

## Larry Thacker - From program director to senior associate dean



As the new Senior Associate Dean for Career and Technical Programs at MCC, Larry Thacker certainly has his work cut out for him. Among the programs in his charge are Nursing, Business, Technology, Welding, Automotive, Mortuary Science, and Fire Science and EMT.

Most familiar to him is Fire Science and EMT. "I started the Fire Science

program for MCC," Larry said. And who better to design such a program than a 20-year veteran of the Phoenix Fire Dept. During 17 of these years, Larry worked half-time for Mesa Community College and ultimately earned the title of Fire Science and Emergency Technology Director.

Larry's new position broadens his focus. In addition to his duties as senior associate dean, he must keep the Fire Science programs in place while seeking a new director. He wants to ensure that plans for a new Emergency Management degree come to fruition. "The big push for this degree has come from the Arizona Army National Guard, whose mission is to provide homeland defense," Larry said. Others interested in the degree are fire and police departments, city and state governments, and large industry.

Larry describes himself as an Air Force brat who grew up all over the world. As a college student at ASU, he struggled with finding a direction. "You know those kids who say 'I want to be a firefighter when I grow up'? Well, that wasn't me," he said.

It was Larry's mom who suggested a career in firefighting, and it turned out to be a perfect match. "It's a job with some meaning," Larry said. "It's exciting because you help everyone in the community."

Not one to rest on his laurels, Larry is eager to tackle new challenges as a senior associate dean at MCC. "I am extremely excited about my new position," Larry said. "I am very proud about what I accomplished in Fire Science, but I am also looking forward to forming partnerships with community members. I think that is what I can bring to this job."

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# APR 1 '04 the Bulletin

## Filmmakers share Iranian culture with U.S audiences

Women's History Month may be over but the Office of International Education is still feeling the aftershocks of the Women's Iranian Film Festival. The International Education office received international coverage for the recent festival with Ida Mansourian, Acting Director of International Education, being interviewed by an Iranian radio station in Prague.

Festival screenings and activities were coordinated by Ida; Don Castro, MCC English professor; and Mashid Bozorgnia, film critic. The festival was made possible by grants from the Arizona Humanities Council and the Maricopa Community College District Office of International and Intercultural Education and through contributions from the Iranian Community of Phoenix.

The festival featured six films by and about Iranian women. An event highlight was appearances by Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Susan Taslimi, and Tahmineh Milani, directors of four of the films shown (Rakhshan had two films). Two of the women came to MCC from Iran while the other came from Sweden. After the movie viewings concluded, the women attended a reception in the lobby to answer audience questions about the films they directed. "The directors were very open and receptive of audience members" said Ida. The women even indulged a few audience members in signing autographs and programs.

All of the directors are well-known internationally. Tahmineh was arrested and threatened with execution while filming *Hidden Half*. American filmmakers, a list which included director



*Pictured from left: Dr. Larry Christiansen, Ida Mansourian, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Don Castro, and Mashid Bozorgnia*

*continued on inside, see Filmmakers*

# Adaptive computer station brings music to visually impaired students

By Keith Heffner



*Sarah Outwater tries out the new Electronic Music Station for the blind/vision impaired during a training session on 2/6/04.*

"Mesa Community College will be a leader among community colleges, providing an innovative and intellectual learning-centered environment that is responsive, adaptable, and inclusive."

This is MCC's vision statement. It is a challenge to explore the needs and concerns of the community and find ways to implement solutions to address them directly. During the Fall semester at MCC, the Music Department in cooperation with Disability Resources and Services began exploring the concept of creating a specially designed computer music workstation for the blind/vision-impaired. This came about because one of our blind students, Sarah Outwater, wanted to participate more fully in her music studies.

February 6th, 2004 marked the inaugural date for an exciting and innovative program for our campus. It is now possible for a blind/vision-impaired student to compose, record, and print music using a synthesizer and adaptive music software in the computer music lab in the Music Department. "We now have one fully functional station that can be used by any blind/vision-impaired music student already familiar with JAWS and willing to learn how to use music software," says Keith Heffner, the Department's Music Technology Instructor. JAWS is an interactive speech program that enables text to be converted to spoken word for the blind. A company named Dancing Dots incorporated the JAWS technology into Cakewalk and Sibelius (both popular music software programs for the PC) to create an adaptive version that blind musicians can use.

Sarah is currently in the process of composing original music in the lab. Her goals are to use the system in a creative way, giving voice to her music, as well as becoming proficient enough to instruct new

students in how to use Cake-Talking and Sibelius-Speaking (the hybrid versions of the music software). Heffner stated that "The department's goal is to eventually promote the system in our community while developing coursework that will allow blind/vision-impaired music students to take advantage of this emerging technology." For more information, call Keith Heffner at 461-7390 or email him at [krheffner@mail.mc.maricopa.edu](mailto:krheffner@mail.mc.maricopa.edu).



*Pictured standing from left to right:*

*Keith Heffner (Music Tech Instructor), Sue Ann Lucius (Music Dept. Chair), Venu Vangueety (vision impaired music student), Gordon Kent (Dancing Dots software training consultant), Charles Wolff (Recording Arts Student)*

*Foreground: Sarah Outwater, Melissa Solomon (Sarah's assistant), & Tom Kusek (Disability Resources and Services Liaison)*

*continued from front, Filmmakers*

Steven Spielberg, signed an international petition of solidarity calling for Tahmineh's release. Another director, Susan Taslimi, is a former Iranian actress who immigrated to Sweden because of problems with the Iranian government. Susan now lives in Sweden and her work is sponsored by the Consulate General of Sweden and the Swedish Film Institute.

Each showing drew crowds of over 300 attendees. Originally each film was to be viewed once but due to widespread interest and demand for tickets, a second showing was added for each film.

## What is the Trip Reduction Program and why do we have to take those surveys?

The surveys are coming! What surveys?? You know those surveys that want to know your work schedule, how often you carpool, ride the bus, and where you live. Ohhh those... Why do we have to take those every year anyway? Don't know.

The annual surveys are conducted by the Maricopa County Trip Reduction Program, which was created as a result of an Air Quality Bill passed by the Arizona Legislature in 1988. The purpose of the Trip Reduction Program is to encourage activities to reduce emissions, traffic congestion, and improve the air quality in Maricopa County.

Every Maricopa County employer with over 51 employees is mandated to participate in the program and complete the annual surveys. The surveys are



important because they assist the County in planning bus routes, bike paths, and highways based on the residence location of individuals who respond.

The County takes these surveys very seriously and expects each organization to reach a target number of completed questionnaires. If an employer does not reach the target number they will have to re-take the survey.

The surveys for 2004 will be administered in April. A drawing for prizes such as restaurant certificates, movie tickets, and more will be held for employees who complete them.

Visit the MCCC's Trip Reduction website at [www.dist.maricopa.edu/trip](http://www.dist.maricopa.edu/trip) for more information on the upcoming survey, valley activities such as Bike Week, and to register as an Alternate Mode User.