

CSI: North Hills?

La Roche College's Unique Summer Program for High School Students

Last summer and this past fall, multiple simulated murder scenes were discovered on the usually serene McCandless campus of La Roche College. And it is certain that similar crimes and their discoveries will happen again in July – when the college hosts CSI: La Roche.

CSI: La Roche is an educational outreach program designed to offer high school students a unique learning experience and realistic, tangible exposure to the world and profession of crime scene investigation. This summer the program ran July 12-16.

CSI participants live on La Roche's campus during this mini "summer camp." Each day, students will learn what it's like



to be a crime scene investigator and forensic scientist. They will investigate simulated crime scenes in classrooms made to look like rooms of homes and even outdoor/car scenes, complete with mannequin victims.

Using law agency techniques and a state-of-the-art science laboratory, the teens will recover and analyze evidence;

deduce and solve the crime; present an affidavit of probable cause; and obtain an arrest warrant. Each student then receives a certificate of completion and one college credit in criminal justice.

The program was founded by three La Roche faculty members who have diverse backgrounds and CSI-related specializations: Dr. Roberta Hartman, Chair of the Department of Chemistry; Lawrence E. Likar, Esq., Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice; and Dr. Gail Rowe, Associate Professor of Biology. In preparation for the program, all three toured the FBI crime lab in Quantico, Virginia.

Likar is a former Supervisory Special Agent of the FBI. He uses his 23 years of experience in violent crime investigations and tactical operations to coordinate and teach the criminal justice aspects of CSI. Students learn interview techniques, crime scene response, evidence gathering, fingerprinting and investigating.

Likar also employs the help of retired FBI special agents and homicide detectives to assist in the education and supervision of participants. As a result, the teens learn alongside professionals for a realistic experience.

Although Likar focuses on crime and scene analysis, he still emphasizes the importance of science. "We want to make sure that the students who are accepted into CSI: La Roche, have the capability of doing advanced science work," he emphasized.

In addition to these highly detailed, mock crime scenes, participants also use sophisticated scientific equipment and laboratories. Dr. Rowe is La Roche's expert in the forensic analysis of biological evidence (molecular biology and blood-typing). "La Roche has some of the very best technology in chemistry and biology," she noted. "We can even do DNA fingerprinting and students have access to nearly half a million dollars' worth of analytical science equipment."

She also agrees with the importance of science in CSI. "Now that the technology is here, there is a real need in



law enforcement for the scientists who know how to do this type of crime scene investigation."

CSI currently requires and employs chemists, biologists, physicists and even computer scientists in the field. Said Rowe, "People need to be scientists in forensic science programs, not just trained from a police point of view."

Josh Steiner is a science-oriented student. Currently a junior at Serra Catholic High School, he participated in the camp last year. "I've always been interested in science, and this [program] offered the area that I was looking into," said Steiner. "Not only do you learn how to collect evidence, but you also learn how to process and properly test it. For



Noteworthy Music: Instruments plus Instruction

example, we matched glass from the crime scene to a suspect's shoes, as well as blood-typing and DNA fingerprinting. The program shows the whole 360 degrees of what it is really like to be in CSI."

For the last few years, a CSI craze has been sweeping the nation. Not only does television clone a new CSI drama every season, but even the more traditional crime shows like *Law and Order* have started to emphasize forensic science.

Why the fascination with CSI? Even Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, Allegheny County Coroner and nationally acclaimed forensic expert, is affected. "This interest is indeed an incredible thing to witness," he said. "It's truly a societal and academic phenomenon – maybe it's something like the perfect storm, with many factors coming together."

According to Dr. Wecht, the recent advent of DNA utilization in criminal cases and the media saturation of such high profile and CSI-savvy murder cases like those involving O.J. Simpson, JonBenet Ramsey and Laci Peterson have focused more attention on forensic matters.

Perhaps as a reaction to this national obsession, and also to address the practical needs of the profession, many colleges and universities have added CSI courses and degrees to their academic offerings. Also, increasing numbers of high school students are interested in studying forensic science and CSI-related majors in college.

CSI: La Roche responds to the popularity and growing interest of this field by giving high school-aged CSI enthusiasts and budding forensic scientists this realistic and fun opportunity to study and participate in the intricacies of criminology, chemistry and biology. And they also get to learn how these disciplines coalesce into the practice of crime scene investigation.

La Roche College is looking for 12 warm bodies. If you or a high school student you know is interested in CSI and is proficient in the sciences, please contact Thomas Schaefer at 412.536.1198 or schaeft1@laroche.edu for more information. ❖



Curiously, for a successful music academy with over 250 students and a major local source for musical instruments, Noteworthy Music still has no road sign. However, **Noteworthy Music** is not hard to find: It is located on Route 8 on the "flats" between Bakerstown (Red Belt) and Route 228 and exactly three miles north of Route 910 (Orange Belt) where it shares space with Twin Willows Storage in the historic Twin Willows Building. This long white building close to the edge of the road is fondly remembered for when it was a fun place to roller skate. It is still a fun place but with a serious purpose: To provide musicians of all ages with the skills and equipment they need to enjoy making music.

Meeting business owners Janet and Bob Dietrich has been an enjoyable experience for several thousand people over the last 18 years that Noteworthy Music has served our community. Janet is an excellent teacher / composer / arranger / organist / choir director. Her enthusiasm for these activities is rivalled only by love for their four children, whose accomplishments include playing a dozen different musical instruments. Bob, an expert instrument repair technician, likes to sing with his family. There is a rumor that before someone can marry one of their children, he or she first has to audition for Janet and Bob.

People are pleasantly surprised when they visit Noteworthy Music. When you walk through the door to Noteworthy Music, you are surrounded by pianos of all types (digital, player, grand and acoustic) available for rent or purchase. A little further is the service counter where you'll likely find Jordan or Mandy wrapping up the sale of reeds, music books, guitar picks, an instrument care kit, or some other item a student needs. Then comes the area where Bob may be helping someone choose between an acoustic or electric guitar or

Janet is fitting a violin. Bob may excuse himself to make some quick adjustments to a flute that a teacher just brought to him to make playable again.

Surprisingly, although Noteworthy has more than 1000 instruments available for rent or purchase, you won't see many on display because the remainder of the facility is devoted to teaching rooms, a waiting area, instrument storage, and a repair shop where instruments are adjusted and made ready to rent. For new renters, a staff member always gives a mini-lesson on the proper care and handling of each instrument, a service unique to Noteworthy Music that benefits both the renter and the store. Despite their high quality, most Noteworthy band and orchestra instruments are still being rented for only \$12 per month with generous options for purchase. Even after taking the attractive "trial period" of competing rental programs into



account, parents who consider their options discover that Noteworthy Music has the most economical and flexible program available for their children.

Noteworthy Music Academy continues to maintain its reputation for high-quality instruction. All Noteworthy teachers have college degrees for the instrument they teach. Most have substantial experience teaching or performing. All agree to teach music theory as well as instrumental technique. Each student is given at least one public performance opportunity each year to enjoy demonstrating what they have learned.

Visitors are welcomed Monday through Friday, noon to 9 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., or may phone 724-443-0040. Incidentally, when asked about the absence of a road sign, Bob says, "People find us! Most of our best customers have been referred by their friends; we keep growing with more to do. We just haven't had time to put up a sign."

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