

**Datestamp:** 07/25/2008

## **2 arrested, linked to string of burglaries**

### **Unrelated arrest made in attempted Ithaca burglary**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Tompkins County Sheriff?s Office arrested a man and woman Thursday in connection with a string of more than a dozen burglaries in Tompkins, Cortland and Cayuga counties.

Daniel Samson, 24, and Julianna Salerno, 29, both of Groton, were caught while burglarizing a ticket booth at Buttermilk Falls State Park in Ithaca early Thursday morning, according to the Sheriff?s Office.

The two were initially charged with third-degree burglary, a Class D felony, but Captain Derek Osborne said the Sheriff?s Office has evidence to charge the pair in connection with a number of recent burglaries of small amounts of cash at the following Tompkins County businesses: The Jim Johnston Golf Range, The Plantsmen Nursery, Todd?s Beach House, The Groton Rod & Gun Club, Linda?s Diner, Ringwood Raceway, The Ice Cream Caboose and Baker?s Acres.

The pair were also linked to Cortland County burglaries at the Greek Peak Ski Resort and Hope Lake, and Cayuga County burglaries at Salmon Creek Sports, Grisamore Farms, Badman?s Bushel Baskets Produce, Ron?s Corner Store, Triangle Restaurant and Longpoint State Park.

Samson was first identified as a suspect after he was caught on the surveillance camera footage of one of the burgled businesses, the Sheriff?s Office said.

Samson and Salerno were arraigned Thursday at the Groton Town Court and sent to the Tompkins County Jail in lieu of \$25,000 cash bail. They?re due back in court July 29.

The Sheriff?s Office said more charges may follow.

Kathy Vidovich, nursery manager of the Plantsmen, said the business was robbed twice: first last Wednesday when approximately \$400 in cash and a stack of CDs were taken and again on Sunday when about \$5 in rolled change was stolen. The office was vandalized during the last burglary attempt, she said.

?They ransacked the office looking for the cash,? she said. ?It?s never happened to the Plantsmen before.?

Another burglary arrest

Another man was arrested in what the Sheriff?s Office said was a nonrelated burglary attempt at the Glenwood Pines restaurant in Ithaca in the morning of July 21.

Allen Little, 40, of Dryden was arrested after police responded to an alarm activation at the restaurant, where deputies found Little hiding under a porch.

Little is charged with third-degree burglary, a Class D felony. He was arraigned in Ulysses Town Court and sent to the Tompkins County Jail in lieu of \$5,000 bail. He's due back in court Aug. 11.

Osborne said Little is a suspect in several other investigations.

Agencies from Tompkins, Cortland and Cayuga counties assisted in the investigations, including the New York State Police, Cortland County Sheriff's Office and the Cayuga County Sheriff's Office.

**Datestamp:** 07/23/2008

## **Newfield asked to give up rights challenge**

### **Lambda Legal seeks to protect LGBT students**

*Journal Staff*

NEWFIELD ? One of the nation?s leading legal advocacy groups for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has urged the Newfield Central School District to reconsider its successful jurisdictional challenge of human rights law protection for students on the grounds that it will end a method of addressing discrimination for LGBT students.

The organization, Lambda Legal, said it sent a letter to members of the Newfield Board of Education Tuesday ?outlining the legal flaws in their position and warning of future consequences for students who may face antigay discrimination.?

The letter was prompted by a judge?s decision to deny the state Division of Human Rights the ability to bring a discrimination complaint against the Newfield Central School District. Barring a successful appeal by the division, the ruling is a step toward stripping public school children of protection under state human rights law.

Lambda Legal?s letter called the challenge ?dizzying(ly) illogic? because other judicial decisions have found that the division does have jurisdiction in public schools.

Hayley Gorenberg, Lambda Legal?s deputy legal director, said the school district isn?t just defending itself, but attacking the rights of all children in the state.

?We?re not venturing an opinion on the case,? he said. ?But when you attack the framework of the case, you?re threatening all public school students.?

School board president Linda Korbel said she had not received the letter, and that it wouldn?t necessarily change her mind on the issue.

?It?s not that we said these kids don?t have rights,? she said. ?We just thought in this case they should pursue a different avenue.?

Superintendent William Hurley said he had no comment on the letter because it was not addressed to him.

The dispute specifically concerns a decision by Judge Robert Mulvey of the Sixth Judicial District on June 19, in which he ruled that the division does not have the appropriate jurisdiction over public schools ? in this case the Newfield Central School District ? to bring a case against the district on behalf of a student?s family, who alleged gender discrimination in a school bus incident last year.

The district countersued the division after it brought the discrimination complaint against them, claiming the division did not have appropriate jurisdiction because the district was not an ?educational corporation or

association? and thus not included under human rights law.

Mulvey?s position was a reversal from September 2007, when he held that the division had jurisdiction in Amelia Kearney?s racial discrimination case, in which she alleged the Ithaca City School District had failed to protect her daughter from racial discrimination. Mulvey based his ruling on a previous case in another judicial region that found for the division.

The state?s human rights law prohibits discrimination based on age, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, military status and other specified classes.

Hurley has said the claim did not have merit, and he does not dispute the division?s jurisdiction over claims of employee discrimination, but said it is not the appropriate venue for school disciplinary issues.

Lambda Legal has chimed in on a similar case, when the Ithaca City School District challenged the division?s jurisdiction in Kearney?s case against the district. When the district voted to rescind their appeal of the judge?s decision to allow jurisdiction, board member Seth Peacock said Lambda legal ?allowed many of us to look at this issue differently.?

**Datestamp:** 07/23/2008

## **Highway chief injured on job in Dryden**

*Journal Staff*

DRYDEN ? Dryden Highway Superintendent Jack Bush fell from paving equipment and hit his head Tuesday.

He was taken to the Cortland Regional Medical Center by Deputy Highway Superintendent Randy Riker and treated.

Supervisor Mary Ann Sumner said Bush remained conscious on the trip to the emergency room and that the injury wasn't serious.

?It could have been worse,? she said.

**Datestamp:** 07/23/2008

## **Payano gang leader sentenced for role in 2000 murder**

*Journal Staff*

BINGHAMTON ? Guillermo Payano, former leader of the Ithaca-area drug gang known as the ?Payano Crew? was sentenced in federal court Tuesday to serve two concurrent 25-year sentences after pleading guilty to four charges of racketeering and the murder of Alexander ?Butter? Miller in 2000.

Payano, 31, was also sentenced to two five-year sentences of supervised release, to be served concurrently. He?s the third member of the gang to be sentenced and receive prison time.

Payano admitted in February that he shot Miller in the back of the head with a Taurus 9mm handgun. Miller had won drug proceeds from Payano in a dice game, according to court documents, and Payano killed him and robbed him to pay a drug debt in New York City.

Payano was the leader of the gang, coordinating the acquisition, purchase and transportation of large quantities of drugs from a group he called ?his uncles? and family in the New York City area. He also ensured gang members were well-supplied with drugs to sell, and he ?influenced, controlled and directed the violent activities of the ?Payano Crew? and its members and associates,? according to the indictment.

Drug distributor and reputed gang enforcer Benoni Bryant received 10 years of federal time in connection with the drug-trafficking operation at the end of May, which law-enforcement officials said operated in and from Tompkins County, Cortland, New York City, North Carolina and Pennsylvania from 1994 to 2002.

In early May, Pablo Lopez, a narcotics distributor for the gang, was sentenced to 6 1/3 years in prison, eight years post-release supervision, mandatory substance abuse treatment and testing. According to court documents, Lopez used autopsy photographs of a murder victim to threaten a rival Ithaca drug dealer.

The only member of the gang to not plead guilty and stand trial, Darnell Shepherd, was found guilty in February of racketeering and narcotics conspiracy. He has yet to be sentenced.

**Datestamp:** 07/22/2008

## **Cortland–area teenager found dead in river**

*Journal Staff*

CORTLAND ? Police are investigating the death of a Cortland County teen found Saturday in the Tioughnioga River in Cortland near a popular swimming spot.

Matthew S. Reale, 18, of Cinncinatus, had been missing from home for two days when police received reports of a body submerged in the river. A group of teens who had gone to the river to swim reported the body after fleeing the scene, police said.

Around 7 p.m. officers pulled Reale's body from the river and attempted to resuscitate him. He was then transported to Cortland Regional Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead.

After searching the area officers found a hat, shirt and shoes near the river they presume belonged to Reale.

Police said Reale's death appears to be accidental, but an investigation is ongoing. They are asking anyone with information on him to contact them at 753–3001.

**Datestamp:** 07/22/2008

### **Dryden man arrested for having gun**

ITHACA ? A Dryden man was arrested at The Haunt on Sunday morning and charged with criminal possession of a semi-automatic handgun, police said.

Bernard Crawford, 30, is accused of discarding the handgun as officers from the Ithaca Police Department arrived at the nightclub's parking lot, where he was arrested. Crawford was charged with criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree, a Class-D felony.

Crawford was charged with possession in the third degree because he had previously been convicted of a crime.

Crawford was arraigned and sent to Tompkins County Jail on \$5,000 bail. He's scheduled to be in court on Wednesday.

? Aaron Munzer



**Datestamp:** 07/21/2008

## **IHS senior to lead national tech group**

### **Student elected to treasurer spot, 1 of 5 who will run organization**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? As a rising Ithaca High School senior, Rayleigh Lei never really had constituents to answer to aside from his mom and dad.

That was before this June.

After being elected as treasurer of the Technology Student Association at its annual conference in Orlando, he?s one of five student leaders of a national organization with more than 150,000 student members that encourages students to learn about and appreciate technology.

Lei, who is also a state officer for the organization, was part of a contingent of more than 30 Ithaca High School and DeWitt Middle School students who traveled to Orlando, Fla., in June to compete in 30 different technology competitions. He also placed as a finalist in the conference?s technical writing competition.

Now Lei?s responsible for a lot more than just doing his homework and applying to colleges: as treasurer, he?ll be responsible for keeping records of activity to help the president, promoting the organization to other high school and middle school students, and tracking how they spend money.

?It?s a huge deal,? said his advisor Ian Krywe, a high school technology teacher and advisor for the school?s Technology Student Association club. ?When you tell people about TSA they have no clue about what it does. When you attend a national conference, you know how big of a deal it is.?

Krywe said Lei is just the type of ?super hard-core? student to help lead the organization: he?s taken practically every advanced science course the high school offers ? he taught himself AP chemistry ? he learns intense software programs in weeks, and Krywe said he watched in amazement as Lei devoured two 350-page books over the course of the trip.

?He just destroys (books),? Krywe said. ?He?s always looking for more knowledge and random facts. He?s going to be president of the United States.?

Lei?s already got a head full of ideas for his one-year term: he wants to use technology to improve membership, like making better use of e-mail and video to show prospective students the benefits of being a part of the organization.

He?d also like to get more corporate sponsors involved with the organization and try to recruit prominent alumni to come back and help out the group, he said.

?When I was elected I was somewhat worried that I wouldn?t be able to do all they needed, but after I talked to the other officers I got more confidence,? he said.

Lei said he never would have gotten involved in the first place if his mom hadn't given him an incentive in seventh grade to become a member: a dinner at Applebee's if he joined. It worked.

"I loved it so much after a year I kept on joining," he said.

Lei's love for communication and politics came out when it came time to give a state greeting as a New York's delegate in front of the 4,600 students at the conference. Because the Ithaca delegation was the only district from the state, Lei thought a little education about New York state's unusual laws might be in order.

"I'm from New York, where it is still illegal to shoot a rabbit from a moving trolley car," he told the audience of students.

"Everyone got a pretty good chuckle (from that)," Krywe said.

Dave Buchner, a technology teacher at DeWitt and an advisor for the club, said Lei's appointment is great recognition for Ithaca and the state as well.

"It kind of puts us on the map," he said. "We really don't have a large presence in this particular competition."

The only disappointments out of the conference, Buchner said, were the poor performance of DeWitt's marquee project, the "scaregull" and the lack of participation from other students from New York state.

"There are other states that have enormous participation from hundreds of districts," Buchner said. "Other states look at tech education much differently than New York. Our efforts are concentrating on No Child Left Behind, and tech education is struggling."

**Datestamp:** 07/18/2008

## **Survey: CU ranks high as workplace**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Once again, Cornell has been recognized as a great place to work.

The school landed in the top five schools in six out of 27 categories in the Chronicle of Higher Education's recent survey called "Great Colleges to Work For."

The survey included responses from 15,000 administrators, faculty members and staff at 89 colleges and universities. Cornell was in the category of schools with more than 2,500 employees.

Cornell was ranked highly by its employees for the opportunities it allows for career development, research and scholarship. In addition, the teaching environment and the recognition of scholarly contributions was also lauded by employees who took the survey. Finally, Cornell's compensation and benefits packages were among the top five in the survey.

In the same size category as Cornell, the State University of New York at Buffalo was a top five contender in eight out of 27 categories. Stanford University led the pack with a mention in the top five schools in 24 out of 27 categories of workplace quality.

The survey was administered by ModernThink, a human-resources-consulting firm that has conducted many "Best Places to Work" surveys for various groups, according to the chronicle's editors.

Professors at the school said they broadly agree with the survey's results. Sarosh Kuruvilla, an 18-year veteran professor who teaches in the school of Industrial Labor Relations, said he agrees with the survey's findings for himself, but that employee satisfaction varies between Cornell's schools.

"I want to emphasize that the teaching environment differs heavily," he said. "I wouldn't know if my positive experience reaches across the university. In my school particularly, there's always time and often funding to help you do your own research. That's something ILR has always helped faculty with. And I know not all the colleges have that same level of support."

Elizabeth Hirsh, an assistant professor in the sociology department who does research on organizations, employment and inequality, said in her two years of teaching that Cornell has provided her and others with good resources and a supportive environment.

But she said there's a disconnect between the endowed schools and those partially funded by the state, especially in terms of benefits packages.

"I think one thing is because of the structure of the school, public verses endowed, it leads to fragmented environments," she said. "So one thing would be to integrate these two environments. Employees in different areas get different benefits packages, and people feel sometimes they're slighted when they see the endowed side."

Cornell has received a host of awards and recognitions before.

According to the university's press office, Cornell was named an Exemplary Voluntary Efforts recipient by the U.S. Department of Labor in 2007; a top non-profit employer for women executives by the National Association for Female Executives in 2008; one of the 100 best employers for working mothers by Working Mother Media in 2006 and 2007; the 50 best companies for prospective parents by Conceive Magazine in 2008; the 100 best adoption-friendly workplaces by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption in 2007 and 2008; one of the 50 best employers for workers over 50 by the American Association of Retired Persons in 2005, 2006, and 2007; and Computer World's 100 Best Employers for Information Technology Professionals in 2007 and 2008.

**Datestamp:** 07/18/2008

## **Candidate for Hinchey's seat talks energy**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? George Philips, a Republican contender for the 22nd Congressional District's seat, stopped at Ithaca gas stations yesterday to discuss his plan for fighting gas prices with the media and several Republican supporters, including Mike Sigler, chairman of the Tompkins County Republican Party.

Philips, who's running against incumbent Maurice Hinchey (D-22nd) and two other Republican candidates, Bruce Layman and David Grate, calls his strategy the "George Philips Gasoline Plan," and elaborated on its four main tenets by phone Thursday.

He calls for more production on American soil, including drilling offshore and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, construction of new refineries and an exploration of other sources of gasoline like oil shale and oil sands. Philips said these tactics will lower the cost of oil by forcing the Middle East to increase supplies. He'd also like the country to invest in alternatives like nuclear energy and geothermal systems, but said wind and solar power have not proven to be a completely effective strategy yet.

"Energy is the number one issue," he said. "We've also got to address and invest in alternative energy sources, because 75 percent of our energy is supplied by fossil fuels."

The other parts of his plan involve streamlining distribution by federally mandating different formulations of gasoline to increase efficiency, and he also supports a gas tax holiday to "provide relief for working class families and businesses."

Philips' desire to cut the federal gas tax is strongly opposed by economists and prominent Democrats, who say the cuts will not lower prices on the whole. But Philips' plan relies on a number of different strategies, he said.

"I'll definitely fight for investing in alternative resources," he said. "I think global warming is a reality we have to deal with and confront, but we also have to deal with the immediate crisis."

Philips said he knows Hinchey is popular in the Ithaca area and his district, but the Binghamton-area teacher said he thinks Hinchey proposes unrealistic goals, like a recent proposal in Congress to give the president the authority to cap the price of gas at \$2.49 a gallon.

"I don't think Hinchey's plan to cap it at \$2.49 is viable," he said.

Regardless of his stance as a fiscal conservative, Philips said he's committed to human rights, and as a former Congressional aide, knows how to achieve bi-partisan solutions.

**Datestamp:** 07/17/2008

## **Alliance plans to fete downtown workers**

### **Office Olympics, free food scheduled for July 21–25**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Downtown Ithaca Alliance appreciates you, the downtown office worker.

But it's hard to feel appreciated when you're sitting at a desk all day, being productive.

So to show their appreciation for the money you spend downtown, the businesses you stimulate and the economic growth you may be partially responsible for, the organization is hosting five days of games, free ice cream, food, live music and even a hot dog eating competition from July 21–25 on The Ithaca Commons and DeWitt Park.

More than 600 people have already signed up for the Downtown Ithaca Worker Appreciation Week, from more than 40 downtown–based businesses and offices like the Tompkins Trust Company, Sciarabba Walker & Co and Family and Children's Service of Ithaca.

It's free, and those who sign up get a badge identifying them as an office worker, which serves as a ticket to activities like the Office Olympics, the Giant Ithaca Coffee break and mouse–pad Frisbee.

But you don't have to work in an office to partake; employees of other downtown businesses can sign up, and the events that don't require a sign–up are open to the public.

Vicky Taylor, the Downtown Ithaca Alliance's director of special events, said they're holding the event because the 3,500 office workers and hundreds of restaurant, retail and hospitality employees working downtown have made downtown a better place for everyone.

“Getting more office workers downtown seems to have worked to increase business,” she said.

Miller Mayer, a downtown law firm, is one of the companies that has already signed up for Office Olympics. They're excited to have a possible future hot dog–eating champion in Pete Mehravari, their summer intern.

“It's exciting, it's something different from the monotonous work day,” said Michelle Parker, a legal assistant with the company. “We consider ourselves a very important part of downtown.”

Parker said it's easy to forget about or be unaware of all the employees who work downtown.

“There are quite a few businesses,” she said. “When I was a student here, I didn't realize how many people worked downtown.”

The events will all occur between noon and 1:30 p.m.

In addition, all day Friday and Saturday, downtown merchants will bring their wares outside and offer discounts during the Sidewalk Sales.

To sign up for an event, go to the downtown information kiosk on The Commons.

**Datestamp:** 07/16/2008

## **Construction under way across ICSD**

### **Summer work paves way for big projects**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The first wave of bond-financed construction projects that started this summer in the Ithaca City School District are on schedule and at or under budget, according to district officials.

“We’re doing real well right now,” said John Franzese, of Welliver McGuire, Inc, the district’s project manager.

The projects are funded by the facilities bond, a multi-year, \$98.4 million plan to upgrade aging district buildings that was approved by voters in March 2007.

The ongoing tasks the district hopes to complete soon are the roof renovations at Boynton and DeWitt middle schools, and heating and air conditioning work at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School. More than 50 employees of construction firms are currently working on the projects, Franzese said.

Heating and air conditioning systems will only be installed at Beverly J. Martin this summer, and the staff has moved temporarily for the work. The installation at the other two schools will be completed next summer. For now, pre-installation work is ongoing at Boynton and DeWitt. Several floors and walls at Boynton are being straightened. Crews are also tearing up the parking lots of the two middle schools to redo bus lanes and create new parent drop-off and parking area.

“The new roof is well-needed, we’ve had multiple leaks throughout the year,” said Jason Trumble, Boynton’s principal.

Parking lot work and repaving is also occurring at the Ithaca High School and Northeast Elementary School. Caroline Elementary School is also getting heating and cooling systems installed, and a new roof is being constructed.

School board president Rob Ainslie said the systems were selected to be as efficient as possible.

The projects are happening concurrently to help keep costs down and so that equipment at each site is similar, Franzese said.

Construction crews are also installing permanent field turf at the high school football stadium, and building a new bathroom facility there.

“Because of the sheer amount of sports that play on the field, it’s really going to make it much better for the athletes, even when it’s February or it’s really wet,” Ainslie said. “It will really lengthen the season.”

The Belle Sherman Elementary School’s playground demolition has been completed and a community build



to assemble new equipment has been scheduled for the weekend of July 26.

Even with all the work under way this summer, the facilities upgrades are just getting started. The most expensive portions of the bond will not be completed until the summers of 2009 or 2010, Franzese said.

Construction on those various projects will start next summer at the high school, Lehman Alternative Community School, Cayuga Heights Elementary, Northeast Elementary, Fall Creek Elementary and Enfield Elementary Schools.

The addition and renovation of the high school's Kulp Auditorium and performance art center is projected to cost \$13.25 million; the new high school gym, \$7.5 million; the Belle Sherman gym, \$3.9 million; the stadium at the high school, \$2.8 million; and the LACS gym and classroom construction, \$9.8 million.

The main renovations and additions at Belle Sherman and South Hill Elementary are expected to be completed in 2010.

"This year is going to be one of the small years, actually," Franzese said.

The three bond-financed projects that have already been completed are the Caroline Elementary School playground, Beverly J. Martin playground, and the new transport building roof.

The costs of the bond projects won't begin to affect tax payers until 2009.

Possible future facility upgrades that are not a part of the bond project include a renovation of high school tennis courts, and a security upgrade involving key cards, security cameras and GPS locators. In addition, the district is discussing the possibility of eight new classrooms for South Hill, 10 more classrooms at Belle Sherman, heating and cooling systems at Enfield and a new roof for Cayuga Heights.

**Datestamp:** 07/15/2008

## **IC gets green light from accrediting organization**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Middle States Commission on Higher Education reaffirmed ? with minor reservations ? Ithaca College?s accreditation on June 26, concluding a review process that occurs every 10 years.

Re-accreditation is a voluntary peer-review process that colleges and universities undergo to publicly show that they adhere to and maintain a certain level of standards on the campus and in the classroom. If colleges lose accreditation, their students may lose access to federal financial aid.

To prepare for a reviewing team of higher education leaders who visited the campus last spring, the college spent three years documenting its adherence to the commission?s standards.

In its report to the college, the commission wrote that Ithaca affirmed its belief that Ithaca is a college ?that has greatness within its reach,? according to a letter to the community written by Ithaca College?s new president, Thomas Rochon.

However, the school isn?t perfect.

The commission has asked it to submit an additional report in 2010 documenting progress in several areas that, according to the review, are in need of improvement.

Specifically, the review found that Ithaca had not done enough the assess student learning throughout its undergraduate and graduate academic programs, and that it needs to become more goal- and measurement-oriented when determining institutional effectiveness.

?It is clear that the Middle States Commission expects us to become more focused and informed on student progress in achieving the skills, knowledge, and understanding that we expect our students to master,? Rochon wrote.

To achieve the assessment goals by April of 2010, the college will hire a director of student learning assessment, and the president has tasked the deans of schools and other administrators to more clearly define the school?s general education goals.

**Datestamp:** 07/14/2008

## **1,200 at Relay raise \$155k to fight cancer**

*Journal Staff*

LANSING ? The approximately 1,200 people who walked in Friday night's Relay for Life event at Lansing High School brought in about \$155,000 in donations for the American Cancer Society, organizers reported.

All told, 63 teams of community members walked the track at the high school beginning at 6 p.m. Friday and going through the night. Though nine fewer teams entered compared to last year, organizer Joe Macrina said the fact that donations from 2007 to 2008 stayed nearly the same shows the teams' dedication to fundraising.

Macrina also attributed the flat donation levels to economic worries.

"It's the economy," he said. "Everyone has their hand out for something."

The AES Cayuga team raised the most money with \$14,675.

The 11th annual event also featured a speech by the founder of Relay for Life, Gordy Klatt, who gave rise to the idea in 1985. Macrina called Klatt's speech inspiring.

"It was great to hear how he started it, what his story was, and how it just took off," Macrina said. "He also talked about all the research that's going on, we're taking the right steps."

Macrina went on to thank the high school, including members of the ground staff who stayed overnight to ensure the event went smoothly.

"They go over and beyond what they really need to do," he said.

**Datestamp:** 07/14/2008

## **Wineries prop up other Ithaca–area businesses**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Without the Cayuga Wine Trail, Laura Winter Falk probably wouldn't be in business as a tour operator.

Falk is co–owner of Experience the Finger Lakes Co., a new Ithaca–based touring company. She said about three quarters of her business centers around shuttling tourists to and from the region's wineries and educating them about the wines they taste, she said.

?Most of the calls in our business deal with wanting to go to the wineries,? she said. ?It's the number one attractor to our region.?

While the company also showcases the area's gorges, parks and cultural centers, the wineries are the main course ? but the idea isn't simply to let guests get drunk.

?Our goal is to have the guests fully experience the wineries, from history, science and tasting,? Falk said.

The growth of the Finger Lakes wine region has been a boon for touring and limousine companies like Falk's, in addition to boosting customers to a number of other local businesses like restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts, cheese makers and even a cookbook publisher.

### Benefits

Eric Russo, general manager of Six Mile Creek Vineyards, said that as the first winery on the trail for tourists from New York City driving north on Route 79, he and his staff often act as ambassadors, recommending local restaurants and hotels and suggesting places to see in the area. He said non–winery businesses have quickly seen the benefits of being involved with the trail as an associate member.

?They're saying, ?Hey it's a good idea to be involved with these wineries, people on wine tours need a place to sit down and have a meal or stay the night,?? Russo said.

?I think wineries give people a lot more of a reason to come to Ithaca,? said Colleen Schuler, co–owner of City Lights Bed & Breakfast and an associate member of the wine trail.

She estimates that 40 percent of her guests go on a wine tour or do tastings at a winery. ?It's a huge draw for us.?

Likewise, Dean Zervos, co–owner of Simeon's on the Commons restaurant, said he has a symbiotic relationship with the wineries. The customers they accommodate on the wine trail often dine at his restaurant afterwards, and in return about 50 percent of the wines he sells are produced in the region.

Zervos said it's hard to place a figure on how many customers the trail brings him, but he noted that his

restaurant is busier in the summer when the students are gone than it is when thousands of young people with disposable incomes return for the fall semester.

“It’s one of those things you can see, but it’s definitely there,” he said. “You have this influx of people. You see a lot of parents of children who are doing dual things, parents want to go on a wine tour as well.”

It’s not just the typical businesses that are helped by the presence of the nearby wine trails.

“I realized that there were so few books written about the Finger Lakes, as compared to other places with an emerging wine region,” said Michael Turback, co-founder of Side Order Books, which seeks to publish cookbooks for area chefs to pair local foods with local wines.

“There’s been a migration of talented chefs, and (this is) offering smaller regional players an opportunity to publish their own cookbooks,” he said.

The first cookbook, produced by Simply Red Bistro chefs at Sheldrake Point Vineyard, is available locally, he said.

A boon to limo companies

During the summer tourism season – which coincides with the grape growing and harvesting season at the wineries – limousine companies say the wine trails provide much of their business.

“Right now we’re swamped with wine tours,” said Ron Lower of First Class Limousines, an Ithaca-based company he started in January.

About 50 percent of his summer business comes from wine tours.

Lower said he takes all the work out of the hands of his guests, offering to provide personalized tours of the region and the wineries. He said people call to ask him questions about wineries all the time.

Although Superior Limousines of Cortland mainly transports wedding guests, owner Joe Fezza said he’s constantly asked to do wine tours, and they’ve become a large part of his business – if not yet an essential part.

“If I have any openings, it’s filled by a wine tour,” he said. “It’s a good thing, because in the fall the weddings drop off and the wine tours take their place.”

But Fezza said the wineries lose their appeal when the weather turns cold.

“The week after Halloween, (wine tours) die right off.”

**Datestamp:** 07/12/2008

## **Wine trails bear economic fruit**

### **Cayuga, Seneca, Keuka alliances bring tourists**

Twenty–five years ago, McGregor Vineyards Winery on Keuka Lake would see about half a dozen people in its tasting room on a weekend.

Twenty years ago, maybe 100.

Today, says John McGregor, winery owner and president of the Keuka Lake Wine Trail, "we have served more than 1,000 on a weekend."

Winery owners attribute that explosion of visitors, in part, to decisions made more than 20 years ago. In the 1980s, winemakers on Keuka, Seneca and Cayuga lakes banded together into three wine trails "cooperative marketing ventures that raised the profile of the Finger Lakes wine industry.

Ted Marks, who bought Atwater Estate Vineyards on Seneca Lake in 1999, said the first thing he did was join the Seneca Lake Wine Trail, which was established in 1984.

"It was the very obvious way of getting my winery on the map," Marks said. "That was the way to become exposed immediately to 4,000 people."

Marks says 60 percent of visitors to his winery come as a result of Seneca Lake Wine Trail marketing.

At Sheldrake Point Winery on Cayuga Lake, owner Bob Madill said growth since the establishment of the Cayuga Wine Trail 25 years ago has been dramatic. Today the trail includes 16 wineries and says that it is the oldest established wine trail in the United States.

"In 1999, we saw 17,987 in the tasting room at our winery," said Madill, president of the Cayuga Lake Trail. "In 2007, we saw almost 33,000. That's because of the wine trail."

The wine trails give winemakers a chance to connect with potential customers, Madill said.

"It was a huge leg up in establishing our winery and providing a base against which we could develop our own personal credibility," he said.

At Glenora Wine Cellars on Seneca Lake, owner Gene Pierce estimates that about 100,000 to 125,000 visit the Seneca Lake Wine Trail annually. Glenora hosted 72,000 last year.

"These wine trails have had a huge, huge impact," Pierce said. "In the tourism area, this is what is driving this area."

When the Seneca Lake Wine Trail was first organized, Pierce said, wineries didn't have a lot of human or financial resources.

"It made sense to put together a larger brochure for seven or eight wineries," he said. "It was more of an enticement to bring people into the area."

Pierce estimates that the number of visitors at his winery has increased by a factor of seven or eight since the trail began in 1984. There are 36 wineries on the Seneca Lake trail.

The Canandaigua Lake Wine Trail is the newest in the Finger Lakes, having started in about 2000 with four wineries and now up to seven, said John Brahm, president of the trail and owner of Arbor Mist Grapery & Winery in Naples.

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence that wine trails have jump-started tourism in the Finger Lakes region but little research to back up that assessment.

A 2004 study by MKF Market Research indicated that 4.14 million wine-related tourists visited the state, that the wineries had \$420 million in sales and that the wine industry generated \$427 million in state and local taxes. But the study, which didn't focus solely on the Finger Lakes region, also included the impact of grape and grape juice sales.

There's been no rigorous study of the impact of the Keuka, Seneca and Cayuga wine trails, said Duncan Hilchey, extension associate in the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell University.

"It's important, and we all have anecdotal evidence that it is a tourist draw," Hilchey said. "But we don't have especially good data on that. They just don't collect the data."

Hilchey said a detailed study of the wine trails would be useful, if for no other reason than to justify the public funds they receive through the New York Wine and Grape Foundation.

"I think you have to do it (draw conclusions on the wine trails' impact) by inference," said Jim Tresize, foundation president. "The hardest thing in the world is to get information from this industry. We know that there has been growth in terms of the activities that the wine trails have done as well as the number of wineries per trail."

The success of the wine trail concept was almost immediate, Tresize said.

"When they started the Cayuga Wine Trail, they had trouble getting \$200 per winery for the first year," he said. "A year later they needed \$2,000 per winery, and nobody blinked an eye."

Along the smallest of the three Finger Lakes wine trails, the one on Keuka, winery sales have soared from \$2.7 million in 1995 to \$15.9 million in 2007, said Mike Linehan, president of the Yates County Chamber of Commerce.

The 22-year-old Keuka Wine Trail maintains close contact with its visitors by compiling mailing lists of those who purchase tickets for its events.

"We have a database of about 13,000 customers we contact by direct mail eight times a year and via electronic mail about 12 times a year," Linehan said. "We really don't have estimates of the number of people who actually visit the trail."

Wine trails have also helped the tourism business in the Finger Lakes become less seasonal, Linehan said.

“The season used to be June 20 to Labor Day,” he said. “But you can basically do a wine trail event at any time of year, especially in February and May, when hotel occupancy is low.”

Jerry “Ernesto” Gunnell of Staten Island visited Finger Lakes wineries after his son graduated from Cornell University Law School in May.

“It was a great surprise,” Gunnell said. “The guides were very knowledgeable. We visited four wineries and had a total of 64 ounces. That’s a lot of wine, I’m telling you.”

Gunnell, who has also visited California wineries, said having a guide from Experience the Finger Lakes Co. made the visit more meaningful.

“It makes it a much more enjoyable experience to have a guide,” he said. “The one in California didn’t have a guide, and it was definitely less informative. No one’s there telling you about the local color.”

Another recent visitor was Bonnie Rozinski, a sales assistant at a television station in Rochester who came to the region with friends last fall.

“(We decided to come) 100 percent based on the wineries,” she said. “We wanted to do wine tours.”

Rozinski said each woman in the group spent about \$300 per day. She said the trip was enhanced by the tour guide’s knowledge.

“Our tour guide knew why certain areas grow certain grapes, what caused the area to have certain land formations, why certain grapes do well in a certain area,” she said. “We were talking last night about setting up another trip.”

The influx of tourists such as Gunnell and Rozinski reverberates throughout the regional economy by stimulating other businesses such as restaurants, hotels, limousine services, produce stands, cheesemaking ventures and boat rentals.

“There are seven restaurants on the water (on Keuka Lake) that would probably have been converted to single-family homes if we didn’t have the wine trail,” Linehan said.

Along with the success of the wine trails has come the development of upscale lodging and dining facilities.

“When we started joining together and promoting ourselves we saw people coming into the area looking for lunch and upscale lodging,” said Pierce at Glenora Wine Cellars, which built The Inn at Glenora and Veraisons restaurant.

Other wineries and lodging providers have followed suit, with a number of new restaurants using locally produced food to develop a Finger Lakes cuisine that complements the region’s wines.

The success of the wine trails has also caught the attention of non-winery businesses, said Nancy Battistella, co-owner of Six Mile Creek Vineyard near Ithaca.

“Wine trails are pretty hot,” Battistella said. “Other businesses are hopping on the bandwagon. They want to be in our brochure, advertise with us.”



Larry Wilson is a reporter for the Elmira Star-Gazette. Aaron Munzer is a reporter for The Ithaca Journal.

**Datestamp:** 07/12/2008

## **Cayuga Wine Trail looks back over 25 years**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? In 1983, Mary Plane was having trouble attracting tourists to her winery.

Plane and her husband Robert, then the owners of Plane?s Cayuga Vineyards, were vexed because Route 89 ? the road along which their winery was located ? was closed for construction, and the usual summer stream of wine seekers had slowed to a trickle.

?We were scrambling to see what we could do to bring in tourists,? she said.

One night, the Planes and fellow Cayuga Lake winery owners from Frontenac, Americana, Lucas and Lakeshore wineries gathered over bottles of their own wines to share their frustrations with the lackluster tourism season. They eventually hashed out the blueprints for the Cayuga Wine Trail, a cooperative alliance in which wineries would share in marketing costs, like printing brochures advertising their wines.

?No one?s going to come from New York City to the Finger Lakes to visit one winery, so we (thought we) better get some others into this,? Robert Plane said. ?Unlike California wineries, we didn?t have a reputation in the Finger Lakes, and so we decided the best thing to do was to get people to visit the actual winery.?

Now more than 25 years old and composed of 16 member wineries, up from the founding five, the nation?s first official wine trail has brought esteem to the region and elevated the expectations of quality for the region?s vintages. Finger Lakes wines have garnered thousands of winemaking honors and praise as the ?up and coming? region in Wine Spectator magazine.

Plane?s idea for the trail first came after a trip to Europe, where she and her husband found that small wineries would congenially tell visitors about the next winery down the road.

Success came slowly but surely, said Ruth Lucas, president of Lucas Vineyards, one of the five founding wineries. She said the trail?s exponential growth can be measured with the increase in her winery?s output of wine ? in 1980, they bottled only 400 cases. Now they make 23,000 cases of wine annually. Together, all the trail?s wineries produce approximately 175 thousand cases of wine a year.

She attributes most of the visitors to the wine trail?s allure, too. From 1983 to 2007, the number of annual visitors spiked from 5,000 to 65,000 people.

?It?s been a wonderful adventure,? Lucas said. ?Each month it gets busier. Some weekends we?ll see a couple thousand people.?

In the 1980s, wineries on Keuka and Seneca lakes created their own wine trails based on Cayuga?s model. Other wineries also jumped aboard the Cayuga Wine Trail ? by the early ?90s, it had 12 total member wineries.

The increase in visitors due to the wine trails has played an important part in increasing the stature of the region's wines, forcing winemakers to craft higher quality wines, said Cathy Millspaugh, executive director of the trail. Since its inception, member wineries have won close to 5,000 awards for their vintages.

Dean Zervos, co-owner of Simeon's on the Commons restaurant in Ithaca, said he's seen a substantial increase in the quality of Finger Lakes wines since he worked in the restaurant business in Florida years ago.

"In Florida, all the wines I got from New York were trash," he said. "But now the wines are really starting to come into their own. They're not at California levels yet, but it's the Napa Valley of the east."

Bob Madill, owner of the Sheldrake Point Vineyard and president of the trail, said the trail has achieved its mission of educating the public about the quality of local wines, but there's still more work to do.

"We want to build the regional identity and be part of that in a strong way," Madill said. "If we do that, we'll get our share of the business." Madill said with 16 member wineries the trail is comfortably sized, but he and other members would be open to new "energetic" winery owners.

Eric Russo, general manager of Six Mile Creek Vineyard, said the annual membership fees are far outweighed by the services the trail provides individual winery owners.

"We could never reach the markets the wine trail reaches ourselves," he said. "There's no illusion that tourists are here for our specific winery. They came because they heard about the 90 different wineries."

**Datestamp:** 07/11/2008

## **Ruling may mean less legal protection for students**

### **Newfield case could impact future complaints of discrimination**

*Journal Staff*

Barring a successful appeal, a New York judge's decision to stop the state Division of Human Rights from bringing a discrimination complaint against the Newfield Central School District is a step toward stripping public school children of protection under state human rights law, a division official and law experts said.

On June 19, Judge Robert C. Mulvey of the Sixth Judicial District ruled that the division does not have the appropriate jurisdiction over public schools — in this case the Newfield Central School District — to bring a case against the district on behalf of a student's family.

Deputy Commissioner Tom Shanahan said the division filed an appeal this week of Mulvey's decision in the case and disputes that its jurisdiction does not extend to public schools. According to division figures, in 2007 it filed 11 discrimination complaints against New York public school districts.

"Our jurisdiction is well established in the context of school districts," Shanahan said. "It's inconsistent with the prior ruling of the judge. We are a resource for the least affluent folks in this state, and to make an attempt to limit our jurisdiction, especially in the context of public schools, that would really be a disservice."

In fact the decision is a reversal for Mulvey, who as recently as September 2007 held that the division had jurisdiction in Amelia Kearney's racial discrimination case, in which she alleged the Ithaca City School District had failed to protect her daughter from racial discrimination. Mulvey based his ruling on a previous case in another judicial region which found for the division.

When called for comment Thursday, Mulvey said it would be inappropriate for him to speak about the decision.

Ray Schlather, an Ithaca-based lawyer who represents clients in discrimination cases, including Kearney, said the judge's decision effectively "ropes off" the legal option of human rights law to public school children and their parents seeking to address claims of discrimination. The state's human rights law prohibits discrimination based on age, race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, military status and other specified classes.

"This is a very unfortunate decision," he said. "An entire group of citizens will not have access to the human rights law when their rights are violated."

#### The Newfield complaint

The judge's decision involves two similar complaints brought against the Newfield district by two parents, Kevin Eldridge and Lena Worcester, on behalf of their respective children, who alleged that the district discriminated against their sons by punishing them for bad behavior on the school bus while meting out little

or no punishment to several female students who were also "acting insubordinately," according to court documents.

Newfield Superintendent William Hurley said he was aware of the implications of the judge's decision regarding the district's jurisdictional challenge but said he felt the division doesn't have the right to intervene in what he called a school disciplinary issue.

"This is an isolated incident for us," he said. "It's ironic that it's gotten to this point."

He said the division's request for information would have forced the district to violate federal student privacy laws.

"We're put into a bind when we have to work with the (division) and they request things that are confidential," Hurley said.

Hurley said if an employee brought a discrimination complaint against the district, it would be willing to accept the division's jurisdiction, but a student disciplinary issue is different.

Hurley also said parents have other effective methods for filing discrimination complaints.

If public school children no longer have protection under human rights law, their parents may still file complaints of discrimination with the State Education Commissioner or the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education. They may also file suit in state or federal court but must pay for their own litigation fees. In a discrimination complaint brought to the division, complainants are provided with free legal representation.

"There are already existing venues," Hurley said. "What's one more?"

In his district, he said he was aware of only one complaint brought to the Commissioner of Education and one brought to the division in recent years. Hurley said filing a complaint with the State Education Commissioner can result in punishments for school districts and the removal of superintendents and boards of education.

He speculated that if parents and students were aware that large payouts from school districts were possible by filing human rights complaints, it might become a common practice and a burden on districts.

"There (could be) more an incentive to use the system of human rights," he said. "It may make it more interesting for a parent, make them more apt."

Kevin Clermont, a professor of law at Cornell University, said the judge's responsibility is to interpret if the law considers public schools under the division's jurisdiction and not to make a decision based on non-binding precedent cases.

"It simply strikes me that it's conceivable that a legislature may want to separate public schools, and not want to have an agency (like the division) oversee them," he said.

Clermont said Mulvey's ruling wouldn't set any precedent until a higher court like the Appellate Division or the Court of Appeals weighed in.

"The fact that he's able to reverse himself makes it clear that any decision he makes doesn't have a binding effect," he said.

## Jurisdiction

Mulvey wrote that the school district does not fall under the jurisdiction of the division because the section of New York's human rights law that deals with discrimination and harassment of students applies only to "education corporations and associations," which public schools are not.

Although a judge in the fourth department, a different region of the state, ruled that the division did have jurisdiction over public school children in a 1983 case, a judge in the second department ruled it did not, in a 1974 case. In the absence of a precedent-setting decision in the third department, in which Newfield is located, the judge made his decision based on "reason and justice," he wrote.

"What (Judge) Mulvey has done has said "there's a case that is favorable, there is one that is unfavorable, now that there are competing decisions, I'm free to go with either one," Schlather said. "The problem arises in general terms because the human rights law does not expressly mention public schools."

Shanahan said the case will likely be heard by the Appellate Division and possibly the Court of Appeals, the highest court in the state, which would make a precedent-setting decision on the issue of the division's jurisdiction then.

## A simpler method

Right now, filing a discrimination complaint with the division is a simple solution, while the others are not, Shanahan said.

"How many people know about (them)?" he said. "The remedies available for them in the department of education aren't as good or broad, and word is not out there."

Schlather also said the Education Department isn't well equipped to handle claims of discrimination.

Shanahan said he thinks any possible decision to limit the division's jurisdiction may actually hurt school districts, rather than protecting them from answering discrimination cases.

"If in fact we can't process claims, what will likely occur is there will be lots more cases filed in courts with attorneys and all kind of costs that aren't relevant here because we don't permit it," he said. "Sometimes you have to watch what you ask for because you just might get it."

Alan Rosenthal, a lawyer who has previously litigated civil rights cases, said he's seen that the process of filing a complaint with the division is a less "cumbersome" process for many lower-income families.

"Many attorneys are reluctant to take those (cases) on a contingency basis and charge an hourly fee, so for many people of modest means, they cannot do this," he said.

## Decision's effects on ICSD

Schlather said the decision wouldn't affect the jurisdiction question in the Kearney case.

In that case, the district at first challenged the division's jurisdiction and appealed Mulvey's ruling upholding jurisdiction until the board of education changed course under pressure from community members and state advocacy groups.

If the district's challenge had been successful and set a precedent in a higher court, it would have stripped public school students of human rights law protection throughout the state.

Robert Ainslie, the new school board president, said the number of decisions and the apparent reversal by Judge Mulvey is confusing for districts that have to address discrimination complaints.

He said the board stepped down from its challenge of human rights law in the Kearney case because it did not want to force a judge to set a precedent stripping students of protection from the division.

"We'd like to get clarity from someone telling us this is a proper venue, or it is not," Ainslie said. "Would somebody please just tell us what we're supposed to do?"

**Datestamp:** 07/10/2008

## **Schumer pushes for funding to restore physics jobs**

*Journal Staff*

Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., wants to give Cornell University and other Upstate research labs more money in the 2009 federal budget to recover from funding cuts that forced Cornell to lay off 24 physics lab employees in January and March.

In a letter he sent to the Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations this week, Schumer urged the members to fully fund the Department of Energy's Office of Science with \$4.722 billion. If the funding bill is passed, it would make additional money available for grants from the university's Laboratory of Elementary Particle Physics, which studies fundamental particles and the laws that govern them.

The lab estimates it has lost nearly 30 percent of its federal funding over the last 2 1/2 years and has had to curtail research efforts because of it. The lab currently has 86 employees, down from 110 at the beginning of the year.

"We must provide funding that allows for not only scientific advancement, but continuous scientific discovery," Schumer wrote. "Investment in America's scientific community fuels the economy, (and) creates and retains high-skilled jobs."

Cornell University applauded the move, even though the lab receives its primary federal funding — about \$25 million — from the National Science Foundation, not the Department of Energy, which funds Cornell with only about \$1 million. In the past, Schumer has also advocated for more funding for the NSF. This year the NSF received \$6.85 billion in funding, up from \$4.8 billion the year before.

"In the face of cuts to critical science funding streams from both the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, Senator Schumer has been a strong advocate to preserve necessary funding which Cornell depends on," said Blaine Friedlander, a Cornell spokesman. "His efforts are welcome to support Cornell's lab of elementary physics."

Currently the lab receives about \$1 million annually from the Office of Science, but would have received an additional \$1 million if funding in an omnibus bill was approved, according to Lab Director Maurey Tigner, the Hans A. Bethe Professor Emeritus of Physics.

Tigner called the letter "wonderful," and said he'd also like to see Schumer support the bill when it comes up for a vote in the Senate.

"I know the senator has been appreciative of the impetus that science and technology ... give New York state, and we're glad to see that he's on the ball and continuing to support it," he said. "I think it's very important for this country that science and technology be strengthened so we can be competitive in the world."

In 2007, Cornell physics research received more than \$44 million in federal funding, about 6.7 percent of all Cornell's federal funding.



The Energy and Water, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, which contains the funding request, is due to be marked up and amended this week by the committee.

The Office of Science is authorized to receive \$5.2 billion in 2009, but much of the funding for scientific research was cut out of an earlier appropriations bill. Schumer wrote that the funding of scientific research needs to be predictable and not threatened by year-to-year fiscal problems.

“It is an absolute tragedy that funding for science has been one of the casualties of the appropriations hoopla we’ve seen over the past few years,” Schumer said in a release.

**Datestamp:** 07/09/2008

**Rochon meets IC faculty, staff today**

*From Journal Staff Reports*

ITHACA ? Ithaca College faculty and staff will meet with their new president Thomas Rochon at an on-campus reception today.

Although today's event will not be open to the public there will be an event held with invited guests from the community before the end of the summer, said Dave Maley, the college's associate director of media relations.

Faculty and staff at Ithaca College are invited to attend the reception from 2:15–3:30 p.m. in the second-floor atrium of the Park Center for Sustainable Enterprise. Rochon will hold another reception from 9–10 a.m. July 16, and will attend the college's annual ice cream social July 28 to meet members of the college community.

Rochon was previously the chief academic officer at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota.

**Datestamp:** 07/08/2008

## **New ICSD board elects officers**

### **Bornstein, Perez, Peacock sworn in; Ainslie voted board president**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Ithaca City School District Board of Education elected board member Robert Ainslie as its president Monday morning. The board also swore in two new members, Josh Bornstein and Scott Perez, and one returning member, Seth Peacock.

The new president and new members said they would continue to work to bring greater equity to students in the district and focus on recruiting more top notch faculty and administrative talent.

Board member Jay True was elected first vice president; Carol Warshawsky was elected second vice president.

The two incoming members replace outgoing board president Tom Frank and board member Judy Maxwell, whose terms both ended. Neither sought reelection.

(right triangle) Ainslie has been a board member for a year. He has a son enrolled at Ithaca High School and graduated from the high school himself after growing up in Enfield. He?s a senior financial adviser with a brokerage firm.

(right triangle) Bornstein has raised two children in the district, a son who is now in college and a daughter in the high school. He was principal of the Lansing school district?s Raymond C. Buckley Elementary School and is now a doctoral candidate at Syracuse University in the disability studies program.

(right triangle) Perez has a son with a disability in the fourth grade at Enfield Elementary School. That?s part of the reason why he ran for school board, he said. He feels the district makes it difficult for parents of students with disabilities to make sure their children get the help they need. He?s pursuing his doctorate at Cornell University in natural resource and American Indian studies, and he teaches at Wells College in Aurora.

Ainslie, Perez and Bornstein all said they would focus on fulfilling the district?s equity goals during their tenures on the board.

Ainslie specifically stressed the importance of the upcoming construction projects funded by the facilities bond and said the issues of a diverse, competent workforce and small class size would be paramount for the board under his leadership.

He served on the board during the fall of 2007, when protests erupted and board meetings sometimes became chaotic as the district challenged the state Human Rights Division?s jurisdiction in Amelia Kearney?s racial harassment case against the district.

"It's been difficult times on the board, difficult issues, and I certainly think the board has tried to work together on the issues of the day," he said. "We're going to continue to deal with short-term equity issues, try to have a diverse workforce and put great teachers in and let them do what they do."

Ainslie said he'd continue to seek clarity on whether the Human Rights Division was the appropriate venue for cases of student discrimination and harassment, and said he'd seek to meet requirements for equity in the district based on the human rights commissioner's final decision in the Kearney case.

It's Perez's mission to bring a more qualitative approach to the board, he said, so that members more often ask why some programs are successful, instead of just determining success or failure.

"We know numbers have their place, but we want to look more into the why's of the issues, and that hasn't been the focus of the board in the past," he said.

Perez said he and Bornstein are also money conscious and will be "looking out for the taxpayer's interest."

Bornstein added that he'd like to bring more community members to the table for input on important board decisions.

**Datestamp:** 07/02/2008

## **New IC president:**

### **Some issues for Rochon to consider**

Thomas Rochon had his first day on the job on Tuesday as Ithaca College president. As he told The Journal's Aaron Munzer recently, he will work toward some specific college-related goals and try to learn as much as he can about the community.

It's no secret that Ithaca and Tompkins County is a diverse place, with a relatively active and engaging community. As the chief executive officer of one of the county's largest employers, Rochon will often find himself in the spotlight outside of the South Hill campus.

While it is understandable that he will at first focus on education-related goals to help Ithaca College prosper, Rochon will have many issues in the community he must deal with to help place the college in the good graces of the locals.

Town-gown relations are always at the forefront of any community discussion with Ithaca College and Cornell University. In recent years, laws passed to help quell noise problems on the South and East hills have gone far to relieve some of the tension between residents and students. It will be wise for Rochon to move the issue of keeping the peace to the top of his agenda early in his tenure. Even with the noise laws, there is still work to be done. Some of the college's decisions under former president Peggy Williams to limit student activities and partying on campus have pushed the parties into residential neighborhoods, angering local residents and causing more work for law enforcement. Sheriff Peter Meskill told Munzer the college needs to plan activities that will interest students. This is an immediate area where Rochon can make an impact.

Though Williams never actively sought the spotlight, she worked hard to help Ithaca College improve its relationship with the community. As Williams neared retirement, many spoke about her commitment to having Ithaca College students actively volunteering in the community. Hopefully, Rochon will feel as strongly about those programs as Williams did, and those programs will continue to grow even though Williams is no longer the president.

Finally, as reported in The Journal last month, Town of Ithaca officials are again raising the issue of whether Ithaca College should pay the town for fire protection. About 5 percent of calls, and 3 percent of false alarms, are on the college's campus. Ithaca College officials have said they are willing to renew the discussion about the issue, but also noted other things they have done including donating a fire house on South Hill and keeping the Circle Apartments on the tax rolls. If Rochon can broker a deal early in his tenure, he'll show he wants to be a good community partner.

There are many other issues Rochon will face as college president that involve not just the educational mission of Ithaca College, but the community as a whole. Those include sustainability initiatives, transportation and expanding Ithaca College's role as a large employer. We'll be interested to see what how he proceeds on those fronts. In the meantime, we welcome him to the community, and wish him good luck in his new job.



**Datestamp:** 06/28/2008

## **Williams leaves IC a stronger school, community**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Peggy Williams wasn't exactly in her element.

Three years ago, Ithaca College's first female president was hiding in the lighting booth of Emerson Suites as a large male student aped around on stage making fun of her. The student wore a black, Peggy-esque wig and was imitating her penchant for yo-yoing in front of hundreds of students as the final act of a comedy show.

No one but the show's creators knew she was present. The audience ? and the imitator ? wouldn't know what hit them.

Mustering her best presidential voice, she belted out into the microphone, "You're not the real Peggy Williams. I'm Peggy Williams!" and then leapt onstage, microphone accidentally still in hand, and hurled a pie into the hapless student's face.

Thunderous couldn't begin to describe the applause from the student audience. Her performance would become legendary, and prospective students at the event would cite her appearance on stage as one of the reasons they chose to attend the college.

"I knew everyone was going to crack up," she said last month in her office, as she recalled her one-time comedy cameo. "But you don't realize the impact you'll have."

Impact is an understatement for the 61-year-old Williams. When she officially retires on June 30 and hands the reins to Thomas R. Rochon ? after 11 years as the president of Ithaca College and 36 in higher education ? she will have had a craterous impact.

### **Achievements**

Since arriving in Ithaca in 1997 from Lyndon State College in Vermont, where she was president for eight years, Williams focused on building the college community, strengthening its ties to the local community and setting its course for the future.

(right triangle) **Development:** She oversaw the creation of the Institutional Plan to guide the college's growth, the construction of a number of buildings, the completion of the college's largest capital campaign, which raised \$145 million ? \$30 million more than its goal ? and a host of other academic initiatives and campus improvements. Two newly visible products of the "Campaign for Ithaca College" include the sustainable business school and the college's planned Athletics and Events Center, a \$35 million, 7,500-seat venue that will be the largest building of its type in the county.

(right triangle) **Sustainability:** At the urging of students, she agreed to three public commitments to campus sustainability during her years at the college. In 2001, she endorsed the Comprehensive Environmental Plan,

which committed the college to a wide range of sustainability–related practices. In 2006, Williams adopted the Talloires Declaration, an institutional commitment to campus sustainability. In 2007, Williams joined the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment and pledged to work to make the college carbon neutral.

(right triangle) Diversity: Diversity was a large issue that she sought to address through a number of different avenues. She aided in the creation of the Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies; the Center for the Study of Culture, Race, and Ethnicity; and the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar Program.

Since Williams arrived, the number of minority students doubled to about 10 percent of the student population.

She's also confronted racism head on: At the college's Erase the Hate rally in 2005 – a response to a series of racial incidents that led to unprecedented anger against the administration for what many students deemed inaction – she spoke to hundreds of students, calling the incidents "seriously at odds with the values of this community."

In the days before the rally, Williams, in a rare show of emotion, told the Student Government Association she was so angry she "could actually just spit."

"At this point, I'm ready to throw whoever these people are off of the highest roof I can find on the Ithaca College campus," Williams said.

On the eve of her retirement, she seemed to express mild regret about her statement.

"As a president, you don't try to be an automaton, but you try to not convey a lot of emotion," she said. "But sometimes it happens. It's good for people to know you're human."

Besides racial diversity, the college emphasized its other diverse elements under Williams: the school's gerontology program and relationship with the Longview senior care center was strengthened and the college was recognized as one of the country's 100 friendliest campuses for LGBT students by the "Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students."

(right triangle) Community responsibility: In addition to increasing the number of minority students, she also increased the number of undergraduates by about 400 students.

Under her leadership, the college improved community relations, most notably by helping to curb off–campus partying and encouraging a sense of civic responsibility in off–campus students.

The college created an on–campus event on the last day of classes called "IC Kicks Back" to encourage students not to attend off–campus parties such as Prospect Day.

She championed days where students would go help the community, said former town supervisor Cathy Valentino. "It took communication to find out ways to help students understand their responsibility of being good citizens, and I think we were pretty successful with that."

And she's not gone yet: even though she'll live in Vermont, she'll still be serving during a year–long sabbatical as a sort of unofficial advisor to Rochon, to help him navigate his first year.

In retirement, she'll serve on the board of St. Michael's College. She'll alternate her time between Vermont



and her home country of Canada, where she and her husband, David, have a house in British Columbia. They plan to do a lot of hiking and canoeing, she said.

### Personality

Even with all the work she's done, probably the last place you'll ever find her is in her office. What students know as "Peggy sightings" happen all over: She's been seen swimming in the college pool, in the aisles of Wegmans, learning to unicycle, attending lectures, or cheering on the women's basketball team.

It wasn't just her presence, students say, it's the genuine enthusiasm she seems to have for Ithaca that has fostered the larger-than-life reputation of "P-Willy," who, among other things, is actually a champion yo-yo-er.

"The P-Willy nickname is generally endearing," said former student government president Aaron Bloom. "She's got this crazy hairdo, she's comical in the most endearing way, and I think students appreciate her for that."

Williams' zeal for exercise and the building of the college's modern fitness center contributed to "Men's Fitness" magazine rating Ithaca one of the top 25 fittest campuses in the nation in 2006.

While the athletic profile of the school may not have increased during her years, she's also been a true fan of the college's teams.

Head football coach Mike Welch said he remembered a moment that became emblematic of Williams' personality. The team had made the playoffs and was facing off against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy. Williams was in New York City and there was an epic snowstorm between the two cities. No roads were open, Welch said. Nevertheless, Williams boarded a train for the frozen north and made it in time to cheer for Ithaca.

"The train was the only thing running, and (still) she was there for our support, to see us play," he said.

### Shortcomings

Williams' presidency hasn't been perfect. Although she has seen the college's endowment grow, the school has also made its largest tuition increases during her tenure.

Williams also dealt with student protests against the college's food service provider, Sodexo, over the company's practices regarding privately run prisons. A small group of students carried out a sit-in, and she eventually negotiated a compromise with them.

As an educational institution, the college is exempt from paying property taxes to support the Ithaca Fire Department, but it has not agreed to payments in lieu of taxes for that purpose as have some other institutions, including Cornell University. This has been an ongoing issue between the leadership of the town and the college.

In addition, in 2006, Sheriff Peter Meskill said because the college had taken over the Circle Apartments, restricted Fountain Day and created strict rules about alcohol on campus, student partying "and noise" went off campus, creating problems for South Hill residents.

"The college needs to provide real activities that students are interested in if the college really wants to make

a difference," Meskill said then. "Talk is cheap."

## Legacy

As for a legacy, Williams has only to look out her window and bemoan the loss of her once-beautiful view to see it: the huge glass panes of the new Dorothy D. and Roy H. Park Center for Sustainable Enterprise.

But for her, it's not the pretty buildings she orchestrated that are important, but the lectures, learning and sporting competitions that will take place within.

"They happen to be visible, but they're just buildings," she said. "It's all about the people. It always sounds corny, but it's true. We're trying to educate young minds, and it's the faculty and staff that make all of this possible."

Carl Sgrecci, vice president for finance and administration, called Williams a dynamic leader with "boundless energy" who'll leave a sense of community and pride that wasn't at the college before she arrived.

"Faculty, staff, and students all feel really good about Ithaca College and feel like a family," he said.

She's also given credit for the volunteer spirit that Ithaca College attempts to foster in its students, said Deb Mohlenhoff, assistant director of community service and leadership and development, whose position was created by Williams.

The college now holds the annual Celebration of Service to encourage community service and recognize volunteers, and created an award for students who emphasize service. Also during her tenure, Ithaca College was named to the national 2006 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for its encouragement of civic engagement.

"Just talking to community members, they felt like walls came down from around the institution, there was a much more engaged campus community," Mohlenhoff said. "She put herself out there, like at the AIDS ride and (giving talks) to the rotary club. There was no longer this sense of 'We're up on the hill and you're downtown,' and her attitude empowered others."

In early June, with only a month left, Williams hadn't begun the process of packing up her office. But a change in course was coming, and she knew it.

"I said when I came I was coming aboard a moving train and I was going to keep going in the same path until such time as we needed a change in course," she said. "It's getting real now, obviously, and the mechanics of leaving aren't so fun."

She stared off into the blue Ithaca sky she'd looked out on for 11 years, then to the numerous pictures on the walls, and finally to her yo-yos, sitting unused on a shelf in her office.

"I'll have to take all these down," she said wistfully.

But retirement isn't such a bad thing, and she knows it.

"I'm looking forward to the fact that I can just go out for a bike ride on a Tuesday morning," she said. "I've never really been able to do that."



**Datestamp:** 06/30/2008

## **Rochon era at IC begins on Tuesday**

### **New president wants to ease into role, but has broad goals**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA — Thomas R. Rochon, once a top administrator at a large Catholic university in Minnesota, begins his term as the eighth president of Ithaca College on Tuesday. Rochon succeeds outgoing president Peggy Williams, whose last day is today.

Rochon, 55, was the executive vice president for academic affairs for five years at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. He was one of three candidates for the presidency who interviewed at Ithaca College in the past year. After one candidate dropped out, Rochon was chosen by the Board of Trustees above Iain Crawford, the vice president of academic affairs at the College of Wooster in Ohio.

After working in higher education since receiving his doctorate in 1980, Rochon said he will approach the job of president — which he said he hopes to hold for 10 years — gingerly, and feel out the needs of the position and the community before attempting to make his own changes.

"I have broad goals for the first year," he said. "I want to get to know much more about Ithaca, and Tompkins County, and I want to feel like I'm part of the fabric in that place and I want other people to feel like I'm part of that."

He's still goal-oriented, though, he said. He said he plans to make fundraising a priority — building on the success of the college's recently completed \$145 million capital campaign — especially for the college's planned \$35 million Athletics and Events Center. Sustainability, a focus on more graduate programs and an increased school profile are also important issues for him.

Jim Rogers, managing director of the center for Irish Studies at St. Thomas, said Rochon would be a visible and articulate representative of the college.

"He's straightforward, supportive, and he has a really good sense of what's important in academic life," Rogers said. "He's got his head on straight."

Although this is his first time as the steward of an institution, he said that as the second-in-command for some time, he's seen enough to be prepared for the job.

Michael Wilcox, a senior editor at The Aquin, St. Thomas' campus newspaper, said from his work reporting on the administration, he thinks Rochon is prepared for the position.

"From being at such a high-up position at our school for five years, he's done a lot of work right along side the president," Wilcox said. "So I would say yeah, he's prepared to be a president."

A history of controversy

Although administrators and members of the college's board of trustees have called Rochon a candidate with excellent leadership credentials, students at both St. Thomas and Ithaca haven't taken so kindly to Rochon.

Editors of Ithaca College's student newspaper, *The Ithacan*, wrote in an editorial that members of the St. Thomas community told them Rochon was not very effective in building consensus and "just not willing to discuss a lot of ... things with students." The paper also featured an editorial cartoon showing Rochon, dressed as a Catholic priest, walking warily into a hippie drum circle meant to portray Ithaca.

Similarly, stories have spread around the Ithaca campus about Rochon's and St. Thomas' handling of two separate incidents that incited controversy within the student body and the faculty.

One issue that Ithaca students said Rochon would be called on to account for concerned a 2006 policy restricting same-sex and unmarried couples from staying in the same room while traveling on school-sponsored trips because it did not adhere to Catholic values.

"When choices of private conscience also directly affect students because it's in their face, if you will, that's the distinctive situation we're trying to address," Rochon told Minnesota Public Radio at the time. "This is a Catholic university. It stands for something. When people look at an institution that stands for something and has the courage of its convictions, they often find that institution to be very attractive."

Senior Joseph Goodliffe, who is friends with students in Ithaca College's student government, said he and many others wonder how Rochon will adjust to Ithaca's gay-friendly environment "and a school that was recognized as one of the country's 100 friendliest campuses for LGBT students by the *Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*."

"You're coming to an open, liberal university, where things like sexuality and race are very open. When I heard a lot of these things, it's kind of like, 'Yes you were at a Catholic institution,' but it makes that look like your belief at the same time, and at a school like Ithaca, that's not acceptable. People would be up in arms over that."

Goodliffe said he and other students share serious concerns about his ability to lead Ithaca forward.

"I'm interested to see what he's going to do when he comes to Ithaca and he's placed in a setting where what he did at his old university will not work here," Goodliffe said.

Rochon also faced student opposition when St. Thomas banned Archbishop Desmond Tutu "an apartheid opponent and civil rights activist" from speaking on campus stemming from what administrators saw as his "anti-Semitic" comments. The controversy went further when Rochon demoted Professor Cris Toffolo in the peace studies program for writing Tutu a letter strongly disagreeing with the administration's actions.

Wilcox, the editor at St. Thomas' campus newspaper, said Rochon often had a bad reputation with students as the bearer of bad news, and could be "intimidating" to interview.

"Not a lot of students interacted with Rochon," Wilcox said. "He doesn't really come into the spotlight a lot, and when he does it's because of negative issues, so a lot of students have negative impressions of him, because he demoted their favorite professor, or he was involved in the travel policy discussions, and he gave the school's position that they didn't want to hear."

Rochon, responding to those comments and the controversies, said he was acting as a representative of a

Catholic institution, and that he would have done things differently if it occurred at Ithaca College. Rochon said his own religious beliefs were a "private matter."

"When you have a code of values that underlies the institution, you can't be all things to all people, and there will be times when positions are made that are not only unpopular with some individuals, but not even be acceptable, supported or understood in the wider society," he said. "That's just having a value commitment being built into the charter of the institution."

He said the entire process has taught him to learn the value of laying out the decision-making process

"The vast majority of people I deal with are appreciative of that kind of openness," he said.

Mich., Calif., Japan

Rochon has had a long, geographically varied career in academia. After receiving his undergraduate and doctoral degrees in politics and political science from the University of Michigan, he moved to Princeton University, where he served as an assistant politics professor and counselor.

Later Rochon moved to a professor position Claremont Graduate University in California, and then to Kobe University in Japan for a year of teaching as a Fulbright Lecturer. When he returned to Claremont he was named dean of the school of Politics and Economics, and also served a one-year term there as interim provost. He is the author or co-editor of five books and has been published in numerous journals.

At the University of St. Thomas, Rochon was responsible for leading curriculum development; managing the academic budget; and maintaining relationships with deans, faculty, staff and students.

Rochon said a large part of his scholarly work has been in the area of social movements, which has made it clear to him that the dominant social movement of the time is toward sustainability and the environment. He thinks Ithaca College is leading the way already, and could be doing even more.

"I think Ithaca College has taken the leadership position with respect to the critical issue of our time, and I'd be a horrible president if I didn't continue that," he said.

Rochon, who drives a Ford Mustang and a Ford Explorer, said he is committed to sustainability because he walked to work every day in Minnesota. Although he won't be able to walk because of the longer commute in Ithaca, he'll have a college-provided vehicle that emphasizes efficiency, he said.

Moving IC forward

Ithaca College administrators and officials and students had two basic messages for Rochon: stay the current course and listen to the concerns of students and the faculty.

Williams met recently with Rochon and his wife Amber to discuss pressing issues at the college and in higher education in general. She said she emphasized to Rochon the importance of an emphasis on fundraising, the completion of a housing study to determine how to add new residence halls to campus and the future of federal financial aid.

"Transitions are no fun," Williams said, noting that she'd be serving as an advisor to Rochon and introducing him to large donors to encourage continued philanthropic giving to the college. "I want to stay out of the way and be helpful."

Outgoing student government president Aaron Bloom, who's a Minnesota native, met with Rochon recently at his house in St. Paul to discuss issues of importance to the Ithaca student body.

"I thought I'd go over there and get him in the loop, and let him know what's going on from the student perspective," Bloom said. "I kind of wanted to ensure that a lot of the initiatives that have been going on from student government wouldn't go by the wayside now that Peggy's gone. I talked to him about the (proposal for a campus shuttle) and he was very receptive of that. I'm very comforted to know that he seemed very responsive."

Likewise, Carl Sgrecci, Ithaca's vice president for finance and administration, who has worked with several different presidents at the college, said Rochon appeared to be a prime candidate who was "committed to higher education." He cautioned that Rochon should not try to move too quickly, however.

"He's going to be boarding a moving train, things are going to be under way when he gets here, and he should ask us all to keep the train moving, and very soon he'll take the engineer's seat and start steering the train," Sgrecci said.

Town supervisor Herb Engman said Rochon needs to understand that the futures of the college and the town are "inextricably linked" and he should take care to preserve those relationships.

"As IC prospers, so does the town of Ithaca, and vice versa," Engman said. "We have a number of things we'll need to talk about. I'd like to mention some of the recent success we've had, after we'd gotten complaints about noise from residents and we worked with Ithaca College to tone things down. As far as I know we had no complaints last year. That's an example of how we can work together."

Engman said he'd also like to talk with Rochon about possibly contributing to town fire protection costs.

Overall, Bloom said Rochon should take a few pages out of President Williams's book.

"I think he should make a very strong effort to be at a lot of the social things that Peggy was committed to," he said. "Although people didn't know her personally, she did make a point of being at a lot of the athletic events, the pep rallies, and it would do him a great service if he would kind of follow that idea."

**Datestamp:** 06/27/2008

## **DeWitt, IHS students take projects to tech competition**

*From Journal Staff Reports*

ITHACA ? Students from DeWitt Middle School and Ithaca High School will be competing in a national student technology competition next week.

Eighteen students will travel to enter their 30 technology projects against projects from schools from around the world at the Technology Students Association competitions in Orlando, Fla.

The DeWitt students' marquee project is the scaregull, or Robo-Ranger One, which is a mannequin named Jack who the team recently installed on a remote island off the coast of Maine to deter seagulls from eating baby terns, which come to the island to breed every year.

The students had to learn about mechanical engineering to find a way for Jack to pop out of a box and scare the gulls. They'll enter the project in the ?Environmental Challenges? category.

Dave Buchner, technology teacher at DeWitt, said the mannequin worked to fend off the gulls.

The project is collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project Puffin.

Fourteen students from Ithaca High School will also attend the competition to enter projects in categories for older students.



**Datestamp:** 06/26/2008

## **Lansing's Redmond named associate principal at IHS**

### **Board OKs 3.7% raise for Pastel**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Ithaca City School District's new "fast track" process for hiring administrators was used Tuesday night to hire Edward Redmond as Ithaca High School's associate principal.

Redmond, an Ithaca High graduate, has been in the Lansing School District for more than 20 years, serving in various positions, including athletic director, dean of students, and football and baseball coach. He previously applied to be director of health, physical education and athletics and an associate principal at Boynton Middle School. Redmond will replace associate principal Greg Santoro, who recently accepted a job at the Cortland City School District.

Superintendent Judith Pastel called Redmond an "outstanding" candidate and said Wednesday that Redmond has also applied to be the high school football coach. However, she said she has not brought any coaching recommendations to the board yet.

Redmond is the first of several new administrators the board will need to hire in the coming months to fill a list of vacant or soon-to-be vacant positions. Board member Seth Peacock said the board is scrambling to fill those spots.

"This is a problem," he said. "We have a lot of key positions open, and we need to hustle to keep those filled."

The board also accepted the resignation of Melina Carnicelli, assistant superintendent for human resources. She has agreed to stay until Aug. 4 and possibly longer to help the district fill its hiring needs. Board member Deborah O'Connor said Carnicelli's resignation provided a unique challenge because she is responsible for administrative hiring.

"How do you fill positions when you don't have an administrator to fill those positions?" O'Connor said.

In addition to filling Carnicelli's position, the board will also need to replace:

(right triangle) Paul Mintz, assistant superintendent of business services, who is retiring;

(right triangle) Bill Bryant, director of health, physical education and athletics, who will remain as interim director until the end of the 2008-09 school year; and

(right triangle) Ithaca High School principal Joe Wilson, who has said he will resign after the 2008-09 school year.

The board will also need to fill the position of Lydia Rosero, associate principal at Boynton Middle School,

who recently resigned to work in the Cortland City School District.

O'Connor said the new "fast track" hiring process will only be used rarely, in cases where speed is essential.

"For the most part we anticipate sticking to our current hiring policies, and we're always trying to improve (them)," she said.

Pastel gets raise

The board also voted unanimously to give Superintendent Judith Pastel a 3.7 percent salary increase from her current salary of \$168,225 per year, which is smaller than increases for other administrators, board member Robert Ainslie said.

Pastel's contract, which will expire Dec. 31, 2010, has not been extended.

Board member Seth Peacock said the raise had little connection to merit but is a typical, yearly increase.

"It's typically not zeroed out when things don't go so well," he said, referring to the district's tumultuous fall in which many community members questioned Pastel's leadership and even called for her to be fired. "It's a standard public employee raise."

The calls for her ouster from legal actions the district took in fall 2007 to challenge whether New York's human rights law protects public school students. As recently as February, the board had also discussed the possibility of Pastel's departure from the district.

Ainslie said all other positions on the administrative team received slightly larger salary increases.

**Datestamp:** 06/26/2008

## **ICSD approves fast-track hiring for administrators**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Ithaca City School District's Board of Education authorized Superintendent Judith Pastel to ?fast track? attractive administrative candidates at its last meeting of the school year Tuesday, bypassing what Pastel had called a ?cumbersome? pre-employment process.

The new policy, which board member Deborah O'Connor said would be used rarely, is an attempt to make the district more competitive when hiring in-demand administrators.

Currently the pre-employment process is a complex, multilayered system involving screening committees, interviews and input from the community that board members, Pastel and others have said impairs the district's hiring abilities by ?outsourcing? important decisions to community members.

In cases where speed is necessary to ensure a candidate does not accept a competing job offer, the superintendent must first ask the board for permission to offer a candidate the ?fast track.?

Board president Tom Frank noted that there are two levels of accountability: The superintendent must first inform the board and then bring the potential hire to the board again for a vote.

The policy change was opposed by Steve Cariddi, a board member of the Village at Ithaca and member of the Equity & Inclusion Leadership Council. He said he was opposed because the ?elimination of checks and balances? would circumvent community groups and makes no attempt to fix the cumbersome pre-employment system.

?By allowing the superintendent to handpick administrators to be approved by the board, it circumvents all the community groups that have a stake in this,? he said.

He suggested the board focus on improving the existing pre-employment process or modifying the new policy to restrict the superintendent's authority.

?The community may not trust the board, but the board does provide oversight,? said board member Carol Warshawsky. ?Without this flexibility, we're going to be hurt.?

Incoming board member Josh Bornstein asked why the resolution was so quickly drafted without an opportunity for public comment.

?This is the board validating a mixed-to-poor record of judgment in this area,? he said. ?A person brought in under this process, as good as they may be, comes in under something of a cloud.?

Pastel sought to stave off the idea that she was trying to consolidate power.

?I didn't ask for this resolution, let me make that clear,? she said.

The policy is being initiated quickly to be used in several upcoming hiring situations, board member Seth Peacock said before the meeting.

Greg Santoro, an associate principal in the high school, was hired away by a Cortland school district, and the board needs to replace him, said board member Robert Ainslie.

A similar policy was created in 2000 to streamline the hiring process for teachers. It has only been used five times since then but has worked well, Ainslie said.

"It's very important to have input from the community and stakeholder groups in the process, but there are circumstances where we do need to speed the process," he said. "We're trying to be competitive and recruit talent."

Pastel said the hiring process for administrators can take up to six weeks, which often causes candidates to accept jobs at competing districts.

Former board member Allen Lambert said he supports the policy because it gives the superintendent the flexibility not to be limited by procedures that "aren't working," he said.

O'Connor said the board would further discuss improving the existing pre-employment process to bring it further in line with other districts.

Deborah Casey, outgoing president of the Ithaca Council of PTAs, said before the meeting that the new resolution was necessary to attract quality candidates for recently vacated administrative positions. She said she has noticed a draining pool of quality applicants for administrative positions.

"I think this community is really nervous about putting power into one person's hands," Casey said. "They really want everyone to have a seat at the table. I think people are nervous about giving more power to the superintendent. I don't see it that way, but some people might see it as giving her more control."

Peacock said the policy was in no way shaped by the superintendent alone.

"This isn't Judy's (Pastel's) policy," he said. "This is common sense."

Susan Mittler, president of the Ithaca Teacher's Association, called the procedure necessary for competition but was adamant that the policy have clear restrictions to limit its use.

"It has no safeguard or safe net," she said. "Include some of the stakeholders who are critical to this decision."

**Datestamp:** 06/26/2008

## **LACS Commencement: Grads urged to think outside the box**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Pomp and circumstance took a back seat at the graduation ceremony for the Lehman Alternative Community School?s class of 2008 on Wednesday night.

After several student instrumental performances, Principal Joe Greenberg invited the 26 members of the class of 2008 onto the stage at Ithaca College?s Ford Hall.

There, he eschewed ceremony and simply had the students sit down on a blanket, where he passed out organic chocolate milk, cookies and a few stories to chew on before they left for the ?real world.?

He told the class a fable about a girl who saves her father by using lateral, outside-the-box thinking to outwit a cheating money lender.

?Even the most dire problems do have solutions, it?s just that sometimes discovering what it is requires us to think and act differently,? he told them. ?It?s about perceiving what others think is logical, then standing back, looking at the big picture, and focusing in on the parts that have been overlooked.?

LACS is an alternative to Ithaca High School that offers small class sizes and allows students to actively participate in school affairs and design their own education.

Accordingly, the graduation ceremony was more of a performance piece than a farewell celebration. Each senior presented his or her final project before hand, which ranged from Alana Cox?s project to send 110 teddy bears to children in the Dominican Republic, to Antal Spector-Zabusky?s homemade Haptic Radar Device, which allows someone wearing the device to sense the presence of nearby objects using vibrations.

His mother, Stacia Zabusky, said LACS allowed her son to thrive in a small, close relationship.

?I think he?s developed into a leader that would never have happened in another school,? she said. ?The teacher?s dedication to the students is phenomenal. They understood who my son was and helped him to figure out the best he could be.?

So how does she feel to be sending him away to college now?

She paused.

?It?s a bittersweet moment,? she said. ?I can?t believe what the house is going to be like without him.?

Graduate Eva Hall, who attended LACS for just one year, said she instantly felt accepted by the community when she transferred.

?I liked enjoying school every day, looking forward to school, looking forward to the people,? she said. ?It

was a very welcoming environment.?

Founding Principal Dave Lehman was there to watch the students graduate, some of whom he'd known as middle schoolers.

Sarah Brumberg, an LACS science teacher, said the relationships between students and teachers grew beyond the classroom into real friendships.

"I see the student through the years, from middle school to high school," she said. "It's wonderful to see them go off on their big adventures now."

**Datestamp:** 06/25/2008

## **ICSD votes to report distribution, class rank**

### **Teachers urge small class size at Enfield**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The Ithaca City School District's Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday night to slightly alter the reporting of class rank on Ithaca High School transcripts.

Transcripts will now contain a grade distribution chart of the graduating class, and will also denote decile divisions on the charts.

The school will also report weighted and unweighted averages to provide colleges with enough information to make admissions decisions.

Board member Josh Bornstein was against the decile ranking, saying it doesn't help as much as it may harm students.

'Class rank speaks loudly on a transcript,' he said. 'It has a history.'

Board members and Superintendent Judith Pastel have said simply sending the decile ranking is unfair to 90 percent of students who do not make the top 10 percent of grade point averages.

Some college admissions directors have said not reporting rank would not be a disadvantage to student applicants.

Board member Carol Warshawsky said it is clear students will not be hurt if they don't have the decile ranking.

'(Colleges) will look harder,' she said. 'I don't think it's an issue.'

Board president Tom Frank said adding a ranking from one to ten is largely symbolic, and the grade distribution will show how their academic performance relates to the rest of their class.

Board member Seth Peacock's proposal to reintroduce numeric ranking did not pass.

### Enfield class size

A number of Enfield Elementary School teachers told the board that not dividing a planned class of 29 fourth-graders between two teachers would be 'educationally reckless and will set this class up for failure.'

Fourth-grade teacher Diana Andersen said that having so many students in one class was inequitable and would set students up for failure, especially given that a number of the students in the class had special needs or required academic intervention services.

?This is incredibly distressing to us,? she said.

Susan Mittler, president of the Ithaca Teacher's Association, asked the board to hire another teacher so the class could be split into two sections, urging members to not be ?penny wise and pound foolish.?

?If they say we need a section in a school, let's do the right thing,? she said.

Pastel told the assembled teachers that the district would closely monitor the number of students in the class, and would make a decision on whether to make a split by August so as not to disrupt classroom time.

?We'll keep an eye on that,? she said.



**Datestamp:** 06/25/2008

## **A librarian ahead of her time**

### **Boynton library renamed for Brodhead**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Phyllis Brodhead wasn't any ordinary librarian.

Before she died last year, the "mother" of Boynton Middle School was a mentor to students and principals, a library guru with a knowing smile and a technological savvy unmatched by others, friends said. She also didn't fit into any stereotypes of the "nasty" librarian. She was actually nice.

"A lot of school librarians get a bad rap for being sort of nasty and saying "Be quiet" all the time, which makes sense because you're in middle school," said Michael Huffaker, a Boynton Middle School and Ithaca High School graduate. "But she was friendly and even if I was in trouble she never yelled or anything."

About 150 friends and colleagues feted the revered librarian's 31 years of accomplishments Monday night by officially renaming the Boynton Middle School's library the Phyllis B. Brodhead Library Media Center, and placing a plaque in her honor in the center. Brodhead, who retired in 2004, died in 2007. Her four children and her widower, Chuck Brodhead, were in attendance.

Phyllis Brodhead, who brought the school from the age of books into the age of the Internet, was described by many as a selfless person who seemed genuinely interested in the lives of others. When she started work in 1973, the school's library consisted of books, electric typewriters and strip film projectors. By the time she left, there were new computer labs and an emphasis on database searching and thoughtful Internet research.

Fran Kozen, a former PTA president and parent of former Boynton students, said the library was renamed for Brodhead because she had an unique enthusiasm for learning new technology.

"She was an older teacher, but she caught on," she said. "By the time she ended her career the library ended up being the computer lab and the Internet and a whole new way of seeing information. Younger, more able people would have given up."

Brodhead's husband Chuck said technology may have been her passion, but it was her love for students and her dedication to making sure all students were treated equally that was truly memorable.

"She took great joy in helping that kid who was struggling," he said.

Kim Fontana, the district's director of staff development and research, told the audience at the dedication about Brodhead's impact on her during her early years at Boynton as a rookie English teacher.

"She made me feel like I was the best new teacher on the planet and that I was teaching her," Fontana said. "That was crazy. But she knew that both adults and children learned from their strengths."

Fontana noted that Brodhead served as the institutional memory for the middle school, so much so that new principals often came to her for advice.

?Young or old, whether we knew it or not, Phyllis was mentoring us,? she said.

**Datestamp:** 06/24/2008

## **Northeast Principal fulfills pool pledge**

### **Tomasik rewards young readers**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? "We want a cannonball!" the Northeast Elementary School students shouted as their Principal Jeff Tomasik, in a suit and tie, leapt off the diving board and straight into Cass Park Pool on Monday to salute his students' reading achievements.

As he emerged sopping wet from the pool, students crowded around the tall principal like Munchkins, laughing with him ? and at him ? about his damp condition.

"We wanted to see him do it so much," said 11-year-old Mimi Dong. "It was really cool of him."

For three years, Tomasik has offered to perform a bizarre stunt if Northeast kids managed to hit a target number of reading hours in a week. The first year he ran 10 miles on a treadmill, and last year he dyed his hair purple. This year, the school's approximately 500 students had to read for 1,100 hours in a week to get him to go off the deep end in business casual attire.

Turns out, the students wanted to see their principal a soggy mess so much that they completed 1,470 hours in a week ? about three hours per student, said Karen Powers, a third-grade teacher at the school. She said that the fun end-of-the-year wrap up also drives home the message that reading is important, and the daily tallying of reading hours keeps students interested in reading goals.

"It's great to have a principal who gets the message and is willing to get so actively involved in this," she said. "And the kids, they just love it."

Kathy Brand, a mother of three kids at Northeast, stood well outside of splash range and smiled as she watched the man responsible for her kids during the school day swim around in the pool with his tie on.

"He's really willing to do these bizarre things to get his kids to read," she said.

Later as he drip-dried, Tomasik reflected on his somewhat bizarre form of motivation, suggesting that the main impetus for it was to keep kids reading throughout the historically book-empty summer months.

"I think our school goes out of the way to promote reading in a lot of different ways," he said, mentioning faculty efforts, an up-to-date library and computer programs for reading assistance.

Oh, and pool jumping. "Whatever works to get the kids pumped up," he said, as he smiled and water dripped off his nose.

**Datestamp:** 06/24/2008

## **Test results show ICSD above state average**

*Journal Staff*

In the Ithaca City School District, students in grades three through eight generally met or exceeded state standards for math and English proficiency, according to state test results released today.

On average, 78.3 percent of students from grades three through eight scored well enough to meet or exceed standards in the English language portion of the state tests. Compared to the rest of the state, Ithaca's students are above average: Only 69 percent of students achieved the English standards state-wide.

In the third grade overall, 77.5 percent of students met or exceeded standards in English/language arts. In the fourth grade, 80.7 percent of students did. In the fifth grade, 87.4 percent did. In the sixth grade, 77.9 percent did. In the seventh grade, 81.3 did. In the eighth grade, 64.8 percent did.

The third-, fifth-, sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade scores all improved from last year.

One low-performing grade was the third grade of Beverly J. Martin Elementary School, where 47.6 percent of students met or exceeded English/language arts requirements.

Patrick Jensen, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, said the low results could be attributed to the large number of students leaving and enrolling in the school.

"It's hard to measure the impact we have on kids who come in for a year and leave," he said. "If you were to go back eight or nine years, you'd be amazed (at the improvements)."

Jensen noted that the third-grade class of two years ago is now meeting standards at about 65 percent, so improvement has come slowly. He said the district was maintaining smaller class sizes at Beverly J. Martin, adding staff positions and academic intervention services to help

He stressed that overall, the district scores were "impressive."

"You have a lot of schools right now that have shown 10-point increases in their test scores," he said. "We're working very hard to meet the kids' needs."

**Datestamp:** 06/24/2008

## **ICSD mulls future of class rank**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Today the Ithaca City School District?s Board of Education will vote on whether to do away with decile ranking on high school transcripts ? the practice of reporting where a student stands academically in relationship to his or her peers on a numerical scale.

The board?s impending decision on eliminating decile ranking beginning with Ithaca High School?s Class of 2009 is also playing out at other schools across the country, as the reporting of class rank to colleges declines in importance, according to annual studies by the National Association for College Admission Counseling. However, 61 percent of high schools report that they still provide a student?s numeric rank to colleges.

While the high school will not do away with ranking altogether on the transcripts of seniors applying to colleges, it will replace decile ranking with weighted and un-weighted GPAs and the grade distribution of the graduating class, which is broadly seen as a more fair system to the 90 percent of students at the high school who don?t make it into the top 10 percent.

A NACAC report said colleges were able to use class rank as a ?shortcut,? and the elimination of it would require schools to take a more holistic approach to evaluating students.

David Hawkins, director of public policy and research for NACAC, said class rank saves time for colleges but doesn?t preclude them from looking at the student?s larger academic portrait ? and even calculating a student?s rank from available information.

?Even with a rank on a transcript, they?ll often look to the school?s profile to determine how to interpret a high or low class rank,? he said.

Sharon Gublo, the department leader of student services at the high school, said the new system isn?t very different from class rank but will force colleges to look more heavily at other admissions criteria.

?From my perspective, I guess class rank makes it easier for colleges when they?re looking at applications,? she said. ?But any students not in the top rank would benefit by not being ranked.?

At the top four colleges that Ithaca High School seniors applied to ? in order, Cornell University, Tompkins Cortland Community College, Ithaca College and Binghamton University ? heads of admission offices said the elimination of the decile ranking on transcripts wouldn?t hurt applicants, but more information is always better.

?My response to schools considering this is: The more information the schools give us, the better,? said Gerard Turbide, director of admission at Ithaca College. ?The more accurate assessment an admission officer can make about the student?s potential, the better for everyone. I would prefer to have it all.?

The impetus to do away with class rank at many high schools stems from parental and district concerns about

a top heavy system that may disadvantage otherwise high-performing students.

Class rank is used as a factor in awarding about half of institutional scholarships, according to the NACAC.

The new policy is a reaction to errors the high school made in calculating the rank of certain graduating seniors applying to colleges last summer, Superintendent Judith Pastel said.

Pastel said the district is also seeking to eliminate rank because the competition to climb to the top of the class can cause students to take harder, weighted courses and ignore those courses that don't weigh heavier on the ranking scale, like art and music.

"We want students to take tougher course loads, but sometimes youngsters are into the competitive piece so much that they don't avail themselves of these other opportunities," she said at the district's last board meeting.

Sophomore Grace Wang told the board that the ranking system encourages a high level of academic competition, and she and other students think the school shouldn't send both rank and the grade distribution on transcripts.

"Why would we send both if one has a problem?" she said.

Lesli Myers, assistant superintendent for student services, said the current ranking system disadvantages students.

"When you rank one by one by one, the competitiveness that exists is not a good, healthy competitiveness," she said. "Students can be bumped a rank or two down by a hundredth of a point. The competition is nasty, frankly."

Sean P. Kaylor, a vice president for enrollment at Marist College and a member of NACAC, said class rank has outlived its usefulness in many school districts.

"(Ithaca's) not the first community to have this type of concern," he said. "Usually most people end up agreeing that class rank isn't necessary."

Kaylor said only about half of the applications his office sees have a student's rank attached. Although he said it's nice to be able to pick from "the cream of the crop" using class rank, admissions decisions are in no way affected by its absence.

"It made a lot of sense for schools to drop rank," he said. "It was doing a number of students a disservice."

Turbide said about 50 percent of schools send Ithaca College exact ranking information, instead relying on grade distribution systems like Ithaca High School is considering. He said the culture of ranking is ingrained in society, and it's hard to eliminate from a student's application.

"I think this is a society that in many realms likes rankings," he said. "It speaks to larger issues for us as human beings."

But Brian Hazlett, Binghamton University's director of undergraduate recruitment, said his office understands that class rank, in today's society, may not mean as much as it once did.

"Ithaca is an extremely strong high school with a good reputation," he said. "We know there's very little difference between a number two and a number 15 (student)."

Kurt Komaromi is a parent with two children at the high school. His perspective is simple: Give the colleges all the information the school can, even if that means sending both class rank and a grade distribution chart with a transcript.

"I think the ranking is simpler for people to understand and relate to," he said. "I can even recall when I was in high school what my ranking was."

**Datestamp:** 06/23/2008

## **Rain-soaked festival ends with attempt at Guinness World Record**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? As one, close to 6,000 Ithacans stood up on Sunday ? each with two fingers thrust to the sun-drenched sky ? in support of world peace, and in the shape of a peace sign.

The massive human peace sign, which stretched from one end of the field in Stewart Park to the other, was composed of 5,814 festival-goers who stood for 20 minutes as volunteers recorded the crowd's attempt to set a Guinness World Record by creating the largest human peace sign.

?These people are walking away inspired,? said Ithaca High School sophomore Trevor Dougherty, the organizer of the attempt. ?We're not going to trash any weapons because of this, but if everyone has the same idea in their mind, that they are for coming together in peace and unity, then there's a community started.?

As far as he knows, the largest human peace sign so far was a gathering of 2,500 people at the University of Michigan, so unofficially, Ithaca has set the record. They still have to wait on the Guinness World Record's official decision, though.

A video of the event will be released on Youtube.com within the next few weeks, Dougherty said. A viral video he made last year for the site promoting world peace was watched more than 700,000 times and inspired him to organize this event, he said.

?We were just hoping to get into the thousands,? he said. ?I'm totally ecstatic.?

The attempt capped off the three-day Ithaca Festival, which was dampened by rain at times and hampered by a change in date and location but largely still successful, according to organizers.

Throughout the day, flying discs whizzed through the air as bands played across Stewart Park, and children and adults alike wrote about what peace meant to them. Colorful community murals adorned the festival grounds, and drummers kept people on a rhythm.

First-year festival director Jacob Roberts, enjoying the sun with his shirt off Sunday, said success was marked by a number of different benchmarks: at least 1,700 people marched in Friday's parade ? the largest turnout ever; at least 3,000 people showed up to dine on The Commons even as the world record attempt was occurring; and everyone seemed to be having fun in Sunday's good weather.

?To a lot of the changes, people are saying, ?You're doing the right thing, it'll take a few years for people to pick up on it,?? he said.

Roberts addressed the fact that food vendors operating at Stewart Park were disappointed on Friday and Saturday because rain drove their customers away, saying he sympathized, but Sunday should make up for it.

?The festival is dependent on Mother Nature,? he said. ?That's [the vendors'] livelihood, but you know what,



they're doing gangbusters rights now.?

Avtar Singh, who was cooking at New Delhi Diamond's tent, said the rain earlier in the weekend left them with about half their food uneaten.

?I think the [vendors] on The Commons did more business than people did [in Stewart Park],? he said.

Godfrey Higgs, who was one of the thousands of Ithacans making up the peace sign, said the world record attempt was a chance to make a statement as a community.

?It's a great thing to say with a lot of people,? he said.

**Datestamp:** 06/23/2008

## **Shooting leads to attempted murder charge**

### **Victim critical after incident Saturday at apartment**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Police have charged a 20-year-old Ithaca man with attempted murder in a shooting Saturday morning at Parkside Gardens Apartments.

Darrell Bailey Jr. is due back in court Wednesday after being charged with second-degree attempted murder and first-degree assault, according to the Ithaca Police Department. He was arraigned in Ithaca City Court late Saturday and is being held without bail at the Tompkins County jail.

The victim, a 27-year-old man, was in critical condition at a regional trauma center, according to Ithaca police. The police department did not disclose the name of the hospital for his safety. On Sunday, police would not disclose any change in his condition, nor would they give the number of the apartment where the shooting occurred, or the motive for the crime.

Police became involved after shots were reported shortly before 3 a.m. Saturday. When officers arrived at the apartment complex, between South and Wood streets near the city skate park, they learned the victim had already been taken to Cayuga Medical Center by an associate.

Children played in their yards at Parkside Gardens on Sunday afternoon, and several residents sat on their porches.

Jim McGuire, who has lived at the apartments for 11 years, said the gunshots woke him up Saturday morning. He's considering moving out because of the frequent violence and police calls.

"This place is just too much, it isn't safe," he said. "It's too dangerous ? I don't want to be shot."

The apartment complex was the site of another shooting in October 2003, when police found Enrique "Ricky" Chavez, 19, shot in the chest at 101 Parkside Gardens. He died at the scene, and later his friend, Tarrant Sheppard, was acquitted of second-degree manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide and tampering with physical evidence in connection with the shooting.

Sheppard did receive the maximum prison sentence for the one charge he was found guilty of ? third-degree criminal possession of a weapon.

New resident Jennifer Sullivan said the recent shooting hasn't made her any more afraid to live there, but she'd like to have a neighborhood meeting to discuss how to prevent more violence from occurring.

"It seems like there's already a lot of unity, people get along and look out for each other's kids, but we need a sort of human neighborhood watch dog," she said.

The police ask that anyone with information about the shooting call the police department at 272-9973.

**Datestamp:** 06/23/2008

## **ICSD welcoming new principals**

### *Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Two new principals start their jobs at local elementary schools next month, bringing with them dozens of years of teaching experience within and outside the Ithaca City School District.

Sloan Sheridan–Thomas, an English teacher at DeWitt Middle School since 1982, was appointed principal at Belle Sherman Elementary School. She starts on July 7.

Michael Simons, who has taught at Belle Sherman and Fall Creek elementary schools, was appointed principal of Enfield Elementary School. He starts on July 25.

### Sloan Sheridan–Thomas

As Belle Sherman's new principal, Sloan Sheridan–Thomas will be stepping into a familiar position ? she's been certified as a school district administrator since 2005. She said her biggest priority is giving teachers freedom and energy to teach and getting students enthusiastic about learning.

?I know what good teaching looks like, and I know I could rejuvenate teachers who are burned out, because I've gone through all those stages myself,? she said.

Throughout her career, she's held positions of leadership, as a department chair of English–Language Arts, chairperson of an English curriculum committee, and a member of the districts curriculum council and the Dewitt anti–bias committee.

Jeff Spence, the outgoing interim principal of Belle Sherman, said the biggest difficulty Sheridan–Thomas will encounter is educating children with serious emotional, physical and mental problems.

?Schools aren't always set up for that, we're not a therapeutic environment,? he said. ?But the staff is fantastic and we've really addressed the student needs and gotten kids to respect themselves and each other.?

Sheridan–Thomas said she plans to be a very visible ?pocket principal? ? someone who always has something interesting in her pockets to teach students about.

?Like, ?Hey, have you ever seen a geode??? she said. ?So I can spark that interest.?

She said the job will allow her to impact more people and be the face for the school, which she said she plans to do for some time.

?I'm hoping to be at Belle Sherman until I retire,? she said. ?This is exactly my career goal.?

### Michael Simons

Enfield Elementary School's new principal once brought a hive full of living bees into his fourth-grade classroom.

But rest assured, parents: when Michael Simons walks into the school this coming school year, he won't be bringing any stinging insects. Instead, he said the bee experiment "no children were harmed, for the record" shows that his enthusiasm for science and social studies will lead him to find ways for students to enrich themselves while still learning core skills like math and reading.

"I want to free teachers up while keeping their eyes on (the state curriculum)," he said. "There's a lot of ways to get at the content without just focusing on test-taking strategies."

Simons has been the assistant principal at Dryden Elementary School for the past three years. Before that he was a fourth grade teacher at Belle Sherman and a kindergarten and second-grade teacher at Fall Creek Elementary School. He's served on various district-wide curriculum committees as well.

He plans to be a very visible principal, he said; he'll be eating lunch with the students in the cafeteria for at least his first few weeks.

He said plans to address equity issues by keeping standards uniformly high for all students.

"My mission's [to make] sure you can't predict where children are because of the color of their skin or the class they are," he said.

**Datestamp:** 06/19/2008

## **Outgoing principal trumpets IHS successes**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Principal Joe Wilson spoke Wednesday about the good news at Ithaca High School that ?you probably don?t know about.?

Wilson, who is entering his fifth and final year as principal, primarily highlighted what he called the school?s ?remarkable? success in reducing disciplinary problems and increasing high graduation rates and standardized test scores in his speech to the Ithaca Rotary Club at the Holiday Inn.

Former mayor Alan Cohen introduced Wilson, telling the audience that ?the high school is often in the news because of bad news, and there are actually a lot of good things that also happens in our schools (that) don?t get the same visibility.?

Wilson explained the unique challenges to teaching and administering the more than 1,500 students at the high school, with a broad range of academic skills, ethnicities, socio-economic background, religious beliefs and even hairstyles.

?We have a range of students, from those who can?t read to those who will be Nobel Laureate nominees in 15 years,? he said.

He got emotional when he spoke about the dedication of the school?s faculty and staff to the community?s students.

?I will confess to you, I tear up when I think about the people who are serving your young people, and how sincerely they want all of (them) to succeed,? he said.

The thrust of his speech revolved around the school?s improving statistics. High school students scored above the national average in SATs. Fifty-five percent of all seniors take Advanced Placement exams, and 33 percent of all juniors do, he said. The school was named a ?Best American High School? for the fifth year in a row by Newsweek magazine. In recent years, 91 percent of students have said they?re going on to college after graduation. He also noted that 89 percent of white students and 91 percent of black students graduate after four or five years.

In terms of discipline, Wilson noted the 50 percent reduction in disciplinary referrals and 48 percent reduction in number of suspensions in the past year and said that the drop in numbers was caused by increasingly strong relationships between students and their teachers.

?Adults are building relationships to young people, and the payoff has been dramatic,? he said.

Relationships between upperclassmen and freshmen have also been improved, thanks to a program that brings the two groups together to help guide the young students in their first year, Wilson said. In addition, building relations between students from antagonistic groups was accomplished by bringing students together

to talk directly to each other, he said.

Dale Flinn, president of the Rotary Club, said the nature of Wilson's job forced him to be "permanently between a rock and a hard place."

"A lot of the good stuff happens behind the scenes, so it just doesn't show up as much in the public eye," he said.

**Datestamp:** 06/19/2008

## **State Senate passes bill banning smoking in dorm rooms**

*Journal Staff*

The New York state Senate passed legislation this week that would ban smoking in all dorms and residence halls of public and private colleges and universities in the state.

The bill amends previous legislation that banned smoking in all public school residence halls starting in 2007 but not at private institutions. This current law, passed Monday, closes that loophole.

According to the bill, prohibiting smoking in dormitories will eliminate the danger of second-hand smoke, mitigate fire risks and prevent students from becoming smokers.

But the legislature may be behind the curve, at least locally: Schools like Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College have already banned smoking in their on-campus residence halls.

Cornell banned smoking in dorms five years ago, according to Simeon Moss, the university's director of press relations, and Ithaca College almost two years ago. Bonnie Solt-Prunty, Ithaca's director of residential life, said the school moved to ban smoking after receiving a number of complaints from parents and students about the potential dangers of second-hand smoke.

"Colleges felt a responsibility to respond to increasing evidence that second-hand smoke is harmful," she said.

The bill cites a study from Harvard University that found students entering college as nonsmokers are 40 percent less likely to take up smoking when they live in smoke-free dorms.

The bill, still not signed into law by Gov. David Paterson, was sponsored by Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, D-Westchester, and lauded by the American Lung Association as a step to protect college students from second-hand smoke and prevent them from becoming addicted.



**Datestamp:** 06/18/2008

## **?New math? at Northeast Elementary**

### **Dance, repetition reinforces multiplication**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? At first, it might seem like an odd way to learn math. As part of their multiplication practice, Northeast Elementary School students in Margaret Steinacher?s first-grade class dance, shout and clap.

But it?s working. Ask most first-graders to multiply big numbers, and you?ll get many blank stares. Ask these first graders what eight times nine is, and every one of them knows the answer:

?Seventy-two!? they shout.

Don?t even get them started on six times six. Piece of cake, they say.

?Oh that?s so easy. Thirty-six!?

The technique they?re using to learn skip counting and multiplication combines math with movement and dance, a technique advanced by author and district parent Suzy Kuntz as a way to enhance enthusiasm and ability for learning math in elementary school children.

In one exercise, students perform a dance routine with a number of steps equal to the number they?re counting by, and clap and shout whenever they reach a multiple of a certain number to reinforce the learning.

?I see this method as revolutionizing the way math is taught,? Kuntz said, as the students filed out of the little classroom where their names are written on their desks and the chair feet are cushioned by tennis balls. ?Combine movement with it, make it fun, and there?s a body of research out there that says learning is enhanced.?

The 10-week pilot program is somewhat advanced for a first-grade class ? usually, Steinacher said, the students won?t learn skip counting beyond multiples of five.

The collaboration between Kuntz and the class started because she wanted to explore how the techniques in her new book, ?Multiply with Me,? transferred to the classroom.

Last Thursday, the students performed their math dance, dressed as monkeys, for an audience of families, teachers and friends.

As a teacher, author, educational consultant and longtime actuary, Kuntz has championed the idea that math can be fun and easy. Too often, she said, students are alienated by the subject early on.

?In the past it was all flashcards,? Kuntz said. ?But without a firm foundation in these basic skills, (children are) almost guaranteed to find math frustrating. They may also come to the conclusion that they are bad at

math.?

Dani Novak, an associate professor of mathematics at Ithaca College, said he wishes he could see more innovative approaches such as Kuntz's to teaching math in the early grades, but that standardized testing often prevents it from occurring.

"Math can be fun," he said. "For most people, the way it's taught isn't so much fun. Multiplication is based on rhythm, so if kids get the feel for this, then they actually start feeling the mathematics."

Steinacher said that because there's a range of math abilities between the students in her class, it's hard to find a one-size-fits-all program.

"This is the perfect fit for everyone," Steinacher said. "Everyone feels successful."

Learning math is often a struggle for first-graders, she said, especially at the end of a long, hot day, when all they seem to want to do is wiggle.

"At the end of the day when it's hot, the kids are like, 'Oh no,' but movement changes that," she said.

Although several students in the class expressed mild embarrassment with the dance moves they did, most said they liked learning math by jumping and clapping.

"I already knew multiplying before, but I never knew threes, fours, sixes, sevens, eights and nines," first-grader Andrew Kim said. "And the dancing was fun."

Kuntz said she's waiting to hear whether she'll receive a grant to distribute copies of her books to every second-grade student in the school district.

The idea has also reached the ears of school administrators such as Principal Jeff Tomasik, who said he "and the kids" really like the idea.

"I think the kids really like the fact that math is linked to movement," Tomasik said. "Before we would want to send it to other classes we still need more information, but the initial results look promising, and the kids are excited."

**Datestamp:** 06/18/2008

## **Cornell e-mail expected back on line today**

### *Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Cornell University?s e-mail system has been out of service since noon Sunday and isn?t expected to be working again until today.

Cornell Information Technology staff and the e-mail vendor, Sun Microsystems, have been working ?round the clock? to restore e-mail access to campus, said Simeon Moss, director of press relations.

The university is attempting to fully restore service by 9 a.m. today but will bring the e-mail back in a ?bare-bones? state if that is not successful. In that case, individuals would not be able to access old e-mails in the system but will be able to send and receive new mail.

For now, faculty and staff have been encouraged to set their Cornell e-mail accounts to forward items to a private Gmail, Yahoo or MSN e-mail account.

The university is trying to ensure faculty, staff and student e-mail archives are backed up and no incoming messages are lost.

CIT will continue to post updates hourly at: <http://networkstatus.cit.cornell.edu>.

Other departmental e-mail systems, including the pilot Exchange system, are working but cannot communicate with the Cornell post offices, according to an update on the university?s Web site.

All messages that have been sent to any addresses that have arrived since the failure have been queued and will be delivered.

**Datestamp:** 06/17/2008

## **False alarms increase costs for IFD, taxpayers**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? A big point of contention for Ithaca Fire Chief Brian Wilbur is the number of false alarms his firefighters must respond to every year Cornell University and Ithaca College, which cost the city and town tens of thousands of dollars every year.

According to Ithaca College data, in the 2007–08 school year, 135 alarms went off. The fire department reports that in 2007, the department responded to 131 false alarms on campus, and 222 calls in total.

In 2007, every call cost the fire department at least \$576. The fire department sends a ladder truck, a fire engine and a chief's vehicle to the site of each alarm, and must pay seven employees who respond to each call. The average hourly rate for firefighters in 2008 is \$42.50 with fringe benefits included.

The 131 false alarms the department responded to at Ithaca College cost \$75,456, according to Wilbur.

In addition, the department's fuel costs have shot up by 60 percent in the past year, Wilbur said.

In comparison, 2007 saw the fire department respond to 564 total calls and 326 false fire alarms at Cornell; 2,773 calls and 919 false calls in the city of Ithaca; and 729 calls and 105 false calls in the town of Ithaca.

Wilbur said that because it has so many false alarms, the college should at least chip in to help the fire department keep pace with rising fuel costs without having to burden town taxpayers even more. Beyond just rising costs, because each call takes an average of 20 minutes to respond to, firefighters may be unavailable when real emergencies occur.

Dave Maley, Ithaca College's associate director of media relations, said false alarms are a fact of life on college campuses, but that the school endeavors to reduce the number of alarms through education and regular testing of monitoring systems.

The educational programs the college has implemented haven't had an apparent reducing effect: The number of calls to Ithaca's campus has risen steadily, from 158 in 2002 to 222 last year.

Maley also said the college's Environmental Health and Safety officers are trained to respond to minor fires so the fire department doesn't have to.

"We're fortunate that we don't have a great number of malicious false alarms," Maley said. "But dust in a smoke detector can set off fire alarms, and we also have alarms caused by burnt food, but that's an alarm acting as it's supposed to. We do work very hard to limit the number of alarms we have on campus by educating the campus community and having a quick response from our officers to prevent the IFD from having to respond to calls."

**Datestamp:** 06/17/2008

## **Fire fee debate simmers**

### **Town considers seeking IC contribution**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The debate over the lack of fire protection payments from Ithaca College is heating up again.

Town of Ithaca Supervisor Herb Engman and Ithaca Fire Chief Brian Wilbur recently said with Ithaca College's appointment of a new president, the time is right to resume discussions about sharing the cost of the town's fire protection services. They'd like the college to enter into an agreement with the town in which it will contribute monetarily to the Ithaca Fire Department's annual budget because it uses a substantial amount of municipal services.

In 2007, Ithaca College accounted for 5.1 percent of all calls, and 3 percent of false calls, according to fire department figures.

Ithaca College officials say it's not their responsibility or obligation as a tax-exempt institution to pay taxes for municipal services and that they are providing other forms of compensation besides money, like land for a fire station on South Hill.

Engman said Ithaca College has a civic responsibility to contribute funding to the Ithaca Fire Department's budget to ease the tax burden on local residents. The town pays the city \$2.2 million every year for fire protection services, which must be collected from taxpayers.

?They feel that their presence in the community provides salaries, an additional tax base, and other benefits,? Engman said. ?The problem comes back to the fact that there's such a high percentage of tax-exempt property that the burden placed on taxable properties is extraordinary.?

Engman said that he'd like to bring the issue back to the table when incoming president Thomas Rochon assumes the position on July 1. Previously, Ithaca College's firm stance has been to not make payments, said Cathy Valentino, former town supervisor.

?IC has always felt pretty strongly that just to make payments was not how they wanted to do it,? Valentino said. ?But [retiring president Peggy] Williams was always open to thinking about different ways to do it.?

#### **IC's contributions**

Ithaca College does not contribute money to the Ithaca Fire Department, but has provided the town with donated land for the South Hill Fire Station and has supported annual firefighter training programs in the past, according to Carl Sgrecci, the college's vice president for finance and administration.

?I'm not aware in recent years that we'd had any kind of overtures to discuss that further,? he said. ?If it's something they want to talk about, they should ask.?

In addition, after the school purchased the Circle Apartments complex years ago, Ithaca College offered to voluntarily keep it on the tax roll, something it didn't have to do, he said.

In 2004, the college also provided space behind the Towers residence halls for one of the towers for the new countywide emergency communications system. In the 2007–08 fiscal year, Ithaca College paid a total of \$335,053 in taxes to the taxing entities in which that property is located – Tompkins County, the Town of Ithaca, and the Ithaca City School District.

Sgrecci pointed out that colleges, as tax-exempt institutions, aren't required to pay anything to the municipalities in which they are located. The money, land and other resources Ithaca College can choose to contribute is all voluntary.

Sgrecci said because the college is primarily funded by student fees, it has a policy that it will not use that money to support other not-for-profit organizations like the town.

"It's all a question of how we use the funds we have," he said. "We're a tax-exempt institution and we take advantage of what that offers us. But we're conscious of the community and we're willing to open up discussions."

Engman said the town is grateful for the college's assistance, but the one-time donations don't stack up over time.

"Once the (South Hill) fire house is up, all the expenses come along," he said. "Any amount would be helpful, otherwise we have to tax the taxpayer to help with the fire protection of Ithaca College."

#### Cornell's agreement

Across town, Cornell University has been paying for fire protection services since 1967, and formalized the agreement in a 1995 memo of understanding between Cornell's leadership and then-mayor Ben Nichols.

The memo acknowledged that Cornell's presence "creates demands in the community for municipal services, particularly in the area of fire protection."

Cornell contributes an annual sum of money that increases every year by the Consumer Price Index. In 2007, \$1.1 million was given to the city, and the fire department received a 60 percent share totaling \$660,000, said Simeon Moss, Cornell's director of press relations.

Moss said the university is the only one in the state that voluntarily contributes to municipal fire services, as far as he's aware.

"The relationship between Cornell and the city is important to both entities," he said.

Dave Maley, Ithaca College's associate director of media relations, said it's not easy to compare the two institutions' relationships with their appropriate municipalities, because Cornell's size, endowment, and student body dwarfs Ithaca College's. Cornell has an endowment of \$5.4 billion and an enrollment of 19,639 on its Ithaca campus, compared to Ithaca College's \$237 million endowment and enrollment of 6,660 students.

"I don't think it makes sense to try to draw a comparison between how the two operate and the way they

interact with the city or town," Maley said.

Maley pointed to the college's payment of taxes for the Circle Apartments complex south of campus as proof the school is contributing to the town's coffers. He also stressed that any funding decisions would be handled by the college's Board of Trustees.

"We certainly recognize that there are other ways to contribute other than simply providing dollars, and we try to contribute in those," he said.

Fresh dialogue

Engman said he'd like to start off a fresh dialogue between the town and the campus's new president Rochon about a resolution to the issue that's amicable to both sides.

"I've had conversations with Peggy (Williams), Carl (Sgrecci) and the Board of Trustees, but knowing that everything was in transition mode, I haven't pushed to extend those conversations, but I'd love to have another one," he said.

In an interview from his previous job at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, Rochon said he recognizes the college's obligation but also recognizes that the college has provided other non-monetary resources.

"I regard this as an ongoing dialogue on how Ithaca College can compensate for the town and city services, but I certainly don't have a substantive position on that," he said. "I do want to point out that there are solutions to that that don't involve cash."

Melinda Staniszewska, a resident of Coddington Road and a taxpayer in the Town of Ithaca, said providing funding for fire protection could extend an olive branch to residents.

"Here we could have the college show some good will," she said.

Engman pointed to the town's approval of the college's environmental impact statement and preliminary site plan approval for the new Athletics and Events Center as examples of their cooperation in the town-gown relationship.

"We have to be mutually supportive in order to provide the wonderful services that we do in both directions," he said.

**Datestamp:** 06/17/2008

## **CU conference to explore modern research**

### *Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? How is the Internet changing research? And how can students be convinced to stop citing Wikipedia and use books instead?

Those are some of the questions being considered at Cornell's first conference on the changing landscape of undergraduate research. The answers are more complicated.

?It's not an either/or ? we need both,? said Charlotte Davis, a graduate of Cornell University, as she and current undergraduates shared their experiences doing research in the library and online with a group of librarians, faculty and staff members on Cornell's campus Monday.

The undergraduate panel kicked off a weeklong conference on information competency and how to address what the university calls ?a growing national concern? over student preparedness. The conference seeks to examine why many of today's tech-savvy students are unable to understand how to access quality information, get reliable results and present that information effectively and with accurate citations.

But faculty don't want to only teach book and journal research ? what they learned in college ? so they need a primer in how to best teach these new techniques, said David Way, the university's director of instructional support.

?Many of us older people grew up in a different time, and now students have new needs,? he said. ?So we're trying to see what it looks like from the student's perspective.?

During the weeklong Institute for Undergraduate Information Competency, funded by the initiative of the same name, library research thinkers aim to develop a plan to make sure students possess the skills needed to find, assess and analyze information and its reputability. Some of the topics they'll cover include digital literacy, the process of crafting an effective research assignment and how to teach information assessment ? the ability to discern whether a Wikipedia entry is accurate, for example.

Leah Solla, the university's chemistry librarian, said many times students feel overwhelmed when they first approach a research paper by looking online.

?It's one of those cases where more isn't better ? we're drowning in more information,? she said. ?The Internet's been here over 10 years, and people have grown up in the digital age now. There wasn't always this level of information available so readily. Part of it is learning how to work your way to the quality through the chaff.?

On the first day, the student panel ? all of whom have worked in a campus library ? brought up concerns with educators, including the intimidation factor of the library as a place for research, the often-spotty availability of articles on online databases and the ease of researching from home with search engines like ProQuest and Lexis-Nexis.



"It's really hard to be told, "Back in my day we had to use books," because we didn't grow up that way," said Corinne Newhart, a recent graduate, who advocated more easily searchable databases of library material. "You can get everything online, and it's much easier to search through."

Panelist Eujan Park said though she noticed many of her peers were looking through un-credited sources like Wikipedia most of the time, the site was still a good place to start research. But she noted that much new research being published is available online first.

"It's a lot harder to find them in books anymore," she said.

But the students also recognized the value of books for finding historical references and obscure information. Lesley Hernandez, a panelist, said she had to hit the books for a research paper in which the information she was looking for was in Spanish.

"We're much too reliant on the Internet," she said. "Even today, there's a value to doing research with the books."

While the day offered the opportunity for librarians to learn about their weak points, they also got to hear about the success stories. Davis praised the librarians' accessibility and use of instant messenger services to help students get answers and said she loved the challenge of researching a paper while surrounded by stacks of books.

"I like finding my way through materials, and cracking it open is like a little puzzle," she said.

The group hopes to send faculty members back to their separate departments to serve as "change agents" and take the things they've learned and integrate the lessons into their class research projects.

"We want to have students who will come out of Cornell with better skills, things they need to use," said Camille Andrews, a co-director of the initiative.

**Datestamp:** 06/16/2008

## **New Orleans pastor returns to Ithaca**

### **Davenport thanks sister city for its support, says more needed**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Pastor Bruce Davenport is back.

Davenport, the 56-year-old leader of the St. John #5 Faith Church and a national spokesman for his devastated section of the City of New Orleans, is in Ithaca for the coming week to drum up more support in the 7th Ward's official sister city.

While Davenport is in the city, he'll meet with school children, local officials and even get a chance to march in the Ithaca Festival's parade.

Davenport said during the several visits he's made here, the financial and emotional support he's received from Ithaca residents has been overwhelming.

"Ithaca gives us the strength to go back and say, "Help is coming," he said. "Also, in New Orleans, they never invited me to be in no parade."

This time, he's brought along his wife, Deborah, who's a partner in his efforts to rebuild his shattered community, and two friends, Pastor Jerry Darby and his wife, Norma, who were able to return to New Orleans temporarily since taking refuge in Texas when Hurricane Katrina hit almost three years ago.

On Sunday, EcoVillage residents like Mike Ellis welcomed the Davenports and the Darbys into their community for a short time, where they had a picnic and met with old friends, many of whom Davenport knew by name.

Ellis, the co-director of Love Knows No Bounds, has coordinated the Ithaca area's efforts to help the citizens of New Orleans, including several trips to clean up neighborhoods and build new homes, at least nine truckloads of donated furniture, and about \$50,000 in donated funds. The organization is also providing floor plans for simple, sustainable and efficient homes.

Davenport's visit helps people reconnect with the progress they're making in New Orleans, Ellis said.

"Practically, it's also a chance to get them out of the city," he said. "They have the whole community relying on them all the time, so for them to get a break and have the fresh air and beauty of Ithaca is really restoring for them."

Spoken in the bucolic surroundings of EcoVillage, Davenport's words seemed out of place as he described what a living hell his neighborhood has become.

Teen pregnancies are up, high school drop-out rates are up, violence is up, municipal services are

non-existent, low-income people are being driven out and the city's government has forgotten about the people in favor of tourists and the New Orleans Saints, he said.

With him, he carries a binder thick with rejection letters from agencies he requested aid from.

"We're in the Guinness Book of World Records for the amount of 'no's' we've gotten from them," he said.

Davenport's friend Pastor Darby said the rebuilding of their neighborhoods around the churches is so important because for many people in New Orleans, church is a large part of their life, a meeting place and a community support system.

"There's a myth to some extent that things are better than they seem, but they're not," Darby said. "They're still a lot to do. We want to make it known how much we appreciate the love we've been given, but that we need so much more help to rebuild both our church and the houses."

Ellis pointed out that this project is community wide; hundreds have people have donated or volunteered in New Orleans. Even little Ithacans like his daughter Emma are helping out "she raised \$40 with a 'pretty rock' sale.

"I saw pictures of houses smashed together, so I wanted to help out," she said. "I feel sorry for people who don't have houses or nice things."

**Datestamp:** 06/16/2008

## **CU grad awarded \$100K for inventions to help poor**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? A one-time Ithaca resident and graduate of Cornell University was awarded \$100,000 in April for his work in lifting thousands of poor African farmers out of poverty.

Martin Fisher, the co-founder and CEO of the not-for-profit social enterprise KickStart, received the award in conjunction with the 2008 Lemelson-MIT Award for Sustainability. He will receive the award at the second annual EurekaFest, which celebrates the inventive spirit, on June 25-28.

Fisher's life's work has been to invent and market inventions like affordable, human-powered irrigation pumps for poor farmers in rural Africa, which allow them to double or triple their family incomes.

"They're always looking to make them more easily for women and children," said Josh Schuler, the executive director of the Lemelson-MIT program. "He's developed a full range of products that use the human body to create pressure and pump water to where it's needed."

The other facet to his sustainability strategy is to have the manufacturing of products located within the countries they are sold, to encourage wealth development and local sustainability.

"These are not handouts," Schuler said. "He's quite adamant about that. You need to create a business model. If they leave, it's still going to go. And that's huge."

The Lemelson-MIT Program is meant to encourage the inventors of sustainable solutions to real-world problems.

Fisher graduated from Cornell University in 1979 and then received his Ph.D. from Stanford University. His mother, Sorrel Fisher, who now lives in Maryland, founded the Ithaca Festival in 1977. Martin Fisher was born in London, moved to Ithaca when he was 7 and attended Cayuga Elementary School and Ithaca High School.

His mother said her son deserve the award because his "adventurous and imaginative" ideas are needed in poor countries.

"He's done some tremendous things," she said. "Certainly now the need for what he's doing is more than ever."

**Datestamp:** 06/13/2008

### **Enfield school closed today due to water pipe clogging**

*From Journal Staff Reports*

ITHACA ? Enfield Elementary School will remained closed for students today due to a clogged water line, Ithaca City School District Superintendent Judith Pastel said Thursday night.

Enfield staff are expected to report to school for work, where they will be directed to temporary school locations.

On Thursday students at Enfield Elementary School were bused to Beverly J. Martin Elementary School Thursday morning because a malfunction of the school's well water supply left the building without water. The problem was originally thought to be a faulty pump. School officials now believe the problem may also include a blockage or a leak in the water line. Repairs are expected to be completed before Monday so the school's classes can resume next week, Pastel said.

Around 200 students were affected by the move Thursday, because the fifth-grade pupils had already left the school on a previously scheduled field trip.

**Datestamp:** 06/13/2008

## **Briefly in Tompkins**

### **ITHACA**

#### **Two new principals appointed at ICSD**

The Ithaca City School District announced the appointment of two new principals to two of the area's elementary schools Tuesday.

Sloan Sheridan–Thomas was appointed principal at Belle Sherman Elementary School. She starts July 7.

Michael Simons was appointed principal of Enfield Elementary School. He starts July 25.

#### **GIAC festival is Saturday**

The Greater Ithaca Activities Center will hold the annual GIAC Festival from noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, June 14. This year's theme is "GIAC, it is a State of Mind."

There will be a free music with a show starring local community talent at 2 p.m. Free games, a blow up bounce house and family races and games will also be available. The GIAC adult program will feature a cake wheel. GIAC is seeking vendors for the festival. Those interested can contact Michael Thomas at 272–3622.

**Datestamp:** 06/11/2008

## **Cornell grad to ride cross county for cancer research**

*Journal Staff*

Monday, Cornell University graduate Philip Haar and his father Jack embarked on a journey to honor a friend whose life was cut short by cancer.

This summer, the two will bike more than 4,000 miles ? across the United States ? starting with ?their rear wheels in the Pacific Ocean? near Astoria, Ore. They?ll end up in Yorktown, Va., 10 weeks later, if everything goes according to plan.

The ?Ride for Jim? is meant to honor the life of Dr. Jim Popp, a friend of the Haar family and a co-worker of Jack Haar. Popp died last year, at 45, of a malignant sarcoma in his leg.

?When I learned he had been diagnosed with pretty much untreatable cancer, we decided to do it in his memory,? Jack Haar said.

Along the way, Philip, 33, and Jack, 65, will solicit donations for a cancer research fund and raise awareness about the disease. When they reach Virginia they?ll donate all the money they raised to the Medical College of Virginia, where Jack is a professor and where Popp was an immunology researcher. So far, the father-son pair has raised 10 percent of their goal, or about \$5,000.

?It really struck us that someone so young, athletic and productive could be taken so quickly,? Philip Haar said. ?It?s just amazing how many people?s lives have been touched by cancer. There?s so much research to be done, and that?s the purpose of the ride.?

They?ll be joined for various stretches of the road by family and friends but will complete most of the epic bike ride by themselves. Both father and son will be carrying about 30 pounds of equipment each, and they?ll make high-energy meals like pasta and soup to stay strong.

For more information on their trip or to donate to the research fund, visit [www.rideforjim.org](http://www.rideforjim.org).

The exertion isn?t anything unusual for them ? the junior Haar was in the Air Force for a decade before receiving his master?s in business from Cornell, and his father bikes or runs six days a week. The two of them also biked in the Register?s Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa, a 450-mile trek across the state that they completed in the face of ?monsoon-like? rains. Now, they?ve set their sights a bit higher ? or longer.

?We wanted to try a bit of a longer ride that was more flexible,? Philip Haar said.

For Philip Haar, the ride will have only just begun once they reach the eastern seaboard ? he?ll be joining friends soon after for a week-long bike trip from Telluride, Co. to Moab, Utah. Friend David Marr, who graduated with him, said that?s just the kind of person Haar is.

?Phil doesn?t come across as being an extreme guy, and that?s one of the most interesting things about him,?

Marr said. "He's extremely understated, and everything he does, he does well."

Jack Haar said he's excited to spend some quality time with his son and get a chance to complete this journey while he's still in good shape.

"I'm at the age where I have to admit that I don't know for how many years I could still do this," he said.



**Datestamp:** 06/11/2008

## **ICSD debates eliminating class rank**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Class rank may get expelled from Ithaca High School this fall.

At the Ithaca City School District Board of Education meeting Tuesday night, students and board members debated the merits of decile ranking for students applying to college ? in which the highest-achieving students are ranked as in the top 10 percent of their class ? against grade point average distribution, which shows college admissions offices how each student falls on a spectrum.

The board will vote on June 24 to either keep or do away with the current system of decile ranking, which was characterized by many at the meeting as disadvantageous to all students not in the top 10 percent of their class.

?The decile system really only helps the first decile, and barely the second decile,? said Kaku Ansah, an Ithaca High senior present at the meeting. ?With grade distribution you?re actually helping all the other students and you?re not hurting the (top) students.?

If rank is eliminated, the high school will send out weighted and unweighted grade point averages ? generally, honors classes are weighted more heavily ? on transcripts, beginning with the Class of 2009. Colleges will also receive a profile of Ithaca High School and a distribution of student GPAs.

Board member Bradley Grainger, citing a report from the National Association for College Admission Counseling, said the school should send out both class rank and the grade distribution, even though class rank is declining, because 92 percent of high schools regularly report class rank and colleges still consider it to be important when considering applicants.

?I like grade distribution, and I want the rank to go with it as well,? he said. ?Our object is not to disadvantage students, so I think we should err on the side of more information.?

Superintendent Judith Pastel said the proposal to eliminate class rank began last fall when the high school made errors in calculating the rank of certain graduating seniors applying to colleges.

She?s in favor of the grade distribution because the competition to climb to the top of the class rank can cause students to take easier courses.

?We want students to take tougher course loads, and sometimes youngsters are into the competitive piece so much that they don?t avail themselves of these other opportunities,? she said.

Board Member Deborah O?Connor said the decile system is an extremely arbitrary way to rank students.

?The way it works now, the kids in the top decile of IHS really get a boost from it,? she said. ?The other 90 percent, uh, not so much.?

Martha Frommeld, a mother with a graduating senior in the high school, said she'd heard students were considering dropping art courses because the grade wouldn't help their decile ranking because the class was unweighted, she said.

"I think the change is broadly positive," she said. "Having the unweighted information as well as weighted as well as distribution gives a better sense of the total student."

**Datestamp:** 06/10/2008

## **Amputee, coach waits to get back in game**

### **Gunshot survivor needs records, more surgery**

*Journal Staff*

NEWFIELD ? Josh Rice is trying to get his son to hold the tee ball bat correctly.

It's not the easiest task in the world for the irrepressible 4-year-old to master, but his dad is firm and patient as he positions little Josh Rice's hands in just the right spot, then plants his son's feet in a firm stance.

The rest of the players on the Newfield Central Schools field, the parents on the sidelines and the other coaches watch as Coach Rice gets his son into the perfect swinging position, his arms doing all the work as his lone leg dangles from his wheelchair.

?The kids don't ever ask questions about the injury, he's just Coach Rice to them,? says his mother, Darla Wright, from the sidelines.

Then Rice's son swings, smacks a line drive and runs off to first base with his blue jersey flying, as the 30-year-old Rice watches his son do something he himself might never be able to do again.

On Sept. 22 of last year, Rice's life changed forever when a rifle he was cleaning accidentally went off, shredding his left calf and foot.

Now, he's dealing with the aftereffects. But coaching tee ball helps, he said.

Rice had had close to two weeks of intensive surgeries and failed reconstruction efforts after the accident when he finally decided to have his leg amputated below the knee, rather than spend six more months in the hospital.

He returned to live with his mother just before Thanksgiving, with high hopes that by spring, his leg would be ready to have a prosthesis attached and he'd be able to go back to his job with the City of Ithaca's Water and Sewer Division.

But his bones healed in such a way that attaching a prosthesis to his knee would be impossible without another bout of surgery to round out the stump to prepare it for the new leg. So sometime in the coming months, when his medical records are finally mailed to him from the Rochester hospital where he was first operated on, doctors at the Johns Hopkins Hospital will revisit the surgery on his knee and leave him recovering for another six months, jobless and stranded at home.

For now, he's stuck in a no-man's-land, he said. All he wants for his birthday on July 17 is to be in a hospital bed awaiting the surgery that will get his life back on track.

?I'm sitting in a wheelchair just waiting for medical records,? he said. ?They have to go from Rochester to

Johns Hopkins, and it's been over a month.

But even though he has to coach in his wheelchair, tee ball makes Josh Rice smile, and he can forget about anything else but watching his son pound around the bases in the balmy springtime air.

"He told us nothing would stop him from helping us grow up and teaching ball," said his third grade niece, Jaquela Rice, who he waits for every day after school.

Both his mother and sister, Lyndsey Mallory, said that since his accident, they've seen a real change in his outlook on life.

"He's getting back to being a dad, a brother, an uncle," his sister said. "Honestly, the changes can be difficult, but he has done a tremendous job. It doesn't reflect on his children. I think he's dealt with it wonderfully."

Even his old boss noticed the change in his attitude.

"Josh has been down here every other week, and he's kept in touch," said Erik Whitney Assistant Superintendent of Public Works. "He seems more ambitious and he has a renewed energy. It invigorated him. It didn't belittle him at all."

Whitney said he's never had anyone leave work because of a leg amputation, but as long as the doctors are OK with it, Rice can reapply to work with the city.

Out on the grass of the tee ball field, Josh wraps a player's tiny fingers around the bat. Then, he wheels himself backward so he doesn't get whacked by the enthusiastic batter, and a smile breaks out on his face. He shouts words of encouragement to his little protégé as she rounds the bases.

"Go ahead! Good job! Swing hard, run fast!" he shouts.

He's back in the game.

**Datestamp:** 06/10/2008

## **Record heat plays role in school evacuation, hay fire**

### **Refrigerant leak at DeWitt created unsafe environment, official says**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? DeWitt Middle School students were evacuated Monday morning due to a breakdown of the school?s air conditioning system that caused the odorless refrigerant Freon to leak out, district officials said.

The system broke down mostly because it was ?built in the ?70s and beyond its useful life? and also because the heat ? which set a record ? may have caused the machine to work too hard, said Paul Mintz, assistant superintendent for business services for the Ithaca City School District.

The official high Monday, as recorded at 4 p.m. at the Game Farm Road weather station, was 95 degrees. The previous Ithaca record for June 9 was 92 degrees, set in 1933.

Also on Monday, a hay fire inside a McLean silo kept Tompkins and Cortland county firefighters busy for 8 1/2 hours on Monday (story, Page 4A).

DeWitt is a closed building, Mintz said, meaning most of the windows do not open, and it needs to be air conditioned; otherwise, temperatures can become unbearable.

?Murphy?s Law says the A.C. will fail on the hottest day,? Mintz said. ?Between the heat and the gas leak we wanted to play it safe and empty the building out.?

The malfunction was reported around 7 a.m. when leaking refrigerant mist was seen in the school.

Students were taken next door to Ithaca High School?s Kulp Auditorium, said Judith Pastel, superintendent of the Ithaca City School District.

Woodcock & Armani of Syracuse, a service company, repaired the leaking line Monday. Mintz said school would be held as normal today.

Many of the older buildings in the district are without air conditioning, Mintz said. None of the elementary schools have air conditioning systems, and only DeWitt and Boynton middle schools and parts of Ithaca High have air conditioning.

The high school?s air conditioning is powered by Cornell?s lake source cooling project, which runs below school grounds, Mintz said.

**Datestamp:** 06/10/2008

**Cultural class:**

**With CD, students learn lesson on diversity**

"Music is the universal language." Those words are from guitarist John Simon, who recently participated in one of the coolest school projects we've heard of in quite some time.

Belle Sherman Elementary School teacher Randi Beckmann had her class of 21 first-grade students learn the words to songs from the different cultures of each of the students in the class. Those songs were taught by parents and then recorded by Chad Crumm of Music Tank Recording Studio. The end result was a CD produced by the class called "Recording Our Community."

"There was such a joy of learning for each new song," Beckmann told The Journal's Aaron Munzer last week. The class project resulted in a CD of songs from Jewish, Scottish, Burmese, African, Chinese, Colombian, Korean, Romanian and American cultures ("School fetes release of 'Community' CD," June 6).

As Simon said, music is a common theme that can help diverse communities such as ours string together vibrant, positive experiences about our different cultures. Projects like the CD production Beckmann's class did are important to teaching our children how our cultural differences are positive attributes that should be celebrated. This is incredibly important in a county where roughly two out of every 10 people is not white, about one out of every 10 was born in a foreign country and about 14 out of every 100 residents age 5 or older reported in the 2000 Census that a foreign language other than English was spoken in their homes.

Beckmann has found a way to bridge those different cultures and show students how working together and honoring their differences produces a positive outcome - a lesson that, if reinforced, will help those children throughout their school years.

**Datestamp:** 06/09/2008

## **Kearney asked to testify at anti-harassment forum**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Amelia Kearney will tell the story of her lawsuit against the Ithaca City School District regarding her daughter's racial harassment at a public forum on bias, harassment and bullying in New York state schools Tuesday in Albany.

The forum is meant to provide support for the Dignity for All Students Act, which would specifically prohibit discrimination and harassment based on race, gender and other identifying characteristics, and would apply to school employees and students when on school property or at a school function, according to the Web site of State Sen. Thomas Duane, D-Manhattan, a sponsor of the bill in the Senate.

Kearney and her lawyer Ray Schlather were invited to speak by Duane. The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell, D-Manhattan.

"I'm happy it's caught the attention of them and something will really happen and we'll see change," Kearney said on Sunday. "This is a step in the right direction, and hopefully it will never go as far it did with (my family)."

In part, the act would require that school districts create rules and policies that will help them respond to and prevent discriminatory violence, and would establish guidelines for teachers and administrators to follow when dealing with diversity and discrimination.

Kearney claims the school district did not promptly and effectively protect her then-12-year-old daughter from racial harassment during the 2005-06 school year while she was a student at DeWitt Middle School.

Administrative Law Judge Christine Kellett with the New York State Division of Human Rights recommended on April 11 that the district pay Kearney and her daughter \$1 million in compensatory damages.

The judge's findings are not official until a final order is approved by the human rights commissioner. The proposed bill says that harassment and bullying "not only hamper a student's ability to receive an education but may lead to psychological scarring and increases the chance of a violent incident."

Kearney said she'll talk about how the entire ordeal has affected her and her daughter in a similar fashion.

"This is a reality that affects people on a very deep level," she said. "It does cause emotional scarring, and things that people will carry with them for the rest of their lives."

**Datestamp:** 06/09/2008

## **Tompkins GOP backs incumbents, sets platform**

*From Journal Staff Reports*

ITHACA ? The Tompkins County GOP announced Saturday that it has endorsed three incumbent Republican state senators and one newcomer who is challenging a democratic Congressman.

The committee endorsed State Senators Jim Seward, Mike Nozzolio and George Winner in their reelection races.

In a release, Mike Sigler, chairman of the Tompkins County GOP, said decision to endorse the incumbents was based on their high-quality leadership.

?They've been fighting to cap property taxes for years and this past week we finally saw several leading democrats break from their tradition and move in that direction,? he said.

The committee also endorsed Richard Hanna for Congress in his race against Rep. Michael Arcuri in the 24th Congressional district.

The GOP passed an updated and finalized party platform with localized strategies for political issues, especially regarding energy policy and taxation.

The committee said it supports a greater emphasis on building renewable energy systems, including wind turbines and solar panels.

They advocate for investing in local start-up companies instead of luring businesses from out-of-state, lowering state taxes by a hefty 10 to 20 percent and capping local school taxes, and possibly cutting as many as 30 county jobs which ?cause a deficit of about \$1.6 million a year.?

The committee?s platform also supports training more young adults for trade professions, and aggressively signing up people in Tompkins County who are unaware that they qualify for state health care.



**Datestamp:** 06/09/2008

## **Playing cards at jail aim to solve crime**

*From Journal Staff Reports*

ITHACA ? Sheriff Peter Meskill wants inmates in the Tompkins County Jail to help solve crimes ? while they're playing cards.

As part of a statewide effort to help solve missing persons and homicide cases, Meskill announced that inmates will be given decks of playing cards with information about unsolved ?cold cases? to obtain information to aid those investigations. Inmates are given an anonymous tip line to call, and the hope is that they will be able to provide fresh leads to old crimes after seeing photographs and information on the playing cards.

Rewards will be given to inmates who provide viable tips. The project, officially called the Cold Case Playing Card Program, is modeled on a successful program in Florida, and is funded by a grant from state Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno.

The New York State Sheriffs? Association is providing reward money and has distributed the cards to all New York jails. The program was started by Doug and Mary Lyall of Ballston Spa whose daughter Suzanne has been missing for 10 years.

**Datestamp:** 06/06/2008

## **Recording stars at Belle Sherman**

### **School fetes release of 'Community' CD**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA — On the stage at Belle Sherman Elementary School, 21 kids sang in a language they couldn't speak.

Below them, in the packed gymnasium, their school mates — who were unusually attentive, for elementary-school students — sang along with them to "Funga Alafia," an African greeting song, at Thursday's CD release party for Randi Beckmann and her first-grade class's "Recording Our Community" album.

In the front row, Beckmann swayed to the rhythm of the children as she directed her elementary chorale. She said it was one of the best projects she's ever done.

"There was such a joy of learning for each new song," she said.

The students and Beckmann spent more than a month rehearsing the songs on the album, which were then recorded by sound engineer Chad Crumm of Music Tank Recording Studio.

Each week, parents came in and taught the class a song from their particular culture, so that by the end the students had learned traditional songs from traditional Jewish, Scottish, Burmese, African, Chinese, Colombian, Korean, Romanian and American cultures.

Beckmann said she came up with the idea in grad school as a way to affirm the importance of culture and family at the same time.

"It's hard to do that, but for this project, it wasn't hard," she said. "The hardest part was learning the words to the songs in other languages. The kids learned them very quickly, and I was the slowpoke."

The students in her class are a diverse group, with three recently arrived from a Burmese refugee camp in Thailand. Beckmann said those students' father told her the class sang their traditional song, "Po Na-Lo," so well that he could understand all the words.

"He was filled with honor," she said.

Other parents at the event said they were thrilled with how much their kids enjoyed the cross-cultural project.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for them to learn about each other," said Karla Hanson, with her daughter Megan by her side. "They talked about little else."

After their premiere, the students said they loved the project.

“Some of the words from different cultures were hard to learn,” said Riley Kwortnick, a first-grader in Beckmann’s class. “But we practiced the songs a lot.”

Also onstage with the students was John Simon, the class’s guitarist, who kept rhythm for the students by strumming along. He said music is a great way for the students to learn about other cultures.

“Music is the universal language, and the kids were so excited about the whole process,” he said.

Beckmann received a grant from the Ithaca Public Education Initiative and from the Fine Arts Booster Group to fund the project.

**Datestamp:** 06/06/2008

## **Wine center targets April debut**

### **Liquor license won't be ready by this August**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Officials with the planned Finger Lakes Wine Center said it should open for business in April of next year, pending the approval of their liquor license applications.

The center, which is planned for the space below the Cayuga Garage, had originally been scheduled to open Aug. 1, but it could not because it would not have been approved to sell wine by then.

At a press conference held Thursday at the Holiday Inn, Gary Ferguson, executive director of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance and a member of the center's board of directors, said the group officially applied for their three separate liquor licenses on Wednesday.

"We've been told it can take up to six months to get the official licenses," he said. "Based on that, we do not want to open the wine center in January," when there is little wine tourism. "It is a very long, laborious process, and it takes a lot of effort to put this together."

Ferguson said construction on the center will start when the licenses are approved, or around Jan. 1.

The center, which will be a gateway to local wineries with a focus on wine education, has been in the works since 2000, and has received a total of \$409,000 in state and local funding. Ferguson said they're still seeking approximately \$186,000 in funding for the project.

Advocates say the new center will teach both interested locals and wine tourists ? who spend about \$300 a day while they're here ? about the nature of wine making, and will act as a springboard to Finger Lakes wine country.

The center will have six large wine exhibits, an interactive digital map of New York state wine regions, a tasting room with a rotating selection of 20 local wines and a gift shop where visitors will be able to purchase individual bottles of wine and other wine-related items.

Wine will be priced so as not to be competitive with local wineries, officials said. A set of tastings will cost \$5. The center will also be available for formal functions and other hosted and catered events, and visitors will be able to book wine tours at the center.

Local artists will be commissioned to create murals on the walls, said David Sparrow, president of the center's board of directors.

"The center is meant to introduce the wines of the Finger Lakes to a broad audience including residents of the regions and travelers from around the world," he said.

A crucial aspect of the center that will differentiate it from others, like the New York Wine & Culinary Center in Canandaigua, will be the focus on educational lectures and workshops, such as winemaking demonstrations and talks about tasting, wine history and viticulture, Ferguson said.

"Programming is going to be key," he said.

Fred Bonn, director of the Ithaca/Tompkins Convention and Visitors Bureau and a member of the board of directors, said the wine center will do much to help encourage tourists to spend more money both at the 105 Finger Lakes wineries and in local communities.

"It will become an attractor to our community, and we can use this center as a vehicle to support our friends across the Finger Lakes region and at the other wineries," he said.

The 3,400-square-foot space will be leased from Bloomfield, Schon & Partners for \$5,100 a month when construction begins in January, according to Andrew Dixon, a consultant for the project.

State and local officials have said the grant money will not be affected by a delay in the center's opening date.

**Datestamp:** 06/05/2008

## **A town by kids, for kids, at BJM**

### **?Julieville? teaches students teamwork**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? A gallon of gas costs \$3.05 in Julieville. There are no fast food restaurants. The elementary school is the biggest building. The main drag is called ?Obama Boulevard.?

And most unusual of all, the miniature town was built by second- and third-graders.

On Wednesday morning, the 20 students in Julie Muzzy?s second- and third-grade class at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School showed off their massive, detailed model town they?ve spent a month perfecting to an audience of delighted parents, relatives and friends.

With the help of ?Ms. Julie,? as the students call her, each child was assigned a team to work with on the creation of a particular building, such as a church, school, grocery store or post office.

?We decided the post office could be small because these days people use computers for everything,? said Noah Klausner, a student who helped to build the structure.

The town, which measures about 10 feet by 4 feet, was made out of foam board similar to what architects use for their mock-ups.

Muzzy said the students were in charge of all the city planning decisions, and had to learn to strategically locate homes far away from the fire station, for example, so imaginary residents wouldn?t be disturbed by sirens.

?We decided our police station should be far away from our houses so we wouldn?t hear the noise,? she said with a laugh as a siren went blazing by outside the school, partially drowning out her voice.

Muzzy said the project, which is the biggest undertaking the students will complete all year, involved a higher level of conversation and thinking that the kids enjoyed.

?We spent more than half an hour talking about the playground,? she said. ?This was a really sophisticated conversation.?

After each student presented their role in the project, parents got a chance to huddle around the diorama while each child pointed out their own house.

Student Ella Cannon said she had initially wanted to make a town without roads, but found out that it would be unfeasible. However, she said they had planned it out so everything was within walking distance.

?We kept saying, if only it was this easy to plan a real city,? she said.

Her mother, Michelle Cannon, said the project had really excited her daughter and her classmates.

"This is the most talked about thing all year," she said. "For them, it was really cool to make this community."

Muzzy, who's been teaching at the school for three years, said that while projects like the model town are invaluable for the students to learn how to critically think and to make real world decisions, it's not something she can do every year.

"I can't do these big projects so much because education is so driven by testing," she said.

She said the whole experience taught her students to put aside their egos and build a real community for themselves as they worked on this imaginary community.

"Julieville is a place where anything's possible," she said, noting that she was embarrassed that the kids had voted to name the town after her.

Jen Eastwater, the mother of Ben Eastwater, said Muzzy had used the project to bring students from two grade levels together to create something larger than themselves.

"Ms. Julie never thinks kids can't," she said. "Kids have a lot of power in her classroom, but there's guided control."

Deborah O'Connor, a member of the board of education, stopped by the classroom to watch the students present their town.

"This is what it's all about ? getting into the classroom," she said. "I think it's fabulous. This is a perfect example of the fact that kids can come together to make something great."

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**Datestamp:** 06/03/2008

## **Hewlett Packard plans appeal of CU's patent lawsuit victory**

### **University awarded \$184M last week**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? A lawyer for the Hewlett Packard Co. said Monday the company plans to appeal a federal jury's decision to award Cornell University \$184 million in its patent infringement lawsuit against the company.

Cornell had originally asked for \$900 million in damages.

The verdict in the 7 1/2-year-old case, which was returned Friday evening, found that Hewlett Packard Co. had infringed on a Cornell professor's invention that allows computers to work faster. The invention was patented in 1989 by Professor Emeritus Hwa Torng of Cornell's School of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Ed Poplawski, the lead trial attorney for Cornell from the law firm Sidley Austin Brown & Wood, said the case took so long because they had a "determined defendant in HP" that was committed to "making things as difficult as possible."

"I believe that it is a tremendous victory for Cornell," he said.

The trial, which began in mid-May and was presided over by Judge Randall R. Rader, a patent law specialist, was settled in the U.S. District Court in Syracuse over the course of almost a month.

Poplawski said Torng's "breakthrough" invention substantially increased the efficiency and speed of computer processors, and that HP had made more than \$36 billion in profits from using Torng's invention without permission. Although the patent expired in 2006, the university sought damages during the patent's 17-year life. Poplawski said the invention is still used in modern computers.

"The Cornell patent on that invention was very valuable, and HP had profited from use of that invention to sell servers and workstations," Poplawski said.

John Allcock, an attorney for HP, said the settlement figure was "premature."

"We obviously are going to be engaging in an appeal to hopefully get what is the true and correct result," he said.

Thomas Bruce, vice president for Cornell University communications, said because there will be a long appeals process, it's "too early to celebrate." But Bruce did note that this decision sends a strong message about universities' intellectual property.

"This has the potential for being a fundamental case for all universities," he said. "It's very important to protect intellectual property, and you have to make sure people know that this happened."

Torng, who stands to get 25 percent of the settlement if HP's appeal is not successful, said he will donate at least 80 percent of his possible \$46 million take to charity. Although he retired from Cornell in 1999 and lives in California, he said Ithaca still has a special place in his heart.

"We will be thinking about (donating to local charities in Ithaca)," he said. "We have a strong love for Ithaca and Tompkins County, so whatever we do, that will figure into it."

According to a Cornell press release, Torng has been "widely recognized for his contributions to computer chip architecture," and was honored for it when he was named the first Intel Academic Research Fellow.

Poplawski said Cornell's legal team established the patent infringement by showing that certain HP products fit within the claims of Torng's patent, number 4,807,115.

"As we established at trial, the heart of any computer is the microprocessor, and the heart of HP's processors was basically Dr. Torng's invention that allows the computer to process instructions extremely rapidly," he said.

**Datestamp:** 06/03/2008

## **Wine center opening delayed**

### **More time needed to resolve licensing issues**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? The planned downtown Finger Lakes Wine Center will not open as hoped on Aug. 1 due to liquor licensing issues, officials said. A community meeting will be held at 11 a.m. Thursday at the Holiday Inn to discuss the project and a timeline for construction.

The center ? envisioned as a hub for the area?s wine tourism industry ? was initially proposed in 2000 and has received a total of \$409,000 in state and local funding.

Although at least \$186,000 still needs to be raised, Gary Ferguson, executive director of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance and a member of the center?s board of directors, said the project has enough funding to move forward. Now he said it is being delayed by the process of obtaining license approval from the State Liquor Authority, which could take up to six months.

?Our original plan was to have this up and running in August, but it?s just taken much, much longer ... so we said, let?s really do this thing right,? Ferguson said.

Ferguson said the license application has not been sent out, but will be in the hands of State Liquor Authority employees by Thursday.

He said he wouldn?t comment until the meeting on whether the center, to be located in the Cayuga Green development, would be delayed until the 2009 tourism season.

?That?s definitely something we?ve been thinking about, and we?ll be addressing whether to do this next year at the conference,? he said.

Fred Bonn, director of the Ithaca/Tompkins County Convention & Visitors Bureau and a member of the center?s board of directors, said the meeting would be a chance for residents to ask questions about the project.

?I think it will be an awful lot of information sharing,? he said.

The center is being pitched as a starting point for wine tourism in the area, and will feature tastings, wine tour information, demonstrations of the wine making process and multiple large educational exhibits about the history and science of wine making in the area. The center will also hold classes on wine, sell wine and host formal functions, according to Ferguson.

Ferguson said the big hurdles for the project were getting state funding and legislation passed to allow the center to apply for a liquor license, both of which were promoted in Albany last year by Sen. George H. Winner Jr. R-53rd District and Assemblywoman Barbara Lifton, D-125th District.

The project has been lauded by some winery and liquor store employees, who see it not as competition, but as a chance for greater exposure and education about the finer points of wine drinking.

Kit Kalfs, the tasting room manager at Sheldrake Point Vineyard, said the educational perspective of the center will drive more out-of-towners and locals to explore the Finger Lakes' wine offerings.

"If the idea is education about the region and its wines, then I think it only helps us out, and they'll have representative wines there so people will know what's available," he said. "I think their real benefit is to get people out into the wineries to explore it more. It only benefits us as an industry."

Jackie Kippola, the county's liaison to the strategic tourism planning board, said the county grants would not be affected by any possible year-long delays in construction. Members of Lifton's staff said the grant money from the state also would not be affected by delays.

Mike Smith, who works in the communications department of the New York State Liquor Authority, said liquor licensing takes so long because 90 percent of applications are submitted with parts of the 29 page process missing or incorrect.

"A lot of it is back and forth licensing, it's all required by law," he said. "When we get ones that are incomplete, we really can't act on it."

Ferguson said the liquor license application hadn't been submitted earlier so it could be vetted for errors by the center's lawyer.

The center is supported by both the Downtown Ithaca Alliance and the Tompkins County Strategic Tourism Planning Board.

**Datestamp:** 06/02/2008

## **Truly a heartfelt reunion**

### **IC alum finally meets doctor who saved his life 39 years ago**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? Thirty–nine years ago, Joe Palmieri’s life was saved by a doctor he didn’t know.

On Saturday at Ithaca College’s Alumni Weekend event, the 81–year–old Palmieri, a 1953 alumnus, finally met his guardian angel, Dr. George Heitzman of Syracuse.

In 1969, Heitzman removed a potentially lethal aneurysm on the left ventricle of Palmieri’s heart.

At that time, open heart surgery was a new procedure and Palmieri’s chances for survival weren’t good.

“Back then,” Palmieri said, “they didn’t even think I was going to come through.”

After the two met and embraced like old buddies on campus in Philips Hall, Heitzman, who towers over Palmieri, inspected the surgery scars he incised in the other man’s chest almost four decades ago.

“Without (surgery), he wouldn’t have lived very long,” Heitzman said. “People don’t live this long after an operation. He’s as sharp as a tack. It may be some kind of a record, I don’t know.”

Palmieri, who was at one time the editor of the campus newspaper *The Ithacan*, served in the Navy during World War II, and graduated with a degree in business. When he attended Ithaca College, classes were held downtown, pitchers of beer cost \$1 at local bars like the Chanticleer and tuition, room and board came to \$210 a semester.

Now, he’s a gregarious grandfather living in York, Pa., who likes to show off pictures of his grandchildren and chat about the college pranks he used to play with his fraternity buddies. After he retired some years ago from the automobile sales business, he worked at a food pantry operated by York’s chapter of the Knights of Columbus, of which he is a member.

Palmieri’s life–changing surgery came eight years after he was hospitalized for three months following a pair of heart attacks. Seven years before, his father had died of a heart attack, so his own chances didn’t look good.

Although Palmieri and Heitzman stayed in touch through occasional phone calls, they hadn’t seen each other face–to–face since the operation at Syracuse’s St. Joseph’s Hospital. He had to make numerous phone calls to find a phone number for Heitzman, who has been retired for years and keeps an unlisted phone number.

Heitzman brought to Ithaca the detailed write–ups he filed after the surgery, describing the entire procedure. His wife, Gina, said after he retired he threw out most of his old files, but kept Palmieri’s case because it was so special.

?It?s a beautiful story,? she said. ?I see so many stories like this with him.?

Heitzman said he was surprised to see how well Palmieri had recovered.

?I love to hear you laugh, Joe,? Heitzman said.

?And I love to hear you laugh,? Palmieri responded with a chuckle, ?because it means I?m still here.?

**Datestamp:** 05/26/2008

## **Angelou tells grads to be courageous above all else**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? The clouds over campus retreated and the sun warmed the backs of the audience Saturday as Maya Angelou reminded the Cornell University class of 2008 to be courageous as they look to the future.

As the convocation ceremony's invited speaker, Angelou, the famous poet, civil rights activist and cultural presence, talked about the obligations of the graduating generation in her speech to an audience of about 20,000 graduates and their families and friends in Schoellkopf Field.

?Let us take time out, so that by-and-by, we can say, I did take time to help someone's life,? she said. ?The chore on you is to make this country better than it is today.?

Angelou, 80, is more than a Pulitzer Prize-nominated poet ? she's a composer, director, actress and author of 11 books who is best known for writing the autobiography, ?I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.? In 1993, she was invited to write and recite an original poem at Bill Clinton's presidential inauguration.

She delivered the first lines of her speech like a true poet: by reciting poetry.

?By-and-by, by-and-by, I'm gonna lay down, my heavy load,? she sang to the graduates who were about to do the same, at least for a time. ?I know four years ago, it seemed like byyyyyy and by,? she said, drawing a bloom of laughter from the audience.

Angelou smiled before she went on to tell the assembled legions of Cornell University graduates to see the humanity in every human, regardless of their differences.

?Human beings are more alike than we are un-alike,? she said. ?I am a human being. Nothing human can be alien to me.?

Although the veteran graduation speaker peppered her speech with jokes about everything from cannibalism to cursing and found many a good reason to laugh aloud, her graceful words were often serious.

?People of my generation are ashamed of the world we are leaving,? she said. ?I am. I just wish we hadn't left a world full of blood thirst, ignorance, and hatred... This is your world now, and it's up to you.?

In a soft, sure voice, Angelou asked those gathered to refrain from using racial pejoratives, sexist language, and even, simply, from laughing at others.

?You will like yourself much more. Just try it,? she said, noting that she will leave a room if she ever hears racist language being used. ?Those words were created to dehumanize. I know they are poison.?

Cornell President David Skorton, who introduced Angelou, called her ability to relate her own life to others ?inspiring.?



"Maya Angelou confronts her own life with such a moving wonder, such a luminous dignity," he said.

Her words inspired members of the graduating class like Adrian Nunez, who has read much of her work.

"The stuff that she's done for African-American literature is out of this world, so hearing her speak was mind blowing," he said. "I thought it was fitting, but what I didn't expect was how she was so funny. She had an infectious laugh."

At the ceremony, the senior class also presented the university with an oversized check for \$64,402 to create an endowed scholarship for rising seniors. A record-breaking 50 percent of the senior class donated, according to Manuel Nattal, alumni co-president of the senior class.

**Datestamp:** 05/21/2008

## **Proposed South Hill bike path draws fire**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Residents raised several objections to Ithaca College?s proposed Athletics and Events Center at a public hearing on the preliminary site plan approval at the Town of Ithaca Planning Board meeting Tuesday night.

Most of the opposition centered on the creation of a bike/walking trail that would connect the campus with the South Hill Recreation Way and pass by the properties of several residents.

The athletics center is a proposed 300,000 square feet of indoor athletic facilities, including an indoor track and field, Olympic size pool, tennis courts, rowing center, gymnasium, strength and conditioning center. Outside plans call for a lighted artificial turf field, a track and lighted tennis courts. The project also includes the construction of 1,002 parking spaces and several new roads, walkways and lighting facilities.

Melinda Staniszewska, a Coddington Road resident, submitted a petition with 25 signatures to the board expressing concern over the bike/walking trail, noting that the lighting of the trail by 12-foot-high lamp posts was intrusive and would be ?difficult to mitigate.?

She suggested a lower level walkway type lighting that would cast less light on neighboring properties. She and other residents also asked for thicker, noise-dampening plantings along the path to lessen noise and the widening of the shoulder of Coddington Road to provide a safer route for students walking alongside the road.

?Low-level lights would make a significant difference to the people who live along the trail,? said Tessa Flores, a resident of Compton Road.

David Herrick, an engineer with T.G. Miller, the consulting group hired by Ithaca College, said the lights were designed to be 12 feet high to cast more light on the path and prevent vandalism that would be easier with lower level lighting.

Bill Hilker, who owns property on Kendall Avenue, said he wanted an assurance that the new center wouldn?t increase the level of stormwater running into the neighborhood. He said in the past few years he?s seen large increases in stormwater flow.

?I?m all in favor of what Ithaca College is trying to do, but I think there should be some method of controlling that runoff,? he said. ?As you pave and put up new buildings, more water?s going to flow. You can?t stop that.?

Daniel Walker, the town?s engineer, assured him that the athletics center would include a major stormwater retention facility that would not allow any additional water flow.

Brian Noteboom, a representative of the Empire State Regional Council of Carpenters, asked the planning

board that Ithaca College require the construction company to hire local carpenters and pay them a standard area wage, including health benefits.

Michael Talarski, business manager of the local union of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, echoed Noteboom and requested that local electricians also be hired.

?Employing local workers is the right thing to do,? Talarski said.

**Datestamp:** 05/13/2008

## **Lab renamed for CU researcher**

### **\$51M expansion planned for Holley Center**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? To honor a scientific researcher whose work paved the way for modern agricultural research, Cornell University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture renamed the USDA?s campus facility the Robert W. Holley Center for Agriculture and Health on Monday.

Holley, who scientists at the rededication called a ?revolutionary,? received the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1968 for his breakthrough work on Cornell?s campus to determine the molecular structure of transfer RNA. His discovery of the link between DNA and protein synthesis served as a springboard for agricultural research into the genetics and genomics of plants, insects and pathogens. He died in 1993.

Gale Buchanan, an undersecretary at the USDA, called Holley a ?giant? who continues to support scientists today with the foundation of his breakthrough research.

?We?re like dwarves, sitting on the shoulders of giants,? he said. ?They raised us up, and by their great stature, added to ours. And that?s exactly what Robert Holley did. He raised us up, so we could seek progress.?

The Holley Center, operated by the USDA?s Agricultural Research Service and built in 1939, was previously known as the U.S. Plant, Soil and Nutrition Laboratory. Scientists at the lab conduct research in genomics, genetics, biochemistry and physiology to improve the sustainability and productivity of U.S. and world agriculture.

Work at the center ranges from improving crop production on marginal soils to mapping the DNA sequences of insects and bacterial pathogens to develop new techniques to thwart pests and diseases.

In addition to the current building, plans are in motion to build a \$51 million addition by 2013, which will allow the center?s 27 research scientists to all work under one roof for increased efficiency, said Leon Kochian, the director of the Holley Center, and \$11 million has already been earmarked for the project.

?We?re growing the next class of giants in this center,? Kochian said, before turning to watch as Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-22nd Dist., helped to cut the ceremonial ribbon tied to the stairs of the building.

Hinchey spoke to those in attendance about his efforts in Congress to secure funding for agricultural research and the new facility at the Holley Center, noting that even from his perch on the agricultural subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, it was challenging to find the funds for continued agricultural research.

?The work done by Dr. Holley and all the scientists at this center is a testament to the reasons why the federal government should invest in the sciences,? Hinchey said. ?Basic research ? science for the sake of science ? is the cornerstone of innovation. Without a base, many of the technologies we take for granted today would

still be science fiction.?

Bryan Swingle is one of those researchers at the Holley Center. He studies how genes are regulated in a pathogen to better understand how to develop a plant's defenses against bacterial infections.

Like Holley once did in the same building, Swingle spends much of his time mapping DNA but does it much more efficiently; he can map millions of DNA sequences in an hour, while it took Holley years to map far fewer.

“But Holley was the first person to sequence a nucleic acid,” he said.

Swingle said the new building will encourage more collaboration among scientists who are now spread across campus.

“One of the major problems is we’re spread out, but a new building will also bring us up to date in the facilities,” he said.

**Datestamp:** 05/07/2008

## **Drivers wanted**

### **Gadabout staff being stretched to limit**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Bob Hoyte squeezes his yellow bus into the handicapped parking spot at the doctor's office just before noon ? he's right on time. He turns off the ignition, adjusts his yellow Gadabout trucker's hat and walks into the office, looking for his passenger.

Inside the waiting room, Hoyte finds Barbara Gegg, a blind Ithaca resident who requested the ride.

?Ready?? he says. ?Would you like a hand??

She says yes, and he gently walks Gegg onto the yellow bus, past a big white sign on the side of this bus that reads, ?We Need Volunteers.?

He'll do this about eight times before his shift as a volunteer driver with Gadabout is over for the day.

Hoyte, 61, is a retired mailman and motorcycle aficionado with a misbehaving beard who wears a black Harley Davidson T-shirt and doesn't like to mention that he raced in the Iditarod. He said he couldn't think of a better way to spend four of his mornings every week.

?All they ask is a half a day a week, and it's a new adventure every day,? he said. ?I work with good guys and gals, and meet interesting people.?

It's like this every day for drivers like Hoyte who volunteer at Gadabout, a not-for-profit transportation service unique to Ithaca that's staffed by mostly volunteers, with a few paid drivers. The service allows Tompkins County residents who are older than 60 or disabled to get rides for \$1.50-\$2.

?There are mornings when I wake up at 6 and say, ?Why am I doing this??? he said. ?When I pick up the first person, I know why.?

But Gadabout is facing an ever-present shortage of volunteer drivers that's only expected to get bigger as more baby boomers retire and will need rides, according to Judy Willis, the organization's founder and executive director.

?It's always been a juggling match to fill all the needs,? she said. ?Some drivers are run ragged.?

Willis, who's steered the organization through its more than 30 years of existence, said Gadabout does more than just give rides to doctor appointments for seniors and disabled people. It gives them independence.

?It allows people to have a social life and secure their basic needs,? she said. ?A lot of it is to make sure people can still live by themselves. A nursing home requires enormous expenditures, up to six grand a

month.?

After she became blind, Gegg, 48, was no longer able to drive and has had to rely on Gadabout to drive her to appointments, church and the supermarket. Without the service, the Ithaca native said she wouldn't be able to stay in her hometown because she no longer has family in the area.

'One of the hardest things about not being able to drive is having to go when someone can take you,' she said. 'But Gadabout helps. I wouldn't be able to get around without Gadabout.'

Gadabout, which means 'a person that flits about,' Willis said, gives approximately 60,000 rides a year on 25 buses. This year, it's projected to give around 65,000. It averages about 200–280 rides a day, fulfilling the federal requirement that Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit have a flexible, paratransit option beyond buses.

But the organization's \$1 million budget doesn't allow for more than a few paid drivers and the 30 volunteer drivers it currently has won't be enough in the near future.

'If the service is to stay healthy, we need a steady stream of new volunteers,' Willis said. She can't imagine why more people aren't volunteering, she said.

'Volunteers get direct contact and satisfaction, they see immediately that they're doing something that needs to be done,' she said.

As the Gadabout van drove her home last Wednesday, 82-year-old Doris Koconis watched the horses in the Cornell Equine Park. She said she couldn't show the volunteers how much she appreciated their work.

'Gadabout people are beautiful people,' she said. 'I need help (getting) up, and they do that. For volunteers, that's a lot of work. I appreciate them more than they know.'

After Hoyte dropped off Koconis, he stopped by another doctor's office for Barbara Capalongo. On the way back to her apartment at Titus Towers, Capalongo, 72, said the service helps her get around without accepting rides from her daughter, who 'couldn't keep up.'

'For about two years I was sick all the time, didn't get out,' she said, looking out the window at the green neighborhoods flashing by. 'Just riding around here, seeing the places I knew ... It's nice.'

**Datestamp:** 05/05/2008

## **Bolton Point wins annual water taste test**

*Special to The Journal*

It's official: The Bolton Point water treatment plant has the best water in Tompkins County for 2008, according to a taste test performed Saturday at the Ithaca Farmers' Market.

Out of 253 total taste testings, Bolton Point won with 53 total first place votes, while Trumansburg Water System 's last year's winner ' and the village of Groton's treatment plant tied for second with 46 votes each.

Bolton Point, which draws from Cayuga Lake to provide tap water for the towns of Dryden, Ithaca, Lansing and the villages of Cayuga Heights and Lansing, has 'historically done pretty well' in the past few years, according to Chris Laverack, the county's public health sanitarian.

But Laverack said many people will unknowingly vote for the water from the plant that serves their community because it tastes most familiar to them.

The competition is put on to raise awareness of the plants' role in providing safe, drinkable water for residents, and is sponsored by the Tompkins County Health Department and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.

The Town of Newfield, Cornell University, Town of Dryden, and City of Ithaca water treatment plants were also represented in the competition.

Bolton Point will now represent Tompkins County in an upcoming regional competition held by the New York State Department of Health.



**Datestamp:** 05/05/2008

## **Local residents debate how to use their rebates**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? How do you spend a tax rebate check?

That's the question people across the country have been asking themselves since May 2, when the federal government began sending out the first of more than 130 million economic stimulus payments in a \$168 billion aid stimulus package.

The checks and direct deposit payments, which range from \$300 to \$1,200 per household, plus \$300 extra per child, will be sent to most U.S. households by early July and are intended to jumpstart the country's sluggish economy.

Schuyler, Chemung, Tompkins and Seneca counties stand to get about \$111.5 million worth of those tax rebate checks. Residents of Tompkins County said they'll be using the money primarily to pay off bills, make home improvements and to take vacations.

Additionally, almost a third of the 30 residents interviewed at the Target and Best Buy stores in the The Shops at Ithaca Mall said they'd be simply saving the money and not spending any of it.

No one said they'd be spending all the money on a big ticket purchase.

"I'm saving it for rent," said Matt Spears, a Cornell University graduate student. "Given that I'm a poor grad student, I'm appreciative, for me it's useful, but I have a feeling people are just going to stash it."

According to a new National Retail Federation survey, about 40.6 percent of the stimulus package will be immediately spent ? a \$42.9 billion jolt to the economy. The survey also found that \$30 billion of the entire \$168 billion aid stimulus package will be used to pay down debt, and almost \$20 billion will be saved. About \$4.4 billion will be invested, and another \$4.6 billion will be used to pay medical bills, according to the survey.

Sheila Burhans of Homer said the money was certainly welcome, but she'd rather have a healthy economy.

"It'll pay some bills, but I doubt it's going to help (the economy)," she said. "It's not like you can plan a trip on it, but it'll fill in the gaps somewhere."

President Bush signed the Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 into law on Feb. 13, with the intent that it be a "booster shot" for the economy.

The law provides tax rebate checks of up to \$600 per working person and \$1,200 per married couple, plus \$300 per child for families with children and new tax incentives for job-creating business investments.

More than 25 percent of the payments will be made in the first three weeks, according to the Internal

Revenue Service's Web site.

Consumers aren't convinced the stimulus plan will have the intended effect of jumpstarting the economy; in fact, most thought just the opposite.

"I work with low income people and they need it to survive, but I don't think it's a good thing ? it's just going to hurt us in the end," said Jessen Smith of Brooktondale, who's planning to pay down her credit card debt with the rebate check.

Greg Sherrow of Ithaca said anything that encourages people to spend more won't lead to a sustainable economy.

"It's wrong to base an economy on people buying stuff, and this is just perpetuating that," he said.

Ann Emory of King Ferry, who's planning to spend her checks to pay bills or redo her kitchen, said the money was nice, but "I don't think it's going to help the economy."

Retailers are also trying to cash in on the stimulus checks. Some stores in the area are even offering to cash the checks for free, or convert them to gift cards with an additional bonus.

Ray Seamans, manager of Lowe's at Ithaca, said the store is "glad" to cash stimulus checks for customers.

"Whenever there's extra disposable income, people think about home improvement," he said.

Sears and Best Buy are offering a matching gift card plus 10 percent of the amount of the check. Old Navy is offering a \$10 coupon for every \$50 spent. Radio Shack Corp is offering 10 percent off when customers pay with their stimulus checks.

Kristina Bolkert, sales manager for Best Buy, said the store tries to make it easy for families to save.

"We're selling a lot of washers, dryers, TVs, because it's geared toward families," she said. "We just lay out options; we're not going to tell people what to do with their money."

**Datestamp:** 05/05/2008

## **Cornell planning student winery**

### **Facility will be used to teach art of winemaking**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Starting next fall, students on East Hill will have a winery to call their own.

Cornell University announced plans last month for a 2,400–square–foot teaching winery to be built alongside the school’s Pomology Cold Storage Building, on the south side of campus by the orchards. The facility will take students through every step of the winemaking process, from processing fresh grapes to fermentation, bottling and chemical analysis.

Although Cornell now has a temporary winemaking facility in the school’s food science labs and a vinification lab at the school’s New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, horticulture professor Ian Merwin said the approximately 40 students in the four–year–old department of enology and viticulture needed a dedicated facility like this one.

“You can’t teach winemaking without a winery,” he said. “It’s a very hands–on thing. We’ve known since we started the major that we’d need a winery in Ithaca.”

Merwin said graduate students will continue to use the labs in Geneva, and the facility in Ithaca will be for undergraduates, who are unable to travel to the experimental station for classes every day because it is more than an hour away.

Construction is being partially funded by the State University of New York, and Beardsley Design Associates in Auburn is planning the project, although it has not yet completed a site review, college officials said. Merwin said this new winery will be phased out in around 10 years, when a larger, permanent one will be built in Stocking Hall.

Merwin said Cornell’s winemaking program emphasizes the science and chemistry behind the process, and is a joint collaboration between the horticulture and food science departments. Students in the new winery will have the capability to make and experiment with small, 25–gallon test batches, starting with grapes from this year’s harvest, according to Peter Schrempf, the College of Agriculture and Life Science’s program manager.

“They’re able to try a lot of different things,” Schrempf said. “This is much more flexible in that way.”

Merwin emphasized that the winemaking program has gotten students into wineries from the start, and about three–quarters of the program’s graduates go to work at the area’s wineries and vineyards after they complete internships there. There’s a need across the state, too, he said: According to the school, the number of wineries in New York has jumped to 212 from a mere nine 30 years ago.

“There’s quite a need in the New York vineyard area,” he said. “There’s a shortage of trained people here.”

Most people who start vineyards have little formal training in winemaking.?

Merwin said Cornell hasn't decided if it will sell wines, but in keeping with policy it will price them higher to avoid competing with local wineries.

Adriana Coderch, a sophomore at Cornell studying winemaking, came to the school from her parents' winery in Chile.

She chose Cornell over the University of California at Davis' winemaking program because students and faculty here seemed more passionate and science-oriented, she said.

'I've done a semester of research developing a hybrid [grape] variety called pinot noiret, and we did some summer field work on cluster thinning. In general, it was pretty good, a semester of hands-on work.?

She's been an advocate for the new program, and spoke in front of the university's board of trustees to push for an endowment for her major.

'Cornell gives us everything we need to make wine, but we don't have the (proper) facilities to make it,' she said. 'A winery is definitely necessary.?

**Datestamp:** 04/28/2008

## **Town dedicates baseball field to former supervisor Valentino**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? It was one of former town supervisor Cathy Valentino's proudest moments, she said.

On Saturday, flanked by young baseball players in brightly colored uniforms, a beaming Valentino threw out the first ball of opening day at Valentino Field, the baseball diamond at Tutelo Park named in her honor.

"Baseball has always been one of my favorite sports," she said, wearing an oversized Bernie Williams Yankees jersey. "This is one of my dreams come true."

After Valentino founded the Recreation Partnership Board, she worked to get the field built because previously youth players in the town's Babe Ruth Cal Ripken Division had to play on the city's fields at Cass Park. The field is the first of its kind in the Town of Ithaca and will allow youth leagues to host tournaments and other events, Valentino said.

Dominic Frongillo, a council member in the Town of Caroline, told the crowd that Valentino's leadership saw the project to completion.

"It's because of her vision that the recreation partnership is still a reality," he said.

Valentino said organized community sports like baseball allow kids and their parents to get outside and learn about working together.

"Especially for children, it's a good healthy sport," she said. "It turns them into good citizens."

Valentino said a fully functioning field will revive the culture of baseball in the town.

"Youth baseball was kind of dying down in Ithaca," she said. "So this was a really exciting thing to bring back."

The construction, which took about three years, was a special project for Valentino, an avid baseball fan, who lost her re-election bid to current town supervisor Herb Engman last year. Engman ? the unofficial photographer at the event ? praised Valentino's 23 years of service to the town as supervisor and town board member after the field's sign had been unveiled.

"She got the town engaged with her dedication to the task," he said. "She's just an inspiration, and we're lucky to have her."

As she spoke from home plate to the community that surrounded her, Valentino was quick to note that her dream for a baseball park wouldn't have become a reality without others.

"It certainly wasn't just me alone; it takes a lot of community spirit, a lot of volunteers, and a lot of help,"

she said. "I think everyone here today should be proud of this field."

Parents and children alike had good things to say about the new field.

David Wentzel of Ithaca, who was watching his son play baseball, said the sport is a large part of their spring and looked forward to coming to Tutelo Park more often.

"This is a great looking field," he said, "and the kids are really excited about it."

**Datestamp:** 04/28/2008

## **New eco-development takes 1st step**

### **Farm Pond Circle community plants 1,000 trees in keeping with reforestation emphasis**

*Special to The Journal*

LANSING ? Right now, Farm Pond Circle is nothing more than a driveway and 50 acres of abandoned farm land, littered with burrs and grasses and hedged by a run-down barn.

But Jack Jensen sees it becoming so much more ? a 20-home, low-impact community similar to Ithaca?s Ecovillage, though with less of a communal living requirement and an emphasis on reforestation and energy-efficiency.

Jensen and a crew of about 20 volunteers with the not-for-profit housing group Community Building Works ? including former Ithaca mayor Alan Cohen ? took the first step Saturday by planting a tree nursery with 1,000 pine, birch and spruce trees that will form the backbone of this residential reforestation project.

When Jensen, a 51-year-old veteran carpenter and architect, founded CBW last year, he had planned to build affordable housing around the county and abroad, but couldn?t find any pre-cleared lots to build on. So he took it upon himself to buy and clear the old Lansing farm, and began the process of planning a ?blue collar green? community.

?It became clear that the only way we were going to create affordable lots was to do it ourselves,? he said, taking a rest to wipe his hands on his dirty white T-shirt. ?We took a leap of faith, and we?re hoping the concept will be attractive.?

Jensen personally emptied out his retirement fund to pay for the land ? ?I?m scared,? he said ? because he sees it as an investment in a more sustainable future.

The Farm Pond Circle neighborhood will include two ponds, a communal park-like area in the center, and a walking path around the perimeter with tree barriers designed to block wind and for solar shading.

The full road will go in this winter, and the rest of the project is dependent upon planning board approval. But the neighbors are happy, and the Lansing town planning board seems ?enthusiastic? about his proposal, he said.

?We?re not trying to compete with the Ecovillage model, where people really want to live together and share walls,? Jensen said. ?We?re a different model. (Residents) will be able to have their own space but still be able to tap into community amenities.?

Once approved, the first four homes will be built by CBW starting next year and then sold to families in the Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Service program, and the rest of the two-acre lots will be sold to developers for around \$40,000 each. Jensen said he doesn?t want developers to build ?McMansions,? however, so deed restrictions will require that houses exceed Energy Star requirements, and will be limited to 2,400 square feet.

He said he's already heard from people interested in becoming homeowners in the neighborhood.

'Ecovillage has been successful, White Hawk (Ecovillage) I think is being successful, that's a market segment of folks who want to live like this,' he said. 'This is more for people who want to be green, but don't want to spend a lot of time talking about it.'

Sheila Squier, 46, a partner in the organization and Jensen's fiancée, worked with Neighbor Works America for years building affordable housing before she joined CBW. She said this project will reach a group of people who don't qualify for low-income housing, but could still use assistance.

'We're trying to be kind of green and affordable,' she said. 'Green (housing) should be available to everyone. There's a need for this.'

Jensen has been building houses and training others to do the same for more than 30 years – both across the country and for three years with INHS. But when he traveled to Ecuador last year to help build homes there, he was struck by how much the rest of the world needs affordable housing just as much as the United States does – if not more. So for every house they build stateside, they'll also send a group of volunteers to a developing country to build a house there, Jensen said.

CBW will also be refurbishing an old house under contract with INHS starting this summer. Jensen said that will provide funding for the first homes at Farm Pond Circle.

Richard Spingarn, a Trumansburg resident who went with his wife Penny to plant trees Saturday, said he likes the project because it tackles a number of problems at once.

'It's working for many goals, talking about lower-income housing, reforestation and donating overseas,' he said.

Jensen's 22-year-old daughter, Jamie, has planted tree nurseries with her dad since she was little, she said. She said although the project will take a long time to complete, her father is the kind of guy who always needs to be working on something.

'He's been wanting to do something like this for a really long time and finally got it all together,' she said. 'It's going to take up a lot of his time, but that's what he likes to do – work all day long, for the greater good.'



**Datestamp:** 04/28/2008

## **Everybody ... ducks!: 4–H fundraiser draws excited throng to creek**

*Journal Staff*

ITHACA ? More than 3,000 rubber ducks cascading down the falls of Cascadilla Gorge drummed up the kind of excitement that is more typical at a sporting event than a fundraiser.

The eighth annual 4–H Duck Race was held on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. The day started with a 5–kilometer run and events at Cornell Cooperative Extension before people walked to the park.

Kids of all ages, their parents and some students ran up and down Cascadilla Creek, stopping at bridges along the way to watch the ducks float by ? but most importantly to get to the finish line to find out who won.

?This is so awesome,? said Cornell student Kerri Lyons to her friend, Lindsay Broyhill, as the two hustled down the path along the creek.

The ducks are dropped from a tarp, head into the falls and immediately pick up momentum in the rapids before they begin separating.

Intensity builds at the finish line as some leading ducks get caught against the side of the creek, the crowd reacting to every current carrying trailing ducks to the lead.

The path to the ducks? finish line claimed a few victims. Some ducks got caught in grass or by rock formations. Breanna Fulper, a 4–H worker and race coordinator, said last year they only lost 10 or so ducks, but she?s heard people say they see them in the lake. Following the racers was a team of 4–H workers in waders who walked along and knocked stuck ducks free.

Lyons said it?s the best idea for a fundraiser she?s ever heard of, and the race itself is growing in popularity. Fulper said there were a total of 3,067 ducks this year, about 400 more than last year.

Fulper said she can tell people like the fundraiser because it?s steadily becoming more popular. This year, she had a high volume of people calling ahead to put orders in for ducks.

Ducks were \$5 apiece or \$20 for five, and the payoffs were substantial. First prize was a ?nest egg? of \$500. Prizes for the second through 10th spots were all \$80 or more and included an iPod Nano, a grill and a camcorder.

A figure for money raised won?t be available until later this week, Fulper said. The money will be put into 4–H?s general fund, she said.

**Datestamp:** 04/21/2008

## **Volunteers deliver bulbs in Caroline**

### **Group spreads message of energy efficiency**

*Special to The Journal*

CAROLINE ? Foot soldiers in the fight for an energy independent community talked up bright ideas about saving energy and handed out reusable cloth bags stuffed with an efficient compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) to each of Caroline?s 1,400 households Saturday.

Approximately 90 volunteers from Cornell University, Ithaca College and the surrounding communities walked, biked, drove and even rode horses around Caroline, distributing the bulbs with a friendly message: help make the town a model for other rural communities seeking to control their energy costs.

?We?re trying to take energy independence into our own hands,? said Dominic Frongillo, a council member in the Town of Caroline, deputy supervisor, and a member of Energy Independent Caroline, the group behind the distribution. ?This is our future.?

The project was funded by a \$5,000 grant written with money from the Cornell Community Partnership Board, the Cornell Cooperative Extension, and an anonymous local donor. The colorful cloth bags were made by Sew Green, an Ithaca-based sustainable sewing group.

Frongillo said he and the other residents are taking sustainability into their own hands because the federal government isn?t.

?Things are going so slow to address climate change,? Frongillo said. ?I came back from the (United Nations) Climate Change Conference in Bali and realized it?s up to us. We?re the leaders we?re looking for.?

Collectively, Frongillo said the project could save residents \$70,000 in energy bills and reduce carbon emissions by more than 800,000 pounds over the bulbs? lifetimes. The town has already made strides to decrease its energy impact. In 2005 it became the second municipality in the state to purchase wind power for 100 percent of its electricity use.

The volunteers who handled the distribution Saturday set out with smiles as they went door-to-door to greet their neighbors, some who were tanning or working on a new front walk.

Megan O?Rourke, a Caroline resident and Cornell graduate student, said she remembered the neighborhood route from Halloween trick-or-treating, and enjoyed the chance to introduce herself to other residents

?I like to meet the neighbors, and share information about energy conservation with them,? she said.

Another volunteer, Anne Stork, a lecturer of biology at Ithaca College, said she thought the project was more about energy efficiency education than free light bulbs.

“Today’s really about awareness,” she said.

Although some residents had already installed CFLs, like Edward Prouty of Buffalo Road, most received the free bulb with surprise and interest, especially when they found out the CFLs use only about 25 percent of the electricity that normal incandescent bulbs suck up.

Prouty, a 73-year-old who hasn’t retired yet, said the spiral-shaped bulbs he’s installed have saved him money, even though they initially cost more to buy.

“They last a lot longer, so how are they more expensive?” he said. “I tell everyone. The only thing wrong with these things is we get infested with lady bugs, and these catch a lot of them.”

For some volunteers, the day was also a chance to show how to conserve energy in other ways. Her saddlebags filled with light bulbs, Caroline resident JoAnne Guarino and her daughter Cassie rode their two Palo Fino horses from house to house in an unusual statement about alternative transportation.

“Horses are energy efficient, they don’t use gas, and I think people need to start thinking about different ways to save energy and different modes of transportation, whether it’s taking your horse, your bike, or walking,” she said. Her steed whinnied appreciatively.

Ithaca College student Serena Weckel said she volunteered because she wants to change the notion that rural communities are backward.

“Sometimes I feel like they get left out,” she said. “They’re employing their own sustainable ways, and people just don’t know it.”

**Datestamp:** 04/30/2008

## **Searching? religious gifts reach across faiths: Shops meet spiritual, material needs**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? In a little house downtown that sits next to the massive, stone Immaculate Conception Church, Sharon Woloszyn ?guides people to what they?re looking for.?

And then she sells it to them.

As the manager of the church?s not-for-profit Inspirational Gift Shoppe ? the only Catholic-themed shop in Tompkins County ? she?s responsible for keeping more than 2,000 parishioners well stocked with religious articles, texts, jewelry and gifts.

?It?s more than just rosaries and bibles,? she said. ?Angels are really big, as are light-up crosses, and we do big business on kids? (items). We cater to the spiritual side.?

But Woloszyn stresses that the store isn?t just for Catholics ? in fact, the store is billed as ?complete line for all denominations,? and they even sell quite a few Qur?ans, the central Muslim religious text, she said.

Woloszyn walked through the carpeted store ? past everything from puzzles of Heaven to framed pictures of the pope ? as she showed off the many items for sale. She says the store allows people to share their religion with others, and find it within themselves.

When three kids walked in looking for a good present for their grandmother?s birthday, she knew exactly where to bring them ? the painted teapots section.

?Grandmas really love these,? she told them. A few minutes later, the three walked out, but not before complimenting the store.

?It?s a beautiful place, from my perspective, it?s blessed,? said 15-year-old Courtney Jacobsen of Ithaca. ?The prices are high, but it?s for a good cause.?

Her brother and sister, Codey, 14, and Emily, 11, nodded in agreement.

The store doesn?t try to profit off parish members, but just bring in enough to make ends meet, Woloszyn said. The church pays for the store?s rent and Woloszyn?s salary, and proceeds go to pay for things such as utilities and ordering more products.

?The church started it so their own parishioners could buy items,? Woloszyn said, noting that since then, it?s become something more. ?It?s sort of a meeting place for people. The regulars see each other here a lot.?

The busiest times for the shop are between Sunday Masses, when church-goers stop by to stock up on icons, memorial books, birthstone angels and an array of more than a dozen versions of the Bible, from Korean and Spanish versions to ones made for students. She also sells a number of folksy items such as the St. Joseph?s

home seller's kits, which are buried upside down in the ground outside a house to help to sell it.

"I've never had anyone come in and say it didn't work," she said.

Besides a few other volunteers who work for a few days a week, Woloszyn tends to all the requirements of the business by herself. The shop, which is more than 30 years old, was expanded about six years ago after church officials decided it needed more products to serve parishioners.

Lynne Kingston, the church's business manager, said the shop enhances the religious experience of parishioners who shop there.

She's a frequent customer.

"I spend too much money there," she said. "Oh, God, over the years I've bought cards, statue, holiday gift items, wall plaques, pictures, medals, just about the whole gamut, I've probably purchased."

Andrea Staffeld of Ithaca stops in occasionally to pick up frankincense, advent calendars or Bible stories for her children, even though she said she's not a practicing Catholic.

"I grew up Catholic and I have a strong connection with things here that appeal to my senses," she said. "I often burn candles and I love the smell of frankincense. It puts me in a religious mood. But it definitely serves the needs of practicing Catholics."

Woloszyn said the varied, often humorous items such as "The Bad Catholic's Guide To Wine, Whiskey, And Song" show a lighter side to the church.

"Religion should be fun, she said. "God didn't make us to suffer."

#### Jewish religious retail

The Immaculate Conception shop isn't alone as a primary religious retailer in Ithaca — right across DeWitt Park, the Sisterhood of the Temple Beth-El runs the Judaica Shop, where congregants can buy a variety of Jewish-themed gifts, religious items and books.

Esther Racoosin, the shop's manager and a synagogue member, said the shop's location within the temple is a big draw.

"Many of the congregants find it convenient for them, so when they're looking for something they come to the shop," she said.

She also said that besides the sale of kosher food in a few local grocery stores, there's no good place to find a variety of Jewish religious items and imported items like candles from Israel.

Though the shop was initially established in the 1980s only as a service for synagogue members, it now raises funds that are reinvested into the synagogue and the religious school.

Religious books for children are a large focus of the shop, Racoosin said — although local bookstores also sell Jewish-themed books, she believes they have the most comprehensive array.

Racoosin said there's a definite need for stores devoted to religious items, but there are challenges, even with

a mostly captive audience.

“Many times people look online first,” she said. “That’s what people do a lot these days, though.”

#### Internet competition

Even with the advent of the Internet, religious shops still do lots of business.

A study conducted by The Association for Christian Retail, an industry trade group with 2,055 member stores, showed the retail value of Christian products sold by CBA member suppliers reached \$4.63 billion in 2006, up from \$4 billion in 2000.

According to the group, small church gift shop operations such as the Immaculate Conception shop made up about 15 percent of all sales.

In a CBA-commissioned survey of member church stores, 67 percent anticipated being more profitable last year. Figures were not yet available for 2007. The market for these products is also growing — in 2006, 303 new Christian store locations opened up.

At the same time, Internet sales are also going up — Leah Firooz, the manager and founder of JewishStore.com, said she’s seen a huge increase in sales since she started her Judaica gift Web site in 1995. The Web allows her to avoid many of the expenses associated with brick-and-mortar stores, she said.

“Our prices are very affordable, and if we had a physical space we couldn’t offer that to our customers,” she said.

But Firooz said she isn’t trying to compete with small operations like the Temple Beth-El’s shop — her site is just for those who don’t have access to a Judaica shop in their area.

Woloszyn said her customers are loyal enough that she doesn’t see much competition from online Christian retailers.

“I can usually get items before an individual can, because I’m a wholesaler,” she said. “So I don’t usually have a problem, and most people would prefer to get it here.”

**Datestamp:** 04/23/2008

## **Cornell outlines efforts to be green**

## **Skorton focuses on being a neighbor**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Cornell University President David Skorton spoke Tuesday night to an audience of almost 70 community members about how the university he heads is trying to be a good neighbor ? and a good steward of the planet.

In an Earth Day speech in Ithaca High School?s Kulp Auditorium to members of local service-based organizations such as the Kiwanis Club and Lions Club, Skorton outlined some of the university?s efforts to become a more sustainable and open institution.

?I want ... to look at some of the broader challenges we face as a university and the impact they may have on the community,? he said. ?The focus of our education is dependent on a bilateral partnership with the community.?

The event was coordinated by the Ithaca Rotary Club, a service-based organization of which Skorton is an honorary member.

Foremost in his speech was the creation of the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future, which will focus research and education on energy use, environmental problems, and economic development issues such as poverty alleviation. The school has allocated \$10 million in seed money for the project.

Skorton said Cornell Dining supports local agriculture by purchasing 33 percent of its produce from local and regional sources, and the campus is working to achieve its goal of carbon neutrality with a 10-year plan to reduce campus energy use by 20 percent from its 2000 levels.

?Local food is very relevant to Earth Day to reduce transportation needs and by contributing to the Upstate economy,? he said.

In his address, he mentioned the university?s master plan that will promote sustainable campus development in areas such as transportation and construction, and spoke about the Cornell Cooperative Extension?s recent establishment of a program with five full-time positions dedicated to environmental education.

Cornell?s employment of almost 2,000 faculty members is also a boon to the local economy, Skorton said.

?Faculty members and their campus colleagues contribute significantly to the community,? he said. ?They and their families buy houses and rent apartments ... and their research can lead to the development of new businesses within our community.?

When the controversial Lake Source Cooling project came up, Skorton said Cornell was working with the community to alleviate concerns about a project that saves the university from significant extra energy costs

and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

"We all recognize that Cayuga Lake is an essential asset to our community and region," he said, noting that Cornell faculty members are working to develop a better system for monitoring the project's effect on the lake.

Though he acknowledged that Cornell's campus is energy intensive, in part because of the creation of a number of new science research labs, he characterized new building projects as an investment in the future and discussed the ways the school is seeking to limit usage and save energy.

"Energy conservation and achieving climate neutrality are also high priorities at Cornell," Skorton said.

He said the short term energy costs to new research labs and an expanding campus will pay off in the future.

"We're educating people who will develop technologies that will lead to greater energy efficiency," he said. "We want to have a leadership in sustainability education."

Skorton, called himself a "cheerleader" for the university.

During a question and answer session at the end of his talk, the president offered his business card to those whose questions he could not answer, and promised to make sure their requests were heard, offering to sit down and have coffee with one audience member.

Dale Flinn, president of the Ithaca Rotary Club, said Skorton's willingness to be open to ideas is essential for the community to be able to work with the university.

"Finding the right person to talk to is the hardest part of working with Cornell," Flinn said. "Finding those connections is key."



**Datestamp:** 04/12/2008

## **Area students reflect on safety after Virginia Tech**

*Special to The Journal*

On April 16, 2007 the Virginia Tech shootings forced colleges and universities across the nation to re-examine and revise their security preparations.

Today, many schools ? including Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College ? have implemented additional security measures like locked door policies, text and phone alert programs, and public address systems to better inform students of a dangerous situation on campus.

Students interviewed recently on the three local campuses said they feel schools have done everything possible to alert people of security threats on campus. However, the students questioned whether any school can truly be safe in the event of a shooting. They said some responsibility lies with their fellow students, including actions like making sure doors are locked on campus and having people reach out to socially isolated students.

Ithaca College

?Despite the fact that you hear of these occasional things that are very scary, in general, being on a college campus is safer relative to society at large,? said Aaron Bloom, a senior at Ithaca College and president of the Student Government Association.

?It?s just that when you hear about these things, the fact that you?re in such a clustered, high density population makes it more terrifying.?

Bloom said he has spoke to outgoing college President Peggy R. Williams to inform her about how students on campus feel about safety. In case of an emergency, Bloom said he thinks the college?s security preparations would be able to inform students quickly.

?Through the sirens, through e-mail, (news of) something like (a shooting) is going to spread like wildfire,? he said.

But not everyone thinks the safety measures have been completely beneficial.

Sarah Brylinsky, a junior resident assistant and a member of IC Feminists, said after many conversations with residents, she thinks students actually feel less safe because campus safety has created a ?culture of fear.?

?I think my level of safety was pretty high before the (Virginia Tech) attacks and with the security system before it happened, and now the things that have happened like the text message system and public alert system have actually increased the sense of insecurity on campus,? she said.

Brylinsky said Ithaca is a place that has such a strong sense of community that it doesn?t need a ?real security system.?

Bloom said although he thinks students at Ithaca feel safe on campus, he points to recent sexual assaults as proof that there's more work to be done. He said the college is working to install card readers on dorm doors, which should prevent unauthorized access.

Sophomore Abby Brewer said even though all dorm doors are constantly locked, other students need to take steps to protect themselves and others by not propping doors open.

"I get really frustrated when students prop doors open, but I feel like there's no way around that," she said. "Because anyone can walk in, but I always lock my own room too."

Brylinsky said that as a resident assistant, she's found that a strong, friendly community is a powerful way to make isolated students feel welcome and not so closed off that they might cause a "human disaster," as she calls it. She thinks the college should spend more time teaching its leaders to reach out to others to build friendships.

"A safe campus environment will only manifest itself if individuals reach out and trust other individuals," she said. "You need to reach out to your neighbors and get to know them so they don't feel frustrated, like their only outlet is violence."

#### Cornell University

"There's always a potential for violence to occur just because of the general freedom that we have," said Michael Tedesco, a Cornell University senior. "But it's a lot different than high schools — we assume an unspoken trust between students that everything will be OK."

Like many other students, Tedesco is more concerned about the frequency of burglaries and armed robberies on campus and in Collegetown than he is about a campus shooter, he said. "But there's always potential for it to happen," he said. "Everyone should have it in the back of their mind."

Brendan Porto, a freshman living on campus, said he takes safety for granted but wonders about the effectiveness of his school's new text messaging alert system. On March 25, he received a text message at 12:41 a.m. about an armed robbery in Collegetown that occurred at 11:15 p.m. that night. He said he was concerned that sending out late alerts is ineffective and even dangerous.

"Text messaging doesn't make me feel any more safe, especially because of the time difference," he said. "A little more efficient system would be better."

Capt. Kathy Zoner of the Cornell Police Department said technological issues had delayed the sending of the March 24 text message alert until almost an hour and a half after the robbery occurred. Zoner said it was the first and only alert the school has sent out using the AlertNow system so far.

"It didn't go as well as we had hoped," she said. "But it's not as easy as it's being sold as."

Only half the students interviewed knew about the college's fairly new public alert system.

Freshman Katie Sequeira said she was disappointed in the university's Blue Light emergency phone system when she had to use it for a friend's medical emergency. She said she had to explain to the dispatch operator where she was and had to wait on hold while she was transferred.

Lindsey Walker, a junior who lives in Collegetown, said the school is doing enough for security on campus, but she feels unsafe walking home to her apartment off campus.

"If you see a creeper in your dorm, everyone is going to question that," she said. "It's more in Collegetown that I don't feel safe walking at night. You're reminded that you don't live in a bubble."

### TC3

Students interviewed at TC3 expressed little concern over school violence. The text message system TC3 uses is being moved into the SUNY NY–Alert system because it has a higher capacity for volume and a faster delivery time.

Brashan Gami, a second–year TC3 student and treasurer of student government, said he's received text alerts for class cancellations or snow days but never for anything regarding criminal activity.

The only criminal incidents Gami recalled were those regarding dorm–room drug use.

"Mostly text messages and stuff are used for snow days or class cancellations," said Eduardo Garza, a second–year TC3 student and president of the student body. "It hasn't really been affecting my feelings about security."

Students at TC3 are provided with school e–mail accounts where criminal alerts are occasionally sent out, Garza said.

Garza noted that TC3 will soon have armed peace officers on campus and said that he's not thrilled they'll be carrying weapons.

"It's good in the safety manner, but it's not good in the sense that we're going to have more arms on campus," he said.

Gami is not concerned that peace officers will be armed because of the drug–related incidents, he said.

Staff writer Tim Ashmore contributed to this report.

**Datestamp:** 04/11/2008

## **Young entrepreneurs get lesson in creative thinking**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Howard P. Milstein, Cornell University's Entrepreneur of the Year, shared the secret to his success Wednesday night in front of an audience of hundreds of students, faculty and staff in the Statler Auditorium.

?I call it the advanced and mysterious technique of trial and error,? he said with a smile. ?Luck is a huge factor.?

Milstein, a 1973 Cornell graduate, told the story of his own early career as the manager of his family's hotel operations and his efforts to turn every facet of the business upside down by introducing new untested strategies, from hotel dining, to marketing, pricing and television advertising.

He attributed his success to his innovative plans and because he was a newcomer to the business and had not settled into preconceived business plans.

?I hope that the ideas I share here today will serve as a springboard for your own ideas,? he told the crowd.

Milstein is the co-chairman, president and chief executive officer of Emigrant Savings Bank and its holding company, New York Private Bank & Trust, and managing partner of Milstein Properties. He was the keynote speaker at CU's annual Entrepreneurship@Cornell Celebration that will continue today.

The event, held since 1984, brings together successful alumni with current business students for a two-day series of networking events, informational sessions and discussions with successful entrepreneurs like Milstein. With the event, the university and the Johnson School hope to highlight efforts to infuse an entrepreneurial spirit into the school's curriculum and its students, said John Jaquette, the executive director of Entrepreneurship@Cornell.

?There are a bunch of startups (businesses) coming out of Cornell,? he said. ?Creating a culture of entrepreneurship leads to these results eventually.?

Jaquette said getting startups to stay in the Ithaca area is a complicated issue, but events like this will serve to remind alumni of the potential of the area around Cornell.

All across the conference, students and alumni shared their ideas, projects and successes with each other.

Terence Davidovits, a graduate engineering student and a founding member of the Cornell Automotive X-Prize team, is leading a group of 70 students hoping to win a \$10 million prize for creating, from scratch, an automobile that can be commercially viable and still get 100 miles to the gallon.

It's a huge challenge, even more so because his team has competition from automakers, clean technology firms and other corporations.

He spoke during a panel of student entrepreneurs, who relayed the progress of their ideas, and then took pointed questions from alumni and professional entrepreneurs in the audience.

Davidovits said he'd like to make the idea a reality after graduation and said he sees the potential for his car to be commercially successful.

"You can't get there overnight ? you want an affordable car, but first you need a commercial market," he said.

Not all entrepreneurial activities were on such a grand scale. Still, the alumni presenting them ? like Trent Preszler '02, the CEO of Bedell Cellars, who spoke at a panel on innovation in the wine industry ? were enthusiastic about the ways in which they've been successful by thinking outside the box.

Preszler explained how his company has combined contemporary art and wine to increase sales. He also revealed how his winery had diversified its income stream by marketing itself as a venue to host upscale weddings and by selling "wine favor" gift packages.

"The economics of wine are crazy," he said. "To supplement our income, we started doing weddings."

Students interested in becoming entrepreneurs showed up to network and learn more about advances in the fields they plan to enter when they graduate.

Chinenye Offor, a graduate student in health administration who's from Nigeria, came to listen to the experiences of successful alumni in the health care industry. She'd like to contribute to the development of health care in Third World countries.

"I wanted to see what has been done in the past. They've had some really amazing experiences, and what they haven't done correctly will really help me," she said. "I'm definitely learning from their experience."

**Datestamp:** 04/07/2008

## **IC radio hosts stay awake for charity**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Armed with microphones, headsets and an arsenal of good tunes, two Ithaca College radio DJs broadcast live for 50 hours this weekend for charity.

?It?s a great opportunity, but it?s a lot of pressure too,? said senior Doug Evasick, a.k.a. ?DJ Dougstyle,? who pledged to stay awake for 50 hours with his co-DJ, sophomore Sarah Paolantonio, a.k.a. ?DJ Sarah.?

VIC radio?s 22nd annual 50 Hour Marathon supports a local not-for-profit every year. This year, the station donated more than \$4,000 to the Tompkins County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals shelter.

The marathon, also broadcast on VIC?s sister station, WICB-FM (91.7) along with VIC?s Web site and Ithaca College television, started at 4 p.m. Friday, and ended at 6 p.m. Sunday.

The two DJs hosted numerous activities over the weekend, including a battle of the bands at The Haunt on Saturday evening, a ?diner hop,? a scavenger hunt, a live broadcast from the opening weekend at the Ithaca Farmer?s Market, and playing with the pets at the SPCA.

In previous years the station has donated their proceeds to The Ithaca Free Clinic, The Advocacy Center and the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Even at hour 23, Paolantonio couldn?t find anything to complain about, although she did seem a bit sleep-deprived.

?I?m having a great time,? she said. ?It almost looks like the home stretch.?

On Saturday, Evasick was optimistic about his chances of staying awake. ?I haven?t hit the wall yet,? he laughed.

And at 6 p.m. Sunday, he said he was off to get some much-needed rest.

**Datestamp:** 04/07/2008

## **Sciencenter Egg Drop**

### **Nearly 200 entries try to defy gravity**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? The crowd hushes.

Everyone, from the kids gathered by the landing pad to the parents huddled behind them, is silent, staring at the latest experimental vessel that?s about to be dropped eight meters from the balcony to the hard floor below.

Egg yolk from previous failures soaks the floor; the tile isn?t very forgiving.

The latest creation, a red zeppelin with an uncooked, unbroken egg attached to it, is held aloft by a volunteer. He drops it. It crashes to the floor.

SPLAT! Yolk everywhere.

Everyone shouts: ?Ohhhhhh!?

But even the ones that don?t survive are part of the fun.

It was a day of experimental egg-dropping at the Sciencenter?s 23rd annual Egg Drop, which brought out hundreds of children and their families to watch as their eggs went soaring to the ground, protected by a variety of creative contraptions like flying turtles, a bundle of sticks, a space shuttle, a penguin doll, or even a pizza box with a parachute.

Families and kids of all ages entered a total of 197 egg protectors, which were dropped during two ceremonies on Saturday in Center Ithaca. Similar to previous years, the average success rate for projects was 66.5 percent. The event was sponsored by local businesses and the Sciencenter, Ithaca?s hands-on science museum, and coordinated by about 100 volunteers.

Dozens of kids walked away with prizes, which included a Sciencenter membership and a dozen eggs. The prizes were awarded in a number of different categories, including Best Engineering Design; Most Earth Friendly; Best Freefall; Best Parachute; Best in Age Group; and for the ones that had the biggest splatters, Best Unsuccessful Effort.

For the children?s creativity, the sky ? or maybe the floor ? was the limit, and emcee Jim Bell, an associate professor of astronomy at Cornell University, said the egg drops are a great way to introduce young students to the idea that science can be fun, creative, and even a bit messy.

Bell, who?s involved with the Mars rover project at Cornell, said he saw kids using techniques similar to those used to safely land the rovers on the surface of the planet Mars.

"It's cool to see kids realizing that balloons are good shock absorbers too," he said. "It's a real demonstration of the power of engineering and design."

Daniel Halpern, 10, and his classmate, Yaateh Richardson, 9, won in the categories of Best Freefall and Best in Age Group for their project, which attached two propellers to the egg, allowing it to drift safely to the ground. The two of them built their project in about an hour.

"It was kind of simple," Richardson said.

"People never think of the simple stuff," Halpern continued.

They've got a few tips for next year's competitors: Make sure your egg is centered; simple isn't always bad; don't use too much string; and experiment before entering.

So why'd they enter?

"It's fun to watch them drop down," Halpern said.

Halpern's dad Joe, the self-described "chauffeur" for the boys, said he also had a lot of fun helping them to come up with an idea.

"It's hard to hang back sometimes, but I do," he said. "They're perfectly capable of doing this themselves."

Lara Kimber, the associate director of the Sciencenter, said the event gets kids thinking about science and sustainability with the addition of the Earth Friendly category, which requires that all materials used be compostable. But it's also just a good excuse for kids and their parents to have fun together, she said.

"It gives you an amazing opportunity to connect and collaborate with your kids on projects and it encourages conversations about them," she said. "Plus, it's a challenge for kids."



**Datestamp:** 04/08/2008

## **Times columnist speaks about Darfur, China**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? A picture of a 19-year-old man from Darfur whose eyes had been gouged out with bayonets framed Nicholas Kristof's shadow as he walked to the podium.

It's the plight of villagers like him that keeps Kristof, a two-time Pulitzer-prize winning New York Times columnist, seeking an end to the genocide in Darfur, he said.

"Genocide is hard to get out of your system when you've seen these things," he said. "It's not just the death toll, but, well, the degree of evil. That's what's going on in Darfur."

Kristof, who has traveled to the region 11 times to cover the genocide, spoke to audiences Monday at Cornell University's Anabel Taylor Hall and at Ithaca College about his reporting experiences in the African country and about how the international community can work to end the fighting and mass killings.

In somber tones, Kristof described the Darfuris he had met in a refugee camp on the border of Chad, a neighboring country, who had taken shelter under a row of trees. Under every tree, villagers had different tales of horror to tell him.

A man had been shot in the neck and face. A woman's parents had been shot, then thrown in her village's well to poison the water supply. Parents had their children taken from them and thrown into bonfires because of their skin color. Another woman had her babies taken from her and shot in front of her eyes. She was then raped for a week.

"It was really at that moment that the severity and the scale of the atrocities really hit home for me," he said.

Kristof said the genocide has not been a priority for the U.S. government, so it must be a cause that is taken up by the people.

Since 1993, an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 black Darfuris have died from starvation, disease, and massacres carried out by the Arab janjaweed militias and Sudanese government troops, according to the reports of humanitarian organizations.

The conflict attracted international scrutiny and outrage in 2003 after fighting between Sudanese forces and Darfuri rebels escalated.

Kristof's speech wrapped up a two-day symposium called Dream for Darfur that aimed to raise awareness of the role China plays in allowing the genocide in Darfur to continue.

The symposium is sponsored by Ithaca College's chapter of STAND, the national student anti-genocide coalition, and Cornell University's anti-genocide group, STARS.

Kristof said any solution to the conflict must involve China, which supplies Sudan with much of its weaponry and financial backing, in addition to serving as a diplomatic protector in the United Nations.

He conceded that although it would be hard for the international community to deter China from purchasing much of Sudan's oil output — thus directly financing the government's campaign of terror against its people — there are other ways to pressure the economic superpower into behaving.

"We have leverage with China right now because of the Olympics," he said. "If China were to announce it was suspending arms transfers, that would be a tremendously important bit of leverage on Sudan's [government], which I think would lead Sudan to negotiate with the rebels."

Kristof said a boycott of the Beijing Olympics realistically "won't happen," but suggested that President George Bush could make a difference by inviting China's leaders to visit the Darfur region and see the people's suffering first hand.

Philip McMichael, a professor of development sociology at Cornell, introduced Kristof as a reporter who had done much to bring the conflict to the eyes of American readers in an "eloquent" manner, and to connect the tragedies in Darfur to China.

"Much of what I learned about Darfur I read in Kristof's op-ed columns," he said.

Natalie Thompson, a junior at Cornell who attended the speech, said she's impressed by people like Kristof and aid workers who can work in war zones to help genocide victims.

"It takes a lot of courage," she said. "He makes good points — it's not a solution to keep sending in doctors to take shrapnel out of children."

**Datestamp:** 04/07/2008

## **Darfur survivor speaks at IC, CU**

### **Activist lost entire family in genocide**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Mohamed Yahya's stories of the atrocities in Darfur speak for themselves.

?I was born in a small village made of straw and wood. I am a village man; my parents were farmers,? Yahya, 45, told an audience of about 30 students Saturday at Ithaca College, in a soft but passionate voice. ?It is difficult when I come to speak to students like you, because I always tell the same story. But I must tell it.?

Yahya's small village made of straw and wood, located in the conflict-ridden Darfur region of Sudan, was one of the first to be attacked in 1993 by the janjaweed Arab militias and the Sudanese government, while Yahya studied in Cairo at Al-Azhar University, he said.

Soldiers razed the village and slaughtered every villager who didn't flee. Twenty-one members of Yahya's family died that day, including six of his siblings and his disabled grandparents, who were burned alive in their home.

A couple of weeks after the attack, his mother wrote him a letter, telling him that his family had been killed.

??Don't come home. We don't want you to be killed,?? he recalled his mother writing. ?I have never in my life experienced something like that. I was a student, just like you.?

Yahya, the executive director of the Damanga Coalition for Freedom and Democracy, spoke at Ithaca College and Cornell University over the weekend as part of a two-day symposium, which continues today, called ?Dream for Darfur? that aims to raise awareness of the role China plays in allowing the genocide in Darfur to continue.

The symposium is sponsored by Ithaca College's chapter of STAND, the national student anti-genocide coalition, and Cornell University's anti-genocide group, STARS.

Yahya spoke from his own experience about how an apathetic international community has allowed the genocide to continue, and urged students to boycott this summer's Olympic Games in Beijing, the capital of China.

?(China is) supporting the genocide by sending them weapons and getting billions of dollars in oil from Sudan,? he said. ?If we boycott the Chinese Olympics, we can make a big difference.?

He also urged support for U.N. Resolution 1769, which has ordered the creation of an international force of 26,000 peacekeepers, which has not yet been deployed in the region.

?To send in those peacekeepers will stop the genocide and allow my people to come back,? he said.

Since 1993, an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 black Darfuris have died from starvation, disease and massacres carried out by the Arab janjaweed militias and Sudanese government troops. They have displaced 2.5 million people as they burn villages to the ground and systematically rape and torture the native farmers.

The conflict didn't gain international scrutiny and outrage until 2003, after fighting between Sudanese forces and Darfuri rebels escalated. Yahya also claims some credit for the international attention because of the work of a group he founded 1995 called the Representatives of the Massaleit Community in Exile (RMCE). As students in Cairo, they wrote an open letter and distributed it to Western embassies in the city, which largely ignored them, he said.

Finally, with the help of fellow students at American University in Cairo, they translated the letter, entitled "The Hidden Slaughter and Ethnic Cleansing in Western Sudan," and distributed it on the Internet to global leaders.

"As human beings, we have a moral obligation to stop this genocide," he said.

After advocating for his people in Cairo for many years, Yahya left after he was the target of two failed assassination attempts. He applied for refugee status and now lives in the United States, where he directs Damanga and speaks about his experiences.

Mandy Kessler, a senior at Ithaca and an organizer, said the event was held to raise awareness about China's role in the genocide as well as help students understand a distant conflict through the experiences of someone who lived through it.

"As American students, it's hard to grasp what genocide is really like," she said. "Mr. Yahya brings emotion and reality to the conversation."

Adam Sterling, director of the Sudan Divestment Force and a planned speaker, was unable to attend due to travel complications, Kessler said.

Jeremy Tagliaferre, a junior at Ithaca, said Yahya brought a sense of empowerment to students who listened to him.

"It was powerful to hear him talk and to know that he had been through hell," he said. "It was very empowering for him to say, 'You guys can do it too,' as someone who has accomplished so much in life."

**Datestamp:** 03/31/2008

## **Couple tie the knot at Ithaca senior residence**

### **After cheating death, widower exchanges vows with widow**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? After surviving a heart attack, a bacterial infection, pneumonia and a 3-week coma, Jessie Page knew he had to marry Luvenia Collins.

When Page ? who his doctors called ?The Miracle Man? ? finally awoke from the coma, ?I love you, Luvenia,? was the first thing he said.

Until Page?s brush with death, neither of the two friends, who had both already lost spouses, had considered marriage. Then he promised her something.

?He said, ?When I get well enough to walk into city hall, I?m going to marry you,? Collins, 70, said.

Two weeks after he was discharged from the hospital, he walked into city hall with her.

On Saturday, their wedding at Titus Towers was an unlikely but welcome one, in a senior residence with many more memorials and funerals than marriage celebrations.

Page, 67, had fallen into a coma on Jan. 23 at Cayuga Medical Center after a heart attack flat-lined him in the ambulance. His best man, Don Smith, 72, said he had wondered if Page could make it.

But Collins, his unknowing bride-to-be, spent \$20 every day for a taxi from Titus Towers to the hospital so she could spend every moment she could with her comatose soul mate.

Inside Intensive Care Unit No. 9, she played his favorite song, B.B. King?s ?Sweet Sixteen,? on repeat for him, hoping that he?d come out of it.

?Luvenia never doubted,? Smith said. ?She was with him the whole time.?

As Page and Collins stood with each other Saturday, dressed in their finest ? her in a burgundy dress, and he in a gray suit ? it was obvious that all the hours and days she had spent at her love?s bed side hadn?t been in vain.

When they had finished reciting their vows of marriage, the cameras flashed and their assembled friends and family cheered as the two gave each other a quick peck on the lips. Page, who uses a walker to get around, would not bring it to the ceremony ? he stood on his feet the whole time.

?Congratulations, Luvenia and Jessie!? someone shouted, and everyone erupted in applause.

Even Kim Stanford, the mail carrier, stopped in with tears in her eyes to congratulate the two.

‘I love them, they’re great people,’ she said. ‘Jessie sings to me while I’m delivering the mail.’

Page and Collins had both lost their spouses years ago, and were living single in Titus Towers – one of Ithaca’s senior residences, with about 200 residents. After they met about five years ago, they found they had a lot in common – but Collins said it was her homemade potato salad that really made him fall for her.

‘He fell in love with that first,’ she said. ‘We got to talking, he came over one day and said, ‘I think I’m falling in love with you,’ and I said, ‘I think I’m falling in love with you.’’

When Page recovers enough to walk, the two will be taking an unofficial honeymoon to Alabama to visit family, they said.

Weddings are quite an uncommon occurrence at the Towers, where many retirees and widowers live. Billie Nordby, program coordinator for the Ithaca Housing Authority, which oversees the residence, said the last time they’d had a wedding was at least five years ago.

Seventy-five-year-old Ellie Griffith, a resident who’s lived there for 16 years, said she could only remember a few ‘rare’ weddings.

‘We have them from time to time, but it’s certainly an occasion,’ she said.

Thelma Belgard, 71, Collins’ maid of honor, said she hadn’t been in a wedding since the 1980s and said she was honored to participate in Saturday’s ceremony. She called Page the ‘greatest guy in the world,’ after she saw how much he cared for his first wife, Mary, who had a stroke and was unable to care for herself afterward.

‘It doesn’t happen often where the man becomes the caretaker. That won me over,’ Belgard said. ‘I just hope that they have plenty of time to have a really wonderful future together.’

**Datestamp:** 03/31/2008

## **IC, Cornell students raise funds for cancer fight**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? More than 2,200 Cornell University and Ithaca College students spent a sleepless evening and early morning walking the track in Cornell?s cavernous Barton Hall at the school?s 4th annual Relay For Life event.

They walked for cancer fighters and survivors like 12-year-old Abby Sharpless.

Five years ago, Sharpless, who?s now in the seventh grade at Lansing Middle School, received what everyone thought was her death sentence.

After a routine doctor?s visit for what her father Robin thought was a sinus infection, she was diagnosed with glioma and glioblastoma, two aggressive brain tumors that had swollen inside her skull and eventually caused her to go blind for a year.

But after two major brain surgeries, where doctors removed almost 23 percent of her brain mass, and 37 chemotherapy sessions, her cancer was gone.

Sharpless, who walked in the survivor?s lap at the event, said she knows how she survived the whole ordeal.

?I believed in myself,? she said, wearing a purple shirt with the word ?survivor? printed on it, her smiling face painted with bright colors. ?Life rocks.?

It was an emotional time for the thousands of students who raised \$207,423 in donations in the weeks preceding the event, which will go to benefit the American Cancer Society?s research and advocacy programs.

For a night, Barton Hall was transformed into a sleepless city as students ? most of whom have been affected by cancer in some way ? came together to send a message of hope to cancer survivors and those still fighting the disease.

During a lap of remembrance, students walked in darkness past the glowing luminaria, covered with messages of support and tribute that shone brightly as the spirits of the survivors who gathered there to support others fighting against cancer and tell their stories.

Sarah Shurpin, a Cornell senior and president of Colleges Against Cancer who helped to organize the event, has a personal reason for getting involved ? she lost her dad, Stanley, to leukemia the summer after her freshman year.

?Relay helps me to realize that other people out there are feeling this, too, and are touched as well,? she said. ?Seeing all the luminaria really makes it real.?

All night, a cappella groups, bands and dance troupes performed for the walkers, and survivors spoke intermittently about the importance of keeping hope alive for those fighting such a debilitating disease.

To lighten the mood, students from Ithaca College's Do Anything Nice Club gave out free hugs, and two students from Colleges Against Cancer cavorted around the track in costumes resembling a clean lung and one with lung cancer to remind students about the dangers of smoking.

Samantha Solomon, a senior at Cornell, spoke to the crowd of students about her own battle with cancer when she was a young girl.

"Let's remember why we're here: we're running for hope, we're running for life," she said. "Just like the cancer does not sleep, all of us have given up sleep tonight in the fight against cancer."

Stacy Gilbert, a sophomore at Ithaca College, almost gave up hope the week after her freshman orientation, when she was diagnosed with cancer.

Biopsy results showed that she had tumors in the fat of her left leg. She missed her first semester in order to get surgery and several rounds of chemotherapy, during which her hair fell out.

"I started crying when I shaved my head, that's when it hit me," she said. But the treatments worked, and Gilbert started classes in the spring semester, wearing a bandanna to cover her temporary baldness.

Now she has black locks of hair tucked behind her ears, and she can laugh about the six-month treatment process. She raised money and went to Relay For Life to help out others who are going through the same thing.

"I feel like I need to give back in some way," she said.

The event also recognized non-student members of the college community who have struggled with cancer.

Rev. Meredith Ellis, the chaplain of Ithaca's Protestant community, was diagnosed with melanoma last year, and survived after she had surgery to remove the tumor. She still remembers the terror she felt when she heard the grim diagnosis.

"I had a 'deer in the headlights' reaction," she said.

But Ellis didn't mention the disease often to her students "she didn't want to worry them, she said.

"It's easier for students to see me as strong and coping well," she said. "And I am now."



**Datestamp:** 03/24/2008

## **Coming together for Janet**

### **Candor holds benefit for accident victim**

*Special to The Journal*

CANDOR ? The only person missing in the packed Candor Fire Hall was the person for whom Saturday?s event was held.

But although she was absent, 24-year-old Janet Harris? name was spoken often, and she was in every picture on the walls, wearing a necklace that says ?hope,? and smiling and hugging her friends.

While her comatose body fought in a far-away hospital to recover from a car accident, hope hung in the air in the fire hall where, at a benefit for Harris, a steady stream of friends, relatives and residents crowded together to eat ziti, listen to music and help her family defray their costs and keep their hope alive.

?It?s hard to think that she?s not going to be perfect when she does wake up, but at the same time we just want her to be awake,? her friend Kelly Halstead said.

Harris? life would change forever on Feb. 1, a day that dawned as a snowstorm hit. Ice and sleet coated the roads, but Harris had to go to work. She started her drive to Ithaca?s Bed Bath & Beyond, where she worked, around 10 a.m.

On her way there, her car skidded on the ice. She lost control, swerved, and struck a tree on the side of the road, crumpling her vehicle. She was still alive, but her pelvis and wrist were broken, and she was in a coma from serious brain trauma.

The paramedics wouldn?t even let her father, Jim Harris, ride in the ambulance because they didn?t think she?d survive all the way to Cayuga Medical Center, her aunt, Rose Blinn, said.

Since then, she?s been transferred to the Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital in Schenectady, where she undergoes hours of therapy every day to bring her out of the coma she?s been in for close to two months.

Although she hasn?t regained full consciousness yet, she?s made progress ? she can swallow, look around the room and she?s even eaten an ice pop. Her friends and boyfriend stay with her every weekend, often sleeping in the hospital?s waiting rooms, hoping for good news every day.

For her best friend, Jeanne Corwin, the past months have been a nightmare.

?I just want her back, to get back to life, get back to laughing, and get over this horror movie,? she said.

Corwin said before she went into the coma, Harris was a loving person who knew how to laugh at herself. She loved Candor and the country, and often went line-dancing with her friends, drove around her parent?s property on four-wheelers with friends, played softball or relaxed at backyard bonfires.

"She's the kind of person who would be here helping today," her brother Jeff Harris said as he cooked in the fire hall kitchen. "I don't know what we'd do if we lost her."

After high school, Janet Harris went to Cazenovia College, Tompkins Cortland Community College and even lived in Florida for a time. She returned to Candor recently to pursue an interest in hotel management. Corwin said Harris always had planned to have kids and a family "the whole nine yards," she said.

Blinn said the whole town has been trying to come to grips with such a random, senseless tragedy.

"I can't even describe it," she said, "it's just incredibly sad."

**Datestamp:** 03/26/2008

## **Dryden cafe coming together nicely**

### **Newcomers create community meeting place**

*Special to The Journal*

DRYDEN ? Monica Knight admits that businesses on the village?s main street are ?drying up and emptying out.? But she?s not discouraged ? she sees it as a challenge.

In a building surrounded by shuttered windows with ?For Rent? signs taped to them, she and a bevy of other committed community members envisioned revitalizing the area with a place where residents could gather to talk, relax and socialize with their neighbors. That was in August.

On Feb. 28, their creation, the not-for-profit Dryden Community Center Caf , officially opened for business at 1 W. Main St.

The coffee shop, located at the village?s four corners at the intersection of routes 38 and 13, serves up hot coffee, grilled paninis, free wireless Internet and a place for locals to congregate in a town that many said had no good central meeting place.

?The most common comment we heard was there?s no place to gather, relax, have a good cup of coffee, and just chat,? Knight, the Caf 's vice president, said. ?People have been hungry for something like this for a while here. There was a dearth of community space.?

Since 1836, when it was built, the building at 1 W. Main St. has been a place to mingle with neighbors ? it?s been grocery store and, most recently, the Brooklyn Diner. But for almost the past two years, it?s been a vacant shell.

That?s no longer the case.

As she worked at the Caf  on Saturday with fellow trustee and board president Wendy Martin, Knight outlined all the events they?ve planned: first, a grand opening this Friday; live music three days a week; family game nights; talks by local authors and professors; and events for kids whenever possible.

Martin and Knight are newcomers to the Dryden area, so for them, the Caf  is also about making new friends and bringing their adopted community closer together in a shared space, they said. With a core crew of about 30 volunteers who helped build and help run the space, and a \$3,000 grant from the town of Dryden, the Caf  board members have lassoed the community into their project.

?We?re trying to put heart into our community and so we wanted this to be in the heart of the village,? Martin said. ?People have been coming to this location for a long time.?

A reading and book swap room in the back was furnished for free with donations, a stage in front provides room for coffee drinkers and people watchers, and in the center ? with the functional style of a mother?s

kitchen ? the espresso bar/sandwich counter serves up hot food and drinks. Bulletin boards, volunteer sign up sheets, a chalkboard and local artwork adorn the walls.

But even as the place has come together, Martin said there have been many challenges in running a not-for-profit Café with a mostly volunteer staff, so they hired several paid staff members, like Virgil resident Amanda Underwood. She said she likes working in a non-traditional coffee shop.

?There are challenges trying to organize everything, but it's fun to make up the rules as we go,? she said.

For Martin and Knight, an administrative assistant and a paralegal, respectively, managing a restaurant was a completely new experience.

?We're a bunch of non-restaurant people trying to start a restaurant,? she said. ?But every time we've needed something, someone's walked in and said, ?I can do that.??

Even before the grand opening, the community has already been quietly exploring the new coffee shop.

In the back reading room on Saturday, 3-year-old Truman Lyons picked out a book to read while he and his parents, Chris and Mary Beth, of Dryden, ordered hot chocolate all around. The Lyonses stop into the Café twice a week, they said.

?I was kind of skeptical at first, but it has been amazing to see how this place has come together,? Chris Lyons said.

They just moved into town from Texas, and for them, the Café has also been a great place to meet their neighbors, Lyons said.

?There's a lot to make us isolated in this society, and so anything that reverses that is better,? he said. ?(The Café) has been filled to capacity with people of all ages. It's exceeded our expectations, and they have great hot chocolate ? what's not to like??

**Datestamp:** 03/20/2008

## **Never too late to learn**

### **Black Elks Lodge hosts computer classes**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Ralph Brown?s fingers, curled like hesitant spiders above difficult prey, shake as he taps the keyboard.

Hunting and pecking, he types the letters A, S, D, F, over and over, until he?s mastered the home keys. Except for his roving fingers, Brown ? a 75-year-old retired carpenter who never learned how to read or write ? is silent and still as he learns to type.

In a steady voice that projects the patience of his years, Mr. Brown, who now sings with his church?s choir, finally voices his frustrations out loud.

?These old fingers are just ... funny,? he said. ?I don?t see how you people can just ?Dit, dit, dit,? as he mimics a person typing quickly.

Sitting by his side, her soft, youthful touch guiding his weathered, sandpaper hands on the mouse, Ithaca College senior Michelle Diemer smiles and reassures Brown as he slowly types the words ?we learn together.?

?That?ll be you soon,? Diemer said.

On a Saturday afternoon, the two sat in the stuffy attic of the Black Elks Lodge on Green Street that, before it became the lodge?s computer lab, was a barber shop where Brown would get his hair cut.

It?s here that the Elks held their third weekly computer literacy class, which attracted four members looking to learn the basics of using a computer. Unlike Annie Carter, 64, who was furiously typing away on another computer, many have never touched a keyboard before.

?I had used it before, but I?m a person who needs one-on-one,? Carter said. ?I always wanted to use a computer. I was excited about this because I knew I?d get the attention that I needed. And I love it.?

When she learns enough, Carter plans to use the computer to e-mail her daughter and granddaughter, who live in Brooklyn.

?My grandchild knows how to use it better than me,? she said, laughing.

The class was the result of a hot summer day?s conversation between two prominent community members ? Lucy Brown, a longtime activist, and Gossa Tsegaye, a documentary filmmaker and a professor of television and radio at Ithaca College.

Both felt that many of the area's poorer residents would benefit tremendously from an education in computer use. So they acquired several older computers from Cornell University, and enlisted the help of three Ithaca College student volunteers – Diemer and fellow senior Amanda Butts to teach, and sophomore Feleg Tsegaye to provide technical support.

Echoing the findings of a 2000 survey by American Express Small Business Services in which 41 percent of business owners felt computer skills were "very important" for workplace success, Brown said typing and Internet skills can help uneducated people find better jobs.

"It's the way everyone communicates now," Lucy Brown said. "Computer literacy is so important – everyone's emphasizing that."

While the program is restricted to members of the Elks Lodge, Gossa Tsegaye and Brown hope to one day open it to the public, after they install four more computers and a conference table for the class to meet at. The class will be run in sessions of six to seven weeks, and Tsegaye said he plans to have a graduation ceremony for the students in May.

"I think the problem will be, can we serve everybody?" Tsegaye said.

Floyd Carrington, a trustee member of the Elks who helped to renovate the room, said before the class he was intimidated by computers. Now all he worries about is that his fingers are coordinated enough to type.

"When I used to look at a computer, I got scared," he said. "I'm going to be in this class as long as they have it. I can't learn enough."

He also likes working with Diemer and the younger generation, who, surprisingly, are very patient teachers.

"Michelle doesn't run around and skip stuff," he said. "It's fun working with her."

Although Diemer will be graduating in May and probably leaving the area, she said she'd like to establish the program now so it can continue on. The teaching has also been challenging – and rewarding – for her.

"I knew going in that they had no experience, but because I grew up with computers it was hard for me to fathom how someone wouldn't know how to use a mouse," she said. "It's a great idea, and great experience."

**Datestamp:** 03/20/2008

## **Cornell's NCAA bids energize Ithaca**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? March Madness has hit close to home this year.

Across Ithaca and Tompkins County today, thousands of local fans will be crowded around their TVs to watch Cornell University men's basketball, their hometown team, play in its first appearance in the NCAA tournament since 1988. Paul Wheeler, a manager at Emerson Power Transmission, said he won't be able to watch today's game at Uncle Joe's Grill and Sports Bar, so "it'll be on at work."

And while the odds will be against 14th-seeded Cornell in their 5 p.m. EDT game in Anaheim, Calif. against the No. 3 seed Stanford University, the fans here are cheering for the team regardless.

"It's a local team ? you've got to root for them," Wheeler said.

On Sunday the Big Red women's team, in its first ever NCAA Division I tournament appearance, play first-seeded University of Connecticut at 7 p.m. in Bristol, Conn.

Alycia Zieno, a senior at Cornell and an avid fan of the school's teams, said even though students are on spring break this week, many are still planning to tune in to watch the men's and women's teams play.

"It's a big time for Cornell," she said. "People are talking about it, congratulating each other ? it's brought a big school closer together."

Thomas Yengo, the owner of Benchwarmers Restaurant and Sports Bar on The Commons, is expecting big crowds for the March Madness games, especially the men's first-round game at Anaheim's Honda Center.

"There's a lot of local buzz, and people are interested in it," he said.

Pride also goes beyond the local communities. Alumni are "ecstatic" about Cornell's performances this year in a variety of sports, not only in men's and women's basketball, but hockey and wrestling too, said John Webster, director of athletic alumni affairs and development for the university.

"People are just absolutely thrilled with the attention Cornell has gotten in the press as a result of some of our athletic accomplishments," he said. "What makes great university (athletics) is giving undergrads an opportunity to cheer for Cornell."

Although he hasn't seen any spike in donations since the news that Cornell would be playing in the Big Dance, he expects that next year will be the department's biggest year ever for fundraising. If he's correct, it'll be a lot of money ? in the past three years, the department has already raised \$45 million, he said.

It hasn't always been this good. Webster remembered a dark night four years ago, after Cornell had gotten "whacked" by Harvard University, and men's head coach Steve Donahue had gone with only a few friends to

the empty Chapter House Brew Pub. Webster said that the mood all changed this year, when Cornell beat Harvard to win the Ivy League Championship.

“He goes to the Chapter House, he walks in, and a cheer goes up – the place is packed,” Webster said. “It was kind of a stark contrast to what had happened four years ago. The residual effect to the community is substantial.”

Webster said although the basketball victories are getting the most attention, they’re only the tip of Cornell’s iceberg of sporting success. In the past five years, the school has had 37 Ivy League titles and four more just this winter, he said.

While only about 1,000 of Cornell’s 20,000 students participate in a team sport, Simeon Moss, director of press relations, said the big wins across the board this year gives the school a higher profile and will help people realize that Cornell students are well rounded.

“It definitely increases the interest of people considering Cornell,” he said.

But Moss wouldn’t attribute any possible applicant spikes to what is known as the “Flutie effect,” named after Boston College’s Doug Flutie, whose Hail Mary pass in a 1984 football game led to a impressive win over the University of Miami. Supporters of the idea say the play led to a substantial increase in applications to Boston College the following year, but many others say that the phenomenon’s effects are uncertain at best.

“I can’t say that we’ve seen a rise in applications, but it isn’t something that would be new for us,” Moss said.

Stephen Mosher, a professor of sport management and media at Ithaca College, said he doesn’t think Cornell’s brief foray into March Madness will have any lasting effect on the school at all.

“It isn’t going to affect Cornell except for an hour,” he said. “This is just a sacrificial lamb fodder for the giant NCAA machine.”

Wheeler believes that if the men’s team could make it all the way to the Sweet Sixteen, then the team would see big increases in its fan base next year.

“Everyone I talk to about the pool asks, ‘are you picking Cornell to win,?’” he said. “Most people said they would pick them to win at least the first round.”



**Datestamp:** 03/12/2008

### **City's trash problem**

Complaining, blaming and punishment seem to be the underpinning of today's society. The litter in Collegetown brings this to light. Trash abounds, though everyone is responsible, someone has to pay for it. The pervading attitude is that if someone else created it, it's their responsibility to take care of it. It's not my job to pick up for others. I'm not paid for it, and I may have to work too hard.

Recognizing that not everyone will be consistently considerate of others, a paradigm shift is needed based on recognition and resolution of problems with the installation of programs that reward rather than punish. The City of Ithaca should take the initiative to place needed trash and recyclable containers throughout all high-density areas as well as the surrounding neighborhoods (with the knowledge that people will use and abuse them). It should do away with its agenda of tickets and fines and create campaigns rewarding those caught doing something right. Why don't we recognize those who clean up the places where we walk, work, eat, and live? Perhaps Abraham Lincoln had this in mind when he said: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him."

James R. Orcutt

Ithaca

Wilson's a great principal

It was with sadness and frustration that I learned that the Ithaca City School District Board of Education has forced the resignation of Joe Wilson as principal of Ithaca High. I'm in my 23rd year of teaching English at the high school, and Joe is the 11th principal I've worked under. Randy Ehrenberg, who served as interim principal almost 20 years ago, was the only one who equaled Joe Wilson in intelligence, vision and commitment.

The job has become increasingly difficult. The community and the board seem to expect swift and faultless action, and there are always at least two loudly voiced opinions about the right decision in any given situation.

Joe has been blamed for complex problems that have been around for decades. He has worked tirelessly and with grace under pressure to the best of his considerable ability. As the superintendent has said, Joe Wilson is "professional top to toe."

I hope Joe decides to stay with us until the end of next year. I will have 30 years in teaching in June 2009. I had always thought I would continue beyond that as I still enjoy my work with students in the classroom. But I despair at facing a 12th principal, especially as I believe that any quality candidate (and they are rare) who looks at the way this district has treated Joe Wilson would be loathe to darken our door.

Moira Lang

Ithaca

Wishing Grasen well

Encouragement! That was the word that came to our minds when we read the article by Aaron Munzer in The Ithaca Journal about Grasen Alexander (?Dryden high schooler gets back on his feet,? Feb. 27). Our personal message to Grasen is: We know it's hard, but you have to keep on going. We know it's hard because we have cerebral palsy, and when we were in school our classmates sometimes teased us. We remember how much it hurt. We too went through long hours of physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. We know that surgeries are no fun. Keep going. You can reach that goal of studying robotics at Rochester Institute of Technology and goals after that. We also want Grasen to know that he can call on us for support if he chooses. There are successful adults living with cerebral palsy.

Name-calling is hurtful. In this case it has reached a point beyond name-calling. We were outraged that Grasen reports receiving death threats. When their peers without disabilities are treating students with disabilities like this, it is time to take a more active role in teaching acceptance and tolerance of others. Behavior like this cannot be tolerated. Adults must role model how to be respectful of others. Each of us, regardless of age, must work harder to create a society in which people with disabilities are free from harassment. We are part of the communities in which we live.

Grasen Alexander should feel good about telling his story. Hopefully, his courage will lead to positive change. We wish him well.

Jeff Boles

Larry Roberts

Ithaca

Editor's note: Boles is a peer counselor, and Roberts is the program director at the Finger Lakes Independence Center.

Mount in Cayuga Heights

We are writing to support Elizabeth Mount, who is a candidate for trustee in the Village of Cayuga Heights. She listens and uses good judgment in making decisions. In addition to performing all the regular duties of a trustee, Elizabeth has edited the village newsletter. The Cayuga Heights newsletter, The Courier, is informative and alerts everyone to important dates and services such as leaf pick-up. The Courier updates readers on seasonal road construction, deer policies, the latest on proposed changes at Community Corners and always an interview of village officials. Elizabeth is also upgrading the village Web site. Anyone willing to do these tasks with her dedication deserves your vote on election day.

Diane & George Conneman

Ithaca

Cayuga Heights newsletter

Recently, I received my copy of the Cayuga Heights Courier in the mail. The Courier is the village's community newsletter, which is sent periodically to all residents of the village. As I read through it, I was surprised to find campaign rhetoric inside the publicly funded newsletter a mere 11 days before the election.

Under the guise of an election–day announcement, the newsletter touts the ‘steady and careful oversight’ and the ‘experience and knowledge’ of the current trustees. The names of the incumbent mayor and trustees appear on the same page, just inches away from the seeming endorsement. The names of the opposing candidates are nowhere to be found. The editor of The Courier is herself one of the candidates running for re–election!

I do not fault The Courier for publicizing the upcoming election, but the names of all the candidates should have been listed. Receiving the newsletter less than two weeks before the election with such blatantly pro–incumbent language was unfair and an inappropriate use of my tax dollars.

To be fair to the other candidates, I would like to list them here. Jim Gilmore for the Community Party and Mindy Mindlin for the Had Enough Party are running for mayor. Diana Riesman, Ron Bors and David Donner are running for trustee under the Community Party line. I encourage my fellow villagers to vote on March 18.

Elliott Smith

Cayuga Heights

Editor’s note: To see a copy of the newsletter, visit [www.cayuga–heights.ny.us/doc/COURIER.pdf](http://www.cayuga–heights.ny.us/doc/COURIER.pdf).

Trash hauler suggestion

Regarding the problem of trash haulers using local roads to get to the Seneca Falls landfill, targeted law enforcement activity in the form of random and frequent weight checks, driver’s log and safety inspections, etc. might cause many of these vehicles to seek other routes (like the Thruway) to get to the landfill. I suspect that the fear of being delayed at a truck checkpoint and the possibility of a citation for some infraction would have a beneficial impact on this problem without the need for extensive studies or state legislation.

Larry Sallinger

Ithaca

Iditarod is ‘torture’

I am writing to respond to the Feb. 27 article ‘Area racer knows all about the challenges ahead at Iditarod.’

Sue Allen should have refused to race Martin Buser’s 19–month–old puppies in the 2008 Iditarod. Vigorous activities like long–distance endurance races are dangerous for young dogs. The resulting damage to their developing bone cells can be painful and hasten the onset of degenerative joint disease and bone cancer. Since their neuromuscular connections are not fully formed, a pup’s coordination is not the best. As a result, injuries are more likely to occur.

In addition, puppies face the same risks as older dogs. What can happen to them includes death, paralysis, penile frostbite, bleeding ulcers, lung damage, bloody diarrhea, broken bones, pneumonia, torn muscles and tendons, viral diseases, hypothermia, ruptured discs, sprains and anemia.

For the dogs, the Iditarod is torture.

Margery Glickman

Miami

Editor's note: The writer is the director of the Sled Dog Action Coalition.

What's the cost?

I have a question I would like to ask. Why is it that when the country is doing something that a lot of people don't like they always come up with what we could be doing but aren't? For example, if it wasn't for the war we could be spending the money on health care. It doesn't matter if it is a Democrat or Republican president because at any time after a war we never get health care or whatever else we could be spending the money on if it wasn't for the war. After the war we have to finish paying for whatever but after that we still don't get health care.

Another question to ask ourselves: How much is it going to cost us? Health care is going to cost us, so how much? Everyone knows that once you get what you are asking for then it seems things have to get attached to it so how much is that? The government is not going to be so active in finding the money for it because it will be around here forever so let's wait until then to find the money. If we look at history, we will see that although we could be spending the money on whatever, we never do so let's not worry about it as the government will find away to spend our tax dollars and that is a Democrat or Republican plan.

Charlie Hart

Ithaca

**Datestamp:** 03/05/2008

## **Palestinian ambassador speaks at cornell**

### **Safieh pleads for more U.S. involvement**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Afif Safieh, the Palestinian ambassador to the United States, spoke Wednesday night at Cornell University about the need for the U.S. to have a stronger diplomatic presence in the Israeli–Palestinian peace process.

Half a world away, peace talks were collapsing this week after retaliatory Israeli rocket attacks killed more than 100 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

?We would be your consenting victims if America decided to wage peace on us,? he joked, in a speech that mixed humor with serious pleas for increased efforts by America to resolve the ongoing Middle Eastern conflict once and for all.

Safieh was introduced by Cornell University President David Skorton, who described him as a ?frank and engaging advocate of Palestinian points of view.?

?He has long been known as one of the most eloquent spokespersons for the Palestinian peoples,? Skorton said. ?He has condemned terrorism and sought common ground with Jewish organizations.?

Safieh spoke extensively about his own experience with the conflict; why his political party, Fatah, failed to control the Gaza Strip; and the need for Israel to stop encroaching on his society?s rightful territory.

The ambassador described himself as a proponent of ?popular, non–violent resistance,? and called it the only way to both neutralize the Israeli military and mobilize the Palestinian population. But he also condemned the United States for failing to intervene in a meaningful way.

?Americans need to make decisive diplomacy,? he said. ?The superpower of the world deals with Israel with all the political power of Liechtenstein.?

President Bush has said he would like to have a peace plan in place before he leaves office in January 2009, but the collapse of talks this week have set back U.S. diplomatic efforts.

Safieh, a Christian born in Jerusalem in 1950, was educated in Paris and served in various roles with the Palestine Liberation Organization until 1990, when he was appointed as the official delegate to the United Kingdom, and then in 1995 to the Vatican.

In October 2005 he was appointed to serve as a representative of the PLO to the United States in Washington.

During his talk, held at Cornell?s Statler Auditorium, Safieh criticized the terrorist attacks of Hamas, the controlling party in Gaza, but said that Israeli actions on the ground were also responsible for the lack of a

lasting peace.

“I believe it is the Israelis’ priority to acquire as much of our geography as possible, with as little of our demography as possible,” he said.

He said that although many Palestinians, including himself, are in favor of a two–state solution, Hamas’ refusal to negotiate “has created a three–state solution” between Israel and the two Palestinian territories, Gaza Strip and the West Bank, controlled by different political parties – Hamas and his party, Fatah, respectively.

Safieh also spoke at length about the economic effect the Israeli occupation has had on his society. He bemoaned the decline of higher education in his society, and described how the 600 military checkpoints surrounding the Gaza Strip resulted in a loss of more than eight million work hours each day.

“After 60 years of diaspora and 40 years of military occupation, the checkpoints are plunging our society into economic decline,” he said.

Several times during his speech, Safieh compared the plight of the Palestinian people to that of the Jewish people after World War II and the Holocaust.

“We have become the Jews of the Israelis,” he said, “and I believe the two–state solution is the way out.”

At the conclusion of his brief talk, Safieh and Skorton opened up the floor to more than a half–hour of questioning.

Safieh avoided a question related to his own party’s relevance in Palestinian society, chastised a student questioner for focusing on Israeli casualties in the face of overwhelming Palestinian dead, and said he thought certain Israeli officials should be tried for war crimes. He also rebuked a claim by a student that Palestinian textbooks advocated hate. At all times, though, the dialogue remained relatively civil.

After the talk, Nora Cohen, a Jewish resident of Ithaca who was born in Egypt, said she thought Safieh should not focus so much on international intervention.

“I wish that some of the Arab countries could get together to make peace,” she said. “The U.S. cannot make peace. I do not think that we should get involved, but I know peace can be made.”

Srikant Iyer, a graduate student from India studying at Cornell, said being involved in a dialogue with Safieh about the conflict was like being physically involved with history.

“There are a lot of human atrocities going on there,” he said, “and I think Israel, which seems to be the major force, need to recognize that human beings matter a lot more than personal investments.”

**Datestamp:** 02/27/2008

## **Dryden high schooler gets back on his feet**

### **16-year-old with cerebral palsy seeks normalcy**

*Special to The Journal*

DRYDEN ? High school isn't easy for anyone, what with the triple threats of acne, awkward dating and puberty, but 16-year-old Grasen Alexander has had to deal with a lot more than that.

Grasen walks stiffly and one of his legs is slightly shorter than the other because he has cerebral palsy. The disorder, which he's had since infancy, permanently affects body movement and muscle coordination but doesn't cause mental retardation.

When he walked through the halls of Dryden High School, other kids stuck out their legs and tripped him as he went by. He's gotten nasty phone calls ? death threats, too. After his surgeries, he had to sit in the bleachers during gym class while the other kids play games. They've called him so many names he now keeps a mental list of all of them. But ?cripple? tops the list, he said.

?People automatically assume I'm stupid because I walk funny,? he said while sitting on his couch, baggy jeans draped over his matchstick-thin legs, a walker by his side. Once, he skipped nine days of class in a row because he didn't want to face the ridicule.

?It's not easy going through school for anyone, but when you have issues, kids are meaner,? his mother, Linda Alexander, said.

But things took a turn for the worse in the summer of 2006 when his awkward gait caused his hip bone to pop out. When that happened, he couldn't walk far or put weight on his legs.

After several unsuccessful surgeries at Cayuga Medical Center, where his longest stay lasted five weeks, in July of last year a team of doctors at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester finally corrected his leg.

Because he was so weakened by the numerous surgery complications ? at one point, he weighed only 87 pounds ? he's had to stay out of school for the whole year, and he'll have to graduate a year later than the rest of his class. He's now back to 108 pounds and eating a high-calorie diet.

His life at home is focused on returning him to health and school ? he does stretching exercises every day and goes to physical therapy twice a week. His lifeline is his cell phone, the only way he can keep in touch with his friends on a regular basis.

But even with all the humiliation he's had to suffer at school, now he wants to go back more than anything.

?I've pretty much lost an entire year of my life,? he said, speaking slowly and deliberately. ?After everything I've been through, I don't really care anymore. What they say means nothing to me.?

Richard During, the principal of Dryden High School, said the school is rooting for him to get well enough to return to class soon. During said he has a "zero-tolerance policy" for teasing, and he has worked with Grasen to help him feel comfortable in school.

"We're a very respectful environment. There are blind spots, though," During said. "But this is where he belongs. He needs to be with his friends."

Grasen's basically your average high schooler - he loves playing basketball, riding bikes, playing video games and reading fantasy books. He wants to go to college at the Rochester Institute of Technology to be a robotics engineer. Before his hip popped out of place, he could do almost everything other kids could do - just a little slower.

"Nothing stopped him," his mother said.

Mostly Grasen misses the long bike rides he used to go on with his good friend Nick Clark, also 16. Clark said some kids have asked him why he is friends with Grasen. He said he always tells them the same thing: "I told them I like him for the way he is."

Although the battle for normalcy has been a constant in Grasen's life, his mother and his grandmother, Betty Stone, have been by his side the whole time. Even as a baby, his grandmother would help him exercise his legs.

"Through the years I've helped him," Stone said. "I'd wiggle his arms and legs, and say, you're going to move, kid."

Grasen's dad left the family when they found out as a baby that he had cerebral palsy. He calls every so often but never asks to speak with his son.

His mother deals with the same ignorance Grasen encounters at school, too.

"People think if he has (cerebral palsy) he must automatically have a mental disorder," she said. "Even some nurses and doctors we've encountered automatically assume that he can't talk for himself."

Although Grasen's surgeries have been covered by his health insurance, many costs, like ambulance rides, travel expenses and wheelchair purchases aren't reimbursed by the policy.

His grandmother stepped up when the family was having trouble paying those bills.

With her church, the McLean Community Church, where Grasen has volunteered, she organized two benefits for their family. This Friday, Feb. 29, there will be a barbecue at the McLean Fire Station. On March 1, the Dryden Fire Hall will host a benefit for his family, with food, raffles and live music. Many of his friends, teachers and counselors from school have said they'll be there.

Grasen said he's "shocked" that so many people in the community care that he gets better. He hopes he'll be perfect by summer, so he'll still have time to go on that bike ride.

"I just want to do everything I used to be able to do," he said. "I want to be as normal as I possibly can."



**Datestamp:** 02/25/2008

## **In New Orleans, hope is on the move**

*Special to The Journal*

NEW ORLEANS ? Sitting on an overgrown lawn, between a deserted road and a gutted pink house, the rubber ducky looks out of place.

In a different world, he would be floating merrily on top of some laughing child's bathwater, as gumbo or jambalaya cooked in the kitchen and adults relaxed on the front porch to the sounds of Dixieland jazz on this fair January day in New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward.

But after Hurricane Katrina devastated this place 2 1/2 years ago, ducky's only companion in this deserted neighborhood is a solitary rooster, sight unseen, that crows with an aimlessness that suggests he has no idea when dawn will come again.

?Cock-a-doodle-doo....?

Amidst all the destruction, Joan Landry, wrapped in a cloak, stands resolute next to what was once her perfect little pink house, the house her father bought after the war. She was raised there; she raised her children and grandchildren there. She's since bought a new house with her life savings, but she's still paying taxes on this empty home surrounded by empty lots.

?That this place still looks like this is a failure of the government,? she says, telling her story to the Ithaca College students ? friends of her granddaughter ? assembled in front of her.

Her granddaughter, Fallon Blossom, stands next to her. That little pink house was where she played with friends, did her homework, and finally left to come to Ithaca College four years ago, never thinking it would look like this when she returned.

?All of my memories up until I was 19 are there,? she says.

She says the government hurriedly rebuilt the ?most important? parts of the city first, like the downtown area and the French Quarter, both big tourist draws, but neglected places like the Ninth Ward.

?They sort of forgot about the rest,? she says. ?They wanted people to move back so bad, but then they turned around and made them have to do all the work (on their homes). My family barely got insurance money.?

With the death of one neighborhood, though, came the birth of others.

Though Blossom's family and the other people who lived in the Ninth Ward have long since moved, hope is being hammered together nearby. In Slidell, a parish north of Lake Pontchartrain, Habitat for Humanity is on track to build its 100th house in two years. Thousands have migrated there to find jobs and new homes.

It's here that a crew of 44 Ithaca College students has come to finish the houses they and other volunteers

laid foundations for last year.

The blossoming Habitat neighborhood is a world apart from the broken Ninth Ward.

At 8 a.m., residents are regularly awoken by volunteers nailing their houses down or fixing their lattices. They come out in their bathrobes, coffee in hand, talking on portable phones, offhandedly surveying the work in progress that will soon become their front yard.

Signs of normalcy are returning. Kids wait for the school bus in the morning with their moms and dads. Teenagers pump their stereos as they roll down the streets in beat-up cars, past babies toddling away from their parents on freshly seeded lawns.

But the storm is still a fresh chapter in their lives, and the people of Louisiana love telling their survival stories. Some left home and headed to Tuscaloosa, Ala., with family. Others battened down the hatches and rode out the 200 mph winds.

A pudgy kid stops raking leaves in his yard to explain how he and his parents rode out the storm. As winds raged outside his living room window, he saw a tree branch crash through his neighbor's roof "like a spear."

"He had to get the roof redone after that," he says, grinning.

The work gives many people a reason to get up each day. Every morning, an old man with a wispy beard named Fritz trundles past the job site, eyeing the kids sawing boards and nailing down shingles as his puppy, "Princess," trots in front of him.

When Katrina hit, Fritz stayed at home. His wife died the next year. He had to put his old dog down. But now he has Princess, and every day, he takes a walk with her to see the houses being built for his new neighbors.

And the construction isn't just happening in this quiet little neighborhood. Everywhere, it seems, things are being built. Shopping plazas are going up on the sides of the highways, churches are building new missions, movie theatres are springing up, and a new bridge across Lake Pontchartrain gets longer every day.

Fritz worries that all the new construction is driving poorer people out of the area.

"Prices are going up here. People can't afford to live," he says.

Things aren't perfect here, for sure. Many families like Blossom's struggle to receive money from their insurance companies. Next to the new homes built by Habitat are run-down trailers and abandoned houses, their roofs caved in.

But regardless, hope, like the child next to Fritz wheeling across his lawn in a new toy car, is on the move.

Journal freelance reporter Aaron Munzer traveled to Louisiana in January with an Ithaca College group to help build new homes in the area and to visit the forgotten places in a healing New Orleans.

**Datestamp:** 02/18/2008

## **?Survivor? speaks about the ?model minority? myth**

### **Asian–American conference at CU brings students, activists together**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Before being cast on the CBS reality show ?Survivor: Cooke Island,? Yul Kwon was told to dress up in a suit and glasses for his audition. When he arrived, he was the only guy out of 20 wearing a suit and glasses.

?It was pretty obvious that I was being cast as the overachieving Asian–American,? he said, telling his story about overcoming racial stereotypes on national television to an audience of close to 1,200 Asian–American students in Bailey Hall at the 30th annual East Coast Asian American Student Union conference Saturday at Cornell University.

Kwon, who went on to win the show?s controversial racially segregated competition, was one of the many speakers and performers, including co–star Becky Lee, who spoke about the need to dispel harmful ?model minority? stereotypes about Asians and Asian culture in the worlds of media, business and education. Kwon, a Korean–American, graduated from Stanford University and went on to become a lawyer, earning his Juris doctor degree from Yale University.

?Hopefully this will create more opportunities for us so that one day we?ll see Asian–Americans being recognized for much more important things than doing well on reality shows,? he said.

Kwon lamented the fact that the two most visible Asian characters on television today, Daniel Dae–Kim of ?Lost? and Masi Oka of ?Heroes? are portrayed as foreigners unable to speak English.

?There?s a lack of diversity in the way we?re portrayed on television,? Kwon said. ?I?m tired of people assuming that just because I?m Korean that means I eat dogs.?

This year?s ECAASU conference ? held at Cornell every 10 years ? focused on the theme of ?Push Forward,? and organized workshops and speakers to discuss the challenges Asian–Americans, from adopted children, international students and those with immigrant parents, continue to face in their daily lives. Students from more than 100 universities and colleges attended the three–day conference, which also featured performances by a number of Asian artists and musicians like the hip–hop group Blue Scholars.

At a panel discussion about adoption, sisters Rachel and Katie Borst, both adopted Korean students at Ithaca College, said they could easily recall being stereotyped and harassed in elementary school.

?We were going to an after school club when one kid started mocking Chinese language, asking if we were Chinese and yelling at us,? Katie Borst said.

?It was very significant, because we were like, ?Oh, we look different, and people are making fun of us,?? her sister Rachel continued. The two said that while they didn?t have Asian role models growing up, Kwon was

someone they could now look up to.

"Yul Kwon represents the Asian community, and that makes us proud," Rachel Borst said. "ECAASU is great because we realize that people can go through (adversity) and it sets an example for us."

Andrew Wang, a senior at Cornell who helped organize the conference, said many Asian students face imitation, mocking and nasty stereotypes every day, even when the student is adopted and has grown up in a completely American culture.

"There's still racism that goes on, and there are a lot of stereotypes," Wang said. "People imitate us; they'll do it in front of you. Cornell has come to recognize that the Asian population has a lot of needs, and they try to address issues as much as they can."

Students at other schools said they felt the pain of discrimination on campus.

Alan Tan, a junior from University of Connecticut at the conference, started his own computer company with 16 employees before he entered college but left his leadership positions in the business school after he felt he was discriminated against by professors for being Asian.

"A lot of people from Asian backgrounds are trained to be obedient," he said. "I wasn't acting to their stereotypical expectations."

On Saturday, before Kwon took the stage at Bailey Hall, several hundred Asian students stood outside in the snow. Someone threw a snowball, and a playful fight broke out. A female student on the steps screamed, "Stop the Asian-on-Asian violence!" Everyone laughed, and the snowballs were dropped.

**Datestamp:** 02/16/2008

## **School's out; Ithaca's in**

### **City hosts 2nd annual 'teacher week' to promote area businesses**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA — If Bruce Stoff has his way, every February Ithaca will be the Promised Land for teachers from around New York state.

For the second year running, Stoff, marketing communications manager for the Ithaca/Tompkins Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the visitor industry council volunteers have cooked up a bevy of discounts, events and promotions to entice thousands of teachers to spend their winter recess in Ithaca during February, a typically slow month for local businesses.

The city is holding the event from Feb. 16–23 because it is an almost universal week off for the nearly 600,000 teachers in the state.

With more than 140 businesses, restaurants, hotels and theaters participating in the Winter Recess 2008 event, the thousands of teachers expected to show up will be overwhelmed by all the coupons and discounts offered, Stoff said. Every teacher or school district employee in New York and surrounding states is eligible to receive a free Very Important Teacher pass that can be presented to businesses to receive the discounts.

Feedback from business owners about the 'wall-to-wall' teachers last year has been nothing but positive, Stoff said.

'They loved it. And for that alone, it was like, we have to do it again,' he said. 'It makes a big impact on a lot of people in the community.'

Alex Brown, head chef at Maxie's Supper Club, said he tends to agree, calling the promotion 'wildly popular.' This year his restaurant is again sponsoring a buy-one-get-one-free coupon for teachers.

'It brought a lot of people down,' he said. 'There were a lot of people from other areas of the state who came to our restaurant who wouldn't normally.'

In addition to the restaurant discounts, teachers are expected to be drawn in by lectures at both Cornell University and Ithaca College, and by the concerts and shows being offered next week, including the Bob and Tom Comedy Show, the legendary Taj Mahal and a performance by Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt.

But Susan Mittler, a longtime elementary school teacher and president of the Ithaca Teachers' Association, said the real value of the event for many teachers is the networking.

'You can meet colleagues from all over the state,' she said. 'Last year people made connections by grade level, interest areas, professional growth, and mastering certain items of technology,' she laughed. 'But it's also an invitation to explore a community and get to know each other, sort of a general collegiate networking

that you don't get to do during the school year.?

Stoff said the event's large expected turnout is due to the viral nature of their advertising campaign and the positive word-of-mouth from last year. He and his office sent out almost 30,000 e-mails informing school districts about the events. Although last year's returns were small ? February occupancy went up 2 percent because of it ? he said he expects this year to be a much bigger success because of all the planning.

As of Thursday, more than 400 teachers had already booked rooms at local hotels, Stoff said.

Joseph Gaylord, manager of American Crafts by Robbie Dein on The Commons, said last year he saw groups of teachers swarm his store during a typically slow month.

?Last year I didn't have any expectations, because it was a trial year,? he said. ?It exceeded my expectations last year, and raised them for this year. It's been pretty beneficial for all the downtown businesses.?

For Mittler and other local teachers, it's not just networking they're excited about, she said.

?I always brag about Cornell's library and the number of bookstores we have here to my colleagues from Buffalo and Albany, so I want to show them what a gem we have in Ithaca,? she said.

For more information on discounts, promotions and events, visit [www.ithacalovesteachers.com](http://www.ithacalovesteachers.com).

**Datestamp:** 02/14/2008

## **Kidney donation:**

### **Good-news story raises awareness**

It is hard not to love the story surrounding Rick Uhl's new kidney.

His sister, Cindie Bobnick, donated one of her kidneys to him and saved his life, as was detailed by reporter Aaron Munzer in a story we published last week. Uhl was diagnosed with IGA nephropathy, a hereditary kidney disease with no known cure. For eight years he has had to live a life filled with sickness, and two years ago he began undergoing dialysis that sapped him of his energy.

In the meantime, Uhl and his family had other struggles. His brother, Harry, died in 2002 in a hit-and-run boating accident on Cayuga Lake. Before that, his mother died.

Once he needed to go onto dialysis, he didn't sleep well, lost 45 pounds and had troubling urinating. Uhl said, "I told people "I can deal with dialysis, I've been through a whole lot worse." But it was no life."

After Bobnick saw him struggling in the parking lot of the mall one day, she decided enough was enough. She offered up one of her kidneys to save him, and eventually he agreed it was worth the chance.

The procedure didn't go as smoothly as planned, and Bobnick became very sick during the operation. She stopped breathing during the procedure and lost more than a third of her blood supply. Thankfully, both made it through their operations and lived to tell their story.

However, their worries don't end there. Bobnick's son, a Marine, is set to deploy to Iraq for a second tour of duty soon. We know this community wishes him a safe return so he can enjoy his uncle's newfound health and his mother's compassionate ways.

We wish every story had a happy ending. But in terms of organ donations, they do not. Last year, there were about 74,000 people awaiting kidneys.

Thankfully, though, he got his life-saving kidney. And we thank Uhl and Bobnick for sharing their story.

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There is an interesting footnote to this story. In January, we told you how bad news dominated page views on our Web site in 2007. Stories about crime, accidents, gorge falls and fires made up 34 of the top 50 online stories in 2007. In a Jan. 4 editorial we wrote: "Sure, we all love a good human-interest feature story with a happy ending. But deep down it appears people are attracted to bad news."

The Uhl kidney story trumped those trends. While the Marie Manos' murder trial generated a large number of page views each day we reported on the proceedings, the Uhl kidney story managed to knock it out of the top spot last Thursday. In fact, more people clicked on the Uhl story than they did for any other story we published online in the preceding week. That's impressive considering we reported about the Ithaca Police

Department's heroic efforts to save people from a burning building near the police station, the Ithaca City School District's discussions of buying out Superintendent Judy Pastel's contract and the Manos trial during that week.

But don't think people shelved grim news for very long. One day later, more people clicked on the story about a jury finding Manos guilty than they did for the Uhl story a day earlier. Grim news still gets the clicks, but every so often a human-interest story rightfully steals our attention.



**Datestamp:** 02/11/2008

## **Ringling in the Chinese New Year in Ithaca**

### **Community hosts performances, activities**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? The huge Chinese lion crouched in front of the children, shaking with hunger. The children sat still as statues.

A drum roll began, and like magic, the two men hiding beneath the lion costume jumped up and began dancing. The children shrieked with delight.

As the monster paraded its way around the room, the children grabbed their red ?laissez? packets filled with donations and fed them to the hungry spirit in a traditional Chinese New Year activity meant to bring happiness and luck and to drive away evil spirits.

The lion dance, performed by a Canadian dance troupe, was a part of the Ithaca community?s Saturday celebration of the 15-day Chinese New Year holiday. Throughout the day, children fished for lucky goldfish, made paper lanterns, ate Chinese candy and watched the Amber Dance Troupe perform at the Center Ithaca building on The Commons.

It was a true community festival, with families from across the county packing the mezzanine, and student volunteers from Ithaca College?s Asian Culture Club, and two Asian sororities from Cornell University ? Kappa Phi Lambda and Alpha Kappa Delta Phi.

Organized by the Ithaca Asian American Association, the annual celebration was larger than previous years, according to Amy Kuo Somchanhmvong, Cornell?s assistant director of community programs. She said the lion wasn?t just for the children?s amusement ? she hopes it will also bring luck to the downtown business community.

?It?s for kids to understand our culture, and to bridge two campuses and the community,? she said.

Judging only by their smiles, kids like 2-year-old Charlie McCurdy were enjoying the ancient traditions and modern day sweets.

Charlie?s mom, Mary McCurdy of Trumansburg, helped him open a pineapple candy. As he chewed on it thoughtfully, she laughed. ?Cultural candy differences,? she said.

Katie Borst, a senior at Ithaca College and the president of the Asian Culture Club, volunteered at the event. She?s an adopted Korean, and said before she came to college she had ?never even had Chinese food.?

Now Asian culture is important enough for her that she said when she has a family, it will be a priority to expose her children to the traditions of a different world.

She also likes Korean cuisine very much now.

"It took me awhile to get used to the spicy food, though," she said.

At the end of the lion dance, as the children meandered away to check on their new goldfish, two very sweaty dancers emerged from the lion suit.

Steven Kwok, a member of the dance troupe, smiled as he saw all the happy faces watching their performance.

"It's an extremely positive force," he said. "When they can see it in real life, it's eye-opening."

**Datestamp:** 02/11/2008

## **Good deed worth \$4K to local man**

### **Scrap yard quickly returns thousands left in car's glove box**

*Special to The Journal*

NEWFIELD ? Frank Borra didn't even realize he'd lost \$3,900 until it was returned to him.

It was last Tuesday when Borra ? who runs a used car lot in Newfield ? weighed and sold a junked 1998 Lincoln Continental to Teets & Son Scrap Metal Recycling for \$345.

But he had forgotten that he had left a box containing almost \$4,000 in checks and cash locked in the car's glove box the night before. It was car payments his customers had paid him, and he was planning to deposit it safely in the bank that day.

Minutes later, before he could even return home from the Newfield scrap yard and realize his loss, he got a call on his cell phone from Mike Hertel, a Teets & Son employee.

?They called me and said, we found your money,? Borra said. ?They wouldn't take a reward or anything.?

Soon after, he was back at the scrap yard, where Theresa Guler, who works as a secretary there, handed him back the money. Every cent of it.

?Usually people forget license plates, keys, CDs, but that's never happened before up here,? Guler said. ?It could have been someone's mortgage payment. It is a large amount of money, but it didn't belong to us. It felt good when he came back that he could trust us.?

Guler's boyfriend Rich Teeter, who owns the scrap yard, said Borra was amazed to see his missing money.

?He was kind of like, holy smokes, I can't believe I left that in there,? Teeter said.

Borra said he was impressed with the integrity of Guler and Teeter. Because they had already paid him for the car, Borra said they technically owned everything inside of it.

?They were just being honest people, decent citizens,? he said.

Teeter, who's only met Borra a few times, said there was never any question that they would return the money.

?All you have is your reputation,? he said. ?So people won't come back to you if you're cheating. And I wouldn't want to lose my money like that in a vehicle.?

**Datestamp:** 02/07/2008

## **A Gift of New Life**

### **Sister gives kidney, saves brother's life**

*Special to The Journal*

It took guts to do what Cindie Bobnick did for her brother.

But she knew she had to do something when she saw him in the mall parking lot on a cold day so many months ago. The man she saw wasn't the energetic Rick Uhl she knew: his head was stooped, and he walked like there was no life left in him.

The decision took only a second, as she pulled up her car next to him to say, "Hi."

"What's your blood type?" she asked him, after she told him she wanted to give up one of her kidneys to keep him alive.

The transplant would get him off the dialysis machine that substituted for his failing kidneys, and cure him of the disease that had plagued him for eight years.

In the United States, there were 74,000 patients awaiting kidneys in 2007, according to the National Institute for Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Without his sister's gift, Uhl would probably still be one of those thousands waiting for an organ.

"Convincing him was the hard part," Bobnick, 44, said, smiling and lightly poking her brother in the side as they sat together last month in her Enfield home, both still recovering from the Jan. 8 transplant surgery that saved Uhl's life.

"At first I didn't want any part of it," he said. "There was a possibility she could get sick, and lose her kidney, and she only has one. What she's gone through has been more than I have. For what she's done, she's the biggest hero in my life."

Uhl, 40, is a soft-spoken, once-muscular man who works as a master machinist at Borg Warner and lives in Brooktondale. Eight years ago, doctors diagnosed him with IGA nephropathy, a hereditary kidney disease with no known cure. Over the years the disease weakened his kidneys' filtering ability further.

On Aug. 17, 2002, " with his mother's recent death still fresh in his mind " tragedy struck Uhl and his family again. His younger brother Harry was killed in a hit-and-run boating crash on Cayuga Lake. They had had a successful DJ business together, and Harry had just started working with Rick at Borg Warner. They were brothers, but also best friends.

When Uhl talks about his brother's death, his jaw clenches. He speaks very slowly.

"It was one of the hardest things I've ever dealt with " when he died, I thought my life was over," he said.

Then, about two years ago, he was told he needed to undergo dialysis ? a \$20,000 monthly treatment fortunately covered by his insurance. Doctors implanted a tube through his abdomen and into his peritoneal cavity to act as an artificial kidney and filtration system.

For a year and a half, Uhl, housebound and in a weakened state, endured nine hours a night leashed to a two liter bag of dialysis fluid that slowly filtered his blood for him.

Friends and family called and visited often to keep him busy ? he even got a call from a high school wrestling opponent who lives in Colorado. And though he accompanied friends like Randy Jordan and Randy Brokaw to the race track occasionally to help them with their cars, it was hard for him, they said. Still, Jordan said Uhl came every time they asked ? and brought his dialysis machine with him.

?He never gave up, he still wanted to be around, even if it meant bringing the machine with him,? Jordan said.

But he couldn't go out in public much, for fear of getting an infection. His skin turned a sickly yellow color. He lost 45 pounds. He couldn't urinate for the last eight months. A good night's sleep was non-existent. An earlier kind of blood dialysis caused the veins on his arm to bulge out like sausages ? and they still do. But all that changed when his sister agreed to give up an organ.

Now, his bedroom is still stacked with boxes of unused solution that he's donating to other dialysis patients. The pumping machine has already been removed. He still has the tank he drained the fluid from his abdomen into every morning, kept in a drawer underneath his sink.

?I told people ?I can deal with dialysis, I've been through a lot worse,?? he said. ?But it was no life.?

After months of pre-surgery tests and preparation, Bobnick's kidney was found to be a match for her brother.

On Jan. 8 they held hands as they walked in to the Syracuse University Hospital to undergo surgery together.

Days later, Uhl sprang up in bed with a healthy new kidney inside him. He was starving ? the first change he noticed, because he'd lost his appetite for so long. He felt like he was 20 years old. He felt good.

?I was sick for so long, I didn't know how ?good? felt,? he said.

But Bobnick's surgery had complications. Doctors had to cut a foot-long incision in her rib cage in order to remove the kidney. She lost four liters of blood during the surgery ? more than a third of the body's supply ? and stopped breathing at one point.

The two were only told as they were being discharged. A lump appeared unbidden in Uhl's throat, and tears found their way into his eyes. His sister had almost died so he could live.

?She's an angel,? he tells everyone.

Three weeks later, her jagged abdominal scar feels like broken ribs, ?with a lot more burning.? Now, while she recovers, the most activity this construction-working, motorcycle-riding woman can do is the dishes.

?It's driving me nuts,? she said, as her parrot Michael nibbled on her earlobe. ?(Michael) helps me take

showers, though.?

But seeing her brother healed isn't the end of the mother of two's worries. Her son David, a Marine, is returning to Iraq soon for his second tour of duty, which bothers her, she said. But she's planning to work at Borg Warner with her brother, which should take her mind off her son, at least a little bit. Both of them should be better by summer.

So how's the kidney feeling?

"It comes complete with hot flashes, I told him," Bobnick interrupted.

"I've been feeling hot, so I asked my doctor about it," Uhl said. "He laughed, said it was the medication, though." His sister just smiled.

Despite his sister's loyalty, Uhl said he still feels bad about all the trouble she's been through.

"(Surgery has) been a major setback for her," Uhl said.

Bobnick put her hand in front of his mouth. "But it was all worth it," she said.

**Datestamp:** 02/07/2008

## **Justice Dept. tells city to upgrade disabled parking**

### **Deadline of May 1 set by feds**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? After a recent investigation, the U.S. Department of Justice has ordered the city of Ithaca to bring a number of parking garages and lots which it operates into compliance with accessibility standards by May 1.

Superintendent of Public Works William Gray said Wednesday night that the city will be unable to complete the projects within that time frame, but expects to negotiate an extension without any penalties.

?We thought we were (compliant),? he said. ?It?s possible that the laws have changed and we missed it, or some signs may have gotten plowed down. It?s still our responsibility, though.?

In a letter sent Dec. 11, the Department of Justice?s Civil Rights Division said that the investigation began after an anonymous complainant alleged that the city was in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Gray said he expects the upgrades and signage replacement to cost several thousand dollars.

?It will make the parks and garages more welcoming to the people who use them,? he said.

In total, three garages, 13 parking lots and several restroom facilities were found to be violating specific parameters established by the ADA to facilitate people with disabilities.

Specifically, the letter requires the city to ensure that accessible parking spaces are at least 96 inches wide and have access aisles of the same size. It also requires proper signage that cannot be concealed, and that slopes be practically flat and ?firm, stable and slip-resistant.?

Finally, the city will be required to ensure that at several local parks there are accessible paths from the parking lot to benches and picnic tables, and that handicap-accessible restrooms are made available.

Rick Ferrel, assistant superintendent of streets and facilities, said the city received an order like this about a decade ago, and resolved it without incident.

Gray likened the letter to a friendly traffic ticket without the fines.

?They want to keep the pressure on to get a positive response,? he said. ?It?s just drama.?

**Datestamp:** 02/05/2008

## **Officer of the Month**

### **Sheriff's Office veteran wins monthly Kiwanis award**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Capt. Mark R. Dresser, a veteran of the Tompkins County Sheriff Department, was given this month's Frank G. Hammer Officer of the Month Award for his many years of service and his work to bring the department technologically up to speed.

Fellow officers and Kiwanis Club of Ithaca-Cayuga members paid tribute to the "dedicated, hardworking," senior officer of 31 years at a luncheon Monday at Kendal of Ithaca.

Dresser, who has received the award three other times, was praised by Sheriff Peter Meskill for his work on special task forces dealing with issues of arson, illegal drugs and child pornography. Recently Dresser has worked to combine records and information on one database to facilitate the issuing of tickets and reports. He still makes a point of going on patrols and participating in seat belt and cell phone violation programs.

Dresser has previously been recognized by the PARK-IT group for his work to arrest drunk drivers on Tompkins County roads and with the Carl Draxler award, given for selfless public service. Meskill said Dresser has given up personal time to work on murder investigations without a second thought.

"He's got a great institutional memory and an ability to guide other members of the force," Meskill said.

Andrew Bonavia, the assistant district attorney, recalled how, as a public defender, he was intimidated by Dresser's tough demeanor but got to know a different side of him when he became a prosecutor.

"He's a good guy to know if you're in law enforcement, but a bad guy to know if you're a criminal," Bonavia joked.

The Kiwanis club gives the award to an outstanding member of local law enforcement agencies every month. Hammer was a local jeweler, police commissioner and Kiwanis Club member who conceived the award in 1987 to recognize the achievements of Ithaca police officers. The scope of the award was subsequently expanded to include all law-enforcement agencies in Tompkins County.

Dresser said he owes much of his success to his wife, Linda, who has supported him throughout the years as a friend, partner and sounding board. He enjoys his position as a senior member of the force but said that while swearing in new deputies makes him proud, it also reminds him of his age.

"Sometimes I feel old," he smiled.

However old he might feel, he still finds time and energy to hunt in the fall and ride motorcycles with his wife when the weather gets better.





**Datestamp:** 02/05/2008

## **United Way scholarship announced**

### **Cornell senior was impetus behind award**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? A new scholarship announced Monday will give three rising seniors from local high schools a \$1,500 stipend to work for a United Way agency every summer.

The agency also announced that it has raised 93 percent of its \$2 million goal for its Community Campaign nearly two months before the campaign ends on March 31.

The Stephen E. Garner Summers of Service Scholarship was announced by Jonathan Feldman, a senior at Cornell and a student volunteer with the United Way of Tompkins County. While Feldman said he will personally fund one of the scholarships ?for the rest of (his) life,? the funding for the other awards will come from university events.

?Cornell students raised the money to grant a younger member of the Ithaca community the ability to participate in a rewarding and philanthropic event,? Feldman said. ?The students will have their minds and hearts emblazoned with an indelible appreciation for service.?

Feldman also named the first scholarship in honor of his mentor at the university, Gary Stewart, the assistant director of government and community relations. Stewart said the commitment of students like Feldman goes a long way toward bringing the college and city community closer together.

?I think Cornell students are many times misunderstood by the community, and people don?t really get to know students,? he said. ?Once people realize how committed students are to the community, it?s a wonderful synergy.?

After Feldman graduates, the fundraising work to endow future scholarships with more than \$30,000 will be undertaken by Cornell junior Greg Schvey, who?s already worked with Feldman to raise money at athletic and a cappella events on campus.

The Stephen E. Garner scholarship is named for the late president and chief executive officer of the Tompkins Trust Co. and a United Way campaign chairman and board chairman. Garner died in May 2006.

Kara Taylor, Garner?s daughter, said the scholarship will reflect the ripple effect of her father?s community work.

?We?re enormously proud at how this is going to serve our community,? she said.

Cornell employees have given the United Way?s main campaign \$784,882 to date, above the university?s goal of \$700,000, said Steve Golding, executive vice president for finance and administration and the university?s campaign chairman.



**Datestamp:** 02/04/2008

## **Local nurse uses her skills to help the poor of Dominican**

*Special to The Journal*

ITHACA ? Mira McEwan was exhausted.

In front of her, the line of sick Dominican people stretched out the door of the Somos Amigos Medical Mission Clinic, and McEwan's 12-hour nursing shift was just beginning.

During her one week of volunteering, more than 800 people made pilgrimages from around the Dominican Republic to the free clinic in the small mountain village of El Naranjito, where they could get basic medical care, medicines and the advice of doctors and nurses, a practically non-existent luxury in the rural areas of the impoverished country.

But McEwan's fatigue was tempered by the energy she felt from helping the friendly, appreciative families, who wouldn't receive any health care without the clinic.

"Nurses who question themselves can do this to reaffirm the work they're doing," she said.

Along with 49 nurses, doctors and other medical practitioners from around the U.S. and Canada, McEwan, 38, an Ithaca resident, traveled to the country for the week of Jan. 14, bags packed with medicines and supplies to help the ailing populace.

Although Americans know the small Caribbean country mostly as a vacation destination renowned for its beaches, golf courses and merengue dancing, McEwan and the others saw a different side in El Naranjito, a village of 100 with a small school and a chapel. Many women did not know how to give themselves breast exams. Volunteers diagnosed illnesses, handed out medicines and oral hygiene supplies and, through Spanish translators, gave dietary advice to help patients ward off diabetes.

"The need in the Dominican is so profound," McEwan said Saturday, still in her scrubs, after she had finished a nursing shift at Cayuga Medical Center's Convenient Care Campus, where she works part-time. "There are few rich at the top, lots of poor at the bottom."

At night, she and the other volunteers stayed with host families in the village, and shared stories and photographs of each other's husbands, children and relatives. The hosts are honored to have volunteers stay with them, and have been helping out since the program's inception 11 years ago. McEwan said the most promising part is the children who come to the clinic healthier than most because they have been returning since they were born.

McEwan heard about the program through a friend, Robin Bauer, who had accompanied her and her husband Ken on a trip to the Dominican Republic last summer with a community college development group.

"When I told her about this organization, she said that's exactly what she wanted to do," said Bauer, a Spanish professor from Maryland who has volunteered with Somos Amigos twice. "It's physically

exhausting, but it's emotionally and spiritually refreshing.

"It's eye-opening," Bauer said, "because you get to know the community and see what their life is like."

In addition to being a nurse for the last eight years, McEwan has her masters in English literature and teaches as an adjunct professor at Tompkins Cortland Community College. She's also written a book of poetry.

But this time, she said the trip wasn't about writing, but about serving.

"As a developed country, we have an obligation to be of service," she said. "It's not about us being guilty, Frank (Brightwell, the organization's founder) says, it's not about being the wealthy Americans. There's joy in doing it, although we do have a responsibility."

McEwan brought back stories and photographs from her trip to show her co-workers, who said it has had an impact on them. Amy Thomas, director of the Convenient Care Campus, said she had made it her personal goal to work during her vacation time at the Somos Amigos clinic.

"I'm very amazed and proud of Mira," Thomas said. "I just saw her pictures the other day of her experience and it's amazing. It makes people feel proud to be a nurse."