

## DACC's Bennington a scholar, musician, outdoorsman

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DACC's Wesyn Bennington

*Story and photo by*

**LIZ ROBERTSON**

Westyn Bennington will be the guy on the documentary film ensuring the public that the oil industry is not as bad as everyone says it is.

The Delaware Area Career Center senior said he took some flak from others in his environmental technology lab for his career choice, but his choice to become a petroleum engineer is not just about the drilling process. He also will be tasked with making certain it is up to code and has the lowest impact on the environment, he said.

It's important, Westyn said, to listen to an objective point of view before making a decision about the drilling process.

"If you look at the whole picture, it's not as bad as people say," he said of the oil-drilling industry.

Living in Delaware County his entire life, Westyn enjoys spending his time outdoors, so deciding to take DACC's environmental program made perfect sense.

"I'd not really thought about the career center much in the past, but the ambassador came to visit and the presentation made it sound like a fun class," he said. Westyn has always liked camping and being outdoors so the transition was an easy one, he said.

Today, Westyn is a career center ambassador, speaking to students around the county about the programs at DACC.

Paul Grimes, the environmental technologies instructor at DACC, sees a bright future for Westyn. "Wow, what to say? There is so much. I have not met a person that after meeting and speaking with Westyn has not said what a 'nice young man. He is going places.'"

Grimes went on. "Westyn is one of those students who you get the privilege of having in class once or twice in your teaching career. He is articulate, loves to learn, is compassionate to his classmates, honest and is a deep thinker, but he will also grab a chainsaw or shovel and get his hands dirty. He is also a phenom on the guitar. I'm not sure when he is older whether he will be a top engineer with a doctorate degree or changing the world with his guitar, most likely both. Either way, I want his autograph so I can tell people I knew him and had him in my class. He is going to be something special."

Westyn has been accepted to Marietta College where he will study petroleum engineering which combines the math and science that he enjoys.

"It's a nice, small school," he said, adding that Marietta, not unlike Delaware in size, is beautiful and on the Ohio River. He laughed at the thought of himself in a large city.

While he may have considered going into music, the opportunity did not present itself; he said he knows others who received music degrees, but are unable to find work. Yet music will always be a part of Westyn's life, he said.

His foray into music began with a borrowed guitar when he was 8 years old. Playing it for awhile, he then received his own instrument for Christmas.

He eventually began playing in a band with his guitar teacher.

"So I got experience that way," he said. Today, he has friends all over the state that are

musicians.

His induction into his current band — Hardwired — began after band founder Don McCann heard Westyn play during an open mic at Roop Brothers. Since that time nearly three years ago, Westyn has become an integral part of the band.

Enjoying his time with the band now, Westyn said he is not certain what will happen when he leaves for school. But, he noted, summers are the busiest season for the band, so he hopes to be able to play some gigs then.

Maybe he'll even be able to do some solo work in Marietta, he mused.

"I'll definitely always keep playing guitar," he said.

Having started with the blues, Westyn has since learned to play other musical genres including classic rock covers and some older country, like Johnny Cash.

"I try and play as many types as possible," he said, adding that he has even expanded into bluegrass.

Besides the band's weekly practices, Westyn plays guitar on his own daily. He finds that the weekends are particularly busy when there is a gig, but it is "steady gas money."

He performs almost every weekend (especially in the summer), but he added the band also does benefit shows.

"The main reason I play is for fun, not the money," he said.

In his spare time, Westyn likes to snow board, ski and play tennis (he plays on Buckeye Valley's team). He also camps, kayaks, canoes and fishes.

"I like to spend time outdoors," he said.

Westyn also volunteers about six hours a week at Stratford Ecological Center, where he learns about sustainable living and farming. He does other volunteer work through student council at BV, in addition to being an ambassador for the career center.

"Westyn has a casual style all his own, an unassuming, genuine personality, and a scholar's curiosity. He has the intellectual heft to conduct meaningful field research and pursue a career that will make a noticeable impact. I've also heard him play some nifty guitar licks, to boot... an emerging 'Renaissance man,'" said Buckeye Valley English teacher Zac Landefeld. "My bet: His next few years will be intriguing in the best possible way. He's a student about whom I can confidently say, 'He's going to be fine no matter what roads he travels.'"

For the rest of the year, Westyn looks forward to playing tennis for the school team, playing more gigs with the band and participating in senior activities. There is also his senior project in environmental technology. He speaks excitedly about the process of exploring the use of algae as a biodiesel fuel.

Wrapping up his senior year in a few months, Westyn said he is excited to meet new people. He will have friends at Ohio University as well as a friend's cabin nearby so he can still do some camping and kayaking, he said grinning. "I'm excited for a change. It will be cool to change where I'm living for a while."

Westyn said the biggest change in his life came after he decided to attend the career center. If not for environmental technology and the community service requirement, he would still only be doing a minimal amount of community service through student council at his home school, he said. But with his involvement with Stratford, Westyn learned a lot and encourages others to volunteer for the same experience.

"Find something you like to do, and do some volunteer service. It looks great on job and college applications. "I've changed my activities since coming here," he added, referring to DACC. "It helped me choose what I want to do for a career."

Westyn is the son of Jeff and Beth Bennington of Ashley.



Posted by Liz Robertson <sup>[2]</sup> on Jan 7 2013. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS Feed <sup>[3]</sup>. Comments can be made below.

1. [http://delgazette.com/2013/01/daccs-bennington-a-scholar-musician-outdoorsman/wesytn\\_bennington-3/](http://delgazette.com/2013/01/daccs-bennington-a-scholar-musician-outdoorsman/wesytn_bennington-3/)
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