This year’s award winners share a common trait: Their enthusiasm is not just inspiring, it is infectious. Our 2009 honorees personify the very best of what a LCSC education stands for: dreaming big, working hard and reaping the rewards of a job well done.

**Alumni of the Year Award**
The Outstanding Alumni Award is presented to an alumnus/alumna who has enriched the lives of others through their generous gifts of time and talent, their involvement with civic, charitable and social causes and their ability to inspire.

Our recipient for this year’s award is a role model and an inspiration. She has achieved against all odds and continues to exceed beyond all expectations. **Mary Jane Oatman Wak-Wak** earned a bachelor’s degree in justice studies with a minor in Nez Perce language in 2006 and is only six credits away from completing her master’s degree in anthropology at the University of Idaho.

While a student at LC, Mary Jane was active in student government and served as student body vice president. She was also involved with both Ambassador Honor Society and Mock Trial at LCSC. When she graduated from LCSC, her mother, Judy Oatman, graduated too. Her grandmother, Alice Warden, earned an associate degree in hotel management a year earlier. Mary Jane said the value of her family’s commitment hit her at the graduation ceremony. “We are living the dream, by shaking all the historical burdens that we have and saying that we don’t want that for future generations,” she said. In June of 2007, Mary Jane was appointed Idaho’s State Coordinator of Indian Education. Her role is to serve as a liaison between Indian tribes and the state, and Mary Jane believes it is her mission to help close the achievement gap between tribal and non-tribal members.

Mary Jane was selected as the University Continuing Education Association’s 2008 Outstanding Nontraditional Student and was honored during the organization’s annual conference. In October 2008, she was elected to the National Indian Education Board of Directors and elected as board secretary. She was recently elected to serve as the National Indian Education Association President for 2010-2011. Mary Jane will serve as the youngest NEA President and the first Idaho Tribal member to do so.

Her love of LCSC is contagious! She recently led the efforts to start a new LCSC Native American Alumni Chapter. She currently serves as chair for the chapter.

We are extremely proud to present the 2009 Alumni of the Year Award to Mary Jane Oatman Wak-Wak.

**Young Alumni of the Year Award**
This year two Young Alumni Awards were presented. This award recognizes significant contributions by an individual in their field of endeavor, whether through professional achievement or community service. The recipient is aged 40 or under, and sets an inspirational example for future young alumni.

Our Young Alumnus of the Year Award was presented to **Brett Kinzer**. Brett graduated in 1995 with an Associates Degree in Major Appliances from the Technical and Industrial Division at LC. He loved his time at LCSC so much that he came back and in 2002 he

**Jill Hanford ‘92**

Jill Hanford was recognized with this year’s Alumna of the Year Award. Jill received her Master of Science Degree in Educational Technology from Boise State University in 2005. Her love of her alma mater is apparent – Jill has remained an enthusiastic supporter of LCSC and has readily volunteered her time to participate in myriad LCSC initiatives in the Treasure Valley. She has attended all alumni events and the vast majority of recruiting and/or advising events we’ve hosted in or near Boise. She has also personally escorted students – elementary school students – on trips to Lewiston where she orchestrated preview events such that the students could begin learning about the college and considering it as they made their educational and career plans. What’s more, many of Jill’s former students are beginning to inquire about LCSC and even apply for admission. In short, Jill has played a monumental role in bringing favorable attention and publicity to our college in the state’s capital city. She has worked as a sixth grade teacher for the Boise School District for the past 15 years. She is also very involved in student athletics, serving as soccer, basketball and track head coach for Valley Boys and Girls Club/Boise School District for the past 18 years.

**Jill Hanford and Andy Hanson**
Charlette Kremer ‘91

Charlette graduated from Lewis-Clark State College in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications. While attending LC she was a student senator and student body vice president. She currently is working on her Master’s Degree in Adult and Organizational Leadership at the University of Idaho.

In 2004 Charlette joined Lewis-Clark Service Corps as an AmeriCorps VISTA and in 2007 she was named Interim Director for the program. As a VISTA, she organized and coordinated First Book-LC to provide free books to low-income children in Lewis, Nez Perce, Idaho, Clearwater and Asotin Counties. Since its development in 2005, First Book-LCSC has provided more than 35,000 new books to 3,500 children. In 2008, Charlette accepted the Governor’s Brightest Star Award for outstanding non-profit organization on behalf of First Book-LCSC.

Charlette also oversees the service-learning program and volunteer center at LCSC. Faculty use service-learning as a way to reinforce concepts learned in class by placing students in meaningful service placements. In 2008, more than 194 students served more than 4800 hours through class-based service. The Community Warriors Volunteer Center placed 294 student volunteers who served an additional 5,600 hours – a 46% increase over 2007.

Charlette’s community involvement is impressive to say the least. She currently serves as co-chair for the Lewiston Chapter of the AmeriCorps Alumni Association. She is a past board member for Project Idaho, which raises money to finance construction of affordable housing for developmentally disabled adults; past board member for Lewis-Clark Special Olympics and Fairview Terrace Apartments where she oversaw operations of affordable housing for developmentally disabled adults.

Evolution in Education Award

The Excellence in Education Award recognizes superior achievement in the field of education. The recipient serves as a role model and sets standards of excellence to which others can aspire.

Steven Branting ‘70

This year our Excellence in Education Award goes to Steven Branting.

Steven graduated from Lewis-Clark Normal in 1970, with a double major in English and history. He served as student body president in 1969. He began his 37 year career in teaching at LC as an instructor in American Government. He then taught English at Orofino and then at Kendrick. He began his employment with the Lewiston School District in 1976, where he currently works as the gifted and talented program facilitator and curriculum designer. He also is an adjunct faculty member at Lewis-Clark State and the University of Idaho.

His awards and accomplishments are many and reflect his commitment to excellence in his students and himself. They include:

• Teacher of the Year (Lewiston School District)
• Governor’s Innovative Award, Archaeology
• NASA Orbiter Experiment Design, National 1st Place Award, Junior High Division
• Educator of the Year, Idaho Science Teachers Association
• Orchid Award for Historical Preservation, City of Lewiston
• Geography Excellence in Media, National Council for Geographic Education

We are proud to recognize Steven and his record of distinguished service as this year’s Educator of the Year award recipient.

Aletha Pabst Award

The Aletha Pabst Award pays tribute to someone who is not an alumnus, but has made significant contributions to Lewis-Clark State College.

Dr. Robin Henderson

The LCSC Alumni Association is proud to recognize Dr. Robin Henderson as the recipient of this year’s award. When Robin was notified that she had received the award, her response was “it feels a little funny because LCSC is
This year the board chose to honor Dr. Robert Olson for his distinguished record of service and achievement.

Dr. Robert Olson

Bob has fond memories of being “NICE” and “NORMAL” and loved his time spent at Lewiston State Normal School and Northern Idaho College of Education. He was very involved with student activities, where he was a cheerleader, a member of the debate team, theater group, editor of the school newspaper and yearbook, and participated in “just about every activity that was happening on campus.”

After leaving college, Bob began teaching in Aberdeen, Idaho where he taught English and speech. He also served as advisor to the cheerleading squad and pep club. Two years later he was drafted and served in the armed forces. He then entered Ohio University on a GI bill and in 1955 received his master’s degree in speech therapy. He received a fellowship to attend Northwestern and completed his PhD. He moved to Southern California University and taught speech and language pathology for the next six (6) years. He then moved to North Carolina where he worked at Bowman Grey School of Medicine (now Wake Forest). He returned to teaching and taught at Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas. He was then invited to create a graduate program at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. There he stayed for 28 years until his retirement brought him back to his home state of Idaho.

Throughout the years Bob has remained a constant supporter of the college through his gifts of time, talent and treasure. He also has been instrumental in organizing and hosting alumni events in the Treasure Valley area and has volunteered to be a member of the steering committee for the newly organized Treasure Valley Chapter. He also volunteers for Boise Art Museum and Black History Museum in Boise. We are proud to recognize Dr. Robert Olson and his lifelong gifts to L-C and his community.

Marion Shinn Lifelong Achievement Award

The Marion Shinn Lifelong Achievement Award recognizes outstanding contributions of an alumnus who has shown long-term dedication and service to the College and their community.

Melinda George ‘05

Melinda George graduated summa cum laude in 2005 with an Interdisciplinary Studies degree. She was a non-traditional student that successfully balanced her family and career, while achieving a 4.0 GPA.

She was a store manager at the Coeur d’Alene Sears while attending L-C and was promoted to District Manager (overseeing 9 stores in Washington, Idaho and Montana) soon after she completed her college degree. She has been with Sears for the past 14 years, where her exemplary performance has been recognized with numerous awards.

Melinda is a true credit to our institution and is well known for her involvement with LCSC and her community. She joined the LCSC Alumni Association Board in 2005. She volunteered to be part of the steering committee for the Inland Northwest Alumni Chapter and has served as its chairperson for the past three years. Under her tremendous leadership she has significantly grown chapter involvement and visibility and was instrumental in establishing the Inland Northwest Chapter Scholarship which benefits LCSC CDA students. Her community involvement includes being a Planning and Zoning Commissioner, a Board Member for Opera Plus, Rotary Club Member, and was the Campaign Manager for Councilman Mike Kennedy’s re-election campaign. Even with all this, she still manages to find time to be a very active mom to her two children, Hannah, 18, and son, James, 16, and wife to her husband of 21 years, Thom. She also enjoys spending time with friends and, in Melinda’s words, her “crazy dog” Izzae.

Outstanding Coeur d’Alene Alumni Award

The Outstanding Coeur d’Alene Alumni Award is presented to an alumnus who has enriched the lives of others through their generous gifts of time and talent, their involvement with civic, charitable and social causes and their ability to inspire.