Rock couples kiss and tell
Dear friends,

As I write this, the Commonwealth is at the beginning of what promises to be a long road to passing a state budget. I am pleased that in these early stages our proposed funding is level with the current fiscal year. I am also practical enough to know this will undoubtedly change.

Currently our state appropriation covers approximately 37 percent of the cost to educate a student. The remaining 63 percent is dependent on tuition, fees and private support. In the early 1990s the funding ratio was almost reversed. This disinvestment in higher education, more than any other factor, has placed a significant financial burden on our students. 89 percent of who apply for need-based financial aid.

It’s a common misconception that higher education costs are out of control. This is certainly not the case at SRU, or at our sister institutions in PASSHE. The total cost of attending one of our universities – including tuition, required fees and room and board – is now $539 below the national average and $2,459 below the average charged by four-year public colleges and universities in the Middle Atlantic region. Over the past four years, our tuition increases have been below the rate of inflation – averaging 2.9 percent annually.

During this same period, we have raised academic standards, enrolled more academically talented students, produced more graduates and returned more than $10 in regional economic impact for every $1 of state appropriation received. This was only possible through careful planning, cost savings, and the generosity of alumni and friends who financially contribute to the University. As the economy continues to falter, state support declines and the value of our endowment drops, we need your support more than ever.

And, as we educate a new generation of students who will be able to share their own stories about what a great time they had at Slippery Rock University, we need your enthusiasm. Those stories are probably your story as well.

I fear that students who have everything it takes to succeed at SRU, except for the financial means, will miss out on The Rock experience. Now, more than ever, we need your support more than ever.

To our readers

This edition of The ROCK honors the accomplishments of pioneers in women’s athletics and the Title IX movement, and it explores the always lively topic of campus romance.

Heidi King, a regular contributor, profiles five women coaches who overcame the men-only ethos of the past. Today’s young women at The Rock enjoy equal access to varsity sports largely because these no-quit pioneers challenged the status quo.

Give yourself a pat on the back. We put the call out for courtship stories from married couples. The response was overwhelming – more than 50 couples responded. While we couldn’t run all the stories, we appreciate your enthusiasm.

This edition also includes a profile of alumna Charles Klausing, a legendary football coach, written by freelance Elizabeth Lee Brown. You will also learn more about the importance of contributing to scholarships and other causes that benefit students. As always, I look forward to hearing from you.

Cordially,

Gordon Ovenshine, ’88
Editor, The ROCK

gordon.ovenshine@sru.edu

Best wishes,

Robert Smith, president

Slippery Rock University is a member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

About the cover

Like dozens of other married couples, Clinton Lingenfelder, ’01, and Karen (Stanley) Lingenfelder, ’01, met at Slippery Rock University. Couples share their stories on page 8. Photograph courtesy Chapman Photography.

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New technology innovator sets goals

The rise of wireless gadgets such as the iPhone and social networks like Facebook has created a stampede of online activities on college campuses—and new learning opportunities. Simeon Ananou, SRU’s new associate provost for information and administrative technology services, is bringing the two worlds together.

“My role is often referred to as chief technology officer, but I view myself a little differently. I believe I have to act as an innovation officer,” he said. “I have a passion for education, and I have a passion for using technology to enhance what happens on this campus.”

Ananou’s priorities include enhancing administrative and instructional processes through the use of technology, reducing expenses by eliminating unnecessary redundancies; and helping to improve student success and retention.

One of his goals for SRU is exploring unified messaging. This refers to the inclusion of faxes and voice-mail in one’s e-mail inbox, to dictating a message into a cell phone and delivering that message to the intended recipient via e-mail, fax or voice recording in some cases.

SRU’s position as a national leader in encouraging physical activity among those with disabilities entered a new phase recently when eight universities and agencies from across the country came to campus to learn how to replicate the “I Can Do It, You Can Do It” mentorship program that SRU is piloting.

The federal program partners college students with individuals with disabilities for one-on-one physical activity sessions for eight-week units. Mentors assist their partners in developing programs that are enjoyable and can lead to permanent increases in physical activity and better nutrition habits.

Institutions that came to SRU for training included Oregon State University, California State University/Chico, SUNY-Cortland, Tennessee Tech University, North Carolina University-Wilmington, The University of Wisconsin/La Crosse, SPIRE in Salt Lake City, and the School District of Miami-Dade County, Fl.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Disability chose SRU to be the charter institution for the national expansion.

University sets timeline for new Student Union

A new, $45-million Student Union with a contemporary town-center design is scheduled to open fall 2011 at the site of the former Dods/Bard residence halls.

The 104,485-square-foot facility will include a movie theater, ballroom, meeting rooms, lounges, grille, mail and copy center and perhaps a bank. The theater will double as a multi-purpose room, using telescoping seats that push back into the walls that will permit space utilization for other activities.

“There is plenty of space, and it’s a very open and airy design, with as many sustainable features as possible,” said Paula Oliver, assistant vice president for student development.

“It’s very exciting, because it will serve as a community/town center. It’s primarily for our students, but we expect faculty, staff and the community residents to use it as well.”

The Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Board of Governors have approved the project. Construction bids will be accepted this year.

Students boost SRU’s rating in national engagement survey

First-year SRU students have given higher approval ratings on their college experiences than their peers did at comparative sister institutions in the areas of academic challenge, collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences and campus experiences.

SRU seniors gave solid evaluations on the national survey, exceeding last year’s rating in four of the five categories surveyed.

With first-year students, our scores significantly higher than our Carnegie Classification peers, our state system peers and all institutions in NSSE on three of those benchmarks: academic learning, student and faculty and interaction and enriching educational experience,” said Amanda Yale, associate provost for enrollment services.

Seniors gave SRU higher approval ratings than their peers did at other state system schools, Carnegie peer and NSSE institutions in collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences and supporting campus experiences.

The NSSE project, launched in 1999 with a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, involves surveying randomly chosen first-year students and seniors. Students respond to questions about academic, campus activities, meaningful discussion with faculty, library services and a host of other indicators. The NSSE project surveyed 1,200 colleges and universities and more than 1.5 million students.

College of Education continues NCATE accreditation streak

The College of Education, a national and state leader in providing high-quality teachers for today’s classrooms, continued its 53-year record of earning accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education when it was recently re-accredited.

“Seeking accreditation is a long, arduous process, but well worth it because it tells potential employers that SRU offers a quality, innovative program. It also tells those considering enrollment in SRU’s teacher education programs that education will meet nationally accepted standards,” said Jay Herron, dean of SRU’s College of Education.

“Slippery Rock University’s teacher preparation programs have long been at the forefront ensuring our graduates have the latest tools and theories necessary to enter the classroom ready to teach.”

SRU streams commencement ceremony on Web for first time

Relatives who couldn’t make December commencement were able to watch it live on Internet-connected computers for the first time thanks to video-streaming technology utilized by the University’s Office of Information Technology.

“Due to the large number of people who wanted to attend commencement, and, in part, because some of our graduates, including international students and those with family stationed with the military around the world, find their family and friends could not attend, we thought we should broadcast the ceremony on the Internet,” said Thomas Shannon, PC support manager in SRU’s Office of Information Technology.

SRU graduated 561, including one doctor of physical therapy degree recipient, 77 master’s degree and 483 bachelor’s degree recipients.

U.S. Navy Capt. Kathleen Greiner, commanding officer of the U.S. Navy’s Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute and a 1977 SRU graduate, served as commencement speaker.

Shelter dwellers empathize with homeless

Nearly 1,000 students recently made a strong statement about the social injustice of homelessness by constructing a cardboard village and occupying their “houses” in the Bailey Library Quad for 24 hours despite sub-freezing temperatures.

“A lot of students on campus have not experienced homelessness in any other way but to ignore a person who is sitting on the street pan handling,” said Jessica Fox, a communication major from Pittsburgh who participated in the outdoor event. “I don’t think college students really understand the seriousness of the situation until it is – bam – right in their face. If we aren’t going to take a stand against the problems that await us in the real world then who is? If we aren’t going to care about our own country then why should we expect anyone else to?”

Hundreds of paper doll signs went up all around campus during the event, with 57 different statistics about how homelessness affects children and adults in Pennsylvania and the U.S. Students from each “house” collected money to purchase hats, scarves, mittens, gloves and socks that were distributed to homeless adults in Pittsburgh and to homeless children living in rural western Pennsylvania. SRU’s Institute for Community, Service-Learning and Nonprofit Leadership coordinated the event.

University Trustees aid local fire department

The Slippery Rock University Council of Trustees recently gave $20,000 to representatives of the Slippery Rock Volunteer Fire Department as thanks for fire and rescue service volunteers provide to the campus. Passing the check are (from left) Robert Smith, SRU president, Robert Taylor, chair of the SRU Council of Trustees, Ken Harley, president of the fire department, Albert Taggart, vice president, and Pudgie Taggart, a firefighter.

Since 1997, the University has contributed $421,000 to the department. SRU has contributed to the local fire department since 1977 and to the regional department since 1979 following passage of state legislation that permitted such support because the departments provide fire and rescue protection to the campus and its facilities. Several SRU students volunteer for the department.
Jacob Right, ’04, resort recreation management/tourism

Home: Divides time between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.
Age: 27.
Profession: Owner of Pittsburg Boot Camp LLC, with nine locations around the region and Philly Boot Camp in Philadelphia. The businesses offer four-week outdoor fitness programs for women that include motivational training and nutritional counseling.

Hobbies: Working out. Right is a certified personal fitness trainer with the International Sports Science Association and a certified outdoor boot camp instructor with National Exercise and Sports Trainers Association.

Great accomplishment: Receiving the Combat Infantry Badge and Bronze Star for receiving the Combat Infantry Badge and Bronze Star.

Why I Give: Contributed $25,000 to build an endowment supporting the annual Mr. SRU Bodybuilding and Ms. SRU Figure Champion competitions. My gift will provide cash awards to the competition winners.

For more information on the Modern China Center, visit http://academics.sru.edu/mcc/index.html.

Modern China Center fosters academic growth

Students are learning more about China, the fast-growing economy in the world, through the recently launched Modern China Center. The center promotes academic and cultural research about the emerging superpower. It is of great significance for SRU students to understand China better, said Jingjing Wang, SRU assistant professor of geography, geology and the environment and center director. “China is playing a more and more important role in the world affairs, especially the world economy. As China opens up to the West, there are opportunities for employment in all areas. For SRU students, understanding China better could provide them with job opportunities.”

For more information on the Modern China Center, visit http://academics.sru.edu/mcc/index.html.

Inline Hockey Club team rolls to national ranking

Inline Hockey

Inline Hockey Club at SRU had its most successful season in history, earning a national ranking of 18th and clinching a playoff berth. The team has never been ranked before. “We put together a really strong team this year,” said Eric Viletto, a marketing major from Wexford and club president. “Inline hockey has really arrived at SRU. We’re playing in the best inline hockey league in the country except professional.”

The sport resembles ice hockey, except players wear inline skates rather than blades. SRU’s team has 45 members and played 18 games this season, from September through February. The team practices at Neville Island near Pittsburgh and plays many of its games in Harrisburg and Philadelphia, Viletto said. While inline skating was invented to help ice hockey players stay in shape during the off season, Viletto said inline is faster-paced than ice hockey.

“I like it more than ice hockey for a couple different reasons,” he said. “It’s four-on-four instead of five-on-five, which really opens the rink a lot more. There is no off side or icing, so that really allows the play to develop a lot more quickly.”

The team, incorporated six years ago, competes in the Eastern Collegiate Roller Hockey Association, which includes Butler Shippensburg, Millersville, Drexel and other teams from the northeast.

Inline Hockey continued from page 6

In 187, Rich, ’04, resort recreation management/tourism

Sign of the times: Travelers on Interstate 79 in southwestern Pennsylvania have some new scenery to brighten their commute — this Slippery Rock University billboard. The board is part of the University’s overall branding campaign to raise awareness and complement the “1 Rock” television campaign targeting students, alumni and Armstrong cable, and print ads in regional publications. The board is located south of the Slippery Rock exit off northbound I-79.

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Slippery Rock University Foundation, Inc.

Gifts and pledges received as of Sept. 30, 2008 for the Campaign for Slippery Rock University. This represents 41.6 percent of the campaign goal.

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17,831,430 Dollars raised for the Campaign for Slippery Rock University.
7,600,000 Dollars invested in the Boscov Dining Hall renovation.
8,458 Critical student enrollment for fall 2008, the largest in the history of the University.
22,186 Number of families registered for Friends and Family Weekend.
200 Number of families registered for Friends and Family Weekend.
90.5 Percent of full time, tenure and tenure-track faculty with terminal degree.
90.4 Percent of entering freshmen fall 2008 that were in the top 50 percent of their high school class.
48.96 Percent of full time, tenure and tenure-track faculty who are female.
40 Percent of entering freshmen fall 2008 that were in the top 50 percent of their high school class.
16.12 Percent of full time, tenure and tenure-track faculty who represent diverse populations.
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Graduate profiles newscaster Chet Huntley

Mark Weisennmiller, ’88, a Florida-based reporter, has written “Chet Huntley: Newscaster From The West A New Kind Of Book,” published by Alka Press International. Huntley was a long-time radio and television anchor-man and reporter and he is still the only major newscaster to have worked, at various times in his career, for all of the so-called “big three” U.S. broadcast networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC.

Professor emeritus publishes autobiography

Donald Meggin, a professor emeritus of international politics who taught at SRU from 1967-1994, has published his autobiography, “A Farm Boy Goes to Washington.” The book chronicles his transition from rural isolation on a farm near Chittenango, N.Y., to world traveler. The cover testifies to the scope of his travels. It includes pictures from Thailand, Cambodia and Germany. The book is available at xlibris.com, Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble.com and Borders.com.

Inspirational book links father to son from beyond the grave

Patrick O’Shea, ’94, bachelor’s degree in music, has written a father/son book called “Conversations We Never Had.” The book is a spiritual journey of how a father and son reconnect through poetry 30 years after the father’s tragic death. Books can be ordered and excerpts can be viewed at www.conversationsweneverhad.com. Infinity Publishing published the book, which is available at Amazon.com.

Experienced educator pens book for teachers

Floyd Cogley, ’61, elementary education major, has co-written a valuable resource for teachers of grades pre-kindergartners through second. “It’s Just Good Teaching: Ideas to Add to Your Bag of Tricks” gives teachers activities and reproducible lessons for the classrooms. Cogley has served as a teacher, principal, supervisor and curriculum director. Published by AuthorHouse, the book is available at Amazon.com

History professor writes Floyd Patterson biography

Alan Levy, professor of history, has written “Floyd Patterson: A Boxer and a Gentleman.” The book covers the former heavyweight boxer’s meteoric rise as a boxer and gives equal attention to his life away from sport, including Patterson’s work for civil rights causes in the 1960s. It is available at Amazon.com.

‘82 graduate exposes American myths

Dennis Plaisted, ’82, business administration, takes a look at the social and political history of America in “Hypocrite Nation: The American Tragedy.” Plaisted said he aimed to dispel myths many American accept as truth. One example: Four U.S. presidents have been elected by winning the electoral college while losing the popular vote, not just George W. Bush in 2000. The book is available at Amazon.com and pbbooksore.com

ién Hockey continued from page 6

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“I like it more than ice hockey for a couple different reasons,” he said. “It’s four-on-four instead of five-on-five, which really opens the rink a lot more. There is no off side or icing, so that really allows the play to develop a lot more quickly.”

The team, incorporated six years ago, competes in the Eastern Collegiate Roller Hockey Association, which includes Butler Shippensburg, Millersville, Drexel and other teams from the northeast.
Debbie said. “We posed for pictures – happy couple, ring and crepe paper streamers.”

Mike’s friends marked the occasion with roundness.

“Following our announced engagement, my Riviera Hall friends decided to help me ‘celebrate’ by throwing me into the shower – fully clothed and water running – and then covering me with many rolls of toilet paper,” he said.

Perhaps the residence-hall ring ceremony proposal was inevitable. They met in the fall of 1972 at a residence hall mixer. Their first date occurred in his residence hall room.

“This was back in the day when the room door had to be left open as wide as a shoe on the floor and a light had to be on,” said Mike, whom friends called Tuba.

The couple attended dances, basketball games, wrestling matches or any other free campus event. They married in 1976 and currently live about 20 miles from SRU. Mike teaches 9th-grade English. Debbie is a substitute teacher. They have a grown son and daughter.

“Mike wasn’t the only good thing from freshman year that I keep,” Debbie said. “I still get together each summer with my first roommate and a good friend from across the hall of Towers’ ‘right dungeon.’”

Cheryle (Fox) Williamson and Scott Williamson met during orientation in January 1979 after transferring to SRU. Scott remembers helping Cheryle solve the mystery of how to read her schedule. He soon made his attraction known.

“I lived with an older couple in a farmhouse with a barn, where they had horses,” Cheryle recalled. “One night, there was a knock on the door of the house where I was living. It was Scott. He had walked at least a mile in the wind, cold and snow to find me and ask for my phone number. He had no idea where I lived, just that I lived with an older couple in a farm-house with a barn.”

Scott took the telephone number and immediately walked back to his residence hall. “The next night, he called me for a date,” Cheryle said. “That was the start of our relationship, and we have now been married 25 years.”

They went for a walk – in January – on one of their first dates. “Of course it was freezing and icy – SRU is always cold, windy and icy in winter,” she said. “Anyway, when we had turned a corner and were heading back, he suddenly stopped, turned to me and said, ‘Look, it’s a mistletoe tree.’ Then I received my first kiss.”

The Williamson’s, who graduated in 1981 and married in 1983, have two children and own Interstate Courier Express, a same-day trucking and courier service in Allentown.
Alumni share courtship stories

Couple comes together, heals body and soul

Michael Chendorain, ’98 and Melissa (Rosman) Chendorain’s story is unusual because Melissa was engaged when they met. “We were both biology majors, pre-med,” Michael said. “We met when she was a freshman and I a sophomore. She was, at the time, engaged to a fellow biology major that was a friend of mine.” The former relationship didn’t last.

“One day I came into physics class and she was bawling her eyes out,” Michael continued. “I said, ‘What’s wrong?’ She said she had broken up with him the night before. My mouth dropped to the floor, and I gave her the ‘pump.’”

“Her dad told her to find a priest and Melissa as a physical therapist specializing in rehabilitation. “I guess our story is one of two grades healing body and soul, so to speak,” Michael said.

Melissa’s first fiancé left SRU after the breakup and hasn’t been heard from since. “Yeah, she’s a real heartbreaker,” Michael said with a laugh.

A father’s command, Kraus Hall change two lives

How often does the future father of the bride help bring a couple together? That’s what happened, by serendipity, when Matt Stahl, ’05, and Jana (Venturella) Stahl, ’05, transferred to SRU in fall 2003 and were assigned to Kraus Hall.

Matt moved in a day early. Jana arrived with her father the next day. “They get upstairs to her assigned dorm room and decided that they would need to un-bunk the beds and rearrange to maximize space,” Matt recalled. “Her dad told her to find a guy who was already moved in and looked like he’d be able to lift a bed. Luckily, I was all set up and sitting at my computer lounging around.

“Our corner of the eye saw her walk around the corner. She popped her head into my room. She asked if I was busy and if I could help her dad with the bed and I replied, ‘Nope, not busy at all,’ especially considering a cute girl was asking me for help. Now that I look back on it, it had to be destiny.”

They began dating and went to a nightclub on their first date. After graduating in 1999, Melissa entered SRU’s Doctor of Physical Therapy Program. Michael entered the seminary to become an Orthodox Christian priest. They graduated in May 2002 and married three months later. The couple has two children and lives in Rockaway, NJ.

They found love on ‘The Hill’

“Cute guy, but he needs a haircut.” Those were Deborah Wilman’s first thoughts about John Stolley when they met as sophomores in a “Small Group Communication” class taught by Thom Cobb, assistant professor of dance. They married in 2004 and have one child. Both work for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management Federal Investigative Services. Leslie is in contract negotiations and author. Aaron owns and operates Schultz Contracting.

“I’m amazed to think that when Jana asked me to help her that day at SRU, our lives would change forever. We would get married and live a wonderful, happy life together,” Matt said. “But I’ve told her that ever since the day I met her at SRU, I knew she’d be the one.”


“Desert Storm/Desert Shield,” John said. “Our lives are circling around. Our Pennsylvania connections are strengthening. We have new life and love on a hill in West Virginia, but we remember love’s first spark, on The Hill.”

The Hut strikes again

There are millions of ways to meet and date now days, but in the pre-text messaging days, options were fewer. The campus culture was stricter, especially in the years after World War II. Earl and Shirley (Dean) Birdy, ’51, met at The Hut, the student center that stood at the current site of Art Building I.

“As we grew together in our marriage and children came along, our long courtship that began at Slippery Rock sustained us through the tough spots, like six-month deployments and service in Desert Storm/Desert Shield,” John said. “Our lives are circling around. Our Pennsylvania connections are strengthening. We have new life and love on a hill in West Virginia, but we remember love’s first spark, on The Hill.”

They danced, and we kept on dancing. “We’ve been dancing for 57 years.”

Earl, nicknamed “Mr. Sunshine,” arrived at SRU in 1947 on the G.I. Bill. He found college pleasant compared to
Alumni share courtship stories

Cindy (Anderson) Phillips, ’93, and Terry Phillips, ’94, met in 1993 during spring break in Daytona Beach. Terry called Cindy and invited her to a party. “At the end of the party, he romantically took me to meet the 8 p.m. curfew at North Hall,” she said. “Little did I know he was on a date that night, but it didn’t matter – my friends had already given him my number.” They arranged for a first date at The Rock House and soon became inseparable. The couple recalls riding on his motorcycle to local swimming holes such as Rock Falls and Kino Quarry. Ryan graduated in 2002 with a degree in physics. Hastie graduated in 2003 with a degree in special education. They married in 2004 and live in Butler. Ryan works at Ibis Tek and Hastie is a teacher. “It wasn’t for Slippery Rock University, we never would have found each other,” Hastie said. “I never considered myself to believe in magic, but SRU has certainly proved to be magical for us.”

Couple overcomes shyness

Sandy McCann, ’05, and Amy Watters, ’03, met through the campus LGBA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Allies) group. They married in 2005 at a Unitarian Universalist church in Murrysville. Sandy changed her name to McCann and Sandy is birth mother to their son Elliott, born in 2006. Sandy, a computer science graduate, works as a senior software engineer. Amy works as a therapeutic assistant.

SRL, car ride become greatest decisions of life

Hastie (Miller) LeFevre met the love of her life in the one place that would make any father shudder – the back seat of a car. She was on her way to a party. “A fellow member from Phi Sigma Pi called to invite me to her 21st birthday celebration,” she recalled. “When her car arrived to pick me up, I got into the back seat and there was Ryan. Immediately my heart started racing and my face went flush. I was not expecting to sit next to such a good-looking guy. I was incredibly nervous sitting next to him and too afraid to talk to him on the ride over.”

Marine service during World War II. “You didn’t have to march. You didn’t have to clean your rifle. You had all this free time,” Earl said. He recalls watching Shirley home to meet the 8 p.m. curfew at North Hall. The couple took in a movie in Grove City on their first date. “I knew she was the one after a couple months. We got along so well,” Earl said. “We still dance. We don’t dance the jitterbug anymore.”

The couple retired to Arizona but remains true to SRU. They donated to create The Birdy Room Office at the Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center.

Community includes SRL during big day

Many graduates show affection for their alma mater by returning for homecoming, buying a sweatshirt or contributing to a scholarship. Celeste (Krejocic) Hardie, ’06, and Jason Hardie found each other, “I never considered myself to believe in magic, but SRU has certainly proved to be magical for us.”

Cindy and Terry said they’d met neighbors their junior and senior years. “SRU also gave me a great education, not just a Mrs. degree,” Judy said. Eric works for Nevada State Bank as an executive assistant for a bank. They met at Kiester Apartments, where they were neighbors their junior and senior years. “SRU also gave me a great education, not just a Mrs. degree,” Judy said. Eric works for Nevada State Bank as a bank officer. He recalls walking Shirley home to meet the 8 p.m. curfew at North Hall. The couple took in a movie in Grove City on their first date. “I knew she was the one after a couple months. We got along so well,” Earl said. “We still dance. We don’t dance the jitterbug anymore.”

The couple retired to Arizona but remains true to SRU. They donated to create The Birdy Room Office at the Russell Wright Alumni House and Conference Center.
In 1961, coaching women’s field hockey required more than teaching the team how to score—it meant digging into personal funds to underwrite tournament trips, making bus hitchhikes for the team, and rounding up students with cars to transport the team to matches. “We played on a field, literally, with goats at the top of the hill watching us practice,” recalled Patricia Zimmerman, affectionately known as the “mother of Rock field hockey,” and the first women’s varsity field hockey coach. “We’d get the physical education classes to fill the holes on the field with sand, and before matches, the team would cut the grass using push mowers.”

“That was just the way it was,” explained Anne Griffiths, who joined the faculty in 1958 to teach health and physical education. “I didn’t know we had a right to complain—we just gritted our teeth and started coaching women’s basketball at SRU in 1965. “We didn’t talk, I realized I wasn’t being recruited—I was being assigned.”

“...and it wasn’t about taking opportunities away from men, but giving equal opportunities to women.”
— Wilma Cavill

Doing what had to be done, however, was different from accepting the status quo. As the two coaches and others from SRU became involved with national associations like the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), it was apparent that women throughout the country recognized that sweeping change was essential if women’s athletics was going to survive—and thrive.

Patricia Zimmerman taught and coached at SRU from 1961-1993.

Good Sports
These women were more than coaches at The Rock—they were pioneers in women’s athletics and the Title IX movement.

I coached for 13 years before being compensated. Title IX made a big difference for athletes but also coaches. Cavill is quick to say that change was gradual and progressive, “and it wasn’t about taking opportunities away from men, but giving equal opportunities to women,” she said. “Many of our women students don’t think about the fact that we had to fight for these changes, but having opportunities for competition has made a difference not only in athletics but also in their careers. Great skills are one thing, but participating in athletics provides discipline, the ability to organize and plan, and leadership. Even today, women with athletic experience are more likely to be hired as coaches.”

Cavill, who received her master’s degree in athletic administration from Indiana University, is the longest-serving faculty member in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Zimmerman landed at SRU in 1963, after playing five years on the United States Field Hockey Association team. “Having been on the U.S. team, I had a different outlook as to how sports should be played,” she explained. Her athletic experience, along with her involvement in AAUW and the Eastern Intercollegiate Association for Women (EIAW), made her the ideal choice for director of the SRU’s initiative for Equal Opportunity. “Investigating how the school stood in regard to Title IX—that was a difficult job,” remembered Zimmerman. “The fellows were so used to getting what they needed for their teams that it was difficult for them to share facilities and equipment in the beginning. It was my job to remind them that just meeting the requirements wasn’t enough levels, but only the beginning in terms of implementation. “It was more than equality on the playing field—it was the responsibility I felt for standing up and speaking for young women and coaches,” Griffiths said. “When Title IX was having trouble getting through Congress, we got a van and hauled our students and athletes to Washington, D.C., to protest. We had to educate them about their rights, make them believe and teach them to stand up for themselves. That was my goal. As a faculty member and administrator, I wanted to mentor young women to take our places one day.”

Griffiths, who received her undergraduate degree from East Stroudsburg University, also became The Rock’s first woman chair for the department of physical education. Realizing she would have a more significant impact in administration, Griffiths earned her doctorate and worked her way through academia from dean to vice president of academic affairs. She retired in 1999 and also served as president of the Eastern Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. “As a faculty member and coach, I could identify issues, but I didn’t have the power to make real change,” Griffiths said. “As an administrator, I could keep my eye on equity and implement changes as needed.”

Wilma Cavill, another pioneer in women’s athletics at SRU, joined the faculty in 1958 to teach health and physical education. Two weeks after being on campus, President Norman Weisenfluh called her in to his office for a chat. “He remembered that I was a gymnast and I got the impression he was recruiting me to coach,” she remembered. “I never wanted to coach, but as we continued to talk, I realized I wasn’t being recruited—I was being assigned. I coached for 13 years before being compensated. Title IX made a big difference for athletes but also coaches.”

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— that it also meant providing women’s athletics with quality staff, transportation, and facilities.

Zimmerman graduated from East Stroudsburg University and received a master’s degree from the University of Illinois. She coached field hockey, taught physical education and became assistant athletic director at SRU. She also played for the U.S. Field Hockey Association Team for five years. She retired from SRU in 1993.

The late Martha Haverstick, who joined SRU in 1962 to coach tennis and coordinate physical education programs, is another Rock pioneer in women’s athletics. She believed young women could achieve whatever they set their sights on through hard work and passion mixed with compassion.

Long before there were women varsity athletics at SRU, she served as adviser to the Women’s Recreation Association. She was a great role model in academics as well. She became chair of the physical education department and later served as first woman dean of the graduate school. She dedicated 22 years of her life to SRU. She died in 2007.

Marie Wheaton, who coached varsity volleyball and taught everything from swimming to outdoor adventure during her 27-year tenure at SRU, was recently asked back to campus and given a game ball signed by the current women’s volleyball players.

“Dr. Griffiths taught me that it is okay to be a strong woman. I loved the way she spoke, the way men responded to her with admiration, and I tried to emulate her when I was the young head coach at Cheyney. At SRU I also learned to be fair, to always be prepared, to reach out to others, to be respectful of teammates. Both she and Dr. Zimmerman are my professional best friends. I can’t think of doing anything without talking to them. I can name on one hand the people I talked to during the Imus affair, and that includes them.”

C. Vivian Stringer, ’70, ’73, Head Coach at Rutgers University

“I was a young coach, and I saw firsthand how my women bosses and mentors at SRU were the rock of the Title IX movement for equality. I really benefitted from that. I was encouraged to be very involved with AIAW and that got me involved on a couple of committees. With my master’s degree and my SRU experience, I was able to move into athletic administration very quickly. I look back and I’m so thankful for having role models, and I’ve tried to do the same for my athletes, daughters, and the hundreds of student athletes I work with every year. I want it to be the norm that there are female mentors out there to help.”

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“I decided to go to the inauguration because I did some work at the convention and just thought it would be a nice thing to do,” said Cosme. She arrived early and worked delivering inauguration tickets. “I thought it was a pretty great experience,” Cosme said. “There were lots of very, very enthusiastic people. The city was wonderful, with lots of happy people. It was a once in a lifetime experience. It is something I will always be able to say ‘I was there’ for.”

McNeill, and her mother, Lynnda, knew they had inauguration tickets – and nearby “hotel space” with relatives. While Sykora-Bodie had front row seats, the others were assigned to the “Purple Section,” in eyeshot of the Capitol stage. McNeill, who had interned in Washington, D.C., found her Congressional connections paid off handsomely. “We were to pick up our tickets in person, but when we arrived the line was around the building,” she said. She called the office “to say I would not be able to get in before closing time. They assured me the office would stay open until all tickets were distributed. Then, an intern from the office where I had worked came down and into the line to deliver my tickets. It was great.”

From the Dean:
The inauguration experience for these political science majors is an excellent example of the type of extracurricular opportunities available at SRU to enhance a student’s learning. I am pleased to report that through our continuous assessment process, the faculty has developed a curriculum that encourages learning beyond the classroom, and with the financial support of alarms we continue to provide support for student learning opportunities that demonstrate service-learning, leadership and civic engagement.

— Bruce Russell

LEARNING THE MOVES:

Jessica Peconi, a December health and physical education graduate from Jefferson Hills, spent 10 weeks at St. Colmcille’s Community School in Dublin, Ireland, teaching physical education to fifth graders as part of her student teaching requirement and found the experience exciting. “I’d go back in a heartbeat,” she said.

When Jay Hertzog, dean of SRU’s College of Education, returned to campus after reviewing the Dublin practicum, he brought “a bucket of praise from Dublin school teachers and administrators for our student teachers.”

“To a person, everyone who was involved offered praise and thanks for the fine work our students are doing,” he said. Hertzog used his visit to re-establish contact with Dublin schools involved in the practicum and to examine expansion possibilities.

The Dublin program, offered each fall, is similar to those with regional Pennsylvania school districts in which SRU education majors observe then teach as a way of gaining actual classroom experience before entering the teaching profession.

“I had the opportunity to watch our students involved with elementary, middle and high school students as well as those with special needs and special education classes. I saw really good teaching taking place. I observed two physical education classes with four and five year olds, a fourth-grade science class and a social science class for ninth graders,” Hertzog said.

Betsy McKinley, associate professor of physical education, accompanied the students. “The students spend time in her on-campus class before heading to Dublin for their formal teaching experience. Halfway through the program Joanne Leight, assistant professor of physical education, joined the group. Leight will lead next year’s students.

From the Dean:

Our Dublin student teaching is one of the College of Education’s signature student teaching experiences. Unlike out-of-the-region student teaching conducted by other colleges, SRU prides itself that we send our faculty with our students to these experiences to assure that our students have a meaningful experience in the schools where they teach as well as have the opportunity to feel and see the culture of the area. We are extremely proud of this program and all our out-of-the-region student teaching programs.

— Jay Hertzog

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Rock students grab prime seats, jobs at inauguration

Winter 2009

The ROCK
Press one button and weather patterns emerge. Press another and Jupiter appears. Press again and Hurricane Katrina comes to interactive life.

Slippery Rock University has equipped the first floor lobby of its Advanced Technology and Science Hall with The Magic Planet, a new projection display device with unlimited teaching potential. The Magic Planet – one of the first in Pennsylvania – is a sphere-shaped computer that displays digital media of the earth and other planets.

“It’s neat because you can see information that you don’t normally think of, such as different climates and hurricanes,” said Eric Klug, geology major from Wexford.

The interactive learning globe enables students to choose climate change or other settings and see moving, color images of earth’s environment as it appears from space. Cloud cover, climate zones and shifting continents are lifted out of their flat dimension and projected in flashing real time.

“Magic Planet takes students leaps and bounds ahead of textbook science or even computer-assisted learning by offering visual representations of what the ever-changing earth really looks like,” said Julie Snow, SRU associate professor of geography, geology and the environment.

Snow, Tamra Schiappa and Jack Livingston, associate professors of geography, geology, and the environment department has introduced the first $43,224 globe through the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education Technology Fee Program.

SRU is the only Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institution and one of only two universities in Pennsylvania – Carnegie Mellon University is the other – to have The Magic Planet, Snow said.

Students interact with Magic Planet at times convenient to them, using a touch-screen kiosk to explore or conduct research. Students study satellite imagery, the movements of continents, sea surface temperatures, glaciers and human population growth.

The College of Health, Environment and Science plans to expand digital learning opportunities by creating an interactive, hands-on Exploratorium in Advanced Technology and Science Hall. The chemistry department wants to install an interactive Periodic Table of the Elements; computer science plans to introduce virtual programming, and geology envisions interactive fossil and rock and mineral display cases.

From the Dean: Glen Brunken, professor of art at Slippery Rock University, doesn’t care about accolades, but he certainly deserves them. He has helped hundreds of students develop their painting, teaching and art skills during his 40 years at SRU.

“Glen is a wonderful teacher and has had a huge influence on my visual art and my teaching,” said Jaci Ross, a 2002 SRU graduate and instructor at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. “I often tell my students things I remember him teaching me.”

SRU’s art department recently organized a tribute to Brunken to observe his 40th anniversary and upcoming June retirement that resembles “Mr. Holland’s Opus,” the movie in which former students come back to campus to play for their beloved music professor. The department sent letters to 450 of Brunken’s former students asking them to contribute a postcard for an art show, “Forty Years Later: 1969-2009.” The exhibition was staged Feb. 9 through March 13 at SRU’s Martha Gault Art Gallery.

“My idea was to celebrate all those years and the collaboration with all those students,” Brunken said. “The only way to teach art is to work with the students and get them to open up. On their postcard, they were allowed to put whatever they liked – a photograph of one of their art works, a drawing, some memory of their student days, pictures of the children or family.”

Former students sent postcards from their art shows while others lauded their professor. One graduate pasted a photo of himself on a 4x6 postcard with the words, “Thank you Professor Brunken.”

Brunken, who received his master’s degree in art from Wichita State University, specializes in abstract expression. His work is exhibited and collected internationally.

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“I am proud of what we’ve accomplished,” Brunken said. “There wasn’t much of an art department when we started. Now we have a nationally and internationally known art department. To be part of that is a real honor.”

The difficult aspect of teaching is saying “goodbye.” “The hardest part of teaching is turning them loose,” he said. “When you have a student for three or four years, you become friends. That’s why if they write to me after they graduate, I always write back. If they’re doing something, I want to know about it.”

From the Dean: Glen Brunken notes the hardest part of teaching: saying goodbye to students. Equally – if not more – bittersweet is bidding farewell to him, a College of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts colleague, one who has contributed not only his teaching excellence and rapport with students, but also consistently shared collegiality, wisdom, humor and good sense across the SRU community. We will miss his presence.

A public thanks, Glen, for your decades of service and best wishes for all future pursuits. More is to come. You have a great future ahead of you, Glen.”

— Diana Dreyer

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Ben Shaevitz isn’t your typical physics department chairperson. His interests are as varied as the cosmos. He’s an educator, backpacker, mountain biker and sustainable farmer and ice sailor, to name just a few of his endeavors.

In 2004, Shaevitz reached 19,500 feet on Mt. Illimani in Bolivia, despite hazardous conditions. If “Survivor” came calling, he’d participate. If “Bizarre Foods” wanted a taste tester, he’d eat the fertilized duck egg as long as it was certified organic.

“What can I say? I like to be in the fringes,” he said.

It’s exactly this eccentricity and energy that makes him such an exemplary educator at Slippery Rock University. The department chair, who will celebrate his 20th anniversary this year, has never worked for another institution and remains proudest of his pioneering work in modernizing physics pedagogy. Long before it was on anyone’s radar, Shaevitz obtained a $350,000 grant to infuse physics curriculum with inquiry and activity-based learning.

He eschews textbooks and lectures for experiments, even in introductory courses. His leadership in activity-based learning is one of the reasons why physics graduates are earning full rides into doctoral programs at Yale, North Carolina State and other top institutions.

“I am in a position to influence others,” Shaevitz said. “I have to seize the opportunity. We don’t want future citizens and teachers to lecture and be satisfied with the status quo. We want teachers to teach in engaging ways. Our job is to plant the seed. In one of our classes, future teachers are actually taught a model that they can use in the third grade.”

In fact, Shaevitz, who grew up near Columbus, Ohio, and received his doctorate from Pennsylvania State University, doesn’t even like the term physicist. He views himself as a naturalist, someone who finds connections between ice racing and the motion of light and shares his insights with students in understandable terms.

“I’m not a research scientist. I’m a physics educator, and I am a very good communicator who has a lot of awareness about how people learn,” he said. “For me, a course is like a play. There is a scene, a set and an ambiance. I am really good at setting the scene, so that students are relaxed and comfortable and able to synthesize lessons.”

His advice to students as they explore career paths? “Find your passion and amass the tools and credentials you need in order to act out that passion,” he said. “People who get told what their passions should be are the ones who live for the weekend and vacations. They’re not happy in their 40-hour jobs.”
Ice sailor flies over ice

An avid outdoorsman, Shaevitz took up ice sailing three years ago. Ranked 59th in the world by the International DN Ice Yacht Racing Association, he recently participated in the Great Western Challenge Regatta in Minnesota. He whisked across 12 miles of Lake Osakis in an iceboat on blades, reaching 60 miles an hour.

The event drew more than 75 participants, including three former world champions, from around the globe. Although the sport’s been around since the 18th century and began in Holland, it is not widely known.

“Ice-boating has this element of speed, and it’s obscure and I tend to like things that are obscure because they’re not in the mainstream,” Shaevitz said. “I like the understudy. I like to be in the fringes.”

For competitions, Shaevitz uses a 12-foot-long boat propelled by a 60-square-foot sail. “Sailing is my passion at the moment. It’s 24/7, now that I found ice-boating,” he said. “It’s an exhilarating experience and very, very humbling. You’re very, very aware of your surroundings and the people around you.”

Ice sailing is most popular in Sweden, Canada and the Great Lakes states of Minnesota and Michigan, he said. Most events take place during early and late winter, before heavy snows render frozen lakes unsuitable for racing.

“I participate in at least four regattas a year,” he said. “But you have to be ready to go when the conditions are right. I have hotlines on my phone and keep my eye on Web sites.”

Shaevitz said he aspires to move from a bronze to silver-medalist sailor. “People that are good at racing ice boats tend to have done it for a while. It’s really, really hard for an upstart person to break into top levels,” he said.

Like everything he does outdoors, Shaevitz finds lessons for his students. “Sailing is all physics—all of this stuff is fodder for the classroom. When I’m rock climbing at Seneca Rocks in West Virginia, I am using physics concepts for motion and force and angles. It sure doesn’t have to have the academic knowledge.”

Educator becomes green grocer

Shaevitz’s interest in the outdoors led him into another endeavor—sustainable farming. He and wife Lori Sands incorporated Silver Wheel Farm LLC in 2005. Located 20 miles from SRU, the farm produces certified, naturally grown produce and eggs. They sell goods to restaurants in Allegheny and Butler counties, as well as the famed Strip District in Pittsburgh.

Sustainability combines sound economic and environmental policy, another passion Shaevitz has embraced. “I wouldn’t be in farming in a way that was not beneficial to the earth,” he said. “I think conventional agriculture doesn’t promote regeneration and maintenance of the earth.

His other interests include music, swimming and cross-country skiing. Still, teaching remains his priority, and Shaevitz relishes his role with freshmen.

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“I showed this to the coach and he asked if anyone else could do that. No one did. He used to say time ran out,” he said. “I would go back to when I was growing up. If you lost a game, the next day, you’re back and ready to play again.” That’s sort of a philosophy I have had.

Anyone that knows anything about western Pennsylvania football knows that he was one of the best teachers of the game.” — George Mihalik

SRU’s current head football coach

“Winning streak starts at The Rock”

Klausing recalled how his love for football and drive to distinguish himself set him apart at Slippery Rock early on. At one of the first tryouts for the football team, 100 guys competed for 30 slots. The traditional drills of physical workouts, cross-country runs and tumbling skills whittled the field down to about 30, but there were still more players than uniforms.

So Klausing volunteered to demonstrate a physical feat beloved by his former drill instructor, but scorned by his fellow footballers. He stood on the asphalt with his arms behind his back and fell forward flat onto his knees, belly and face.

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Gomez’s maternal grandmother Mary Cunningham Ray, who earned two Slippery Rock University diplomas, clearly set the path for her grandson when he was young. The emulation culminated at December graduation when Gomez received his own SRU diploma.

“It was a great path,” said Gomez, who received a degree in business management. “It is already paying off. I landed a job working for First Commonwealth Bank as a transaction specialist where I deal with verifying loan information.”

Ray earned her first SRU degree in nursing education in 1978, then returned for further study to earn a bachelor of science in nursing in 1983. She spent 20 years at Butler Memorial Hospital before taking positions with the Veterans Administration Hospital in Butler, then the Armstrong County Memorial Hospital, and St. Francis Hospital in Wichita, Kan. She returned to Butler to work for the Butler County Department of Health for 10 years then worked with a home health care agency before retiring in 1999 with 34 years experience.

“When I was growing up, my family lived in Florida and when we came to Butler to visit my grandmother, she would dress up my brother Evan, my sister Molly, and me in Slippery Rock University hoodies and shirts and joke about us going to SRU. We wanted to go where grandma went. She displayed her degrees at her home and often talked about how good SRU was and how she received a quality education,” Gomez said. “I decided to follow her advice.”

Gomez’ parents moved to Pennsylvania in 1992 and following high school, he enrolled at Butler County Community College, later transferring to SRU. "My brother and sister are still in high school, so they too may follow grandma’s path,” Gomez said.

“I think it was really a very good decision to come here,” he said, but jokes, “Of course, my wife, Maggie, may not agree. She is an undergraduate at IUP - SRU’s arch rival. When we go to football games, she sits with her friends on the IUP side of the stadium and I sit with my SRU friends on the SRU side. It has made for some very loud discussions.”

Retired English chair finds his bliss He’s still as thin as a marathon runner, laughs a lot and appreciates good fiction. But Alden Hart, the former English department chair who retired to North Carolina, doesn’t want to brag about his notify-the-teacher’s-union accomplishment.

“I wore the orange apron. "I found out there was a new Home Depot opening near town,” he said. “On a lark, I went in and applied for a job. Wow, I got one. So for one and a half years I wore the orange apron, went by Al and was an associate in the hardware department. Loved the experience, even though after four years I still wasn’t making $10 an hour."

Hart, a professor of English, retired from SRU in 2001. He swapped Molly Dick and freshman composition for a three-are farm-house with a barn and woodshop. He grows vegetables, including okra, and peanuts and plays golf five times a week. He and wife Carla moved to the Greenville area to be near their daughter Rachel and two grandchildren.

It’s not quite Walden Pond, but Hart does own five horses and a riding mower. He clearly admires Henry David Thoreau’s ethic of living a life of balance between nature and community.

“I keep experimenting with various projects: small furniture, birdhouses, doll furniture," Hart said. “I always loved mowing grass and raking leaves. Now I have the time to really do that around the property."

He is quick to add that he still likes Milwaukee’s Best and antiques.

"I enjoy going to the second-hand stores and looking for treasures,” he said. “I haven’t escaped being thrifty (cheap?)."

Hart said he finds the flexibility of retirement exciting. "What has been surprising is the freedom to try out options, and if those don’t work, try some others,” he said.

William B. Rometo, who played halfback for legendary Slippery Rock University football coach N. Kerr Thompson and once served as president of the scholarship committee that bears his coach’s name, used his lifelong love of sports and SRU to benefit high school students throughout his entire life.

Rometo, a 1946 SRU graduate, died at age 91 in Alliance, Ohio. His SRU football career was cut short in 1942 by injury, but he continued his studies in physical education before entering the teaching profession. Those who knew him recalled that he frequently credited coach Thompson for setting his life’s path in the field of education. He had played for several pro-sports teams, including the Clewiston Tigers and Swissville Floridians.

"Dad never missed a chance to tell people he had gone to Slippery Rock,” said his son William J. Rometo, who followed in his father’s footsteps in numerous ways. William J. Rometo and his sister Arlene Rometo Braderly, ’71, both graduated from SRU. His son remains a health and physical education teacher at Plum High School, where his father landed his first teaching job.

Both men coached football at Plum, with the elder Rometo also excelling as the school’s basketball and baseball coach. The elder Rometo’s greatest triumphs, like his mentor Thompson’s, were in football. Teams he coached won 14 straight games through the 1931-32 seasons, including the Alle-Kiski Conference Championship. His overall record stands at 54 wins, 53 losses and 11 ties. He also taught in the Shriners All-Star Football Game in 1952.

“One time we counted in the family and found between 14 and 15 of dad’s family members—children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews attended Slippery Rock University," said William J. Rometo, a 1976 graduate. "William J. Rometo’s own sons (the coach’s grandsons) Mario graduated from SRU in 2006, while

Carlo is now a freshman majoring in criminology and criminal justice. Coach Rometo’s brother, the late Art Rometo, led the family’s tradition at SRU as the first Rock graduate in 1942.

Coach Rometo met his wife, Rose, on the steps of North Hall, according to their son. Rose Rometo, a 1943 SRU graduate, is now a retired teacher from the Penn Hills School System living in Alliance Ohio. Both she and her husband were life members of the SRU Alumni Association.

Throughout his 32-year teaching career, including 18 years as principal at Plum, Rometo guided countless, deserving students and athletes to his alma mater and frequently told of his days at The Rock along with his work with coach Thompson. He retired from Plum in 1978 after 32 years in education.
1970s

Date: April 7-17.

Cora Krueger, ’03, and husband, Jim, announce the birth of their son, Justin Alexander Krueger, Aug. 9, 2008. He was welcomed home by brother Luke and sister Sydney.

1980s

Date: April 7-17.

Caren Olson, ’83, and husband, Joe, announce the birth of their daughter, Hannah Grace Olson, Aug. 24, 2008.

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Caren Olson, ’83, and husband, Joe, announce the birth of their daughter, Hannah Grace Olson, Aug. 24, 2008.
Nominations sought for Distinguished Alumni Awards

The Slippery Rock University Distinguished Alumni Awards honor individuals who have graduated from Slippery Rock University and have translated their SRU experience into distinguished service in public, business, professional, educational, or service and philanthropic work to the University community.

Minimum criteria to distinguish themselves by reaching the highest level of accomplishment and possess the highest standards of integrity and character to positively reflect and enhance the prestige of SRU. To be eligible, nominees must have graduated from or attended SRU at least 20 years ago.

Criteria for Nomination

- Must be a graduate of SRU or have attended SRU at least 20 years ago.
- Current members of the SRU alumni association board of directors, the distinguished alumni award committee and employees of SRU may not be considered for this award.
- Nominees must have graduated at least 20 years ago from Slippery Rock University
- MUST be present to accept the award at the distinguished alumni awards banquet during homecoming weekend.
- All nomination packets must include the following by the announced deadline:
  - A nominator's statement the nominee's qualifications
  - Letters of support that address different areas listed on the criteria form. Supporting letters may be included and should address different areas listed on the criteria form.
  - An original nomination form.
  - Photographs
  - Newspaper articles, clips or other supporting materials

To receive a copy of the nomination form, please contact the SRU Office of Alumni Relations at 724.738.2018 or e-mail alumni@sru.edu.

For more information, call 724.738.2004.

University’s new hire expected to score for athletics

William Richter, a former college football and basketball player, admires Slippery Rock University's top-notch athletic facilities and loves to point out that "The Rock captured the most recent Dyon Trophy symbolizing the most successful all-around program in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference. Recently hired as University Advancement's first development officer for athletics, Richter intends to build on those positives by helping to raise the funds necessary to increase the number of athletic scholarships available to outstanding student-athletes. Contributions from alumni, public, private and corporate donors will support the creation of new athletic scholarships.

"We are excited to have Bill Richter join our staff as a dedicated fundraiser for Rock athletics," said Barbara Ender, Vice President for University Advancement. "We recognize the need to put a stronger emphasis on our direct efforts to create more scholarships for athletics. Bill will work closely with coaches and the athletic director to increase our scholarship dollars in order to attract more outstanding student-athletes to The Rock.

Richter's goals involve establishing new scholarships, hosting goodwill events in cities with head football coach George Mihalik and basketball player, William Richter. A new hire University Advancement’s director of the Victim Outreach Intervention Center in Butler from 2000-2008 and worked for the Volunteers Against Abuse Center in Evans City. Her successful years of fundraising in those positions continue to inform her work in advancement. "You have to have a passion for your cause. She has bachelor's degrees in psychology and industrial psychology from Clarion University and enjoys working for SRU.

"I enjoy the enthusiasm of my co-workers and their mission-driven philosophy," she said. "I have a great job."
Matteson, a 1968 Rock graduate. “She had a good sense of humor. She was very, very intelligent. She had very high standards and very high expectations for her students. So you knew you were working with someone who was unusual, the kind of faculty member that all students should have.”

Haverstick, who taught at SRU from 1962-1985, died in 2006. When Matteson and her former roommate Jan Kasnevich, a fellow ’68 graduate, learned of her passing, they decided to do something to memorialize their mentor and help current women physical education majors. They launched the Dr. Martha Haverstick Endowed Scholarship to provide $1,000 a year to women physical education majors.

Unfortunately, we are losing many of the women who mentored us at SRU and opened the doors to unimaginable futures for us,” Matteson said. “When I talk to young women today, many assume that women always played varsity sports, pursued the careers of their choice and were leaders in industry, government and education. At our wise age we know that the reason young women can pursue their dreams is because of being able to communicate with anyone regardless of their position in the school, janitor or president,” Matteson said. “She felt that skill was the mark of an educated person.”

“I want to be the type of teacher and coach that students look up to, a leader who can offer positive guidance,” Peconi said. “Growing up is a tough thing, middle school and high school is a tough time. I am leaning on the examples of past mentors such as Martha Haverstick, Carol Matteson and Jan Kasnevich to create a very positive environment in my classrooms and gymnasium.”

Matteson recalled Haverstick’s embrace of everyone on campus long before the era of inclusiveness. “She taught me the importance of being able to communicate with anyone regardless of their position in the school, janitor or president,” Matteson said. “She felt that skill was the mark of an educated person.”

Alice Dieke, a 1965 graduate, recalled Haverstick as popular and easy to talk to you. “She was the nicest person ever. She had all kinds of knowledge in her head and you could talk to her about anything. She was my advisor. It didn’t take me long to figure out she was a very special person.”

Lauren Fraser, a 1976 graduate and physician living in Colorado, said she owes much of her personal success to Haverstick. “She taught me that if I applied myself, I could achieve whatever I set my sights on. She was small, but mighty, and her influence drove me to become a successful student teacher and eventual doctor,” Fraser said. “On a personal level, she also served as a mentor – I supported myself through undergrad and graduate school, and she provided a steady source of guidance and moral support.”

Fraser stayed in touch with her mentor until she passed away. “Dr. Haverstick provided me with a strong sense of purpose, high standards, and commitment to being my best. I only hope that I can pay forward the same strength and guidance to those with whom I come in contact,” she said.

For more information about the scholarship, call 724.738.2004.
Although not related by blood, a significant portion of the Pittsburgh Pirates front office has come from the same source: Slippery Rock University. I had the opportunity to serve as an intern in the Pirates media relations office during the 2008 Major League Baseball season. Little did I know upon arriving I would have something in common with 17 front office employees.

I wouldn’t have landed the coveted internship if not for the support of other members of The Rock family, especially head football coach George Mihalik, sports information director Bob McComas and Andy Major, the former assistant to the athletic director. These Rock graduates urged me to apply and provided key contacts.

I sent Mr. Trdinich a resume and cover letter and waited for a response. I received a call one evening from Dan Hart. Dan worked as the manager of media services for the Pirates and was in charge of the public relations internship program. He said having that experience would be very beneficial working in the Pirates media relations office. I was offered the internship.

While Rock graduates at PNC Park often talk about their common background, the experience that really showed SRU’s prevalence within the organization occurred during the annual intern luncheon. Frank Coonelly, Pirates president, asked every intern and department head in the room to stand and summarize his or her background.

The microphone came to me so I stood, stated my name, that I worked in the media relations department and that I was a graduate of Slippery Rock University. I was sitting beside Jim and passed the microphone to him. He stood, stated his name, his position and he also stated he was a graduate of The Rock. From that moment on every Pirates front office employee that was at that luncheon stood up when it was their turn and stated they were from SRU.

My experience at SRU really helped me to go into the Pirates front office and adapt well. Serving in the sports information office helped me to develop skills in writing game recaps and dealing with stats that were very beneficial too, as I had opportunities to work with Fox Sports Net as a stats person for television broadcasts. I would sit beside the broadcasters and help keep an eye on the game and what was going on and also talk with the producers down in the production truck through my headset and help them keep track of what was going on during the game.

Spending the 2008 season with the Pirates was an experience I will never forget. It was a great experience not only from a professional development standpoint, but also to work alongside someone who came from The Rock and is in a position I aspire to be in one day. I am proud to say I am a Pittsburgh Pirates alum, a Slippery Rock University alum and another chip off The Rock.

The Pittsburgh Pirates employs several SRU graduates, who gathered for a group photograph at PNC Park. They are (from left) Bryan Betzler, premium sales account executive; Jared Izzo, intern; Julie Howe, tour supervisor; Chris Hunter, senior director of ballpark operations; Melissa Cushey, guest relations manager; Jeff Hammond, IT operations manager; Josie Billetteaux, director, alumni affairs, promotions and licensing; Dave Wysocki, manager, ticket services; Patty Paytas, vice president, community and public affairs; Jim Trdinich, manager of media services; Jeff Podobnik, senior director of security and contract services; Chris Zorich, technical analyst; Jim Papal, premium client services representative; and Ryan Leech, group sales coordinator.
The internship – one of the first of its kind in the country – provides job preparation experiences to students in sport management, journalism, marketing, business and other fields.

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"It's everyone's dream that wants to get into sports, whether it be Major League Baseball or the National Football League, to work for a major team," said Cushey, a sport management major intern the internship for many years. "I was able to get a feel for the life," Kusniez said. "I was able to work on some real promotions such as mascot visits, T-shirt tosses, between innings and during the games."

"The internship was very helpful, and it allowed me to position myself well for the next several years of my life," Kusniez said. "I was able to work on some real skills relating to sports administration that were valuable to places I was interested in working at."

Lanny Frattare, the Pirates long-time sportscaster, was very involved in the internship for many years and welcomed several SRU students in the broadcast-booth. Frattare also visited SRU to talk to students in sports writing and other topics.

"For years, he would take only Slippery Rock University interns in the broadcast booth and didn’t want to see the program expanded to accept other institutions," Walsh said. "Lanny did a whole lot. He only took interns from Slippery Rock because we screened them so well and sent really competent people."

Frattare and Walsh collaborated on a graduate-level sports writing class and invited students to visit Frattare at Three Rivers Stadium. A former student recalled the broadcaster providing valuable advice, including tips for conducting locker room interviews. "He talked about sports casting and how he worked up through the ranks," said Bob Dandoy, a '84 graduate who took the course and now teaches English at SRU. "How many graduates do you remember this many years later, but I remember that one course very, very vividly," he said. "He was great, very amicable."
Blasko earns prestigious honors

Rock volleyball standout Jen Blasko collected a pair of prestigious awards in her final season of collegiate competition.

A senior outside hitter from Summit Hill (Marian Catholic High School), Blasko received ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America first-team and Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference “Fall Top Ten Award” honors. The Academic All-America® honor, awarded by the College Sports Information Directors of America, was the first received by Blasko, while she earned the Fall Top Ten Award voted upon by the conference’s SIDs for the second consecutive year.

Blasko currently owns a perfect 4.0 grade point average as an exercise science major at SRU and has been admitted to SRU’s nationally renowned doctor of physical therapy program.

On the court, Blasko earned Daktronics Inc. first-team and American Volleyball Coaches Association honorable mention all-region honors in 2008. She ranked ninth in the PSAC in kills (2.96 per game) and led the team in kills, digs (3.02 per game) and service aces (52).

Blasko concluded her collegiate career as a four-year starter for veteran Rock head coach Laurie Lukas. She is a three-time Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference-Western Division selection and, in addition to all-region honors this fall, was named to Academic All-District. She also earned ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District® honors in each of her final three seasons and will be a four-year member of the PSAC Scholar-Athlete list.

Blasko helped lead the Rock to a 26-12 record this year and a fourth consecutive birth in the NCAA Tournament, as well as a berth in the PSAC Tournament for the second time in her four years. She is one of only three players in Rock history to have played in the NCAA Tournament all four seasons of her collegiate eligibility.

Blasko’s selection as an Academic All-America® performer extends to twice the number of consecutive years in which at least one SRU student-athlete has earned that prestigious honor. She is the 19th Rock student-athlete to be named to Academic All-America® first-team status and the sixth since 2000.

Blasko’s selection as PSAC Top Ten Award winner extends to 12 the number of consecutive years in which at least one SRU student-athlete has earned that honor.

Heilman reaches career milestone

First in a two-part series on her head coach, Laurel Heilman has set herself apart from others in Rock women’s basketball history.

As a player, Heilman was a captain of the 1986-87 Rock squad, the only Green and White women’s team to win a Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference championship. In the process, she earned first-team All-PSAC academic and athletic honors.

On Jan. 18, 2009, Heilman added the distinction of being only the second Rock women’s basketball coach to record 100 victories. The milestone win was a 79-59 triumph at Lock Haven University.

Heilman, who is completing her ninth season as head coach at her alma mater, joins Almena Griffiths as the only Rock women’s basketball coaches to reach the 100-win milestone. Griffiths recorded a 111-56 record in nine seasons (1970-79) as The Rock’s varsity head coach.

Since assuming The Rock reins in October 2000, Heilman has led SRU to three appearances in the PSAC postseason tournament. Heilman recorded her 200th career victory January 12, 2008, when The Rock beat Bloomsburg, 81-51, in Morrow Field House.

A native of Bethel Park and a graduate of Bethel Park High School, Heilman began her head coaching career with an eight-year reign at Allegheny College in Meadville. She was two wins shy of becoming the school’s all-time leader in wins when she accepted The Rock head coaching position.

Heilman is the proud owner of both a bachelor of science degree in physical education/health (1986) and master of education degree in athletic administration (1988) from SRU.

Butterworth re-signs with Falcons

Former Rock standout Mike Butterworth agreed to a two-year contract with the National Football League Atlanta Falcons at the end of the 2008 season.

Butterworth, a native of Northern Cambria and graduate of Northern Cambria High School, was a member of the Falcons’ preseason camp squad but was waived on August 30. He rejoined the team in mid-December as a practice-squad player as the Falcons prepared for the NFL playoffs.

As a four-year starter at SRU, Butterworth earned honorable mention All-America honors from Don Hansen’s Football Gazette and was a three-time first-team All-Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference-Western Division choice.

Off the field, he garnered two ESPN The Magazine Academic All-America first-team accolades and was also a two-time recipient of the PSAC “Fall Top Ten Award.” He is one of only two Rock student-athletes to earn two Academic All-America® first-team honors and one of five SRU student-athletes to earn two PSAC Top Ten awards.

Q: What distinguishes Slippery Rock University’s Community Health Program and where do graduates find employment?

A: The Community Health Program provides graduates with a broad foundation to work in health promotion, disease prevention/intervention and to identify/assess community health and disease patterns and plans/evaluate public health programs. Graduates are employed by health departments, health insurance companies, healthcare facilities and non-profit agencies. Often students continue on for master’s and doctoral degrees. Many choose clinical areas such as physical therapy and physician’s assistant.

Q: What does nutrition encompass within the field of health and wellness?

A: Nutrition is one subject that assists our graduates when trying to improve the health of communities. Knowing basic nutrition enables them to educate clients about healthy lifestyles. For example, they can encourage community members to consume heart-healthy foods. Our students learn about the basic nutrients and specific nutritional concerns throughout the life cycle. Upon graduation, they’re prepared to provide general nutrition information to a variety of ages, potentially helping communities to reduce the risk of a multitude of nutrition-related health challenges.

Q: What are the key components of maintaining proper nutrition?

A: There are three keys to good nutrition are balance, variety and moderation. There is no such thing as good foods and bad foods when it comes to nutrition advice. All foods in moderation can fit into a well-balanced meal plan. By selecting a variety of foods one increases the chance of the nutrients required for good health. Individuals can uniquely apply these three factors to their food choices to successfully consume a healthy diet.

Q: What are the ramifications of poor nutrition?

A: Poor dietary intake is a risk factor for many of the chronic health conditions that afflict Americans today, including heart disease, hypertension (high blood pressure), stroke, obesity, diabetes and many types of cancer. Inappropriate nutritional choices also put one at risk of developing nutritional deficiencies, the most prevalent being iron deficiency anemia. A useful tool in making wise personal food choices is the food guide pyramid. For more information about this tool, go to www.mypyramid.gov.

Q: What is the connection between nutrition and proper weight?

A: Overeating and having a well-balanced diet, along with regular exercise, helps to maintain a healthy body weight. There is a center in the brain responsible for sending signals for hunger and satiety (fullness). External cues like large portion sizes in restaurants and college dining halls along with “all you can eat” buffets challenge individuals to heed these signals. It is difficult to listen to internal cues when surrounded by irresistible external cues.

Q: Do diets work? What weight loss advice do you give people?

A: In the case of weight control, the goal is to never become overweight by making wise food choices and exercising regularly throughout one’s life. Once an individual becomes overweight the recommendation is to eat less, exercise more and modify one’s behaviors for a lifetime. Making permanent behavior changes is the goal. Experts recommend that three changes be made slowly, step by step. The more gradual the changes, the more likely they’ll be permanent.

Q: What are the important nutrition issues for women?

A: Women have important gender specific nutrition-related health concerns. Females are high risk for developing iron-deficiency anemia and osteoporosis. Regularly consuming good dietary sources of iron and calcium decreases their risk of developing these health challenges. Entering pregnancy with adequate stores of folic acid and continuing to consume adequate amounts during the first trimester can reduce the risk of newborns having neural tube defects. Eating healthy is essential for women and their future offspring.

Q: What are your interests?

A: I practice what I preach by eating healthy and exercising regularly. I enjoy spending time with my daughter and husband, working in my organic garden, going to theater and dance performances, reading women’s novels, and hiking. I have hiked at Mt. Everest, backpacked in the Sierra’s, climbed Seneca Rocks, rafted and cased on the Youghiogheny, hiked in the rain forests of Costa Rica, and cycled solo across southern France with a tent and sleeping bag on my bicycle.

Marcy Leeds

Marcy Leeds has been teaching nutrition and health courses within the Community Health Program housed in the department of health and safety at Slippery Rock University for 22 years.

The three keys to good nutrition are balance, variety and moderation. There is no such thing as good foods and bad foods when it comes to nutrition advice. All foods in moderation can fit into a well-balanced meal plan. By selecting a variety of foods one increases the chance of the nutrients required for good health. Individuals can uniquely apply these three factors to their food choices to successfully consume a healthy diet.
A $7.5-million renovation to Boozel Dining Hall has transformed the student dining experience forever. The interior was totally redesigned to offer eight food courts, community seating, wireless access and made-to-order entrees of nearly every variety, including one of the first live-fire Brazilian Churrasco food stations on a college campus.

New furniture and a 2,000-square-foot lobby with glass atrium give Boozel a trendy vibe.

“This is really about the transformation of on-campus dining. We’re moving away from the typical cafeteria line to a food court approach,” said Debra Pincek, assistant to the vice president for student life.

The dining experience is more like a social event, especially with the technology. The food service areas are highlighted with five new LCD menu-message screens, and students use wireless service any time.”

Other new amenities include high-top bar tables with stools, diner-style countertops and 20,000 square feet of quarry and checkerboard floor tiles. Workers used colors such as Asian black, mister green jeans, mud pie and blue suede shoes.

Weisenfluh, the older campus dining facility, continues to offer lunches Monday-Friday but no breakfast or dinner. The C-Zone snack bar with bag-lunches, fresh program and grab-and-go, prepackaged meals remains open.

While most patrons are students on a food contract, both centers welcome guest diners. Costs for individual meals, which can be paid for by cash or RockDollar, vary for SRU faculty and staff and community residents. SRU rates are $4.10 for breakfast, $5.10 for brunch, $5.10 for lunch and $6.05 for dinner. Non-SRU patrons pay $5.55 for breakfast, $6.55 for brunch, $6.55 for lunch and $7.45 for dinner.

Renovated Boozel Dining Hall transforms culinary culture

We’re moving away from the typical cafeteria line to a food court approach,”
- Debra Pincek, assistant to the vice president for student life
I am 
The ROCK

Elaine Enfonde, ’90, environmental science
Senior environmental scientist at the law firm
Nixon Peabody LLP, Rochester, N.Y.

DAY JOB: I provide assistance to Nixon Peabody attorneys and clients on a broad range of environmental issues, including regulatory compliance, due diligence, renewable energy and sustainability practices.

MOONLIGHTING: I am active in community organizations that focus on environmental and social issues. Of particular interest to me is the local town’s environmental sustainability advisory council, which I am involved with. We provide recommendations to “green” town operations and development. Other activities include being a Genesee Land Trust volunteer and working with high school students to design a rain garden.

INFLUENCE OF SRU: SRU’s environmental sciences education helped me get where I am today. I learned by participating in research projects at industrial facilities as well as in the creeks and woodlands of Pennsylvania. My professors, classmates and environmental sciences alumni are passionate about finding solutions to our world’s environmental issues. Their examples continue to motivate me to learn new things, to share my knowledge and expertise and to contribute to the SRU Bobletz-Enfonde Scholarship.