As we come to the end of another winter season we begin to look for signs of spring. While I don’t know that this has been a particularly harsh winter, I do hear people remark each February and March about how they have had enough and are ready for spring.

Of course, in Western New York, our growing impatience with the weather coincides with the Lenten season and our anticipation of Easter. Easter is certainly a time of special blessing for us.

We are also in the late winter of our campaign and are looking forward to a time of celebration for “The Promise of Niagara.” For that reason, this edition of the Eagle provides you with an update on the university’s campaign progress. We currently have raised more than $61 million toward our goal of $80 million. I am very proud of the work of our board members, alumni, friends, and of course, our staff and administration. The dedication that everyone has brought to the campaign has been very energizing.

This past January we were blessed to receive a $1-million gift from the family of the late Dr. Lawrence D. Jacobs, a member of the university’s Class of 1961. In the announcement of the gift, Dr. Jacobs’ wife, Pamela Jacobs-Vogt, said, “… it will serve as an inspiration for students to pursue careers in the science field.” The gift from the Jacobs family is truly inspirational and is very important to “The Promise of Niagara.” In fact, we have been blessed in the great support we have received throughout the campaign. To date, we have received 74 gifts of $100,000 or more.

The financial contributions are most important to us in a capital campaign, but I would be remiss if I didn’t also recognize gifts of time and effort that have also been given. In a special way I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to Bob Dwyer who has served a dual purpose for Niagara for these past few years. He has been the chairman for “The Promise of Niagara” campaign, while at the same time continuing to provide leadership and guidance as the chairman of the board of trustees. His dedication to our institution is exemplary and it does not go unnoticed. Thank you most sincerely, Bob.

It is important for us to reflect on how this campaign is laying the groundwork for the next 150 years of Niagara University. The opening of the Academic Complex and Bisgrove Hall in 2007 was a tremendous event that transformed the colleges of Education and Business Administration. This spring we will cut the ribbon on the Elizabeth Ann Clune Center for Theatre and the renovated Leary Theatre. This center will play a key role in our theater program and our overall campus experience.

When talking about the transformation of the campus it is very important to highlight the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. As I have said before, this interdisciplinary science building will radically alter the teaching and research environment on our campus. We are continuing work on this project behind the scenes with planners and architects and we look forward to the day in the near future when we will cut the ribbon for this great center.

In addition to the physical improvements on the campus, the campaign funding also allows us to grow the amount of financial aid money available to students at Niagara. During these challenging times we know how critically important this is to our students.

These projects are very exciting in their own right, and each has, or will, make an impact on the physical campus at Niagara. However, what energizes me most about these projects, and the entire Promise campaign, is the keen focus it has on our students at Niagara University. The benefit they derive from the new buildings, scholarships, academic program development and campus improvements is immeasurable and long-lasting. These improvements will continue to provide an environment that fosters academic excellence and encourages a vibrant campus life.

Once again, I am so pleased to have the opportunity to reflect on these successes with you and to thank so many of you who are connected to our campaign. I look forward to updating you further on “The Promise of Niagara.”

As always, I look forward to hearing your input or comments on my letter and this issue of the Eagle magazine at jll@niagara.edu.

God bless you for your generosity!

Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.
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Students enrolled in Niagara University’s College of Education received some hands-on training Dec. 1-3 as they played host to children from several area learning centers. For the youngsters, it was an adventure in reading, music and art. For NU students, it was a unique opportunity to give back to the community.

During one-hour morning sessions, the children were able to interact with NU faculty, grad students and undergrads through reading and craft activities. Following lunch on campus, the children returned to the Academic Complex, where they entertained passers-by with some enthusiastic Christmas carols.

Forty-five NU freshmen, 10 juniors and several grad students participated in the event, known on campus as “Standards for Santa Week.”

“Our freshmen were able to experience many phases of education and learn how to make learning fun,” said Patricia Wrobel, assistant dean for external relations in the College of Education. The event also had an environmental theme, and the visiting students were asked to come up with at least one idea on how they could make the holiday season just a little bit “greener.” Students who participated in the environmental awareness project were eligible to win some great prizes, including a hockey stick signed by Buffalo Sabres alumni.

— Joe Kirchmyer

Thomas J. Burns Named Associate Vice President for Public Relations, Communications and Marketing

Thomas J. Burns has been named to the newly established position of associate vice president for public relations, communications and marketing at Niagara University. In this position, he will lead the university’s integrated marketing and communications programs and serve as part of the university’s senior administrative council.

“Tom will be an outstanding addition to our executive team,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president. “He has substantial experience in brand development and management and will be able to provide the vision and strategic leadership necessary to effectively position, market and brand Niagara University.”

Burns brings a strong background in media relations, marketing and communications to the position. He most recently served as executive director of Deaf Adult Services in Buffalo. Previously, he held the position of associate vice president for advancement and communications at Medaille College. He also served as director of public relations and marketing for Bison Baseball, Inc.

“I am extremely excited to join an institution with such a strong heritage and a belief in preparing individuals not only for their careers, but also to serve the needs of all members of our society,” said Burns. “I truly believe in Niagara’s core values of spirituality, knowledge, creativity, integrity, and compassion and I look forward to being a part of the continued success of one of the premier institutions of higher education in Western New York.”

A native of Buffalo, Burns holds a bachelor of arts degree in broadcast communication from the State University of New York at Buffalo and an MBA in strategic management from Medaille College.
The Rev. John G. Nugent, C.M., the 21st president of Niagara University, passed away Feb. 4 at St. Catherine’s Infirmary in Philadelphia from natural causes. He was 87.

“The entire Niagara University family is mourning the loss of Father John Nugent,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., president of Niagara University.

Father Nugent began his time at Niagara in 1966 as the dean of the Graduate School and the School of Education. He left that position in 1972, and then held a seat on the Niagara University board of trustees. He was named chairman of the board in 1978.

Father Nugent became president of Niagara in August of 1981, and he was immediately charged with establishing fiscal stability for the university. He instituted tough fiscal controls, which played a major role in creating a stronger economic condition at the university. As president, Father Nugent welcomed Mother Teresa of Calcutta as Niagara’s commencement speaker in 1982. Under his presidency, Niagara introduced a new degree program in computer and information sciences, earned accreditation from the Council on Social Work and named the “Taps” Gallagher Center in honor of the legendary basketball coach.

Father Nugent was ordained a priest on May 26, 1949, and received a Doctor of Canon Laws degree in 1953 from Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Before joining Niagara, he was a faculty member at St. Joseph’s College in Princeton, N.J. He was a teacher of moral theology, ethics, literature and music at Mary Immaculate Seminary in Northampton, Pa., and later became director of scholastics there. Father Nugent was the superior and director of the seminary for six years before his first assignment at Niagara.

After leaving Niagara, Father Nugent served in many roles, including professor of canon law at Mary Immaculate Seminary, member of the formation team for the DePaul Novitiate in Germantown, Pa., and in general ministry at St. Vincent’s Seminary in Germantown.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Feb. 9 at the Miraculous Medal Shrine in Philadelphia.

Dr. Gary D. Praetzel, dean of Niagara’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, was elected chairman of the board of directors of the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau. His term runs through the end of 2010. He had served as treasurer of the board in 2009 before stepping in as interim chairman in June 2009.

NOTED AUTHOR VISITS CAMPUS — Julie Otsuka (second from right), author of “When the Emperor Was Divine,” gave an address at Niagara University on Sept. 10 as part of the activities conducted through Niagara’s annual freshman summer reading program, Niagara Reads. Otsuka discussed her novel, which gave a poignant depiction of how one family was irrevocably affected by the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. “When the Emperor Was Divine” was given to all incoming freshmen to read over the summer and discuss in their “First Year Niagara” freshman seminar classes.

Otsuka is pictured here with Niagara Reads committee members (back row, 1-r) Melissa Langridge, Ginny Pasceri, and Michelle Smith-Link; (front row, 1-r) Yoshiko Connelly and Sharon Green, chair of Niagara Reads.
Statler Foundation Grant Will Enrich NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management was awarded a $125,000 Statler Foundation grant to support expanded student recruitment efforts, add on-campus educational opportunities and experiences, and expand upon its international programs, which include work-abroad programs in Lake Como, Italy, and in Cusco, Peru. It will also enable the college to implement an international dual degree program with the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany, to enhance the marketability of graduates.

“What separates our program from other programs across the country is our almost seamless relationship with industry,” noted Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the college. “We provide our students annually with approximately 12 industry excursions and we work hard to deliver the best possible experiential opportunities available to our students.” According to Praetzel, the grant will facilitate these kinds of opportunities, including the development of an on-campus conferencing initiative that will provide students with practical sales and operations experience during summer events that require housing.

Dialogue on Diversity

Niagara University students, faculty and staff had an opportunity to come together to have an open, honest discussion about issues of diversity on campus when the Diversity Advocates hosted “Become a Match: Spark the Flame of Diversity and Inclusion,” a dynamic workshop that encouraged participants to confront their own belief systems about themselves and others.

Facilitated by Dr. Derek Greenfield, assistant professor of sociology at Shaw University, Raleigh, N.C., the workshops engaged attendees using real-world examples, experiences, and participatory exercises to challenge popular thought and foster new ways of seeing the world and its people.

The event was the first organized by the Diversity Advocates, a group established last year to raise awareness of diversity issues and help bring about change in accordance with its core values of equality, respect, acceptance, fellowship and understanding.

Tunde Adepegba, a junior political science/international studies major who serves as chief of staff for the organization, noted that the university community has begun a conversation on diversity issues and said that Greenfield was invited to campus to “be a catalyst to keep the dialogue going.”

The event took place over two days and featured three separate sessions: a student leadership workshop for resident assistants, members of the Niagara University Student Government Association, and the Diversity Advocates; a morning meeting with administration and faculty members; and the interactive workshop for the NU community. Adepegba said that the event has received positive feedback from students and employees alike.

“It’s definitely sparked a conversation on campus,” he said. “I think it was very successful.”

For more information on the Diversity Advocates, see www.niagara.edu/diversityadvocates. For a conversation with Dr. Derek Greenfield, see www.niagara.edu/diversity-advocates-videos/.

Sister Louise Sullivan, D.C., Receives Pierre Coste Prize

Sister Louise Sullivan, D.C., a professor emerita of modern languages at Niagara University, was selected as a recipient of the 2010 Pierre Coste Prize in recognition of her distinguished contributions in Vincentian studies and her deep spiritual insights into St. Louise de Marillac. The award, which was presented by the Vincentian Studies Institute at DePaul University during a ceremony on Feb. 5, is named after the famed 20th century French Vincentian historian, Pierre Coste, C.M. Coste is known as the father of modern Vincentian studies.

Sister Louise edited and translated “Saint Louise de Marillac: Spiritual Writings” and “Sr. Rosalie Rendu: A Daughter of Charity on Fire with Love for the Poor,” among other books and articles. She speaks worldwide on Louise de Marillac, who co-founded the Daughters of Charity in 1633 with Vincent de Paul; Rosalie Rendu, a Daughter of Charity decorated by Napoleon III for her service to the most impoverished of Paris; and other Vincentian topics.

Sister Louise first became interested in Vincentian heritage in 1968 when she was an interpreter for the First General Chapter of the Daughters of Charity, called in response to the directive of Vatican II to all religious congregations to return to the spirit of their founders.

“Through the years, interest became a passion especially for Louise de Marillac, and more recently, Rosalie Rendu,” she says. “My great joy is to share my discovery of these two remarkable women with the Vincentian family and to see the seeds planted grow in such diverse settings.”
Longtime University Professor Dies

Domenick A. Iannuzzi, ’34, a former Niagara University professor of modern languages, died Aug. 21, 2009. He was 97.

“Professor Domenick Iannuzzi was a longtime and highly respected member of our Niagara University community,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara’s president. “He was a beloved teacher, an influential colleague and collaborator and always a perfectly gracious gentleman. We miss him tremendously, and we will always remember him and pray for him.”

Iannuzzi joined the Niagara University faculty as a Spanish instructor in 1947. His career at Niagara spanned nearly 40 years and included serving as chairman of the department of modern languages for more than 25 years. He also served on numerous academic and faculty/student relationship committees and boards.

He was the recipient of many honors while at Niagara, earning the status of professor emeritus in 1972 and the President’s Medal, the university’s highest honor, in 1984. The university also granted him the honorary degree of Doctor of Pedagogy in 1987.

A loyal fan of Niagara athletics, Iannuzzi was one of the founders of the Niagara Club Football and the Niagara Boosters, and was the ticket manager for the teams in their fledgling days. His support of the Purple Eagles basketball team was legendary — he missed only one home game played in the Gallagher Center during its first 50 years, when the center was closed to the public due to a measles epidemic.

Iannuzzi’s association with Niagara began during his teen years, when he played with the Niagara University Band and the Purple Serenaders, the university’s dance orchestra, as a junior and senior in high school. After earning his bachelor’s degree from NU, Iannuzzi taught Spanish in the Philadelphia area. He also served as a translator for the federal government, helping to compile a Spanish-English dictionary for the armed forces. After he started his full-time employment at Niagara, he spent 10 summers as a Spanish interpreter for the U.S. Department of State. He retired from Niagara in 1986.


Dual Degree Program Approved

A new dual degree program between Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the International University of Applied Sciences in Bad Honnef, Germany, will enable students in the college to earn two degrees in four years: one degree from Niagara and a second from Bad Honnef in either international tourism management or international hospitality management.

A one-year study-abroad placement in Germany is required as part of this option, which begins in fall 2010.

“This dual degree program offers a unique opportunity to our students,” noted Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. “In addition to their NU degree, students receive a degree from a respected European university emphasizing practical industry applications — like Niagara’s program. The hospitality and tourism industry is the world’s single largest industry and is getting more international by the day. This degree program of cultural immersion and intensive academic study abroad for one year in hospitality and tourism proves to employers that these students are prepared to work in any kind of international environment.”

Bad Honnef is one of the 10 partner schools in the Leading Hotel Schools of the World, an association of leading hotel schools worldwide that works with the 440 five-star Leading Hotels of the World. Niagara University is a founding member of this organization.
Our Apologies

The list of ROTC Hall of Fame members included in the last Eagle inadvertently omitted several individuals from the 2007 and 2008 classes:
Col. Nicholas Grunzweig, '42
Rev. Lt. Thomas Conway, '30
Maj. John Rubins, '53
Col. Paul Somerville, '57
Lt. Col. Scott J. Pautz, '80
Lt. Col. Richard Walsh, '58

We are sorry for the error.

Turkey Poetry Slam Leaves Participants Asking for Seconds

What began in a jazz club in Chicago in the mid-1980s has made its way to the Niagara University campus and NU faculty and students from several departments couldn't be more pleased.

Just prior to Thanksgiving break, NU's English department and Poetry Society co-hosted the inaugural English Turkey Poetry Slam, a social event with a goal of "creating a congenial atmosphere for NU students," said one of the organizers, Dr. Jeanne Laurel, English department chair. Helping plan the event were students Tavon Rowe and Jackie Eckel, officers in the NU Poetry Society, with assistance from Evelyn Tracy, an administrative assistant in the English department. David Blackburn, director of Multicultural and International Student Affairs, served as emcee.

What is a poetry slam? It's a competition of verse, where participants read or recite poetry — usually original work — and are then judged on their performance. Audience members are encouraged to let their feeling of approval or disapproval be known.

While this was the first Turkey Poetry Slam, it wasn't the first time that such an event has taken place at NU. "Students have organized themselves into a club, and have been having very successful poetry slams, competing in national competitions, for a few years," said Laurel. "Based on turnout and enthusiasm (approximately 125 people are estimated to have attended the slam), I would very much like to have it become an annual tradition. I think the organizers said they were expecting half the number who actually showed up. In fact, I think it might be good to have a spring event as well."

"Thanks to energetic students and some folks from the surrounding community, the poetry slams will have a long and healthy life," added Laurel. "I think the whole department would like to see at least one — maybe two — department-sponsored slams happening each year."

Participants in the event represented a reasonably good cultural mix of students, teachers, male, female, black and white. Also in attendance was one gentleman from NCCC, a follower and supporter of Niagara University's poetry slams, who was one of the finalists in the competition.

"I would like to see us attract more folks from off campus, as well as students," said Laurel. "I'd also love to see some folks push the envelope with poetry in languages other than English."

The work performed by participants also represented a good mix. There were poems about relationships, social constraints on personal expression, Irish nationalism, and a few good-natured whacks at Niagara University culture. Some students read their work with a dramatic flair, while others had memorized their material. Some were old hands at the genre, and there was at least one first-timer. All were given respect and enthusiastic support from the judges.

And while she has attended poetry slams in the past, this marked the first time that Laurel has performed, reading a mash-up of Hamlet's soliloquy published by Mark Twain in "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

"No butterflies — as students in my classes will probably be quick to tell you, I'm a drama queen in class and now out of class," admitted Laurel. "I think next slam, though, I'm going to try to actually compose something original. That will depend on how much work has piled up on my plate as department chair, of course."

Overall, was she pleased with the results?

"I hope students had fun," she said. "I think they did. They got to see old friends, make new ones, and see some of us faculty with our hair down. They got a forum for whatever was on their minds, in an atmosphere that was genuinely warm and supportive. They got to see our excellent NU Poetry Club in action, a sample of the kind of excellence in student leadership they too can emulate. Maybe they'll attend other slams, or even get involved in future slams as performers, or even start an organization with a different focus or twist — either while they're at NU or after they've graduated."

"They got to see and hear poetry that won't be 'on the exam,' created by people who are ordinary folks rather than some esoteric eggheads they can never hope to equal," Laurel added.

English department adjunct Jane Stein agrees. "Several of my students went to the poetry slam on campus and wrote insightful and positive responses about their experience. I think it helps my students to see that it is okay to 'put yourself out there' and that their feelings may not be as weird as they thought."

— Joe Kirchmyer
Niagara University has received $1.5 million toward two major capital projects from the Higher Education Capital Matching Grants Program. The award will be applied to the construction of the university’s Academic Complex, home to the colleges of Business Administration and Education; and to the renovation of the Gallagher Center dining facility.

“The addition of the Academic Complex on Niagara’s campus has enabled us to provide a state-of-the-art facility for our highly accredited colleges of Business Administration and Education,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., university president.

“Features like interactive technology, model classrooms, and our financial services lab provide numerous opportunities for our students to engage in active, integrated learning. This building is a prominent part of the transformation being made on campus.”

Niagara’s Academic Complex, an $18.5 million project that was completed in August of 2007, incorporates high-tech classrooms with hands-on interactive SMART board technology; podcasting and videoconferencing capability; a conference room and related support areas for the Family Literacy and Family Counseling centers in the College of Education; the Family Business, Supply Chain Management, Technology Transfer, and International Accounting Education and Research centers in the College of Business Administration; a high-tech financial services lab that functions as a stock exchange learning center; and “green” features for energy efficiency. It received Business First of Buffalo’s “Brick by Brick” award for best educational project in 2008.

The Gallagher Center underwent a renovation in 2008 to establish a food-court setting featuring a broad variety of food offerings, including Buffalo wings, beef on weck sandwiches, wraps, specialty salads, and fresh fruit smoothies. In addition, a Galley Market convenience store sells snacks and grocery items that students commonly use in their dorm rooms.

The HECap program provides funding for construction projects at private colleges and universities that are considered critical academic facilities or that are related to economic development, high technology, urban renewal, or historic preservation. The program matches $1 for every $3 raised for these projects and distributes the funds under a formula based on total student enrollment and student financial need.
A group of Niagara University students is learning what goes into organizing one of the world’s largest sporting events.

Eleven students from Niagara’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management traveled Feb. 2 to Miami to volunteer at the National Football League’s Superbowl XLIV, which pitted the Indianapolis Colts against the New Orleans Saints in the Feb. 7 matchup.

During the eight-day trip, the students greeted visitors, filled goody bags for Superbowl attendees and worked at the Taste of the NFL, an annual pregame day event that raises money for local and national hunger organizations.

“The purpose is to give these students hands-on experience in terms of what goes into putting together a major sporting event like the Superbowl,” said Dexter Davis, assistant professor of sport management, who accompanied the students to Florida.

The trip is part of the program’s experiential focus, which aims to give students as many first-hand learning opportunities as possible, Davis said.

Groups of students go to South Florida each year for Major League Baseball’s spring training camps and an upcoming trip to San Antonio, Texas, site of the 2010 NCAA Women’s Final Four, is planned.

Networking is key for students, many of whom have landed post-graduation jobs due to the contacts they made during such trips, Davis said.

“It really does boil down to connections and knowing people,” he said.

Students underwent a fairly rigorous process to be selected for the trip. Resumes and cover letters were collected and interviews were conducted to determine which students to take, Davis said.

While portions of travel expenses are being paid for with grant money, each student paid about $500 out of pocket to go.

The trip marks the second Superbowl experience in three years for Niagara students. In 2007, a group did similar volunteer work in preparation for the game between the Colts and the Chicago Bears. The Colts won 29-17.

“PAINT THE RAIN” — ReNU Niagara, Niagara University’s community outreach partnership center, co-hosted “MLK Service Day: Paint the Rain,” in recognition of the national day of service honoring the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. The event included a presentation about rain barrels and water conservation given by event co-host Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. Participants then painted environmental-themed images on rain barrels that will be placed at Niagara Falls community garden sites. Youth from the Niagara Falls Weed and Seed program as well as university students from Buffalo participated in the event.
Early January before the Christmas bills arrive, I dream of escaping winter’s wind, snow, and the Monteagle Ridge “perma-cloud” by perusing the Sunday paper’s travel section, imagining what exotic and faraway locations I could visit. The warmer and sunnier, the better! The deal maker or breaker: does JetBlue or Southwest fly there?

Then I wake up and smell the coffee, realizing my January is taken. I’ve agreed to chaperone our students on a BASIC (Brothers and Sisters in Christ) service trip — this year in either Philadelphia or Camden, N.J. This rich campus ministry tradition was begun 30 years ago by two Vincentians, the Rev. Greg Gay, NU alum (now superior general in Rome) and the Rev. Bernie Tracey, superior of our provincial house in Philadelphia. Both served as campus ministers here in the 1980s and started the service program that is now BASIC.

In this service immersion program, students volunteer to spend the last week of their Christmas break serving the urban poor. They live as a community and go out daily to work in soup kitchens, thrift shops, nursing homes, rehab houses, tutor after-school programs, and whatever else needs to be done. At night, they listen to expert speakers explain the plight of the urban poor, and the complexity of issues: poverty, lack of jobs and affordable housing, immigration, and health care. They also spend time each night reflecting on what they’ve seen, heard and learned in that day’s service to the poor.

I must admit at the tender age of 56, I have to gear myself up for this week: it’s “go-go-go” from the moment we arrive until our return (in time for next-day classes)! Keeping up with the group, making sure all are well, driving them to and from their work sites, and serving alongside them does make for a full day … and week! There’s no time to dream about lolling on a tropical beach or visiting an exotic locale.

But something more important than warm fuzzies, feeling of good or comradely type community is at work here — call it the “Holy Spirit moment” if you will. As the week goes on, I watch the mental and spiritual “light bulbs” go off for NU students. They speak about what they have seen and heard in each day’s interaction with the poor, and are disturbed and challenged. They see beyond stereotypes and learn firsthand what it is to be poor and disadvantaged. Their comfortable preset ideas get all shaken up. In BASIC, our students get a physical, social, and spiritual workout.

For me, the beauty of it all is seeing how they rise to encounter it and not only how it affects them there, but when they return to campus. Service learning — one of Niagara’s most enduring traditions — becomes a personal goal for those coming back from BASIC, even to the point where some seniors end up volunteering for a year’s service after graduation. They go to BASIC hoping to change the world, but are changed by their encounter with the poor. It is “education that makes a difference” in a most Vincentian way: learning to love without limits.

Perhaps that early desire for a trip to places far and exotic isn’t so important after all. The Little Prince reminded his mentor that, “It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” Every time I go on a BASIC service trip with our NU students and watch them in action, my eyes are opened, my heart widened, and my spirit revived. In this year of celebrating the 350th anniversary of Saints Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, the Vincentian heritage of hope still endures and flourishes.
What a difference a year can make. No one knows that any better than NU’s women’s volleyball team. Their turnaround season was indeed one for the record books.

In 2008, the youngest women’s collegiate team in the nation took its lumps while posting a 6-24 record. In 2009, it was time for a little payback. The team opened its season by sweeping both Coppin State and Providence on Aug. 29 and never looked back.

“My expectations coming into the season were to improve our wins, no doubt,” said head coach Susan Clements. “I tried to schedule matches where I felt we could win early and build confidence. I was hoping to finish sixth in the MAAC and be around six to eight wins in the conference. Lofty expectations at the beginning were to be at .500. After our first tournament and playing so well against Syracuse I had more confidence that we could have a great season.”

When the season ended, the team had posted a 14-4 record in the MAAC and an overall record of 23-9, far exceeding the expectations of coach Clements and assistant coach Kara Hellmann. The 17-win improvement from last season was the largest turnaround in the nation.

Moving on to the MAAC playoffs, the team defeated Siena in the semifinals in a match that came down to the fifth and final game. The team then advanced to the finals where they met Marist and posted a three-game sweep to claim their first MAAC championship.

“The match against Siena was very tough,” Clements said. “Having to defend and play against Burgandy McCurty, the three-time MAAC Offensive Player of the Year, was a big task. Siena has been there before and had seasoned veterans who know how to win. We were able to get the rotation match we wanted, when we needed them, to pull out the hard fought victory.

“Against Marist I felt our team was much more confident because we had defeated them with not too much difficulty the two matches previous, and being close to home we were more rested. Sweeping that match was hard and took great mental toughness and with scores very close it could have gone either way. We were able to catch some breaks and the turning point was coming back from being seven points down in set two to win.”

But the season didn’t end there. The team then traveled to Ann Arbor, Mich., to face Michigan in the first round of the 2009 NCAA Tournament. It was the first time in the program’s history that NU earned a spot in the field of 64. While the Purple Eagles were knocked out in the first round, the experience was incredibly valuable for such a young team.

“The NCAA Tournament was a wonderful experience and the atmosphere at Michigan was unbelievable,” Clements said. “We did not play up to our potential and test Michigan, but we had some great points within the match. As a coach, I took away what we needed to get better at to compete at an even higher level and a drive to push our team to return. I believe our student athletes learned that they could play better and that they want another opportunity to prove that to the NCAA Selection Committee and the top programs. They learned that hard work can win a MAAC Championship, but if you push even more you could win a first round match in the NCAA Tournament.”

As for post-season honors, Clements was named 2009 MAAC Coach of the Year, while sophomores Michelle James and Hannah Hedrick were named 2009 MAAC Setter of the Year and 2009 MAAC Defensive Player of the Year, respectively. Both players were named to the MAAC All-Tournament Team, and Hedrick was honored with the Most Outstanding Player award.

Things should only get better next year: Niagara’s 2009 roster featured three juniors, five sophomores and a pair of freshmen ... and no seniors.

“My expectation for next season is to challenge our team with a tougher schedule,” said Clements. “With everyone back we have the makings for a repeat. However, our team will need to learn to play with an ‘X’ on their back. I am shooting for a .500 preseason record before MAAC play begins and a Top 3 finish in the MAAC. It’s always hard to predict what new players will impact which program, but I know that our team will always play hard and give it their best.”

In addition to James and Hedrick, rounding out the championship team are juniors Lauren Costello, Shannon Ryan and Rebecca Suchy; sophomores Kathy Bibler, Lisa Bilich and Sam Morgan; and freshmen Kari Honomichl and Amanda Wilken.

— Joe Kirchmyer
Imagine the buzz that would make its way through the crowd at HSBC Arena as the announcer reads the starting lineup for the Buffalo Sabres: At center, from South Buffalo … Tim Kennedy. On the wing, from Angola, N.Y., … Patrick Kaleta. And on the other wing, playing in his first National Hockey League game, from Niagara University … Matt Caruana!

While we may be getting a little ahead of ourselves, it could happen in the not-so-distant future. Caruana, who played his collegiate hockey at Niagara from the 2004-05 through 2007-08 seasons, was signed by the Portland Pirates, the minor league affiliate of the Buffalo Sabres.

A forward from Orono, Ontario, Matt played in 146 games during his stellar NU hockey career, scoring 51 goals, adding 78 assists and accumulating 108 minutes in the penalty box. He currently ranks fifth in career assists, sixth in career points and ninth in career goals at NU.

“One of the best that has ever donned the jersey here at Niagara,” said head hockey coach Dave Burkholder of his former star player. “He came in as a young freshman and earned ice in all situations. Power play, penalty kill or defending a lead late in game, Matt was our guy. The consummate professional in all areas of his life — including academics and community service — he had the tools to be a great Division 1 player and valued the rewards of hard work and practice. That’s very evident as the entire Niagara hockey family watches his development professionally.”

This is actually Matt’s third stint with Portland, the first coming in 2007-08 when the team was affiliated with Anaheim, and the second earlier in this season, when he recorded two goals and two assists. He also spent time with the Bakersfield Condors in the ECHL, the AHL’s Iowa Chops and the ECHL’s Gwinnett Gladiators.

— Joe Kirchmyer
Tsekanovskii notes.

says, demonstrating how he would open the tin with its key. “Without

“Even up to this moment I remember the taste of the bacon,” T sekanovskii

job. “If you did not go you could be in big trouble. This was the life,”

students had to agree to work for three years at a government-assigned

applicants being selected. And although there was no cost to attend,

admission was extremely competitive, with only one out of every four

Ukrainian and Russian languages, math, physics and chemistry –– and

process was a laborious one –– he had to pass entrance exams in the

Pedagogical University’s College of Mathematics to study with the

war. The box contained bacon, rice, dried egg yolks, and other staples.

huge hunger.” He notes that each month, his father would receive one

income. Food was scarce, and T sekanovskii’s memory of that time was of “a

not work. His mother, a piano teacher, was the family’s main source of

difficult ones –– his father, an engineer, had a heart condition and could

save money, the four brought sausages and biscuits to eat on their journey

cost him two months’ salary to attend. He gave his first presentation, met

invitations from a number of organizations until 1988, when Mikhail

Gorbachev’s political and economic reform relaxed the control of the Communist Party. T sekanovskii’s first conference was in Romania and it
cost him two months’ salary to attend. He gave his first presentation, met many American mathematicians, and established connections that led to additional conference invitations. He recalls two that were held in Japan in 1991. He traveled with three colleagues first to Sapporo, then to Kobe. To save money, the four brought sausages and biscuits to eat on their journey and found a cargo ship that could take them “almost for free” from one city to the other. He remembers how the crew laughed when they saw the men take out their food at mealtimes during the 36-hour trip.

In 1992, Tsekanovskii made a life-altering decision to join his son, a graduate student at the University at Buffalo, in the United States.

Tsekanovskii faced considerable obstacles in coming to America. There were cultural differences — he remembers his first trip to a grocery store, when he saw the beer aisle for the first time. “You stand on line almost one hour to get one bottle of beer and food when the system in the former USSR was about to collapse,” he says. “I considered this Tops supermarket as a museum of food.”

In addition, Tsekanovskii’s English skills were limited. He notes that he could not understand television at all. He had no money, no job. He didn’t know how to drive. But, he explains, “I am a mathematician. I started solving problem by problem.” He attended the International Institute in Buffalo to learn English, walking an hour each way to get to class. He received government assistance to rent an apartment and pay for food.
If you've lived in Western New York for any amount of time, you're probably familiar with the mayfly. These distinctive-looking, large-winged insects, which have a very short lifespan, annually emerge from their nesting places at the bottom of Lake Erie and fly to the nearest waterfront property ... only to die, usually within hours.

Enter Dr. William Edwards, assistant professor of biology at Niagara University. In 2005, he began a research project focusing on oxygen levels in Lake Erie. Part of that research takes into account the mayfly's impact on those levels.

Assisting Edwards with his research is senior Ashley Bantelman, an NU biology major. Together, their work is garnering national attention from environmental publications.

"Back in the 1970s, Lake Erie was referred to as 'the lake that died,' said Edwards. "The lake was polluted to such a point that we fertilized it to death."

Far too much fertilizer, or phosphorus, entered the lake during the 1950s, '60s and '70s — from sewage, nearby industry, car washes and even laundry detergent. Algae flourished in the poor conditions, and bacteria would then eat away at the algae, using up the lake's oxygen and killing off just about everything else.

The mayflies started to disappear in the mid-1960s because they couldn't handle the low oxygen conditions in the lake. That caused great concern among environmentalists because the mayfly is an important part of the lake's food chain, a favorite feast of the smallmouth bass, yellow perch and walleye that call the lake their home.

Mayflies begin their life underwater, burrowed into lake sediment. Upon hatching, they make their way to the surface and then fly en masse to nearby coastal towns. Swarms can be large enough to appear on Doppler radar.

Thanks to enactment of the Clean Water Act in the mid-1970s, Lake Erie began its slow recovery. When large amounts of phosphorus were taken out of the equation, algae growth was slowed and oxygen levels once again returned to normal. And in the 1990s, an old friend, the mayfly, returned.

But then something strange occurred. When the mayflies returned to Lake Erie, the lake's oxygen levels once again started to fall off, which leaves Edwards and Bantelman asking a somewhat surprising question: Do mayflies actually have a role in causing low oxygen levels in Lake Erie?

As it turns out, they probably do. Testing done at NU indicates that the burrows in the bottom of the lake, created by the nesting mayflies, act as a sponge and absorb oxygen from the water. There's also the idea that old pockets of phosphorus are being released due to the burrowing.

To make a long story short, the mayflies may very well be contributing to their own demise.

"The next phase of the study," according to Edwards, "is to look at all the critters who live on the bottom of the lake and create burrows that can cause oxygen to disappear." Bantelman, in a side project, is investigating how other environmental factors impact the way oxygen is pumped into the lake.

"To ignore the situation would mean that lake managers won't be able to make good predictions about lake oxygen levels," Edwards said. "We're interested in providing the managers with useful information."

Edwards is currently looking to secure additional funding for his research through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Should funding become available, he hopes to board a United States Environmental Protection Agency ship and conduct tests in the ship's labs right out on the lake.

After earning her bachelor's degree from NU, Bantelman plans to go on to a grad school where she can continue to study our lakes, and eventually earn her Ph.D.

As the future of the mayfly? That remains to be seen ... and studied.

Dr. William Edwards' research on mayflies is garnering national attention.
“The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years” is the most ambitious capital campaign in Niagara University's history. The $80-million fundraising endeavor is enabling the university to begin implementing the first phase of a campus master plan and enhance programs that will give our students additional opportunities for real-life educational experiences. Now, nearly three years into its public phase, with another year and a half to go, the campaign has achieved a number of its goals. But there is still much to be done, including financing a new, state-of-the-art science facility, the campaign’s most important capital priority.

The following pages provide a review of the campaign at this point and a look at the challenges still ahead.
Robert J. Dwyer, ’65, ’90 (Hon.), National Chairman

“The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years” is the most ambitious capital campaign ever undertaken by Niagara University. The funds raised will foster the physical and academic transformation of the university, including new construction, scholarships and endowments.

Today, three years into the campaign’s public phase, we can already see the success of our labors. We have raised more than $61 million toward our campaign goal, and we have built new facilities that provide state-of-the-art technology and ample space for our highly respected academic programs. In spite of the economy, alumni and friends have responded positively to our vision for the future and have supported this vital campaign.

We intend to keep working hard to maintain the momentum that will enable us to achieve our vision for the university, whatever the challenges before us, but we cannot do it without your help. Working together, I am confident that we can meet our goal of $80 million and support the outstanding students and faculty that are here at Niagara today and into the future.

The Campaign at a Glance

CAPITAL PROJECTS: $40.5 million will be raised to fund new and renovated facilities

Academic Complex — Opened August 2007
Renovation and construction of a three-story, 55,000-square-foot facility for the colleges of Business Administration and Education. The College of Business Administration wing was named Bisgrove Hall in recognition of the support of Jerry Bisgrove, ’68.

Major benefactors:
- Barnes and Noble College Booksellers, Inc.
- Gerald Bisgrove, ’68
- James R., ’73, and Mary, MBA’92, Boldt
- Richard H. and Jane Brown
- Richard F., ’49, and Therese Chapdelaine
- Robert J., ’58, and Jo Ann (Guardalibene, ’58) Clune
- Eugene R. Corasanti, ’52
- Robert J., ’66, and Judith M. Daino
- Robert B., ’75, and Lynda Engel
- Joy Family Foundation
- Thomas M., ’72, and Patricia O’Brien

Science Center and Bioinformatics
Construction of a 44,000-square-foot science facility to be named for B. Thomas Golisano in recognition of his tremendous support.

Major benefactors:
- Eugene R. Corasanti, ’52
- B. Thomas Golisano
- Daniel C., ’72, and Cathy (Brinda, ’72) Hauck
- Family of the late Dr. Lawrence D. Jacobs, ’61
- James H. Cummings Foundation, Inc.

Athletics — Niagara Field Opened August 2008
Renovations and construction of locker facilities, playing field and fan amenities.

Major benefactors:
- Anonymous
- Kevin F., ’70, and Lisa Crawford
- Robert J., ’65, and Connie (Micle, ’65) Dwyer
- Daniel C., ’72, and Cathy (Brinda, ’72) Hauck
- Brian J., ’68, and Kathleen (Cichy, ’69) Mylod
- Vincent A., ’68, and Joan M. Russo

Theatre — Opening May 2010
Renovation of the Leary Theatre and addition of a two-story lobby and atrium, named the Elizabeth Ann Clune Center for Theatre through the generosity of George and Betsy Wiegers and the Wieger Family Foundation.

Major benefactors:
- Estate of James M., ’43, and Marie (Rougeaux, ’44) Bedard
- Robert J., ’58, and Jo Ann (Guardalibene, ’58) Clune
- Robert J., ’65, and Connie (Micle, ’65) Dwyer
- Pam Jacobs and Family
- John Kander
- John T. Overbeck, ’75
- Vincent A., ’68, and Joan M. Russo

Campaign Priorities Funding

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Ben, ’81, and Kathleen (Coman, ’80) Tarantino

What do you do to support Niagara University?

Ben and I support Niagara financially, which we have done since we each graduated (when I could only give an annual donation of $20, and I'm not sure what Ben was able to give). After we got married, we began increasing our annual donations as we were able.

We also try to support Niagara in a social way as well. Every few summers we have a gathering at our home so we can get together with some of our area alumni friends. Father Levesque always graciously attends. It's a treat for us to see people whom we don't get to see often enough and to be surrounded by people who enjoyed their years at Niagara as much as we did.

The ways in which we are able to support Niagara are really our pleasure. We feel a strong commitment to the university and to supporting our alma mater.

Why do you feel it is important for you to support Niagara in this way?

We donate because we believe in the value of a Catholic college education, and in the value of Niagara in particular. The gifts we received during our college years go beyond a good education. In addition to finding each other, we also made great, lifelong friends. We had wonderful professors who knew our names and truly cared about who we were and who we would become. Going to Mass in the chapel on Sunday nights at 11 p.m. was proof positive of the strength of the Niagara community — it was always a packed house.
Wayne Smith, parent of sophomore student and uncle of freshman student

**What do you do to support Niagara University?**

I provide financial support to the university's athletic program, and I work with the baseball coach to improve fundraising, recruiting and communication efforts to raise awareness among alumni of the importance of supporting the university's athletic programs.

**Why do you feel it is important for you to support Niagara in this way?**

I am pleased to support Niagara in this way because of Niagara's ideals and Vincentian mission. Niagara goes above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to providing solid educational opportunities to a variety of student types at a reasonable price point, which is important in these tough economic times. It is my pleasure to help.

---

Rocco LaRocca, ’39

**What do you do to support Niagara University?**

I’m a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society and an affiliate of the Vincentians, and I spend a good deal of time helping the poor, delivering food. I make my yearly contribution to the Lynch Society and contribute to the Novena Office.

**Why do you feel it is important for you to support Niagara in this way?**

Niagara helps students in every facet of their lives: spiritually, scholastically, socially. Niagara prepares them for their future so that they can serve God, their families and their communities, and so that they can be an asset to Niagara University.

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### The Promise of Niagara ... The next 150 years

**Status of commitments as of Jan. 31, 2010**

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</table>

**Total**

$80,000,000 12,075 $61,636,804

Campaign planning chart showing anticipated commitments needed to reach goal.
"I would never be where I am today without my Niagara education. Countless times I have come to rely on the values and strong ethics that were so much a part of my Niagara education. I am indebted to members of the faculty and the Vincentian Fathers and Brothers, especially Father Joe Dunne, who was a mentor and friend." Jerry Bisgrove, ’68

At this point in time, we begin a public effort to garner the resources needed to chart the history of Niagara for the next 150 years. This is a pivotal day that will be looked on as the beginning of a new era of excellence for Niagara University."

"This building is proof of the physical transformation taking place on this campus. It has been purposefully designed to help us build on the key ingredients that make a Niagara education so special." Dr. Bonnie Rose, executive vice president/vice president for academic affairs

The state-of-the-art field features a new turf playing surface, specifically designed for soccer and lacrosse; lights that enable the Purple Eagles to hold night practices and games; seating for 1,200; and a fully functional press box.
“It’s all based on the quality of the institution. What matters here is this is a great organization and great institution, and that’s what this gift is based on.” B. Thomas Golisano

This new home provides members of the Vincentian Community “an opportunity in which to grow their efforts at contributing to the Catholic and Vincentian mission of the university, especially as this new beginning brings with it our continued dedication to the charism of St. Vincent de Paul.”

The Rev. Joseph G. Hubbert, C.M., ’73, Vincentian religious superior and associate professor of religious studies

“Niagara University has two goals for the theater program: provide a theater that is an excellent teaching/learning facility for our students; and offer a comfortable and engaging audience experience.”

The Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president

“The new Leary Theatre will reopen for our final production — aptly enough — “Anything Goes!” The title alone describes our anticipation and enthusiasm for what is to come at NU Theatre ….”

Gregory Fletcher, director of Niagara University Theatre

Anticipated end of “The Promise of Niagara” campaign, reaching $80 million in commitments for university priorities.
An Investment for Science and for Western New York

Niagara University has made the construction of the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences a top priority in its capital campaign. The $33-million facility will provide modern, spacious, state-of-the-art facilities for our science programs and enable the university to realize its potential as a key part of the economic revitalization of the Western New York community.

The B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences will be a signature building on Niagara’s campus. It will replace the current science building, DePaul Hall, which cannot be renovated to meet current standards or to support new science education endeavors such as integrated science. The new facility will provide the improved infrastructure to expand the cutting-edge student-faculty research currently being performed on campus, including research on cancer, coronary heart disease, lipid drug delivery systems, cell physiology and cystic fibrosis, invasive species in the Great Lakes, staph infections, medicinal chemistry for Type II diabetes, novel thermo-dynamics of black holes, dioxins, AIDS, pharmaceuticals with developing national applications, and Alzheimer’s disease. The new science center will enhance our efforts in these areas and facilitate other applied research and learning experiences to prepare students for leadership in the expanding biosciences professions and industries.

“The B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences will serve as a source of inspiration for our students to explore the future of scientific study,” said Dr. Nancy McGlen, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “It will allow students to directly observe, as well as more easily participate in, research projects in integrated science. It will instill, at an early stage, a career-long expectation of collaboration among scientists of diverse disciplines, and in so doing, the new facility will significantly enhance student success in their careers.”
The Family of the Late Dr. Lawrence Jacobs Gives
$1-Million Gift to Niagara University

Jacobs Family Gift Dedicated to New Center for Integrated Sciences

Niagara University has received a $1-million gift from the family of the late Dr. Lawrence D. Jacobs, a member of the university’s Class of 1961. The gift will be applied toward the construction of the university’s new science facility.

“Niagara was a very special place for Larry,” said his wife, Pamela R. Jacobs-Vogt. “It was where he discovered his dream of a career in medicine, and he thoroughly enjoyed being a student there. This gift is an endorsement of the vision that the university is pursuing related to a world-class science and research center.”

The Jacobs family’s gift will bring Niagara University closer to the construction of the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences, a $33-million facility that will provide teaching laboratories and space to support cutting-edge integrated research collaborations among faculty and students in biology, biochemistry, chemistry and physics, and prepare students for leadership in the medical profession.

“We are grateful to the members of Dr. Larry Jacobs’ family for their generous support of our science program,” said the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., president of Niagara University. “In assisting Niagara to build our science center, this gift will enhance the educational experiences of countless students and enable them to follow the example of Dr. Jacobs by pursuing careers that improve the lives of others.”

“Niagara has always recognized and encouraged Larry’s work,” Jacobs-Vogt said. “It seemed most appropriate for our family to honor Larry and thank Niagara by making this gift to the science center. It will serve as a way for future generations of the Jacobs family, as well as Niagara University students, to know more about Larry’s research. We also hope it will serve as an inspiration for students to pursue careers in the science field.”

Jacobs, an internationally acclaimed researcher who developed the first treatment proven to slow the progress of multiple sclerosis, earned his medical degree from St. Louis University and served his residency at Mt. Sinai Hospital and School of Medicine in New York City. A specialist in the field of neurology, Jacobs dedicated his life to conquering MS and other illnesses. He served as a member of Niagara University’s board of trustees from 1993 to 1997.

“I am thrilled that Pam Jacobs-Vogt and her family have chosen Niagara University for this significant gift. This gift is a vote of confidence in our vision and it will allow us to recognize in a significant way Dr. Jacobs, one of Niagara’s outstanding science graduates,” said Dr. Nancy McGlen, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “His medical research on multiple sclerosis is a wonderful role model that we try to follow with our commitment to student/faculty research on coronary artery disease and cancer.”

In 2009, 85 percent of Niagara’s science students performed research with faculty, much of it leading to publication in peer-reviewed journals and presentations at regional and national conferences.

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Dr. John Hughes, ’67

**What do you do to support Niagara University?**

Although I live in south Florida and don’t have many opportunities to return to campus, I have gotten involved with a few university committees. I am on one that is developing ideas to recognize Dr. Thomas Morton, and I have served as a class representative for my 10th and 15th anniversary reunions, calling my classmates for donations. I was class captain for my 15th, and I am proud to say that we had the highest class participation that year.

I am also a big believer in restricted donations because I think they encourage people to donate more. I established the Dr. Thomas H. Morton Lectureship to bring top quality scientists to campus so that our students can network with them, and I established a scholarship for biology students. I am also working to bring a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa to campus.

**Why do you feel it is important for you to support Niagara in this way?**

Niagara deserves our support for many reasons. When you graduate from college, you’ve spent a big part of your life on that campus and have been influenced in many ways by the college. We think of Niagara as giving us facts and dates and other information, but it also gives us intellectual habits that we carry with us throughout our lives. I’ve learned methods to attack problems that have shaped the way I function in my medical career. Niagara’s intimate campus also enables its students to connect with other students and faculty so that they can blossom in ways they might not have been able to before.

In addition, Niagara has grown academically and become a bi-national school with its activities in Canada, particularly in relation to the College of Education. Our faculty is research oriented and students are an integral part of those research efforts.

Niagara has also proven to be an excellent steward of its financial resources. When I graduated in 1967, the endowment was $157,000. In 2008, the endowment was $74 million, despite a relatively low alumni donation rate of 12 to 14 percent. We can have confidence that Niagara will use our financial support to grow the university.

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Kresge Challenge Grant

In January, Niagara University submitted a letter of intent to the Kresge Foundation to apply for one of its challenge grants. It was a bold undertaking, but it’s one we are confident we can accomplish if we have the support of our alumni and friends.

The Kresge Foundation is a national private foundation that awards facilities capital as a challenge grant to help nonprofit organizations build their base of private financial support as they conduct capital campaigns to build or renovate their facilities. These grants are awarded to organizations that cater specifically to the needs of poor, disadvantaged and disenfranchised in six fields of interest, including health, education, and community development. Once an organization’s proposal is selected, it has a specified period of time to raise the balance of funds required to complete the funding of its campaign goal.

Niagara’s challenge grant will focus specifically on obtaining the capital to build the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. If our proposal is accepted, we will begin an aggressive “campaign within a campaign” to secure the funding necessary to meet the requirements of the challenge grant. While other campaign objectives will continue to be addressed during this time, our priority will be soliciting donations that directly support the building of our new science facility. This Kresge grant can be a determining factor in the future of our science program, so it is imperative that we have the generous financial support of our alumni and friends.
Living His Dream

Dr. Shawn Vainio, ’99, parleys a career in medicine and a dedication to humanitarian service into a lifetime of adventure.

He's been to the highest point in North America, to the southernmost continent in the world, and to an array of locales in between. And while he never imagined his career would take him to such exotic locations — or even that he would live outside of Western New York — Dr. Shawn Vainio, ’99, has learned that if you are willing to work hard, you can achieve your dreams.

As a child in rural Byron, N.Y., Vainio enjoyed the outdoors. He hunted and fished with his father, a manufacturing engineer for Kodak; and helped tend the family’s large garden of fruits and vegetables. His mother inspired her son to serve others, setting an example each year by knitting mittens that young Vainio would place on the Christmas tree at St. Michael’s Parish for those in need. He was fascinated by science in those early years and says that first aid was his favorite subject while in the Boy Scouts. “Who wouldn’t love learning about hypothermia, lightning strikes, snakebites, etc?” he asks. A childhood heart condition spurred a personal interest in the field and solidified his desire to pursue a career as a doctor.

Vainio graduated from Byron-Bergen High School in 1995 as valedictorian of his class and Athlete of the Year, and enrolled at Niagara University on an honors scholarship with the dream of going to medical school. He continued his charitable endeavors while an undergraduate, participating in events including the American Cancer Society Daffodil sale and the Multiple Sclerosis Walk-a-thon, and volunteering as a coach for the Tonawanda youth wrestling program.

After graduating from Niagara with a B.S. in chemistry and biology in 1999, Vainio embarked on a journey that ignited his passion for travel. He had taken a few trips as a child — locally and regionally with his high school wrestling team and to summer camps and the National Boy Scout Jamboree — but it wasn’t until he took a post-graduation cross-country trek of more than 11,000 miles, including 22 states and 12 national parks, that he says his “travel fate was sealed.”

When he returned to Western New York, Vainio attended the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. There, he met people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and developed a desire to go to India, where he could combine medicine, mountains (a new passion he discovered during his cross-country journey), and cultural exploration. During his fourth year as a medical student, he was able to realize that dream, traveling to India with the Himalayan Health Exchange, an organization that has been bringing medical and dental services to the rural Indio-Tibetan borderlands region of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh since 1996. Vainio was in India for two months, providing free medical care to the Tibetan refugees, Northern Indians and Gaddis people who call this remote area home.

This experience was a life-altering one for Vainio. He witnessed how the rural people of Ladakh lived: experiencing their song and dance traditions; watching them make their hand-woven, vegetable-dyed woolen clothes; and learning how the two-foot-thick walls of their three-story homes, made of mud bricks, would shelter them from the bitterly cold winters that brought snow and ice and blocked the mountain passes. “The resiliency of the people, the subsistence lifestyle, their beautiful smiles, and the lack of waste in their society left me in admiration,” he says. “An extreme locale has seemingly protected these people from vice. They simply worked hard and worked together or they would not survive.”
Vainio returned to the United States and completed his final year in medical school, learned wilderness medicine (a hobby of his) with the Wilderness Medical Society in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park of Tennessee, and traveled to Budapest, Hungary, to study forensic pathology.

“The flood gate had opened and my thirst for travel, learning, and truly experiencing life grew uncontrollably,” Vainio says.

Vainio graduated from UB in 2003, and, inspired by his desire to “unselfishly serve a small community through comprehensive, community-based medicine with continuity for patients,” he pursued a specialty in family medicine at the University of Utah. The program provided strong training in all aspects of the field in an area that was close to the outdoors and the mountains he loved. It also allowed him to satisfy his desire for international travel and he returned to India twice during his residency.

In his final year at the University of Utah, Vainio received an e-mail from an alumnus who was looking for someone to come to Alaska to fill in for him while he continued his studies at Harvard. Vainio jumped at the chance to live in a place where he could fish and enjoy the outdoors.

So in September 2006, after graduating, passing his boards and visiting India a fourth time, Vainio headed to Kodiak, Alaska, for his first real job.

As a substitute doctor at Kodiak Island Medical Associates Clinic and in the emergency room at Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center, Vainio practiced the full spectrum of family medicine while enjoying all the outdoor activity that the island offered.

But the travel bug called to Vainio again, this time with an opportunity to work at a small U.S. research station in Antarctica. Vainio spent seven months as the sole medical provider for Palmer Station, a place so remote that it is accessible only by boat. Three months out of every year, the accumulation of ice makes even this impossible.

Vainio spent seven months at the station, serving a variety of medical roles for the handful of researchers who lived there. He also treated cruise ship passengers who needed medical attention. When his assignment was over, he and his girlfriend, Annjannette Larsen, a Kodiak native whom Vainio had met just before accepting the position in Antarctica, went to South America. They backpacked through Torres Del Paine National Park in Patagonia, Chile, and on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru; tasted the wines of Chile’s Colchagua Valley; spent a week on Easter Island; drove across Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia, the largest salt flat in the world; took a boat trip through the Bolivian Amazon and Pampas (grasslands); and hiked across the Island of the Sun on Lake Titicaca.

Then they returned to Kodiak, bought a house and got married. Vainio continues his work in family medicine, seeing a diverse array of patients and treating everything from heart attacks to bear attacks. “I couldn’t imagine myself doing anything else,” he says. “I love the diversity of patients on our island and I thoroughly enjoy obstetrics, pediatrics, adolescent and adult medicine, ER, you name it.”

Last spring, Vainio took advantage of the opportunity to scale Mount McKinley, North America’s highest mountain peak. An experienced climber (he’d already conquered summits in the Western Rockies, the Great Smoky Mountains, the Adirondacks and several 21,000-foot peaks in the Himalayas), he found this climb to be the most challenging. It took several weeks, and his group was stranded for seven days at 14,200 feet while the winds blew at 60-80 mph. Vainio made the most of this time, studying Hindi for an upcoming trip to India. Once the weather cleared, the group continued on its trek and on May 16, 2009, Vainio reached the 20,320-foot summit.

Vainio’s dedication to the Himalayan people continues through his work with the Himalayan Health Center, an offshoot of the organization with which he took his first medical excursion to India. He has taken five trips to India in all, and now teaches the medical students who volunteer and supervises the delivery of medical care. He also serves as a member of the HHC’s advisory panel and board, encouraging other medical professionals to volunteer in assisting the Himalayan people.

What’s next for the doctor and his wife? In the immediate future, it’s a trip to El Salvador and Honduras to visit family and attend a friend’s wedding. After that, the possibilities are endless, but are certain to include global excursions, fishing, climbing mountains, and serving others. As Vainio says, “I try to live my dreams each day … stay(ing) in Alaska, serving a community through health and science, with a beautiful, intelligent and talented wife by my side, catching fish and photographing wildlife by foot on the mountains or by kayak on the ocean. Life doesn’t get any better than this.”

— Lisa McMahon
Fellow alumni,

At a Niagara University Board of Advisors meeting not long ago, someone asked me how I started my career, a question that comes up all the time. I realized that I — like so many people with creative jobs — developed my passion at a very early age.

To help others develop their passions, the Niagara University Alumni Association has established a mentoring program that allows alumni to use alumni as guides to their future careers. Alumni Jobs, through a program called Experience, can provide this help. This program bridges college and careers with access to more than 800,000 jobs. Experience, Inc. is the only university-endorsed career network bridging NU alumni and the working world. Whether you are a new graduate or a seasoned professional who’s been in the workforce for years and seeking a new career, the Career Center on Eagle’s Nest, www.niagaraalumni.com, has the support and resources you need to launch and lead extraordinary future endeavors.

Also be sure to check out our Facebook page by searching “Niagara University Alumni” and our Twitter account by searching “Niagara Alumni.”

Congratulations to NU grad Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, our new assistant director of alumni relations. Chapter events will be happening all spring. Go to www.niagaraalumni.com for a complete listing of events, and see the “Mark Your Calendars” section on the next page.

To all our “Purple Eagles” … go NU!

Sincerely,

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

Niagara Welcomes
Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, as the New Assistant Director of Alumni Relations

Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, has been named assistant director of alumni relations at Niagara University.

“I am ecstatic to be working at my alma mater,” she says. “My goal is to continue to develop the alumni program by reaching out to Niagara University alumni and working with chapter leaders and the NUAA board.”

The Fairport, N.Y., native was a graduate assistant in the Office of Annual Giving for the past year and a half, and served as president of her class throughout her undergraduate years. This experience will help her as she explores new areas of development, including an alumni-in-training (student) program, a young alumni program, and a networking collaboration with the career development office.

Rossi will complete her master’s degree in May.

Taps Gallagher congratulates newlyweds Greg, ’68, and JoAnne Hudecki, in July of 1968 while family and friends look on.

Alumni Association
Board of Directors
Gregory Hudecki, ’68
President
Thomas Summers, ’84
Vice President
Nancy Langer, ’78
Secretary
Father Stephen Denig, C.M., ’71
Alumni Chaplain
Art Cardella
Director of Alumni Relations
Maureen Becker, ’90
Shannon Bloomquist, ’07
Martin Byrne, ’78
Timothy Carroll, ’84
Carol Cassell, ’79
Ashleigh Cirilla, ’02
James Collard, ’74
Frances Crosby, ’67
Jeffrey Dann, ’74
Kimberly Dreier, ’09
Frank Fiannaca, ’85
James Hart, ’69
Anthony Lista, ’80
Loretta Madia, ’86
Barbara Malinowski, ’59
Mary Lou Markowski, ’90
Paul McCarthy, ’60
Dianne Moll, ’89
Michael Moll, ’89
Robert Sheehan, ’85
Lavisse Smith, ’75
Melinda Smith, ’78
Lisa Sparks, ’95
Jason Stein, ’93
Iasha Stone, ’08
Michelle Van de Loo, ’01

Alumni Chapters
Albany Chapter
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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

Niagara Welcomes
Jaclyn Rossi, ’08, as the New Assistant Director of Alumni Relations

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Mark Your Calendar

Alumni events are a great way to stay connected to Niagara, no matter your location! We have a lot in store for our chapters in the upcoming months. Don’t forget to add these dates to your calendar and check out the Eagle’s Nest at www.niagaraalumni.com for more information.*

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<td>Charlotte — Chapter planning meeting</td>
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<td>Buffalo/Niagara — Networking event</td>
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<td>Delaware Valley — Networking event</td>
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<td>Buffalo/Niagara — Dinner theater: “Anything Goes”</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Rochester — Networking event</td>
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<td>Niagara University — SOLA reunion</td>
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<td>Buffalo/Niagara — Kist Golf Tournament</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Albany — Saratoga Day at the Races</td>
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**Summer 2010**

Rochester — Golf tournament

*Event calendar is subject to change. The listing includes only the confirmed events as of printing. Check the Eagle’s Nest for the full listing.

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**Looking to meet and network with local Niagarans?**

**April**

- TBD Central New York — Networking event
- TBD Boston — Networking event
- 28 Charlotte — Chapter planning meeting
- 29 Buffalo/Niagara — Networking event

**May**

- 6 Delaware Valley — Networking event
- 8 Buffalo/Niagara — Dinner theater: “Anything Goes”
- 13 Rochester — Networking event
- 26 Niagara University — SOLA reunion

**June**

- 14 Buffalo/Niagara — Kist Golf Tournament

**July**

- 24 Albany — Saratoga Day at the Races

**Summer 2010**

- Rochester — Golf tournament

*Event calendar is subject to change. The listing includes only the confirmed events as of printing. Check the Eagle’s Nest for the full listing.

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John Madden Jr., ’87, and Jay Costello, ’86, at the NU vs. Siena basketball game and reception sponsored by Albany alumni.

Looking to meet and network with local Niagarans?

Jim Geis, Tara Lee, ’95, Pat Nerney, ’81, Stephanie Nannery Nerney, ’81, and Michelle Vandeloo, ’01, at the hockey game and reception sponsored by the tri-state chapter.

---

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Nancy Langer ’78
716-836-5188
nnlanger@aol.com

Shannon Bloomquist, ’07
716-316-5873
shannon.m.bloomquist@gmail.com

Central New York Chapter
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315-424-7139
Byrneirish7@aol.com

Lisa Sparks, ’95
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Lisa.Sparks@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

Central New York Chapter
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Dianne Moll, ’89
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Tri-State Chapter
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michelle.vandeloo@aig.com

Washington National Capital Chapter
Paul McCarthy, ’60
703-931-6478
paulmccarthy@earthlink.net
Members of the Class of 1959 got together at Alex’s in Batavia, N.Y., recently to catch up with what was happening in one another’s lives. The group regularly gets together in the Rochester area. (L-r): Joe Carmola, Gene Murphy, Bill Parsons, John Barrett, Ren Warsitz, Tom Luce, Don Wimett, Bob Cross, Bill Casey, and Jim Monte.

The picture was taken by Pete Swartwout, also of the Class of 1959.

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

1950s Bernard Camia, ’57 (CA&S), Brooklyn, N.Y., was elected to a third term as trustee for Societa Val Trebbia & Val Nure, which awards scholarships to members’ children entering college.

Robert Kostoff, ’58 (CA&S), Niagara Falls, N.Y., recently had his seventh book published. “Hidden History of Greater Niagara” is a collection of columns appearing in the weekly Niagara Falls Reporter. It is published by The History Press.

1960s Roy Gardner, ’60 (CBA), Sun City Center, Fla., played outfield for Clearwater 70’s Senior Softball Team in the Huntsman World Senior Games in Utah in October 2009. The team won a silver medal in their division.

Edward J. Kampf, ’65 (CA&S), Albany, N.Y., sold his dental practice and recently went on his sixth dental missionary trip to Guatemala. He is now teaching at New York University, College of Dentistry.

Nancy (Fichter) Juliano, ’67 (CE), Hamden, Conn., received the Distinguished Valuable Award from Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, Conn., for science leadership in Hamden and service to Sacred Heart University as an adjunct professor.

Rick Manhey, ’68 (CA&S), Lake George, N.Y., is president of Environmental Remediation Services, Inc., specializing in demolition and asbestos abatement.

Robert M. DiFrancesco, ’69 (CE), Lewiston, N.Y., was recently honored by Niagara County Head Start. The organization named their newest facility in Niagara Falls The Robert M. DiFrancesco Center for Early Childhood and Head Start Education.

1970s Mary (St. John) Otterman, ’70 (CN), Oakland, Calif., received her master’s degree in nursing from California State University, Sacramento, Calif., in summer 2009.

Robert Ptak, ’70 (CE), Saint Petersburg, Fla., who was employed by Sabre Holdings for 22 years, has returned from his recent assignment in their Krakow, Poland, IT development site. While assigned to that office, Ptak was a training manager for new hire employees at that location.

Richard Zick, ’70 (CA&S), Rome, N.Y., was elected chair of the New York Insurance Association at the association’s annual meeting in November 2009. He will serve a one-year term.

Gregory Giuliano, ’71 (CA&S), Leominster, Mass., has been promoted to executive director of Montachusett Home Care Corp. of Leominster and Gardner.

Kathy (Hoffmann) Noonan, ’73 (CN), Farmingville, N.Y., has been appointed a medical services specialist for the Suffolk County Department of Social Services.

Janet (Strack) Kemp, ’75 (TTT), Long Grove, Ill., is currently manager, carrier operations, at U.S. Gypsum Corp. in Chicago. She and her company recently were named 2009 Shipper of the Year by the National Strategic Transportation Council. NASSTRAC, in conjunction with Logistics Management Magazine, annually selects one member company for recognition of outstanding achievement in transportation and distribution. As a winner, U.S. Gypsum received a cover story in the October 2009 issue of Logistics Management Magazine, and will be honored this spring at the council’s annual meeting in Orlando.

Dean Messing, ’75 (CBA), Hamburg, N.Y., retired in July 2009 after almost 31 years of service with Erie County. He served more than 19 years in the Department of Emergency Services and 15 years as deputy commissioner of Disaster Preparedness.

Paul Arena, ’76 (CE), Manassas, Va., recently retired from teaching geosystems in Fairfax County, Va., and is obtaining his pilot’s license. He is currently serving as pastoral associate at St. Mary’s Church in downtown Rochester, N.Y.

Vincent Boles, ’76 (CA&S), Madison, Ala., has retired from the US Army after 33 years of service.

Class of ’09 Graduation DVDs Still Available
Haven’t received your DVD from your 2009 undergraduate or graduate convocation? Send an e-mail with your updated mailing address and phone number to alumni@niagara.edu and we will send one right out to you!
Joseph McCauley, ’77 (CBA), Rochester, N.Y., has been promoted to professor of business administration and economics.

Albert Ginchereau, ’78 (CE), Newport, R.I., retired after a career in the hospitality industry managing and marketing start-up operations, turnaround and award-winning properties. During his career he taught hotel, restaurant and casino management at the undergraduate level at state, private and for-profit colleges.

Paul Gaughan, ’79 (CA&S), Hambur, N.Y., was appointed Erie County commissioner of jurors. In this position, he oversees an operation that deals with the 100,000 Erie County adults summoned annually for jury service in State Supreme Court, Erie County Court, the three local city courts, 25 town courts, and 13 village courts.

Michael Prospero, ’79 (CE), Brampton, Ontario, was appointed to the board of directors of the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse. He joins the board as a member-at-large and recently retired from his position as superintendent of education for the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

1980s Deborah (Tansey) Zimmermann, ’80 (CN), Richmond, Va., has been named chief nursing officer and vice president of Patient Care Services by the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System.

Peter Dunn, ’81 (CA&S), New York, N.Y., has been named president of CBS Television Stations and will oversee their entire 29-station portfolio.

Janet (Kirkwood) Kay, ’81 (CN), Tonawanda, N.Y., was the recipient of Kenmore Mercy Hospital’s Annual Medical Staff Award recognizing outstanding associates for their service to patients and staff.

Judy (Cowan) Antonio, ’83 (CA&S), Niagara Falls, N.Y., has accepted a position with the Niagara Health System as the regional program assistant, Emergency Services, Critical Care & Outpatient Medicine.

Karen (Haag) Williams, ’83 (CN), APE, AE, Germany, is working as a nurse practitioner in the neurology department at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and is the coordinator of the TBI screening process for the service members coming to Landstuhl from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Timothy Bronson, ’84 (CE), Niagara Falls, N.Y., has semiretired, after 25 years, as director of counseling at D’Youville College and has a full-time counseling practice. He also teaches in the graduate mental health counseling program at Niagara University.

Sandra (Pottynski) Gibson, ’84 (CN) has achieved board certification as a nurse executive from the American Nurses’ Credentialing Center. She is presently the manager of the Open Heart Unit and the Cardiac Medical Intensive Care Unit at Kaleida Millard Fillmore Gates Circle Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y.

David Sylvester, ’84 (CA&S), Langley, Ontario, was installed as the eighth principal of King’s University College in London, Ontario, in October 2009.

Winston Kirton, ’87 (CA&S), East Windsor, N.J., joined the senior management team of Digestive Care, Inc.

Christopher Montpetit, ’87 (CA&S), Northport, Ala., was hired at the University of Alabama as assistant professor and the new director of the theater management program.

Rhonda (Goodberry) Rotterman, ’88 (CN), Buffalo, N.Y., has been named executive director of the Western New York Alliance for Person-Centered Care, the first communitywide initiative of its kind in the United States aimed at transforming the way nursing homes and assisted living facilities deliver care to the elderly.

HELP FOR HAITI — Natalie, left, and Eileen Weckesser, daughters of Kevin Weckesser, ’88, came up with a unique idea to help the people affected by the earthquake in Haiti. They made glass angel charms, which they sold for $2 each to family, friends and fellow parishioners of St. Mary’s Church in Rochester. Niagara alumnus Art Roberts, ’78 (also pictured), matched the funds the two girls raised and together they donated more than $2,000 to Catholic Relief Services and the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Kevin Weckesser notes that more than 300 charms were sold, and that he and his wife, Mary, “are very proud of their (daughters’) hard work and compassion for others.”

Long Odds Pay Off for NU Grad With the Trip of a Lifetime

The odds weren’t one-in-a-million, although they were pretty close. But that didn’t stop NU grad Joe Fratello, ’07, from entering an online contest that he heard about while watching the television show “Jeopardy.” The grand prize was a trip to the Galapagos Islands. Over two million entries were submitted. Fratello entered just one time.

And then the phone rang, and the caller informed Fratello that he was one of 25 winners. He and his fiancee, Ashley Alaimo, made the journey in October and had an experience they will never forget.

The Galapagos Islands are located in the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of South America. Known for their wildlife, marine life and natural beauty, the islands are considered a unique living museum.

In addition to encounters with iguanas, giant sea tortoises, baby sea lions and more, Fratello and Alaimo enjoyed boat rides, hikes, kayaking and snorkeling adventures.

In an interview with the Niagara Gazette, Fratello said the trip has changed the way he looks at the world.

“It’s very obvious what the impact of humanity is on the environment now,” said the NU grad. “Growing up in Niagara Falls, you didn’t see it. You can’t see it because you don’t know what nature was like before the city was there. When I’m walking around and see someone littering, it affects me differently now. I think we all need to be more conscious of the environment than we are right now.”

— Joe Kirchmyer
Christopher Simpson, ’88 (CA&S), Ancaster, Ontario, has been named varsity head cross-country and track and field coach at St. Jean de Brebeuf C.S.S. He is currently a teacher of economics and history at the school.

Thomas Lecceadone, ’89 (CBA), East Randolph, N.Y., received recognition for his more than seven years as Cattaraugus County’s District Three advisory board coordinator at the Coldspring Fire Hall. He was presented a second plaque for his service to the eight fire departments that included Cattaraugus, Cold Spring, East Randolph, Kill Buck, Little Valley, Randolph, Salamanca and the Seneca Nation of Indians.

1990s Kim McKeown, ’90 (CBA), Bolton, Mass., was recently accepted into the American Society of Health Systems Pharmacists’ pharmacy technician training program. In addition to doing volunteer work at UMass, she works in the community pharmacy sector at Walgreens in the Boston/Central Massachusetts district.

Lisa (Schreiner) Berta, ’91 (CA&S), Odessa, Texas, has accepted the position of technical support manager with Waste Control Specialists LLC. WCS, a waste processing and disposal company, operates a fully permitted 1,338-acre treatment, storage and disposal facility near Andrews, Texas.

Stephen Cook, ’92 (CA&S), Fairport, N.Y., has been voted into the “Forty Under 40” class of 2009 by the Rochester Business Journal.


Megan (Barry) Broomfield, ’94 (CBA), Perinton, N.Y., has been voted into the “Forty Under 40” class of 2009 by the Rochester Business Journal.

Ellen (Gould) Rychlik, ’96 (CN), Lake View, N.Y., was awarded RN of the Year 2009 through the New York State Health Care Facilities Association.

Stephanie Finney, ’97 (CE), Middleport, N.Y., has graduated with distinction from the Institute of Education, University of London, with her master’s degree in higher and professional education.

Thomas Devereaux, ’99 (CBA), Lockport, N.Y., was named a manager in the accounting and auditing department at Tironconi Segarra and Associates, LLP.

2000s Gregory Alvord, ’01 (CH), Lutz, Fla., was promoted to the position of senior marketing underwriter with Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company in September 2009.

Laura (Sagar) Stevens, ’02 (CBA), Lake View, N.Y., has accepted a position as a senior staff assistant in the student accounts office at the University at Buffalo.

Courtland Van Deusen, ’02 (CBA), Lockport, N.Y., has been promoted to principal with Lumsden and McCormick. He is responsible for development and implementation of tax engagement strategies.

Paul White, ’02 (CE), West Point, N.Y., was honored by Starpoint Schools in Pendleton, N.Y., at their “Starpoint Scholars … Past and Present” program in November 2009. White was inducted to the Academic Wall of Fame.

Amber Zito, ’03 (CA&S), Lakewood, Ohio, accepted the position of home care medical social worker with Hospice of the Western Reserve in Cleveland in May 2009. She is responsible for providing counseling and support to patients and families at the end of life, as well as linking client systems to community resources. She has also been selected to be a member of the Continuing Education Committee for Hospice of the Western Reserve’s Education Institute.

Jennifer (Kemak) Brown, ’06 (CE), Manassas, Va., graduated from George Mason University, Fairfax, Va., in August 2009 with a master’s degree in educational leadership.

Benjamin Lecmeke, ’06 (CA&S), Albion, N.Y., has passed the bar exam for the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts following the conferring of his juris doctor law degree from Roger Williams University School of Law, Bristol, R.I.

Nicholas Hossfeld, ’07 (CBA), Amherst, N.Y., has been promoted to senior accountant with the accounting firm Chiampou Travis Besaw and Kershner.

Candace Keuchler, ’07 (CBA), East Amherst, N.Y., has accepted the position of staff accountant with the accounting firm Chiampou Travis Besaw and Kershner.

Angela Argauer, ’08 (CBA), East Aurora, N.Y., was named staff accountant at Lumsden & McCormick.

Brittany Hillery, ’08 (CBA), Hamburg, N.Y., has accepted the position of staff accountant with the accounting firm Chiampou Travis Besaw and Kershner.

Mark Anastasia, ’09 (CBA), North Tonawanda, N.Y., has affiliated with L&M Financial Services after having served as a finance intern at the company since 2004.

Michael DeChellis, ’09 (CBA), Middleport, N.Y., was hired by the Talking Phone Book in Tonawanda, N.Y.

Amanda Moses, ’09 (CBA), Williamsville, N.Y., was named staff accountant at Lumsden & McCormick.

marriages


NU Grad Earns National Teaching Award

The National Council for the Social Studies recently presented Outstanding Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year awards to two recipients, one of whom earned a BA in education and history from Niagara University. Elizabeth M. Devine, ’77, is currently teaching American Studies at William H. Hall High School in West Hartford, Conn. She received her award during the 89th annual NCSS conference in Atlanta in November.

“I have been teaching for 31 years and I still love every day in the classroom. I hope I can inspire more young people to enter the profession,” said Devine.

The award is presented annually to recognize social studies teachers who demonstrate exceptional abilities in developing and using instructional material creatively and effectively; incorporate innovative instructional strategies and techniques into their teaching; foster a spirit of inquiry; and encourage the development of democratic beliefs, values and skills needed to become effective citizens. Devine helped design the American studies interdisciplinary curriculum that she currently team teaches with a colleague from the school’s English department. In order to introduce visual arts to students and fine-tune student exhibition pieces for the spring art show, she and her teaching partner also work with an art teacher. In her classes, students discuss the larger themes of history and politics, analyze primary source materials and benefit from careful exposure to both sides of any issue presented.

Devine was recognized in 2008 as the New England History Teacher of the Year.

— Joe Kirchmyer

Ashley Borczynski, ’07, Webster, N.Y., to Andrew Zachowicz, Oct. 11, 2009.

births

To Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Connor (Jill Bonadio, ’93), Salt Lake City, Utah, a son, Brady Easton, Aug. 6, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jude Kelly (Michele Dingece, ’93), Apex, N.C., a daughter, Raina Marie, Nov. 10, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Eric Connor, ’94, Lockport, N.Y., a daughter, Marin Frances, July 31, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Schadt (Jean Gilligan, ’94), Commack, N.Y., a son, Logan Thomas, Nov. 20, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Spath, ’94, Charleston, S.C., a daughter, Caroline Alexandra, Nov. 3, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jon DiBernardo (Jacqueline Tosetto, ’95), Lewiston, N.Y., a son, Vena Cesarino, and daughter, Franca Camille, July 29, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Eric Gunnarson, ’96, Buffalo, N.Y., a daughter, Mackenzie Reid, Sept. 15, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Tim Manley (Tracy Muckler, ’96), Cheektowaga, N.Y., a daughter, Kennedy Elaine, May 19, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Leskiw (Barbara Panza, ’96), Richardson, Texas, a son, Henry Augustine, July 23, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Steven Kula, ’97, Prattsburgh, N.Y., a daughter, Nathalya Grace, Nov. 25, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kahler, ’98, Brooklyn, N.Y., a daughter, Kaitlyn Christine, June 4, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. James DeVivo, ’99, Woodbridge, N.J., a son, Maxwell James, Sept. 11, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Amann (Keri Potwora, ’99), Kenmore, N.Y., a son, Kaden Vincent, Dec. 21, 2009.

adoptions

To Mr. and Mrs. Owen Skelly, ’87 (Bernadette Falls, ’87), Cumming, Ga., an son, Andrew John, adopted from Russia, July 22, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Cardinal, ’91, Buffalo, N.Y., a son, Camden John, July 9, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Reid, ’91, Merrick, N.Y., a daughter, Maeve Kathleen, Aug. 12, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Connor (Jill Bonadio, ’93), Salt Lake City, Utah, a son, Brady Easton, Aug. 6, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jude Kelly (Michele Dingece, ’93), Apex, N.C., a daughter, Raina Marie, Nov. 10, 2009.
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To Mr. and Mrs. James DeVivo, ’99, Woodbridge, N.J., a son, Maxwell James, Sept. 11, 2009.
To Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Amann (Keri Potwora, ’99), Kenmore, N.Y., a son, Kaden Vincent, Dec. 21, 2009.
Fond Memories

An early DePaul Hall lab.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Barnett '00 (Traci Wagner, '00), Lockport, N.Y., a daughter, Ava Kathryn, Aug. 19, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brady (Carly Crisafulli, '00), Niagara Falls, N.Y., a daughter, Teaghan Marie, Aug. 20, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Todd Smith (Jenny Baird, '01), Mumford, N.Y., a daughter, Claire Ann, Oct. 14, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Dailey (Suzanne Oney, '01), Wauconda, Ill., a son, Ryan Patrick, Oct. 27, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kempster, '03 (Ann Stafford, '04), Hamburg, N.Y., a son, Mark Stafford, Dec. 2, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Davis II (Cecelia Orlando, '04), Kileen, Texas, a son, Gregory Lynn, Sept. 24, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Feliciano (Ramona Torres, '04), New York, N.Y., a daughter, Silmeria Sara, Oct. 13, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Dealy (Nicole Giamporcaro, '05), Daytona Beach, Fla., a son, Gavin Ryan, May 5, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Brown, '06 (Jennifer Kemak, '06), Manassas, Va., a daughter, Emily Erin, Sept. 18, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Barnett '00 (Traci Wagner, '00), Lockport, N.Y., a daughter, Ava Kathryn, Aug. 19, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brady (Carly Crisafulli, '00), Niagara Falls, N.Y., a daughter, Teaghan Marie, Aug. 20, 2009.

To Mr. and Mrs. Todd Smith (Jenny Baird, '01), Mumford, N.Y., a daughter, Claire Ann, Oct. 14, 2009.

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If you don’t hear from us by e-mail already …

Do you want to hear from us electronically about topics and events that might interest you? Please send an e-mail to alumni@niagara.edu with your name and class year to receive more regular communications about all our events and NUws at Niagara! The more we use e-mail to communicate, the less paper we need for mailings and invitations.


Victor D. Benigni Jr., '60, St. Mary’s, Pa., Jan. 1, 2010.


James M. McQueen, '67, Chicopee, Mass., Aug. 6, 2009.


deaths

To have a Mass celebrated at Alumni Chapel, call NU’s campus ministry office at 716-286-8400.


Joseph A. Rider, '37, Boston, July 9, 2009.


Parsons Assists Victims of Earthquake in Haiti

David Parsons, ’94, had wanted to go on a medical mission for several years before he finally made plans to do just that last September. He had no way of knowing that his service would include assisting people whose lives were devastated by the most powerful earthquake to hit Haiti in 200 years.

On Jan. 15, three days after the 7.0 magnitude quake hit Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital city, Parsons arrived in Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic, as part of a 36-member team of medical and dental professionals sponsored by SCORE International. He spent three days at SCORE’s clinic and at Casa de Luz (House of Light), an orphanage that cares for Dominican children with special needs, before one of the group’s leaders asked him and several others to go to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Jimani, on the border of the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

“It was horrific,” he says of the scene that he witnessed upon his arrival. Countless victims of the earthquake waited for medical attention, bloodied, bones broken, dust-covered and dehydrated. Parsons worked two 17-hour shifts to assist the injured, setting and casting bones for some, arranging amputations for others.

The enormity of the situation became evident to him during his first hour on the job, when he took care of a seven-year-old boy with an injured foot. Parsons saw that his toes were crushed and needed to be amputated. The boy spoke no English, so Parsons looked for relatives or friends to whom he could explain the situation. There were none.

“This kid was completely by himself,” Parsons says.

While Parsons could help only a few of the people injured in the quake, he says that he was not discouraged. He and his colleagues recalled the Loren Eiseley story of the young man who walked along the ocean shore, gently throwing beached starfish into the surf. When admonished by an onlooker that he could not be making a difference because there were hundreds of starfish he could not save, the young man picked up another starfish, threw it in the ocean and answered, “I made a difference for that one.”

“That’s the mentality we went in there with because you can’t help everybody,” Parsons says.

Now back at home in Western New York, Parsons is planning to return to Haiti some time this summer. In the meantime, he’s been soliciting durable medical supplies such as cast saws, orthopedic splints, walkers and wheelchairs to send to the people of Haiti. He notes that many individuals whose initial injuries had been treated were now facing amputations due to a lack of follow-up medical care. He’s also hoping to organize a Christian benefit concert for Haiti this spring.

— Lisa McMahon

Editor’s note: To learn more about the organizations Parsons assisted while in Haiti, visit www.scoreinternational.org, www.projectchild.org, and www.cha-dasha.org.

Alumni Relations Meets Social Networking

The alumni relations department has joined the social networking buzz. You can find us on Facebook by searching “Niagara University Alumni.” This alumni fan page will keep you up-to-date with upcoming events, news, fellow alumni, and information! We have more than 1,400 alumni fans right now; what are you waiting for? We have also linked into Twitter! Find us there by searching “NiagaraAlumni.” See you on the networks soon!

Leo Stupur, ’76, Houston, Nov. 10, 2009.

With sympathy

To John G. Fraser, ’47, Cleveland, on the death of his wife, Mona Lee Fraser, June 23, 2009.
To Louise (D’Anna) Geracci, ’54, Las Vegas, on the death of her husband, James Geracci, ’52, May 7, 2009.
To Beverly (Smith) Marra, ’55, Niagara Falls, N.Y., on the death of her husband, Joseph V. Marra, ’45, Oct. 12, 2009.
To Thomas O’Connor, ’71, Leesburg, Va., on the death of his wife, Valerie (Roast) O’Connor, ’73, Jan. 9, 2010.
To Catherine Serianni, ’75, Lewiston, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Margaret Serianni, Dec. 15, 2009.

To Joseph V. Marra, ’45, Niagara Falls, N.Y., on the death of his wife, Mona Lee Fraser, June 23, 2009.
To Thomas O’Connor, ’71, Leesburg, Va., on the death of his wife, Valerie (Roast) O’Connor, ’73, Jan. 9, 2010.
To Catherine Serianni, ’75, Lewiston, N.Y., on the death of her mother, Margaret Serianni, Dec. 15, 2009.
Come be a part of a tradition as Niagara University, Canisius College, and St. Bonaventure University host the 60th annual Little Three Golf Tournament. The Little Three proudly holds the title of the oldest continuous intercollegiate alumni golf tournament in the nation. This friendly competition between the three schools is open to alumni and friends alike for golf, dinner or both!

Where: Transit Valley Country Club
8920 Transit Road, East Amherst, N.Y.

When: Monday, June 28

Time: 11 a.m. — Registration and lunch
Noon — Shotgun start

Cost: $130
Includes golf, lunch, dinner, beverages and prizes
(Individual prices available for golf or dinner only)
Golf scratch or scramble format

For a reservation brochure, more information, or to reserve your place, please call Art Traver at 716-834-9542.

He called on American colleagues, who would invite him to give talks at conferences, and he spoke at seminars at the University at Buffalo. “The mathematics department at the university, as well as other mathematicians from other universities, supported me very much in my new life,” he says.

In June of 1993, Tsekanovskii walked to Erie County Community College’s city campus to apply for a job. There were no vacancies at the time, but he was called for an interview the next year and offered a part-time teaching position. He was also offered a part-time position at the University at Buffalo. These two jobs enabled him to earn enough money to purchase a car.

While these jobs helped pay his bills, Tsekanovskii wanted full-time employment. He began applying to universities, including Niagara, looking for work. In 1996, he accepted a position as a visiting professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where his colleagues in the mathematics department strongly supported both his application and his work. Two years later, he was offered a research position at the Institute for Financial Mathematics in North Carolina, a new school that closed a month after he arrived because of financial difficulties.

With no job and no home, Tsekanovskii “put all (his) belongings in a car and went to Brooklyn” where his sister, a piano teacher, lived, and began looking for work again. In July 1998, he received an e-mail from Niagara inquiring if he was still interested in a position in the math department. He was.

Tsekanovskii taught his first semester at Niagara in the fall of 1998 as an assistant professor and has worked his way to a full, tenured professorship. “It’s a completely different life for me at Niagara,” he says. From having his own office (before he came to the United Sates, he was allotted one drawer in a departmental desk), to having access to publications (“You can order anything from the libraries here,” he says in amazement. “Any book I want they find or buy specifically for me.”), the disparities between his life in the former Soviet Union and his new life as an American citizen still astonish Tsekanovskii, who says, “Now I understand what it means to enjoy life like many Americans do. I am very grateful to Niagara for giving me a chance to do the same.”

— Lisa McMahon
One Student's Undergraduate Research Experience

I am originally from Niger Republic, West Africa. I came to Western New York in September of 2003 and attended Sweet Home High School in Amherst. After graduating in 2005, I came to Niagara to begin premedicine studies and am currently a senior majoring in biology with minors in chemistry and French. I chose medicine because I really want to make a difference in any way I can. I have seen many of my family members suffer from illnesses that threatened their lives, and both my grandmother and my uncle recently passed away due to health complications and hepatitis.

One of Niagara University’s powerful areas is undergraduate research, and it’s one of the reasons I chose to attend. I was able to get involved with cancer research in the spring of 2008, working with Dr. Robert Greene, chair and professor of biology, as my research adviser. I chose to work with cancer cells because one of my aunts was diagnosed with uterine cancer. It was detected early and there was no metastasis, so she has a good chance of survival.

I started my research experience with cell culture, learning how to grow Hela cervical and MCF-7 breast cancer cells without contaminating the cultures. Once I became comfortable with the cell-culturing methods, I started to conduct experiments and learned various laboratory techniques such as the DNA fragmentation assay, gel electrophoresis, fluorescence microscopy, chambers cultures, and many more. I soon performed well at all those procedures and reached a whole new level in my laboratory expertise. Now, I teach other students what I learned and am currently supervising three undergraduates in the laboratory, helping them with their projects.

Like other researchers, I experienced some disappointment with my work. Albert Einstein once said, “If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?” On some days, experiments run as expected; on other days, they do not. That is the true nature of research, where frustration is always around the edges of success.

My work involves investigating whether staurosporine and photodynamic compounds will induce apoptosis (programmed cell death) in the Hela and MCF-7 cancer cells and thus alter the morphological characteristics of these cells. Once I succeeded in testing my hypotheses, I was asked to attend a science conference. Undergraduate researchers at Niagara have the remarkable opportunity to attend regional and national science conferences. I was fortunate to go to the Eastern Colleges Science Conference at Wagner College in April 2009, where I made a poster presentation of the Morphological Comparison of Hela Cervical and MCF-7 Breast Cancer Cells through Apoptosis Induced by Staurosporine and Photodynamic Drugs. I received an Award of Excellence for Outstanding Poster Presentation in Morphology and Histology for my very first presentation, which encouraged me to dive into more research. I decided to do an honors thesis, to be defended in May of 2010. I am currently working on my thesis and on my project for the 2010 ECSC conference in April.

I learned a great deal while at Niagara University, and it has been an extremely pleasant and fulfilling journey. The help here is tremendous — Dr. Greene offered me a lot of support and motivation with my studies and research — and resources are available for those who really want to be engaged in serious, career-directed research.

My research background helped me to be a competitive candidate for a Ph.D. program in molecular biology at Lehigh University and in cancer biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. After I obtain my Ph.D. in cancer biology or molecular biology, I intend to dive into more cancer research, though academia might be another option, because educating about cancer is as important as developing a cure.
Celebrating classes ending in 0’s and 5’s

It’s that time of year again to dust off those yearbooks, find your old NU gear, and come on back to campus for your class reunion! This year we celebrate classes with years ending in 0’s and 5’s, but as always, we welcome back all alumni to join in the party and the fun! Mark your calendar now, and look for a formal invitation this summer.

If you are interested in assisting with the planning of your class reunion, please contact Loretta Madia, at lmadia@niagara.edu or 716-286-8789.

We hope to see you this fall!

The Saratoga Day at the Races hosted by the Albany chapter has been booked for July 24, 2010. Join fellow alumni in the clubhouse in At the Rail Pavilion, where you will have a trackside view of all the live racing action. Your ticket will include admission, buffet, and conveniently located betting facilities. There will also be an informal alumni gathering on Friday, July 23.

As in previous years, there will be a room block at the Courtyard by Marriott, Saratoga Springs.

Be on the lookout for more information on the Eagle’s Nest at www.niagaraalumni.com for the latest details when they are available!