went back to negotiate. On the third race, Pharris received a two car links lead over Meyer to accommodate for the lack of first gear "to make it a fair race," Pharris said. The lead was all he needed. Pharris won.

The competition was now two to one, in Pharris' favor.

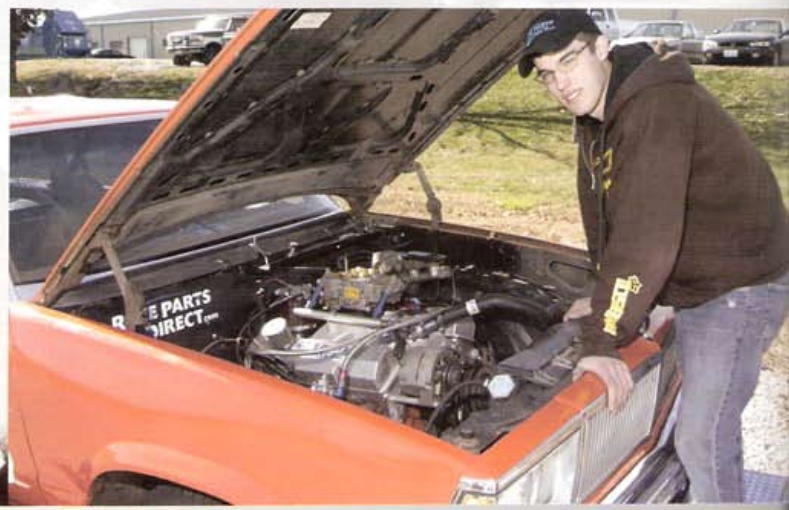
Race four. Engines only. Pharris was riding high on his victories, but knew his best shot at beating Meyer was with the nitrous oxide boost. He still didn't have first gear. This time, Pharris received a 2.5 car links lead.

to use. "We knew the competition would be tough in Topeka."

Four days and sleepless nights after the call to race, Pharris sat in his Malibu, a ¼ mile stretch of pavement before him. Typically, it takes 10.5 seconds to navigate ¼ mile at top speed.

If his opponent clocked in with that time, then Pharris had to be faster. If not, he'd lose his car in traditional drag racing form – in front of his family, friends, thousands of fans at the park – and a television audience.

Before the cars were on the track, Pharris and Meyer negotiated terms of the race. They agreed: the best three out of five races wins. PINKS operates in traditional



"what's the greatest is you have about 6,000 people cheering for you."



He lost by two car links.
The men were now tied.
Judy Pharris, Pharris' mother, was on edge. She wanted this win for her son.
"I prayed for a minute," she said. "I thought, 'Mr. Meyers has been around and he's done his thing. Let it be Daniel's night.'"
On the fifth race, the drivers agreed to use nitrous oxide, but because Pharris' car was faster with it, Meyer received a lead of two car links.
They went to their cars. They saw the

signal. The race began. Pharris pushed his car for all it was worth – and, somehow, first gear clicked into place.

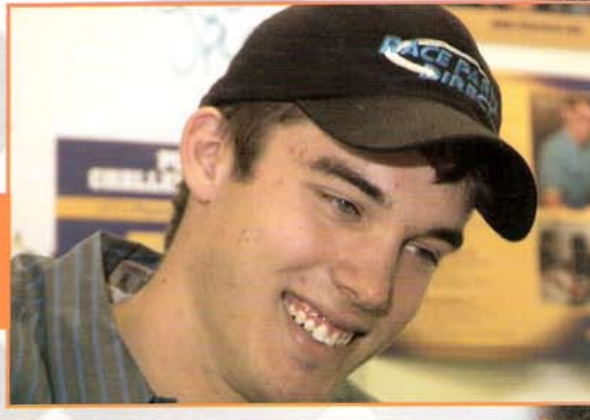
He won by a nose.
Judy and husband, Jim, were watching from the starting line, with Pharris' girlfriend, Kim Forrester.
"There was about 15 seconds of dead silence when they crossed the finish line," Jim Pharris said. "You held your breath for 15 seconds. No one standing at the starting line could tell who won. It was dark. It was night and the race was so close you couldn't tell who won."
Later, Pharris called the moment when he edged out his opponent "the happiest I've been in my life."

"What's the greatest is you have about 6,000 people cheering for you."

Pharris, who took home his opponent's 1967 Pontiac Tempest,



said he's going to take a break from racing to concentrate on his final year of classes at Linn State. After graduation, he plans to work at a dealership in southeastern Missouri until he builds up his reputation – and sponsorships – to race full time.



Student: Daniel Pharris
Age: 19
Hometown: Sikeston, Mo.
Major: Automotive Technology

JOB FAIR

The Linn State Technical College Job Fair is scheduled for Feb. 14 at the Osage County Community Center. Booth space fills up fast, so if you would like to be a part of this exciting event, call Linn State's Career Services office at 800.743.8324.

Linn State's online career resource offers free job ad space for employers.

At Linn State Technical College, employers can post jobs or find just the right employee through Career Services Online.

To learn more or to register with CSO, contact Glenda Jordan-Whitney at 800.743.8324 ext. 5159.

CSO is a web-based resource that allows employers to post jobs and search a growing number of resumes submitted by Linn State students and alumni.

"Through this system, we can set up web-based resume books for specific companies," said Glenda Jordan-Whitney, Linn State's Career Services Coordinator. "Employers will have access to student and alumni resumes 24/7 – and it's free."

Companies registered with CSO can:

- Set parameters for job openings.
- Receive email reminders when students apply for jobs, or when job postings are ready to expire.
- Conduct searches for qualified applicants.
- Manage student applicants for on-campus interviews.
- Register online for the Linn State Job Fair.

CSO
Career Services Online

ALUMNI PROFILE: CLARKE THOMAS LSTC GRAD BUILDS SUCCESSFUL HELICOPTER BUSINESS



Then, the flood of 1993 devastated parts of Missouri – especially St. Louis, where the Missouri and Mississippi meet. The barge the company used for offices floated away. Riverboat casinos replaced waterfront businesses. Fostaire needed a new home – and the Thomas' had to carve out a new niche for their small company.

A year later, they had relocated to the St. Louis Downtown Airport in Sauget, Ill. The 80 foot by 120 foot Fostaire building is one of the first structures on Curtis Steinberg Drive, the entry road to the airport.

The Thomas' painstakingly built up the business – and took it in more directions than just scenic tours. Now, the executive charter company is one of three at the airport, with a total of four aircraft, two pilots and long-time mechanic Jim Middleton, an '85 graduate of LSTC's Aviation Maintenance program. Company helicopters have been featured in movies including *U.S. Marshals*, *American Flyers* and *The Relic*, the ABC miniseries *Amerika*, and most recently in the Sci-Fi Channel's program *Black Hole*. Fostaire pilots

At 4 a.m. on May 17, 2006, Clarke Thomas awoke to the shrill ringing of the telephone.

Calls in the middle of the night are never good. But on this night for Thomas, 52, of Sauget, Ill., it means he can help save a life.

Within the hour, Thomas, owner of charter flight company Fostaire Helicopters was speeding through the night to deliver organs for a transplant at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Mo.

Conducting life flights for area hospitals is just one of many jobs the executive charter helicopter company at the St. Louis Downtown Airport takes on each week. With grit, guts and determination – especially after the flood of 1993 destroyed their offices - Thomas and his wife, Arlene, have made their charter business a success.

"It's a great risk" to own a small business, Thomas said, adding it can be an even greater risk to work in a corporate world where jobs are never secure. "I wanted my independence so I didn't have to rely on anyone else (for a paycheck.) I thought, 'At least I'm steering the ship.'"

Added Arlene: "When things are bad, we know it's bad."

In the 1970s, former owner Tom Foster offered scenic tours of the St. Louis Riverfront for less than \$5 per person. Thomas worked for Foster from the time he graduated from LSTC in 1976 until 1980, when he went to work for Midcoast Aviation. In 1983, the Thomas' purchased Fostaire and continued scenic tours and did traffic reports for St. Louis radio station KMOX.



– including Thomas - conduct patrols for electric companies like AmerenUE, transport videographers and photographers for movie and newscast shoots, and execute executive charters.

"If it can be done with a helicopter, we will do it," Thomas said.



"If it can be done with a helicopter, we will do it."

JIM MIDDLETON '85

For more than 20 years, LSTC alum Jim Middleton has worked alongside Clarke Thomas at Fostaire executive helicopter charter services in Sauget, Ill.

Middleton, a 1985 graduate of the Aviation Maintenance program from Waterloo, Ill., works as a full-time mechanic. He inspects and maintains helicopters, checks alert bulletins and maintains the company's hangar.

A former Marine, Middleton was a crew chief on the presidential helicopter, and saluted presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Middleton is married and has two children.



AIR SCORE

The two guys with video cameras just didn't look right to Arlene Thomas. It was 2004.

In a post 9-11 America, transportation officials were on the lookout for anything or anyone who seemed suspicious. The men shifted from one foot to the other and couldn't quite look her in the eye. They wanted a 30-minute helicopter tour of the Riverfront. Their vehicle had a Texas license plate. When asked for ID, Arlene discovered they had driver's licenses from Georgia and New York. And the large bags they'd brought in the lobby and dropped on the floor really bothered her.

"These guys were acting squirrely," she said. "They kept asking how close we could fly to the Arch."

Unnerved and more than a little worried, Arlene Thomas told the men to wait for her while she checked on some things. Her husband was in Arkansas on business, so she hurried to the back and asked mechanic Middleton to stall the men while she called a friend with the FBI.

Middleton went to the front and noticed the men were extremely nervous. Out the window, Middleton saw police cars, lights flashing, sirens silent, barreling down the airport's road.

"I picked up the candy bowl and said, 'Want some candy?' They turned their backs to the door and didn't see the cops coming. They had no idea what was happening."

Authorities discovered liquid in the bags and box cutters sewn into the linings. After questioning, they discovered the men were reporters with NBC doing an exposé on America's lack of security in air transportation.

The reporters didn't get their story. Fostaire received the National Air and Aviation Business Distinguished Service Award in 2005 and a commendation from the Transportation Safety Administration for their diligence.

NEWS DEPARTMENT

Cutting through the mystery of self-mutilation

For decades, young adults have expressed themselves by tattooing and piercing their bodies. But more extreme forms of expression recently have seeped into the mainstream. Designs are carved and burned into flesh. Bodies are altered surgically in search of sensual pleasure. And spiritual ecstasy is pursued in painful re-enactments of primitive rituals that employ hooks and weights.

These seemingly bizarre acts only recently emerged from the shadow of American subculture, but they have long been a subject of study for **Armando Favazza, MD**, a professor of psychiatry and neurology at the MU School of Medicine. He offered the first comprehensive look at culturally sanctioned and pathological self-mutilation in his book *Bodies Under Siege* in 1987. Although Favazza's more than 20 years of research have done much to demystify the behaviors, he still is answering the same question: Why do people deliberately harm themselves?

"Pathological self-mutilation is a morbid form of self-help — a healing act," he says. This short answer evolved as Favazza pioneered the approach of cultural psychiatry, a discipline that combines cultural anthropology and clinical psychiatry. A co-founder of the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture, Favazza discovered that cultures throughout history have accepted ritualistic body modification as part of healing, religion and social balance. Just as the behavior has a therapeutic purpose for some cultural groups, it serves a similar function for some mentally ill people.

Young adults with decorative scars probably are trying to be stylish or shocking, Favazza says. Repeated cuts hidden under long sleeves and skirts are more often a sign of mental illness. "When self-mutilation is done in response to anxiety, depersonalization and depression, that's when it's pathological," he says. "Cutting and burning provide these patients with immediate relief, but the relief is only temporary."



An estimated 2 million Americans are secretly addicted to harming themselves, a behavior Favazza regards as a distinct syndrome called repetitive self-mutilation. This impulse-control disorder typically begins in adolescence and carries into adulthood, often coexisting with eating disorders and drug abuse. The behavior appears to be more common in women, but repetitive self-mutilators come from all walks of life.

Favazza's studies have revealed a history of childhood abuse and neglect in about 60 percent of people who cut and burn themselves. Many sufferers say they are responding to feelings of anger, guilt or fear. The cuts and burns quickly erase unbearable numbness and disassociation, demonstrate control over their bodies and restore focus. "Once you understand the therapeutic effect self-mutilation can have, it doesn't seem senseless anymore," Favazza says.

But each cut and burn is like a drug — more is needed to hang on to tenuous relief. In many cases, repetitive self-mutilation leads to suicide attempts. "Sufferers get very despondent because they can't control the behavior," Favazza says. "Cutting and burning are associated with feeling better, so they do something else to die, like a drug overdose."

In the mid-1980s, when Favazza began preparing for the first edition of *Bodies Under Siege*, there were few colleagues with whom he could share his ideas. Today, a number of psychiatrists and psychologists are conducting important research based on Favazza's classification of self-mutilation into major, stereotypic, compulsive and impulsive types.

When the second edition of his book appeared in 1996, Favazza had just completed a major biological study demonstrating diminished serotonin levels among female self-mutilators. His treatment method now includes selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as Prozac and Zoloft, to control impulsivity. These are followed by mood stabilizers and modern neuroleptics, such as Zyprexa and Risperdal. The difficult part of his treatment, however, is the intensive psychotherapy that may be necessary for years.

Along with breakthroughs in diagnosis and treatment, there has been a growing public awareness of self-mutilation. In the early 1990s, people were shocked by reports that Princess Diana and Johnny Depp, star of the movie *Edward Scissorhands*, cut themselves. But media attention has helped self-mutilators in the same way it helped people with eating disorders seek treatment and speak out about their illness.

Favazza has been a source for national media reports for many years. Last fall, *Time* magazine and the television news program *20/20* Downtown featured him in reports on extreme body modification. The subject is covered by *Bodies Under Siege* in a new epilogue written by Fakir Musallam, a self-described shaman and founder of the "modern primitive" school of self-mutilation.

The biggest hurdle to raising awareness about self-mutilation still is the feeling of disgust the behavior elicits from most people. Favazza, who has lectured to more than 200 medical groups and for more than 40 medical school programs, has polished his presentation and included moments of humor so audiences can release some of their tension. "I eventually eliminated the photographic slides," he says. "Too many physicians were passing out." — By Angela Wilson

Medical examiner leadership changing

Prosecutor hopes new chief can ease friction with law enforcement.

By Angela Wilson
NEWS-LEADER

Greene County Medical Examiner James Spindler and his longtime assistant Ron Yoder are leaving the county office that conducts autopsies for law enforcement agencies throughout southwest Missouri.

Spindler is retiring for health reasons. Yoder said he is leaving at the same time because, with changes in the office under newly appointed forensic pathologist Paul Spence, his job may be in jeopardy. Their last day is June 30.

Both say the County Commission usurped Spindler's choice for his replacement. But Presiding Commissioner David Coonrod said that choice was never up to Spindler.

Yoder and Spindler will head up a newly created nonprofit agency — Southwest Missouri Forensics in Nixa — which plans to conduct autopsies for counties surrounding Greene. Under Spindler, Greene County has handled autopsies for 32 Missouri counties.

"I'm not ready to retire," Yoder said, "and I wanted some assurance that I had a future here."

Spence's first day in Greene County will be June 30. Area county coroners, who have developed a solid working relationship with Spindler and his crew, say they are sad to see him go. But others, including Greene County Prosecutor Darrell Moore, said they are hoping Spence can dissolve what are some see as friction that has developed between the medical examiner's office and law enforcement.

"The friction was not so much with the prosecutor's office and medical examiner so much as there were times where I've had to play referee between medical examiner folks and the law



Yoder

8A Saturday, May 11, 2002

Spindler is outraged by hiring process

EXAMINER, from Page 1A

enforcement folks — and that's not a good thing," Moore said. Both men, who were interviewed for the position, "made it clear they were into cooperation and working and not into power plays and into turf," Moore said.

Other Greene County officials said there has never been tension with the examiner's office, and officials in other counties said Spindler's office always worked well with law enforcement.

Springfield Police Department Maj. Steve James declined to comment.

According to Moore, the friction developed over a power play over dead bodies. A Missouri statute gives the medical examiner control over a body at a crime scene. When they were called, examiners attempted to remove bodies promptly to preserve evidence like bullets, which can fade within the body in cold weather, Spindler's office said.

Moore said officers don't want bodies moved until they have collected all evidence at the scene. They tired of hearing about the state statute from medical examiner's associates, he said.

"Our concern is preservation of evidence," Spindler said. "When that evidence is destroyed before our eyes, you realize the need to preserve evidence."

HIRING POWER DISPUTED

In August, Spindler met forensic pathologist Keith Norton at a conference in Maine. He immediately took to Norton, 47, whose wife has family in Marion County. "We love his wife," said Spindler, 58, who submitted his letter of resignation in mid-April.

After talking to Norton several times, Spindler wrote a letter of recommendation to the Greene County Commission, which interviewed Norton and Spence, 39, the only two candidates for the job. Norton and Spindler considered the matter closed. Norton and his wife, Patricia, visited relatives and found they liked Missouri, he said. He gave notice and made plans to give here.

Then the county's business department contacted the medical examiner's office and told them Spence had been hired.

It came as a shock to Spindler and those who work with him. Both candidates had been interviewed by the commission, Moore, and officials with the Sheriff's Department and Springfield police.

The commission usually hires alone, but because the medical examiner works closely with the other agencies, they felt representatives of the other agencies should be present.

Spindler said he never thought it would be a problem to hire Norton — he's done the hiring and firing for the office since he took it over eight years ago. Spindler and Yoder were also upset that the medical examiner's office was not asked to participate in the interview process.

Coonrod said Spindler should have known better.

"Where does he get off in trying to exercise undue influence on the members of the Greene County Commission with respect to his replacement?" the commissioner said.

"They have no standing in this. We're the people that hire. We're the people that represent

FROM PAGE ONE



Greene County Medical Examiner James Spindler (left) and Ron Yoder, assistant medical examiner, will be leaving Greene County's employ to open a new forensic business in Nixa. They will be joined by Keith Norton, Spindler's choice as his successor.

ANGELA WILSON

Biographies

PAUL B. SPENCE

• **Newly appointed** chief medical examiner, Greene County. He will begin work June 30.

• **Age:** 39

• **Family:** Wife, Brenda; stepchildren Kenneth, 24, and Jennifer, 22

• **Education:** University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Neb.

• **Current position:** Medical examiner, Chief Medical Examiner's Office, Chapel Hill, N.C.; clinical assistant professor, Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University

KEITH K. NORTON

• **Passed over** for job of chief medical examiner; has been hired as forensic pathologist, Southwest Missouri Forensics, Nixa

• **Age:** 47

• **Family:** Wife, Patricia; children David, 14 and Andrew, 8

• **Education:** Medical College of Virginia

• **Current position:** 15 years as deputy coroner/forensic pathologist, Franklin County Coroner's Office, Columbus, Ohio; professor of forensic pathology, Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Spence — who, like Spindler, is a medical doctor — is a clinical assistant professor at Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University. A physician and medical examiner in Chapel Hill, N.C., four years ago, he and one other pathologist conduct about 540 autopsies a year for 29 counties.

Last year, the Greene County office conducted 228 autopsies. Spence, who declined to comment about the flap over finding a new medical examiner, said he found out about the job from friends who are pathologists at Covington. He said he won't make any changes until he gets a letter for the office and its needs.

"My intentions are to, of course, serve Greene County and other counties to the best of my abilities," he said.

He's not sure what kind of reception he will receive when he arrives, or what people will think of him as he follows in the footsteps of the highly regarded Spindler.

"I think I'll leave that up to people to decide for themselves when they meet me," he said.

Greene County to provide the best medical examiner's office we can possibly provide."

After the news, Yoder and Spindler offered Norton a job at their new agency. Norton, whose wife is a family physician, accepted and will begin July 1.

Yoder will assist in autopsies as he does now, and Spindler will sit on the agency's Board of Directors.

"What I would be doing is autopsies as available in locations in Springfield and sending reports out to coroners who re-

ferred them," Norton said.

Yoder said about a dozen coroners in surrounding counties have already told him they will use his agency for forensic work.

EXAMINER PLANS MOVE

Amid the fallout that has occurred over the resignations and the hiring of Norton, Spence is carefully planning his move to Greene County. He and his wife, Brenda, will work side by side in the office. She is a pathologist assistant, similar to Yoder.

See Examiner, Page 8A

A VISIONARY'S DREAM CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

LSTC'S FIRST INSTRUCTOR SEES LINN STATE CAMPUS FOR THE FIRST TIME

When John Baker became the first – and only – instructor at Linn State Technical College in 1961, all he had was a room without electricity or heating.

It was his job to turn that empty space into the area's first post-secondary technical program.

In September, Baker, 86, stood, stunned at how the college has transformed from that one room for one program to a 249-acre campus with nine buildings, student housing and more than 25 programs in Linn, Jefferson City and Mexico.

BUYING INTO A DREAM

In 1961, Baker was ready to retire from the U.S. Navy. He was stationed at the Navy Service School in Great Lakes, Ill., where Baker served as an electronics technician and administrator of the testing center for electronics.

The New York native had a wife, two children and three job offers on the table. He noticed a bulletin board posting about the need for an electronics program director in Linn. Baker thought for a moment. He would be passing through Jefferson City on the

way to another job interview. Linn is only 20 miles from Missouri's capital. He decided to check it out.

When he arrived, he met Thurman Willett, superintendent

Willett's enthusiasm and determination convinced Baker to sign on for a six-year stint.

"I wouldn't have come (to Linn) had he not convinced me of the importance of what we were doing for the students of this area," Baker said. "(Willett) told me of his dream and what he hoped would happen here. I decided to help him make that dream come true."

BAKER'S DOZEN

Willett and Baker found a room in the high school basement – beneath the band room – to set up shop. Baker painted, created work benches and was ready for the first class in fall 1961.

Adkins recalled how the class would tap their feet when the band played. But what stuck with him throughout his career, he said, were Baker's first words to the class.

"He walked back and forth and told us to look at (the people) on each side of (us)," said Adkins, who retired from what is now Boeing. "Then he told us, 'Two of you won't be there when you graduate.'"

"It was a definite motivator to realize



"I was amazed at what had been accomplished," said Baker after he toured labs and classrooms in the Information Technology Center. The first classroom "was a bare room in the basement of Linn High School with a concrete block wall."

Baker was honored for his contributions to the college during a short ceremony, where he received a plaque for implementing the college's first program in electronics. Baker was also greeted by nine of the 13 students in his first official class.

"John was a good instructor," said Layman Adkins of O'Fallon, one of Baker's former students. "I've always wanted to see him again."

of Osage County R-II school district. Willett was passionate about starting a post-secondary technical program in electronics. He believed that the rural area needed an infusion of advanced education to create opportunities. He told Baker he'd searched for 4 ½ years for someone with the qualifications – and willingness to relocate – to establish the program.



there was going to be a reduction of two-thirds" of the class.

In 1963, 13 young men graduated – fewer than the number who originally signed

2006 RETIREES

Linn State Technical College honors those who retired from the college after years of serving students.

Mary Buhr, Cashier
Grace Radmacher, Food Service Worker

Fern Heyman, Food Service Worker
Kate Puyear, Director, Tech Prep
Donna Hoskins, Director of Student Support Services
Dean Klouzek, Instructor, Automotive Collision Technology

Jack Light, Instructor, Mathematics
Mary Light, Instructor, Computer Programming
Ralph Michel, Department Chair/
Instructor, Aviation Maintenance

on. All were offered jobs with McDonnell Aircraft, now known as Boeing.

Some continued to work in electronics, while others decided the field wasn't for them. No matter where their lives took them, all of Baker's former students said he gave them the direction they needed to be successful.

Joe Copeland, who also retired from Boeing, attributed his career success to the foundation Baker gave him in electronics. The combination of classroom and hands-on learning put Copeland a cut above others who joined McDonnell Aircraft in the 1960s, he said.

"You can't believe how (Baker) worked with all of us," added Gary Lock of Jefferson City.

AN EVOLVING VISION

After touring some of Linn State's facilities in September, Baker, who now lives in Plattsburg, N.Y., nodded to himself.

"Thurman Willet was right on the money on what would happen with (Linn State) in years to come," he said.

As he walked through one of five spacious rooms for today's Electronics Engineering Technology program, Baker turned to former student Clyde Ragan of St. Charles.

"Boy, it's a lot different from what we had, isn't it?"

Ragan nodded. "I know. It's a lot different."

When Baker discusses the college's beginning, he shies away from accolades for starting Linn State's first program. The credit, he says, goes to Willett, who had the initial vision and fortitude to make it happen.

"I couldn't really imagine how big and how fine a system" Linn State offers today, Baker said.



LINN STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE HISTORY:

1961 Linn Technical Junior College founded by Osage County R-II School District through a grant from National Defense Education Act of 1958.

1965 Designated as an Area Vocational Technical School by Missouri State Board of Education through Vocational Education Act of 1963.

1991 State statutory authority established for conferring of associate of technology degrees.

1995 Received statutory designation by Missouri General Assembly as a state college; "Linn State Technical College" was created.

Easy credit in college can turn to nightmare

More unwary students
are caught in the dark
snares of bad debt.

By Angela Wilson
News Leader

Tessa Alexander smiled uncomfortably as she handed the cashier her credit card.

The 18-year-old freshman fidgeted nervously as she and two friends waited to pay for her purchases at the Southwest Missouri State University Bookstore. She'd already had one maxed-out credit card turned down.

Her heart sank as the clerk handed back her card. Declined.

"I'm addicted to shopping. I don't care if I don't have the money, I just buy it."

— Tessa Alexander
SMS freshman

College students are charging more.
Graphic, 11A

Just days after she discovered she bounced \$300 in checks and with the holidays on the horizon, Alexander had two maxed-out credit cards.

She didn't want to ask her mom for help — she had already bailed Alexander out with one credit card and paid her car payments.

"I just quit my job," Alexander said in disbelief. "Now I'm going to have to get a job."

Alexander calculated the figures quickly in her head — between her two bank credit cards and store charges with American Eagle, the Gap and others, she realized she was more than \$2,000 in debt.

"I'm addicted to shopping," said Alexander. "I don't care if I don't have the money, I just buy it."

Alexander isn't alone. More college students are relying on the buy-now-pay-later philosophy that makes credit cards so alluring.

Some rely too heavily. One-third of college students have at least four credit cards. Research shows students steadily add a card each year on campus — and multiply their debt in the process.

The cards are becoming much too easy to get, consumer protection officials said, as students find themselves immersed in "low interest, no annual fee" offers from out-of-state banks as soon as they arrive on campus. Credit card companies, they added, strategically

See **DEBT-STEPPED**, Page 11A

Debt-steeped students face gloomy future

Continued from 1A

gry on improvement 18- to 20-year olds who lack budgeting skills and, in many cases, discipline.

The marketing programs of credit card companies — they can target the college freshmen and have that new student every year," said Willie Cherry, president and CEO of Consumer Credit Counseling of Springfield.

Credit officials, however, say they target young people. If managed properly, they said, credit cards can be an asset to a student with limited financial resources.

"Credit cards are a very good tool to establish a good credit history and help you manage your financial life," said First USA Senior Vice President of Marketing Doug Fink.

"When we do bring students in, we want students who are using their cards" responsibly.

College students aren't children, credit officials noted, and must make responsible choices on their own. Parents and colleges need to educate students before they hit the books, they add.

Many students are afraid of dipping in credit solicitations on campus — by mail, e-mail and phone — and want the government to intervene, said Rep. Andrew Broun, D-Ill. Last week, a committee the House is expected to release a report about the impact of credit cards on students at Missouri.

The report said many students are lured into using "debit" — E-bank, hot, online copy — according to the committee's findings. Officials with credit companies, however, don't believe governments have much impact on student applications.

"We are trying to do whatever we can — if anything — to help our students," Broun said. "There is not a lot that we can do legislatively to make sure that credit cards — they usually are looking institutions out of state, however, there are things we can do on campus to protect our students."

Experts paint a gloomy picture for debt-steeped students. Many will leave college in such bad financial shape, credit counselors said, it will take years to get out of debt. Some never do, entering a lifelong cycle of minimum monthly payments and balances that never drop downward.

"I said the same thing everybody else says: 'I can pay it off,'" said Jason Reeves, 24, a recent 1997 graduate, who found himself in \$100 in debt when he graduated. "But that's isn't good until life sends you a curve."

More cards, more debt
The warnings about credit card abuse are hardly new. Since then, more and more students take the plunge each year.

According to Willie Mae, the nation's leading provider of higher-education loans, the number of undergraduates with credit cards, jumped 77 percent in the past five years. In 2000, 67 percent of undergraduates had an average 1.3 credit cards, compared with 39 percent of students with three cards in 2000.

The percent of students surveyed had balances exceeding \$1,000 in 2000 that number dropped last year — but only slightly, to 4 percent.

The number of students with four or more credit cards rose from 27 percent in 1998 to 33 percent in 2000. The cycle isn't hard to figure out. According to a 1997 survey by the University of Missouri-Columbia professor Craig Lawson, the average freshman had one credit card, sophomore two, junior three and senior four — a new card every year.

Lawson, 33 percent of the 540 monthly clients at Consumer Credit Counseling of Springfield are college students. Clients there average about \$2,800 in total debt — half of which is used to credit card companies.

The trend is alarming to financial counselors, who said students are getting themselves up for a tangled credit history before they even graduate.

"What they do while they are in college will affect them for the rest of their lives," Cherry said.

While rolling up debt for four years, students are relying less heavily on anticipated income to pay the bills. Ideal jobs sometimes aren't available right after college and new, with a driving economy, experts said the number of well-paying jobs will narrow.

"They're setting their future while they are at college," said Cherry. "That's why credit is very important."

Officials with credit card companies also said they should educate all customers about credit, but said colleges should also offer budgeting information and students take responsibility for their actions.

Doug Mann, vice president of operations at Great Southern Bank, which offers credit through First USA, said colleges that allow students on campus should discuss financial accountability during freshman orientation. The teenage daughters have already been advised by credit card companies via mail.

"It's the student's responsibility to pay for the commitments they've made," Mann said. "It's also the responsibility of the lender to make sure they do not issue credit beyond the means of the individual who is applying for it."

'I was very good ... at first'
Alexander inquired with her friends by the bookstore's door, unsure of what to do next.

At the beginning of the semester, she made her credit card payments on time. But while the balances crept up, her income didn't.

"I was at the beginning of the semester" to pay them, she said, "but now I don't have any money."

Alexander's story is all too familiar to former student Reeves. The 2001 graduate, who majored in Spanish, said the stress and worry that accompanied credit earned his college experience.

"Emotionally, my sophomore year was horrible," said Reeves, a finance major who now lives in Jefferson City. "I've never been one to call home. I had to call home and ask for

College credit

College students are charging — and paying for the price. Studies show that students are charging more and have more credit cards to chase them. In Springfield, students accumulate about \$10,000 in debt with half of that owed to credit card companies, Consumer Credit Counseling of Springfield said. According to a 2000 survey by Willie Mae, the nation's leading provider of higher education loans, the number of college students who have credit cards rose 77 percent in five years. Officials say the trend is alarming because many students don't understand the impact of credit and how it can affect their future.

Undergraduate student credit card debt	
Factors	1998
Average number of credit cards	1.3
Average credit card debt	\$1,879
Percentage with balances between \$1,000-\$2,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$2,000-\$3,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$3,000-\$4,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$4,000-\$5,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$5,000-\$6,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$6,000-\$7,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$7,000-\$8,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$8,000-\$9,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$9,000-\$10,000	17%

Graduate student credit card debt	
Factors	1998
Average number of credit cards	1.3
Average credit card debt	\$4,205
Percentage with balances between \$1,000-\$2,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$2,000-\$3,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$3,000-\$4,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$4,000-\$5,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$5,000-\$6,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$6,000-\$7,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$7,000-\$8,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$8,000-\$9,000	17%
Percentage with balances between \$9,000-\$10,000	17%

Source: Willie Mae



Source: Willie Mae

help once. I didn't like that very much. And my grades suffered for it as well."

While growing up, Reeves said, he watched his father balance the checkbook, but they never really discussed who or what happens when you live beyond your means.

Classes gave him the structure and knowledge to properly budget, but not the discipline.

"I was very good with my credit card at first," said Reeves, who would like to see companies banned from enticing students on campus. "I paid it off monthly and did real well."

As a freshman, Reeves earned a solid wage at a waiter during school, and tips augmented his weekly take. But he was already spending at a higher level than his income. Reeves said his debts were minor compared with other waiters he worked with.

During the summer, he went home to Jefferson City and took a job where he didn't make tips. When summer was over, he went back to school and expected the better-paying waiter position to be open. It wasn't.

So he took a lower-paying job and just even more ground on his payments.

"One credit card led to another, and then a third," Reeves said. "That's when the real problems began."

Adel said.

"A lot of them see that as the easier route to have money," she said, "even though sometimes they don't have the money to pay it when the bill comes."

Boosting education

Students may learn debt's real-life low credit cards credit shape their lives, the state study indicates. Students enrolled for the research at SDSU and the University of Missouri-Columbia in St. Louis, Kansas City and Columbia.

"We found education is the key," Broun said. "Starting early and educating students on the dangers of debt and also make sure they have some form of help should they get into trouble."

Some area colleges and universities are taking steps to educate students about good credit.

Officials are increasingly covering credit topics during freshman orientation. And most provide a lesson in checks and balances while filling out financial aid.

At Drury University in Missouri, students in Free Enterprise, in cooperation with Fannie, told a "responsible use of credit week" as part of a national campaign.

"We're trying to prevent a situation where they have to file bankruptcy before they leave here," said Robert Foyat, director of the French School of Business administration, located in Jersey, companies that want to personally solicit business from SDSU students must provide materials on managing credit. The university's Student Government Association spearheaded the new policy.

Some students, however, don't think that will have much impact. "I don't think people are really going to pay attention to brochures," said Bill senior Christy Howell, 22, who changes bills on her credit card each month. "Most people know that credit cards can be bad and they think they can control themselves."

The American Banking Association believes budgeting skills should start at home.

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— Jason Reeves
20-year-old SDSU student

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Marketing Tips For Authors

Tony Eldridge, Author and Book Marketing Expert
Guides You To Low Cost/No Cost Ways To Market Your Book

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TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2009

Guest Blogging Topics to Avoid By Angela Wilson

I am excited to have Angela Wilson as our guest blogger this week. I was turned onto Angela's blog, [Market My Novel](#), by fellow book marketers. It has quickly grown into one of my favorites to read. Angela is an author and a social networking expert who operates *Ask Angela* from her blog. This allows authors to submit their book marketing questions directly to her. Visit her blog today and look around. You won't be disappointed.

29
tweets

retweet

Before we get to Angela's article, here are a couple of housekeeping announcements:

1. First, as many of you know by now, my computer has died. I have one on order from Dell. It should get to me by July 23rd, and I will be on the Gulf Coast next week for vacation. All this means that for the next few weeks, I will have very limited access to a computer and for my normal blogging/video creating activities. Thanks for your patience during this time.
2. The next chapter, [chapter 10](#), of *The Samson Effect* is now released on my serial blog. If you have not started the action/adventure novel yet, you can do so by visiting the [Table of Contents](#). There you will find links to each chapter available as well as links to the announcement for the movie rights to the book being purchased, NY Times best selling author Clive Cussler's cover quote for the book and the international story where science finally caught up to the fiction I created in the book. I hope you enjoy it!

Now, on to Angela's article.

Guest Blogging Topics to Avoid

By Angela Wilson

Guest blogs are one of the best ways authors can personally connect with fans in the blogosphere.

Not doing it right, however, can permanently blemish your virtual reputation and limit the number of blogs willing to host you.

As editor of [Pop Syndicate's Book Addict blog](#), I've noticed a disturbing trend of mediocrity the past three months among authors. It isn't just newbies committing these cardinal sins of guest blogging; it is also authors with enough experience to know better.

Three of the top guest blogging mistakes I experience include:

SUBSCRIBE BY E-MAIL

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ABOUT ME



TONY ELDRIDGE
FORNEY, TX, UNITED STATES

I am the author of the

action/adventure book, *The Samson Effect*, that Clive Cussler calls a "first rate thriller brimming with intrigue and adventure." Read more about it at

[SamsonEffect.com](#). I also share my book marketing tips with fellow authors through my blog and through my free weekly video marketing tips for authors. I sincerely hope you can find something on my blog or in my videos to help you market your book more effectively. You can follow me on Twitter @TonyEldridge

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WEEKLY VIDEO NEWSLETTER

Have you signed up for my **Free VIDEO Marketing Tips newsletter** yet? If not, I invite you to view a free sample video now.

When you do sign up, you will immediately be sent the link with our current video tips.

This Week's Video Tip:

Creating Banners, Ad Boxes and Buttons

Have you ever wondered how to create banners or ad boxes for your web page or blog but don't think you have the creative talent to do it? Don't worry! In this video tip, we will walk through using a tool that can even help someone like me.

- Authors send posts regurgitated from previous guest blog tours, their personal blog or Web site.
- Authors draft an extended synopsis of the book.
- Authors create a post that is nothing more than a hard sales pitch that could put any used car salesman to shame.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Imagine the feeling you get when you eagerly dive into a novel only to realize you've read it already. That's the same feeling readers get when they find the same information on several different sites. Eventually, readers will stop seeking out your posts because you don't offer anything new. Blog hosts will stop having you at their blogs because your copy isn't new and doesn't drive traffic to their site, or offer unique information to their readers.

This may seem daunting to some - particularly nonfiction authors who need to focus on one topic for their tours. If this is you, borrow a trick from freelance writers, who take one topic and write about it from several different angles to sell to different publications.

For example, if you have a book on divorce and want your theme to always be on that topic, you could write about how to find a good divorce attorney, how divorce impacts children, your pets rights during divorce, changes in laws that could impact your divorce, how to craft a rock-solid prenup, and what it means to be "separated."

Tell Me a Story

If readers want to know what your book is about, they will go to Amazon or a big box store to read the cover copy, or find it on your Web site. When reading a guest blog, fans expect to learn something new, different or exciting about you or your novels.

That said, there are creative ways you can give a short synopsis of your novels without becoming a jacket copy drone. You can pull out specific plot points and tell readers unique facts about them - like the research it took to create the scene, how you got the idea for the scene, or how many times you changed the scene until you got it just right.

- Marie Force offers an excellent example in her post, "[Rules, Schmooks](#)," where she discusses the plots of her novels and how these plots broke cardinal rules of romance writing. She goes on to say that, had she known "the rules," her creativity would have been stifled, and she never would have written her first two romance novels.
- Science fiction and fantasy author Rie Sheridan Rose discusses plot points from her novels to illustrate the Show, Don't Tell Rule in "[The Watershed](#)."
- Barbara Freethy talks about how she built a separate world for her Angel's Bay series, and includes tidbits of plot in "[Barbara Freethy Blogs about Writing an Ongoing Series](#)." At the bottom of her post, she included a short tag that included her latest novel title and Web site.

Buy My Book - Please!

Don't you hate those pushy sales clerks in posh stores who follow you around, peddling this and that in the hopes that you will buy something so they make their sales quota?

Most people feel the same way - including people in sales. Hard sells are a major no-no on social networks - much to the chagrin of major corporations trying to sell their goods online.

One of the worst "sales pitch" guest blogs I received included this paragraph, editing slightly to remove any specifics about the author:

My book depicts the day to day struggles of living ... and will intrigue the reader with horror, laughter, sadness and tears as I tell my true and compelling story. The reader will not be left disappointed or bored. This I promise! It's already being called a ... classic and will surely be appreciated by almost three generations of ... fans....

I don't want to read that. My readers at Book Addict don't want to read that. Your fans also don't want to read that. They want to know about YOU and your books. You can mention your book title, genre, and even blog about specifics of writing it, but don't try to push readers into buying.

Before you take on a virtual guest blog book tour, write out a list of topics that you want to talk about, and think of three different ways to approach each topic. Write up the posts at least a month in advance of your tour, and ask fellow authors to proof them not just for grammar and spelling, but also for decisive differences in approach.



Angela Wilson is a social media consultant and online marketing strategist. Visit her blog www.marketmynovel.com for more author marketing tips and tricks.



POSTED BY TONY ELDRIDGE AT 6:00 AM

LABELS: [ANGELA WILSON](#), [ASK ANGELA](#), [BOOK MARKETING](#), [GUEST BLOGGER](#), [GUEST BLOGGING](#), [NOVEL MARKETING](#)