

THE EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE MAGAZINE

connections



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Dr. Richard Bonnabeau, Center for International Programs, at the inauguration of President Alan Davis.

PHOTO BY REBECCA STERLING

On the cover: Alumna Wendy Perron '00, right, with Paloma Herrera, principal dancer with the American Ballet Theater.

PHOTO BY HANNA VARADY

Connections

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Linda Rapin '08, center front, with friends and "readers"

Undaunted Success

One intrepid Hudson Valley Center student restarted where she left off her education and ended up ahead. Linda Rapin's days as an undergraduate were interrupted in 1983 when she suffered a cerebral brain hemorrhage, which permanently impaired her ability to read. Then, in 2002, with encouragement from her husband, Tom, she took up the reins of her future again, returning to study. Her staunch support system included dedicated friends who took turns reading academic texts to her while Rapin took notes. She graduated last year with a bachelor's degree in mathematics. Today, Linda Rapin is planning a career in nutrition and wellness to help consumers understand food labels. She especially wants to improve life for individuals with traumatic brain injury. Her husband says, through Empire State College, Linda "has realized her dream."

Preserving Language

The spoken word safeguards a culture by preserving its past and enabling authentic communication in the future among those who understand its words, symbols and meanings. With this in mind, Empire State College faculty member KD Eaglefeathers is documenting the Northern Cheyenne sacred language in a



Cheyenne Sun Dance photo, 2002

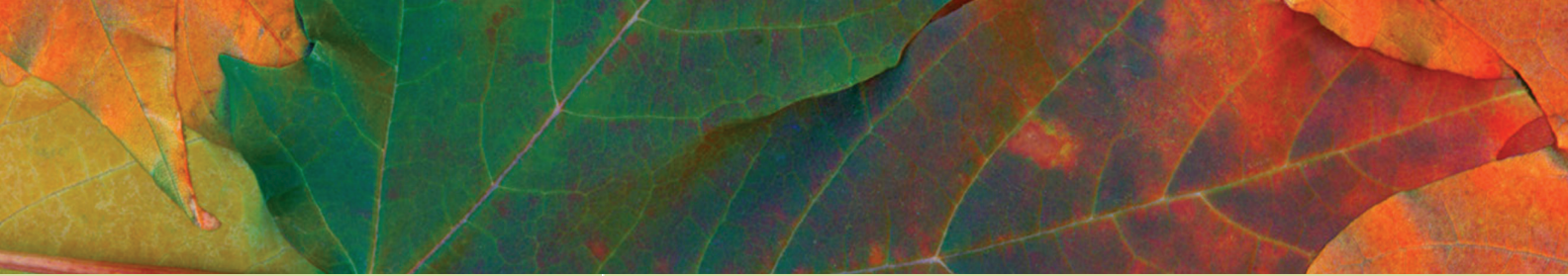
multimedia archive that will include recordings, drawings, notebooks, images, artifacts, photographs and field notes. She is collaborating with the remaining handful of native speakers – Sun Dance priests and Sun Dance women – to interpret existing Northern Cheyenne language resources that tell the stories of ceremonies, values and world views. The National Science Foundation has a part in funding this project, which will protect for posterity the dwindling evidence of a proud community.

Tales of Cutting-Edge Cocktails

Achieving his official, superstar status of "Global Ambassador of Tequila" was dependent on a degree for Brian Van Flandern. He needed one as a condition of getting the job to "travel the world to the highest-end hotels, restaurants and resorts to lecture on cocktails and spirits." He studied at the Metropolitan Center to fulfill the requirement. Now, the internationally in-demand mixologist reports that he is paid to get media attention while eating and drinking with his friends in the nicest places on earth. One of his top-shelf talents is designing recipes for food-friendly cocktails. He's produced dozens, including a version of the classic gin and tonic (with made-from-scratch tonic). He also creates cocktail menus for restaurants. Next on his ... errrr ... plate: a book, a TV show and marketing custom cocktail mixers.



Brian Van Flandern '04



Mission: Intelligence

The new principal deputy under secretary for intelligence and analysis (I&A) for the Department of Homeland Security is one of our own. Bart R. Johnson was named to the post recently by Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano. The Northeast Center graduate comes to the job after a stint as director of homeland security and law enforcement, where he was principal advisor to the director of national intelligence. He says he will make "a concerted effort to build on the accomplishments of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis," in his new role to enable the office to "evolve and mature," and "accept nothing but the utmost professionalism" in carrying out I&A's critical mission.

Previously, he served with the New York State Police for 25 years, rising from trooper to colonel and field commander as a leader in narcotics enforcement and counterterrorism. While he was a trooper, Johnson helped establish and command the Office of Counterterrorism following the 9/11 attacks. He also was co-chairman of the Global Advisory Committee and chairman of the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council.



Bart Johnson '04

Walkers Honored for Service

Tom and Mabel Walker, a Watertown couple, were named recipients of the Empire State College Citizens Laureate Award for their dedication to both North Country residents and Empire State College. The Walkers have established multiple endowments to honor the memories of their two daughters. Recently, they responded to a nationwide nursing shortage by establishing scholarships for enrollees in Empire State College's nursing program who are North Country residents. In the past, their charitable donations have helped more than 200 students pursue higher education at SUNY Potsdam and Jefferson Community College.



From left to right, Jefferson Community College President Carole McCoy, Mabel Walker '79, Foundation Board member Tom Walker and President Alan Davis.

Tom Walker has served on the boards of the Empire State College Foundation, the Jefferson/Lewis Board of Cooperative Educational Services and the Watertown School Board. He was a co-founder of Jefferson Community College Foundation and mayor of Watertown for two terms.

Mabel Walker was a diploma nurse who poured herself into parenting, patient care and civic commitments to such organizations as the Visiting Nurses Association and Red Cross Blood Bank. She helped co-found and lead Jefferson County Hospice. Mabel is a graduate of the Watertown Unit.

The Walkers also have been generous to Samaritan Medical Center, Watertown High School, Watertown Family YMCA, Tree Watertown, Jefferson County Historical Society and Watertown United Fund.

The Walkers, who married on Sept. 25, 1948, recently marked their 61st wedding anniversary.



Danielle Cote



Robert G. Nazzaro



Patricia Panepinto



Francesca Rizzo



Bonnie Warden

PHOTOS BY STOCK STUDIOS

Humanitarian Beliefs Inspire International Alumna

Kristina Žitnanová is dedicated to improving the prospects for refugees around the world, and she has joined the foremost international team to help do it: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland. A tireless relief worker, Žitnanová has traveled around the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Africa and Afghanistan to support humanitarian missions. Now she will be performing human rights reviews and learning



Kristina Žitnanová '09

about refugees' rights to asylum and remedies for racism, torture and the exploitation of their children. She considers the UNHCR's approach to assisting individuals separated from their native country, "the best because it's cooperative with other agencies." She is a polyglot who speaks Slovak, English, French, German and Arabic. The Prague Unit graduate is driven by her belief that positive change is possible and that she can contribute to solving global problems.

Five at the Fore

Five students were honored with the 2009 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, recognizing their academic excellence and leadership, community service, creative and performing arts or career achievement. Recipients of the SUNYwide prize were: Danielle Cote, Syracuse; Robert G. Nazzaro, Rochester; Patricia Panepinto, Albany; Francesca Rizzo, Rahway, N.J.; and Bonnie Warden, Painted Post.

- Cote is a business, management and economics major balancing study with a career finding technology solutions for the financial world. She came to the college after leaving a V.P. post at JPMorgan Chase. Next she wants to earn a master's degree so that she can teach. Cote is on the road 80 percent of the time, so the flexibility of online study is vital to her. When she's close to home, she is involved in charitable fundraising. She's also an Oswego's Women's Bowling Association Hall of Fame inductee.

- Nazzaro puts his bachelor's degree in community and human services to work running Rochester General Hospital's outpatient addiction services, as well as teaching health and physical education at Monroe Community College. He has an extensive background working with both adults with addictions and children with emotional difficulties. His professional passion is underlined by his volunteer activities in the community, serving similar populations. Nazzaro's ability to tend simultaneously to family, job and civic responsibilities has earned him the Rochester Area Colleges Continuing Education Committee Outstanding Student Award.

- Panepinto's bachelor's degree in community and human services was the springboard that gave her the confidence to found a local chapter of the national organization PFLAG – Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. The mother of a lesbian, Panepinto serves as an informal counselor for people dealing with sex and gender concerns. She also works in graduate admissions at the State University of New York at Albany. In the past, she received an Adirondack Trust Company Academic Scholarship and the college's Community Service Award.

- Rizzo is an award-winning multimedia artist whose body of work exemplifies excellence in both academics and the arts. Actress, writer/editor, mixed-media producer, filmmaker and graphic artist, Rizzo was inspired by her coursework toward her bachelor's degree in media arts to explore how women have been portrayed by media across time. She plans to start a nonprofit organization to teach the public about creating and using art. Rizzo won an award of merit from the Westfield (N.J.) Art Association.

- Warden walks a creative path leading toward her goal of writing about and photographing the environment. She also enjoys her work for Corning Community College in institutional research. The Bachelor of Arts degree graduate, who concentrated on environment and society, created "Environmental Studies Residency: A 10-Year Retrospective: 1997-2006." This college publication highlighted student, faculty and staff experiences at the residency. Warden also volunteers for community-based and campus-based organizations that support environmental protection.



Veterans Prepare for Future by Degrees

by Helen Susan Edelman

Four years ago, Ryan Smithson was in Iraq operating heavy construction equipment for the U.S. Army. Some days he was – literally – dodging bullets; others, he spent with Iraqi civilians, improving their living conditions. When there was time, he thought about going to college at the end of his deployment.

Now an Empire State College student, the 24-year-old has published “Ghosts of War,” a compelling memoir of his experience in the military that allows readers to march alongside him on his one-year stint in the Middle East.

“At 17, I joined the Army Reserves and the next year I went to Iraq. I knew on 9/11, when I saw that terrible attack on the World Trade Center, that I had to do something,” he says.

While in Iraq, Smithson realized he was “itching to attend college when I

Ryan Smithson

PHOTO BY STOCK STUDIOS

came home.” He was worried about being two years behind his peers in his education and his career, and wanted to make money so that he and his new wife could afford a house. He also was motivated by his platoon leader’s “street smarts and book smarts. He encouraged us to go to college. I emulated him.” Smithson’s transformation from G.I. to journalist after he returned from Iraq began in a Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) classroom with an assignment to write about something he saw destroyed. Emotions erupted as he composed the essay, and provoked tears in his teacher and classmates when he read it aloud. The unanticipated reaction inspired “Ghosts of War,” and led from his tour of duty to a book tour.

“That was the seed for me to work with my natural talent,” says Smithson,

who is a native of the Capital Region community of East Greenbush, in eastern New York. “I always had liked to write in high school but I didn’t have a reason. Now, it’s my therapy.”

He explored his raw recollections of devastation from war in class discussions and on paper, while earning an associate degree in criminal justice from HVCC. In 2008, he enrolled at Empire State College where he studies culture and history. Like many other Empire State College students, he is married, owns a home, and works full time for the American Red Cross. He also has taken exams to join the force of either the New York State Police or the New York City Police Department.

“There are lots of opportunities for me. When I was in high school, I thought I would be an auto mechanic,”

Smithson says. “Now, I think about going on at Empire State College for a Master of Arts in Teaching.”

He considers the State University of New York diploma a plus in the marketplace.

The college has been the ideal environment for Smithson, who checked out many schools before choosing it.

“I go part time, because I have to work, too. Empire State College is the most fluid program I found. You can take classes outside your major (area of concentration) and there are options for how you learn. I like that you can do things online, but I don’t want to have to. I like being in a classroom, sharing with others. And I like working with mentors to see where my path is leading.”

Student as Teacher

Smithson often interacts with students who are interested in the subject of war or in how their own writing may help investigate its impact on them.

One such class – War Stories – is team-taught by mentors Elaine Handley and Claudia Hough at the college’s Northeast Center outside of Albany. Smithson has met with the group to answer questions about his personal experiences both in the armed forces and as a writer.

Handley is working with about 10 students. She conceived a curriculum that blends small-group and independent study with online learning. Two veterans and one active-duty service member are signed up. Others drawn to enroll may be military family members or people



Ryan Smithson, center, at the New York State Capitol in Albany, speaking as part of a panel to educators about the needs and goals of veterans on campus.

who want to learn how to look at war from an academic perspective.

The class is consciously apolitical, Handley says, and is a safe forum where students can “pour their feelings and knowledge out if they’re ready and want to.”

During the term, Handley and Hough pose a series of questions to the class in the form of writing assignments, among them: What messages did you receive about war as you were growing up? What is heroism?

“We developed War Stories with veterans in mind. We hope they’ll take the course early in their careers as students so that they have a chance to process what they’ve been through, develop critical writing and thinking skills, and get used to an academic culture.”

~ Mentor Elaine Handley

“Some veterans feel like a ‘bad fit’ with life and people after the service. But, in your own writing, you can manage what you express. It helps restore a sense of control,” says Handley. “Some want to talk about the time they spent in the military helping to build schools or in interactions with civilians instead of about fighting.”

Office Smooths Transition

Last spring, 750 active-duty service members and veterans were enrolled at Empire State College. The number will increase steadily as more of the two million post-9/11 veterans who are eligible take advantage of the new GI Bill, which took effect last summer. The legislation helps pay for post-9/11 veterans to attend college.



Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs James McDonough, above right, speaking about veteran education at the NYS Capitol.

The New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs has located a counselor at Empire State College in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., with the college providing an office where veterans who want to pursue their education can find support.

Director of the division, retired Col. James McDonough, praised the partnership as a demonstration of “a shared commitment to helping student-veterans, veterans in the community and their families by offering onsite access to professional veterans' benefits and counseling services available through our agency.”

Says McDonough, “When I wore our country's uniform, I always pushed soldiers to better themselves through education, and around the world. Empire State College already has the reputation of being a military-friendly college. Now, by becoming more veteran-friendly, the college is providing veterans dedicated resources inside the system to help them succeed. Benefits-counseling resources onsite will serve our veterans well, and I applaud the leaders of Empire State College for turning the concept into reality.”

In addition to accessing the GI Bill, students enrolling at Empire State College also may apply for financial assistance from the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation.

To respond to the anticipated influx of students, Empire State College has established the collegewide Office of Veteran and Military Education (OVME). The office is a dedicated central point of services to help smooth the transition from the armed forces

to college for individuals who want to advance their education toward a career, or to satisfy personal aspirations, and whose schedule already includes family, work and civic commitments. The OVME will steer students through challenges such as identifying tuition assistance resources, completing application forms, honing study skills, and shaping an appropriate academic concentration.

Directed by Linda Frank '98, '00, who has worked with the military population for 14 years through the college's Center for Distance Learning, OVME will "help veterans through the process of coming to college and being in college," she says.

She notes that while most veterans in the past would study business, more are veering toward cultural studies and history, or ultimately want to teach or pursue other careers. Students now can either leave their military training behind and embrace a complete change of career, or follow a more familiar path and concentrate on homeland security or emergency management.

"We also want them to tell us what they want and need," says Frank, noting that OVME will address what she perceives as escalating demands in the active military for an educated workforce to deal with evolving technologies and to assume leadership roles. One advantage for students who attend Empire State College is that prior learning – in school or military training, through certification exams or life experience – can be assessed for credit toward their degree program, putting them closer to their degrees than a more traditional approach would permit.

She adds that the college supports military personnel who are not students as well, and each year "adopts" troops overseas, sending them care packages and letters. Additionally, Empire State College is the educational partner in The Guardian Angel Gathering House, a Ballston Spa, N.Y.-based project to establish the first nonprofit residence for homeless female veterans in the Capital Region.

She points to the success of the Empire State College program at Fort Drum near Watertown, in northern New York, which enables members of the armed forces to pursue educational goals while they are on active duty, in the reserves, or retired, whether they



One of the Top Military-friendly Colleges

"Military Advanced Education," the journal of higher learning for service members who want to take advantage of education benefits, named Empire State College as one of the top military-friendly colleges and universities in the United States.

"We are truly committed to understanding the needs of military students, and offering educational, financial and administrative support to help them achieve their educational goals," says Linda Frank, director of the college's Office of Veteran and Military Education. "We will continue to ensure that our students have the flexibility and support they need to complete their studies while serving their country."

The college also is a member of Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC), a consortium of colleges and universities that provide educational opportunities for service members and their families. Empire State College has ongoing partnerships with the Army, Navy, Army National Guard, Coast Guard and Department of Defense.

are in the United States or overseas. The individualized programs operated from Fort Drum allow service members to study online, which means they can log onto a class from Afghanistan as well as from New York, which faculty is sensitized to accommodate.

The personal growth in a service member emerging as a college student can be exponential, even when life is unreliable. Smithson, for example, recognizes he could be called to active duty any day, and asserts he will pack if he is, but currently is charting both his next semester and his next book. He now knows he can be a G.I., a writer and a student all at the same time.

For more information on the Office of Veteran and Military Education, visit www.esc.edu/Military or www.esc.edu/Veterans.

Grant Supports Vets in College

Empire State College has been chosen to receive a \$100,000 American Council on Education (ACE) and Wal-Mart Foundation Success for Veterans Award Grant. The funds support the college's program for advancing access and success in higher education for veterans and their families.

The grant will help expand and enhance the college's support services for veterans, and create training designed to heighten faculty and staff awareness of the challenges veterans face as they pursue a college education.

Shaping Who We Are

A Conversation with
Robert Clougherty



by Helen Susan Edelman



Robert Clougherty

New technologies enable human beings to communicate with each other faster and more prolifically than ever before in history. But the technologies are only delivery systems. It takes people to filter and interpret information we send and receive to create its meaning. Robert Clougherty, Ph.D., dean of the Center for Graduate Programs, spent an afternoon talking about the changing shape of data, its role in the exchange of ideas, and how Empire State College embodies the “principles of agility” that make it a leader in student-centered education.

Q: “Information” is at the epicenter of our culture right now. You have imagined a model for the way it looks and moves these days. Can you describe it?

A: We have shifted from a linear model to a Web-based model of information. That means that things we know are not separate points, but interconnected in a complex arrangement, like a constellation instead of a string. It makes information three-dimensional – we can dig into its depth or explore its breadth. Also, in this model, there is no hierarchy. Some points may be more important or relevant at a certain time, but the others are not excluded and may be used later. The Web enables people to have relationships to each other and to bits of information, and allows the pieces to be brought together to make a whole picture. It is a dynamic, not a static, system, always changing.

Q: So people who have access to information can make connections?

A: All people have access to information and connections, whether or not they use technology. Technology actually shapes the way in which all of us can and do view the world; it is a metaphor for understanding.

Q: You are fond of quoting Heraclitus, who said, “You cannot step into the same river twice,” and “There is nothing permanent except change.” You assert that he was the first ancient philosopher (sixth century B.C.) to discuss the world as a complex, intertwined entity in a constant state of flux. What bearing does his world view have on contemporary thought and innovation?

A: I believe the concept of the individual is naïve. Knowledge comes from engagement. It is not a permanent body of information, but fluid and evolving – what we know and what we can know.



Technology enables the interconnectivity of people and information.

“Agility in this context means flexibility, interactivity, the capacity to work collaboratively and to change roles on a team, valuing individuals over the tools they use.”

~ Robert Clougherty

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus understood this, and what he was expressing is that nothing stays the same, even information. You can’t step in the same river twice because the second time, new waters already have flowed into the space. An individual is not a “knowing” being in a vacuum, but has been manipulated by his parents, living conditions, etc. So even when you’re alone, and thinking, you’re creating an artificial history and an artificial future of selected, interpreted facts that are reconstructed and will be used to interact with the world. We’re all products of the world around us, not autonomous entities without influence. Content alone is an empty shell.

Q: Can you give an example of the way this interactivity with information works in real time?

A: Think about Wikipedia. Information is edited and updated all the time by users to accommodate new data. Producers are consumers. Senders are receivers. We also see this model in social networking. For example, in the Center for Graduate Programs, our students and faculty can stay in touch with each other via Twitter ([esc_grad_dean](#)), two Nings, two wet paint Wiki’s ([escgraddean.wetpaint.com](#)), a blog, a LinkedIn community group, a Facebook fan page, a Del.Icio.Us bookmark site, and more recently, we have begun to explore the use of World of Warcraft.

Q: Are you saying the information itself isn’t important?

A: No. I’m saying it’s not enough. People don’t just need information. They need to know how to organize it, process it and evaluate it. There’s so much out there we don’t know how to deal with it. When I was an undergraduate student studying Saint Augustine, I would go

to the library and get out all six books. Now I do a Google search on Augustine and I get 20 million hits. We need to figure out which ones have value and how to put them together.

It's not about delivering information; it's about what we deliver and what we can create of it. In the new model, instead of a person having "intellectual property rights" over information he or she has thought of or recorded, there is no ownership of information. It's an "open" model, like software which anyone can go into and adapt for their own use.

Q: The concept of an organization's "agility" is a central one in your evaluation of how effective it is in responding to meet the needs of people it serves. How do you apply this word to an organization, and, specifically, what are the implications for Empire State College?

A: "Agility" in this context means flexibility, interactivity, the capacity to work collaboratively and to change roles on a team, valuing individuals over the tools they use, which have no significance without the user, and valuing discourse over delivery. In simpler terms, an agile organization is "user friendly" and meets needs instead of sitting there passively and forcing consumers to go in after it. Here's an example: It used to be that software had comprehensive documentation because the use of it was not intuitive, so the user would have to look up how to perform a function; now the software brings answers proactively to the user and most functions are a click away on the menu bar. That's how it should be. Agile. In education, we had e-learning that just replicated a classroom. It was generic for students, who would have to log on and look for information. Now, we have e-learning that creates a personal learning environment.

Q: How does agility work in a college setting, especially at Empire State College?

A: When I was in school, I had to write three papers in one semester on the same subject: Karl Marx. Wouldn't it have made more sense for me to write about Karl Marx and post it on my blog, and let the three professors read my thoughts in one place? This is the age of customization. Instead of a student reaching many professors, many professors can reach one student. That's

agile. Topics are naturally related; in the "agile" humanities we get out of our silos and can recognize interdisciplinary study. Empire State College is not rigid and allows learners to approach an area of interest from many directions, and to learn about it using different tools – online, in groups, through books, and so on. Mentors and students at Empire State College also design a degree program together; the process is an interactive negotiation, not an inflexible plan. In this way the college embodies the principles of agility.

Dr. Robert Clougherty is dean of the Center for Graduate Programs. He has a broad interdisciplinary background in the humanities and learning technologies. He was the founding director of the Institute for Technological Scholarship, and served as director of the Tennessee Advanced Computing Technologies Institute and director of the Web Design Program at Tennessee Tech University, the first of its kind in the country. Dr. Clougherty was a Fulbright Scholar in Uppsala, Sweden, is nationally recognized for his work in e-learning and Web applications, and has published and presented widely in this area. He holds a B.A. from Villanova University, an M.A. in English from Texas Women's University, and a Ph.D. in modern letters from the University of Tulsa.



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Connect with Empire State College

In January 2008, the Empire State College Office of Alumni and Student Relations created a college-branded, alumni online community allowing alumni to engage in private social and professional networking. We also created official group pages on the major public social networks with Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube that are open to alumni, students, staff, faculty and supporters. So far more than 4,000 alumni have joined the online community. Here they are able to connect and network with fellow alumni, search for jobs, join groups, upload photos and offer or request career advice. This community was recognized as Best of Category by State University of New York Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD).

More than 1,000 alumni and students have joined our Facebook fan page and about 800 have joined our official pages on the other social networking sites. Alumni can connect their Facebook profile directly to the college's alumni online community profile and receive the latest college news and opportunities while in their Facebook account. How cool is that!

We invite all Empire State College alumni to join the online community and get connected! You can find us at www.esc.edu/AlumniCommunity.



Dancing Through Life

by Cari Scribner

Wendy Perron '00, center, with Renee Robinson, left, and Matthew Rushing, right, lead dancers with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

A dancer's on-stage time can be fleeting; a dozen years or so, with the final curtain call often coming before the age of 30. But along the way, a performer's artistic journey brings a wealth of real-life experiences that can serve as stepping stones to an off-stage career.

The challenge is putting this all together in a way that will be meaningful for the dancer's future. Enter stage left, Empire State College.

Dozens of professional dancers have been matched with mentors at the college who've helped them translate their life experiences into college credit, organize their academic schedule, and map out a path to a long-term career.

Many say their experience at the college was instrumental in keeping them in the field – even after they hung up their dance shoes – and allowing them to help newcomers to the stage hone their talents.

The dancing editor

A dancer and writer at heart, Wendy Perron segued one successful career into another, fulfilling both dreams after earning her master's degree at Empire State College in 2000.

Savvy about the need to keep up her education while

performing, Perron graduated from Bennington College in 1969, continuing her career with the Trisha Brown Dance Company and founding her own company in the 1980s.

"My most active years as a dancer were the '80s," Perron says. "By 1999, I was petering out. A dance career is short as it is, but I also was dealing with a back injury that put limits on my opportunities."

In 1995, Perron's life plan took a detour after her husband became disabled as the result of an accident.

"I needed to get a job, and I realized a master's degree would open so many more doors," Perron says.

She forged new territory at Empire State College, working towards her Master of Arts degree in liberal studies.

"I took so many incredible courses, from public health to education to science, all of which knit all areas of my life together in one neat package," Perron says. "The interdisciplinary nature of my classes fit exactly what I was looking for. Everyone was an adult when I was in class; they'd had their own lives. It was real-life learning."

A seasoned critic for SoHo Weekly News, Perron had her first full article published in Dance Magazine in 1973, something that proved to be a harbinger of things to come.

"I learned to keep my ideas focused, and to write for the readers," Perron says. "I learned how to research and maintain a balance in everything I wrote."

Today, Perron is editor-in-chief of Dance Magazine, a highly regarded publication with an 80-year history.

"I feel I'm serving the dance community and that's very fruitful for me," says Perron. "So many people give up their dreams, but I've been able to hold fast to them."

Decades of dancing

When they first met at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Sandy Stone '98 and

Mary Cochran '02 were high school students with budding dance careers just around the corner. Little did they know they were destined for parallel futures, garnering artistic acclaim in the same prestigious dance troupe, then successfully earning their degrees at Empire State College.

Before the age of 20, Cochran and Stone started touring with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, launching stage careers that lasted for a decade.

"Mary and I are like blood sisters," Stone says. "You get to be a real family when you're on the road. You work together and live together."

Stone was the first to connect with Empire State College. She earned her bachelor's degree with a concentration in education in 1998, an achievement she still considers life-changing.

"My work at Empire State helped me shape

"The interdisciplinary nature of my classes fit exactly what I was looking for."

~ Wendy Perron

my ideas, clarify my goals and improved my critical thinking to an incredible degree," Stone says. "When you're a dancer on tour, you're led around and given instruction from someone else. My college work made me an adult. It freed me to



PHOTO BY MATTHEW KARRAS FOR DANCE MAGAZINE

Mary Cochran '02 demonstrates her dancer's agility and flexibility

think independently and become my own leader. I feel very lucky to have experienced that."

Stone recommended Empire State College to her friend, Mary, who connects her college work with her now flourishing career.

college credits that required lots of paperwork on her part.

"I wrote a syllabus and extensive essays, and went before a committee to account for my work on stage," Cochran recalls. "It was empowering for me."

Cochran went on to earn a master's in fine arts at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and is now chairwoman and artistic director of the dance department at Barnard College of Columbia University.

Over the years, Cochran has helped dancers map out career plans for their lives after they end active performing, encouraging them to pursue higher education even when they are still working dancers.

“The model used to be that young people were waiters and waitresses and just got by at the poverty level, and thought about their futures in the future,” Cochran says. “Now, they plan ahead and look further down the line. It’s a great thing to be an artist, and then support the field and stay in it for the long run.”

Stone is equally satisfied with her career. After teaching dance at the Boston Conservatory for eight years, she opened her own studio, Rise Visual Performing Arts, on Martha’s Vineyard.

The two women stay in touch through visits and phone calls and remain engaged in a lifelong bond brought about by shared experiences, talents and education.

And now for some fun

Adam Schnell takes his dance career very seriously. That said, he’s also a consummate entertainer, happy to parody classical ballet and infuse humor into his work at every turn.

Now touring in Japan as guest artist with Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, the world’s foremost all-male comedic ballet troupe, Schnell is earning 8 Empire State College credits while on the road. He’ll apply the credits toward his bachelor’s degree in dance education and arts management, a degree he’s been pursuing through distance learning. Schnell plans to move off the

stage and into a teaching environment this fall.

“I started my degree to shore up my technical knowledge of both teaching and the business side of the arts,” Schnell says. “I knew I needed to flesh out some of the more complicated and theoretical aspects of those knowledge areas. In the fall, I am planning to teach more, and also use my management degree to start a dance festival or seasonal performing troupe.”

The fact that there’s Internet access in almost every corner of the globe made it possible for Schnell to study while in New York, Nebraska, Florida, Nevada and Japan. He says distance learning suited his needs as well as his favorite broken-in dance shoes.

“I was absolutely shocked at how easy it was for me to obtain my undergraduate degree via distance learning,” Schnell said.

“I’m a very self-motivated person, and the idea that I could work when I needed to within the parameters of each course was ideal for my performance schedule. Also, being able to check out at the end of the day and focus on something other than ballet made me more energized and renewed in my career.”

If it’s physical, it’s therapy

Hailing from South Africa, Estelle Tsalik danced in her native country for years before coming to the U.S. to perform with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

During that time, Tsalik became aware of the limits placed on dancers with injuries – especially those that shorten their time on stage and often force retirement by their mid-20s. She researched online college programs and chose Empire State College for its flexibility and attention to each student as a unique individual.

“For me, Empire State was a perfect transition from stage to a lifelong career in physical therapy,” Tsalik says. “People who work on injuries who have a dance background are especially valuable. There are lots of opportunities for me now.”

Tsalik celebrated her online graduation in 2008, and is working towards her advanced degree while raising her two children.

“If it wasn’t for Empire State,” says Tsalik, “none of this would have been possible.”



Estelle Tsalik '08



PHOTO BY BROCK HAYHIDE

Adam Schnell, front, performing with the world’s foremost all-male comedic ballet troupe

Portfolio

ART



Capturing the Colors of Life Under a Tuscan Sun

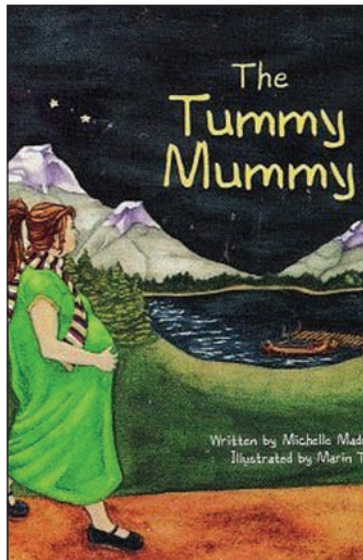
Carol Acquilano '97

Painter, printmaker and bookbinder, Carol Acquilano '97, Genesee Valley Center, has multiple identities. In March, she, along with two other women artists, held an exhibit, "Inspiration Italy: Three Women Paint the Heart of Tuscany." The women traveled through Tuscany to Cortona, a hill town in Italy.

She also has just completed a self-published book of watercolors, "A Sketchbook of Cortona," which is selling in two stores in Cortona, Italy. Fellow artist Jim Mott says of Acquilano's work, "More than any artist I know, Carol Acquilano lives and breathes paint, thinks and feels with it. In turn, her paintings – as a body of work – reflect more of the complete spectrum of her consciousness than most painters' work."

You can see a selection of her paintings at www.carolacquilano.com.

BOOKS



Adoption Means Love and So Much More

Michelle Madrid-Branch '06

Adoption Means Love (AML) Foundation's founder, Michelle Madrid-Branch '06, Hudson Valley Center, is a former television news anchor and the author of a growing series of children's books on adoption, including the highly acclaimed "The Tummy Mummy," and the adult oriented "Adoption Means Love, Triumph of the Heart." Madrid-Branch and her husband, Jeff Branch, a real estate developer, formed the AML Foundation with the vision that "all adoptable children will find the loving families destined to be theirs, and the world will celebrate adoption on every continent." That vision is alive and growing in the state of New Mexico, where AML is focusing on its work to support children in foster care and to educate and advocate on their behalf. The recipient of many awards, Madrid-Branch is the adoptive parent of a little boy from Russia.

BOOKS



Native-American Life Brought to Life for Children

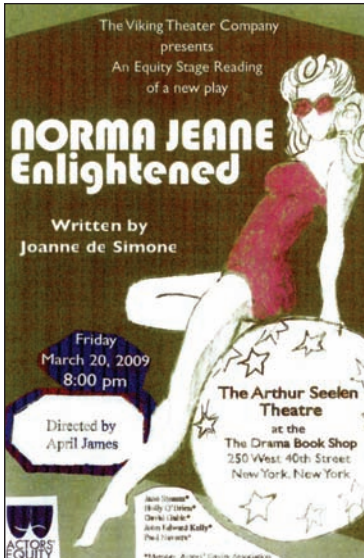
Carol Marie Davis '80

Carol Marie Davis '80, Hudson Valley Center, had to transport her imagination back to a time "thousands of years ago" as she wrote the children's book, "The Adventures of Moon Spirit." The story outlines the adventures of a Native-American girl living on the Gulf Coast in Florida. Although the book is a work of fiction, Davis says that it is based on historical evidence. She also credited her experiences as a volunteer docent leading archeology tours for students at Historic Spanish Point in Osprey, Fla.

Davis divides her time between Nokomis, Fla. and Bennington, Vt. She has worked as an art teacher, and also is a contributing writer and photographer for Venice Gulf Coast Living magazine.

Portfolio

DRAMA



Marilyn Monroe Onstage in the Afterlife

Joanne de Simone '07

Last March, the Viking Theatre Co. presented a stage reading of a new play, "Norma Jeane Enlightened," written by Joanne de Simone '07, Hudson Valley Center. The play is a dramatic fantasy in which Marilyn Monroe, following her death, finds herself in a "curious place" and is met by a spiritual mentor. She is then guided through a reconciliation of her life on earth through encounters of significant people from her past. The reading was done at The Drama Book Shop in Manhattan. "Norma Jeane Enlightened" is de Simone's third theatrically produced play. Her "500 Rummy" was showcased at The Producer's Club in 2006, and "The Suicide Angel" is currently in feature film preproduction. De Simone has recently published a young adult book, "The Metro Cats: Life in the Core of the Big Apple." Her newest book, "Rhythms and Reflections in the Order of Life," is to be released in early 2010.

ART



"Drawing" on Life – It's a "New Yorker" Thing

Barbara Smaller '96

Barbara Smaller's graduation from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies came at a particularly sweet time. As she was about to receive her diploma, she got word that she had sold a cartoon to The New Yorker which, to a cartoonist, is the equivalent of a mountaineer scaling the Himalayas.

Smaller's first sale was to the National Lampoon in the mid-'70s. Now, she sells "a couple of cartoons a month" to The New Yorker. She estimates that the magazine has bought a total of 300 cartoons.

Smaller gauges whether a cartoon is funny by whether she is amused by it. "Usually, I know that it's funny," she says. If she tries to think of what others would find funny, she wouldn't be able to cartoon as successfully. "It's interesting which cartoons get sold," she says, admitting that it's gratifying to see people wearing T-shirts emblazoned with her work.

* THE NEW YORKER COLLECTION 1999 BARBARA SMALLER
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MUSIC



Purr-fectly Penned to Give One "Paws"

Gary Shiebler '93

Gary Shiebler '93, Hudson Valley Center, is an award-winning singer and songwriter who has produced and written for such country music legends as Tanya Tucker, Bobby Bare, George Jones, Patty Loveless, Merle Haggard and Porter Wagoner, to name a few. His love for animals, especially dogs, cats and horses, and his work as a humane educator at the nationally recognized Helen Woodward Animal Center in Southern California, inspired him to write "The Power of Paws," "The Power of Purrs" and the critically acclaimed "A Search for the Perfect Dog." In the fall, Shiebler will release a sister book, "A Search for the Perfect Cat."

Share something from
your portfolio. Send it
to Alumni@esc.edu.



Rebecca Fraser

by Barbara O. Rivera '05

"They teach me!"

This enthusiastic description of her students comes from Rebecca Fraser, mentor at The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies and the college's 2009 recipient of the highly regarded Excellence in Mentoring Award.

Fraser has been teaching trade union apprentices, primarily from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), for the past five years. She says she learns a great deal about the construction world through their stories and contends that working with nontraditional students in the Labor Studies program is a co-learning experience.

She has integrated into her mentoring the role of writing specialist, and encourages her students to become more aware of the significance and value of their trade work and to better understand the unique histories of their professions.

"Everyone can write and everyone's writing can be interesting," she says.

Fraser acknowledges that writing is not a skill regularly used by trade workers, but she regularly convinces them of its importance, often motivating them by asking them to think about who is telling the stories of blue-collar workers.

She tells them, "If you don't tell your story, no one will tell it, or someone else will tell it wrong."

Her encouragement and instruction has led to remarkable work from her students. In fact, she recently compiled an anthology of their best writing, which is used as a textbook for some of the Labor Center courses.

Fraser earned a B.A. from Thiel College, an M.A. from Radford University and a Ph.D. from New York University.

When she is not working at the college, she is likely engaging in a variety of different pursuits, from gardening and jewelry-making to writing and reading.

Books on her nightstand? She says among the most recently read and enjoyed are "The Invention of Hugo Cabret" by Brian Selznick and "Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work" by Matthew B. Crawford.

Alumni COMMUNITY

Center for Distance Learning

The Norwich University Chapter has selected **Paul Annetts '01, '03** as an honorary member of Alpha Phi Sigma, National Criminal Justice Honor Society.

Photographer and photo illustrator **Kim Cady '07** has held exhibits throughout Tennessee including Clarksville Customs House, the Jewish Community Center and HA Gallery.

Jacqueline Cataldo '06 is working toward a graduate degree in counseling psychology at Seton Hall. She is a contributing editor and writer with Bright Hub, Inc., an online technology forum site, and online tutor with Tutor.com

Cristy Dwyer '08, '09 has written "Queen Lili'uokalani's Imprisonment Quilt: Indomitable Spirits in Protest Cloth," an article about the life of a Hawaiian queen and the quilts that chronicle her life and monarchy. The article will be published in the journal, *Femspec*. If interested in viewing the quilts visit www.femspec.org.

Joyce Evans '07 is a health literacy volunteer at a hospital near her Brooklyn home and shares health information with diabetic patients about managing multiple medications. "It is a way for me to use my degree in community and human services and give back to the community," says Evans.

Barbara Feichtner '08 has been promoted to admissions office coordinator with Webster University's Vienna campus. She attributes the promotion to her work experience in the admissions office and having earned her Bachelor of Arts degree.

Robert Gottesman '02 has been awarded a master's degree in education from Grand Canyon University, Arizona.

Christopher Howell '04, who has been an officer with the U.S. Virgin Islands Police Department since 1992, was named St. Croix deputy police chief. He has expertise in investigating local, national and international drug and weapons trafficking, as well as surveillance. Howell's most recent assignment was with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force.

Center for Graduate Programs

The CASE Quarter Century Award, in recognition of contributions to the advancement profession by individuals who have served in the field for at least 25 years, has been given to **Paul Adamo '99**, vice president for college advancement and executive director of the College at Oneonta Foundation. CASE is an international association of education advancement officers and related professionals encompassing more than 700 colleges and schools in the mid-Atlantic region.

The Make a Difference Medal was bestowed on **Anthony Ciuffo '82, '96** by the Town of Hempstead in recognition of his selflessness and desire to enrich the lives of his neighbors. He founded and directed the Franklin Square Athletic Association Karate Program, is former assistant manager of the Franklin Square Little League, and founded the Challenger Program on Long Island so that physically and mentally challenged children could enjoy the little league experience. Every Sunday he visits the homebound and the sick in Franklin Hospital Medical Center and has been a benefactor and supporter of the Little Sisters of the Poor of the Queen of Peach Residence. Ciuffo, who holds a Ph.D. from Union Institute and University, has taught business on a college level; been



Mark Collazo '01, '08

As director of the Respiratory Care Department at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital, Mark Collazo is excited about the upgrading of all of the department's life support systems to help patients have "perfect synchrony with their respiratory devices."

Collazo credits his Empire State College degrees for helping him climb the career ladder at the hospital. After emigrating from Spain as an 18-year-old, he worked as a bike messenger as he studied for a degree in respiratory therapy in New York City. He eventually took a job as a food service aid at the hospital, which allowed him to get his foot in the door. He later moved on to the Respiratory Care Department, and continued his studies for his degree. He was fortunate that his union paid for his education. He chose Empire State College for its flexibility, which allowed him to work full time at the same time that he was completing his education. In 2001, he earned his B.S. in health services from the Hudson Valley Center. He went on to earn an M.A. in labor and policy studies from the Center for Graduate Programs, where he focused on the management of the Respiratory Care Department.

"Thanks to Empire State College, today I am the director for the R.C. Department. I am extremely grateful for the extraordinary faculty at the college. It is a world-class education with unsurpassed flexibility," Collazo says.

continued on page 19

Continued from page 18

special assistant for business development to the mayor of New Hyde Park; and is the author of “Leadership: Caveman to Modern Man,” which traces the evolution of those who have possessed leadership attributes throughout the ages.

Thomas Griffiths ’07, certified master chef and associate dean of global cuisine at The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), received the American Culinary Federation’s Chef Educator of the Year Award for the Northeast Region. Having graduated, with honors, from the CIA in 1980, he has since held chef positions with the United Nations, Le Cirque and has been executive chef for Gardner Merchant Food Service, in addition to having his own catering business. He was a member of the CIA culinary team in 2000 which earned numerous gold medals at the Hotelympia competition and the International Culinary Art Exhibition.

Michael Ogden ’06, who previously held the position of vice president of administrative services with Community Memorial Hospital of Hamilton, has been named president and chief executive officer of Little Falls Hospital. He is board president for the Central New York Area Health Education Center and the Madison County Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Center for International Programs

Both **Mikhail Kuznetsov ’07** and **Alena Shulakova ’08** transferred credit from Omsk State University, Siberia, Russia and completed their degrees with Empire State College. They will return to Omsk State University for a fifth year of study for a Master of Business Administration degree. They also have been accepted for graduate study in the United States. Kuznetsov, a merit scholarship recipient, has been accepted into the Computational Finance Program of Carnegie Mellon University. Shulakova has been accepted into the Master of Arts in International Economics and Finance Program of Brandeis University.

Yamen Tehfe ’00 has accepted a position as food and beverage manager with Moevenpick Hotel, Kuwait.

Central New York Center

Nominated by her staff, **Lorraine Kinney-Kitchen ’99** was recognized at the YWCA of the Mohawk Valley Salute to Outstanding Women for “demonstrated excellence and leadership in their career paths and communities.” She is executive director of the Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council, which trains childcare providers, conducts programs to increase child literacy and gives referrals to those needing childcare.

Genesee Valley Center

As a final requirement for her Bachelor of Arts degree with a concentration in visual arts, **Denise Atherton ’05** held an exhibit, “Organic in Nature,” at the Belfast Library, Cuba.

Having graduated with merit and delivered her dissertation with distinction, **Lynn Holley ’76** has been awarded a Master of Arts degree in museum studies from the University of Leicester, England. She has embarked on a new career as an independent curator and art consultant and as such sells art for collectors; works with international painter, sculptor and filmmaker Rita Blitt; and consults on estate planning for art collections. Holley is co-founder of the Fine Arts Film Festival which debuts this year in Santa Barbara, Calif., where she makes her home.

As a reflection of her concern for the environment, **Karen Kuhn ’05**, a fourth grade teacher at Hornell Intermediate School, teaches the three R’s: reduce, reuse and recycle. Each year, in celebration of Earth Day, she plans activities for her class such as planting trees and picking up trash.

Following retirement, **Ron McIntosh ’90**, who holds an M.A. degree in mass communications from Pittsburg State University, is an adjunct instructor in public speaking at Pasco Hernando Community College.



Left to right, Lue Turner, Genesee Valley Center faculty member, student Gerriane Puskas and American Cancer Society employees at the Making Strides Walk in Rochester.

The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies

Following a career in the airline industry, **Sheri Weiner '97** has started a Web site business: www.BarkingWorld.com

Hudson Valley Center

Having earned a Ph.D. from the Union Institute, **Frieda Birnbaum '86** is a psychotherapist with a private practice and the author of "What Price Power." In 2007, at age 60, Birnbaum gave birth to twins. At that time, she was the oldest woman in America to have done so.

Barbara Kraft '85, who holds an M.B.A. from Long Island University, has been elected a trustee for the Village of Rhinebeck.

Lester Millman '97 is senior political advisor to Dan Schoor who is campaigning for Westchester County district attorney.

Barry Strutt '83, a partner in Keegan, Keegan, Keegan and Strutt, LLP, represented Vincent Pastore, the actor who portrayed Big Pussy on "The Sopranos."

Wendy Townsend '00, a graduate of Vermont College's M.F.A. in Writing for Children and Young Adults Program, has written her debut fiction novel, "Lizard Love," which has been published by Front Street Books and received a Booklist Starred Review. A second novel, "The Sundown Rule," is in the hands of her editor. Since 2004, Townsend has led summer weekend intensive workshops in writing for children at Empire State College and has recently begun offering writing workshops near her home in the Catskills.

Long Island Center

Laurie Coleman '08 has been accepted by the University of Toronto, and in the fall of 2009 began study toward her master's degree in social work.

Scott Holliday '02 served 25 years with the Fire Department of New York before retiring as deputy chief of emergency medical service training and has accepted the position of associate director of St. John's University Emergency Medical Services Institute. He completed his term as chief of the Mineola Fire Department and has published articles in Fire Engineering magazine and The Voice, a publication of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors.

Mindy Kronenberg '96 is an award-winning poet, writer and critic with over 350 poems, essays and reviews published in the U.S. and abroad. Her professional writing experience includes film, animation and theater. She is the author of "Dismantling the Playground," a book of poems, and editor-in-chief of Book/Mark Quarterly Review, a journal of reviews of independent and university press books. She was a teaching assistant for both U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott at the Southampton Writers Conference. Since 1996, Kronenberg has taught writing and literature at Empire State College and is a frequent lecturer and workshop leader in programs sponsored by Poets & Writers and BOCES. "My experience as a former student at the college has greatly enhanced my perspective as a mentor – and has informed my pedagogy in a creative and supportive way," said Kronenberg. The late mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead stated "The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life, by uniting the young and old in the imaginative consideration of learning ... the task of a university is to weld together imagination and experience. I have embraced this idea in my own teaching practices at Empire State College."

Frank Mackay '01 is national chairman of the newly formed Independence Party of America, chairman of the Independence Party of New York and leader of the party in Suffolk County.

Carolyn Niemczyk '74 has made a career in commercial real estate and currently works in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Hughes Named Interim Chairman of Federal Reserve Bank



Denis Hughes '93, '99

Denis Hughes, who graduated from The Harry Van Arsdale Jr. Center for Labor Studies and who is president of the 2.5-million-member New York State AFL-CIO, has been named interim chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. He succeeds Stephen J. Friedman. According to The New York Times, Friedman resigned after an article in the Wall Street Journal criticized his ties to his former employer, Goldman Saks. Hughes previously was the deputy chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank. He also is a commissioner for the New York State Insurance Fund.

The former journeyman electrician, who enjoys motorcycling in his free time, joined the state AFL-CIO, an umbrella organization that encompasses 3,000 unions in New York, as a political director and assistant to the president in 1985. In 1990, he was promoted to the position of executive assistant to the president before assuming the presidency in 1999. As his official bio explains, he has "made creating a more mobile, active and aggressive statewide labor movement a top priority ... [and has] set the tone for organizing new members into the movement and has led the way in developing proactive legislative and political statewide strategy."

Having begun her career as a psychiatric nurse, **Susannah W. Simpson '05**, a poet and writer whose poetry and creative writing pieces have appeared in over 30 national literary journals, now brings the joy and healing power of poetry and creative writing to patients at the VA and psychiatric hospitals, to senior citizens in adult cultural and educational settings, and to adult learners at the Nassau County Museum of Art. She has received grants from Poets & Writers to provide community-based creative writing classes. Simpson writes, "I have been rocketed into the fourth dimension by my experience at Empire State College. A pivotal moment occurred when my mentor suggested I consider pursuing a master's degree so that I could teach." She followed her mentor's advice and earned an M.F.A. at Bennington College. Simpson is a mentor and director of academic support services at the college's Long Island Center. She is enrolled in SUNY Binghamton's creative writing program and has a special interest in literature of the Vietnam War.

Juanita Torrence-Thompson '83 gave a reading of her poems, including "We'll Always Have Queensborough Bridge," as part of the 100th anniversary celebration of the Queensborough Bridge, held by Long Island City Library.

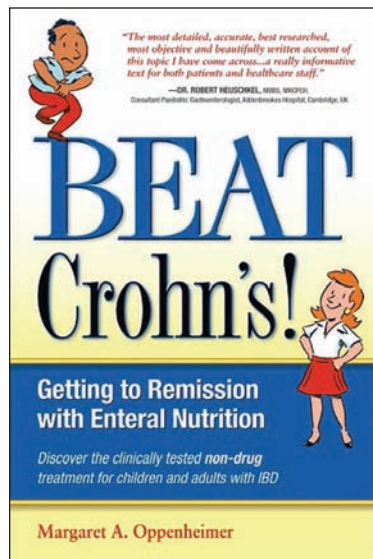
Metropolitan Center

Barbara Bethea '97, '99, a graduate of the Verizon Corporate College Program, has been elected president of the National Association for Poetry Therapy.

Sidney Gluck '79 chaired China's Contribution to Socialism and Democracy in the 21st Century, a panel at Left Forum 2009. The forum is a gathering of intellectuals and activists from around the world whose purpose for meeting is to address the burning issues of our time. Turning Points was the theme.

Debbie Harewood '86 is the southern division administration manager for the National Marine Manufacturers Association, and is responsible for the

Alumna publishes book on Crohn's Disease



Margaret Oppenheimer '86

Margaret Oppenheimer's book, "Beat Crohn's! Getting to Remission with Enteral Nutrition," (Solutions, 2009) was published in June. In it, Oppenheimer '86, Genesee Valley Center, writes about the advantages of a liquid formula diet in treating Crohn's disease, an inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract, which can appear at any age, for anyone.

The book supports enteral nutrition – used in conjunction with, or instead of a normal diet, and covers such topics as treatment options, and Crohn's in children.

Crohn's disease is thought to be an autoimmune illness. The body's own immune system begins to attack what it

perceives as foreign elements in the gastro-intestinal tract, including food and bacteria.

With her book, Oppenheimer aims to make life easier for people with Crohn's.

"I felt patients deserved to know about this therapy," she says. "It's often prescribed in Europe and Canada, particularly for children with Crohn's, but doctors in this country tend to think it's too difficult to ask patients to follow a special diet for a few weeks."

You can learn more about the book, read a few pages and view comments from doctors at www.ibdbook.com.

Oppenheimer went on to earn her Ph.D. in art history from New York University and has practiced art history side by side with medical writing for the last decade. Her last book, an exhibition catalog, was "The French Portrait: Revolution to Restoration" (Smith College Museum of Art, 2005).

registration manager for the association and operations manager for both the Tampa and Atlanta boat shows.

Lawrence University awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters to **Bob Herbert '88**, an award-winning op-ed columnist with The New York Times.

Danette Jenkins '95, '05, a graduate of the Corporate College Program, has graduated from Robert J. Milano's Organizational Change Management Program. She believes that, "... had it not been for the foundation laid by Empire State College, I never would have pursued or achieved a graduate degree."

Music and Health, which has launched its Music for Life Program designed to benefit children and adults with autism in Dutchess County. Participants sing with seniors at adult homes and retirement communities, providing therapeutic and musical benefits for both participants and residents.

Niagara Frontier Center

In recognition of the achievements of women who have been role models, risk takers and path finders for other women, The Everywoman Opportunity Center's Award for Excellence was given

to **Alicia Grant Estenoz '90**. She holds a master's degree in education, counseling and bilingual education from Long Island University and is an academic advisor and counselor at SUNY College at Buffalo. Other accolades include Lamda, La Unidad Latina, "for dedication and commitment to the Buffalo community," as well as being named Most Inspiring Role Model by the Hispanic Network of New York.

Shirley Pieters Vogel '82 is an inspirational speaker and author of "wHispsers, when He is so precious even rock sings." She and her husband, Stefan, live on Cape Cod where she volunteered in full-time ministry at a local church for 20 years. Vogel held several key leadership positions including chairing major fundraising campaigns, and founding and directing Caring Ministries and a ministry for women.

Brian Walters '02, '04, who began his career in education as an English teacher at an alternative school for at-risk youth, has since accepted a series of promotions as coordinator of student affairs, director of operations and, in 2007, executive director of Gulf Coast Marine Institute – North (GCMIN). More than just a school for at-risk youth, GCMIN also provides mental health and counseling services for youth adjudicated through the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. Walters also tutors youth through the YMCA at a Salvation Army homeless shelter that provides shelter to families in need and helps them to get back on their feet. He writes, "Being a high school dropout who had my share of problems, and was in my share of trouble ... I am very thankful for the opportunity to give back in the way that others gave to me. I am grateful to Empire State College for giving me the chance to succeed so I can give these kids a chance."

"Bandages for Your Heart," a DVD and CD by **Nancy Weil '07**, is intended to help people heal from the pain of grief and includes a resource booklet, "A Brief Exploration of Grief." Weil, a leading authority on the relationship between humor and grief, is known for her energetic, entertaining and content-

rich programs offered by The Laugh Academy. She is a member of the Humor and Health Association of Western New York as well as the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor.

Northeast Center

Albany County Legislator **Shawn Morse '06** has been appointed to the newly created position of second deputy majority leader. According to Majority Leader Frank Commisso, "Shawn Morse has proven leadership abilities and an abiding interest in issues that impact children, seniors and the pocketbooks of county residents." Morse, who also holds a certificate in labor studies from Cornell University, is chairman of the county legislature's personnel committee and a member of the civic center and law committees. He has been a Cohoes firefighter since 1989.

"The Labyrinth of Good Intentions: Transmitting Repressed Trauma via Fairy Tales," by **William Peat Jr. '08** has been published at www.the-looking-glass.net, an online children's literature journal. He thanks Mentor Celest Woo for being instrumental in the article being published. Peat, who is working toward a master's degree in political communication at the University at Albany, is a senior public information specialist with the New York State Emergency Management Office.

David Regan White '05, coordinator of alumni services, Empire State College, received the 2009 James William and Mary Elizabeth Hall Award for Innovation for his work on the alumni online community.



Deborah Gregory '86, internationally known author of the Cheetah Girls book series was the keynote speaker at the Women's Studies Residency in Saratoga Springs. She visited Alumni House to sign her newest book, "Catwalk."

Writing to the First Lady



The Niagara Frontier Center hosted a book signing and reading of "Go Tell Michelle: African-American Women Write to the New First Lady." Adjunct professor, Barbara Nevergold, collaborated with co-editor Peggy Brooks-Bertram to compile a list of poems and letters in this book for the new first lady. Pictured here, from left to right, are Alicia Granto Estenov '90, Peggy Brooks-Bertram, Barbara Nevergold.

Please stay connected!

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The Last Word

President Alan Davis shares his thoughts about the next five years for Empire State College



Now that you've gotten to the end of the college's new magazine, I hope you are as pleased with what you have seen and read as I am.

It is a crisply designed, well-written representation of the wonderful diversity of ideas and people populating our alumni ranks and our work lives.

About the name, "Connections." I know we garnered dozens and dozens of suggestions from employees and alumni. It generated two lengthy discussions about what the final choice would be.

"Connections" is meaningful on many levels, not least of which is the historical significance of the word.

If you read Richard Bonnabeau's wonderful history of the college, "The Promise Continues," you will find that Ernest Boyer, the visionary who first imagined this uncommon place of learning and teaching, repeatedly referred to it as "a college of connections."

Nearly 40 years later, with new information and communications technologies, we are increasingly a place that connects people to ideas and to each other across the

state, the nation and around the globe. So, the name "Connections" just seems right.

This new magazine is one of many initiatives undertaken to move the college forward and broaden a recognition and understanding of it by external audiences.

Among the other initiatives, probably the most important is the Vision 2015 process in which many of you have participated. You talked and we listened; we synthesized what we heard and evolved a plan.

And now we have moved into phase two – the process for actually doing the

Ernest Boyer, the visionary who first imagined this uncommon place of learning and teaching, repeatedly referred to it as "a college of connections."

strategic planning. It is time for us to translate the torrent of words and ideas that came at us this past year into a harnessed flow of actions that will set the course of the college for the next five years. This process will continue through February 2010, at which time we should have established specific goals and targets in such key areas as technology, academics, marketing, diversity, partnerships, government relations and sustainability.

Final drafts of the plan will be shared with the college Senate, members of the College Council, Foundation Board and the President's Council. Support and approval will be sought from SUNY's chancellor and Board of Trustees. And then, the path for the college and our work for the next five years should be quite clear.

In parallel to this planning, we also are seeking renewal of our accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Developing a self study for this accreditation process involved dozens of

people from across the college, and we look forward to a visit from a team of our external peers in November. This highly collegial process will contribute immensely to our understanding of ourselves, and our ability to achieve our mission.

I believe these next several years will be transformative for higher education as we have known it, not just in this state but nationally and internationally. In reality, the transformation has already begun.

Together, let us work to ensure that Empire State College remains at the forefront of innovative education, as it has been since its founding.

Alan Davis



Creating an Endowed Scholarship Fund

Did you know that the majority of the college's working adult students face serious financial challenges when it comes to paying college tuition while also supporting their families? Fifty-three percent our students have incomes modest enough to qualify for financial aid. Scholarship support from alumni and friends is a great way to open the door to opportunity for future adult learners.

Has the thought that only wealthy people can create an endowed scholarship fund kept you from considering it? Perhaps you'll discover that with some planning, you could establish an endowed scholarship fund in the name of your family or in the name of someone special to you.

An Endowed Scholarship Now

You may discover that establishing an endowed scholarship (\$25,000 minimum) is not possible right now. However, you could consider spreading your gift over a five-year period to achieve your goal.

An Endowed Scholarship Later

While it may not be feasible to start an endowed scholarship now, your estate might possibly have enough resources. You could do what many others have done and earmark a portion of your estate for a future endowed scholarship fund.

An Endowed Scholarship Now and Later

You may want to start your endowment now, with modest contributions annually, and then add to it later through your will. This way you could meet the students now who benefit from your generosity each year. The funds from your estate would then endow the scholarship forever.

Do you want to learn more about creating your own endowed scholarship fund at Empire State College, and discover additional ways to fund it? If you would like to talk in confidence, without obligation, please contact Alta Schallehn, director of gift planning, at 518 587-2100 ext. 2413 or Alta.Schallehn@esc.edu.



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