

Alumni News @ Clearwater

Issue 7, Summer '11



CCC Alumni News

MAKE THEM LAUGH STRANGERS & FOOLS

*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.
~Proverbs 17:22*

Admit it. Nothing is more fun than getting together with friends, laughing at inside jokes, and poking fun at the person sitting next to you, especially when it's in front of a live audience. *The Strangers & Fools Improv Team: making the Bay area laugh since 2007.*

Matt Auger ('06), Phil Bowen ('06), Stephanie (Auger) Blok ('03), and Dustin Black ('05) were members of the original CCC drama club that morphed into Strangers and Fools. "Before my first performance," said Phil, "I remember seeing a line of people that went out the door and circled around the gym. Matt and I looked at the team and he said, 'Ohhh boy, we better be funny.'"

After graduation, the group naturally split up, but stayed in touch and kept their improv days as happy memories [cue dramatic music]. Missing the thrill of the stage, Matt, Phil, and Stephanie drafted a plan to get the team back together and approached Dustin about the re-launch. Knowing that the world needed way too many laughs than the three could handle on their own, he agreed to join. When Chris Weihe, a mutual church friend, was brought on board to round

out the team, they all lived happily ever after. "The fantastic five was born," said Matt.

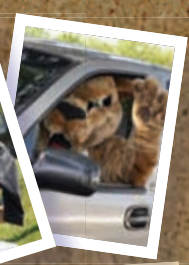
S&F appears regularly on stages around the Bay Area. Their shows consist of a variety of games including favorites such as Cube (where four players form a rotating cube of scenarios), Expand (a two-player game of expanding fun), and Claymation (an audience participation game of life-size puppets). "We found that offering a variety of games is more pleasing to the audience," said Dustin. "It's more fun for them to get involved in different ways throughout the show than one standard, set game. If we're constantly changing what is expected of them, it keeps the audience on their toes and increases the enjoyment."

Communications arts alumnus and IT guru, Dustin is lead A/V engineer and Blackboard Administrator at CCC. Not a stranger to the stage, one of his most memorable performances was *Hound of the Baskervilles* with Matt, Phil, and Stephanie. "I got to wear a fat suit and mutton chops. In fact, there is a video floating around out there of me dancing in the fat suit..." As president of S&F, the team has become a large part of life for Dustin and wife Shannon (Hitchcock '05). "We have something great. We have a way to use our talents to further the Gospel and have a great time doing it." Dustin and Shannon are expecting their first child this year.

Matt, an interdisciplinary studies major (business and communications), is a general manager of a Tampa area UPS Store and is a part-time model train engineer with hopes of one day becoming an actual train engineer. Seriously. Beginning his run with acting, Matt recounts his first experience on stage, "I had a



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Distinguished Alumni



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Want to say something to an old professor? Want to thank someone for a job well done? In our next alumni newsletter, we will list selected **Shout-Outs** to some of the people who made your time at CCC memorable. For this first attempt, we want to send **Shout-Outs** to our past and present Bible faculty.

To record your **Shout-Out**, go to shoutout@clearwater.edu. Tell us who and how they made a difference. The **Shout-Out** deadline is October 1. All alumni participating in this endeavor will be included in a drawing for two CCC sweatshirts.

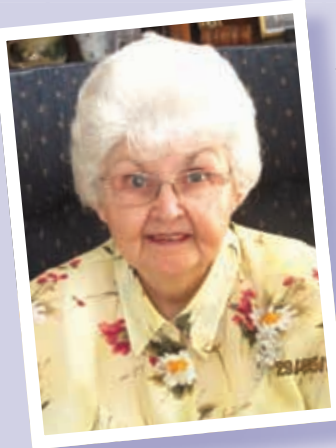
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Aunt Bea Sawyer: Revisited

Just because someone is relatively house-bound doesn't mean that their ministry ceases. Aunt Bea is a classic example of grace and continuing ministry amidst challenging circumstances.

Aunt Bea served the CCC family from 1974-1996 as the head of food services (15 years) and the bookstore manager (7 years). Having celebrated her 84th birthday on June 7, she rarely leaves home, but still attends church on Sundays and Bible study on Thursdays. Most days she enjoys the comfort of having her feet up in her recliner... but that doesn't stop her!

"I spend my days on the phone counseling or evangelizing," she said. "I have a prayer list that is over 200 people long and I had to switch to praying for 100 people a day because it was too long! My mission is to lift people up. I send devotional books and Daily Breads daily to friends and loved ones. I've got to be going for the Lord."

Most of her favorite CCC memories include the students that she was able to help. "I always loved helping those that were having a bad time," she said as she told story after story of how God worked through her during her time at CCC. She was a true inspiration and continues to be a prayer warrior for "her kids."

"Aunt Bea is a brilliant star," said '92 alumnus Pastor Jeremy Coppock. "She befriended me my first day on campus. She is a bright example of hospitality that is broadly fleshed out into one's personality and moment by moment conversation. I will always be grateful to the Lord for her generous spirit and for the way He used and continues to use her to influence me."

CCC Librarian Elizabeth Werner described Aunt Bea by saying, "She and her kitchen crew fed us physically and spiritually. Aunt Bea always greeted us with a smile, a warm hello, and her homespun wisdom as we went through the serving line. Aunt Bea encouraged the faculty and staff and led food service vendors to the Lord."

*"Stay in the Word every day.
If we all do that,
we've got it made.
If we're not moving forward,
we're moving backward."
~Aunt Bea Sawyer*



part in a CCC play where I had to walk on the stage for three seconds and not say a word. I was basically an extra... but I did win an oscar for it!" The newlywed of the team, Matt married Sara Lamb on July 9, 2011.

A business major and an experienced thespian, Phil began his CCC acting career also with Hound of the Baskervilles followed by several campus productions. "As far as comedy goes," he said, "I think that my family is probably my biggest comedy influence. We kept each other laughing non-stop." He also gives his wife Jaimie (Robinson '09) props for laughing at his jokes, even though she knows them all. Phil is the sole performer in the improv game, Musical Phenomenon, and composes songs about suggested topics on the spur of the moment in a variety of musical genres. Phil is the sales manager at PrepLogic, a software company in Tampa.

The chick element of S&F is fantastically owned by Stephanie, a communications and psychology alumna and improv queen. "I became a member of the group through nepotism—honestly. My brother, Matt, and I have been doing improv on family road trips for years. It was a natural fit for me to join the team." Even as an elementary student, she loved theatre and studied drama in high school and at CCC. "I can remember telling my first joke around five. It was lousy and I was probably getting a pity laugh, but I remember that feeling. It was as intoxicating then as it is today." The marketing director of Gift of Life Adoptions, Stephanie and her husband, John, are expecting their first child in August.

Chris, the only non-CCC alum on the team, holds his own with the former Cougars—they all know who is the Top Dog. "The best part of S&F is me. I like me best. I am definitely not serious," he joked. "I would have to say that [the best part of S&F] is the fact that we are a Christian group that proves that you can have a good, entertaining time, in a Christ-centered environment." Chris is a credit analyst for the Commercial Lending Division at BB&T ("My work pretty much lines up perfectly with comedy.") and is married to Lora Lea Shearer of St. Augustine. They are also expecting their first son this year.

S&F exists to glorify God. Every member of the team gave testament that they enjoy the comedy, but more importantly, they delight in sharing their faith with audiences. At the end of each show, one of the S&F players presents a short explanation of their name and why they chose to be "strangers to the world and fools for Christ." Their very name is a launch pad for ministry. "Our name took a while to figure out," said Stephanie. "It is only by the grace of God that we are still able to do this. He has provided open doors and opportunities in ways we would have never imagined. Praise be to God!"

S&F shows are fun. In fact, they're downright hilarious. More than that though, they glorify God through family-friendly, positive comedy. "Making people laugh is the most amazing feeling, but being able to do it as part of a ministry is the greatest," said Phil. "God is good and it's an honor to be able to share that with people."



Dustin on how they met: "One day I was walking down the street with a chocolate bar and Matt was walking in the opposite direction eating out of a jar of peanut butter. We accidentally ran into each other. Matt exclaimed, 'Hey, you got your chocolate in my peanut butter!' At the same time, I said 'Hey, you got your peanut butter on my chocolate!' I think you can figure out the rest from there."

Phil on how they met: "Matt approached me about improv during my freshman year. He said, 'I think you could do this!' I said 'What is Improv?' Matt said, 'Uh, nevermind!' I said, 'Boom. That was Improv.' Matt said, 'You got me. You're in.'"

Stephanie on audiences: "You might ask why so many of the Strangers and Fools troupe are expecting. We were tired of playing to small audiences. We decided to populate them ourselves."

Furious Frugality: the Benefits of Couponing

Due to media attention and trending topics, we are all familiar with the benefits of Extreme Couponing, but in this article, we want to give you basic steps on how to start couponing for your family, whether you're filling one plate or ten. Heather Brickell, wife of CCC adjunct business faculty member Keith Brickell, has become quite a celebrity as the voice behind the popular couponing blog MySweetSavings.com.

"I started couponing eleven years ago when Keith and I were first married," said Heather. "When my son, Drew, was born, I knew that I wanted to be a stay-at-home Mom—couponing became the means to do that. I started saving so much money that I was able to stay home. I began blogging in April of 2009, mainly because my friends and family were amazed at how much I saved." Heather is such a success at couponing that when Keith lost his job, they were able to live off of her stock pile. God provided for the Brickell family through Heather's foresight and preparation. "All we needed was to continue buying fresh things like milk and eggs."

Contrary to popular opinion, couponing is not just for large families. Anyone can do it! "People coupon for a number of reasons," she said. "Maybe they want to have more money to spend on their family, buy a new purse, or just have extra wiggle room in their budget." Some people create a vacation fund, a college fund, or a date night fund with the money they save on groceries. "I've known people to have all-expense paid vacations on their local supermarket! How cool is that!" Heather coupons because of the savings, but also because of how much she can get for free. "If it's free, it's for me!"

Starting to coupon is a process. "In the beginning it takes time, but once you get a system established and you know what to

do, it's easy!" Heather developed an organized system of filing whole coupon inserts and clipping select coupons. To many people, the daunting task of clipping, filing, and maintaining a coupon bank is too extreme, but Heather's method will even help the individual with an extreme aversion to clipping.

Heather's 7 Steps to Sweet Success

1. *Sunday Newspaper*—Purchase at least 2 newspapers on Sunday. This will give you 2 like coupons if there is a BOGO sale on items at your store. Most stores let you use a coupon on the FREE item.
2. *System of Organization*—Find the system of coupon organization that works best for you. Good coupon organization is key to being a successful couponer!
3. *Set a goal for yourself*—Start small. Each week plan on saving just a few more dollars than you did the last week.
4. *Stack coupons to maximize your savings*—Many stores have their own store coupons that you can stack with a manufacturer's coupon to double your savings! The general rule of thumb for stacking is one manufacturer's coupon and one store coupon per item purchased.
5. *Start shopping the sales*—Scour the weekly ads and check out sneak peeks to your favorite stores.
6. *Stockpile*—If your favorite brand of pasta is on sale and you are able to get it for free or very inexpensive with coupons, purchase as many boxes as possible and add them to your stockpile.
7. *Share*—Once you start adding items to your stockpile, you will be able to donate items to those in need and to share those items with your family and friends.



"Clipping every coupon just takes too much time," said Heather. "I have a banker's box of file folders, a small, easily transportable, plastic box of envelopes, and my laptop. That's it." Each week, Heather purchases four Sunday papers. She removes each coupon insert and files them whole in her banker's box labeled with the date—no clipping necessary! As she makes her weekly shopping list (with a food budget of a whopping \$40!), she visits the website HotCouponWorld.com, a simple database of coupons. She searches for the products that she wants, discovers in which weekly insert or on which website she will find her coupons, consults her banker's box, and finally, clips or prints the coupons that she needs. Simple, right?

Now, you try it!





RECAP

Graduation 2011

On Saturday, May 7, friends, family, and supporters gathered at Ruth Eckerd Hall to participate in the 43rd commencement ceremony—the crowning moment for the graduating class. One graduate student and 124 undergraduate students received their diplomas after successfully completing the requirements for their degrees.



The Arthur E. Steele Award, given to a graduating senior chosen by the faculty and staff for service and leadership, was presented to Joanna Wiedeman from Lehigh Acres, FL. Following this award, 2011 Class President Nathan Perrie presented the school with a class gift of a water filtration system for select water fountains on campus.

Diana Joss of Clearwater, FL, was recognized as a Distinguished Alumnus during the '11 graduation ceremony. At the age of 50, Joss completed a Bachelor of Science degree in English Bible in 1989, and then a Master's Degree in Biblical Counseling from Liberty University. In addition, she has been involved in both stateside and international service through the Child Evangelism Fellowship of Warrenton, MO.

Elliot Eggert (Marines), John White (Army), and Joshua Wurst (Army) were commissioned 2nd Lieutenants in their respective branches of the United States Armed Forces. In addition to his degree from CCC, 2nd Lieutenant John White received the Distinguished Cadet Award for Academic Excellence from the national organization of ROTC during his commissioning on April 27. Military guests at commencement included Major John Macksam, Lieutenant Colonel Pdraig Clark, and Sergeant First Class John Briggs of the United States Army and Commander James Harvey of the United States Navy.



Dr. Stratton noted her 42 years of faithful service, her commitment to the CCC family as a regular conference and classroom speaker and financial supporter, and her example to future graduates as one who has made an impact on her world. In a recent email, Diana states "I am still in awe of everything. It was just one of the most awesome, humbling, and special times of my life."

The commencement address was given by Dr. Matthew Olson, president of Northland Ministries. Dr. Olson presented a charge to the graduates to view their respective fields, albeit some in the secular world, as a God-given ministry.

