

connections





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Veterans' Services Event

Brian Ganon of the Albany House Coalition, left, speaks with the U.S. Navy's Lt. Francis Dore, executive officer and a student in the School for Graduate Studies, and Machinist Mate Chief Jason Phillips, as well as other attendees at an information day presented by the college's Office of Veteran and Military Education, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

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On the cover: Arts Instructor Barrie Cline '01, '04, seated, with Jaime Lopez '09, a student at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, in front of the Workers Pavilion. Story on page 12.

COVER PHOTO CREDIT: MARTY HEITNER '92

Connections

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Plugged In

Plugged In Plugged In Plugged In Plugged In



PHOTO CREDIT: DAVID HENAHAN

Congressman Paul Tonko, second from left, cuts the ribbon with President Merodie Hancock and other dignitaries.

Charge It!

The college has made use of generous grants from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and the National Grid power company for the installation of an electric vehicle charging station at 113 West Ave., Saratoga Springs. The charging station has been placed between two of the high-efficiency vehicle parking spaces, and can charge two cars at once. A ceremony to unveil the ChargePoint charging station, which is available for use by both college employees and the public, was held in November. The station is part of a \$50 million Charge NY initiative that will support the installation of 5,000 such stations throughout the state, and the college's commitment to sustainability.

Benke Is Hall of Fame Inductee



PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN HUGHES

Meg Benke

Meg Benke, a professor in the School for Graduate Studies, is a recent inductee into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, which honors leaders in the fields of continuing education and adult learning. She joined Empire State College in 1991 and has served

as acting president, provost, vice provost and dean of the college's Center for Distance Learning. In addition, she is on the New York State Regents Advisory Council on Institutional Accreditation and serves as a Middle States Association commissioner, a member of the Commission on Postsecondary Distance Education and president of the board of directors of the Sloan-C Consortium. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Youngstown State University, a master's in student personnel and a doctorate in student personnel, higher education, both from Ohio University.

M.S. in Nursing Underway

The first class of students in the School of Nursing's new online Master of Science in Nursing Education program began studies in January.

The program was developed for nurse educators, whether they are faculty at colleges and universities, or working in hospitals or other health care centers. It offers them the opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in a flexible, online format, while maintaining their careers.

The program also is meant to address the urgent need for increased capacity in nursing education. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, nursing schools turned away more than 75,000 qualified applicants from bachelor's and graduate nursing programs in 2011.

The college received a grant from the State of New York for \$276,000 to support the program as part of a \$12 million statewide SUNY effort to train students in high-need career fields. The Empire State College School of Nursing now enrolls more than 1,000 students. To enroll in these nursing programs, students must hold a New York state RN license.



A professional film crew was on site to document the Veteran Artist Program events hosted by the college at its Metropolitan Center.

College Expands Artistic Horizons for Vets

By Helen Susan Edelman

Veterans can be artists too. Empire State College acknowledged and supported this unique population last November when the Metropolitan Center hosted a week of Veteran Artist Program events. VAP is a nonprofit organization that opens opportunities for veteran-artists to spread their wings in the art world through networking, collaborating and performing with experienced artists and related professionals.



Empire State College Office of Veteran and Military Education Director Linda Frank '98, '00 and Veteran Artist Program Founder and Executive Director BR McDonald.

At the Metropolitan Center and The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies event, veteran-artists pitched their ideas to a panel of pros to get feedback and encouragement for their proposed projects. For example, a veteran working on a script with a military theme presented to a filmmaker, a funder and a film professor from New York University. They talked with him about the substance of his script concept and how he was communicating it. The week also included various workshops and performances. A film crew documented the event.

The college's connection with VAP and its founder, BR McDonald, a veteran and vocalist, spurred the college's first Arts Entrepreneurship Residency, designed to help any artist who also is a student to develop a unique brand and to promote it. Visual, performing and literary artists are welcome. During the course and residency, a partnership of the college and VAP, artists interested in the business aspects of their work interact and learn from arts entrepreneurship professionals, present a detailed business plan and pitch their visions. Arts Entrepreneurship is an

online course with two required weekend residencies.

Linda Frank, director of the college's Office of Veteran and Military Education, who helped organize and staff the "VAPpening," points out that the college's involvement is consistent with its mission to create and maintain ties in the community and provide alternative and flexible approaches to higher education that connect individuals' unique and diverse lives to their personal learning goals. These opportunities expand access to affordable education through partnerships with employers, unions, government agencies, the armed forces, community organizations and other educational institutions and address the needs of underserved populations. Working with VAP also is positive exposure for the college in general and, more specifically, to programs for veterans, a group the college actively serves.

"It's strategic," Frank says, "and it's also the right thing to do. Results are not always immediately measurable, but our intention to reach out is obvious."

Photography by Marty Heitner '92

The Veteran Artist Program has spurred the college's first Arts Entrepreneurship Residency. The first of two parts was held in January of 2014, and the second will take place April 11 - 13 in Saratoga Springs.



Visit residencies.esc.edu/arts-entre/ or scan the QR code to learn more.



PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.STOCKSTUDIOGRAPHY.COM

Sue Epstein

By Karen Nerney

Where she grew up: Yonkers, N.Y.

Education: Bachelor of Science from Cornell University; MBA from New York University; Ph.D. from University at Albany

What she does: Center for Distance Learning assistant professor in Business, Management and Economics, based in Saratoga Springs

Career path: Transitioned from banking ("I didn't really like banking, but I loved working with people.") to marketing in the private sector, where managing work-life responsibilities was a challenge. Started a market research firm with her husband before joining Empire State College.

Career passion: Work-life issues. "I very intentionally call it 'work-life.' When we move the discussion to 'work-life' as opposed to 'work-family,' we have a much more inclusive conversation that is more likely to bring about change."

An idea she'd like to dispel: "Research does not support the idea that working while having a family is a bad thing. The issue is whether the parents are happy at their work. Do they come home feeling built up or beat up? That's what's going to have an impact on a family."

Up next: Received approval of her proposal to develop an alumni mentoring program.

Why she's so excited: "I'm thrilled to be able to use the work-life knowledge I've gained from research to develop a program in which alumni give back to the college in a meaningful way, and students benefit from working with alums who have 'been there,' trying to balance multiple parts of their lives simultaneously."

Family: Married to husband, Camm, for 20 years; three children; retired parents who live five blocks away. "I have a tremendous support system, which has been key to how we've managed our work-life interactions."

Words to live by: "It's OK for things to be 'good enough.' We don't need to strive for perfection."

Why she loves upstate: Arts, culture and the outdoors. "I like to be outside and, whenever possible, I try to get on my bike and ride."

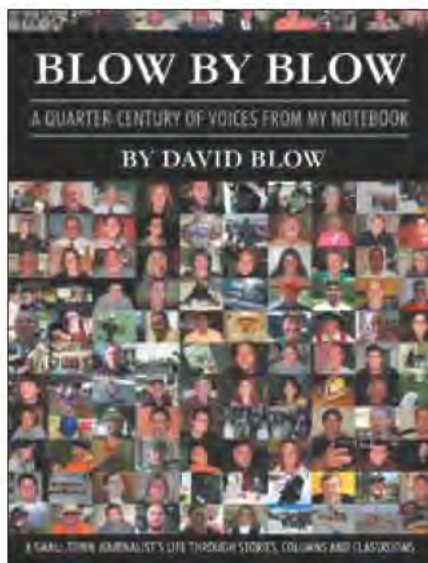
Aspiration: Climb 46 High Peaks of the Adirondacks. To date, she's conquered six. "It's slow progress," she laughs.

Bucket list: A safari

On contentment: "I enjoy teaching nontraditional students and I like living in Saratoga. I feel as if we're in a really good place family-wise, emotionally, physically, career-wise. I'm really happy where I am now."

Portfolio

BOOK



Journalist Tells His Best Tales

David Blow '04
School for Graduate Studies

David Blow, former reporter and now associate professor of communication at Castleton State College in Vermont, never expected that “the little Castleton Spartan would scoop the world.” When merchant mariner Capt. Richard Phillips was taken hostage by Somali pirates, the captain’s daughter, a student of Blow’s, posted the first interview about his release. “It subsequently got picked up by news outlets around the country,” Blow says.

His book, “Blow by Blow,” covers the highs (interviewing Robert Redford) and lows (accidentally amputating his father’s finger) of his 15-year career at The Post-Star, in Glens Falls, N.Y.

“I love hearing stories and telling them. I don’t have a bucket list, but I’ve always wanted to share some of my better works,” Blow says. Now he has. “I hope people laugh and maybe even cry at what they read.”

BOOK



Discover NYC's Hidden Treasures

Mitch Broder '77
Long Island Center

Longtime Gannett company news reporter Mitch Broder has chronicled what he calls “vintage New York,” a look at 75 delis, classic restaurants, shops, bars and nightspots that persevere in a city being overrun by all that is new. He portrays the old, like an eatery where every fruit tastes good in chocolate or the restaurant that is located inside a Christmas tree, and the new that should be classic, like Pota-topia, where your potatoes are baked, scalloped, boiled or prepared any way your heart desires.

“Discovering Vintage New York” takes you to a city “of egg creams and knishes, of record stores and hat shops, of bohemian basements and candlelit clubs,” according to Amazon. “These spots evoke a bygone metropolis. They are lost in time, yet compellingly timely. They are vibrant, quirky and fun to explore.”

Broder maintains a blog, also called Discovering Vintage New York.

BOOK



Author Explores Double Love

Charlie Mann '08
Center for Distance Learning

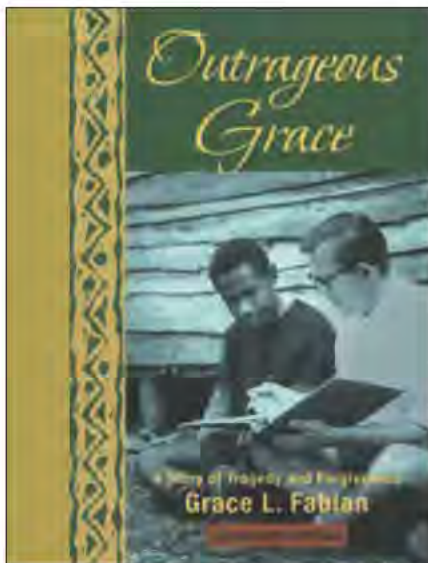
Charlie Mann describes his first novel, “Don’t,” as a coming-of-age tale about friendship and relationships. An engineer by day, Mann had written short stories before, but this was the “first time I got something that large to work.” The plot revolves around a naive young man who falls in love with one twin at first sight, and then discovers he also loves the other one, and has a hard time giving up either.

He writes, “Susan was like an addiction, a barely noticed comfort when present and an overwhelming longing when not. Mandy, on the other hand, was like the flu: totally taking over everything in waves with interludes of transitioning from the memory of the last episode to anticipation of the next.”

Mann says he has received good feedback, including constructive criticism for his first novel, and plans to continue his creative writing.

Portfolio

BOOK



Grappling With An Awful Truth

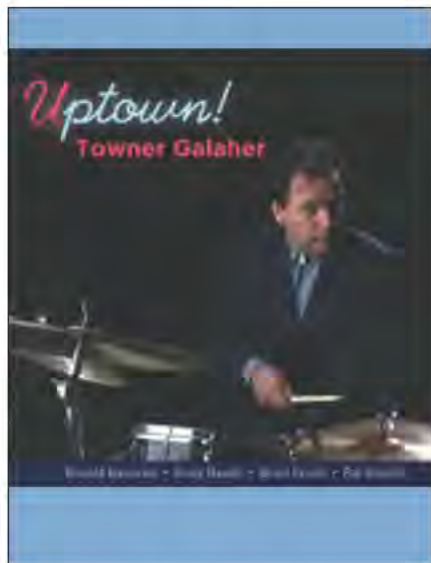
Grace Fabian '86
Central New York Center

Imagine finding your husband with a knife in his back and you are the one to pull it out. Imagine that a close friend is found guilty of the crime. Imagine this happens while you are thousands of miles from home. Grace Fabian experienced all this, while living in Papua, New Guinea, as she and her husband translated the Bible into the Nabuk language and raised four children.

Fabian describes the horror, grief and disorientation her family experienced as they grappled with the death of a husband and father. They didn't get a thunderbolt of understanding, but, she writes, "I never could have conjured up the story that came from this tragedy and our family's forgiveness."

Originally from upstate New York, Fabian now lives in Pennsylvania where she speaks, teaches and writes. The second edition of the book features a study guide for the reader.

MUSIC



Alumnus Captures Classic Jazz Sound

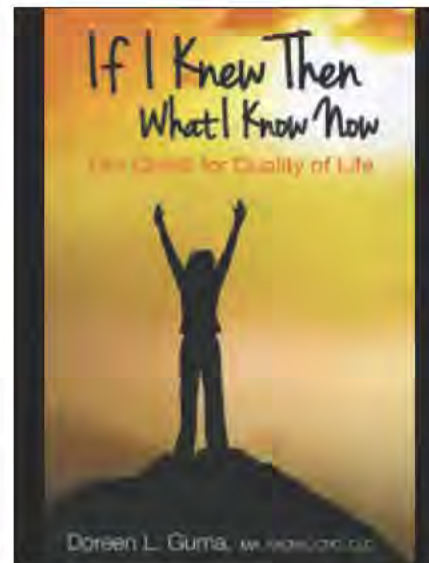
Towner Galaher '98
Metropolitan Center

"Cool, classic jazz, inspired by masters such as Miles Davis and Art Blakey, with some Latin rhythms mixed in."

That's how Towner Galaher describes the music you'll encounter on his three CDs, "Panorama," "Courageous Hearts" and "Uptown," which is his most recent. Each has hit the top 50 on jazz charts.

The Portland, Ore. native, who moved to New York 27 years ago, teaches middle school by day. But at night, he's jamming in Harlem night clubs and occasionally on the road, ensuring the jazz he loves stays alive. Starting as a drummer, he learned to play the piano, which opened up a creative door, he says, to composing and arranging. Learning the Hammond B-3 organ allowed him to delve even deeper into the classic jazz sound of the '50s and '60s. Galaher's CDs are available wherever music is sold.

BOOK



Learning More From Living Well

Doreen L. Guma '03
Metropolitan Center, School for Graduate Studies (student)

Doreen Guma, author, health care administrator, certified professional coach and certified life coach, also can claim another title: "optimist." In this upbeat book, Guma tells readers that it's possible to be happy and to improve their quality of life, even if it can't be done alone. Guma's "If I Knew Then What I Know Now: Our Quest for Quality of Life," shows how, overwhelmed by the state of the world, she hesitated to have children.

Now a mother of three, she believes that if each person does his or her part, change for the better can become a reality. Her brother and several others contributed chapters on money, marriage, happiness and other topics.

"It is so important for us to learn what we need so we can enjoy life and it's our duty to help others do the same."



Sandra Bowden: The Word in Art

By Hope Ferguson

For someone who is known for connecting the transcendence of faith with art, Sandra Bowden '77 seems surprisingly down to earth. A visit to her home in Chatham, Mass. on Cape Cod reveals a highly organized artist who runs her intersecting lives as a painter, printer, collector and curator with stunning efficiency. Her garage even doubles as a shipping center for sending her traveling shows out to museums, colleges and churches.



Bowden's home is filled with other artists' work as well as her own.

When we arrive, Sandra and her husband, Robert, both come out on the manicured lawn to greet us. It is a glorious day, all bright sunshine, blue skies and salty ocean air. Bowden, a slender, blonde woman in a tailored black and white pantsuit and geometric dangling earrings, is framed by a blazing pink azalea bush, creating an apt first impression.

In a retrospective book on her work, "The Art of Sandra Bowden," Bruce Herman, a gallery director at Gordon College in Wenham, Mass., calls her a "phenomenon." Bowden's work hangs in the Cincinnati Museum, the Billy Graham Center Museum, the Museum of Biblical Art and the Vatican Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, among other places. She is a founder and past president of Christians in the Visual Arts, where she helped arrange shows and encouraged other Christian artists.

James Romaine, who edited Herman's book, writes, she "may be one of the boldest artists of her generation ... Most professional artists find their voice, some sooner than others, some stronger than others, and settle into a comfortable production of work ... that can be a Faustian exchange for the safety and marketability that such limits bring. Sandra Bowden never made that deal. Instead, she has plunged herself into exploring systems and limits of vocabulary and language itself."

While most of her pieces – highly textured, glowing, tactile – could be described as abstract, they also seem simultaneously

ancient and familiar, and, like her series of small and decorated gilded boxes and books, immediately relatable.

Bowden came of age in a plain-spoken New Hampshire church built by her forebears. She didn't know people who didn't go to church and didn't love the scriptures, she says. There was never a time she didn't identify as a Christian.

The contemporary home she shares with her husband, whom she met at youth camp when she was just 15, serves as an exhibit space for the various styles and periods of her art. Those styles include gold leaf "books," with raised Hebrew and Greek lettering; collagraphs, a printmaking technique in which materials like fabric and string are glued onto a masonite plate to form images in relief; iconic crosses covered in gold from photos that she later modifies; music notations using actual pages of music; prints based on illuminated book pages; crucifixions and a series of geographical prints of natural wonders, such as the Grand Canyon.

Throughout the house, her own art is interspersed with works by Jasper Johns, Georges Rouault, a painted egg collection from Russia, Canada and Italy, and a sketch by an unknown artist from the 1700s.

In the spring of 1961, Bowden, after taking first prize in an art contest in high school, was asked to contribute a piece to the Beverly Baptist religious art show. "You like it?" she asks, motioning to the artwork called "Ancient Writing," before saying that she hadn't a clue that it would point to what would become

a signature style. It is “just a suggestion of writing fragments on burlap,” using gesso modeling paste. The writing wasn’t real – that would come later, with the implementation of Hebrew and later Greek letters in her pieces. “But something just gelled inside of me,” she says.

In 1978, she did a series exploring creation with lettering suggestive of Hebrew text. A Jewish man she knew from Glens Falls, N.Y., suggested that she begin to study Hebrew and use real Hebrew lettering. “We have writing that is 3,000 to 4,000 years old by which we share thoughts of another person across time and place. It’s through this religious text that God chose to communicate with us,” she says. She began studying Hebrew with an orthodox rabbi.

Completed in 1978, “In the Beginning,” a moody piece with a dark palette, uses real Hebrew letters illuminated from the top by a white light, suggesting, as per Genesis, “the spirit of the Lord brooding over the waters.”

Then there is the series of artists’ books that act as boxes, using Biblical text to illustrate such things as the pearl of great price (a small box filled with real pearls) and “Even the Stones,” a gold-leaf covered box full of stones; and a book with nails glued on the cover. Her series

of crucifixion portraits of Christ likewise employ real nails.

“Until 1994, I did collagraphs,” Bowden says. “In ’94 I had back surgery, so for months couldn’t do anything.” So she cut up a print, tossed in some gold leaf, and voila, the Collage Series. “Each one of the series had its own birth,” she explains. “Same with the Illuminations Series, which arose from an invitation from Emma Willard School in Troy, N.Y., to produce something for a show.”

Giving the Japanese artist Sadao Watanabe more exposure has been a recent passion. He became a Christian at age 17, after a missionary invited him to church. His father had died and he contracted tuberculosis. Needing to support his family, he pledged that if the missionary prayed for him and he became better, he would accept Christ. The colorful, folkloric works of Watanabe comprise a traveling show, as well as an exhibition book sponsored by Christians in the Visual Arts, commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Bowden says the exact terminology to describe her art doesn’t matter to her. “My art is a visual record of my spiritual and artistic journey. Each work that I do seems to beg another question and then leads me to the next work. My job has been to

follow the work. Early on, my work was very abstract, only alluding to a vague theme. But over the course of time, I have come to realize that my work focuses on the word, both the written word and the word made flesh.”

“ Each work that I do seems to beg another question and then leads me to the next work.”

– Sandra Bowden

The day we visited, Bowden seemed to be thinking about her artistic legacy, making several comments about her hopes for the future of her art and telling us about where she wanted certain pieces to go permanently. Whatever the next days and weeks and years bring for Sandra Bowden, it is likely the art produced in that time will continue to have as a central focus her devotion to the word.

Photography by Shareen Davis



Bowden uses real music scores to create artwork for her Music Series.



Detail of a piece from her Music Series.



Photo from the Workers Pavilion portraying workers sense of being trapped on a job.

PHOTO CREDIT: JAIME LOPEZ

¡Solidaridad!

By Helen Susan Edelman

“Un gran error que muchos estadounidenses cometan es pensar que los inmigrantes ilegales reducen nuestros salarios y no pagan impuestos. Se estima que más de la mitad de los inmigrantes ilegales cobran un sueldo fijo cada semana. Muchos reciben un formulario W-2 y hacen declaraciones de impuestos utilizando una identificación especial emitida por el IRS, que permite que los extranjeros paguen impuestos. Lo que la mayoría de los estadounidenses no se dan cuenta es que cuando se trata de Medicare y de la Seguridad Social, la mayoría de los inmigrantes no reciben estas ayudas. Por lo tanto, los inmigrantes ilegales contribuyen en gran medida a estos fondos pero no reciben un dólar de reembolso.”

“A large misconception that many Americans have is that illegal immigrants lower our wages and get away without paying taxes. It is estimated that more than half of illegal immigrants collect a regular paycheck every week. Many receive a W-2 form and file returns using a special ID issued by the IRS, allowing foreigners to pay taxes. What most Americans don’t realize is that when it comes to Medicare and Social Security, most immigrants never collect these allowances. Therefore, illegal immigrants largely contribute to these funds while never seeing a dollar back from them.”

– from a student paper submitted to The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Passions swirl around union members and undocumented immigrant workers, fanned by their relationships to each other, to their communities of origin and to the overarching U.S. culture that subsumes them all, particularly overt in the ethnically cacophonous Queens, N.Y. area, where many live and work. Income disparities, social injustices, long-entrenched resentments, multi-ethnic neighborhoods, new-immigrant expectations and alliances, grassroots activism, language and behavior barriers, media-fueled misinterpretations of intent and action and the word on the street provoke extreme responses – from seething fury to compassionate good will, sometimes simultaneously. Facing off are divisive fears that undocumented immigrants will work long hours for low pay in poor conditions, undermining union workers by stealing their jobs, versus a more progressive, enlightened view that whether union or undocumented, workers all are affected by challenges that can be addressed most effectively by combining forces. Questions and demands centering on problems such as fair wages, health benefits, safety on the job, and race and class tensions both plague and unite workers.

Now, the Workers Pavilion, an ever-evolving art and social action project and showcase, which was conceived and executed by The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies' students, alumni and faculty, is serving both as an intimate forum for dialogue between workers and as a public emblem of unity, in which anyone can engage. The modular, multimedia structure – more than 20 feet long and up to 7 feet high at some points – melds physical materials such as metal, wires, light boxes and photographs with symbolic elements like a lattice design, which signifies a permeable border that both defines

groups and allows them to interact freely. The multifaceted structure embodies representations of workers and their labor, specifically how the bosses' drive to control the bottom line by skimping on pay and materials affects the quality of life of all workers. The piece was originally unveiled on Corona Plaza, in Queens, in August 2013, to spontaneous cheering and applause, and was exhibited again at the grand reopening of the Queens Museum in November 2013. It will be featured on Workers Memorial Day on April 28 in Queens, a celebration which honors those who died performing work duties and fights for the safety of all workers.

The complex project would not be possible without the dedication, intellectual vision and organizational brilliance of much-lauded ceramic and mixed-media artist Barrie Cline '01, '04, adjunct professor of a course in public art for HVACLS. Her position was created by center Dean Michael Merrill to fortify and diversify the liberal arts background of Empire State College learners, who are also apprentices with the International

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 3, based in Flushing, N.Y. (Earning the liberal arts degree is a requirement of the electricians' apprenticeship.) Cline's students are largely responsible for construction of the pavilion, many participating for course credit, a task they undertake with zeal despite full-time jobs, families, civic commitments and student responsibilities. Cline also has taught an art class for plumbers.

Cline calls student and journeyman electrician Jaime Lopez '09, who earned an Empire State College A.A. and is currently in the HVACLS bachelor's program in labor studies, the "energy" behind the pavilion. He turns the spotlight back on Cline, calling her the "inspiration." Similarly, Cline calls labor studies Mentor Richard Wells "crucial," but Wells bounces the compliment to student Stephanie Lawal, a carpenter who contributed text that is embedded in the pavilion. All express appreciation for Merrill's support for them as students and as artists, and all make a point of thanking the college for contributing



Photo from the Workers Pavilion depicting a NICE (New Immigrant Community Empowerment) worker at the job site, symbolically immobilized by social forces and regulatory restrictions.

PHOTO CREDIT: HANA GEORG

dollars from the student activity fee to make it happen. This practice of shifting praise is typical within this modest, incredibly productive, devoted group, underlining the salience of collaborative achievement, shared approbation and focus on the power of the group, not the individual, mirroring the paradigm of union strength and success.

For now, Cline has set aside most of her activity as an artist who “makes things” to become an activist who makes things happen.”

“The pavilion is a space for advocacy, empowerment and solidarity,” explains Cline, a Metropolitan Center graduate in The Arts who also earned a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, now is a candidate for a cutting-edge Queens College/Queens Museum MFA, (aka Social Practice Queens), examining interdisciplinary art and social, interventionist, tactical and cooperative practice. “Our students, who are workers, conceived of this project in terms of labor issues and standards and related themes, and built it mostly out of scraps,” she says. “Most of them love to tinker and this project is a chance to do that on a large scale. But, what they really wanted to do was document transformation and community empowerment. Making meaningful interactive public art is the future of art.”

Wells’ student Lawal, whom Cline admires as a wordsmith, laments, “It is sad to see how much our work has been dumbed down. Speed and monetary gain seem to be the only things that matter. The quality of the work is lacking, as well as the craft, because the time is not truly taken to teach the skills of the trade. These skills, in the past, were passed on from generation to generation. One literally grew up in a trade. Furthermore, the quality of the materials we work with has diminished, in New York City in

particular. We are literally building a city that we can no longer afford to live in and that is not being built for longevity. I did visit the leasing office of the building I’m working in. I passed the gentleman I spoke to in that office on the sidewalk, across the street from the shiny, new structure. His distaste as he observed workers was quite apparent on his face.”

Wells is guiding students, “to get a handle on delicate issues that are front and center in their lives,” he says. “The Workers Pavilion is a great pedagogical tool that helps them and others look at the issues from their workers’ perspective, helps them make sense of it. It makes the priorities more human and multidimensional, it makes changing the conversation possible. All human beings are struggling.”

Wells brings up a volatile subject that his class is asked to explore and that is relevant to the pavilion with its morphing framework: border security. “In the U.S., \$17.9 billion is spent on border security, on keeping immigrants out, and only \$1.6 billion is spent on enforcement of worker safety standards through OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). Straightforward discussions among all workers will shift the conversation from ‘the wall’ to workplace protections, a major issue for exploited, undocumented workers willing to work in unsafe conditions because they fear losing their income if they speak up. Union workers would never tolerate those conditions. The union should be organizing immigrants. Together, union members and undocumented workers have more power to bargain for good wages. The more workers who join the union, the stronger their control over the labor market will be, the better their leverage.”

“El gobierno debería invertir más en su gente y gastar más dinero en las



condiciones de trabajo, y en la expansión de empleo. Consecuentemente, la gente vera la necesidad de la inmigración y de permitir a las personas entrar en este país con seguridad y encontrar un empleo que necesita ser cubierto.”

“The government should invest more in its people and spend more money on working conditions, as well as job expansion. In turn, people would come to see the need for immigration and allow people to come into the country safely and find employment that ultimately needs to be filled.”)

– from a student paper submitted to The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Workers will be more engaged with each other and with the larger community as they assume multiple roles,



A representative portion of the Works Pavilion was on display in the Social Practice studio of Queens Museum during the museum's grand reopening, November 2013.

emphasizes journeyman Lopez, the son of Dominican and Colombian parents, describing the link between work and art. "We each bend wires our own way," he says. "We create amazing differences, illumination, angles, structure, accents, abstract forms. We improvise, design, build. Some of it is freestyle. We are involved. We do it together, as a group, but make individual contributions. And," he adds for good measure, "it is also fun."

Others associated with the college who were key to the pavilion's construction include alumnus Noel Modica '10, '11, who created frames for the light boxes; alumnus Tommy McCormack '03, '10, who contributed the idea for refracting the light; Hana Georg and Olga Jimenez, current students who contributed words and images; and HVACLS faculty

member Arthur Brum, who provided the original sketches.

"Barrie made the idea of art, which was alien, real for us. She encourages students to be creative, see themselves as artists and understand how public art affects a community. The idea of the pavilion was that people could come and walk in it and around it and talk about it and express ideas that affect all of us. The Workers Pavilion was designed to be portable, so that it can be relocated to different areas, bringing its impact to the people," Lopez points out.

In addition to the aesthetics of the project, practical considerations include how to mount, set up and transport the pavilion, how to ensure it can stand on its own, how to make it intriguing and, most importantly, how to use it to

engage the community in a constructive, ongoing dialogue.

One outstanding physical feature of the pavilion is the integration of light boxes at every level. "Light is a special thing for electricians," Lopez explains. "We can place a fixture we usually use at work in an artistic way, with work tools that become tools for art. I've learned that the labor we do every day is beautiful. In the past, our sweat and tears didn't get thanked. Now we are emerging."

The light boxes also command attention. The eye initially travels from box to box, then moves on to the structure's other compelling elements, including mesmerizing photographs and poignant prose in both English and Spanish. The photographs portray startling moments and alarming ideas,

Continued on page 17

Bridging the Gap: Artisan to Artist



PHOTO PROVIDED

Dean Michael Merrill, The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Arts classes within labor studies programs are offered at institutions besides Empire State College, but Michael Merrill, dean of the college's Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies, didn't want them to be "the visual and literary equivalent of a kumbaya hootenanny, where people sing so-called 'folk songs' intended to inspire, but which are often experienced as fossilized relics of another era."

Things didn't turn out that way at Empire State College, where courses are designed to explore public art and students get their hands dirty, broadening their vision of the world and of themselves.

"Art has first to be a mirror," says Merrill. "Students have to see themselves in it. When they do, they begin to notice

other things in the reflection. They are not alone and the mirror then becomes a window through which they can see the wider world, which can be transformative."

Workers in the trades – whether electrician, plumber, carpenter or construction worker – are not valued today for their craft, as was once the case, Merrill worries aloud. "It's relatively recently that 'high art' spun off from the decorative arts. It's a phenomenon of the 19th and 20th centuries. Workers like plumbers and electricians should be respected as artisans who have ideas and plan projects and can make beautiful and useful things out of wires and pipes and paint. No building is erected without labor, no light goes on without labor, why doesn't the public perception of art reflect that? The work our students do is essential to our civilization."

The establishment of the arts curriculum was not necessarily in Merrill's game plan when he became dean in 2004. But, the State University of New York's general education requirements for all bachelor's degree candidates, which call for students to acquire knowledge and skills that are useful and important for all educated people, regardless of their jobs or professions, "was a godsend," he says now. "I embraced that requirement enthusiastically, but I thought it was important not to limit ourselves to the study of art appreciation, or something that belongs to private collections."

Merrill recalls that at first, the union workers were resistant to thinking of themselves as artists. "They thought it was 'too fancy.' They said, 'We just do dirty, nasty work.' But, some of them were taking photos of their work with their cellphones. One said, 'When you look at some of the work we do, you can see that it makes forms that are really beautiful.' From that point forward, it was what I hoped for, that they would be and feel appreciated and valued, that they would know their work has important intrinsic value and not just function. We designed our courses to play to their strengths: practical, hands-on, visual learning."

Merrill was and is concerned that workers are seen as one-dimensional, not only by others, but by themselves. "They are largely invisible or shunned," he says. "Our goal is that the students come to see themselves as people with educated minds and hearts, as well as 'hands,' and that they develop the self-confidence to tell their stories, not just to themselves but to the world. That's what the Workers Pavilion is about. Higher education is not merely preparation for a job. It's an opening for personal development and leadership. The Workers Pavilion is such an opening. And, it is a bridge across the divide between who we are and who we want to be."

The labor center's approach to the literature syllabus is similarly expansive in its sensibilities. "In other programs, often the literature about working people is a literature of despair, in which workers are victimized by forces beyond their control. It is also often preachy and moralistic, basically propaganda. Our students don't need or want to be propagandized. What they need is exposure to the best and what they want, what we all want, is inspiration."

Not everything created in the arts classes is material, Merrill points out. Some students have become writers and are published in *Labor Writes*, a journal produced by HVACLS. He was especially pleased when interest was expressed in founding a poetry club.

He hastens to add that all attempts at educating students in the arts are not success stories, "but what we do impart is that your approach to the world is as an artist and if you don't like what you see, you want to change it. There is an affinity between the Romantic artistic sensibilities and social reform. People don't like living in ugliness. They want things to be beautiful. They want things to be fair. Beauty is fair."

Circling back, Merrill emphasizes that the underlying objective of the arts courses is to be revealing. "Art should not be a secret," he concludes. "People should be involved in it."

“ The identity and culture of the worker is being erased and society has gripped on to hopeless individualism and a weird social acceptance that everyone is replaceable.”

– Jaime Lopez '09



To view a video about the Workers Pavilion, scan this QR code or visit www.trustart.org/projects/24_the_workers_pavilion

such as workers feeling and being literally trapped on the job, gagged by caution tape, or being tangled in netting they can't escape. The worker subject is never free to “blow the whistle.”

Another photo is of books, representing education; another depicts an Empire State College student participating in a hunger strike sponsored by NICE (New Immigrant Community Empowerment), protesting social and work conditions for immigrants. The photos were curated by Project LUZ, a photography program for empowering communities that collaborated on the project.

“The labor laws are broken,” says Lopez. “We need to take care of minimum wage and child labor issues, not fear each other. Personally, I want to project the idea that we are artists and art is a powerful tool that can bring communities together to solve problems. The Workers Pavilion is not about property, it's about taking barriers down, building things together intelligently, communicating continually.”

“The idea of workers coming together animates what we do,” Cline says. “It's not the kind of public art that just gets plopped down with no relationship to the communities. This is responsive, generative. This is space that allows everyone who participates to flex, to meet them where they are, to work with the union ethos of ‘we,’ not ‘I.’ But it's not good enough to be symbolic. It has to be productive. It has to connect expertise to product. You know, I believe art can provide the space to question how one can be fiercely pro-union and at the same time be pro-immigrant in a dialogue. Workers don't have to be pitted against each other.”

Cline points out another way that the Workers Pavilion fits with the college:

each transcends the classroom and both value and champion different intelligences and skill sets, connecting intangibles to outcomes. She says that public art is “not a discrete event, but a development of threads, a partnership between the artists and the community, common ground. Not a signed object or an artifact, but a series of moments, initiatives around ideas and around raising awareness that changes people, that makes us better, more civic, that signals commitment. It's not enough that *you* know you're committed – public art lets *other* people know you are committed as well.”

“The identity and culture of the worker is being erased and society has gripped a hopeless individualism and a weird social acceptance that everyone is replaceable,” says Lopez. “If we cannot expose this attack on the working people, it will not matter if you are an immigrant, a citizen, a woman, a man, living abroad or in the U.S., working nonunion or union. We will all feel the same pain of helplessness and regret.”

Lopez, like Cline and many others involved in the project, including curators at the Queens Museum, believes that projects like the Workers Pavilion – and others in development – address social concerns head on. “We can talk about ‘stop and frisk,’ we can talk about deportation, literacy, legal services, we can be peers who are not working in a vacuum.”

Though it has an impressive physical presence, the pavilion is more milestone than composition, more purpose than item, more intention than object, more collective effort than entity. As it is built, so is the camaraderie it engenders. As a setting for solidarity, it has far surpassed its form.



Ninth Annual Student Academic Conference





1) Julio Hernandez '12, a graduate studies student, presents photographs he took while working as an IBEW Local 3 electrician in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. 2) President Merodie Hancock presents 2013 art competition winner Stephen O'Donnell Sr. and his wife, SueJean, with a framed copy of his work, "Pleasure." 3) Michael Freeman, a student from the Metropolitan Center, with guest, performing "I Am Woman." 4) President Merodie Hancock joins Francesca Cichello of the college's Center for International Programs, far left, and students Petr Rieger and Michaela Matejekova, from the college's program in Prague. 5) From left to right, students Shealee Hogan, Elizabeth Mago, Michael Kaufman, Anna Barrow and Flavia Perez at the Friday evening reception. 6) College Achievement Requires Engaged Students club member Elizabeth Locke with founding member of the student group Michael Kless. 7) Three of the members of the Alumni Student Board of Governors, Althea Luerhsen '02, '10, Melva Visher '83, '96 and Mary Raymond '99, '04, at the art competition awards ceremony. 8) Grace Mateo, a graduate studies student, presents "Make Me Pretty," an interactive workshop about self-identity.

Photography by David Henahan

Alumni and Student COMMUNITY

Center for Distance Learning

John Catone '04 was promoted to assistant chief of police for the Saratoga Springs Police Department, where he is a 26-year veteran. Appointed as a police officer in 1987, Catone was promoted to investigator in 1999, spending time in the juvenile aid unit and criminal investigations unit. In 2006, he was promoted to sergeant, with assignments in the patrol division, the administrative section and investigations division. Catone has been involved in several major investigations during his career, and has earned several departmental awards. He holds a bachelor's degree with a concentration in criminal justice from the college, and completed the requirements for a master's degree in criminal justice from Arizona State University in December.

Julie Chiarito '02 has been appointed assistant vice president for budget at SUNY New Paltz. Prior to joining New Paltz, Chiarito worked for IBM for more than 17 years as a cost accountant, general and administrative analyst, and lead financial analyst for sales. She is a certified management accountant who also holds a master's degree from Marist College.

Lilian Yanni Deconescu '10 earned a Master Career Development Professional special membership status from the National Career Development Association. The association is a world-recognized leader that develops standards for the career development profession, for the provision of career counseling programs and services and for the evaluation of career information materials. Deconescu is founder and president of ESCU Consulting LLC, and is a career coach, recruiter, trainer and notary public for New York. He earned his master's degree in industrial relations from Cornell University, ILR School, and his bachelor's degree in Business, Management and Economics from the college.

Mark Smith '09 recently compiled and published "My Photographic Travel Journal." Smith is a travel photographer, author, and movie and television producer. His book includes shots from Alaska and throughout New York City.

Richard Smith '11 was appointed director of the library partnership programs at Schenectady County Community College. He previously worked as an adjunct for the college and was a coordinator of student services. He also is pursuing a doctorate in the social welfare program at the University at Albany. He has a master's degree in African studies from SUNY Albany and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Boston University.

Central New York Center

Kathleen Deaver '12 was promoted to fund operations manager in the finance and administration department of the Central New York Community Foundation. Deaver has worked for the foundation since 2008, where she previously served as grants coordinator. She holds an associate degree with a concentration in accounting from the college and is working towards her bachelor's. She previously was business manager at L'Arche Syracuse.

Dave Eichorn '10, a WSYR-TV meteorologist, shared his expertise on changing global weather patterns and their potential impact on the Western New York region last fall during the Cazenovia Forum lecture at the Catherine Cummings Theatre. Eichorn's



Current student, Domenico Bernardo, far right, brought good friends to the annual alumni student dinner at the Culinary Institute of America. From left to right are Anthony and Maria Puglisi, Joanne and Domenico Bernardo.

PHOTO PROVIDED

lecture was titled, "Climate Change Through a Meteorological Perspective."

Mardis Kelsen '92, who earned her law degree at Syracuse University after graduating with a bachelor's degree from the college, was profiled in the Cortland Standard last fall, in an article titled, "Late Bloomer Masters Law." Kelsen was an appointed justice for the town of Cortlandville before earning her law degree. She started as chief town clerk and 10 years later ran for the elected post of town justice. She passed the New York bar in 1998, after which she became a prosecutor and defense attorney. She now is in private practice focusing on criminal, matrimonial, family and real estate law.

Michael Leahey '10, the director of Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse (CHOW) of the Broome County Council of Churches, was showcased in a Q-and-A in the Binghamton Press Sun and Bulletin, talking about the need for the program which serves the area's 30,000 people in poverty and the homeless. Leahey, at age 9, was formerly homeless with his family "so the work I do here is very personal to me."

Emad Rahim '02, '03 has co-authored "Leading Through Diversity: Transforming Managers into Effective Leaders" (Common Ground Publishing), with Amine Ayad. Rahim, chief learning officer with Global i365 LLC, is a survivor of the Killing Fields of Cambodia. This book, called "a unique contribution to the complex subject of leadership," covers many contemporary aspects of leadership such as change management, diversity and servant leadership. Rahim and Ayad provide a roadmap for students as well as managers, executives and business leaders. Rahim has worked as a social entrepreneur, nonprofit executive, public servant, management consultant and at the college's Central New York Center as an outreach recruitment specialist. He brings this unique background to the leadership conversation and brings social responsibility to the forefront.

Samuel Roberts '12, a member of the New York State Assembly, was honored at Onondaga Community College's Celebration of Success Breakfast in October. A Democrat, Roberts represents the 119th District in the Assembly. He graduated from OCC in 2000 with a degree in apprentice training and the following year, he received a degree in labor studies. He also has a bachelor's degree from Empire State College and certificates in labor studies from



PHOTO PROVIDED

Long Island alumni and students joined Dean Michael Spitzer at the wine tasting and lunch at Raphael Vineyards.

Cornell University. He is retired from General Motors, where he worked as a journeyman tool and die maker for 30 years. He served his co-workers as recording secretary of UAW Local 466 and also was a member of the Onondaga County Legislature.

Kimberly Rogers '09 coasted to re-election as a member of the Rome Common Council. She represents southwest Rome as the Republican representative of the 3rd Ward, and easily won re-election to a second two-year term in November. Rogers graduated from the college with a bachelor's degree with a concentration in business administration.

Genesee Valley Center

Timothy Brown '90, '94 was promoted to sales leader in the business banking division at Key Bank. Brown is responsible for providing sales leadership and driving the sales results of the regional business banking team, which provides expertise and financial solutions to small business clients that generate annual revenue of up to \$15 million. Previously, Brown was senior relationship manager, business banking. Before joining Key in 2010, he was a business development officer with Banco Popular. His associate and bachelor's degrees are both in Business, Management and Economics.

Robin Dettman '12 received his Master of Science degree from Roberts Wesleyan College

in strategic leadership. He currently sits on the boards of two community organizations, Baobab Cultural Center and the Celebration of Life Community.

Sady Fischer '07, '10 was profiled in the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle for her work as a community activist and educator. Fischer is the associate director of minority health initiatives at Trillium Health. As part of the Women's Health Project, she educates communities identified as high risk on HIV prevention and facilitates weekly support groups.

Sydney Houseknecht '93 was appointed as an interim guidance counselor at Warsaw Central School. Houseknecht started his career as a music supply salesman. He earned an undergraduate degree with a concentration in history from the college, and went on to earn a master's degree in education and counseling at SUNY Brockport. He previously worked at Keshequa Central School as a high school and middle school counselor.

Hudson Valley Center

Julie Evans '03, '05 told the moving story of her experience as a student at Empire State College in a listener essay on the WAMC Roundtable. Hear it at <http://wamc.org/post/listener-essay-embarrassed>. She is a writer, personal mentor, host of the television program "Just Say So" and an adjunct instructor for



New York City alumni and students gathered at the International Culinary Institute for wine tasting, food sampling and kitchen tours. From left are Patricia Polak '87 with students, Julian Wyllie and Holly Pecora.

Empire State College. She has just completed her memoir, "Joy Road."

Eileen MacAvery Kane '86 was appointed chairwoman of the new graphic design program at Berkeley College. She brings 25 years of experience working as a creative director, art director and graphic designer to her new position. In addition, she has taught graphic design courses at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online, Rockland Community College and the Peekskill Center for Digital Arts. She also is the author of three books including "Ethics: A Graphic Designer's Field Guide." MacAvery Kane holds a Master of Fine Arts in graphic design from Savannah College of Art and Design, Ga., a Bachelor of Professional Studies with a concentration in graphic design from Empire State College and an associate degree in graphic arts technology from Rockland Community College.

Doris Jane Smith '77 was named an honoree for State Sen. Greg Ball's Women of Distinction Award, along with 22 others from the New York State Senate's 40th District. She has lived in the town of Somers for 47 years, working for the Somers Central School District for 20 years and the Somers Parks and Recreation Department for 23 years. A member of the Somers Historical Society for almost half a century, she served as the co-chair for the town's Bicentennial Committee, chair of the

Museum and Reis House Committees and co-chair of the Education Committee. Smith is the town historian and an art teacher at Somers Primrose School. Since 1990, she has been an American Girl coordinator, where the curriculum was centered on the American Girl dolls and their importance to American history. She has her B.S. from Empire State College and graduated from Manhattanville College with a master's in arts and teaching.

Long Island Center

Mary Aversano '09 was the subject of a feature story in the Queens edition of Long Island's Newsday about her career as an actress, and her founding of the Archstone Players. Aversano, 78, acts in the group that performs radio scripts before audiences at libraries and nursing homes. She also is a licensed real estate agent. She earned her associate degree with a concentration in film and voiceover from Empire State College. In 2011, she wrote her self-published autobiography, "Mary's Journey."

Marian Conway '01, '04 received her Doctorate of Philosophy in Public Policy and Administration, Nonprofit Management and Leadership from Walden University. Conway is the executive director of the New York Community Bank Foundation and

former president of the Empire State College Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors. She serves on the boards of several community and educational organizations including the Empire State College Foundation Board of Directors. In celebration of her accomplishment, she has created Dr. Marian Conway's Pay it Forward Fund to provide scholarships for Empire State College students pursuing their educational goals.

Susan Moriarty Miele '08, '09 writes to tell us that she was inducted into the International Library and Information Studies Honor Society - Beta Phi Mu. "Working hard does pay off," she noted.

Metropolitan Center

Nancy Azara '74 was a featured artist in the show Totem in New York City in September. Her piece, "Four Gold Feathers: From the Eagle," was a centerpiece. This sculpture of assembled, carved, painted and gilded wood is inspired by traditional totems, especially those of Native-American artists. It is about family, present and past, about nature and its relationship to healing, and about a wisdom gleaned from a spiritual reach into the unknown.

Richard Johnson '77, who earned a B.S. in Cultural Studies, was featured on the front page of the New York Post in October, in an item promoting his new column for the paper. Johnson, formerly editor of the Post's Page Six, now writes a column that mixes gossip from both coasts, society news, business and politics.

Zazel-Chavah O'Garra '02 is the recipient of the Gai's Essence Women's Wellness Conference Women of Honor Award for Artistic Excellence. She was honored during the fifth annual conference for spreading the message of "turning setbacks into comebacks."

Niagara Frontier Center

John Lambert '07 was named director of development and marketing at the University of Buffalo. Lambert previously was senior associate athletic director for external affairs. He is a graduate of Niagara College, Canada, and Empire State College.

Craig Maitland '12 was promoted to sales manager in Buffalo for GEICO Insurance Co. With more than 10 years of management

experience, he joined the Region 8 GEICO management team in May 2005. Maitland has participated in a number of initiatives as a Green Belt candidate and as a part of the college's Pathways Mentoring Program. He graduated from the college with a Bachelor of Science in Business, Management and Economics.

Amy P. Rupp '90, '95 received the 2013 State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service, as well as the Jamestown Community College President's Award. A member of JCC's library staff since 1988, Rupp serves as the senior project director for library automation. She also served as interim director of JCC's libraries in 2012 and as an adjunct professor of library courses since 1999. She earned two associate degrees at JCC and two bachelor's degrees at Empire State College, as well as a master's degree from Clarion University. She is a member of the American Library Association and other professional organizations.

June Tistkovich '11 has published, "The Powerful One Al-Qadr," a lighthearted novel about a Biblical scholar who vacations in Israel and stumbles into an international Syrian conspiracy named the Massa Conspiracy. The female protagonist, Prudence Pennypacker, meets the Al-Qadr (Powerful One), who is head of a Middle Eastern illegal antiquities ring, and the adventure begins. Tistkovich writes that she used real people and real situations, "but a lot of poetic license to mask their identities." Her pen name is Abigail James.

Northeast Center

Linda Ford '74, a master gardener, has written a field guide of flowers, after being impressed with the abundance and variety of wildflowers she encountered on a trip to the Copper Canyon region of Mexico in 2004. Upon returning in 2005, she was able to identify 40 wildflower species. With field technician Ryan Hawkins in 2006 and 2007, and with the expertise of local guides, she discovered new trails and rural roadways. The duo was able to document and photograph 140 more species and match them with local names of the plants. Toutcha Lebgue, a botany professor, translated the guide into Spanish, and Daniel Atha, a botanist from the New York Botanical Garden, helped to identify the plants. Proceeds benefit the Rota-scholars program (funded by Rotary), benefitting youth of the Copper Canyon region. For more: www.amazon.com.

Mike Lovegreen '90 Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Mike Lovegreen '90 is the conservation district manager in Bradford County, Pa. He also is a graduate of the Genesee Valley Center at Corning/Elmira. Lovegreen was honored with the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Nearly 100 colleagues, friends and foundation staff gathered at the state Capitol to see the award bestowed upon Lovegreen, recognizing him for his leadership, conservation efforts and lifetime achievements with the CBF.

"Mike has steadfastly dedicated years of service to innovatively tackling challenging and complex issues, not only because it was good, but because it was right," says Harry Campbell, CBF's Pennsylvania executive director. "For more than 30 years, the district has delivered conservation programs comprehensively and creatively, demonstrating how multiple programs can be integrated and leveraged to deliver a broad array of benefits. Conservation districts are an invaluable asset to the commonwealth."

The Bradford County conservation district provides technical assistance to farmers and other landowners, assisting them as they maneuver through state and federal conservation programs, requirements and opportunities, according to Campbell.

"I have had the continued privilege of working with the most dedicated, talented and personable groups of people – each focused on the noblest of missions," Lovegreen says. "We have learned the true value of the capabilities of our many and varied partners. By finding win-win solutions and piecing together the abilities and talents of those partners, without thought of credit, we get some amazing things done on the ground."

When Lovegreen was hired in 1980, the district office had only two employees and a budget of around \$10,000. Today, because of the hard work, leadership and perseverance of Lovegreen and his colleagues, the office now has 17 employees and a \$1.5 million budget. Lovegreen announced plans to retire in August 2014.



Mike Lovegreen '90

The CBF Lifetime Achievement Award is the highest honor given by CBF, awarded to only those most deserving individuals whose longstanding dedication and achievement to saving the Chesapeake Bay merits special recognition.

Michele Kilburn '13 was appointed business development coordinator for Kirchhoff-Consigli Construction Management. Kilburn is a master's candidate at Union College, and she earned her bachelor's degree with a concentration in business administration and human resources from Empire State College. She has a decade of experience as a business manager and in research support and coordination.

Linda Lambert '00, executive director of the New York Chapter of the American College of Physicians, was honored with the Medical Executive Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is given to recognize a medical association executive who has contributed substantially to the goals and ideals of the medical profession. Lambert has been executive director of NYCACP since 1997. She also serves as president of its subsidiary,

Internal Medicine Research and Service Corp. After graduating from Empire State College, she attended the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Executive Program in Health Care Policy.

School for Graduate Studies

Maggi Gabriela Ackert '06, '09, a Spanish teacher at C. J. Hooker Middle School in Goshen, N.Y., and an MAT graduate of the college, was awarded the New York State Association for Computers and Technology in Education Lee H. Bryant Outstanding State Teacher Award. This award is presented to an individual who has implemented or demonstrated the use of technology to improve education in his or her district in meeting the goals of the NYSCATE mission. The nomination of Ackert cited her use of numerous technologies to enhance her lesson plans, including her personal teacher website, Edmodo, YouTube, iLife, Moodle, SMART Boards and Web 2.0 applications such as podcasts, widgets, wikis, 3D books, Vokies, Glogsters, and more.

Susan Hohenhaus '03, '05 received her Doctor of Law and Policy (LPD) from Northeastern University. She is executive director of the Emergency Nurses Association and ENA Foundation. She also is a former member of the Empire State College Alumni Student Federation Board of Governors.

Olivia Lightie, a student in the School for Graduate Studies, was featured in the Five Questions section of *The Saratogian* newspaper. Her master's degree focuses on community gardening. She hopes to establish a garden-based educational curriculum "wherever I can find a job." In 2012, she was involved in the Catskill Edible Garden Project working with teens to take care of school gardens in the summer when the staff and students are on vacation.

Althea Luehrsen '02, '10 received the Executive of the Year Award from Buffalo Niagara Sales and Marketing Executives.

Buffalo Bills linebacker **Arthur Moats** has decided to go back to school to earn his Master of Arts in Community and Economic Development at Empire State College. Moats began his online program last fall with a course on public policy analysis. His enrollment attracted media attention throughout the Buffalo region.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Eric Komoroff '94 Finds Community of Unity to Help At-Risk Youth Thrive

Eric Komoroff '94, is the founder and executive director of Community of Unity, a nonprofit organization in New York City that provides support for at-risk youth and their families. The organization creates and supports programs that help young people live up to their potential socially, spiritually and scholastically, and to recognize their innate worth.

Eric Komoroff '94

The organization offers a variety of group and one-to-one programs to both middle and high school students, as well as college guidance programs and professional development and support services in urban public schools. Community of Unity staff provide stable, safe, trusting relationships and nondenominational spiritual tools to help students learn to make good choices in an environment where the wrong choice seems to lurk on every street corner.

In a recent interview, Komoroff, a tall, lean man with a full head of curly hair, says that he'd had no "grand plan" to start such an organization. Rather, he began working professionally with youth at 18 at an after-school art therapy program, while attending The New School's Art Therapy certificate program.

Komoroff enrolled in Empire State College's Metropolitan Center because he knew he needed the credential of a bachelor's degree to pursue his dream of becoming an educator, but he also knew he did not have time to sit in a classroom getting a degree through the traditional route.

The opportunity to start Community of Unity arose in 2000 when he was asked by the Harlem YMCA to run an after-school program for at-risk kids. He was informed that in order to do so, he had to be part of a registered nonprofit organization, thus Community of Unity was born.

"I had a vision of a certain kind of program I wanted to be part of, and I didn't find that anywhere, so I was left to create one myself," he says with a laugh.

At the Y, Komoroff worked with "80 kids who needed ratcheted-up programming after school," he explains.

From there, his group has blossomed into a small nonprofit, complete with board of trustees and staff, and an internationally recognized leader in the fields of youth empowerment, urban education, holistic education and wellness. He works with numerous schools in all the boroughs to help kids make good choices that will impact the rest of their lives. By developing the social and emotional lives of the youth, they are empowered, which is a healthy part of self-development, Komoroff believes. "The mission is to create and support programs that awaken in young people their unique personality and potential. We call that a song. All people everywhere have a really powerful song that is theirs alone to share. That's our life's work."

In concrete terms, this means more students graduating from high school and going to college; fewer young women having teen pregnancies and fewer youth of both sexes getting caught in the mire of drug use, crime and prison.

To date, he and his organization have nurtured "thousands of success stories, which to us looks like a young person finding a way to embrace his or her own power, to engage that power and create a life that makes sense."

Michelle Moissett '05 has joined Associated Mutual Insurance Cooperative as comptroller and Cooperative Federal Credit Union as manager. Both firms are in Woodridge, N.Y. She received her MBA from the college after earning a bachelor's degree from Mount Saint Mary College. She also is an adjunct professor at SUNY Sullivan, teaching financial accounting and hospitality cost control and purchasing.

Maria Tripi, a student in the School for Graduate Studies, was the keynote speaker at the celebration of World Community Day hosted by Church Women United of the Tonawandas last fall. The celebration focused on the theme, Walking Through the Doors of Opportunity. Tripi spoke about promoting understanding of cultural diversity and how it makes organizations and societies function more effectively. Tripi is active in several community organizations. She works as a lead research assistant on The Buffalo Project, which she co-founded. She is an active member of Chapel at Crosspoint.

In Memoriam

Jennifer Attaway, formerly a part-time mentor in cultural studies at the Niagara Frontier Center, died Oct. 14, 2013. She was 40. Born and raised in Stockton, Calif., she graduated from University of the Pacific with degrees in sports sciences and English. She moved to Houston, Texas, and then to Buffalo, where she earned her master's degree. She was a gifted writer and poet, and enjoyed camping, fishing and hiking.

Nicholas P. Cushner, Ph.D., a Latin American history scholar, author and entrepreneur, died Sept. 25, 2013, in Buffalo, N.Y. He was 80. Born in Manhattan, he was ordained as a priest in the Society of Jesus. He taught high school in the Philippines and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Ateneo de Manila University. In 1986, he received a Ph.D. in history from Kings College at the University of London. He then moved to Buffalo to teach history at Canisius College. In 1975, Cushner joined Empire State College as part of the history faculty. A Fulbright Scholar who studied in Peru, he rose to full professor and, in 1983, was named Outstanding Scholar by the Empire State College Foundation. He was a mentor in history and anthropology with the Niagara Frontier Center and an elected fellow of the Royal Historical Society. A widely published scholar, he served as president of



Benedict Fernandez '87, left, and Carmen Feliciano at the opening reception for the Fernandez photography exhibit, *Countdown to Eternity*, at the Metropolitan Center.

PHOTO CREDIT: XAVIER HAMLIN

the New York State Latin Americanists; was a member of the University Awards Committee of the SUNY Research Foundation; and was an adjunct professor of Latin American history at the University at Buffalo.

Karyl Mammano '94, '95, Ph.D., a Center for Distance Learning adjunct faculty member, died Sept. 26, 2013, in Rochester, N.Y. She was 61. She also was an associate professor of accounting at St. John Fischer College and director of nonprofit management education. She was vice president of Irondequoit Ambulance, and past president of the Irondequoit Library Board. She also served on the Irondequoit Audit Committee, East House Mental Health Finance Committee, and as a board member of Stepping Stones Learning Center. She was the co-author of many books and articles on accounting. She was posthumously named Citizen of the Year by the Irondequoit Chamber of Commerce.

Victor Buscemi Montana, Ph.D., who served Empire State College as an associate dean, acting vice president for academic affairs and acting president, died Dec. 29, 2013, in Concord, N.H. He was 71. He began



PHOTO PROVIDED

Victor Buscemi Montana

his career at the college in 1972, joining one of its first learning centers in Rochester, N.Y. Born and raised in New York City to first generation Americans who spoke French at home, he graduated from the Brooklyn Technical High School and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in physics, summa cum laude, from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn. He attended graduate school at Harvard University as a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, where he earned an A.M. and Ph.D. in high-energy experimental physics, and, later, a certificate from the Institute for Educational Management. Following graduate school he

was selected to be a Danforth Intern in physics at Earlham College. In 1990, he was appointed CEO and dean and, subsequently, president of the College for Lifelong Learning (now Granite State College) of the University System of New Hampshire.

In 2001, Plymouth State University awarded him the Harold E. Hyde Award, in recognition of his more than his 30-year career in higher education and his unwavering commitment to the highest quality of education for adults. The College for Lifelong Learning established the Victor B. Montana Alumni Award, honoring a CLL graduate who exhibits a commitment to lifelong learning and, in 2002, the institution awarded him an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Montana was a director of the National Center for Adult Learning, president of the Rochester Area Colleges consortium, trustee of the Capitol Center for the Arts, chairman of the New Hampshire College and University Council and an alumnus of Leadership New Hampshire.

In the last year of his life, he volunteered several mornings a week at the NH Technical Institute as a tutor in math and physics, a responsibility he took most seriously and found to be most gratifying. He was a lifelong and independent learner: he taught himself to cook and to sail, and in his 40s he studied how to design and build a house, and then built a vacation home on the coast of Maine with his son, John. In his 50s, he taught himself to ski, to build boats and to speak Italian.

Predeceased by his brother, John, he is survived by his wife, Patricia Vasbinder; his son, John Montana of Boston; stepson Dawson Bartlett and wife, Laura, of Chicago; stepdaughter Liann Eden and husband, Andrew, of London; his first wife, Ilene Montana of Rochester, N.Y., and five grandchildren: Jackson and Samuel Bartlett; Rebecca, Eleanor and Julia Eden.

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Kymn Rutigliano, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School for Graduate Studies, left, with Niagara Frontier Center student Jamal Arabaty at the Student Health and Wellness Retreat.

PHOTO PROVIDED



Congressman Dan Maffei, third from the left, visited the college's Central New York Center in Syracuse. Pictured are, left to right: Michael Mancini, director of government relations; alumnus Wayne Britton '12, who shared his experiences as a student veteran at the college; Maffei; Dean Nikki Shrimpton; Associate Dean Mike Gillespie and Tracy Zappola, assistant to the dean.

PHOTO PROVIDED



Vicki Pepe, 2011 scholarship recipient

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**THE FUND FOR
EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE**



The Last Word

The Value of Liberal Arts

In ancient Greece, the liberal arts were considered essential to produce a virtuous, knowledgeable and articulate person who could take an active part in civic life. That is as true now as it was then.

In business, we speak of synergy to explain a whole being more than the sum of its parts and, in turn, a valuable investment. In society, this means broadening your perspective on the human experience to be more than a sum of your parts. Often, that's where the arts come in. That's where an exceptional education encompasses both the focused, practical information that some people say is your entrée into future employment, as well as the arts that intensify your compassionate, intellectual and inquisitive responses to the world. Together, balanced in a curriculum and in daily life, these two vantage points engage our multiple intelligences, fostering individual excellence, self-discipline, creativity and achievement. That's why students at Empire State College are encouraged to explore the world through all their senses and with all their capabilities – to paint, as well as to study environmental sustainability; to read Aristotle, as well as undertake a certificate in veterans services; to write poetry while developing skills in child and family advocacy.

Because the college encourages and rewards innovative and extracurricular learning, these quests also may be recognized in college degrees that represent both their formal achievements as learners and their visceral triumphs.

These pathways are not parallels in divided domains, they intersect and intertwine every step of the way. Some

of our students grow into careers that combine their applied arts backgrounds with academic study, such as art therapist, museum curator or medical illustrator; others bring their unusual, enriched academic foundations into the more traditional careers of medicine, law, teaching, ministry and scholarship; still others become professionals in their fields. The syntheses may be surprising at first – a labor studies student who also is an electrician who sculpts; a Business, Management and Economics student who retires to blog about politics; or an interdisciplinary studies alumnus who imports musical instruments from Nepal. As the stories unfurl, so does the portrait of Empire State College's nontraditional learners and their mentors. Their talents are both fused and specific. Their influences on each other and their environments are both material and imaginative. Their scopes of interest and action are both relevant and infinite. As our students make beautiful things, they also create and derive pleasure from the world, whether en pointe or through a lens.

There is a popular mythology that students need to narrow their studies to concentrate on skills like disaster planning and control, or computer science to get a job, but a survey of 320 CEOs conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 74 percent said they would recommend a 21st-century

liberal arts education in order to create a more dynamic worker. That's because, by virtue of their experiences both in life and in school, a great many workplace leaders who come from liberal arts backgrounds exhibit strong communication skills, resourcefulness, agility, thoughtfulness, insight, initiative, curiosity and originality.

As you probably have noted, the spring 2014 issue of Connections celebrates the influence of the liberal arts on our students with stories about exploring the transcendent work of alumna and artist Sandra Bowden, finding ways to teach veterans, who also are artists, entrepreneurial skills and, in our cover story, examining the social and aesthetic relevance of the arts in public contexts.

These stories, among so many others, illuminate how the work of our students has transformed people and places, including people they will never know and places they will never visit, connecting them to global history and opening conversations that preserve and extend civilization.

It is their work that informs and affirms why we foster the liberal arts across all disciplines and student populations at Empire State College.

Merodie A. Hancock
President



Health, History, Horses and Much More

Join us for our annual day at Saratoga Race Course on Friday, July 25, and an evening at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center in August.

Summer visitors can take in world-class thoroughbred racing and enjoy a number of art galleries, historic sites, parks, mineral springs and a thriving downtown shopping district filled with quaint shops and a tempting array of dining choices.

Please consider visiting Saratoga this summer and, of course, spending time with good friends at Empire State College.

For our out of town visitors, we will secure room blocks at our local hotels.

Visit www.esc.edu/Alumni for more information on all of our events.

Open doors. Change lives.

Make a statement about who you are ...
About what you believe in.

When you leave a legacy to Empire State College, you make a lasting difference. A difference that speaks to your belief in providing for the future. Make a lasting impression and create a personal legacy that endures forever. Plan a gift to Empire State College through your estate.

Learn how you can make a lasting impression through your will and become a member of the Boyer Society by visiting www.esc.edu/PlanGifts or contacting Toby Tobrocke at 800-847-3000, ext. 2793. Together we will open doors and change lives.



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President Merodie Hancock stands between former Empire State College presidents, James Hall, left, and Alan Davis, at a reception preceding the summer alumni evening at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.