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COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS®

The Keeter Report



**Tony Snow to
Visit Campus**
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***Former U.S. Ambassador John Bolton
Speaks at Citizenship Forum***

C of O Hosts Annual Spring Forum

Every spring, College of the Ozarks hosts a Citizenship Forum in which C of O students, visiting students from like-minded institutions, and cadets from the military academies consider various principles of good citizenship. This year, the College took a slightly different tactic and posed the following question to its participants: “The Threat of Terrorism: Do Americans Really Understand?” The underlying presumption behind this question is that the most serious challenges to our security call for an informed and thoughtful citizenry. Plenary speakers included Captain Steven Miller, Chief Deputy on Terrorism at the Pentagon, and Brigitte Gabriel, author of *Because They Hate* and a survivor of the war in Lebanon. John Bolton, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, concluded the Forum with the keynote speech and fielded questions from students following his speech.

In a detailed presentation, Captain Miller described the expansion of global jihad and the various steps the United States is taking to defend itself...from the recruitment of foreign spies to the establishment of a strong national defense. John Willett, a student from the Naval Academy, felt Captain Miller’s words were direct and thought provoking: “As a citizen I am encouraged by my military’s thoroughness in seeking to understand the threat of terrorism and openness in presenting that information to the nation. Captain Miller’s mission is of great importance, for it is only by engaging in informed discussion on the matter that we as a nation will remain resolved to fight on until victory has been achieved.”

Brigitte Gabriel, author of *Because They Hate*, gave forum participants a glimpse into the horror of jihad. As a young woman, she and her elderly parents survived seven years in an underground bomb shelter in Lebanon. Tamra Corbin, a student at College of the Ozarks, described Mrs. Gabriel as passionate and informative: “Brigitte Gabriel was one of the most inspiring and interesting speakers I have ever heard. She presented the issue of terrorism in such a clear and realistic way



Captain Steven Miller speaking at the Forum.



During their tour of campus, Dr. Davis shows Ambassador Bolton the stained glass studio.

that it made me realize it is not just some far-fetched conspiracy.”

Finally, former Ambassador Bolton emphasized the linkage between radical Islamist terrorists of the Middle East and the rogue state of North Korea: “We need to look past terrorism just being isolated instances of suicide bombers . . . the North Korean threat is something that is going to exist as long as the country exists.” He further noted that Iran has enough oil to fuel its economy for another four hundred years; the only explanation for Iran’s pursuit of nuclear energy, according to Bolton, is its desire for nuclear weapons. Many students and faculty noted Bolton’s mastery of his subject and his ability to clearly explain very complex global relationships.

The Forum consisted of 27 nominated College of the Ozarks students, along with guests from institutions across the United States. The participating schools included Ecclesia College, Evangel University, Grove City College, Marine Military Academy, Southwest Baptist University, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Merchant Marine, and U.S. Military Academy. Each school sent four representatives, two students and two sponsors, to College of the Ozarks for the four-day event.

Two Alumni Recognized at Forum

College of the Ozarks recognized recent graduates Angela Ussery Williamson and Christian Woelk at the John N. and Ella C. Marsh Citizenship Forum for their service to our country. Ambassador John Bolton assisted President Davis in presenting each honoree with a plaque.

Angela Ussery Williamson presently serves as the Deputy White House Liaison in the Attorney General's office at the Department of Justice. Angela previously served in the First Lady's Correspondence Office and as Senior Press Assistant in the Justice Department's Office of Public Affairs. Prior to moving to the Washington, D.C., area, she worked in the Admissions Office at College of the Ozarks. Mrs. Williamson is from Norwood, Missouri, and graduated from C of O in 2000. She and her husband, Cleveland, live in Alexandria, Virginia.



*Angela Ussery
Williamson*

Christian Woelk serves in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs at the Department of State. In her capacity as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary, she is responsible for coordinating recruitment and employment of senior-level Americans in international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Food Program, the World Health Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and others. Previously, Christian served in the White House as Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff and National Security Advisor to the Vice President. She was also a Finance Site Manager for the 2005 Presidential Inaugural Committee and a Regional Finance Coordinator for Bush-Cheney '04. Christian graduated from College of the Ozarks in December 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in history and business. She is from Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Editor's note: Christian has recently accepted a new position as Deputy National Finance Director for Fred Thompson's presidential campaign.



Christian Woelk

Brigitte Gabriel Speaks at Forum

Brigitte Gabriel, author of the New York Times bestseller *Because They Hate* and founder of American Congress for Truth, presented a compelling message on terrorism at the College of Ozarks Citizenship Forum. She related firsthand her experiences as a young girl in Lebanon, as the Islamic jihad against the Western World began in the Middle East.

Mrs. Gabriel captivated her audience and warned them about the serious threat posed by fundamentalist Islamic beliefs. She provided numerous examples of radical Muslims declaring their hatred against America in mosques throughout the Middle East and United States. Believing that the risk of another terrorist act is high, she suggested a variety of ways she believes America can help protect itself: closing U.S. borders, reforming the immigration and naturalization process, and developing alternative energy sources. She pointed out that the Immigration and Naturalization Services approved terrorist Mohamed Atta's student visa six months after he died while blowing up the World Trade Center. "Such inconsistencies in the immigration process must be eliminated to ensure America's safety," Mrs. Gabriel said.

Mrs. Gabriel spent seven years of her childhood living in an underground bomb shelter with her elderly parents. After surviving the war, she moved to Israel and began a career in the media as a news anchor on a Mideast world news program. In 1989, she immigrated to the U.S. after marrying an American news correspondent. She founded an advertising company, as well as a non-profit organization, American Congress for Truth. She lectures nationally and internationally, speaking regularly on topics related to the Middle East; she has been seen on Fox News and CNN *Headline Prime*.

In her book, *Because They Hate*, Mrs. Gabriel writes, "As an



Bestselling author Brigitte Gabriel poses with two students from the Marine Military Academy.

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Patriotism

By Dr. Hayden Head, Professor of English

College of the Ozarks stands nearly alone among colleges in honoring patriotism as part of its mission. Our goal is as follows: “To encourage an understanding of American heritage, civic responsibilities, love of country, and willingness to defend it.” Outside of the military academies and a few other like-minded institutions, most colleges seem embarrassed by the notion of patriotism. Obviously, we are not.

FirstPLACE!, the community character initiative of The Keeter Center for Character Education, has also adopted patriotism as one of its monthly traits, and FirstPLACE! defines patriotism simply as “being loyal to your country.” I overheard one fellow protest that definition, saying, “Since when is ‘being loyal’ necessary to be a patriot?” I can only assume that he meant that being a true patriot often requires us to question our authorities and to challenge their policies. And I would also assume that he sees America’s past as tragically flawed, as a series of futile attempts to live up to our ideals. And, of course, to a certain extent, he is right. Patriotism should not demand blind allegiance; we shouldn’t romanticize our past nor should we support immoral policies in the present. But is romanticizing America the same thing as being loyal to her? I would answer, no.

Patriotism, to me at least, seems to belong to that broad family of human affections, which resist romanticization at the same time that they depend fundamentally on loyalty. For example, I’m especially glad that my wife doesn’t keep a checklist of my past mistakes and ongoing failures. In fact, one of her favorite quotes concerning marriage came from Josh McDowell: “One should enter marriage with one’s eyes wide open and go through marriage with one’s eyes half-shut.” My wife’s loyalty to me persists in spite of my errors as she continues to love me through half-shut eyes.

In this sense, married love is an analogy of God’s grace. God certainly doesn’t romanticize us humans; He has the scars to prove just how cruel we can be. But He remains faithful when we are faithless, because He cannot deny who He is. And consequently His love is transformative. God, too, does not keep a checklist of past wrongs, and He readily for-

gives our ongoing failures. All love—existing as it does as a lesser image of God’s great love—transforms the ugly into the beautiful and the condemned into the redeemed. All love is at root loyal, and persistent loyalty imbues love with the power to change the beloved.

Now, I am not suggesting that we love our country through half-shut eyes. But I am suggesting that patriotism is a species of grace, a transforming love of country that is

grounded in persistent loyalty. We may be mad as hornets at our leaders; who hasn’t been at one time or another? But we are not loyal to personalities or parties. We may be furious at the passage of increasingly bizarre laws. But we are not loyal to a political agenda. We are loyal to a country: the towns where we grew up, the schools where we pledged our allegiance, the cemeteries that hold our beloved dead. We are loyal to those rows upon rows of crosses of nameless men and women whose sacrifice continues to transform our country into a “shining city on a hill.” We love more than a set of principles—though we cannot imagine America apart from the principles of equality or the free pursuit of happiness—we love a home. And for our love to work like grace, we must remain loyal, persistently loyal to our home.



*Williams Memorial Chapel on the
College of the Ozarks campus*

Brigitte Gabriel (continued)

Arab Christian, and victim of radical Islam during the Lebanese Civil War, I refuse to stand by and let the same thing happen to my adopted country, the United States. Even after 9/11, there are those who say that we must ‘engage’ our terrorist enemies, that we must ‘address their grievances.’ Their grievance is our freedom of religion. Their grievance is our democratic process. Islamic religious authorities and terrorist leaders repeatedly state that they will destroy the United States and Western Civilization. Unless we take them at their word, and defend ourselves, they will succeed...”

First Annual *Celebrating Families: Surviving the Twists and Turns of Life*

By Sue Head, Executive Director,
The Keeter Center for Character Education

Celebration City, a local Branson theme park, usually sits quietly until 3:00 p.m. when the gates open to guests. However, on Saturday, May 5th, their castle was bustling with 43 families, all chosen to participate in the first annual Celebrating Families: Surviving the Twists and Turns of Life event. As each family approached the entrance, flanked with an enormous blow-up bouncy house and slide, their family picture was taken. Wide-eyed children were dropped off at Kids Camp staffed with College of the Ozarks students, and moms and dads (and some grandparents, too) headed off to workshops related to parenting and relationships.

This event was a response to what many in the community have been learning about both generational and situational poverty through workshops offered by The Keeter Center for Character Education. Since March of 2006, five “Catalyst Groups” made up of community members have been meeting regularly to work on projects that positively impact the community. Two of the groups, “Healthy Families” and “Education,” partnered to create an event that would provide classes on parenting



One of the first families to arrive at the Celebrating Families event



Poverty expert Karen Best (left) with one of the participants

skills and opportunities for relationship building; these classes would depend on facilitators and a large group of volunteers for their success. After these Catalyst Groups presented the Celebrating Families concept, four “owners” emerged to take responsibility for the event in the

future. Leadership from the Boys & Girls Club of the Ozarks, Ozark Mountain YMCA, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Branson, and the First PLACE! initiative at College of the Ozarks identified families, secured facilitators, provided children's activities, and mapped out all of the logistics for the day as they worked to create an unforgettable experience for each family. The ultimate goal was to introduce the love of Christ to the attendees who did not know Him.

Volunteers arrived early and attended an orientation that focused on servant-leadership. Curt McLaughlin, director of Big Brothers Big Sisters, used a golfing analogy to describe the



College of the Ozarks students worked with children during kids camp.

challenges facing the families they would be serving. He described it this way: "Even on a day like today, where the weather is cool and crisp, the birds are singing, and the setting feels right, I still slice every ball I try to hit, and it goes in the rough. For the families coming to this event, they feel like there is a magnet drawing every 'ball' they hit to the rough." To underscore the analogy, each of the 120+ volunteers, representing 20 denominations, received a golf towel to use for the day. They were encouraged to "wash the feet" of each attendee that day and to return to the volunteer "debriefing" at the end of the event with their towels "filthy dirty," either literally or figuratively.

Ms. Karen Best, a local expert on poverty, described situational or generational poverty to the sea of volunteers so they could understand what challenges these families deal with every day and to better serve them during the all-day event. Participants were offered a wide variety of class titles to choose from: "Parenting with Love & Logic"; "Here we go again! Grandparenting"; "Stop the bullying"; "Bringing character education home"; "Where did all my \$ go?"; "His, hers, and ours: blended families"; "Single parenting"; "Calm the chaos time management";



A single mom enjoys the day with her two sons.

“Helping your child with school”; and “Conflict resolution in marriage.” Each attendee chose three workshops held at locations throughout the park. Facilitators were carefully selected as those who were willing to invest in these families and were willing to offer follow-up sessions to their workshops at no charge throughout the school year.

Once the adults had attended three of the workshops, they participated in a wrap-up session with drawings for a myriad of prizes. Since I helped with some of the classes, a mom sought me out, eager to get the name of the bullying prevention instructor. She explained that because there were so many classes that she needed, she was unable to attend the session “Stop the bullying,” but she wanted to call him to see if he could help her with her two boys. She told me, “You see, I come from a family with generations of abuse. Even though the abuse has decreased with the past two generations, it’s going to stop with my children. I need his help.”

After the closing, a resource fair with personnel from numerous local helping agencies and ministries provided information about available services and benefits. At the culmination of the day, each participant picked up free passes and dinner vouchers for his or her family to enjoy the rest of the day and night at Celebration City!



An area family looking forward to a day of learning and fun.

One of the attendees was a single dad with two sons, and a letter he wrote expressed his gratitude:

“I would like to express the gratitude of myself and my sons, for hosting us at the Celebration City seminar/activity/amusements. Thank you for the kindness we were shown. My sons were all ‘smiles’ after the seminar ~ which is a pretty high af-

firmation of their enjoyment. Your compassion, efforts, and inspiration for the 'day' left me without having felt embarrassed or negligent as a parent, and merely 'thankful'...I wanted to make my own attempt to be sure you know the fullness of our 'thanks' and appreciation. Thank-you for the Christ-centered classes and activities, and fellowship."

At the bottom of his note, one of his sons wrote, "Thank you for letting us go in the castle. It was really cool. Thank you for the hot dogs and ice cream. They were really good. Thank you for letting us ride the rides. All of the rides were fun. My favorite two were the Accelerator and the Carousel...even though it was a lot of fun I was really glad to get home because I was really tired. Love, Logan."

The success of this event is due to the enormous amount of prayer that went into each step of the planning, family selection, course outlines, and volunteer recruitment. Teams of volunteers prayed for specific prayer requests from attendees at a central location in the park throughout the time of the event. Volunteers invested their time loving and serving these families. One volunteer commented, "The best part was seeing the joy on these families' faces and witnessing their appreciation of the event...I think they felt loved and significant." Another said, "It was enjoyable to see the unity of believers for the purpose of making a difference in the lives of others."

Free follow-up classes are now in progress at the Boys and Girls Club for those that attended the event and other community members who are looking for ways to become better parents. Plans are already in progress for next year's event in hopes of reaching a greater number of area families.



The puppet making workshop was a hit with the children.

Character Camp

For almost ten years, Dean of Students, Chris Larsen has been preparing new students for life at College of the Ozarks through Character Camp, possibly the most extensive orientation at any college or university in America. This year's theme, appropriately enough for C of O's centennial year, was "Remember the past, record the present, and realize the future." Dean Larsen ensured that "Moms and Pops" kept this theme in mind as they geared up for the fall semester of Character Camp, August 17 – 26, at College of the Ozarks. All new students were assigned to "families" with a "mom" and "pop" to help the student through camp. They spent ten days with their "family" learning about the expectations

of the College, sharing how to use services on campus, visiting their workstations and making new friends.

Amanda Wade, a senior "mom," prepared her welcome letter with her "husband" Jory Leeper. Amanda was a character camp mom for the second time and enjoyed watching the "kids" merge into one family over the ten-day process. "Character Camp helps new students feel a part of College of the Ozarks and



gives them a great start in this new chapter in their lives." New students attend two "family reunions" during their first year at the College.

Character Camp included a variety of events such as a visit to White Water (a water amusement park), a Christian concert, an obstacle course, and a talent show for competing families. Many students made lasting memories and friendships; however, camp was more than just fun, it was also a time for learning and personal growth. Students participated in an etiquette class and community service. During the ten days of camp, students wrote a paper about their own "law of life" for



the Laws of Life essay contest sponsored by the Templeton Foundation.

Character Camp closed with a character banquet where winning essays were recognized and students signed an honor code stating their loyalty and commitment to uphold the handbook, as well as the College's five-fold mission which focuses on cultural, spiritual, vocational, academic, and patriotic goals.

Character Camp, as the name suggests, is about character: learning what it means, building it in each student, and recognizing the importance of it at College of the Ozarks. Character Camp is the stepping stone to a journey at College of the Ozarks that focuses on developing an education of the head, the heart, and the hands.

"The impact of Character Camp goes way beyond creating a great first ten days for students," says C of O Dean of Admissions, Marci Linson. "Students entering their first class will already have a good number of friends, making that transition to the world of college academics more comfortable and not quite as intimidating." Additionally, Dean Linson says that, due to the experience, students have a wealth of knowledge about the expectations of the College and where to go for support... knowledge that will certainly enhance their overall C of O experience.

Fall Convocation Announced

Tony Snow, former White House Press Secretary, will be the guest speaker for the Leonard B. and Edith Gittinger Community Convocation on Thursday, December 6, 2007. Snow will speak on *Battling Adversity*, *Beating the Odds*, and *Passing the Tests*.



Journey to Scotland

By Dr. Eric Bolger, Chair of the Humanities Department

At 9:00 a.m. on a dreary Thursday, March 15, two vans filled with students and staff from College of the Ozarks drove north to the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. The group, 23 in all, was headed for a 12-day adventure to the beautiful (but cold!) country of Scotland. This trip was part of a class on Christian spirituality taught by Professor Eric Bolger and the College's Director of Discipleship, Mrs. Jennifer Freeman.

Why Scotland? What does Scotland have to do with Christian spirituality? Quite a lot as it turns out. Within a century of Jesus' life and death there were missionaries in the British Isles, and over the centuries the people living in what we now know as the United Kingdom developed their own distinctive expressions of the Christian faith, known today as "Celtic Christianity." One of the key figures in Celtic Christianity was St. Columba, an Irish aristocrat who in the 6th century A.D. set up a base on the western Scottish island of Iona, from which he successfully evangelized the people of Scotland.

Iona, Columba's island, was where the College's travelers were headed. Only three miles long and one-half mile wide, Iona is still a thriving tourist attraction and center for Christian renewal. The Iona Abbey sits near where Columba set up his Christian community over 1,400 years earlier. The Abbey is managed by members of the Iona Community, a group committed to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ in today's complex and rapidly changing world.

After taking a train, ferry, bus and another ferry, we finally arrived in Iona. The Iona Abbey at which we stayed dates from medieval times and, though it's been updated various times since then, it is not luxurious. This is part of its charm. We ate together with other visitors and community members in a spacious but sparse dining room, and worshiped twice daily in an ancient stone sanctuary. The only room in the Abbey that was near what we would consider room temperature was a small, cozy meeting room, heated as necessary by a coal fire. Our sleeping rooms, small and clean, were made bearable by space heaters provided by the Abbey staff. If physical suffering can lead to charac-

ter, this was a character-building week for us. Picture, for example, 50 people worshipping in the unheated chapel, wearing five layers of clothing, gloves and hats, wrapped in blankets, and with hot water bottles tucked up against their bellies. This was not your typical Sunday worship service.

Yet, in spite of the unseasonable cold, we found that Iona is a special island, what the Celts call a “thin place,” where the connection between God and creation is noticeably strong. Perhaps Columba experienced that connection when he founded his missionary base on Iona. The hardy people on the island, the harsh but breathtaking beauty of the turquoise ocean waters and white sand beaches, the lush green sheep pastures accented by dazzling daffodils, and even the ever-blowing wind – all of these seem to testify to the glory and power and presence of the Creator. All of us, each in his or her own way, experienced God in a fresh, new way on Iona, something for which we are eternally grateful.

All good things come to an end. Fortunately, when we left Iona a week later, we still could look forward to time in Oban, where we saw many ancient stone carvings and stone age settlements; in Stirling, where William Wallace and Robert Bruce fought legendary battles; and finally, again, in Edinburgh. By the end of our 12-day journey we were tired but content, having seen and experienced much, with stories, pictures and memories (not to mention souvenirs) to prove it.


I can honestly say that this trip to Scotland and Iona, which the College so generously made available to over half the members of our class, was a rich educational experience. Nothing can replace a visit to another culture, and when this is coupled with classroom learning and a wonderful group of people with whom to travel, the results are life-changing. Many of us who took this trip now have a longing in our hearts to return to this “thin-place” called Iona.

*Iona
Abbey*



THE KEETER CENTER *for* CHARACTER EDUCATION

COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS



The Keeter Center for Character Education was established at College of the Ozarks by the generosity of the James P. Keeter family and many friends from across the country. The purpose of the Center is to provide programs and activities which enhance the development of character and good citizenship. In so doing, the Center reflects the principle upon which the College of the Ozarks was established: that

character in young people is best developed from an education which includes the head, the heart, and the hands.

Over the past several years, The Keeter Center for Character Education has hosted such noted speakers as General Colin Powell, Former Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, Mrs. Barbara Bush, President Gerald Ford, General Norman Schwarzkopf, and General Tommy Franks. During our annual forum, cadets from each of the nation's military academies are guests of the College through the Thoresen Cadet Exchange Program.

College of the Ozarks, nicknamed "Hard Work U" by *The Wall Street Journal*, is a unique college that provides a tuition-free education to deserving young people who are willing to work. Every student on the 1,000 acre campus in southwest Missouri works 15 hours a week in one of 80+ work stations on campus. The College was recently recognized by the Young America's Foundation as one of the nation's "Top 10 Conservative Colleges." *U.S. News & World Report* has ranked College of the Ozarks among America's best liberal arts colleges yearly since 1989. College of the Ozarks is a shining example of conservative ideals.

The Keeter Center for Character Education

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