The beginning of the academic year is always a very exciting time on the Niagara campus. It's a time of fresh beginnings, new students, and the promise of a fun and challenging year.

Today, however, I wanted to reflect on a different Niagara University; one with which you may not be familiar: Niagara in the summertime. As a student, you probably didn't have the chance to enjoy the longer summer days on campus, or see all the activity that takes place on Monteagle Ridge between the spring and fall semesters.

In June, for example, Niagara hosted a very successful conference for the New York State Association for College Admission Counseling. This four-day event brought high school and college education administrators to the campus for lectures, seminars and social events, and enabled them to see our beautiful campus and the wonderful facilities we offer for students.

You may have also heard that the Buffalo Sabres held developmental practices in the Dwyer Arena in early July. Those practices brought many hockey fans to Niagara to see the future of the Sabres. In late July, we were very proud to host both women's basketball and women's lacrosse as part of the region's Empire State Games. These events brought people from all over New York state to our campus.

Niagara also held the BRAVO Workshop with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, where high school and college musicians honed their skills while working with members of the BPO, including maestro Jo Ann Falletta.

Summer at Niagara also is a time for summer camps. Each year we look forward to seeing the fresh young faces of the area's youth as they converge on NU for camps focused on soccer, basketball, science, art and theatre, to name a few. I had the pleasure of reading a book to a group of youngsters and they sang a delightful song for me about friendship and happy times together.

It's wonderful to have all of these guests come and experience our campus. For many of them, it's a new experience, and we are always proud to show off our surroundings. For people who may have been here before, it's an opportunity to see the fantastic changes that have been made to the Niagara campus in recent years. New building construction, upgraded athletic facilities and new landscaping have greatly enhanced the campus environment. If you haven't been on campus recently I invite you to come back to Niagara to see a sporting event, enjoy a musical at the new theatre, or enjoy a picnic on the front lawn with your family. Niagara has a wonderful campus and we love to share it with everyone so that it becomes our Niagara family and friends' community.

I would also invite you to share any ideas you may have about other events we could host at Niagara, especially in the summer when we have more space available. Our facilities are state-of-the-art and allow us to offer groups an ideal setting for seminars and events of any size.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you about your experience at Niagara University and welcome your comments and suggestions at jll@niagara.edu.

God bless you all,

Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.
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Former NU Trustee Emeritus Rev. Joseph P. McClain, C.M., Passes Away

The Rev. Joseph P. McClain, C.M., Niagara University trustee emeritus, passed away on July 6, 2010. He was 87.

Father McClain was elected to the NU board of trustees in 1976 and as trustee emeritus in 1995. Prior to his service on the board, Father McClain had been an instructor in theology and sociology at Niagara from 1949-1950.

A Mass of Christian Burial took place July 10 at St. Vincent’s Seminary Community Chapel in Philadelphia.

Niagara Alumnus Named Bishop of Trenton

The Very Rev. David M. O’Connell, C.M., a Niagara University alumnus and former university administrator, was ordained as coadjutor bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, N.J., on July 30 in St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral, Trenton.

Father O’Connell will assist Bishop John Mortimer Smith until Pope Benedict XVI accepts Smith’s resignation, at which time O’Connell will become the 10th bishop of the diocese.

“I am indeed grateful to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for choosing me to serve the people of God in Trenton as bishop,” Father O’Connell said.

Father O’Connell, ’78, served as acting academic vice president at Niagara from 1994-1995. He was elected to the Niagara University board of trustees in 2001 and named trustee emeritus in October 2009.

He received an honorary degree from Niagara in May 2008. Father O’Connell had served as 14th president of The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., for the past 12 years. He holds a bachelor of arts in philosophy from Niagara University, and licentiate and a doctorate in canon law from The Catholic University of America. He celebrated the 28th anniversary of his ordination as a priest on June 5.

The Trenton diocese serves more than 800,000 Catholics in central New Jersey.

Cheap Reads

Budget-conscious Niagara students have a new option to save on their college expenses: renting textbooks instead of buying them. Starting this fall, the Niagara University bookstore will participate in Barnes and Nobles’ textbook rental program, a program that was piloted last spring at 25 of the company’s 636 campus bookstores. Given that students at four-year U.S. colleges spent an average of $1,122 on textbooks during the 2009-2010 academic year*, the savings realized from participating in this program can be significant.

We asked Jennifer Nagelhout, ’98, the campus store manager, about this new program.

EM: What prompted the Niagara bookstore to offer textbooks for rent?

JN: We are committed to providing our students with the range of options they want and need. Offering a textbook rental program provides students with another cost-saving alternative and it helps keep textbook dollars on campus. Now, whether students are interested in new books, used books, digital or rentals, they know they can find what they want at the campus store.

EM: How many textbook titles will be available for rent?

JN: For the fall 2010 semester there are currently 184 titles on our rental list. The number of titles eligible for rental will increase as we continue to receive book information from professors.

EM: How did you decide which books to offer as rentals?

JN: We use a number of criteria to determine whether a book is suitable for inclusion in the rental program. These include edition status, reuse rates both on our campus and across the company, and whether or not there are custom or single-use components required with the text.

EM: Can you give an example of the savings a student might receive on a book?

JN: When students choose to rent a textbook, they save more than 50 percent over the cost of buying a new, printed textbook. If a new textbook cost $100, the used book cost is $75, and the cost to rent is $45. Rentals have the lowest upfront cost, but the used textbook is still the least expensive option — when students sell their books back to the bookstore during finals week, they can get up to 50 percent back as long as the exact same book has been readopted by the professor.

For FAQs about Niagara’s textbook rental program, visit: http://niagara.bncollege.com/docs/rental/docs/morefaqtextbookr.html

* according to the College Board
The James and Mary Glynn Family Donates $2 Million to “Promise of Niagara” Campaign

James V. Glynn, ’57, chair emeritus of the Niagara University board of trustees, spoke at a press conference Aug. 16 announcing his family’s gift to the university. The gift will support important initiatives of the university, including the establishment of the Vincentian Scholars Program. The following is an excerpt from his presentation.

“Our love for Niagara — both the university and the local community — motivates us in our desire to partner with the university in developing an ongoing program that will make a real difference in the lives of the marginalized. All this, of course, is in fully keeping with the Vincentian mission of Niagara University.

“This community needs a lot of help, and that is what this program seeks to provide. Through their studies, research and service, students in the Vincentian Scholars Program will help this community confront many of its most challenging concerns. Ideally, the students who complete it will one day assume leadership positions in agencies and organizations that contribute to the well-being of society — locally, nationally and globally.

“We owe much to Niagara and forever will be grateful for the experiences it has provided our family. Mostly, though, we are grateful to God for the many blessings that allow us to make this commitment to the university and to current and future participants in the Vincentian Scholars Program.”

James and Mary Glynn with the first Vincentian scholars — Theresa Schmidt of Attica, N.Y., Rebecca Yuhas of Rochester, N.Y., and Emma Li of Ontario, N.Y.

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Syllabus

HIS390A: Introduction to Public History, MWF, 11:15 a.m.-12:10 p.m., Dunleavy Hall Room 238

Dr. Shannon Risk, Assistant Professor of History

Course description: Museums, museum workers and public historians have important roles in the United States, both in the past and in present times. Students will explore these roles through readings, discussion, in-class projects, websites, newspaper articles, and lectures by guest speakers.


Key assignments/activities: Internship at a community historic site, museum or agency; class trip to the Castellani Art Museum.

Why this course: “As a historian, I have had the opportunity to work in a number of history-related fields: as a curator, a museum manager, grant writer, researcher/writer, and teacher. I wanted students who love history to know that there are jobs out there that involve history. But I also wanted students to know that these jobs require the proper training while still in college. This involves studying the field of public history and participating in internships and volunteer work in the history field whenever possible.” — Dr. Risk

PINNING CEREMONY

— Eight graduating nursing students participated in a pinning ceremony during a Mass May 7 at Alumni Chapel. The pinning ceremony, a long-standing tradition at Niagara, started in 1962. More than 3,500 nurses have received the pin, which symbolizes academic achievement, scholarly learning, professional dedication and Christian commitment. Here, Dr. Frances Crosby, ’67, chair of the department of nursing, attaches the pin to Diane Morris’ lapel.
Nearly 700 incoming freshmen attended Niagara University’s CARE sessions in July, representing 22 different states and Canada. Twenty-three were “legacy” students — those with a parent who graduated from Niagara, like Sam Reedy, who is pictured here with his mother, Karen (Dempsey) Reedy, ’79. To see additional photos and view a video from CARE, visit http://eagleonline.niagara.edu/.

Bicentennial Peace Garden Established on Monteagle Ridge

A War of 1812 Bicentennial Peace Garden was dedicated on June 18 at Niagara University. The garden, located between St. Vincent’s and Alumni halls on the university’s campus, is a partnership between Niagara, the Binational Economic & Tourism Alliance, and the 1812 Legacy Council.

“This event is part of an effort between Ontario and New York state to celebrate the 200 years of peace between the United States and Canada,” said Dr. Thomas Chambers, chair of the university’s history department.

“These beautiful places along the borders of the two countries will help to commemorate the years of peace, and promote binational cooperation and recognition of the resources that are available for historical tourism.”

Here, Dr. Nancy McGlen and Niagara Falls mayor Paul Dyster unveil a sign at the newly established War of 1812 Bicentennial Peace Garden as sophomore Ryan Clark (left) and Brendan Menz look on. Both men, who are portraying soldiers in the first U.S. artillery, are reenactors at nearby Old Fort Niagara.

Jaclyn and Mallory’s Excellent Adventure — For nine days in August, Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, M.S.Ed.’10 (left), assistant director of alumni relations, and Mallory Jakaub, ’09, graduate assistant in the annual giving office, traveled throughout the Northeast, visiting 12 cities and covering more than 2,000 miles. The reason? To connect with Niagara’s ever-growing alumni community.

The road trip is a joint effort between the Office of Alumni Relations and the Office of Annual Giving and represents the unique ways in which these two offices work together to encourage alumni support of Niagara. The road trip is a first of its kind for the university in many ways: the mode of travel (van), the stops along the way (many of which have not been visited by the advancement and alumni staff in the past), and the individuals traveling (both new NU alums).

The “roadies” documented their “NiagaraNation” adventure via blogs and social media, sharing their “journey of discovery” with alumni and friends from across the country and around the world. For the full story, see http://web.me.com/niagaranation/Site/Welcome.html.
Student-Faculty Research Published in Prestigious Science Journal

A paper co-authored by seven undergraduate students was accepted for publication in Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, the top journal in the field of addictions psychology. The article, “Development and Validation of the College Life Alcohol Salience Scale (CLASS): A Measure of Beliefs About the Role of Alcohol in College Life” by lead author Dr. Timothy Osberg, professor of psychology, and co-authors Lindsay Atkins, Laura Buchholz, Victoria Shirshova, Andrew Swiantek, Jessica Whitley, Sabrina Hartman, and Natasha Oquendo, appeared in the March 2010 issue of the APA journal.

“The research developed a new psychological test that identifies the attitude that ‘alcohol is integral to college life,’” said Osberg. “Scores on the measure were found to be strongly associated with drinking and negative consequences of drinking. The new measure has potential as a student drinking problems screening tool.”

Largely because of the publication, the students have been accepted into programs to continue their studies: Atkins is in the doctoral program in clinical psychology at the Florida Institute of Technology; Buchholz is in the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Kent State University; Shirshova is continuing her undergraduate studies at Pace University; Whitley is in the master’s degree in counseling program at Medaille College; Hartman is in the master’s degree in psychology program at the University of New Haven; Swiantek has been accepted in the doctoral program in clinical psychology at Argosy University, Phoenix campus; and Oquendo will begin her master’s degree studies in psychology in education at Columbia University this fall.

Starting freshman year, Niagara students can roll up their sleeves and work one-on-one with their professors on primary research studies. Many go on to present their findings at the annual Niagara University Undergraduate Research Conference, at state and regional research conferences, or at professional conferences in their fields of study. For a sample of what some of our students have been working on, visit the Eagle online at http://eagleonline.niagara.edu.

Master’s Degree and Certificate Program in Math, Science and Technology to Be Offered

The College of Education has received approval to offer courses leading to a master of science in education and a certificate of advanced study in teaching math, science and technology. The cutting-edge programs are designed for practicing teachers who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills in teaching these critical areas and to meet the need, both statewide and national, for teachers who are highly prepared to work with students in these core areas. The college has long had a focus on teaching math, science and technology and has participated in funded programs and partnerships with P-12 schools and the faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences to increase student achievement in these areas.

For more information about this new program, contact the College of Education at 716-286-8560 or grad-ed@niagara.edu.

A TRIP TO THAILAND —

Graduate students and faculty from the College of Education traveled to Thailand in July to visit several schools and universities and experience the Asian and Thai cultures. The group toured Ayutthaya, the ancient capital of Siam; the Tiger Temple in the Kanchanaburi province; the Elephant Nature Park in Mae Taeng; and the Phi Phi Islands. It also went to several Buddhist temples and the Bridge Over the River Kwai. Here, NU grad student Brendan Sweeney teaches a fourth grade class at the Rajinibon School in Bankok. Looking on, from left to right, are grad students Kim Walton, Amber Hohman, Becky Tomlinson, and Sabrina Sibio.
Drew Cerza

He’s demonstrated the quintessential “Bourbon Street BBQ” Buffalo wing recipe on “Live with Regis and Kelly,” “The Today Show,” and “The View”; beat renowned chef Bobby Flay in a Buffalo wing throw-down; and launched a national festival celebrating the bar food that was created in his hometown in 1964. And for the past three years, Drew Cerza, the Wing King, has shown eager young Niagarans the art of hosting a successful event.

As a part-time instructor in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Cerza shares his considerable experience with his students each fall, guiding them as they plan and run a special event. Cerza knows that experience is the best teacher, and he gives his students ample opportunities to gain knowledge and skills through hands-on work.

Cerza, himself, learned the business by doing. Inspired by his father, who worked in marketing for a supermarket chain and created imaginative, one-of-a-kind displays for national brands, Cerza founded RMI Promotions in 1994, which has represented national clients such as Hershey’s and General Mills.

Some of the promotional work was done at local festivals. As Cerza distributed food samples to festival attendees, he learned the organizational aspects of running a large-scale event, knowledge he put to the test when he launched the National Buffalo Wing Festival in 2002 after reading a column in the Buffalo News one Friday afternoon. The column referenced the movie “Osmosis Jones,” in which Bill Murray’s character attends the fictitious National Chicken Wing Festival in Buffalo. The columnist put out a call for someone to launch such a festival, and Cerza answered it.

“I knew I had the tools to put the whole thing together,” he says. He developed a plan over the weekend and called the writer, who announced the festival in his next column. By the middle of the week, CNN had covered the story, and Cerza was on his way to launching what has become known as the Super Bowl of the wing industry. The first year was a challenge, Cerza acknowledges. There was no way to know how many people would attend, and, while Cerza had a clear vision of what the festival could look like, it was difficult to get restaurant buy-in. He managed to get 15 restaurants to commit, and on Labor Day Weekend 2002, the Buffalo Chicken Wing Festival was born.

From that first year, when 40,000 people enjoyed 20 tons of wings, the festival has grown in size and scope. Last year’s event brought 92,000 people to Coca Cola Field in downtown Buffalo, representing every state but Arkansas (ironically, the home of Tyson chicken) and 31 different countries. They devoured 40 tons of wings prepared in 100 different sauces by more than 30 restaurants and watched contests like the Buffalo Blue Cheese Bowl, where contestants bob for wings in a baby pool filled with blue cheese. The festival features cooking demonstrations, a Miss Buffalo Wing contest, and the selection of an inductee into the National Buffalo Wing “Hall of Flame.” It’s a two-day nirvana for wing lovers, with an energy all its own.

“Buffalo is a special city with a big passion for wings,” Cerza notes. “Wings are a passionate food. There’s a level of intensity and excitement at the Wing Festival — it’s not just about serving wings.”

The festival (and his victory over Chef Flay) has firmly established Cerza as the “go-to” guy for all things wings, and Buffalo as the undisputed home of the Buffalo wing, a boon for the region’s tourist trade.

“What the festival represents is Buffalo taking ownership of the Buffalo wing and celebrating it,” Cerza says. “It’s become a huge tourism opportunity for Buffalo. It’s good for the local economy. Tourists leave with a great impression of what Buffalo is really like.”

The festival is also good for the local community. Cerza is as passionate about community service as he is about wings, and he donates the proceeds from the festival to local charities (to date, $175,000). It’s something he has done since his days at the helm of RMI Promotions, when he launched several campaigns to support organizations like the Food Bank of Western New York and the Race for the Cure. He shares this passion with his Niagara students as well — the proceeds from the events they host have gone to the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Falls and the WNY Food Bank. Cerza also donates his time to his community, donning his Wing King regalia (a red velvet cape, a foam chicken-wing shaped “crown,” and a scepter made of a plunger and a rooster) each year to visit the second-grade class at Forest Elementary School and talk about the food, and the city, he loves.

“It’s just such a good feeling,” he says. “That’s my favorite thing to do each year.”

After years of bringing people to Buffalo, Cerza is now planning to take his festival on the road. He wants to travel across the country, hosting events that invite restaurants to compete for a chance to come to Buffalo and show off their wings. He’s looking for variety — in size, in location, and in the history of the restaurants — but most importantly, he’s looking for restaurants that are as zealous about wings, and the festival, as he is.

Cerza has made a career by doing what he loves, and that’s an example he hopes his Niagara students follow. “Money is one thing, but doing something that you really like feels good and brings some kind of balance to your life,” he says, noting that the support of his wife and daughters has enabled him to find that balance. “This is about life, not business. It’s not about getting bigger; at the end of the day, it’s about balancing family and what you do.”

— Lisa McMahon
Walking the Path of Faith: Giving Reason for our Hope

“Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you the reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence.” (1 Peter 3:15)

Witnessing to one’s faith is a touchy subject on a college campus. In these formative years, changes take place on many levels: intellectual, emotional, social, and yes, spiritual. Sorting out the complex process of relearning and integrating one’s faith and beliefs into adulthood is part and parcel of the college years. Alumni might agree that in life’s long haul, the spiritual journey is as important as a major and a job offer!

With 40 percent of today’s U.S. Catholics age 18-40, and five million in higher education, faith formation on campus is vital. Two recent national surveys point to the need for new directions. From 2001-07, the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, surveyed more than 3,000 young people. From 2003-10, the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA surveyed 112,000 students at 236 colleges. Both surveys reveal interesting facts about spirituality and today’s young people.

It’s a classic “good news-bad news” phenomenon. The UNC study surveyed high school students, while the UCLA study focused on college students. The good news is that the studies concluded that today’s youth are interested in spirituality. Both studies dispel the stereotype of young people as hostile to spirituality and religion. The UNC study said teens are “exceedingly conventional” in religious identity and practices. The UCLA study showed a high level of “spiritual engagement,” with 71 percent stating they “gain strength by trusting in a higher power.” Happily, spirituality flourishes in a secular age.

Yet both studies pointed to a lack of intellectual rigor in religious training of youth and a fall-off in religious practice of faith for college upperclassmen. Both studies came to complete agreement on two particularly unsettling matters: Catholic high school and college youth, the largest group in each study, lagged far behind other Christian youth in articulating their faith and having a willingness to put their beliefs into action.

The UNC study noted that many Catholic youth “have only a vague notion of the tenets and teachings of their religion … they appear spiritually bereft of knowledge and understanding of the great Christian doctrines and narratives.” The UNC study terms this “moral therapeutic Deism.” It is defined as one who, while believing in God, is “nice” and “fair” to others, feels good about oneself, but turns to God only as a problem solver in crisis moments. There is no depth to this faith, and if God does not cooperate: watch out!

The 2003 UCLA study tracked its subjects throughout their college years. It noted after the high level of interest in their first year, there was a noticeable drop-off in interest in spirituality, from 50 percent to 37 percent. Attendance at religious services fell from 52 percent to 29 percent. Although students developed an “ethic of caring,” participation in religious life dropped dramatically. Catholic collegians were the largest single group, but they scored “significantly lower” in “religious commitment and engagement” than Protestant peers.

I suspect this data resonates with the experience of many Catholic campus ministers. The catch phrase, “spiritual, but not religious” captures how many young people see themselves today. It is a challenge that must be met head on, as it affects what values they live out and the type of faith they will pass on to their children.

Here at NU, the campus ministry staff has reflected on this reality and discussed ways to help our students “give reason for the hope” that is our Catholic faith. In studying the U.S. Catholic bishops’ pastoral letter “Empowered by the Spirit,” we focused on the six goals they proffer as benchmarks for an effective campus ministry program. We’ll apply three goals each year for the next two years, devising programs for catechesis, prayer, retreats, seminars, service, and social events.

This year’s goals are: “Forming the Faith Community,” “Appropriating the Faith,” and “Developing Future Leaders.”

Signs are posted all over campus and on our Facebook page (yes, we’re under “Campus Ministry Corner”) about “Women of the Word,” a new women’s Bible study; “A View from the Pew,” a seminar on getting more out of Mass; “Niagara Plunge,” our new freshmen precollege retreat and service program; and “Spiritual Life Coaching,” to introduce the revered practice of spiritual direction to NU students in a contemporary way. And our new student advisory board will challenge us to truly be Christ to others.

Keep our staff and our efforts in your prayers as we move forward this year. The quote from the first letter of Peter ends with the “how” of hope: “do it with gentleness and reverence.” After all is said and done, faith is not only “taught” but “caught” in the witness we give to God in our daily lives. St. Francis of Assisi said it best: “Always preach the Gospel. When necessary, use words.”
The mission of the Niagara University athletic program is to create an environment that challenges student-athletes to reach their full academic and athletic potential. Three former student-athletes who recently had their undergraduate honors theses accepted for publication exemplify what can happen when athletics and academics work hand in hand.

With the support of the athletic department and the assistance of Dr. Susan Mason, professor of psychology, Danielle Grenier, ’06, a former women’s tennis player; Jamie Constantz, ’08, who played on the softball team; and Nikki Rudy, ’09, a women’s hockey player who also played softball in her sophomore year, were able to dovetail their interest in sports with their studies in psychology.

“Athletics was part of their lives here,” said Mason. “The work was not only relevant to their career goals but they had the experience that allowed them to develop an important hypothesis and test it.”

Grenier, who majored in psychology and minored in political science and international studies, investigated athletes’ preferences regarding coaches’ leadership styles and gender.

“I was fascinated by how many determining factors there are and the differences/similarities between both sexes,” she said. “Having been coached with a variety of leadership styles over the years gave me a personal investment in the outcomes of the research.”

Grenier presented her research, which was based on a survey of 160 university student-athletes, at the Eastern Psychological Association Conference in Boston while still at Niagara, and the work was recently accepted for publication in the International Journal of Sport and Society. She is now working on her master’s degree in political science at the University of Victoria in British Columbia and hopes to earn a Ph.D.

Grenier notes that her tennis coaches, Paul Calkins and Dr. Kevin Blair, were supportive of her academic pursuits and accommodated her class schedule and the conferences she attended when they conflicted with team practices and matches. “I was fortunate to have been part of a team that was extremely conscientious and both encouraged and highly valued success in the classroom as well as in competition,” she said.

Constantz had a similar experience while researching the relationship between participation in athletics and eating disorders, a topic she chose because of her awareness of the prevalence of eating disorders among athletes in various sports.

With the assistance of Theresa Berg, associate athletic director/senior women administrator, Constantz, a psychology major who had minors in statistics and sociology, surveyed 260 varsity athletes and 81 nonathletes to determine whether or not they exhibited the psychological traits shown to be clinically relevant in individuals with eating disorders.

“Theresa Berg was instrumental in enabling me to further investigate this area of research,” Constantz said. “During my junior year, she attended my spring symposium presentation and her immediate interest and support, as well as funding provided by the athletic department, allowed me to continue this research for my senior thesis. She also graciously served as a member of my thesis committee.”

For Berg, the opportunity to help Constantz was a “win-win situation.”

“Jamie needed to test student-athletes for her research,” Berg said, “and her research could assist us in adding the topic of eating disorders to our Student Athletic Advisory Committee programming if necessary.”

Purple Eagles Earn MAAC Honor Roll Honors

Ninety-seven Purple Eagle student-athletes were named to the 2009-10 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Academic Honor Roll, with women’s basketball player Jacy Schultz leading the MAAC with a 4.24 grade-point average.

Of the 1,054 student-athletes from the 22 full-time and associate members of the MAAC, Niagara placed the fifth-most student-athletes on the honor roll.
Niagara Has a Great Showing at the Empire State Games

Monteagle Ridge was buzzing with excitement as Niagara’s student-athletes and coaches earned an impressive number of medals at the Empire State Games.

In women’s basketball, senior Liz Floocks and assistant coach Katie Murphy earned silver medals in the Western squad’s Open Division gold medal game against Hudson Valley.

On the pitch, four members of Niagara’s women’s soccer team took home medals. Caitlin Long and Jamie Raepple led the Western team to a gold medal, defeating the Central New York team, which featured teammates Erin Baker and Ashleigh Bowers, who took home silver medals.

Success for NU student-athletes spilled onto the volleyball courts as well, as senior Lauren Costello helped the Western team to a gold medal, defeating Central New York in the title game.

Niagara’s campus was also showcased as the host for women’s lacrosse and women’s basketball, events that brought student-athletes and their families from across the state to the Ridge.

Now attending James Madison University for her master’s degree in school psychology, she hopes to use her research, which was accepted for publication in Modern Psychological Studies, in her future career.

“As a school psychologist, I will be closely working with both students and student-athletes and can utilize what I have learned from my honors thesis experience to recognize and provide direct support to students in need as well as provide consultation services to parents and colleagues,” she said. “In addition, conducting research and lifelong learning is an ongoing objective of a school psychologist, and I hope to continue to conduct research that will positively impact the lives of others.”

Berg was also instrumental in helping Rudy recruit the 114 student-athletes who participated in her study of personality differences between athletes and nonathletes, particularly as they relate to aggression and neuroticism.

Like Grenier and Constanz, Rudy noted that the support offered by the athletic department was crucial, especially when it came to presenting her findings at the Eastern Psychological Association Conference. The conference took place during the women’s hockey team’s final CHA conference tournament, and Rudy said that the coaching staff made arrangements that allowed her to attend the conference while still being able to compete in the tournament.

Rudy is now pursuing her master’s degree in applied behavior analysis at Florida Institute of Technology and hopes to continue her studies to earn a Ph.D., specializing in the area of autism. She said that her research, which was accepted for publication in the International Journal of Sport and Society, “gives me the confidence to know that I can contribute within the field of psychology and the push to make it happen.”

“All three were true scholar-athletes,” said Mason. “They played varsity sports, they each completed an honors thesis in psychology that dealt with athletics, and now all three are pursuing their graduate degrees.

“The relationship between the academic sector and the athletic sector is key to the student-athletes’ success,” Mason added.

— Lisa McMahon

Niagara Volleyball Receives National Academic Honor

The Niagara University volleyball team has been honored with the American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award for the 2009-10 season. It’s the second consecutive year the Purple Eagles have received the honor and adds to a lengthy list of accolades for the 2009 MAAC Champions.

“I am very proud of our team excelling on the court and off,” said Niagara head coach Susan Clements. “It is a great honor for our program to be awarded for the second straight year.”

The AVCA awards its team academic honor to squads that possess a cumulative grade point average of 3.30 or better for the entire academic year. Niagara was joined by Marist and Rider as the only schools in the MAAC to receive this year’s award.
Father John J. Lynch was an Irish Vincentian priest who came to the United States in 1840 to do missionary work. In 1856 he was called upon to help select an appropriate site for a seminary to train priests in Western New York. Father Lynch's efforts resulted in the founding of Our Lady of Angels, later to become Niagara University. As a special tribute to Father Lynch, the John Lynch Society was established as a membership club for individuals making gifts of $1,856 and higher.

**President's Club**
$50,000 and above

**President's Circle**
$25,000 to $49,999

**Trustee’s Circle**
$10,000 to $24,999

**Dean's Circle**
$5,000 to $9,999

**Founder's Circle**
$1,856 to $4,999

**Young Alumni Society**
(6 to 10 years out)
$500 and above
(1 to 5 years out)
$250 and above

Young alumni who give based on the years and amounts listed above will qualify for all Lynch Society benefits.

Benefits of Lynch Society membership:
- Exclusive communication about growth/status of the university
- Invitations to preferred campus events
- Personal thank you from the president of the university
- Prominent listing in the President’s Report

Niagara University is launching a special appeal to raise the necessary funding for the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. The Appeal, which started in August and continues until the end of the campaign in December 2011, is a request for additional gifts to the science center and bioinformatics, a top priority in “The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years” campaign. To ensure that we are successful in our efforts to raise the $33 million necessary to build the new facility, I encourage you not only to continue giving your annual gift, but to make an additional special gift to the science center and bioinformatics through The Appeal.

We are more than three years into an $80 million campaign. We have raised more than $62 million and we have achieved many of our campaign goals. But there is more to do if we are to conclude the campaign successfully next year, and we need your help. Your continued support of the Niagara Fund through annual giving, plus your additional support through a one-time, special gift to The Appeal, is vital to the continued success and growth of Niagara University, and will ensure that we can provide new and improved facilities and academic programs, as well as scholarships and endowments to our students. Your generous gifts to the Niagara Fund and The Appeal will give both current and future students additional opportunities for expanded real-life academic experiences, and advance the educational vision of Niagara for the next 150 years.

You can make your gifts today by using the envelope provided in this magazine. If you prefer, make your gifts online at [www.niagaraalumni.com](http://www.niagaraalumni.com). Throughout the next 15 months, we will be contacting you via mail, phone calls from students, and personal visits, but you don't need to wait until then to be a part of this paramount endeavor in Niagara's history. You are what Niagara is all about and your gifts count.

Thank you for supporting Niagara.

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**The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years**

**By Christine S. O’Hara, ‘88, M.S.’06**

Director of Annual Giving; Executive Director, John Lynch Society

“**The B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences will radically alter the teaching and research environment on our campus.”**

1. B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences
2. Niagara Field
3. Academic Complex

**The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years campaign funding goals:**

- **$40.5 million is allocated to fund capital projects including:**
  - The Academic Complex — completed August 2007
  - Athletics — Niagara Field opened 2008
  - *Science Center and Bioinformatics - Priority*

- **$29.5 million is allocated to support the endowment including:**
  - Scholarships
  - Active Learning Enrichment

- **$10 million is allocated to support the Niagara Fund — Priority**

Unrestricted gifts used to support programs and services funded through annual giving.
Washington, D.C., Internship Helps Launch Political Career for Jensen

By Jason Mollica and Lisa McMahon

Just days after receiving his bachelor’s degree in political science and history from Niagara University, Josh Jensen, ’10, began his career in politics as the public policy adviser for Senator Joseph E. Robach of the 56th Senate District. Jensen had spent three summers as a special assistant in Robach’s office, so he was familiar with the work that the senator, who represents the City of Rochester and the towns of Brighton, Parma, and Jensen’s hometown of Greece, had done.

While Jensen’s internship in the senator’s office was one key to opening the door to his future in politics, another was an internship he had at the White House during his junior year. Jensen was assigned to work under Brian McCormack, who was deputy assistant to the president for strategic initiatives and external affairs in the George W. Bush White House. McCormack was the chief deputy to Barry Jackson, who had replaced Karl Rove in August of 2007. McCormack and Jackson oversaw the offices of Strategic Initiatives, Political Affairs, Public Liaison, and Intergovernmental Affairs, which offered Jensen a first-hand look at the political workings of four White House offices. Jensen saw the opportunity as one of service, both to the president and to the people of the United States.

“Even though I was just an intern, I felt I was working for our country,” Jensen says. “I gained a rare insight into how the government operates.”

One of Jensen’s primary projects was the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument, the largest marine conservation effort in history. The monument, which consists of 95,216 square miles of submerged lands and waters in the Mariana Archipelago, was created in early 2009 by President Bush. Jensen was responsible for helping McCormack monitor the public’s response to the project and to watch for possible environmental concerns.

Jensen also worked for Josh Bolton, the White House chief of staff, on a number of special projects. One such project was a speakers series that featured members of the president’s cabinet and senior staff, who would offer advice and information to the White House interns. Bolton, the last speaker in the series, asked Jensen to be one of the two interns to introduce him. When the time came, Jensen decided to speak spontaneously rather than use the remarks he had prepared. It was a good decision — Bolton laughed at Jensen’s account of the chief of staff’s ability to play the bass guitar and his destiny as an inductee in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

“I knew then that this is a place where I’m comfortable,” says Jensen.

Jensen’s White House internship, which he obtained through a program run by the State University of New York at Brockport and with the assistance of Dr. Jamie Pimlott, Niagara’s internship coordinator for political science, gave him hands-on experience that he draws upon today. As Senator Robach’s public policy adviser, Jensen helps to research, advise, and inform the senator about public position and existing state law on issues such as hydraulic fracturing, a process used to stimulate production from oil and gas wells; wind turbines on Lake Ontario; issues affecting firefighters; and the current budgetary concerns facing New York state. He also represents the senator at events across the district when the senator is in Albany.

“My White House experience, coupled with what I learned at Niagara, helped me step right into this job and be an effective member of a state senator’s staff,” he says. “I look to apply those lessons and knowledge to the work I do for the people of New York state.”
On May 29, 2010, eight students in Niagara University’s MBA program departed for China for what would be 12 days of intensive in-country education and intercultural studies on how to do business in the world’s most exponentially increasing economy.

With an expanding population of more than 1.3 billion people, 63 percent of whom are in the workforce; an economy that has experienced an average annual growth rate of 10 percent over the past 30 years; and a nominal gross domestic product of $4.99 billion (USD), China’s economy has become the third largest in the world, surpassed only by Japan and the United States.

The China voyage was offered through the MBA program’s MGT 683 Business in China and Study Abroad course. The curriculum includes an intensive semester-long preparation of text readings, journal article reviews, case studies, videos, and podcasts that are designed to assist Niagara’s MBA students to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding the business environment in China. Students are also encouraged to bring business cards and résumés with them for networking purposes.

“It is critically important for our MBA students to understand the special nature of how the market economy has evolved in China since limited and cautious market reforms were introduced there as early as 1978,” says Dr. Peggy Choong, director of the program, who accompanied the students on their trip along with Ed Kowalewski, the course instructor. “It is most important for this course as well that a sense of cultural intelligence is integrated into the curriculum.

“The globalization of the world’s economy is radically changing the ways that organizations manage and companies do business,” Choong adds. “Niagara’s MBA program places special emphasis on the overwhelming fact that today’s business executives are required to have the ability to function effectively in a multinational environment, manage operations in different countries, and conduct business in strikingly diverse cultures.”

Choong emphasizes that understanding a country’s cultural intelligence is of considerable importance to succeed in the new and interdependent global environment. “Culture expresses itself in all facets of
human societies including business practices, communication and education,” she says, warning that "shortfalls in cultural intelligence have been shown to lead to expatriate failure as well as breakdowns in joint ventures and acquisitions."

Course instructor Ed Kowalewski is particularly well-versed in the concept of cultural intelligence. Kowalewski, director of international trade and investments for the Empire State Development Corp., has more than 20 years of international business experience in the private sectors of Asia, the Middle East and Europe, as well as an exceedingly rich and working understanding of public sector initiatives for economic development. Throughout the curriculum, he stressed that understanding and pursuing cultural intelligence to support commercial relationships is the key to opening and sustaining successful business ventures in China and all international markets. Under his mentorship and direction, his students spent the spring semester preparing for the study-abroad experience in China. That preparation included not only understanding the metrics of China’s economy, but also China’s diverse culture, an interwoven and complex tapestry of languages and traditions that belie its monolithic appearance to many Western observers.

The study-abroad experience included travel to three Chinese cities: Shanghai, Shenzen (which was the first “Special Economic Zone” created by Deng Xiaoping, who succeeded Mao Zedong as China’s leader after Mao’s death in 1978) and Hong Kong. Over the course of the three-city trip, the Niagara group visited 10 companies and enjoyed opportunities to experience cultural sites and venues as well.

The group called on a wide range of companies to gain insight into industries such as semiconductor manufacturing, integrated logistics, automobile electronics, banking, and market research. In every case, the students were provided an in-depth presentation by company executives of each company’s internal operations, how each functioned in the Chinese economy, and how its successes in negotiating the fabric of China’s hybrid command/market economy assisted its competitive standing in the global marketplace.

A very special aspect of the China experience for the Niagara group was a visit to the Hong Kong office of DFS Galleria, whose chairman and CEO is Niagara alumnus Ed Brennan of the Class of 1978. DFS is the world’s largest luxury retailer for travelers and has more than 6,000 employees. Its latest available annual financial metrics report sales in excess of $2.7 billion (USD).

The DFS visit was made possible due to the enduring relationship between Stephen T. Burger, ’78, director of AT&T Investment Management Corp. in New Jersey, and Brennan, Niagara classmates who have remained lifelong friends. This spring, Burger and his wife, Kerry, hosted a group of new Niagara students from the New Jersey area at their home to introduce them to life at NU. During the event, Gerri Goerke, Niagara’s major gift officer for the tri-state region of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, told Burger about the study-abroad trip and asked him if he would be willing to contact Brennan to arrange a visit to DFS Galleria for the Niagara group.

Burger immediately contacted Brennan, who eagerly arranged for the Niagara group’s stop at DFS. The visit became the highlight of the tour, according to Choong. Brennan was unable to join the group in Hong Kong as he was then, and remains, involved in charitable work in Haiti.

For the MBA students, the entire China experience itself was a tremendous initiation into the growing and often bewildering complexities of creating and managing business opportunities in a globalized economy. For one in particular, Wen Wen Chen, the trip became a stepping stone to her career when she was selected to be part of the management trainee program at DFS Galleria in Hong Kong.

Robin L. Makula summed up the experience of the course, the China tour and her studies in Niagara’s MBA program by sharing that, “This has been one of the most valuable experiences that I have had as an MBA student at Niagara University. I have appreciated the expertise of our faculty, particularly in this course of study with Mr. Kowalewski and Dr. Choong; the comprehensive preparation for our study abroad, which mirrors the rigor of all of my other classes; and the take-away that preparation has provided us in terms of what to expect and how to act in culturally diverse business relationships to seek fair and equitable profits for all parties concerned.”

While in Hong Kong, the Niagara group visited Kerry Logistics Network and its executive director, Jessie Lui. From left to right: Lindsey Allen; Mathew Dziuba; Robin Makula; Jessie Lui; Wenjie Han; Abdul Memon; Steven Magno; Dr. Peggy Choong, director of the NU MBA program; Wen Wen Chen; Ed Kowalewski, MBA course instructor; and Jessica Peyote.

Abdul Memon and Lindsey Allen examine Chinese silk, one of that country’s most valuable and traditional products.
One of the most exciting parts of Dr. Ronnie Priefer’s chemistry magic show involved a garbage can explosion. Priefer and his assistant, senior Megan McGahan, poured liquid nitrogen into a plastic container, then placed that container into a garbage can that was filled with water. About 15 seconds later, the can, which weighed close to 300 pounds, exploded, to the delight of the young children watching.

Dr. Ronnie Priefer stood at the front of a small lecture hall in DePaul Hall at the midpoint of his discussion of electricity. His presentation, thus far, had caused a considerable amount of anxiety in his young volunteer, a boy of about 7 or 8 who stood at the corner of the lecture platform holding a fluorescent light tube that was nearly as long as he was tall. Priefer had just demonstrated how electricity from a Tesla coil could be transferred to his hand, and now he removed the glass globe from the coil, which buzzed and glowed like a bug zapper. Curling his hand around the exposed coil wire, he said, “Okay, so, you saw what can happen, right? It was going through me, it was zapping me pretty good there.”

“I think it’s going to hurt Ray,” a child from the audience said.

Priefer pointed to his young volunteer. “What’s his name? Ray? Want to say goodbye to Ray?” he joked, smiling at the boy. Then he turned back to the audience. “Okay, so right now, I have all the voltage running through my body. Why am I not dead?”

“Oh, you’re going to touch this thing and it’s going to go through me,” Ray said, waving the light tube.

Priefer smiled and addressed the audience again. “First question is, why am I not dead? We know electricity can kill you.”

Ray put down the light tube and began backing away from the stage.

“This is what Nikola Tesla called alternating current,” Priefer continued. Then he noticed that Ray had inched his way back to the steps that led to his seat in the audience. “Come back,” he called to the boy, who reluctantly returned to the stage.

Priefer picked up a second fluorescent tube and turned back to the audience. “And this allows me to become electrified without being killed. Lights please,” Priefer said to his assistant. As the room darkened, the fluorescent tube in Priefer’s hand lit up. Priefer touched the tube Ray held with his, and Ray’s tube lit up.

“Oh, you can come closer now,” Priefer told him.

The two held up the tubes like light sabers in a “Star Wars” movie. From the darkness, a very relieved Ray said, “It doesn’t hurt,” and the audience began to laugh.

Priefer’s chemistry magic show is a highlight of the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) camp that the College of Education has hosted for the past two years. Funded through a Mathematics and Science Partnership grant from the New York State Education Department, the camp’s activities are designed to engage students from grades three to eight through inquiry-based teaching and learning while incorporating literacy comprehension. This year’s topics included the chemistry of art, wildlife biology, solar inventions, and amusement park design.

“We host the camps because we feel it is really important to have children get the feel of a college campus at a young age,” said Patricia Wrobel, assistant dean for external relations in the college. “It involves so many stakeholders that benefit from this, such as NU graduate students and faculty, in-service teachers, graduate assistants, educational leadership interns, and parents.”

Priefer, an associate professor of chemistry at Niagara, appreciates the opportunity the camp affords him to share his passion for a subject that many consider to be for “nerds,” he said. “Chemistry has a very bad reputation. In other parts of the world, chemists are looked at in a more positive light, similar to a dentist or medical doctor. What I am hoping is that by doing shows like this, which entertain and educate, a few students will get that spark which will excite them to consider chemistry as a career path.”

It’s a Wonder-Filled World

College of Education’s camp piques young students’ interest in science, technology, engineering, and math

By Lisa McMahon
Adam looked down at the ground near his feet and noticed a bright yellow flower amid the green of the grass. “Isn’t a dandelion a weed?” he asked Ben, his nature walk leader.

“Do you know what the definition of a weed is?” Ben replied. “Something growing where it’s not wanted. So you can take a rosebush, which is normally a beautiful thing, and if it’s growing somewhere you don’t want it, it’s a weed. It’s all perspective.”

The two joined the rest of their group, 11 boys and two girls in sixth through eighth grade, and continued their search for plants, insects, birds, and mammals on the Niagara University campus. It was a sunny morning, and the young campers filled their nature journals with leaves, berries, cicada shells, and flower petals. When their walk was over, they would take what they found back to their classroom, find five facts about each using SMART boards and iPads, and complete their nature journals.

Ben Ladik, a history teacher in the North Tonawanda school district, taught this session on wildlife biology with fellow graduate students Christina Marino and Emily Crissman. As part of their course work in the College of Education’s graduate program in literacy, they developed lesson plans and activities that would be age appropriate for the campers.

“It’s been interesting to see how much difference even a year makes in interest levels,” said Crissman, a special education teacher in the Lockport school district, who noted that one of the things she valued most about the experience was the interest on the part of the students. “These kids want to be here and excel — they test your knowledge.”

It’s the afternoon of the last day of STEM camp. The campers have learned things like how to transform a Pringles can into a solar oven that could roast a hot dog, how to design windmill blades to produce wind energy, and the relationship between chemistry and art using color wheels and homemade paint. Now, they listened as Joanna Bolender, a gregarious woman with long brown hair and an expressive face, explained what might be found in a wildlife habitat. The children were challenged to clean up an “oil spill” (cocoa powder and vegetable oil) using a variety of tools, including feathers, paper towels, Dawn dishwashing liquid, and cotton pads.

Here, Adam Stojanovski and Chelsea Gunderson find out how well sponges work.

The children shouted out things like food, water and shelter, and Bolender moved around the room, high-fiving campers who gave good answers to the questions she asked. As she continued the discussion, she often broke into song and dance. A veteran educator who has taught sixth grade for 17 years in the Niagara Falls school district, and at Niagara’s STEM camp for two, she quickly established a rapport with her students, engaging them in conversation about music, hobbies, and family. As she worked with the young campers, she, herself, learned things that she will bring back to her classroom, one of the benefits for teachers in the STEM program.

“Elementary teachers before this initiative rarely incorporated science into the daily curriculum,” Wrobel said. “This program helps them to develop the confidence and interest to build math, science, and technology into their curriculums.”

It also enables them to show the children that STEM can be enjoyable. “It’s not always about opening the book and reading and writing,” Bolender said. “It’s about hands-on activities. They learn by doing and have fun — that’s the important part.”

At 4 p.m., campers, instructors, College of Education faculty members, and parents gathered outside Niagara University’s Academic Complex to review the week’s activities, thank the participants, and distribute certificates of completion. It’s been a demanding, but rewarding, four days for Melissa Bonar, a graduate assistant who served as coordinator of the camp. For the past several weeks, she had met with Wrobel, College of Education faculty members, and camp teachers to determine topics, activities, and logistics. During the camp, she had been the “go-to” girl, ensuring everyone had what they needed, where they were supposed to be, and were doing what they were supposed to be doing. Now, as she stood watching the campers share what they had learned with those in attendance, she was proud of the wonderful learning experience that she had been a part of.

“The camp was a huge success. It was great seeing how excited the campers got about learning — learning that they probably didn’t even realize was taking place because it was innovative, hands-on, and fun,” Bonar said. “I hope that the campers realize how important literacy and STEM are and how it is all around them, and that they continue to pursue such endeavors in the future.”

Ben Ladik shows campers the intricate “highway” that ants have constructed beneath the stepping-stones in a garden in front of the campus store.
Club management is a profession that is personally fulfilling, can weather economic turns, and offers a good income and many opportunities for advancement. And now, Niagara University is offering students an exceptional opportunity to gain the knowledge and experience needed to succeed in this lucrative field as members of NU’s Club Management Association of America student chapter, which was recently named the best in the nation.

NU CMAA was established four years ago by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management at the encouragement of alumni working in the club management business.

“It became readily apparent that we needed to do something for students,” says Dr. William Frye, associate professor in the college and club adviser.

So he decided to learn more about club management. In 2005, Frye, a veteran in hotel management, completed a faculty internship through the Club Foundation that brought him to the national CMAA headquarters in Alexandria, Va. There, he learned more about the industry and the organization, which provides education, networking and professional development opportunities for more than 6,000 managers who work at approximately 4,000 country, golf, city, athletic, faculty, yacht, town, and military clubs throughout the United States. The internship also required him to gain hands-on work experience at one of the NU CMAA’s member clubs. After returning to Niagara, Frye launched the student chapter.

“Like all student chapters, NU CMAA is preparing the industry’s next generation of leaders,” Frye says. “We have 100 percent participation in educational activities.”

Other requirements include participating in all other NU CMAA events and fundraisers, including planning and executing the April educational meeting of the NYS CMAA chapter; collecting toys as part of the “Clubs Collecting for Communities” fundraiser coordinated by the NYS chapter; completing the college’s club management course; becoming trained in TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures for the responsible service of alcohol) and CPR/AED; and completing summer-long internships at private CMAA-recognized clubs every summer semester.

In addition to these mandatory activities, students may choose to attend the national organization’s annual Student Education Conference and World Conference, and many also work at area clubs on a part-time basis throughout the academic year and volunteer for numerous large-scale functions such as weddings, Christmas parties and club-sponsored member events.

“It requires an extensive commitment on the part of students to participate,” Frye acknowledges. “The payoff is when they’re ready to graduate they can get a job in the club management industry with competitive pay and job advancement opportunities. We’re setting them up to be successful — they just have to be willing to play ball.”

Bethany Wood, ’10, former NU CMAA secretary/treasurer, knows firsthand how important actively participating in NU CMAA can be. She is the recipient of scholarships from both the national CMAA and the New York state chapter, and was offered a position as the assistant manager of the Chevy Chase Club’s Winter Center, the organization’s casual dining facility, before she graduated this May.
"There are many skills I have obtained throughout the past four years of being involved in CMAA," she says. "The most beneficial is the knowledge about the industry. Through the club management class and the educational sessions we attend there is always a lot to learn, which will help me be a successful manager."

The students’ hard work and commitment have earned them the respect of club managers throughout the state. They are sought-after applicants for both jobs and internships, and this year, the club was retained by the Lockport Town and Country Club to conduct its quinquennial membership survey.

"Everyone wants to be associated with Niagara," says Frye, noting that many club managers want to know "how can we get Niagara students here?"

Many well-established, high-quality clubs throughout the country have figured that out — Niagara students have been offered internships and jobs with a number of the top clubs in the country.

"Each successive internship is at a more highly recognized club," Frye explains, noting that the ideal progression leads to a placement at one of the top 200 clubs in the nation, as rated by club managers and presidents, by the summer between junior and senior year. "Nearly all of our students who have completed at least two internships are at platinum-designated clubs by their third year," Frye says, adding that through their alumni connections and affiliation with the state and national CMAA organizations, Niagara has very strong relationships with several of them, including those in the top 10.

These internships provide valuable hands-on experience for the participants. James Mason, ’10, former NU CMAA president, notes that his internship experience will help him in his future endeavors. "Through my internship opportunities CMAA has provided me at Rolling Rock Club and Chevy Chase Club, I have been able to learn about the industry and better myself for when I graduate."

The connections forged through these internships and NU CMAA’s networking events are another indispensable benefit of membership.

"Through our interaction with local managers, I have had the opportunity to develop great relationships with managers who have been great mentors and who have been willing to invest their time and energy into our training and education," says Lauren Kenney, ’10, former NU CMAA vice president and a recipient of the Joe Perdue scholarship. "We also have the chance to attend two conferences each year; one is the student conference and the other is a world conference with managers not only from the states but other countries as well. Having the opportunity to interact with these managers in a setting such as these conferences has helped me get internships and also learn how to network and interact on their level."

For Allyson Melchreit, ’09, assistant food and beverage manager at Maidstone Club in East Hampton, N.Y., belonging to NU CMAA directly led to her current position. “I finished my managerial internship at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in November, and at that point I was willing to move anywhere to find the position and experience I needed,” she says. “Several managers that I had met during my time with the NU student chapter had offered to keep a lookout for any open positions they might hear of for me, and were also passing my résumé around to their colleagues. The general manager at Maidstone, a club only 10 miles down the road, had heard that I was looking for a food and beverage position and arranged an interview. While interviewing, I found out that I was spoken highly of by my previous managers, as well as by a classmate of mine from Niagara who was currently employed at Maidstone. Without the internship experience and networking skills I gained from being a member of NU CMAA, I could have never gained the skills and experience necessary to excel in the club industry.”

Members of NU’s student CMAA chapter display their Student Chapter of the Year Award at the CMAA World Conference in San Diego this February.
Dear fellow alumni,

“The Niagara University Alumni Association will work with the Office of Alumni Relations to establish a value-based relationship with alumni that is mutually beneficial, aligned with the mission of Niagara University and guided by Vincentian principles.”

— Niagara University Alumni Association Mission Statement

As I write this, my three-year term as president of the alumni association is coming to an end. We’ve accomplished much in that time. We wrote a good mission statement, identified a board of directors and officers, developed our bylaws and put them in place. Our goal was to portray a positive story of alumni, the alumni relations office, alumni activities, and Niagara University, and we did that through our alumni news section in the Eagle and at campus events such as the “Life After Sports” mentoring forum, the freshman orientation welcome, and the senior gala toast.

To encourage our regional chapters to meet on a regular basis, we built strong leadership and held great events that renewed old friendships and formed new ones.

To rekindle that “purple and white pride” among our more than 33,000 alumni nationwide, we upgraded the Eagle’s Nest online alumni community. Because the Eagle’s Nest is the key to keeping in touch with other alumni, the NUAA, and NU events, we encourage all alums to register at www.niagaraalumni.com. When you visit the site, check out the new design and let us know what you think … we welcome your input.

Our annual Alumni Weekend will be here soon (Oct. 8-10, 2010). What a great time for a mini-vacation or to get some classmates together to make the trip to Monteagle Ridge. If you haven’t been there for awhile, you’ll be surprised — it looks great!

It has been an honor to serve the NUAA as president and I welcome our new president, Martin Byrne Sr., ’78. I hope that the framework we laid will provide NUAA with a great future.

Best to all Purple Eagles!

Sincerely,

Dr. Greg Hudecki, ’68
President, Niagara University Alumni Association

Meghan Higman, ’86, Frank Higman, ’54, Kelley Higman Mathieson, ’84, and Kerry Higman Berlinger, ’90, during the Alumni Dinner Theatre event on May 8.


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Alumni Chapters

Albany Chapter
Bob Sheehan, ’85
518-441-2758
rjsheehan2002@yahoo.com

Atlanta Chapter
Melinda Smith, ’78
404-934-6135 or 770-935-4511
msfundraiser@bellsouth.net

Boston Chapter
Tony Lista, ’80
508-951-2641
tonylista@aol.com

Alumni Association Board of Directors
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Melinda Smith, ’78
Lisa Sparks-Shremota, ’95
Jason Stein, ’93
Iasha Stone, ’08
Michelle Van de Loo, ’01

18 eagle magazine
Mark Your Calendar

Don’t forget to mark your calendar on the alumni events coming to you this fall! As a reminder, due to our new postage and “going green” initiatives, event information will be available online at the Eagle’s Nest and in the Eagle alumni magazine only. We will no longer mail information regarding events.

September
15 CNY — Presidential Reception at Bellevue Country Club
16 Rochester — Presidential Reception at Mario’s Italian Restaurant
22 National Capital — Buffalo Nite
25 Chicago — Day at the Races at Arlington Park Race Track

October
15 Boston — TBD
23 Las Vegas — Afternoon BBQ at the home of alumnus Chris Coyer, ’93
23 Delaware Valley — TBD
TBD Central Maryland — TBD

Alumni Weekend: Oct. 8-10, celebrating class years ending in 0’s and 5’s!

We are excited to welcome you back in celebration of the anniversary of your graduation! Whether it has been five years or 50, this is a great way to reunite with classmates, discover new friendships, and relive your memories from your unforgettable Niagara University years!

Register quickly and easily online at the Eagle’s Nest, www.niagaraalumni.com. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

How do I register for an event?
1. Online at the Eagle’s Nest: www.niagaraalumni.com
2. By phone at 716-286-8787
3. By mail:
   Alumni Relations Office
   P.O. Box 2008
   Niagara University, N.Y. 14109-2008

Buffalo-Niagara Chapter
Nancy Langer, ’78
716-836-5188
nmlanger@aol.com
Shannon Bloomquist, ’07
716-316-5873
shannon.m.bloomquist@gmail.com

Central New York Chapter
Marty Byrne, ’78
315-424-7139
Byrneirish7@aol.com
Lisa Sparks-Sheremeta, ’95
315-622-3443 or 607-316-1884
lisa.sheremeta@hilton.com

Central Maryland Chapter
Maureen Becker, ’90
410-744-2400
maureen@ipmba.org

Charlotte Chapter
Jason Stein, ’93
704-332-8407
jstein@carolina.rr.com

Chicago Chapter
“Windy City Purple Eagles”
Lavisse Smith, ’75
630-410-8597
Lavisse.Smith@jostens.com

Cleveland Chapter
Timothy Carroll ’84
216-479-8655
tcarroll@ssd.com
Mary Lou Markowski, ’90
mlmarkowski@roadrunner.com

Delaware Valley Chapter
Ashleigh Cirilla, ’02
585-766-1690
acirilla@gmail.com
Frank Fiannaca, ’85
856-665-5600
ffiannaca@usapayrollnj.com

Rochester Chapter
Mike Moll, ’89
585-924-2414
mmoll2@rochester.rr.com
Dianne Moll, ’89
585-924-2414
dmoll@admin.rochester.edu

Tri-State Chapter
Michelle Vandeloo, ’01
917-685-1675
michelle.vandeloo@aig.com

Washington National Capital Chapter
Paul McCarthy, ’60
703-931-6478
paulmccarthy@earthlink.net

Randy Traugott, ’81, and Bill Loftus, ’82, at the Kist Golf Classic held at the Niagara Falls Country Club on June 14.

Dana Lewandowski, ’02, and Angela Harding, ’01, at Tavern on the Tracks in Charlotte, N.C., on April 23.

Don’t forget to mark your calendar on the alumni events coming to you this fall! As a reminder, due to our new postage and “going green” initiatives, event information will be available online at the Eagle’s Nest and in the Eagle alumni magazine only. We will no longer mail information regarding events.

September
15 CNY — Presidential Reception at Bellevue Country Club
16 Rochester — Presidential Reception at Mario’s Italian Restaurant
22 National Capital — Buffalo Nite
25 Chicago — Day at the Races at Arlington Park Race Track

October
15 Boston — TBD
23 Las Vegas — Afternoon BBQ at the home of alumnus Chris Coyer, ’93
23 Delaware Valley — TBD
TBD Central Maryland — TBD

Alumni Weekend: Oct. 8-10, celebrating class years ending in 0’s and 5’s!

We are excited to welcome you back in celebration of the anniversary of your graduation! Whether it has been five years or 50, this is a great way to reunite with classmates, discover new friendships, and relive your memories from your unforgettable Niagara University years!

Register quickly and easily online at the Eagle’s Nest, www.niagaraalumni.com. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

How do I register for an event?
1. Online at the Eagle’s Nest: www.niagaraalumni.com
2. By phone at 716-286-8787
3. By mail:
   Alumni Relations Office
   P.O. Box 2008
   Niagara University, N.Y. 14109-2008

Buffalo-Niagara Chapter
Nancy Langer, ’78
716-836-5188
nmlanger@aol.com
Shannon Bloomquist, ’07
716-316-5873
shannon.m.bloomquist@gmail.com

Central New York Chapter
Marty Byrne, ’78
315-424-7139
Byrneirish7@aol.com
Lisa Sparks-Sheremeta, ’95
315-622-3443 or 607-316-1884
lisa.sheremeta@hilton.com

Central Maryland Chapter
Maureen Becker, ’90
410-744-2400
maureen@ipmba.org

Charlotte Chapter
Jason Stein, ’93
704-332-8407
jstein@carolina.rr.com

Chicago Chapter
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Dana Lewandowski, ’02, and Angela Harding, ’01, at Tavern on the Tracks in Charlotte, N.C., on April 23. Randy Traugott, ’81, and Bill Loftus, ’82, at the Kist Golf Classic held at the Niagara Falls Country Club on June 14.
Magliarditi Draws a Winning Hand

In a town where fortunes can change in the blink of an eye, Joseph Magliarditi, ’91, hit the jackpot. In June, he was named president and CEO of the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, a premier destination entertainment resort known for its innovative nightlife and music scene.

How did he do it? “I got lucky,” he says. “I was given an opportunity in the beginning of my career to get involved in as much as I wanted.”

While luck may have had something to do with it, Magliarditi’s keen abilities to analyze and assess a property also played a big part. A 16-year veteran in the Las Vegas casino industry, Magliarditi has overseen extensive renovation projects at the Rio, where he got his start in the gaming industry, and at the Colorado Belle and Edgewater casinos.

He also designed and developed the M Resort Spa Casino, which opened in March of 2009. When the top spot at the Hard Rock became available, Magliarditi was confident that he “was the right person to have the biggest impact on the property in the shortest amount of time.”

Magliarditi’s start in the industry came after brief stints as a financial analyst with Times Mirror Inc. and as a consultant for Merrill Lynch. It was a spontaneous decision, made while visiting his older brother, who was living in Vegas. “Las Vegas was a booming town then,” Magliarditi says. He went back to New York, packed his things, and never looked back.

Magliarditi began working as a corporate analyst for the Rio, which at that time was owned by the Marnell family, casino-building pioneers who launched such celebrated properties as the Mirage, Caesars Palace and Wynn. Using the skills he honed as an economics and marketing major at Niagara University and as an MBA student at Hofstra University, he quickly moved his way into positions of increasing responsibility, including director of strategic marketing, vice president of hotel operations, and senior vice president of operations. When Harrah’s Entertainment acquired the Rio in 1999, Magliarditi remained with the hotel another 18 months before joining Anthony Marnell III to launch TRIRIGA, an integrated workplace management system that has been named a leader in sustainability software and is used by more than one-third of the Fortune 100.

“Software was the cool, hip thing to do” at that time, Magliarditi says, and his original three-year commitment to the company stretched over seven years. “It was the best business learning experience I ever had.”

In 2007, Magliarditi returned to the casino industry, accepting the position of COO and executive vice president of the Colorado Belle and Edgewater casinos, Marnell-owned properties along the Colorado River in Laughlin, Nevada. Again, Magliarditi turned a sharp eye toward the operational aspect of the business and spearheaded multimillion dollar remodeling projects at both properties.

At that same time, Magliarditi partnered again with Marnell to build the M Resort, an innovative destination resort on the south end of the Vegas strip. It was the most fun he has had in his career, he says. He oversaw every aspect of the construction, from putting the ideas on paper to doing the final walkthrough 24 months later. “It was dirt and now it is a living, breathing thing,” he says.

The top spot at the Hard Rock became available at a time when Magliarditi was ready for a new challenge. He’d been a customer at the hotel for more than a decade and had always been intrigued by it, he says, adding that he had tried to purchase it at one time but was outbid. “I thought it was a secret jewel of the city.”

Despite his interest in the property, accepting the job was a difficult decision for Magliarditi. He would have to leave the Marnell family to take the helm of a property that had recently undergone a $750 million expansion but was in need of an image makeover. Magliarditi plans to take the property to the next level, maintaining its party atmosphere while appealing to an older, more sophisticated clientele.

Magliarditi’s first weeks on the job were dedicated to getting to know the property and its management team. “It’s been a blur,” he says. He has a long list of things he wants to do at the Hard Rock, but his first steps will be to assess and prioritize the tasks ahead. “This goes beyond starting from scratch. That’s easier.”

The Niagara Falls native has come a long way from his days on Monteagle Ridge, and while Lady Luck may have had a hand in his success, he also credits the opportunity to work with “visionaries” in the field who “gave young people a chance to succeed and allowed them to make mistakes so they could be better.” It’s that environment he wants to create for the 3,000 employees at the Hard Rock. A strong advocate of teamwork, Magliarditi hopes that his leadership will make a positive impact on his employees’ lives and the lives of their families. “That’s a pretty good feeling to know that you’re making things better, that your employees can say, ‘he helped us, it worked.’”

— Lisa McMahon
classnotes
CA&S = College of Arts & Sciences
CBA = College of Business Administration
CE = College of Education
CN = College of Nursing
CH = College of Hospitality & Tourism Management
CA&S = College of Arts & Sciences
IHTRA = Institute of Travel, Hotel & Restaurant Administration (pre-CH)
TTT = Transportation, Travel & Tourism (pre-ITHRA)

1950s Jerald Wolfgang, ’59 (CBA), Youngstown, N.Y., executive director of the Western New York Regional Education Center for Economic Development, was selected as this year’s recipient of the District Director’s Special Award of Distinction and Achievement by the Buffalo district office of the U.S. Small Business Administration. He was recognized at the organization’s Small Business Week Awards Luncheon in May.

1960s Roy Gardner, ’60 (CBA), Sun City Center, Fla., an outfielder for the Bucks & Bulls senior softball team, was selected to the all-tournament team in two national tournaments: the Winter Nationals in Ft. Myers, and the Tournament of Champions in Lakeland. He was also awarded MVP in the Tournament of Champions.

Francis McCann, ’60 (CE), Durham, N.H., recently celebrated the 25th anniversary of the international affairs program that he founded and directed for nine years at the University of New Hampshire. He has retired after 36 years in the university’s history department, but continues to research and write on Brazilian history, primarily on military and foreign relations themes.

Karen A. Ballard, ’66 (CN), New York, N.Y., was elected to a two-year term as first vice president of the American Nurses Association during its House of Delegates biennial meeting in June in Washington, D.C.

Robert J. Cestelli, ’69 (CA&S/Political Science), Centerville, Ohio, is the new owner/operator of the Huntington Learning Center in Cincinnati.

William H. Frank Jr., ’69 (CBA/Accounting), Schenectady, N.Y., was appointed as director of Schenectady County Veterans’ Services Agency. He has three kids: Brendan, 16; Cathy O’Donnell Moore, ’88, and Joseph Kchodl, ’79 (CE/French), Midland, Mich., spoke on “Camarasaurus Dinosaur Discovery in the Deserts of Utah” in the Gateway Executive Office auditorium in May. He discovered a 60-foot-long Camarasaurus dinosaur in the San Rafael Desert in Utah in 2008.

1980s Kathleen (Merritt) Rich, ’83 (CA&S/Biology), New Milford, Conn., accepted the position of director of marketing and operations for Creative Music Center, Monroe, Conn.

1990s Warren Stoll, ’70 (CA&S/Chemistry), Lockport, N.Y., has been selected for induction into the Western New York Baseball Hall of Fame. He has been the catcher and team leader for Lockport Bus Lines for two decades.

1995s William Bengston, ’71 (CA&S/Sociology), Port Jefferson, N.Y., has been elected president of the Society for Scientific Exploration, an international group of scientists who research scientific anomalies.

William J. Collesano, ’71 (CBA/Commerce), Youngstown, N.Y., was named safety manager of AAA Western and Central New York.

George C. Ruotolo Jr., ’72 (CA&S/Political Science), Cliffside Park, N.J., has been selected and sworn in as a trustee of the Ramapo College board of trustees. His term will continue through June 2012.

Rev. James R. Gould, ’74 (CA&S/Philosophy), Springfield, Va., is the newly appointed pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Warrenton, Va.

Kurt Hartmann, ’75 (TTT), Baldwinsville, N.Y., was named Transportation Club of Central N.Y.’s Person of the Year. He has been involved in the Central N.Y. transportation industry for the past 32 years.

Paul Gaughan, ’79 (CA&S/Political Science), Hamburg, N.Y., was selected as Erie County commissioner of jurors for the New York State Office of Court Administration in February. He has been a village trustee in the Village of Hamburg for the last 10 years and is also a trustee for the Scalp and Blade Scholarship Foundation.

Jerald Wolfgang, ’59 (CBA), Youngstown, N.Y., has been the catcher and team leader for Lockport Bus Lines for two decades.


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Sherry (Hunt) DePerro, ’84 (CBA/Accounting), Baldwinsville, N.Y., was named vice president/financial reporting at Cadaret, Grant and Co. in Syracuse, N.Y. She is responsible for both internal and external reporting, monitoring internal financial controls and improving operating standards.

60 Seconds With:
Daniel T. Moore, ’89
Degree: B.S. in marketing
Current job: Business development director at Daley & Associates in Boston
My best memories at Niagara are: meeting my future wife!
My favorite hangout was: the “after hour” parties at the Deveaux apartment complex followed by breakfast the next day at The Why Coffee Shop.
I am inspired by: the Vincentian priests who serve their mission!
The three words that describe me are: fun, competitive, and motivating.
My favorite part of my job is: that there are no two days alike! Every day there is a new “challenge” to face when dealing with clients and job seekers.
When I’m not working you’ll find me: coaching my kids or driving them to their events.
I still want to learn how to: read music and play the guitar really well.
Five random facts about me:
1. I’ve been married for 20 years to Cathy O’Donnell Moore, ’88, and have three kids: Brendan, 16; Cayla, 14; and Kyle, 8.
2. My wife’s uncle, Father Hugh O’Donnell, is a Vincentian priest and is on the St. John’s board of trustees.
3. I once worked at The Lady Luck Casino in Las Vegas “counting cash” at six in the morning. Therefore, I do not gamble.
4. I’ve completed five marathons (four in New York City and one in Boston).
5. I enjoy meeting Niagara alumni in the New England area!
We’d like to get to know you better! In each issue of the Eagle, we’ll spend a minute (or so) with an alum from a random area of the country and ask a few questions to find out more about him or her. Will you be next?
Tonya Russen-Rondinone, ‘87 (CA&S/Psychology), Wallingford, Conn., lecturer in the department of psychology at Saint Joseph College, has been selected as the 2010 recipient of the Reverend John J. Stack Teaching Excellence Award, which is presented annually at the college’s commencement ceremony. As the winner of the Stack Award, she will deliver the convocation address at the start of the 2010 fall semester.

1990s

William Scholl, ’91 (ITHRA), Fairfield, Conn., was named district supply management coordinator with Sodexo, Marriott Services. He also received the fourth degree in the Knights of Columbus, where he is the acting secretary and charter member for Council 14360.

Wendy (Astride) Adams, ’94 (CBA/Management), North Tonawanda, N.Y., was selected as the 2010 recipient of the Reverend John J. Stack Teaching Excellence Award, which is presented annually at the college’s commencement ceremony. As the winner of the Stack Award, she will deliver the convocation address at the start of the 2010 fall semester.

Sophia (Brashear) Darling, ’97 (CBA/Accounting), Ithaca, N.Y., has accepted the position of chief financial officer of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Science. BTI is an independent affiliate of Cornell University with a mission to advance and communicate scientific knowledge in plant biology to improve agriculture, protect the environment and enhance human health.

Michael Gutchell, ’98 (CE/Social Studies-Secondary), Clifton Park, N.Y., has been named assistant principal of Shenendehowa High School in Clifton Park.

2000s

Dawn (Romagnola) Decker, ’00 (CA&S/Psychology), Los Angeles, has successfully defended her dissertation and completed her doctoral degree in clinical psychology at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles.

Monica (DiSanza) Dvoranchik, ’02 (CE/English), Herndon, Va., is a freelance interpreter for sign language.

Nicholas Langworthy, ’03 (CA&S/Political Science), Buffalo, N.Y., was unanimously elected as chairman of the Erie County Republican Committee, the largest Republican organization in upstate New York. He is the youngest person to ever serve in this capacity for either political party in Erie County.

William O’Connor, ’04 (CBA/Management), Camillus, N.Y., graduated in June 2010 with an MBA from the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University. He moved from the lending side of his company, Wells Fargo, to the adviser side as a financial adviser.

Eric Pautz, ’04 (CA&S/Business), O’Fallon, Mo., was promoted to Midwest state government clinic director with Gartner Inc., an information technology research and advisory company.

Michelle McLaughlin, ’05 (CH/Hospitality Management), Amherst, N.Y, was appointed general manager for the Fairfield Inn and Suites Buffalo-Airport hotel by Buffalo Lodging Associates.

Suzanne (Marr) Hill, ’06 (CE/Social Studies), New Port Richey, Fla., received her tenure professional contract with Pinellas County School District, where she currently teaches 10th and 11th grade world and U.S. history at Tarpon Springs High School.

Kathleen Moriarty, ’06 (CBA/Accounting), Grand Island, N.Y., was promoted to manager at Chippou Travis Besaw and Kershner, an Amherst, N.Y., accounting firm.

Cali Gilbert, ’07 (CH), Sausalito, Calif., has started her own company, Serendipity Promotions and Event Management, serving the nonprofit sector in the San Francisco Bay area.
Life after college graduation can be both scary and confusing. Many graduates find themselves grappling for a sense of purpose and a place of belonging, trying to answer the question “Where do I go from here?” For Lacey Howcroft, ’09, the answer was clear. With a heart for others and desire to help those less fortunate, Howcroft decided to join Americorps, a choice influenced by her experience at Niagara University.

“I absolutely loved that Niagara is so big on community service,” Howcroft says. “I had the opportunity to volunteer at the Niagara Falls Housing Authority’s after-school program for two years. That alone gave me the incentive to want to do more for my community.”

Howcroft also went on two service trips with BASIC (Brothers and Sisters in Christ), a campus ministry program that brings students to urban or rural areas in the United States and the Republic of Panama to serve the poor in those communities.

One of those trips was to Bedford-Stuyvesant, a Brooklyn, N.Y., neighborhood. During her stay in Bed-Stuy, Howcroft roomed at St. John the Baptist Parish and participated in several service projects, including rebuilding a local church, volunteering at a mobile soup kitchen, and assisting at a school for underprivileged children.

“In Bed-Stuy, I got to see how the less fortunate live and how they are often forgotten by the government and by society as a whole,” says Howcroft. She spent the majority of her time assisting with the prekindergarten class at St. John the Baptist School during the day and at an after-school program in the afternoon. She grew close to the children during her week there, and they grew very comfortable with her.

“Those children were the most amazing, kind children I have ever met in my life. Yet for being only 4 years old, many of them had seen and dealt with more violence and poverty than any person in America should ever have to see or deal with,” she says. “They gave me the incentive to want to help other children like them and try to make this country a better place for children to live.”

After Howcroft left Bed-Stuy, she stayed in touch with both the parish and several of the children she met, even going back to visit the school. “The BASIC trip to Brooklyn in January 2008 was the deciding factor for me to join Americorps,” she says.

Howcroft served as a member of Americorps from October 2009 through July 2010, based in Sacramento, Calif. After her training, which took place the first month, she completed four projects with her team of 11: restoring a summer camp for children on Vashon Island, Wash.; working as a mentor and tutor for children at an elementary school in South Sacramento; building a house through Habitat for Humanity in Gray, Louisiana; and rebuilding and restoring some of the public schools in New Orleans that were damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

“Americorps affected my life in a positive way. I was able to travel and do things that I never would otherwise get the chance to do,” Howcroft says. “It has also made me much more aware of the social problems that exist in this country, specifically homelessness. There is a very large and visible homeless population in downtown Sacramento and it is very disheartening to see. It’s frustrating because I want to help everyone that I can, but at the same time I am happy to know that I am helping at least some people.”

With her Americorps assignment complete, Howcroft is hoping to obtain a job as a counselor for an inner-city elementary school or residential group home for children in San Francisco before pursuing a master’s degree in social welfare.

“My dream is to open my own recreational center where inner-city children can come to feel safe, get help with homework, be surrounded by positive role models, and have the opportunity to just be kids,” she says. “NU helped me decide to do this because the school is focused on service work, which is something I am very passionate about now.”

— Janna Besant, ’10

We are looking for alumni who have published books within the past 10 years to include in an upcoming Eagle feature. If you have written a book and would like to be included, please contact Lisa McMahon, editor, at lmcmahon@niagara.edu by Oct. 4.
Anthony Mercurio, ’07 (CBA/MBA-Business Administration), Kennesaw, Ga., was inducted into Colgate-Palmolive’s 2009 Hall of Fame in Chicago in recognition of achieving outstanding results through leadership.

Nicole Alico, ’08 (CH/Hotel Planning & Control), West Seneca, N.Y., has accepted the position of sales coordinator at the new Sheraton Tribeca in Manhattan.

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For Denise Payne, the Road to Success Is One Well-Traveled

Vacations are great, but most travelers will admit that there’s no place like home. Living out of a suitcase and being away from your home base can get old after awhile, right?

Don’t tell that to Denise Payne, a 1999 graduate of Niagara University and a member of the critically acclaimed “Jersey Boys” tour. She’s been on the road almost constantly for a decade, and she wouldn’t have it any other way.

We caught up with Payne while Jersey Boys played at Shea’s Performing Arts Center in Buffalo April 21 through May 9. The Buffalo engagement was among the shortest stops on their hugely successful cross-country tour. Many previous stops have lasted anywhere from one to three months in some of the largest U.S. cities.

“This is my fifth tour, and I’ve spent the last 10 years on the road,” Payne said. “Life on the road definitely has its pros and cons. You have to be the type of person who enjoys moving a lot. I think there’s a little part of us that likes to be nomadic. Unfortunately, it means that I don’t get to see my family a lot and we’re only off one day a week. This job is a lifestyle. It’s not for everyone, but it has allowed me to see the whole country.”

Her travels have brought her to the historic Shea’s stage before. Several years ago she came to Buffalo with the “Footloose” tour. “We had a great cast, but the production wasn’t the best quality and the show is a little cheesy,” Payne said of her previous visit with “Footloose.” “In fact, I think we were panned in Buffalo. But this show (‘Jersey Boys’) is so much different. I’m so proud of it!”

Payne is equally as proud of the outstanding education she received while attending NU. “Niagara, for me, was the perfect situation,” she said. “I needed that individual, one-on-one work with the teachers, and the overall theatre program was just amazing. In this show (‘Jersey Boys’), I play many different characters … and we worked on that type of situation so much at NU. It’s such a great program and I’m glad that I was a part of it.”

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1st Sgt. Charles Cutler, ’96 (CA&S/Criminology & Criminal Justice), Rochester, N.Y., was promoted to first sergeant and returned from his third tour of duty in Iraq in May 2010. He is enrolled in the Homeland Security Management Advanced Certificate Program at Long Island University.

Capt. Charlie Schiralli, ’00 (CA&S), Chittenango, N.Y., was promoted to captain (medical service corp) in the New York Army National Guard.

marrriages


Colleen Sweeney, ’94, North Syracuse, N.Y., to Craig Dillenbeck, June 12, 2010.


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marrriages


Colleen Sweeney, ’94, North Syracuse, N.Y., to Craig Dillenbeck, June 12, 2010.


Maria Stockings, ’06, Niagara Falls, N.Y., to Christopher Heist, Niagara Falls, June 26, 2010.


births and adoptions


To Mr. and Mrs. Dan Walters, ’93, Carlsbad, Calif., a daughter, Ciera Danielle, April 8, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. James Adams (Wendy Astridge, ’94), North Tonawanda, N.Y., a son, Braden James, June 22, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Robert Christie (Rebecca Bauer, ’95), Geneseo, N.Y., a son, Henry David, April 24, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Edward Perry (Michelle Stevens, ’96), Syracuse, N.Y., a son, Wyatt Beacham, April 6, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Rich Backus (Kathleen Beene, ’00), Canandaigua, N.Y., a daughter, Ella Mae, April 21, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Sean Esposito, ’00 (Kathryn O’Keefe, ’00), Churchville, N.Y., a son, Caleb Sean, June 19, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Schiralli, ’00 (Sarah Hart, ’00), Chittenango, N.Y., a daughter, Mia Ann, May 23, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Chapman (Bernadette Welter, ’00), Chittenango, N.Y., a daughter, Gabriella Leigh, April 2, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Metzgar (Shelley Baker, ’01), Avon, N.Y., a son, Ty Mason, Jan. 15, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Greg Everett (Amy Byrwa, ’01), Amherst, N.Y., a daughter, Ava Madison, June 23, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Tom Kennedy, ’01 (Michelle Stone, ’01), Westminster, Va., a son, John Allen, March 24, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Schall (Marie Millard, ’01), Forestburgh, N.Y., a son, Jacob Michael, Jan. 16, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smardz, ’03 (Kimberly Barton, ’02), Hamburg, N.Y., a daughter, Liliana Faith, May 7, 2010.

death


A Job of Olympic Proportions

What does it take to coordinate travel for 6,000 amateur athletes, 200 medical personnel, and more than 1,000 coaches, chaperones and other volunteers? Lisa Del Signore, ’81, games administrator for the Empire State Games, knows well.

Del Signore has spent more than 30 years with the Games, one of the largest amateur athletic programs in the nation. She began as a seasonal employee, working for the organization in the summers between semesters at Niagara University. Although she briefly moved to Arizona to look for work as a physical education teacher after earning her B.S. from Niagara, she moved back when the Games offered her a permanent position.

“I kind of put the teaching aspect aside,” she says. “I’ve got the Games in my blood.”

That wasn’t always the case. When she was 10, her dad, Charles, a state Department of Transportation employee, and her mom, Nancy, a registered nurse, moved the family from Long Island to a working dairy farm in Maiden Bridge, N.Y., a little town outside of Albany. There, Del Signore, the third oldest of eight children, tended to the cows and the chickens, and dreamed of one day becoming a veterinarian.

Those dreams changed during her teenage years, when Del Signore became active in sports. She and four of her six brothers would spend hours playing basketball on a hoop her father hung inside the family’s barn. “We played all year long,” Del Signore says. “The ball didn’t bounce very well in the wintertime.”

Her basketball talent earned her a scholarship at Niagara University and a place on the women’s team, which competed in the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women at the time. The team went to nationals a couple of times, she notes. “It was definitely a rewarding time to be involved in basketball.”

The skills she learned as a member of the Lady Eagles — setting priorities, attention to detail, and time management — serve her well in her role with the Empire State Games, an organization that brings New York’s best athletes together each year to compete in 28 Olympic-style sporting events. Many of these participants have gone on to become professional athletes, Olympians and world champions.

Del Signore is responsible for negotiating housing and food contracts with the host schools and planning transportation for the athletes and volunteers that participate in the Summer Games, both before and during the sporting events. This year, Del Signore oversaw the 85 buses that transported athletes from 11 different locations across the state, and the shuttles that brought them to and from 24 event venues across Western New York, including Niagara University’s Gallagher Center and Niagara Field.

Del Signore also coordinates the services of 200 doctors and athletic trainers who attend to the athletes during the Games. Many of the current athletic trainers started out as student athletic trainers and now bring their students with them, Del Signore notes. “People come back after starting with us when they were very young. We must be doing something right.”

Much of Del Signore’s work takes place in the months before the Games. Her job takes her to the host region several times during those months; she travels every third week at first, then every other week. “There’s only certain things we can do by phone,” she says.

About a week and a half before the opening ceremonies, Del Signore sets up a makeshift office on the host campus to finish her behind-the-scenes work. This year, that office was on the first floor of the Student Union at the University at Buffalo’s north campus, a space she shared with three other Games employees.

“Once the Games start, if we’ve done our job right, we don’t have much to do,” she says, adding that watching the Opening Ceremony, which is patterned after the Olympics and includes the traditional athlete procession and a torch-lighting ceremony, is her favorite part of the job. “It’s the end result of all the work,” she says.

During the four days when the Games are taking place, Del Signore typically remains in her office to field phone calls and questions from the athletes and their families and to adjust shuttle schedules that need to be changed due to weather delays or overtime.

Although she typically does not have time to watch the Games herself, she has enjoyed a couple of memorable moments. She saw Mike Tyson win a gold medal in a 1984 championship bout at the Carrier Dome in Syracuse, and she sat and chatted with Governor Mario Cuomo and legendary St. John basketball coach Lou Carnesecca during a men’s basketball game in Albany one year.

“That’s my brush with greatness,” she laughs.

Once the games end, it’s time to start preparing for the next year. The 2011 Games are scheduled to take place in Rochester and plans are already under way.

“In September, I’ll be meeting with regional directors,” Del Signore says. And the process will begin again.

Although Del Signore does occasionally think about the teaching career she put aside, she remains steadfast in her commitment to the Empire State Games. “As long as they’re still doing the Games, I’ll still be here,” she says.

— Lisa McMahon
Alumni from Niagara University men's and women's rugby football club came to campus in April to socialize with current student players and celebrate NU rugby. Activities included a Friday night social in the Heritage Room in Clet Hall; a Saturday game pitting the current men's team against NURFC alumni (won 35-5 by the alumni team); and an awards banquet, during which Bill DesPres was inducted into the NURFC Hall of Fame. Also at the banquet, sophomore Matt McGovern was awarded the Col. Terry Crowe Scholarship, an annual award given by the NURFC men's alumni to a current men's player and named for Col. Terry Crowe, '82, who was killed while serving in Iraq.

Sophomore Matt McGovern, pictured here with the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara’s president, was the recipient of a scholarship named for Col. Terry Crowe, ’82, who was killed while serving in Iraq.

With sympathy


To Mary (Wallace) Neville, ’59, Niagara Falls, N.Y., on the death of her son, Peter Q. Neville, May 12, 2010.

To Wayne R. Bayliff, ’64, Foster City, Calif., on the death of his mother, Dorothy Bayliff, Feb. 2, 2010.

To Mary Ellen (Gallagher) Fraser, ’65, Pittsford, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Alma Gallagher, March 7, 2010.
A Life Dedicated to Helping Others

Service to others and devotion to his family and faith have always been important to Ed Gordon. In fact, it’s not a stretch by any means to say that his entire life has been dedicated to helping others. Even as a student at NU decades ago, it was pretty clear as to the direction in which his life was heading.

“I graduated from NU in 1970 from the School of Education with a degree in German,” says Gordon. “When I graduated from NU I was a member of the Oblates of St. Francis deSales. At that point in my life I was looking forward to serving the church as an ordained priest. A few years later, I discerned that it wasn’t my vocation. After leaving the Oblates, I became a parish director for religious education in Alexandria, Va., completed my MA at Catholic University, and for almost 40 years have been involved in catechesis at the parish, diocesan, national and international levels.”

In recognition of his devotion and dedication, he recently received the Catechetical Award given annually by the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership. The award is presented for outstanding contributions to the ministry of catechesis.

“First of all, it is a great honor to be considered for an award that includes some of my mentors and teachers,” Gordon says. “It is also an affirmation for my family and coworkers who have supported and worked alongside me over these years. It is gratifying that the organization would give the award to a practitioner like myself. Most of the recipients have been from academia or publishing. My career has been spent attempting to find practical ways for people in the pews to come into a deeper relationship with Jesus and to train catechists for the new realities of the post-modern world.”

Professionally, Gordon has served nearly 29 years as secretary for Catholic education and the director of religious education for the Diocese of Wilmington, which encompasses the state of Delaware and the nine counties of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. As secretary of the department, he has administrative responsibilities for the oversight of youth ministry, campus ministry, Catholic schools, and religious education in the diocese. As director for religious education, his office has line responsibility for the formal religious education programs for adults, youth and children in the parishes and the Catholic schools.

Gordon’s Niagara experience was the foundation upon which his career has been built.

“My Niagara years were so rich and challenging,” Gordon recalls. “A few of my theology professors opened me to a whole world of inquiry I am still exploring. When we were at NU, it was the first time the Oblates were involved in activities on campus. Getting involved with the theatre programs, sports and politics helped shape my religious outlook that was broad and engaged with the world. It also helped me to have a network of friends who challenged me in many ways and were a lot of fun besides. While being a seminarian on campus was a different experience than for the other students, I think we were able to gain a tremendous amount from NU, and I hope, give a little back.”

— Joe Kirchmyer

To Michael L. Ciraldo, ’75, Rye Brook, N.Y., on the death of his brother, John Ciraldo, April 18, 2010.
To Christopher P. Leven, ’76, Geneva, N.Y., on the death of his father, Carl Leven Jr., Dec. 30, 2009.
To Colleen (James) O’Rourke, ’79, Buffalo, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Mary Jane James, Dec. 10, 2010.
To Lyn (Celenza) Dyster, ’80, Lewiston, N.Y., on the death of her father; and to John Dyster, ’80, Lewiston, on the death of his father-in-law, Louis A. Celenza, May 10, 2010.
To Mara (Slipko) Neville, ’95, Niagara Falls, N.Y., on the death of her husband, Peter Q. Neville, May 12, 2010.
To Janice Reele, ’02, Youngstown, N.Y., on the death of her husband, Peter Q. Neville, May 12, 2010.
To Nancy Bellissimo, ’09, Rochester, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Louise J. Majchrzak, May 9, 2010.
Taking Second Chance Reaps Big Dividends

Editor’s note: This essay was first published by The Buffalo News on June 23, 2010, and is reprinted with permission.

The novelist Andrew Greeley once said, “We’re given second chances every day of our life. We don’t usually take them, but they’re there for the taking.” Three years ago, on the threshold of 50, I decided to give myself a second chance, and thanks to Niagara University, I graduated with a master’s degree on May 22.

In 2005, I reached a crossroad in my life when my position was eliminated, interrupting a developing career and severing deep ties to an organization I loved.

When I applied for a similar job at the Castellani Art Museum, the art degree that I had never used turned out to be an asset, and I began back where I started, in the world of art. I immediately loved the museum and working on a college campus. Being immersed in a culture of learning was a tonic, waking me up to new possibilities. I started to think seriously about going back to school.

When Niagara launched the Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, which enables students to design their own curriculum, I was intrigued. Other programs I had considered were not quite right. My interests were eclectic. I wanted management and the arts and communication and writing. I needed a degree program that could develop organically, as my career had.

It was appealing to have a second chance at being a student. Over the years, I had often regretted that I coasted through college and vowed that if I ever went back, I would be a different kind of student. When I was accepted into the MA-IS program, I made a commitment to myself that I would not just go through the motions, but give it my best effort to excel.

As a nontraditional student, out of school for decades, the introductory seminar was a crash review course in academic writing, citing sources and analyzing text. The library was a revelation — no more card catalog or microfiche, and the wonders of online research at my fingertips. In the beginning I had no idea how I would structure my courses, but somehow, by the end of that first semester, an amorphous concept had coalesced into a program of study.

The MA-IS program reflects the current reality of the working world. Gone are the days of the one-trick pony. The nature of work today is interdisciplinary.

In our current economy, fewer people perform an increasing number of tasks. In addition to a specific job function, workers must master ever-changing software and rapidly evolving technology. Critical thinking skills are vital. The ability to function well across disciplines is a valuable asset in the workplace.

My career up to this point has followed a meandering course. Learning on the job, I taught myself whatever skills I needed along the way. Graduate school gave me the opportunity — even the luxury — to study aspects of my work in depth, to analyze and write about it. I learned a lot. My brain hurt, I learned so much! What a gift, to go back to school in midlife and feel the mind stretch like it hasn’t in years. For me, graduate school was a youth elixir.

I’m grateful to my employer, Niagara University, for giving me this second chance, and to the friends and loved ones who have cheered me on to the finish line.

In the end, I have just one regret: that my parents, public school teachers who taught me to love learning, were not there to see me graduate. They would have been so proud, and I am grateful that their passion for education led me to pursue this goal.
Your Alumni Office Just Got Greener!

In our continuing commitment to GO GREEN, we have taken two big steps forward!

1. DISCONTINUED EVENT MAILINGS*

You can receive event information in four ways:

1. E-vites from the Eagle’s Nest at www.niagaraalumni.com
   (there will be at least three e-mails per event)
2. E-newsletters sent from the Eagle’s Nest (approximately every other month)
3. Eagle Magazine — in the “Mark Your Calendar” section and special “Save the Date” articles
4. Social networking sites: Facebook and LinkedIn

You can register for events online, through the mail or by phone

*With the exception of the Alumni Weekend brochure, which will continue to be mailed

2. REDESIGN OF THE EAGLE’S NEST WEBSITE

With more reasons for you to go to the Eagle’s Nest, we made sure your new website has:

- A streamlined look
- Easier navigation
- New and enhanced features to better serve you and fellow graduates

Questions?
Call the alumni office at 716-286-8787 or send us an e-mail: alumni@niagara.edu