Alumni Weekend is easily one of my favorite times of year, as it provides me with many opportunities to visit with a wide array of loyal Niagara University graduates. I thoroughly enjoyed the 2010 edition of Alumni Weekend, which welcomed more than 600 Niagarans back to Monteagle Ridge to reconnect, reminisce, and be apprised of the current happenings at their beloved alma mater.

From my own perspective, Alumni Weekend 2010 was particularly special because it celebrated the silver anniversary of the Niagara Class of 1985, one of the final alumni contingents that I personally knew during my time as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. I have always found it interesting to learn of the various paths that our young alumni take after they graduate, and I’m fascinated by all of the diverse and exciting ways in which our former students are utilizing their degrees.

Similarly, I also derive particular enjoyment from celebrating the 50th graduation anniversary with our Golden Eagles, a cadre of distinguished men and women who are always affable and animated in sharing their experiences from the days when the NU landscape was considerably different. The Golden Eagle Reunion begins with Mass in Alumni Chapel, continues with cocktails and dinner in St. Vincent’s Hall, and is highlighted by the traditional presentation of the Golden Eagle pins. Throughout, many memories and laughs are shared among this special group of alumni.

While it is literally impossible for me to attend all of the 25-plus events that our tremendous alumni relations staff presents over the course of three days, I do make my way to quite a few of them and always find it easy to connect with a cross section of graduates whose ages may vary by up to 65 years. From the Reserve Officer Training Corps Hall of Fame induction ceremony, which celebrates a program that I have always been so proud of, to the bestowing of the Deans Awards, which obviously hold a special place in my heart, it is a sincere delight and privilege to honor these individuals for their accomplishments.

Most enjoyable of all, however, is the cumulative presence of the several hundred alums that band together to discuss what Niagara was, what it is today, and what the university can be for upcoming generations of Purple Eagles.

For all of this, we thank you.

We also thank you for reaffirming all that we do as a faith-based institution of higher learning. In accord with our mission, we educate students and enrich their lives through programs in the liberal arts and through career preparation, in the Catholic and Vincentian traditions.

We cannot thank you enough for admirably representing Niagara in all that you do on a daily basis. Our alumni have achieved great success in their careers, and we are proud to hold them up as a measure of success for the university that prepared them to take their prominent places in the world.

Finally, we thank you for the affection and generosity that you continually show for Niagara, not just during Alumni Weekend, but throughout the year. We are who we are because of the loyal support of our alumni who strengthen us through the numerous and far-reaching ways that they “give back” to their alma mater.

Again, Niagara University thanks you.

Please circle Oct. 7-9, 2011, on your calendars — the dates for next year’s Alumni Weekend, where I hope to connect with many of you once again. Until then, please take good care of yourselves, and may God bless you and your families.

Joseph L. Levesque, C.M.
On the cover
Alumni Weekend 2010
More than 600 alumni returned to Monteaule Ridge Oct. 8-10 to reunite with classmates, rediscover friendships and relive their fondest Niagara University memories.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation
Three ROTC students share their summer vacation experiences in field training programs.

Alumni Bookshelf
Some of our most recently published authors offered information and shared the inspiration behind their work.

In every issue
From the President
Around the Ridge
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Advancing NU
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A NU View

View the Eagle online at http://eagleonline.niagara.edu/
News Briefs
Visit the Eagle online at eagleonline.niagara.edu/ for details on these stories.

NU's Fall Enrollment Reaches All-Time High
Niagara University’s total fall enrollment of 4,273 students signifies the highest number of students who have ever been enrolled at the university at one time.

Olympic CEO John Furlong Honored at Convocation
John Furlong, CEO of the organizing committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the university’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management on Oct. 28.

NU’s ACS Student Chapter Receives Award
Niagara University’s American Chemical Society student chapter received an Honorable Mention Award from the ACS for its activities conducted during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Dr. Bonnie Rose Honored by Niagara YWCA
Dr. Bonnie Rose, NU’s executive vice president and vice president for academic affairs, received a 2010 Niagara Award from the YWCA of Niagara at the organization’s annual “Tribute to Women” event on Sept. 28, for creating opportunities for women’s growth, leadership and empowerment.

Michael Jaszka Receives Financial Executive Award
Michael Jaszka, NU’s vice president for administration, was named among Business First of Buffalo’s Financial Executives of the Year at a luncheon Oct. 7. The award recognizes professionals for outstanding performance as corporate financial stewards.

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter Secures $550,000 for NU Science Center
Congresswoman Louise Slaughter recently announced that Niagara University is poised to receive $550,000 to purchase equipment for the B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences. The funding, which has passed a key legislative hurdle and is positioned for approval by the House and Senate, will allow the campus to install modern science equipment within the facility, allowing the university to continue the growth of its science departments and facilitate integrated and interdisciplinary discovery research.

“Niagara University’s commitment to its students is unparalleled, and I’m pleased to provide this federal funding to Niagara University so they can continue their exemplary education in the sciences and prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow,” Slaughter said.

The B. Thomas Golisano Center for Integrated Sciences will feature advanced research laboratories, faculty offices and classrooms. The $550,000 will purchase essential scientific equipment and classroom technology for the state-of-the-art center. Construction is set to begin on the 46,000-square-foot facility in May. The new science building is expected to have an immediate fiscal impact upon the Western New York region with an estimated 392 full-time jobs created during construction and more than $42 million realized in indirect economic impact.

SIX HONORED AT 2010 VINCENTIAN HERITAGE CONVOCATION — Niagara University honored six individuals on Sept. 30 as part of a convocation celebrating Vincentian Heritage Week. Front row: Vincent Agnello, J.D. (left), a law professor and director of NU’s Family Business Center, received the Vincentian Mission Award, which is presented to members of the university community who demonstrate the values of St. Vincent de Paul, the universal patron of charity. Sister Mary Fran Martin, D.C. (center), former northeast provincial for the Daughters of Charity, received an honorary doctor of humane letters degree in recognition of her work with the poor and marginalized. The Rev. Vincent J. O’Malley, C.M., M.S.’80 (right), the director of St. Lazare Retreat House in Spring Lake, Mich., and former senior assistant to the president at Niagara, received the President’s Medal, Niagara University’s highest honor, which recognizes extraordinary service to the university. Back row: Paul M. McManus, ’65 (left), president and CEO of The Leading Hotels of the World, was inducted into “Niagara Legacy — Alumni of Distinction” for his outstanding professional accomplishments, his dedication to the Vincentian ideals of the university, and his positive and lasting impact on society. Class of 1965 alumni Robert (right) and Concetta Dwyer also received President’s Medals. The honorees are pictured here with the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president. For more on this story, visit www.niagara.edu/nu-news.
NU Names Dr. Kevin Hearn VP for Student Life

Kevin Hearn, Ed.D., has been appointed vice president for student life at Niagara University following a nationwide search. Hearn possesses nearly 20 years of experience in higher education and currently serves as the associate vice president at Dean College in Franklin, Mass. He will assume his new position at Niagara on Jan. 1, 2011.

Francis Bok Speaks at NU

Anti-slavery activist and author Francis Bok discussed his acclaimed autobiography, Escape from Slavery, during two lectures at NU’s Gallagher Center on Sept. 28. The presentations were sponsored by Niagara Reads, Niagara University’s annual freshman summer reading program.

Partnership Designed to Prepare Children for Success in School

Niagara University is one of several partners launching the Quality Improvement Project of Niagara, an initiative designed to improve the early childhood opportunities of children in Niagara County and to enhance the kindergarten readiness skills of young children.

TKE Returns to Campus

Tau Kappa Epsilon, a collegiate social fraternity, was rechartered as Nu-Alpha chapter in March 2010 with 35 members. Fifteen new students petitioned to be TKE brothers this fall.

GET ON THE BUS — Early in the morning of Sept. 2, 30 young men and women from various Western New York high schools boarded the NU Express, a Niagara University-themed shuttle that transported them to the university’s campus in Lewiston. Once there, the students were taken on a daylong tour of Niagara University. A full-scale video production crew captured their unscripted impressions about the university in a mini-reality show of sorts that is the basis of the university’s newest television commercials. To view the commercials and learn more about the students, visit www.niagara.edu/bus.

NU Business Students Recognized by Town of Wheatfield

On hand to accept a proclamation from Supervisor Robert Cliffe were (l-r) NU students Ainslie Church, Jessica Hosie, Katherine Kauffman, Sarah Marchese, Hilary Sharkey, Molly Dillon, and Ellen Dipofi, along with Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., president of Niagara University, and professor William Angus.

Town of Wheatfield Supervisor Robert Cliffe presented proclamations to NU professor William Angus, the students in his Management Principles class, and NU President Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., on Sept. 27 for the students’ work on two economic development projects for the Niagara County municipality.

In the first instance, which took place in the spring of 2009, the students identified ways to enhance Wheatfield’s business sector along Niagara Falls Boulevard, many of which were incorporated into the town’s master plan. Former Supervisor Tim Demler was so impressed with the study that he invited six of the participants to appear on a weekly show that he hosted on Lockport Community Television.

This time around, Wheatfield officials asked NU students to make suggestions for developing the town’s recreation program that, while growing, was without a calculated, long-term vision. Like their predecessors, this semester’s students signed nondisclosure agreements, conducted SWOT analyses, evaluated financial projections and cost estimates, referenced comparable recreation plans in other communities, and poured over thousands of pages of data before submitting their 50-page, bound presentations to the town. The students’ recommendations are now being brought before a series of town-organized focus groups so that a final determination can be made regarding which of their suggestions will be implemented into Wheatfield’s master plan.

“The young men and women that conducted this study earned my and the town board’s admiration — and we’re not quick to admire just anybody,” admitted Wheatfield Planning Board Chairman Richard W. Muscatello. “Niagara University is offering an extremely valuable resource to the community and I encourage others to take advantage of it.”

— Michael Freedman

For more information on professor Angus’ class and the work the students have done, visit the Eagle online at eagleonline.niagara.edu.

Eagle magazine 3
Christopher Zukas, ‘12: Change Agent

Christopher Zukas wants to be an agent of change. The recently elected president of Niagara University’s Student Government Association uses words like collaborate, unify, and transparent when he speaks about working with university officials, and he’s hoping that this spirit of cooperation will help bring about a change in Niagara’s culture so that it better matches its students’ vision.

To guide the change, he and his six-member NUSGA cabinet, with the assistance of several university administrators, created the first-ever student-developed strategic plan for the university. It incorporates the key issues from Zukas’ election platform and the ideas gathered from students in informal conversations, town hall meetings, and focus groups. Using the university’s strategic plan as a model, Zukas addressed the same issues, such as diversity, enrollment, residence life, and retention, in his proposal. He notes that because many of the students’ ideas aligned with those in Niagara’s plan, several of their initiatives have been included.

A key focus of the students’ plan is to increase communication among NUSGA and university entities. Encouraged by the vision statement the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., NU president, shared with the university community asking for new voices to be brought into institutional decision making, Zukas reached out to a number of administrators to learn what their roles were and how students could have a voice in the decisions that impact them. As a result of these meetings, Zukas is working with the executive vice president’s office to place a student on each of the committees that addresses student life issues. Zukas himself serves on the university’s strategic plan committee and was a member of the search committee for the vice president of student life.

“If we can be true members of these committees, we can impact decisions and policies that directly affect students,” he says. “We can bridge the gap, be a voice for the student and also be a voice for the administration.”

Another major focus of the NUSGA strategic plan is environmental sustainability. Working with the university’s environmental stewardship club, NUHOPE (Niagara University Helping Our Planet Earth), NUSGA evaluated its events and activities to see where their carbon footprints could be reduced. NUSGA members now hope to share what they learned with the entire university community to help the campus become more energy efficient.

Two other initiatives Zukas is pursuing align with the university’s Vincentian tradition. “Strive to Serve” is an effort to increase the number of community service hours completed by members of clubs and club sports. While community service is already a requirement for organizations to receive NUSGA funding, Zukas hopes that this plan will encourage students to go beyond “the bare minimum” and commit to completing 11,000 hours (a challenging, but realistic goal, according to Zukas) per academic year. As an incentive, “milestone” targets were established. As each milestone is reached, NUSGA will make a donation to a local charity, thus enhancing the hands-on service provided by students with financial support.

“The long-term goal,” Zukas says, “is to make this a universitywide initiative” that includes faculty, staff, and administrators.

The second initiative is the establishment of an endowed scholarship fund that will offer financial assistance for student leaders who exemplify the university’s Vincentian values. While NUSGA currently offers an annual $1,000 scholarship (established in 2005), this fund will enable the organization to assist more students and share with them the surpluses that NUSGA has accrued in the past. Zukas worked with the university’s advancement office to establish the endowment, which will offer its first award after a three-year investment period.

“This is probably the biggest decision that NUSGA has ever been part of,” Zukas says, calling it a “forever-lasting decision.” “We will constantly be giving back (to students) and the endowment will grow.”

Making a lasting impact is a personal goal for Zukas, who hopes to pursue a degree in student personnel administration when he graduates from Niagara in 2012. He is already thinking about developing a transition plan so that the initiatives he helped to establish will continue on after he has left Monteagle Ridge.

“I want to make changes that will improve student life far past my time at Niagara,” he says. “Hopefully when I leave NU, I can look back and see that the initiatives have been completed and that I helped to create a future for others to be successful.”

— Lisa McMahon
**Plunging Into the NU Family**

A financial services company advertised itself as “The Bank You Keep.” That’s clever, as one rarely thinks of institutions in that light. It’s the closest its ad department could come to being called a “keeper” (which Webster’s defines as “something worth keeping, especially a large fish legally caught and retained.”)

Whether fish, fowl, or other, we all look for a “keeper” to add value to life. At NU, students search for the best class, the perfect professor, an amazing internship, and a roommate or classmate to be that lifelong friend. All are quite understandable, as they are tangible achievements in college years. For us NU alums, “keepers” also come in the form of insights, moments of enlightenment that inspire and guide us on our life’s journey well past our days on Monteagle Ridge.

Ironically, one of the best “keeper” insights I ever heard about Niagara came from a banker honored at an NU commencement years ago. Donald L. Thomas, ’49, then president of Anchor Savings Bank in New York City (and proud NU alumnus) was well-known in the New York City area for TV and radio commercials he did with his wife, Barbara. Their tagline became a commercial keeper: “Your Anchor Banker Understands.”

Besides the above tagline, I recall a “keeper phrase” Thomas used in his address. As he spoke of his Niagara education, he defined it in terms of “visible” and “invisible” curriculums. The “visible” curriculum was the course of study and faculty who launched him into his successful business career, eventually making his bank a household name in NYC.

But Thomas spent most of his talk on NU’s “invisible” curriculum and what it had done for him. It gave him the opportunity to study religion, philosophy, his faith, and to ask and seek answers for life’s tough questions. In business classes, Thomas learned how to make a living; the Catholic and Vincentian values of Niagara taught him how to make his way through life. His talk centered on how his life’s work became making the “invisible” curriculum a living reality in his daily life. This Anchor banker obviously knew much more about life than simply how to put together a sound business plan.

It is in that context that I embrace the challenge to cultivate faith and encourage spiritual growth in the lives of NU students. In campus ministry, we meet our students where they are, but also lead them to where we feel they can go, becoming active participants in their spiritual life. We provide opportunities for them to get to know the richness of our Catholic and Vincentian identity, so the “visible” and “less visible” become one. Faith and service are “keepers” upon which our NU heritage rests.

One new way campus ministry tries to imbue our faith tradition in NU students is to provide a “keeper” of an experience. A new program entitled “Niagara Plunge” was designed to introduce incoming freshmen to NU’s Catholic and Vincentian heritage. Letters were sent inviting all new students to apply, and 15 were chosen. They moved onto campus five days early and learned about NU’s Catholic and Vincentian mission in seminars and by serving the poor in the Niagara Falls area. They also saw firsthand what NU does in partnership with local agencies such as Heart and Soul Soup Kitchen. By the week’s end, they bonded and became a community, proudly calling themselves the “First Plungers” (with T-shirts and a mock awards ceremony to cap the week’s end).

While it may be too early to gauge the long-term effect of this new experience, a majority of “plungers” have already immersed themselves in campus ministry programs and other valuable campus organizations. Some have asked if they can help guide next year’s Niagara Plunge group. Our Anchor banker alum would be pleased to see a new NU generation finding and applying his “visible” and “invisible” curriculum.

From start to finish, the Niagara experience is truly a “keeper.”

By Rev. John T. Maher, C.M., ’76
University Chaplain
Director of Campus Ministry

Plunging Into the NU Family
A Dozen Added to Men’s Hockey, Basketball for 2010-11 Season

The Niagara men’s hockey team added seven new players to its roster for the 2010-11 season, enhancing the size, speed, and skill of the 28-member team. Joining the Purple Eagles as freshmen are Scott Arnold (Pointe Claire, Que.), Carsen Chubak (Prince Albert, Sask.), Patrick Divjak (Vienna, Austria), Ryan Murphy (Stratford, Ont.), Ryan Rashid (Farmington Hills, Mich.), Kevin Ryan (Eden, N.Y.), and Matt Williams (Kitchener, Ont.).

Arnold, a 6-foot-2 left winger, is coming off a career year with Brockville (CJHL), where he scored 42 goals and 33 assists for 75 points in 61 games during the 2009-10 season. He also participated in the New Jersey Devils Prospect Camp this summer.

Chubak, a 5-foot-11 netminder, spent the 2009-10 season with the Tri-City Storm (USHL), where he went 21-19-6, with a 2.98 goals-against average and a .903 save percentage.

Divjak is a 5-foot-9 forward who scored 46 goals, 69 assists and 115 points in 171 games in the USHL, split between the Sioux Falls Stampede and the Waterloo Black Hawks. He also has some international competition on his résumé, having competed for Austria in the World Junior Championships in 2008-09.

Murphy, another sizable forward at 6-foot-1, finished second on the Oakville Blades (OJHL), with 72 points (31 goals, 41 assists), while helping to lead the team to the OJHL Championship, Dudley Hewitt Cup Championship, and a spot in the 2010 Royal Bank Cup.

Rashid is a 6-foot-2 forward who scored 11 goals, 11 assists and 22 points in 58 games with the Sioux City Musketeers (USHL).

One of two new defensemen, 6-foot-2 Western New York native Kevin Ryan notched six goals, 29 assists and 35 points in 58 games last year with the Topeka Roadrunners (NAHL), including a plus-33 rating.

Williams, a 6-foot blueliner, spent the last two years with the Grande Prairie Storm of the AJHL, scoring 13 goals, 40 assists and 53 points in 120 games, including six power-play goals.

The newcomers joined their veteran teammates in making history on Oct. 29, when they picked up their first-ever Atlantic Hockey Association conference win in their first-ever AHA game, downing the visiting Mercyhurst Lakers by a 5-3 score at Dwyer Arena.

Meanwhile, Niagara men’s basketball signed five new members to the 2010-11 Purple Eagles team. The recruiting class features four backcourt players and one forward.

Skylar Jones (Alexandria, Va.), a 6-foot-3 guard, comes to Monteagle Ridge with a plethora of awards after four standout seasons at Mount Vernon High School, including Third Team All-State and National District Player of the Year. The two-time Mount Vernon Athlete of the Year averaged 19 points, six rebounds and three steals per game as senior en route to entering the 1,000-point club.

Marvin Jordan (Peoria, Ill.), a 5-foot-11 guard, helped lead Manual High School to the Class 2A Championship Game as a senior and a sophomore. He was a two-time Illinois Basketball Coaches Association All-State Honorable Mention selection and was named First Team All-State as a senior. He was also named to the Windycitybasketball.com Top 25 Class of 2010 and played AAU summer basketball for the Eric Gordon All-Stars in Indianapolis.

Malcolm Lemmons (Washington, D.C.), a 6-foot-3 guard, was a part of the Gonzaga High School teams that won four-straight DC Classics and three-straight Alhambra tournaments. He was named to the Washington Catholic Athletic Conference Second Team All-Conference and earned All-Met Honorable Mention during his senior season.

Antoine Mason (New Rochelle, N.Y.), a 6-foot-3 guard from New Rochelle High School, earned All-Section and All-County honors and was named his school’s Athlete of the Year. The son of former NBA All-Star Anthony Mason, Antoine also played in the 2010 Jordan Brand Classic at Madison Square Garden, a tournament that features the top New York City area prep stars.

Joe Thomas (Miami, Fla.), a 6-foot-7 forward, averaged 12 points, 10 rebounds and four assists as a senior while helping lead Dr. Michael Krop High School to the Florida Class 6A semifinals.

The Niagara men’s basketball team, which was picked eighth in the 2010-11 MAAC Coaches’ Preseason Poll on Oct. 26, started its season Nov. 17, taking on Milwaukee at the Gallagher Center.
Campaign Update

THE PROMISE of NIAGARA
The next 150 years

Dec. 31, 2011, is the finish line for the historic $80 million fundraising campaign “The Promise of Niagara … The next 150 years.” Much has been accomplished: New and renovated facilities, financial assistance for deserving students, and innovative programs are already transforming Niagara. However, much remains, because the job is not yet complete.

Donors have been tremendously responsive in supporting the campaign with commitments of nearly $68,000,000 as of the end of October. This is a wonderful achievement. In fact, “The Promise of Niagara” has already raised four times the amount than the previous capital campaign, and some even claim that it has raised more than the total philanthropic support to Niagara since its founding.

“All alumni should be proud of the campaign results so far and of the changes that are taking place at Niagara as a result,” says Bob Dwyer, ’65, campaign chair. “Many alumni have made sacrifices to support this transformation and their investments are paying off. We are not done yet, but I know that we will be successful. I urge all alumni to support the campaign and be a part of these achievements. You can see from reading this magazine and visiting the campus what Father Levesque and his staff are getting done.”

For more information on the campaign or to make a donation, visit http://purple.niagara.edu/promise/.

John Lynch Society Adjusts Membership Levels

The year was 1856. The Rev. John Lynch, C.M., founded the seminary that would become Niagara University. Years later, historian Joseph McKey, C.M., said that Father Lynch began this vision “with a million-dollar dream in his head and a one-hundred-dollar debt in his pocket.”

As a tribute to Father Lynch and his dream, and to recognize donors who provided $1,000 or more of total support to Niagara in a year, the university founded the John Lynch Society in the 1980s. In the last 154 years, the world has changed dramatically, and in the nearly three decades since the founding of the John Lynch Society, Niagara has continued to move forward as an excellent university that provides an outstanding education to students. In a 21st century tribute to Father Lynch, the university has adjusted membership to the Lynch Society to individuals whose total support is $1,856 or more. This new threshold of leadership support will commemorate the founding of Niagara and the fulfillment of a dream by Father Lynch, and help secure the future of the university.
While the majority of Niagara University students enjoy a break from their studies during the summer, ROTC cadets typically continue their training in a variety of programs, including study-abroad placements, leadership development courses, and field instruction in areas such as scuba diving and flying helicopters. Here, three cadets share their summer vacation experiences.

**Jumping In With Both Feet**

Vincent Powierski earned his wings at Airborne School, Fort Benning Ga., this summer. The training was divided into three separate, weeklong phases. During the first week, ground week, Powierski learned about the different kinds of parachutes and how to put them on. He also practiced parachute-landing falls to learn how to land without injuring himself. Week two was tower week, when he learned how to exit an aircraft without becoming tangled in his suspension lines. During week three, jump week, Powierski performed five jumps from two different aircrafts, the C-17 and the C-130, an experience that seemed surreal to him until he heard Sergeant Airborne, the instructor, give him the instruction to stand up and hook up in the C-17.

“When the instructor told us to stand up and hook up our static lines my heart was going nuts and my legs started feeling weak,” he says. “When I jumped, my mind went blank. I wanted to close my eyes but I couldn’t. I free fell for about six seconds, then the shock from the parachute opening was a great feeling because I knew everything was starting out okay. It was so beautiful on the way down, even though you’re only in the air for a little while. But the jump felt so amazing. By the third jump, I was used to it. The night jump was by far the scariest jump because I never knew when the ground was coming, but I just remembered everything the instructors taught me and everything worked out.”

**Learning to Lead**

Jessica Cristiano honed her leadership skills at a Cadet Field Training Camp at West Point Military Academy’s Camp Buckner, where she was challenged both mentally and physically.

“Every day at Camp Buckner was something new and exciting,” she says. “We challenged ourselves through obstacle courses on land and in water. We zip-lined across a lake over 200 feet long on a platform standing 100 feet tall. Because I am petrified of heights, I was extremely nervous to do this; however, I built up the courage to step off the platform and it was all worth it because the ride was amazing.”

Cristiano also learned how to use weapons effectively at night by using night vision goggles, and how to load and set off several types of explosives such as howitzers and mortars. She was also trained in clearing buildings and calling for fire, and spent days in the field learning how to move as part of a unit and how to perform successful battle drills. The most exciting training, she says, was the close quarters combative course, which took place in a “giant dirt pit.” Cadets learned how to fight using knives and were trained in martial arts.
At the end of the training, we matched up with each other and battled it out," she says. "Cadets had mud in their teeth and mouth with blood on their faces and hands; it was really intense, but a lot of fun."

Cristiano says that the skills and military knowledge she gained helped her to become a confident leader.

"It was difficult at times," she admits, "and I had to push myself like I never have before. However, through this experience, I learned a lot about myself and how to lead as a future officer in the United States military."

Flying High

Sophomore Matthew Rongey spent a month in the Army ROTC helicopter flight training program at the University of North Dakota with 16 other cadets from across the country.

After three days of preparation, which included orientation, a physical, a tour of the university's section of the Grand Forks airport, and learning about the Schweizer 300C helicopter he would be flying, Rongey began his flight training. Each session consisted of pre- and post-flight briefings and an hour of actual flight time, focusing on a different maneuver and emergency procedures.

"One of the scariest and most interesting lessons for me was lesson seven," Rongey says. "We learned how to do an autorotation, which is performed in the event of an engine failure to land safely on the ground by using the air from falling to keep the blades spinning. When practicing these, the instructor simulates engine failure and the autorotation is performed all the way down until about three feet when power is increased again. You fall at about 1,600 feet per second and you get the 'free fall' feeling during the first couple of seconds. What frightened me most was not knowing what was coming and also that I don't like free falling. Plus, not only are you falling, but you also have to think and react quickly to recover the helicopter so you don't hit the ground hard."

Rongey took full control of the aircraft during lesson 13, a two-part lesson that included the usual flight with an instructor as well as a solo flight. In all, he completed 15 flight lessons and four ground school exams to graduate from the course.

"I really enjoyed this experience and I truly believe it is one of the best summer training programs you can be selected for as a ROTC cadet," he says.
More than 600 alumni returned to Monteagle Ridge Oct. 8-10 to reunite with classmates, rediscover friendships and relive their fondest Niagara University memories. The weekend featured something for everyone, from the 26th annual alumni golf outing to theatre performances, a Welcome Back party to the traditional Alumni Dinner-Dance. Special events were held for alumni of the university’s nursing and NUOP programs.

Fifty-four alumni hit the links at the Niagara Falls Country Club for the 26th annual Alumni Weekend Golf Tournament. Pictured above left: Class of 1985’s Bob Virgilio, Frank Fiannaca, Paul Lawless, and Gary Shank. Above right: Thomas Hurban, ’60, Libby Sachelli Caruso, ’75, Doris Hurban, and Thomas Flood, ’60.


Above: Col. Neal Delisanti, ’67, Command Sgt. Maj. Fred E. Kirtchen, ’80, and Col. Kevin F. Harrington, ’67, were inducted into the ROTC Hall of Fame on Saturday morning. Pictured with Col. Harrington (right) are his sister, Kerry Fater, and his children, Sean and Brittany.
Pictured left: Sixteen couples renewed their vows during a Saturday morning ceremony in Alumni Chapel.

Pictured above: Bob Dwyer, Pat Dolan and Bob Rowe enjoy reminiscing during the Class of ‘65 luncheon at Dwyer Arena Saturday afternoon.


Pictured left and right: Nursing alumni returned to Monteagle Ridge for a reception at Dunleavy Hall. A display of nursing memorabilia and the blessing of a stained glass window honoring the tradition of nursing education at Niagara were highlights of the event.

For more photos from Alumni Weekend 2010, visit the Eagle online at eagleonline.niagara.edu/
Former classmates gathered at tables and in groups for class photos during the annual Alumni Dinner-Dance, which was held at the Conference Center Niagara Falls on Saturday night.
Among Niagara’s talented alumni are authors of books ranging from children’s picture books to instructional texts on informatics. Some of our most recently published authors offered information and shared the inspiration behind their work.

Sara Breckenridge Sproat, ’87, Ph.D., R.N.
**Book:** The Nursing Informatics Implementation Guide. **Précis:** A practical guide for nurses and health care professionals that guides the reader in successful execution and management of clinical computer system implementation, in turn improving the delivery of health care. **Inspiration:** The barrage of questions she was asked by health care professionals regarding the implementation of clinical computer systems. **What’s next?** Writing an update and a second edition.

Suzanne Simon Dietz, M.S.’90
**Book:** Lewiston Then and Now. **Précis:** The story of Lewiston, N.Y., from its destruction during the War of 1812 through its rebuilding and ongoing transformation into a popular tourist destination for music, theater, festivals, and more. The book includes history and photographs of Niagara University and its students. **Inspiration:** A spiritual journey that includes her family’s ongoing history and connections with NU. Both her parents and eight of her siblings attended the university. **What’s next?** Work on two books: Honor Our Brothers, veterans’ stories from Korea and Vietnam including several NU ROTC alumni; and an authorized biography of Dutch Van Kirk, the navigator of the Enola Gay.

Mary E. Furlong, M.A.’83
**Book:** Seven titles for an educational publisher as part of the Benchmark series. **Précis:** Easy-to-read fiction and nonfiction books that conform to the Fountas-Pennell system of leveled reading, which provides high-interest reading materials for children of a broad variety of reading abilities. **Inspiration:** The challenge of meeting the comprehension goals and guides regarding the reading skills at each book’s level. The limitations are fun to work with and lead to some very creative writing. **What’s next?** Picture books for the youngest Catholic readers.

John P. Curtin, ’63
**Book:** Pucker Street, The First 100 Years; The New Pucker Street, Since 1953. **Précis:** A documentation of many of the changes that have taken place in the Village of Marcellus, N.Y., addressing some of the issues that face American villages in modern times. **Inspiration:** A love for Marcellus, where he and his wife raised their children and where both of their families have deep roots, dating back more than 150 years. **What’s next?** A third book highlighting the family histories of some of the early pioneers of Marcellus.

Robert Rafferty, ’52
**Book:** Cruising Is Amusing. **Précis:** A cartoon book that shows the funny side of cruise ship life from the passenger’s point of view. **Inspiration:** Combining his work as a gag writer for magazine cartoonists with his enthusiasm for cruising to create a book that could be sold directly by cruise lines in their on-ship gift shops. **What’s next?** Gathering material for a couple of other nonfiction books.

Dianne J. Anderson, ’89
**Book:** The Peachtree (under the name J. Wells-Dickerson). **Précis:** A cautionary tale of domestic violence through the eyes of a woman who endured more than 25 years of abuse. **Inspiration:** Her desire to prevent other young women from experiencing what she did. **What’s next?** Encouraging high school and college social work teachers to include her book in their curriculums.
Mike Zollitsch, ’99
Book: Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway, Volumes 1, 2 & 3. Précis: A pictorial history covering scenery and operations, from steam days to its most current inception, along the former Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railway in New York and Pennsylvania. Inspiration: A desire to compile an in-depth history of the railway using the vast amount of research and photographic information available. What’s next? The fourth in the series.

Pam Spremulli, ’93
Book: Letter Birds (winner of the Mom’s Choice 2010 Gold Distinguished Illustration Award). Précis: A fun ABC book about birds using simple and colorful graphic illustrations. Each letter has a corresponding bird (even X and U!). Inspiration: Her children (ages 4 and 2 at the time) and her love of nature. She initially drew the images because she loves birds and finds them fascinating. What’s next? A uniquely illustrated book called Woof! that offers insight into the different personalities of various breeds of dogs.

Richard Herdlein, M.A.’70, M.S.’76, Ph.D.
Book: A History of Innovation at the University of Pittsburgh: The role of the student personnel dean, 1919-1980. Précis: An examination of the development of student affairs in higher education specifically focusing on historical events at the University of Pittsburgh and highlighting the evolution and accomplishments of three remarkable women. Inspiration: His 31-year career as a student affairs administrator prompted his research interest in the evolution of student personnel deans. He also teaches a course on the history of student affairs, which dovetails with his research agenda. What’s next? Writing a book on his personal experiences of serving in the academy.

Frank D. McCann, ’60
Book: Soldiers of the Pátria: A History of the Brazilian Army, 1889-1937. Précis: A history of the Brazilian army through civil war, rebellions, and conspiracies, moving back and forth from ministerial offices to the firing lines. Inspiration: As a specialist in Brazilian history, he wrote a book about Brazilian-American relations during World War II, which got him involved in studying the Brazilian army. What’s next? Finishing three projects: a book on relations between Brazil and America from the 18th century to the present, another on the “home-front” in Brazil during World War II, and a biography of a leading political-military figure.

Peter C. Scumaci, M.S.Ed.’94
Book: Western New York and the Gilded Age. Précis: A discussion of a variety of topics relating to Western New York during the late 1800s and early 1900s, including politics, business, natural wonders, and communities. Inspiration: The chance to work with both his wife and a local author on a project that gave him an opportunity to explore the WNY area and its history. What’s next? A project that may involve the experience of war and its effect on the people of Western New York.

Tinashe Munyaradzi, ’00
Book: Not for the Fainthearted: The Ultimate Challenge for Men. Précis: A motivational book that discusses men’s roles and responsibility in their relationships, marriages, families, and communities. Inspiration: His wife, who observed how he changed during the course of their relationship and the positive impact it had on them, and his desire to share this experience to help other couples. What’s next? Making his book into an audio book and translating it into other languages.

Patrick H. Dockery, ’66
Gary Ferris, '90
Book: Presidential Places: A Guide to the Historic Sites of U.S. Presidents. Précis: A directory to the historical sites associated with U.S. presidents — their homes, schools, places where they worked, got married, worshipped, were inaugurated, died, and are buried. Inspiration: A conversation with a park ranger at the John F. Kennedy birthplace, who noted that while many families try to visit as many presidential sites as they can, there was no comprehensive guide to the more than 350 sites. What’s next? Performing one-man plays that he wrote called Until It’s Over Over There. The shows are re-creations of a weekly World War II Armed Forces Radio show (visit www.warstory.us/WSUS/index.html).

Jason A. Borton, '95, M.D.
Book: Memoirs of a Volunteer Firefighter. Précis: A chronicle of the many challenges and rewards of being a volunteer firefighter with the Sweeney Hose Company No. 7 in North Tonawanda. Life lessons are learned in the bingo hall, on the training grounds, and in smoky burning buildings. Inspiration: His desire to share the unique experiences he had as a volunteer firefighter, including the things they do that the public doesn’t always know about. What’s next? Putting this book into an e-book format and deciding whether to write a follow-up.

Ken Beirne, ’66
Book: The Best Things Always Disappear: A Family History. Précis: A record of his family, his ancestors’ immigration to the United States, and how each generation influenced the next, based on hundreds of interviews. Inspiration: His interest in learning about his father, who was born in 1899 and whom he never met. What’s next? A thriller novel based upon historical events.

Michael Storey, ’65
Book: Representing the Troubles in Irish Short Fiction. Précis: An academic study of Irish short stories that treat the theme of the “Troubles,” a euphemism for Ireland’s violent struggle to win independence from England in the early 20th century and the conflict between nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland in the last three decades of the 20th century. Inspiration: His deep interest in the Irish “Troubles” and in the way that 20th century Irish writers have depicted them in their stories. What’s next? Researching the similarities between Ireland and Taiwan, particularly the ways in which both peoples have pursued a sense of their cultural identity through language and literature.

Franklin E. Dailey Jr., ’39
Book: Joining the War at Sea 1939-1945. Précis: An account of his experience as a destroyer gunnery officer in antisubmarine warfare, convoys, landings at Casablanca, Sicily, Salerno, Anzio and Southern France. (He has also shared his experiences on the History Channel in three episodes of Patton 360.) Inspiration: After a life in the Navy and a second life in industry, he was motivated to share his experiences. What’s next? Continuation of his website (www.daileyint.com/), launched in 1996, which provides opportunities for reader feedback and discussion.

Naomi Douglas Davis, ’92
Book: The Write1.com. Précis: A woman goes on the Internet to meet her Mr. Right. Readers are invited to interact with the characters, the novelist, and other readers in various ways through this e-mail interactive novel (visit www.omibks.com/). Inspiration: An NU English professor who ignited her passion for writing, and the desire to share the stories of the people she’s met. What’s next? Perhaps pursuing a doctorate degree.
Ed Brennan, ’78: Providing Hope for Haiti

Next summer, 200 Haitian children will have an opportunity they never would have dreamed possible after the January earthquake that devastated their country — the opportunity to go to school. This, due to the remarkable efforts of Edward J. Brennan, ’78.

Brennan, CEO and chairman of DFS Group, the world’s leading luxury retailer to the international traveler, is a steering committee member and chairman of Hand in Hand for Haiti, a travel retail industry response to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti. The organization is working to build a world-class educational facility in Saint-Marc, a coastal town in western Haiti, in an effort to assist in the growth and long-term recovery of that country. Brennan notes that while Haiti has received much support in the areas of medicine and food, “there hasn’t been enough focus on the schools.” It is his belief, and the belief of the founders of Hand in Hand for Haiti, that providing high-quality education in a world-class school is key to Haiti’s future. In addition, the school is expected to cultivate a strong sense of civic pride among its graduates, encouraging them to assist in their country’s recovery.

“The best and brightest flee Haiti now to start their careers,” Brennan explains. “We want to instill a respect for Haiti and a responsibility that they have to work toward the betterment of their home country to pull Haiti up from the terrible challenges.”

Brennan became involved in the effort at the invitation of Olivier Bottrie, president of The Estée Lauder Companies Travel Retail Worldwide, whose wife is Haitian. Brennan immediately offered to coordinate the initiative.

“For me, this was an opportunity to show greater leadership within the industry,” Brennan says.

Brennan had a personal motivation to become involved in the project as well: a bout with cancer 10 years ago that helped him “frame his priorities and balance his life,” and instilled in him a greater desire to reach out and assist others. Brennan and his wife, Debbie, a member of the NU Class of 1979, had been generous financial supporters of a variety of charities in the past and were now looking for opportunities to take a more active role in a particular effort, hoping to take a project from the ground up. The school project was ideal.

Brennan joined Bottrie and Martin Moodie, founder and publisher of The Moodie Report, on a trip to Haiti in March. It was his first time in that country, and he was overcome by the devastation.

“There were people buried under the rubble that used to be their homes or places of work,” he says. “The survivors walk the streets and you can see sadness in their eyes because they know that their families and co-workers are still in the rubble.”

Brennan has made five trips to Haiti in all, conducting site visits and meeting with prominent Haitians to establish a local board that will guide the project. “You really need local insight if you’re going to be successful in another country,” Brennan says.

With the help of the board, which includes a lawyer, a publisher, and a young entrepreneur, the project quickly gained the support of influential individuals in Haiti. “We’ve had an open door to the leadership in Haiti and that’s attributable to these folks and the work they’ve done for us,” Brennan says, noting that the partners have been able to meet with the Haitian minister of education, and the U.S. and French ambassadors to Haiti, as well as local mayors and civic officials.

A Change in Focus

The project, which was initially envisioned as a school for 150 children in pre-K through fifth grades, expanded in scope after a chance meeting with Sister Mary Prema, superior general of the Missionaries of Charity, the congregation founded by Mother Teresa. Brennan was in an airport, preparing to board a “rickety old plane” that his group of 10 had chartered to take them to several provinces that were being considered as the location for the school. Fifteen nuns were also in the airport, huddled together. “It was a strange sight, considering the airport was closed,” Brennan says. One of the nuns approached him to ask where he was going. When he told her Les Cayes, a town in southwest Haiti, she said that the nuns had been praying for someone to take them there. “You’re the answer to my prayers,” she told him.

During the 45-minute flight, Brennan chatted with Sister Mary about their respective relief efforts — hers with an orphanage that had doubled its occupancy after the earthquake, and his with a school for 150 children. “Ed,” she implored him, “please, please do something more.”

With her encouragement, Brennan and his partners developed a plan for a long-term sustainable facility that will offer accessible education to 720 students from the nursery to the baccalaureate level. The curriculum will be taught in English, French, and Creole, and the school year will be extended through the summer to offer continuous learning opportunities. To ensure the school offers an academically superior program, Hand in Hand for Haiti has partnered with the French Lycée in New York City to develop the curriculum and to train the teachers and school director.

“We knew we needed to go to the best in class,” Brennan says.

The state-of-the-art educational facility will include an on-site medical clinic to provide basic health care to those in need; several sports facilities to complement the academic setting; and a school cafeteria and kitchen to prepare two well-balanced meals each day, planned in consultation with trained nutritionists.

“It’s very important to meet the nutritional needs of these students,” Brennan says. “Most likely it will be the only two meals these kids get.”

After an exhaustive search for the site of the school, the partners selected Saint-Marc, an area that took on 32,000 refugees after the earthquake. The men felt that the town’s leadership had the clearest vision for rebuilding and that the area offered great potential from a tourism and agriculture view. In addition, its location, strategically situated between two major fault lines, would provide protection from hurricane winds.

Brennan calls the selection process one of the most challenging aspects of the school project, but notes that the partners received an unusual confirmation of their choice shortly after making it. The men had just concluded a meeting with local officials when they encountered a group of three young girls wearing school uniforms. The girls smiled at the men and said, in English, “Good morning, how are you?” These were the only words in English that they knew, but they were enough to convince Brennan and his partners that Saint-Marc was the right place for their school, with its focus on the English language. Brennan recalls that when he told Sister Mary about the difficulty of selecting a site for the school, she had reassured him that God would give him a sign that the province he selects would be the right one. Brennan took this as his sign.
Phase One of the school, which is expected to open in the summer of 2011, will consist of eight classes of 25 students each. The clinic, preschool classrooms, cafeteria, housing for the director and teachers, a computer room, library, music facilities, and athletic fields will be completed during this phase. Phase Two will include the construction of the secondary school. Fifty students will be added each year until the cap of 720 is reached.

The facility will be constructed of environmentally friendly materials and optimize the use of renewable energy in addition to traditional energy sources. The land around the school will be planted with indigenous trees, including a symbolic Tree of Hope, and organizers are considering planting a school garden that could provide fruits and vegetables for use in the school’s kitchen.

In addition to providing students with an exceptional education, the landmark school will be a training ground for teachers from surrounding schools. It will also play a key role in a community development program that will ultimately link with areas such as vocational skills training, medical services, investment, and job creation. Brennan notes that the primary purpose of the school is to instill hope in the Haitian people.

“Hope is what they have in their hearts,” he says. “If we can provide it, even if it’s just for a small group of kids, it will be the greatest accomplishment of my life.”

— Lisa McMahon
Dear fellow alumni,

It is with great pride and excitement that I write this first letter as I begin my term as Niagara University Alumni Association president. I want to express a great deal of gratitude to Dr. Greg Hudecki, ’68. Greg took the lead in 2007 when we reformed the NUAA. His leadership and outlook gave the Alumni Association the direction it needed to thrive and to grow. Please join me in acknowledging Greg for everything we have accomplished in the past three years.

Alumni Weekend 2010 is a very recent memory. I attended with my wife, Cathy, and we enjoyed events throughout the three days, filled with old and new friends, golf, class gatherings, the dinner-dance, great October weather, a “short” visit to Devil’s Hole, and quality time with my son, Sean, currently a freshman at Niagara. The mood I experienced during the weekend was quite positive. I echo the statements I heard and offer my thanks and congratulations to Art Cardella, Jaclyn Rossi, and Amy Morgan, our alumni relations staff, for making this a very memorable weekend for everyone.

I look forward with enthusiasm to my tenure as president and ask for your assistance and support. In the past three years, the Alumni Association board has grown with new members, new chapters, and expanded chapter events. We have a new executive committee to assist with our growth. I ask that you review the list of alumni events, chapter leader and board member names, and reach out to offer your assistance. Please take time to update your e-mail address and get involved. We need your help NOW!

Our new green initiative invites you to explore the Eagle’s Nest to stay in contact with Niagara. With a simple weekly visit to www.niagaraalumni.com to visit the Eagle’s Nest, you will be certain to have all the latest information regarding alumni events near you. Please reach out to those alumni who coordinate these events. We are a strong and proud group of Purple Eagles!

I will conclude with one personal note. The position of president of the Niagara University Alumni Association is very familiar to my family. My father, James Byrne, served as Alumni Association president from 1978 through 1982. His strong feelings and dedication to Niagara carried throughout our entire family. I am honored and humbled to fill this role and will strive to continue the great Niagara tradition which he started in the 1940s.

Thank you,

Martin F. Byrne Sr.
President, Niagara University Alumni Association
Mark Your Calendar

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

Don’t receive our e-mails? Send your updated information to alumni@niagara.edu!

January
28 Chicago — NU vs. Canisius men’s basketball game watch
30 Albany — NU vs. Siena basketball game and pregame party

February
4 Buffalo-Niagara — N-Zone alumni event: Pregame dinner followed by your choice of basketball or hockey games
11 Central Maryland — NU vs. Loyola basketball game and pregame party
13 Delaware Valley — NU vs. Rider basketball game and pregame party
25 Rochester — NU vs. RIT hockey game and pregame party

March
3-7 MAAC Basketball Tournament in Bridgeport, Conn.
11 Tri-state — St. Patrick’s Day Party
19 Charlotte — St. Patrick’s Day Parade event
TBD Boston

Spring
TBD Dallas

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

Attention Florida alumni:
The alumni relations staff and the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., university president, will not be traveling through Florida this winter. We are taking a year off, but we will be back in the winter of 2012!

classnotes

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

1950s Donald E. Kneeland, ’51 (CA&S), Macedon, N.Y., has authored The Way It Was According to a Magnificent Trio, one of a series of books on area history in which the author assumes the persona of early pioneers and prominent citizens for the sake of personalizing local history.

Charles B. Starrs, ’51 (CA&S), Lake Orion, Mich., has returned to Michigan after 27 years of living and working in Florida. He retired as a fundraising and public relations consultant and executive director with the archdioceses of Detroit and Miami.

1960s Dr. Anthony N. Dardano, ’63 (CA&S), Boca Raton, Fla., has been appointed associate dean for academic affairs and voluntary professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton. He will continue as chief medical officer of the 493-bed Delray Medical Center as well.

Peter L. Manion, ’63 (CA&S), Naples, Fla., along with his wife, Susan, were honored as winners of the 54th annual Naples Daily News Outstanding Citizen Award, primarily for their work in rescuing and relocating hurricane-ravaged Fun Time Nursery and expanding it as Fun Times Early Childhood Academy.

Patrick A. Monti, ’68 (CBA), Naples, Fla., is starting his 41st year of coaching boys basketball. He joined the staff of Naples High School in 2009-2010 and helped the Golden Eagles to their first district championship in basketball since 1992.

Patrick L. Pittinaro, ’69 (CBA), Macedon, N.Y., retired after 36 years of service with New York state, which included 20 years as a Medicaid fraud and abuse auditor/supervisor and 16 years as regional director for training and staff development.

1970s Mark J. Kelly, ’70 (TTT), Radcliff, Ky., accepted a position with Arrow Point Corp. as the U.S. Army Human Resources Command PAC manager, at Fort Knox, Ky.

Roger C. Weiss, ’72 (CA&S), North Boston, N.Y., retired from Cameron Compression (formerly Joy Mfg. Co.) after 40 years of service.

Nina (Mimoni) Daratsos, ’74 (CN), Niskayuna, N.Y., received a master of laws degree in elderlaw and estate planning from Western New England College School of Law.

NU Alum Michael Chatfield Wins National Advertising Award

Michael Chatfield, ’05, MBA’06, was named the sole recipient of the prestigious “Pick of the Litter” award at the 2010 Jay Chiat Strategy Festival, which was held in Miami on Oct. 11. Presented by Miami Ad School and sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies (a.k.a. the 4 A’s), this award recognizes account planners with less than three years of strategy experience.

Chatfield, an account planner at the Rochester-based advertising agency Partners + Napier, was selected based on a case study he submitted for www.kodakmoments.com, a digital platform that creates a unique visual way for users to explore the emotional context of sharing. This idea was based on the insight that people everywhere crave affirmation and a sense of belonging, and that sharing pictures helps to achieve this.

As winner of “Pick of the Litter,” Chatfield, who joined Partners + Napier in May 2007, was presented with a check for $2,500 by Pippa Seichrist, president of the Miami Ad School and an award sponsor.

Tell Us Your Love Story!

Many NU students have met, fallen in love, and married, thanks to their time on Monteagle Ridge. Are you one of them? If so, please send your love story and photos to Lisa McMahon, editor, at lmcmahon@niagara.edu. We’ll be collecting these stories for a future Eagle feature. Deadline for submission is Jan. 2, 2011.
James R. Delaura, ’74 (CBA), Melbourne, Fla., joined Heron Financial Partners as an investment adviser representative with NEXT Financial Group, Inc.

Maryliz (Tompkins) Valli, ’74 (CBA), Hurst, Texas, started Mary Shah Art Model, a company which provides academic art model services to colleges, universities and art institutes in both the New York and Texas areas.

Roy Harris, ’75 (CN), Ellicott City, Md., has accepted a full-time faculty position with Walden University Graduate School of Nursing.

Dean A. Messing, ’75 (CBA), Hamburg, N.Y., retired as deputy commissioner-disaster prep/county disaster coordinator and is now teaching courses in emergency management at Erie Community College and working part time doing homeland security accounting.

Tony DiMichele, ’76 (CA&S), Camillus, N.Y., was promoted to customer sales and service specialist in AT&T’s Business Solutions Customer Care Billing Department in Syracuse, N.Y.

Bishop Samuel Porter Jr., ’76 (CA&S), Niagara Falls, N.Y., is the bishop under El Shaddai Ministries at the God Only Hope Christian Outreach Ministries in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Lance A. Wendt, ’77 (CA&S), Niagara Falls, N.Y., was promoted to captain in the eighth Judicial District Erie Command in Buffalo, N.Y.

Dr. Dennis Goodman, ’79 (CA&S), Chicago, has been named vice president of corporate development for Morrison Management Services, the health care division of Compass Group, PLC.

Sister Janet Keim, ’79 (CN), Chicago, recently moved to Chicago to participate in a nine-month Vincentian Integration Experience with other Daughters of Charity from the United States, Ireland and Australia.

1980s Helen (Rush) Stevenson, ’80 (CE), Sinking Spring, Pa., has been the assistant girls varsity swimming coach at Wilson High School, West Lawn, Pa., for the past 19 seasons. The Wilson girls won the PIAA State Championship in March of 2010.

Ann Liberatore-Cavallo, ’81 (CE), Mansfield, Texas, was recently promoted to the rank of professor of science education and to associate dean for teacher and professional education in the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Herman Platt, ’81 (CE), Cape Coral, Fla., now resides in Cape Coral after retiring from Niagara University. His wife recently retired from teaching at North Tonawanda Catholic.

Laurie (Pero) Napoleone, ’82 (CN), Batavia, N.Y., was honored at the Paolo Busti Cultural Foundation’s first Outstanding Italian-American Women Dinner.


Michael Polite, ’83 (CA&S), Pittsburgh, president and co-managing principal of Ralph A. Falbo, Inc., has been appointed to the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh’s metropolitan board of directors.

John M. Katko, ’84 (CA&S), Camillus, N.Y., has been promoted to the position of narcotics chief and lead Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force attorney within the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of New York.

Maureen (Burke) Schravan, ’84 (TTT), Erie, Pa., has accepted the position of offices services coordinator at the Montessori Regional Charter School in Erie.

Thomas M. Chdyk, ’85 (TTT), Centennial, Colo., was promoted to national sales manager for Neutrik USA, a leading manufacturer of electronic connectors supporting the professional audio, video, and broadcast industries.

1990s Larry Chambers, ’90 (CE), Brookontdale, N.Y., has joined Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as the director of financial aid.

Michael Leggett, ’90 (CA&S), Wilson, N.Y., was recently promoted to the rank of criminal investigator at the Niagara County Sheriff’s Office.

John G. Tully, ’90 (CBA), Brewster, N.Y., has joined Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress as vice president of research, planning, and advocacy.

Michael S. Harrington, ’91 (CA&S), was among the recipients of the 2010 inaugural Life Sciences Award in the category of Best Consultant (Later Stage) by the Philadelphia Business Journal. He was recognized for his efforts in improving human health through his work with life sciences startup companies.

Pam (Swanson) Spremulli, ’93 (CBA), Chagrin Falls, Ohio, received The Mom’s Choice Gold Award for Distinguished Illustration for her children’s book, *Letter Birds,* a conceptual ABC picture book of simple and colorful illustrations of birds. The Mom’s Choice Awards® recognizes authors, inventors, companies, parents, and others for their efforts in creating quality family-friendly media, products, and services. (For more on Spremulli’s book, see page 14.)

We’d like to get to know you better! In each issue of the Eagle, we’ll spend a minute (or so) with an alum from a random area of the country and ask a few questions to find out more about him or her. Will you be next?
Outstanding Alumni

One of the highlights of Alumni Weekend is the opportunity to recognize several of our outstanding graduates for their exceptional professional success and service to the community. This year’s honorees are:

Deans Awards
College of Arts and Sciences

Maureen Mooney Reid, ‘70
Principal and Owner, Maureen M. Reid, LLC

Maureen Mooney Reid, principal and owner of Maureen M. Reid, LLC, brings more than 30 years of experience in delivering workable solutions for the people issues challenging businesses.

Prior to launching her company in 2007, Reid served as director of human resources for the law firms of Clifford Chance US, LLP, and Sullivan & Cromwell. She has held positions in training, compensation administration, and employee relations at Mobil Oil Corp. and at International Playtex. She also served as dean of students at Manhattanville College.

Reid has published articles and spoken at national conferences and professional meetings on a variety of HR topics. She is active in both professional organizations and her community, including the programming board of the National Association of Women Lawyers and its annual meeting planning committee, and the New York City Bar Association’s Committee on Women in the Profession and its Subcommittee on Women Partners. She also serves on the board of directors of the Education Foundation in her hometown of Rockville Centre, N.Y.

Samuel C. Hannah, ‘60
Founder, Ear, Nose and Throat Associates of Manatee

Dr. Samuel C. Hannah graduated summa cum laude from Niagara University in 1960, continued his studies at the University at Buffalo’s School of Dental Medicine, and then proceeded to the Albany Medical College of Union University. By 1972, Hannah had completed his training in otolaryngology and head and neck surgery, and earned additional certification in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Hannah moved his family to Bradenton, Fla., establishing the Ear, Nose and Throat Associates of Manatee practice, which later became known as the Manatee Hearing & Speech Center. He concurrently served as an otolaryngologist at Manatee Hospital and Blake Medical Center, and was an active member of the Manatee County Medical Society.

An active humanitarian, Hannah was a founder of the Saint Mary Star of the Sea Church in Longboat Key, Fla., served on the grants committee of the Manatee Community Foundation, and sponsored the Manatee County Girls Club (aka Just For Girls) for more than 38 years. He was also a faithful supporter of Niagara University until his passing on July 10, 2010.

2000s Scott Poiley, ’00 (CA&S), Orlando, Fla., is the producer and writer for a supernatural thriller film, “Cassadaga,” starring Kelen Coleman, Kevin Alejandro, and Louise Fletcher. The film is set in Cassadaga, Fla., known as the psychic capital of America.

Melissa (Dennis) Basford, ’01 (CE), Westerville, Ohio, is the academic adviser and scholarship program manager at Ohio State University.

Valerie (Camann) Haseley, ’01 (CBA), Niagara Falls, N.Y., accepted a position with Border Community Service of Niagara University as the Niagara County project coordinator.

Katherine (Adams) Courtney, ’03 (CA&S), Rochester, N.Y., was the recipient of the Rochester Daily Record’s 2010 Up and Coming Attorney Award.

Michael E. Sarkissian, ’04 (CH), Clifton Park, N.Y., was promoted to operations manager at FedEx Express in Albany, N.Y.

Beth Kozlowski, ’05 (CH), Forest Hills, N.Y., accepted the position of assistant director of housekeeping at the Setai Fifth Avenue, New York City’s newest luxury hotel, which opened in November.

Mary Cardegna, ’07 (CA&S), Rochester, N.Y., has accepted the position of vocational counselor at DePaul Community Services in Rochester.

Brianna (Bailey) Patti, ’07 (CA&S), Lewiston, N.Y., has accepted the position of dance instructor at the Rabun-Gap-Nacoochee School, in Rabun Gap, Ga.

Angela R. Argauer, ’08 (CBA), East Aurora, N.Y., is a member of the tax team at Lumsden & McCormick, LLP in Buffalo, N.Y., and has passed all four parts of the Uniform Certified Public Accounting exam.
College of Business Administration

John R. Sanderson, '75
President, Sanderson & Company Investment Consultants, LLC

John Sanderson’s academic and professional endeavors have been distinguished by eminent success. At Niagara, he held both the highest overall class average and the highest accounting average for each of his four years of study. When he graduated summa cum laude, he was honored with the John T. Kennedy Award for accounting excellence.

Professionally, Sanderson rose quickly into positions of leadership with Ernst & Young, LLP, an organization he was associated with for 27 years before establishing Sanderson & Company Investment Consultants, LLC, and Sanderson & Company CPAs, LLC, in 2001. At the age of 33, he was named a firm partner. He has served as area office managing partner, a member of the firm’s board of partners, a director of tax and an area office partner of personal financial consulting.

In the community, Sanderson has been associated with numerous professional organizations and is a dedicated volunteer with a special commitment to nonprofit organizations, including the Buffalo Zoological Society, the Greater Buffalo Partnership, and the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. He currently serves as a trustee of Niagara University.

Amanda N. Moses, '09 (CBA), Williamsville, N.Y., is a staff accountant with Lumsden & McCormick, LLP in Buffalo, N.Y., and has passed all four parts of the Uniform Certified Public exam.


Melissa Dennis, '01, Westerville, Ohio, to Michael Basford, June 5, 2010.
Claire Zimmerman, '01, Webster, N.Y., to Alan Freeling, Rochester, N.Y., July 24, 2010.
Ashley Ryan, '03, Niagara Falls, N.Y., to Anthony Winters, Clarence, N.Y., Aug. 27, 2010.

College of Education

Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., ’85
President, DePaul University

Two years after graduating from Niagara University, Father Dennis Holtschneider heeded a call to serve God in a special way, and he entered the major seminary of the Congregation of the Mission, more commonly known as the Vincentians. When his theological studies were completed, Father Holtschneider was assigned to teach moral theology at St. John’s University, while also serving as director and rector of the Vincentian Community’s college seminary program at Ozone Park in New York City.

Not long after, Father Holtschneider set out in pursuit of a doctorate in administration, planning and social policy, which he received from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education in 1997. Three years later, he was appointed as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Niagara University, where he was responsible for directing the university’s strategic planning efforts and daily campus operations.

On July 1, 2004, Father Holtschneider was chosen to become the 11th president of DePaul University. Since his inauguration, Father Holtschneider has led the successful implementation of DePaul’s previous strategic plan as well as the creation of its current strategy.


Lt. Col. Nancy (Horeth) Bodyk, '92 (CA&S), Broadlands, Va., has been promoted from captain to lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army.

Capt. Brett Sim, '07 (CBA), Lacey, Wash., was promoted to captain on June 1, 2010, while deployed in Baqubah, Iraq. His deployment ended July 31, 2010, and he is currently stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Toni Ann Daley, '00, and Richard Walsh wed May 1, 2010.


militarynews


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marriages


John F. Oliver is president and CEO of VisitErie, the convention and visitors bureau for Erie, Pa. In his eight years there, Oliver has been credited with increasing the economic impact of travel to Erie by a staggering 76 percent. He is also chairman of the Pennsylvania Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, an organization that represents 45 bureaus in Pennsylvania’s 67 counties.

Prior to heading south along Lake Erie, Oliver had served as vice president of visitor development at the Greater Buffalo Convention and Visitors Bureau and, later, as the marketing director of the Niagara Falls Convention and Civic Center.

Since his graduation in 1975, Oliver has repeatedly lent his travel and tourism expertise to Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. A popular adjunct professor at Niagara University in the 1980s, he is credited with spearheading the formation of the college’s alumni association. Each year, Oliver mentors students as part of the college’s mentorship program, and speaks in classes every semester. Oliver was also instrumental in the development of the college’s annual career day program.

Lynn Haefner Sullivan has worked in a variety of community-based medical settings since graduating cum laude from Niagara University in 1965. She started out as an intensive care OB/GYN in the United States Navy Nurse Corps and has subsequently worked in a nursing capacity at places such as St. Joseph’s Hospital in South Bend, Ind.; Planned Parenthood of Buffalo; Health Care Plan Inc. of Buffalo; and the Duke University Medical Center. Since 2004, Sullivan has served as a nurse interviewer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s School of Nursing, where she is involved with a comprehensive prostate cancer research project.

Volunteer work is also something that Sullivan has taken quite seriously for many years. Since the early 1990s, she has been associated with Habitat for Humanity in Raleigh, N.C., and Duke University’s International Friends Program, and mentored for the Goodbye Cinderella Program at the Women’s Center in Chapel Hill. In 1994, Sullivan was an integral participant to a two-week medical mission to Jipijapa, Ecuador. For the last seven years, she has volunteered at UNC Hospice.

Clinical Excellence Award

Mary Anne Milone, ’77

Oncology Nursing Educator, Nursing Unlimited in North Miami Beach and the University of Miami Hospitals and Clinics; Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, Veterans Affairs Medical Center

Mary Anne Milone is an oncology nursing educator at both Nursing Unlimited in North Miami Beach and at the University of Miami Hospitals and Clinics. At the same time, she is an advanced registered nurse practitioner for hematology-oncology at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Miami.

In her “off” time, Milone serves on the board of directors of the Miami-Dade Oncology Nursing Society, is a member of the Oncology Nursing Society’s national chapter and presently belongs to at least five other professional and honorary nursing organizations.

Her curriculum vitae contains two-plus pages of presentations that she’s delivered outside of her everyday hospital role — in just the last decade.

The 1977 Niagara University graduate earned a master’s degree, cum laude, from the University of Miami in 2000, and, this past May, received a doctorate of philosophy in nursing from the University of Miami’s School of Nursing and Health Studies.

Leadership Award

Karen A. Ballard, ’66

Adjunct Associate Professor, PACE University
President of the New York State Nurses Association

Karen A. Ballard, as president of the New York State Nurses Association, has testified before the Departments of Health and Insurance on the importance of improving public health in the move toward health care reform. Additionally, Ballard is currently a consultant for the Nurses Workgroup for Health Care Without Harm, an international coalition of 433 organizations in 52 countries working to transform the health care sector.

Ballard is also an adjunct associate professor at PACE University, where she has taught courses on psychiatric-mental health nursing, health care reform, and nursing leadership since 2005.

For the preceding 20 years, Ballard held various positions within the New York State Nurses Association, including some that required her to interpret nursing practice issues and serve as a lobbyist. Much of her knowledge was procured by earning an M.A. from New York University’s College of Nursing and later working as a clinical nurse specialist with chronically and terminally ill children in major New York City medical centers.

An award-winning author and accomplished researcher, Ballard is a regular contributor to several notable nursing publications.

births/adoptions

To Mr. and Mrs. William Choinski (Valerie Johnson, ’90), Frederick, Md., a son, Connor William, July 31, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Touma, ’90 (Jocelyn Supon, ’02), Niagara Falls, N.Y., a son, Michael Albert, April 2, 2010.

To Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Cook, ’92 (Kathleen Gedeon, ’92), Fairport, N.Y., a daughter, Molly Kate, May 30, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. James Greig (Krista-Anne Cipolla, ’93), Niagara Falls, N.Y., a son, Angelo Joseph, April 17, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Ken Ehrsam (Lori Loughrey, ’97), Williamsburg, Va., a son, James Edward, May 7, 2010.


To Mr. and Mrs. William Conboy III, ’98, Albany, N.Y., a daughter, Juliana Jean, July 23, 2010.

To Mr. and Mrs. Chris Birmingham (Shannon Allport, ’99), Syracuse, N.Y., a daughter, Ruth Ann Marie, June 8, 2010.

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To Mr. and Mrs. Chris Birmingham (Shannon Allport, ’99), Syracuse, N.Y., a daughter, Ruth Ann Marie, June 8, 2010.
Dunleavy Award Presented to Kathleen P. Monti, ’70

Kathleen P. Monti, ’70, was recognized with the prestigious Dunleavy Award during the Alumni Memorial Mass at Niagara University’s Alumni Weekend Oct. 10. A member of NU’s board of trustees, she was honored for her exceptional professional success, outstanding charitable service, and consistent loyalty to her alma mater.

Monti has held leadership positions in the health care sector and in banking, retiring in May 2005 from her position as executive vice president/chief administrative officer for First Niagara Financial Group and First Niagara Bank. She began her tenure with that organization in 1993, serving as part of the management team that grew what was then a small, locally based, mutual savings bank into a publicly traded financial services company providing a full range of services throughout New York state. Prior to joining First Niagara, Monti was with HSBC for nine years, where she attained the position of administrative vice president and human resources manager for the Western New York and national regions.

An active community volunteer, Monti enjoys mentoring and coaching others. In addition to her role on the NU board, she donates time to the Volunteer in Tax Assistance program, a joint project of the IRS and AARP. She has served on the boards of numerous community organizations, including Artpark and Company, the WNY National Conference for Community and Justice, and the United Way.

She has been honored by the YWCA of Western New York twice as a “woman making a difference in our community,” and was named to Buffalo Business First’s Who’s Who Among Executive Women. In 2005, Niagara University was pleased to recognize her accomplishments with a Deans Award from the College of Education.

Kathleen P. Monti, ’70, received the prestigious Dunleavy Award at the Alumni Memorial Mass on Oct. 10 in Alumni Chapel. She is pictured here with the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University’s president.
To Mr. and Mrs. Jason Masker (Jacquelyn Vescio, ’04), Tampa, Fla., a daughter, Talia Juliet, Aug. 20, 2010.
To Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brooks, ’06, Derby, N.Y., a daughter, Savannah Grace, Sept. 1, 2010.
To Mr. and Mrs. Michael Mortimer (Amy Mortimer, ’06), Quantico, Va., a son, Preston William, June 23, 2010.
To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Myrick (Jennifer O’Sullivan, ’08), Colorado Springs, Colo., a son, Daniel Joseph, May 1, 2010.

Fond Memories

This group of students from 1980 looks more than ready to head home for Christmas break. Recognize anyone? E-mail Lisa McMahon, editor, at lmcmahon@niagara.edu and tell us more about this photo and the people in it.

To Mr. and Mrs. Jason Masker (Jacquelyn Vescio, ’04), Tampa, Fla., a daughter, Talia Juliet, Aug. 20, 2010.
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To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Myrick (Jennifer O’Sullivan, ’08), Colorado Springs, Colo., a son, Daniel Joseph, May 1, 2010.

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

Sister Olive Marie (Dorothy) Behringer, O.S.F., ’45, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., April 6, 2010. Sister Olive Marie served as the second dean of NU’s College of Nursing.

With Sympathy
To Joseph Temperato, ’76, Avon, N.Y., on the death of his father, Angelo Temperato, July 19, 2010.
Niagara Honors Col. George F. (Ret.), ’54, and Mary Ann Crowe, ’55, with 2010 Alumni Award

George, ’54, and Mary Ann Crowe, ’55, were honored for their commitment to Niagara University at the Alumni Weekend dinner-dance Oct. 9. Here, they are congratulated by the Rev. Joseph L. Levesque, C.M., Niagara University president.

During this year’s Alumni Weekend, Niagara University honored a pair of graduates who have devoted their entire lives to serving others through their professions, their philanthropy, and their faith.

George, ’54, and Mary Ann Crowe, ’55, were the recipients of the 2010 Alumni Award during the annual dinner-dance on Oct. 9. The couple was recognized for their outstanding service and devotion to the university.

Married 53 years, George and Mary Ann met on Monteagle Ridge, when he was a commuter student majoring in economics and enrolled in the university’s ROTC program, and she was a Sigma Alpha Sigma Honor Society member and clerical editor of the Index. Upon graduating from Niagara, George was commissioned by the United States Army and served in Korea for more than three years before returning home to wed Mary Ann on Aug. 31, 1957.

George then began a career as a systems analyst and programmer for Remington Rand, later gaining employment at Moore Business Forms, where he rose to the position of director of analytical and legal services in the company’s research division. At the same time, he remained active in the U.S. Army National Guard and Reserve, and graduated from the Command and General Staff College and The U.S. Army War College in 1979. He retired as a full colonel in 1985 with more than 28 years of service.

Meanwhile, Mary Ann followed up her nursing studies at Niagara with additional training at Buffalo State Hospital. She then began working at Kenmore Mercy Hospital and, later, as a visiting nurse at the Erie County Health Department. Mary Ann eventually accepted a position in the intensive care unit at DeGraff Memorial Hospital, which is where she would spend the next 38 years, serving in various departments from the I.C.U. to the emergency room to, later, becoming head of the gastrointestinal unit.

Together, the couple has raised five children — Kate, Daniel, Terry, Peg and Molly — the latter three of whom are Niagara University graduates. They have been proud supporters of Niagara: George has served on the advisory board for the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management and participated in the college’s mentor program, and both he and Mary Ann have been stewards for their classes in matters of fundraising. They also established an endowed scholarship in the name of their son, Terry, who was killed defending our country in 2005. The scholarship provides annual assistance to a ROTC student who has consistently demonstrated the values of the Army ROTC.
A Life-Changing Experience: My 1997 Summer Study-Abroad Trip to Engelberg, Switzerland

By Donald Dalton, '98

In 1994, I began my Niagara University experience. I had chosen Niagara for three reasons: to play NCAA Division I baseball, to begin my career in the financial services industry via the co-op program, and to see the world via the study-abroad program. Growing up as a child in Buffalo, N.Y., one of my older brothers would always tell me that when I got to college one day to be sure to take advantage of the study-abroad programs. When the time came, that's just what I did.

In the summer of 1997, just before senior year, I set off to Niagara University's partner school, Schiller International University, for a seven-week study-abroad experience. This school is located in the Swiss village of Engelberg, high up in the Swiss Alps. The town's marketing slogan is, "Engelberg Titlis — It's Heaven." Mount Titlis is the highest peak in Switzerland at 10,623 feet. The views in Engelberg at 10,000 feet are absolutely breathtaking, unlike any other that I have experienced.

While attending Schiller, I lived in the dorms of the Hotel Bellevue and met many wonderful people from all over the world, some from as far away as London, India, Japan, and Sri Lanka. Because we were in such close quarters, I learned many of their cultures and vice versa.

The study-abroad program combined classroom studies with travel. At school, we learned a lot about the travel and tourism business in areas of Europe, and studied French, international marketing, Swiss hotel management, and oenology — the art of wine tasting, one of my favorite experiences. Each student paid $50 in Swiss francs to our professor (who was also the dean of the school), which he used to buy wine from the many different regions of Europe. I was so fortunate to have been able to taste the different wines, which were all amazing. Never again have I had such a unique experience.

During the weekends, a group of us would take excursions to different countries. We went to cities within Switzerland, as well as France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Amsterdam, and Ireland. Each country we visited had its own unique culture due to its physical location and the natural resources that can be found there. For example, in Engelberg, the Swiss monks are known for making very fine cheeses, as there is an abundance of cows on the mountains. (In fact, this past summer, my wife and I had one of the best cheeseburgers of all time at the Yucatan, which is the hotel bar/restaurant below the Hotel Bellevue.) Another example is the Italian Riviera, which is known for its pesto, unarguably the best pesto in the world. The region has an abundance of fresh basil, which grows along the many hills of the region.

We also swam in the Mediterranean Sea in Rome, Italy; Nice, France; and Barcelona, Spain. That summer, the water in the Mediterranean was as warm as bath water!

As a result of this study-abroad experience, my appreciation for food, wine and culture is forever changed. Imagine sitting outside a café, sipping an espresso, while overlooking the Roman Colosseum or St. Peter's Cathedral. The Vatican Museum can be a mind-blowing experience. There are so many works of art that, in fact, if you looked at each piece for one minute it would take you five years to see them all! I have been there three times now and it will never get old. This, by the way, leads to the Sistine Chapel, another experience that will leave you speechless.

I always tell people this experience was a game changer. The reason I say it changed my life is because, without an opportunity like Niagara's study-abroad program, it is highly unlikely I would have been able to travel to seven European countries within seven weeks. Because of study abroad, I was able to experience many different cultures, people, languages, food, and wine within a short period of time, an experience that is priceless. Before this trip, I had never been to Europe, but since then, I have been to Italy four times, Engelberg once again, and London, and I want to continue traveling throughout Europe because it is such a magical place.

It has so much history, culture and beauty that it is something that everyone should do at least once.

When I left Switzerland as a student, I vowed to return one day with my future wife so we could relive this tremendous experience together, and that's just what we did this past summer! My wife, Alex, and I went to Engelberg and visited the Italian Riviera. When we have children, we'll highly recommend that they, too, study abroad, to have the same once-in-a-lifetime experience that I had. Besides, it'll give us a reason to go back!
Come celebrate with fellow classmates this October and make this a reunion to remember! Niagara’s Alumni Weekend 2011 celebrates classes with years ending in 1’s and 6’s. As always, we welcome all alumni to join the party and the fun! Mark your calendar now, and look for a formal invitation this summer!

Rooms have been blocked at the Crowne Plaza in Niagara Falls (300 Third St.). Call 1-800-95Falls to make reservations. A special rate of $139/night has been arranged. Please reference Niagara University when making your reservation. Space in the room block is not guaranteed after Sept. 6.

If you are interested in assisting with the planning of your class reunion, please contact Jaclyn Rossi, assistant director of alumni relations, at jrossi@niagara.edu or 716-286-8770.

We hope to see you this fall!

Visit the Eagle’s Nest at www.niagaraalumni.com for the most up-to-date Alumni Weekend information! New to the Nest? Your first-time login code can be found above your name on the mailing label above.