



# LEISURE NOTES

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND LEISURE STUDIES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

## A Year In Review - Report from the Chair

By: Dr. Lynn Anderson

“Everything is a choice. This is life’s greatest truth and its hardest lesson.” (Kelly, 2004)

This was a year full of choices... for the department, for each faculty member, and always, for each student. As each of us made our choices, and lived with the consequences of those choices, we felt a range of feelings, from deep satisfaction to regret, from joy to anger. The hard lesson, of course, is that we are always responsible for the choices we make, whatever the outcome. The gift is that we can begin right now to make choices that bring us meaningfulness and satisfaction. Let me share some of the choices we made as a department that have led to feelings of accomplishment and anticipation this past year.

- We hired a new tenure-track assistant professor, Kenneth Cohen, from the University of Idaho. Ken will be joining us in the fall, focusing on the management area of the curriculum, and we are very excited! See an article about Ken later in this newsletter.
- We passed our national accreditation hearing with flying colors! We received continuing accreditation with four commendations for excellence for our portfolio advising, our student advising, our assessment plan, and the Annual Cortland Recreation Conference. We now have all four concentrations accredited: management, programming, therapeutic, and outdoor. According to the Council on Accreditation website, only 3 other universities have this breadth of degree options (Cal State-Chico, University of Florida, and Western Illinois University).
- We revised our curriculum to move three of our concentrations to stand-alone majors (we are awaiting the SUNY System response to hopefully implement the new majors in the Fall of 2006). In the future, students will graduate from SUNY Cortland with one of the following four degrees:
  - B.S. in Recreation (can choose a concentration in Leisure/Recreation Program Delivery)
  - B.S. in Recreation Management
  - B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation
  - B.S. in Outdoor Recreation (must choose a concentration in outdoor leadership, camp management, environmental & cultural interpretation, or natural resources recreation management)
- We worked diligently, with grant support, on incorporating cultural competence into the curriculum in our department. Our hope is that when students graduate with a recreation degree from SUNY Cortland, they will be able to “ ....respond respectfully

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and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, and religions in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each” (Child Welfare League of America).

- We continued to incorporate the National Alliance for Youth Sports coaching certification program into our curriculum – every student in the core class, “Programming in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services,” participates in the training and has the opportunity to go on for further certification and training the following semester in the core class, “Leadership in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services.”
- Our graduates in therapeutic recreation continue to excel on the national certification exam – this past year, according to a report from the Education Testing Service and NCTRC, the pass rate for SUNY Cortland was 94.4%, as compared to the national pass rate of 73.6%.
- We worked with the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors to sponsor the 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Research Symposium in Outdoor Education, a highly successful and well attended event held at Bradford Woods, Indiana.
- We completed a second successful year of the SUNY Cortland Community Bike Program. The brightly painted yellow bikes continue to be available around campus for all to use on a shared basis.
- We honored Dr. Anderson Young for 25 years of service to SUNY Cortland – a milestone matched only by Darleen Lieber, department secretary, who is starting her 25<sup>th</sup> year this coming year. Both have contributed to making this department one of the best in the nation and we are thankful.
- We continued to progress on our department goals:
  - To foster excellence in teaching and learning
  - To stimulate and support excellence in scholarship and research
  - To provide service that is relevant and meaningful
  - To foster the health of the department and the profession, in order to attain other goals

As a department, we continue to make choices that help us meet the goals we have set forth as meaningful. Being part of a large university system, we are often asked to complete tasks and activities that seem bureaucratic and, yes, even useless. But as a department, we know what we “want out of life,” and it helps us, as a group of teachers, scholars, and students, stay focused on our mission and vision. The quote at the beginning of this column was from a book given to me by a talented and very bright master’s student, upon her graduation this spring. She is a prime example of someone who made some hard choices as she pursued her graduate degree – working full-time, commuting almost 2 hours one way, working as a teaching assistant in courses, and other decisions that involved much sacrifice and dedication on her part. But those choices paid off and now, she will be one more shining star in the field, one more Cortland alumni changing the world in a positive way, one more educated person making choices for a meaningful and purpose-driven life. That is why we do this!

If you would like to read a detailed review of the year, feel free to request a copy of the RLS Department Annual Report at [rls@kortland.edu](mailto:rls@kortland.edu).



*Adirondack Winter Studies, January 2006*

## Out & About - What's been happening in the outdoors

By Dale Anderson

### Key Volunteers Expand Outdoor Activities

Corey Ryon, Lecturer in Health, Assistant Swim Coach, and RLS Alum has been a mainstay of the kayaking program for several years now. Corey has been a coach for kayakers since the first kayak camp at Raquette Lake, '03. Corey has helped with Monday night kayaking in the pool for several years. Corey is equally comfortable paddling a sea kayak on an Adirondack lake or a whitewater boat cart-wheeling his way down a river.

Another kayaking star this year was Kevin Todd, engineer husband of Dr. Sharon Todd. Kevin is a serious C-1 racer in this region. He wins most everything, that's how serious he is. Kevin taught an evening paddling course, in the pool, January through February, which involved negotiating courses through hanging race gates. We all experienced tremendous improvements in our paddling skills!!!



GTA's this year (perhaps the most talented ever) participated in a variety of outdoor activities regularly. Betsy Hilgen-dorf coordinated the Community Bike Project fall semester, then got a real job. Rumor has it she's in the big bucks at a bike company in Michigan. Brandy Boden has been helping Dr. Vicki Wilkins with leisure ed. courses, but is in real-life an outdoor fanatic. Jason Erdman has been teaching backpacking, rock climbing, winter camping, as well as leading Co-op trips. Eric Cielinski took over the Community Bike Project for spring semester and teaches climbing and mountaineering as well as biking. Josh Bochniak runs the office for the Coalition for Education in the Outdoors, and he is good at it! Jason, Eric, and Josh were sneaking out early mornings to ice climb through part of the winter season.

There were many student participants and officers of the outdoor clubs and organizations on campus that have had a large impact on this year's high quality of participation. Andrew, Pip, Bobby, Leda, Jake, Tom, Chelsea, Joe, Christine, Christophe, and many more. You know who you are – Thank you for your energy in the COOP, the Outdoor Adventure Club, Cycling Club, Ski & Snowboard Club, and in the Cortland College Recreation Association.

### Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding Classes Surge this Year

The number of students enrolled in the RLS snowboard and skiing classes jumped to over 50 this semester. I think we had about 25 last year. We had to schedule a couple of buses instead of the usual vans to transport students to Greek Peak and back. Another good thing was that we were able to open the buses to paid-up members of the Ski & Snowboard Club. They helped out by paying for some of the bus trips. Greek Peak has been very helpful in providing an appropriate learning experience at a reasonable cost to the students. They should also be commended for producing lots of snow in the early part of the season which kept the classes going through the rest of the "skimpy" winter. Thank you GP! Looking forward to another great year.

### Adirondack Winter Studies, January '06 - Blue Mountain the Hard Way

According to Dr. Jack Sheltmire, the Director of the Environmental & Outdoor Education Center at Raquette Lake, this was the best Adirondack Winter Studies group ever. I would concur. Dave Ackerson, RLS Alum (teaching at Ithaca College) came in to help for a few days, the team of four graduate teaching assistants from RLS, and an ambitious bunch of students from 12 different majors teamed-up to pull-off a great adventure. Learning about snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, winter in the Adirondacks, all went like clock-work. The big challenge of the course was the trip up Blue Mountain. Phil Rogers, a wheelchair user, provided a focal point for the rest of the group. Phil's determination to pole a sled up the mountain and the group's determination to help Phil accomplish that, teamed-up to create a monumental achievement. Included in this newsletter are a couple of pictures of the group on the way up and at the top of Blue. The best part - we eventually made it, safe and sound. The worst – we were late for one of those fabulous dinners back at camp. Oops! It won't happen again!

**Wilderness First Responder Courses** will be changed to winter break in January, beginning next year, rather than the spring break. The WFR course has been held at Camp Huntington because it is ideal for the realistic practice sessions that camp pro-

"Out and About" continues on page 4

## WISH LIST FOR THE RECREATION AND LEISURE STUDIES DEPARTMENT

The RLS Department is in need of the following items. If you would like to make a donation to the department, please contact Dr. Lynn Anderson, Department Chair, to make arrangements. Your generosity would be greatly appreciated and would make an immediate impact on the students and their learning.

- Passenger van (2000 or newer) - This is our biggest need!
- GPS units
- Kayaks or canoes in good condition
- Adaptive recreation equipment and sport wheelchairs
- Items from countries around the world related to play, recreation, leisure, or culture (toys, games, visuals, etc.)
- Wetsuits in good condition
- Cross-country skis or snowshoes in good condition
- Bicycles and tools for the Community Bike Program



### Out & About continued from page 3

vides. The rationale for changing the time frame is related to scheduling around the winter melt-down in March, which can be rather unpredictable, and could potentially capture the class by pooling water on the ice. The switch is also intended to improve the hypothermia practice opportunities for the group – just kidding!

**NOLS Experiences Available in the Program.** The National Outdoor Leadership School has a fantastic reputation for valuable outdoor leadership and environmental education experiences. The RLS department has had several students participate in NOLS courses and receive college credit for it through the RLS department. Eventually that process will be easier and cheaper as a result of a direct credit articulation agreement between NOLS and SUNY Cortland. We now have quality NOLS options available for students who choose to participate through the International Studies options as well.

**Participation in Adaptive Skiing & Snowboarding is Growing,** thanks to a working relationship between RLS and the Greek Peak Sports for People with Disabilities. A class was initiated two years ago to encourage students to earn credit while volunteering their time helping people with disabilities learn snow sports. Several students and faculty have been active in the program.

**OEP Anticipation.** This year the Outdoor Education Practicum (that course at Raquette Lake that all alums enjoyed so much) is scheduled for Antlers. We alternate with PE between Huntington and Antlers as the site for camp to take place. When we are at Antlers we split the RLS group into two camps of about 28. While at Huntington we can usually accommodate the whole “batch” at once because Huntington can hold up to about 70 people at a time. As of right now the students are nervously trying on bug shirts, raingear, sleeping bags and hoping this will all go away soon. In a short time all that anxiety will change into fond memories and close friendships. It is an amazing process. I can’t wait to see Blue Mountain on the horizon to the east.

**A Special “Thank You” to Dr. Lynn Anderson,** Chair of the RLS Department. Lynn has been a fill-in, substitute staff, practice supervisor, and trip leader for so many occasions, we should provide some sort of unique recognition. Lynn has been a kayak instructor, windsurf coach, van driver, snowboard instructor, cross-country skier, rafter, canoeist, camper, and whatever else is needed. Thanks Lynn, for being there, with all your help and support.

## Community Bike Program Update

By Eric Cielinski

The Community Bike Project enjoyed another successful semester on campus. This spring the total number of bikes reached 40 for the community to benefit from. The Yellow Bikes had a positive impact on campus as ecological and healthy alternatives to driving or using the campus bus system. A small group of dedicated volunteers and the

strong support from the local bike shop made it possible to keep the bikes available through weekly maintenance and building sessions as well as education and awareness of the project. The Community Bike Project even received publicity in the The Dragon Chronicle as a worthwhile program that “fosters cooperation, encourages a

close-knit community, and above all promotes environmental responsibility.” If you would like to learn more about SUNY Cortland’s Community Bike Project or if you would like to donate a bike or much needed tools, please contact us by emailing [communitybikeproject@cortland.edu](mailto:communitybikeproject@cortland.edu). Happy Riding!



## Launching Careers in Research

By Dr. Anderson Young

Last year's newsletter highlighted some of the projects and theses being done by graduate students at Cortland. Often such endeavors are a valuable and final step in completing the master's degree. In some instances, they are a first step toward a career in research. That was certainly the case this year for several recent graduates.

In January 2006, four recent graduates presented papers at the Eighth Biennial Coalition for Education in the Outdoors Research Symposium in Indiana. This symposium is the major outdoor education research meeting in North America, and it draws an audience from several other continents. Tinelle Bustam, MS '04, presented a paper on environmental sensitivity and recreation setting preferences. Rob Andrejewski, MS '05, addressed the development of "environmental connection" through wilderness experience. Beth Bojarski, MS '05, examined the relationship of leadership style, personality type, and outdoor practicum evaluation. Finally, Kendra Liddicoat, MS '02, presented research not based on her thesis, but on a study she designed in her research methods courses at Cortland. Collaborating with Jim Rogers of Indiana University and Lynn Anderson of SUNY Cortland, Kendra's topic was "the status of inclusion at residential outdoor environmental education centers."

A few months later, Bustam and Bojarski presented additional work at the Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium (NERR), which attracts an audience of scholars and managers from across North America and beyond. Also presenting at NERR was Penny James, MS '05. Her topic was

"Effectiveness of Metaphoric Facilitation Techniques in a Challenge Course Program on the Empowerment of Women Participants."

Another alumnus presented at NERR, Dr. Robert Ditton, '64. Bob was among the first of many SUNY Cortland graduates to enjoy a distinguished career as a scholar and researcher. His model, his continuing involvement on the Alumni Advisory Committee and the Metcalf Endowment Board, and his other visits to campus and classes have helped to nurture and sustain the department's role as an important source of our profession's future academic leaders.

Following in that tradition, Kendra Liddicoat has just completed her second year in a doctoral program at Cornell University. Next fall, Penny James will begin a Ph.D. program at North Carolina State University, and Tinelle Bustam has received the University of Florida's Alumni Graduate Award to support her doctoral studies over the next four years. It wouldn't surprise anyone to see Rob Andrejewski or Beth Bojarski take similar steps in the years ahead.

Mentoring these five students in their research efforts were several RLS faculty, whose names are also associated with their research presentations. Lynn Anderson advised Liddicoat, James, and Andrejewski. Sharon Todd advised Andrejewski, Bojarski, and Bustam. James, Bojarski, and Bustam were also advised by Anderson Young.

### ALUMNI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY RESOURCES  
SYRACUSE, NY

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PROFESSOR OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE SCIENCES  
TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY

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DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES  
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NEW ROCHELLE PARKS AND RECREATION  
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## A Conversation with University of Wyoming President Tom Buchanan '74

By Josh Bochniak

Tom Buchanan's college career began, as many of ours did, outside the field of recreation. And, like many of us, he had no idea where such a career would take him. He certainly had no visions of university administration, but now nearly 35 years later, Tom Buchanan, President of the University of Wyoming, took the time to look back at the road to where he is now.

As I mentioned earlier, Tom did not begin as a recreation major. For his first couple of years at Cortland, he was a liberal arts history major whose only connections to the recreation department were a few friendships with recreation majors. However, those friendships influenced Tom to change his major to recreation during his sophomore year and begin his career in outdoor recreation. When I asked if there were any influential experiences during his days at Cortland, he said, "more than experiences were the people." "A few notable people" were Marcia Carlson, his advisor, and Jack Drury, his roommate, who was very influential in his decision to go into recreation. He continued, "This probably sounds hokey, but my guess is that most of the folks that you talk to 20 or 30 years out don't have specific recollection about courses and such. [I] Certainly remember the time I spent at Raquette Lake and on my practicum; those things stand out. But for me I think they were just affirming what I had probably already decided, that I wanted to be more connected with a career that would put me in the outdoors and working with natural resources..."

By the time he graduated from Cortland in 1974, Tom had pretty much decided he wanted to go on to graduate school. He looked at a few schools out west and ended up going to the University of Wyoming for his master's degree. It was his first time west of Penn-

sylvania, and it was at Wyoming that Tom fell in love with the West.

But after completing his master's degree, Tom headed back to Penn State's Ogontz campus to teach. He made it a year before the West called him back. He quit his job as an instructor for Penn State, and with no job prospects in sight, he headed back to Wyoming. Fortune would have it that a year long opening in University of Wyoming's recreation program opened up just as Tom arrived. So he "wound up as an instructor at the University of Wyoming instead of an instructor at Penn State."

After working at Wyoming for a year, Tom decided it was time to begin work on a PhD and in 1977, he headed to the University of Illinois. While completing his coursework and dissertation, he worked as a full-time instructor and also worked with the Institute for Environmental Studies with Rabel Burdge. That got him through two years at the University of Illinois, and in 1979, after completing his PhD, Tom headed back to Wyoming where a tenure-track faculty position was open in recreation, and, as he puts it, "I have been here ever since."

Tom characterizes his academic climb as fairly typical. He spent time as an assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, department head, associate dean, vice president for academic affairs, and almost two years ago now, he assumed the role of President of the University of Wyoming.

Never, from the beginning of his career has Tom anticipated such a path. All he knew at the get go was that he wanted to work in natural resources, national parks, state parks and the like. But the course of his work consistently opened up opportunities for him to advance to his present position. He now sees the

overriding goal of his work as "to make sure that the University works with and connects with the State in ways that serve both the institution and the students that are here, as well as the State of Wyoming."

And while Tom is certainly much further from his beginnings than he ever imagined, the love for the West that drew him to Wyoming persists. As we talked, he told me he had spent the early morning mountain-biking in the nearby

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national forest, and he continues to enjoy woodworking, a hobby he began developing in the craft shop in the basement of the student union almost 35 years ago. Even as he has taken on new roles and opportunities, Tom has time to ski, at Steamboat instead of Greek Peak, and his office looks out at snow covered mountains. "If you live in Wyoming you have to enjoy what Wyoming has to offer and that's just spectacular scenery and natural resources, forests and parks and outdoor opportunities."

As a graduate student myself, I am all too familiar with the feeling that I need to be in this field but have no idea how that will manifest itself in the future. I certainly never anticipated even beginning a master's degree in recreation. So my conversation with Tom Buchanan was refreshing in the sense that life goes by as it is meant to, and though I might like to know the path ahead, perhaps it will take me somewhere I have no way of anticipating.

## AWARD AND SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS IN THE RLS DEPARTMENT

**The Thomas L. Goodale '61 Community Service Scholarship:** In 1999, colleagues across the United States established a scholarship at SUNY Cortland to honor Dr. Thomas Goodale '61 on the occasion of his retirement as a professor at George Mason University. The Thomas L. Goodale Scholarship recognizes an incoming freshman or transfer student who shows an exemplary commitment to the field of recreation, has outstanding scholarship, and has a record of, and commitment to community service. This year's recipient is incoming freshman Nick Olson from Dansville, New York.

**The Marcia Carlson Award:** This award, in honor of professor emeritus Dr. Marcia Carlson, longtime faculty member at SUNY Cortland, recognizes a student who has made a significant contribution to the areas of outdoor education. This year's recipient is Joe Carlson from Kennedy, New York.

**The Ralph S. Mauro Award:** This award honors Ralph Mauro, who was a student in the RLS Department in the 1970's. Ralph demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm and dedication to helping others with disabilities and was

an individual with a physical disability himself. Ralph was actively involved in several community organizations that support individuals with disabilities when he died in 1978. This year's recipient is Dana Poulin from Tully, New York.

**The Harlan "Gold" Metcalf Award:** This award honors the founder of the RLS Department, Harlan "Gold" Metcalf, and recognizes a student who exemplifies Dr. Metcalf's qualities of good scholarship, interest in many activities, high moral and ethical character, and dedication to serving people. This year's recipient is Jessica Krueger of Naples, New York.

**The John A. MacPhee Scholarship:** This award is given each year to a recreation major who shows academic achievement, professional promise, and clear educational goals. It honors John A. MacPhee, one of the founding faculty members of the RLS Department. This year's recipients were Katherine Sclafani, from Yorktown Heights, New York, and Jessica Krueger.

**The John A. MacPhee Award:** This award is given each year to a recreation major who is a scholar athlete. It also honors John A. MacPhee, one of the founding faculty members of the RLS Department. This year's recipient was Jessica Anderson from East Islip, New York.

**The Jay '66 and Bettie Lee Yerka Award:** The Jay '66 and Bettie Lee Yerka Award for Excellence in Recreation and Leisure Studies recognizes a student who is majoring in recreation, demonstrates outstanding academic achievement and leadership, and has high moral and ethical character. In addition, the award is preferably given to a student in therapeutic recreation and a non-traditional student. This year's recipient is Kristen Lamphear from Central Square, New York.

Continuing scholarship recipients include Kara Carrino from Baldwinsville, New York, and Ashley DaSilva from Bellport, NY, recipients of the **Joyce A. Gaus '60 Scholarship**.

**Outstanding Seniors**, selected by their peers, were Jessica Krueger and Stephanie Loscalzo from Wantagh, New York.

## RHO PHI LAMBDA INDUCTS NEW MEMBERS



On May 5, 2006, students were inducted into Rho Phi Lambda, the national honor society for parks, recreation and leisure services.

To become a member as an undergraduate, students must have an overall GPA of 3.20 and substantial evidence of outstanding leadership and service. Graduate students must have a GPA of 3.50 and the same criteria for leadership and service.

The following students were inducted:

### Undergraduate

Jessica Anderson, East Islip, NY  
Joseph Carlson, Kennedy, NY  
Jennifer Gilmartin, Jordanville, NY  
David Hamilton, Freeville, NY  
Katherine Sclafani, Yorktown Heights, NY

### Graduate

Brandy Boden, North Chili, NY  
Patricia Cole, Liverpool, NY  
Kristen Lamphear, Central Square, NY  
Lori Pilosi, Clarks Summit, PA  
Anne Scharmberg, Dansville, NY  
Sarah Unruh, Cleveland, NY

# Cultural Competence Across the Curriculum

By Dr. Vicki Wilkins

This past academic year the RLS faculty participated in the RLS Cultural Competence Across the Curriculum Project. Lynn Anderson, on behalf of the department, applied for and received an assessment grant which allowed us to focus attention and resources on one of the strategies/objectives from our strategic plan. Specifically, Objective 1.1 states to “give our students a broader (multicultural) perspective and increased comfort with differences.” Two of the seven “actions required” with this objective were the focus of the assessment grant: (1) engage faculty in chats about infusing diversity and multicultural information across the RLS curriculum, then develop a plan for infusion; and (2) measure cultural competence to determine baseline status, then early and late in the degree program.

There were four major objectives of the RLS Cultural Competence Across the Curriculum Project.

1. To infuse cultural competence across the curriculum in the RLS majors
  - a. To increase RLS faculty understanding of the meaning of cultural competence
  - b. To identify courses across the curriculum where cultural competence can be infused
  - c. To increase RLS faculty skills and knowledge in assessment of cultural competence
2. To measure changes in cultural competence as students progress through the major
3. To fully implement a departmental strategic goal and a departmental assessment activity
4. To update the RLS Department Assessment Plan to include the assessment of cultural competence on an ongoing basis.



We started out in the fall with a day long retreat held at the Alumni House under the incredible leadership of Dr. Michelle Kelly. We spent the morning simply trying (1) to get clear, as a department, on what cultural competence means and how we can best facilitate its development across curriculum in a way that is meaningful to us; and (2) to get clear on how and what we want to assess in the area of cultural competence in our department. We all did our homework (we had assigned readings!) and then were lead through a facilitated discussion (e.g., theories, concepts, definitions, continuums, paradigms, social justice, human dignity) by Michelle. The discussion continued over a lunch and then the faculty spent the afternoon in open and productive discussion on infusion and assessment. Specifically we analyzed the curriculum (i.e., the core courses) for current cultural infusion as well as what might be needed. Before leaving we generated a list a “what’s next?” ideas to take us into the spring and to complete expected outcomes of the assessment grant. We agreed to continue to identify infusion activities that we already do as well as new ideas for enhancing infusion in our courses. Lynn and I were charged with researching and choosing a quantitative assessment tool. We decided to modify the majors’ Professional Portfolios to include a cultural competence section and suggested a sequence (REC 271, REC 407, REC 475) for baseline, mid and final qualitative and quantitative assessment of our majors’ cultural competence. And finally, we agreed to follow-up with a book chat in the spring.

The grant allowed us to purchase copies of Gary Howard’s book “We Can’t Teach What We Don’t Know” (autographed, no less) for each faculty member. We gathered early in the spring semester for a morning mini-retreat to chat about the book. We just recently completed a second mini-retreat where we reviewed the departmental strategy/objective that was the focus of the project as well as the year’s activities for cultural competence infusion. We chatted about what we had done in our courses and, in some cases, what we had wanted to do in our courses! And, I’m pretty sure we decided to read another book! Michelle Kelly had suggested two readings for us. We will use some of the remaining grant funds to purchase Beverly Tatum’s book “Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together” and hopefully have another book chat next year. We also discussed the possibility of a common reading among the students. Lynn and I need to hone in on an assessment instrument and there is still grant money to be spent on additional resources for the department (e.g., posters, videos, curriculum materials from the REACH Center).

Here’s the thing! How do you add anything to plates that are already full? You just do, I guess. The assessment grant gave the RLS faculty the opportunity to take on something that we had agreed was important to us and our majors, to take it on in a systematic way and with some funding. And from my perspective, at least, it was all good! The retreat, Michelle Kelly, the conversations and discussions among faculty, the readings, the book chat, the Alumni House, even the food! We made tremendous progress on an important piece of our strategic plan and enhanced our personal understanding of and commitment to cultural competence and increased comfort with differences. And that on top of everything else that we accomplished this year!



## Looking at the World (and Therapeutic Recreation Practice) from a Strengths Perspective

By Dr. Lynn Anderson

We grow up in a culture so ingrained in a certain way of thinking that we don't have any insight into that thought process and how it permeates all we do. In our society, one of those ingrained perspectives is the problem-oriented approach we apply to many things in life. The little research that has looked at this issue shows that there is little relationship between being clear on the problem and finding viable solutions. Yet, we continue to feel we must start with what is wrong, not what is right. Imagine a world where we started with strengths, not problems, when change is desired. Imagine our work if we focused on strengths when we wanted to increase any indicator of success, whether it be productivity, creativity, or other desired outcomes. Imagine a world where we looked at helping other people by starting with their strengths, not their needs or problems. Instead of focusing on what is wrong, imagine a world where we focused on what is aspired to, what is dreamed about, and what is going well.

Slowly, other professions that help people and communities are reorienting themselves to this strengths perspective. Social work and the positive psychology movement are two such examples. Therapeutic recreation, as a profession, has often touted itself as focusing on strengths in its practice approach. Yet pick up ANY textbook in the field, and you will not see this orientation in practice. Every text, though it talks about TR being the strengths profession, always ends up back in the familiar problem-oriented approach. The focus of assessment is to find needs and problems, a problem or needs list grounds the plan, documentation is problem-oriented, and interventions are designed to meet needs and solve problems. Even though strengths are used as a tool to help people, they are not the focus of the TR process in most texts in our field.

This past year, Dr. Linda Heyne, from Ithaca College, and I have been working on a book that addresses this gap in the therapeutic recreation literature. Entitled, "A Strengths Perspective in Therapeutic Recreation Practice," the book will be published by Venture Publishing. The book is based on the premise that the role of therapeutic recreation is to help people identify goals and aspirations (what they see as possibilities, what they want), and their accompanying talents, assets, and capacities, as well as family, neighborhood, and community resources, that can help them achieve their goals. Therapeutic recreation specialists will help people link their aspirations to resources and supports, and help them establish plans to reach their dreams. This approach is grounded in the idea that goals related to problems are not goals related to solutions in people's lives. Solutions are what people WANT to have happen, versus problems, which are what people DON'T WANT to have happen. Our hope is that the book will provide a healthy corrective to the entrenchment of our profession, and our society as a whole, in the insidious problem-oriented approach we use almost without knowing it.

Here is a challenge to you! Pay mindful attention over the next week, and see if you can increase your awareness of the extent to which your daily life, the institutions with which you inter-

act (work, school, etc.), the nation, and even the world, is enmeshed in the problem-oriented approach. See if you can identify how often we start with what is wrong to improve a situation. See if you can envision a world where we focus on aspirations and dreams to improve a situation! Perhaps the world, the nation, our neighborhoods, and our families, could move more quickly to where we want to be. I have always been inspired by a bold act I witnessed when I lived in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In a crime-ridden residential street in one of the worst neighborhoods in Minneapolis,

SOLUTIONS ARE WHAT PEOPLE  
WANT TO HAVE HAPPEN, VERSUS  
PROBLEMS, WHICH ARE WHAT PEOPLE  
DON'T WANT TO HAVE HAPPEN.

someone, during the middle of the night, put green wooden chairs in the front lawn of every house. This person, whoever it was, was using a strengths approach in trying to change this neighborhood. The chair-dropping act inspired many people, who came out, talked to each other for the first time in years, and resolved to be out a lot more in their yards. It is hard to be a criminal when a hundred witnesses are out watching!



## Research in Action: SUNY Cortland's Ecological Profile

By Sharon Todd

Each year, the graduate students enrolled in REC 601 & REC 602: *Recreation Research & Evaluation I & II* embark on a year-long journey applying the research and evaluation process to a real world agency and problem. Lynn Anderson and/or Sharon Todd provide supporting roles as seasoned tour guides, helping students grasp in-class topics through hands-on experience.

In the fall, the students cooperatively choose the topic for the class project, review related literature, and then identify and develop all parts of the project plan (problem statement, research questions, study design, project timeline, target population and sampling methods, measurement instruments, and human subjects application). In the spring, the students collect, analyze, and report the data through various presentations (including a Scholars' Day session).

Past projects have included needs assessments for local agencies, including the Cortland YWCA (2000), Cortland Youth Bureau (2001-02), Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture (2001-02), Tioughnioga Waterfront Development

Commission (2002-03), SUNY Cortland Campus Recreation (1999 and 2003-04), and Town of Dryden Recreation Commission (2004-05).

This year, guided by Sharon Todd, the students chose to produce an ecological profile of the SUNY Cortland campus community by assessing the ecological values, attitudes, and behaviors of students, staff, faculty, and administration. They also assessed the campus community's willingness to recycle, reduce energy and water use, and utilize alternate modes of transportation and food service.

Eighteen 100- to 600-level classes were selected to represent the student population, and a systematic random sample of faculty, staff, and administration was mailed the same questionnaire. In addition, two focus groups were conducted, one with Residence Hall Directors and the other with residence hall students, to discuss not only current patterns of behavior, but also what might motivate campus residents to change negative behaviors.

Nearly 500 respondents (over 370 students and over 120 members of the faculty/staff/administration) responded to the written questionnaire, producing a representative sample of the campus community. In general, SUNY Cortland did not score exceptionally high in their behavioral choices, attitudes, or willingness to act pro-environmentally, with non-students scoring significantly higher in almost all cases.

Results from the study support the notion that there is much room for improvement in terms of managing SUNY Cortland's impacts on the environment. The survey was one important step, hopefully raising awareness and educating respondents as they participated in the study. Specific recommendations are being developed and will be shared via a final written report, available this coming fall.

If you are interested in calculating your own personal "eco-footprint," visit the following website: [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org). If you are like the REC 601/602 students, you may be surprised how much your current lifestyle affects the environment!

## Ken Cohen to Join SUNY Cortland RLS Faculty Fall 2006

The Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at SUNY Cortland is pleased to welcome Kenneth Cohen to the faculty in the fall of 2006. Ken is completing his Ph.D. this spring at the University of Idaho. His research focuses on community development, culture, economics, and change. Ken received his Master's of Public Administration from Lewis and Clark College, Portland, Oregon and his B.S. in Com-

mercial Recreation from the University of Colorado at Boulder. As an assistant professor, Ken will teach primarily in recreation administration and leadership, as well as other courses in the nationally accredited curriculum. Welcome Ken!



## SUNY Cortland Alumni Social at the NYSTRA Annual Conference

SUNY Cortland Recreation and Leisure Studies Department sponsored an Alumni Social at the Annual NYSTRA Conference in Saratoga Springs on March 26, 2006. Alumni, current students, and faculty had a chance to meet, talk TR, and reminisce! Bernadette Gaycar, class of 1978, was the alumni who went back the furthest. The youngest attendee was Stephanie Grosso, a current undergraduate student at Cortland. Thanks to NYSTRA

and the SUNY Cortland Alumni Affairs Office for facilitating this wonderful opportunity.

**Pictured: front row – Elaine O’Mara-Hulbert, Carol Lively, Bernadette Gaycar, Stephanie Grosso. Back row – Kendra Liddicoat, Pamela Czarnecki, Lynn Anderson, Susan Wilson, Kristen Lamphear, Jennifer Hayes.**



## Our Alumni – A Measure of Success, a Source of Pride

By Dr. Lynn Anderson

Perhaps there is no better measure of how well we are doing as a department than the actions of our alumni. This past year has been typical – many of our alumni are doing positive and noteworthy activities that improve the profession, communities, and the environment. Here are just a few....

Laurie Penny-McGee, CTRS, '99, Exceptional Family Resources, "2006 Woman of Distinction Award," sponsored by the Girl Scouts and National Grid

Bill Zimmerman, CPRP '76, New Rochelle Parks and Recreation, elected to the National Recreation and Park Association Board of Trustees

Leiko Benson, CTRS '00, Onondaga County Parks, "Young Professional of the Year Award," Central New York Recreation and Park Society

Kendra Liddicoat, CTRS '02, Cornell University, Environmental Protection Agency NNEMS Fellowship

Dr. Geoffrey Godbey '61, Penn State University, retiring after many years of

teaching, research, and service in recreation, parks, and leisure services around the world

Kristen Schad '02, Cortland Youth Bureau, organized a community-wide musical festival (an 11-hour concert) to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina

Dr. Tom Buchanan '74, University of Wyoming, inducted into the inaugural SUNY Cortland Academic Hall of Fame (see article in this newsletter)

Matty Hamel '86, Tompkins Cortland Community College, received the prestigious SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching

Jessica Nowak '99, Town of Tonawanda Parks and Recreation, received the New York State Recreation and Park Society Young Professional of the Year Award

Bill Zimmerman, CPRP, '76, New Rochelle Parks and Recreation, received the New York State Recreation and Park Society Distinguished Service Award

Jim Rauli, '87, Town of Manlius Parks and Recreation, received the Outstanding Service Award from the New York State Recreation and Park Society and the Central New York Recreation and Park Society

Here is an interesting story from alum Heath Emmons '96, Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Bureau of Land Management in Glenallen, Alaska. "I was recently conducting a reference check for one of our river management intern positions this summer with a professor at another university. We were talking the finer points of recreation, at which point the professor asked me where I received my recreation degree. I answered, Cortland State, and his response was, "That's the best." As a Cortland State recreation graduate, I was proud to hear his response, and I thought you would be as well." Thanks for sharing Heath!

We would love to hear of your honors, awards, activities, and contributions. Drop us an email anytime at [rls@cortland.edu](mailto:rls@cortland.edu).

**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND LEISURE STUDIES ALUMNI NEWSLETTER**

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## The 56th Annual Cortland Recreation Conference

The 56th Annual Cortland Recreation Conference will be held on November 2nd and 3rd, 2006, on the SUNY Cortland campus. The student-organized conference is rich with tradition and gathers 300-500 students and professionals in recreation for the purpose of exchanging up-to-date information in the field. This year's conference theme is "FOCUS: a closer look at..." with closer looks at Health, Commercialism, and the Environment. Session topics include childhood obesity, integrating agencies, globalism, grant writing, alternative forms of therapy, and much more.

Gerald Fain will be presenting the key-

note. Dr. Fain is a school of education professor of special education at Boston University. He has served as President of the American Leisure Academy, created drug abuse prevention



programs from Boston schools and the Boston Police Department. Dr. Fain has also been published on special education, health, and recreation. He is a United Nations representative to the World Leisure and Recreation

Association. We look forward to his presentation and believe it will be very insightful. If you believe you can contribute to the theme of the Conference and are interested in presenting, please contact the Cortland Conference Office by phone at (607) 753-4939 or [reconf@cortland.edu](mailto:reconf@cortland.edu). You can also contact this year's conference faculty advisor, Dr. Wayne Stormann at [stormannw@cortland.edu](mailto:stormannw@cortland.edu).

Please reserve the date and look for further information inserted in this newsletter. Please call with any questions or suggestions that you may have to make this the best conference to date!