Pennsylvania College of Technology students played a large role in the production of a Williamsport Symphony Orchestra television commercial that promoted a symphony performance in the fall.


“They really had their hands in almost every single department of the production,” said Carlos Saldivia, executive producer.

Saldivia, the owner and operator of First Contact in Williamsport, provided the work without charge to the WSO. The approximately 50 people in the crew also volunteered their work.

Many of the Penn College students who helped with the production are in the College’s Digital Media Editing class, taught by Bruce E. Huffman, instructor of media arts/video production. Others live near Saldivia in Williamsport.

The students who volunteered are: Tabitha K. Beaver, production (writing), New Columbia; Michael J. Blakeslee, production assistant, New Cumberland; Jean P. Chargois, lead editor, Annville; Matthew A. Demick, production assistant, Reston, Va.; Elke S. Geis, camera operator, Elsenfeld, Germany; Joseph C. Hersh, camera operator, Mountain Top; Andrea C. Herziger, camera operator, Donauwoerth, Germany; Jacob R. Hoover, editor, Williamsport; David N. Hull, camera operator, Annville; Brian E. Kehoe, production assistant, Jacobus; Asa E. Kelley, technical director, Jersey Shore; Daniel N. McKim, production assistant, Hanover; and Steven J. Morrison, production, Howard.

The commercial was shot at the Community Arts Center in two days and was produced – from the immediate pre-production planning to post-production editing – in two weeks. Penn College students executed all of the editing. “It’s really professional-grade. ... I can’t emphasize enough the absolute treasure the students were,” Saldivia said.

Penn College staff also volunteered to help with the production, including Jason M. Hopple, maitre d’hôtel at the College’s Le Jeune Chef Restaurant, who was in charge of food supply; Kevin W. Johnson, an environmental specialist who served as a production assistant; and Christopher J. Legarsi, a part-time lab assistant in media arts, who worked extensively on the project as producer. Huffman was the senior production consultant. The College also provided video and lighting equipment.
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As chief photojournalist for a TV station in a competitive market, Tim Hess works in a pressure-laden environment that demands long, unconventional hours and a willingness to place personal considerations on hold when news breaks.

He wouldn’t have it any other way. “In the news business, it’s not a job. It’s a way of life,” the Pennsylvania College of Technology alumnus said of the commitment required. “You’re on call 24-7, 365. You really are. It’s the business we’re in. Your personal life is second every day. It really is.”

Hess’ commitment, along with his ample talent and the contributions of co-workers on the WSLS Newschannel 10 team in Roanoke, Va., have earned him Emmy Awards the past two years from the Washington, D.C., chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

Hess, 28, has made quick strides in the TV-news business, but when he entered Penn College in Fall 1995, he had no idea where his career path might lead. Hess, who is from Berwick originally, heard about Penn College from a cousin, and he was immediately impressed with the College’s hands-on approach to education. He concedes that he arrived at his choice of a major in unconventional fashion. “I kind of threw my finger in a book and that (Broadcast Communications) is what I came up with,” he said.

Before earning his degree in May 1998, Hess had to juggle his studies with a 35-hour-a-week job, but he still found time to work at the College radio station as sports editor and later in an on-the-air capacity. While at the College, he also picked up some of the editing skills that serve him well today.

“The hands-on experience of actually doing it represents the best of Penn College,” he said. “It’s what really sets Penn College apart.”

After graduation, Hess had a brief foray in the radio business in Myrtle Beach, S.C., but didn’t enjoy it much. He also tried a couple of stints with a cable-advertising firm in the Williamsport area and another 24-hour commercial business. A supervisor there told Hess, “You don’t know how to run a camera.” Eventually, he headed back to Myrtle Beach, where he worked in a bar that was a favorite of employees for a local television station. Through that connection, he got his first job in TV photojournalism, despite having only one semester of video experience in school.

“Contacts are a big deal in the news business,” he explained. “That’s all I wanted – the chance to get my foot in the door.”

Hess honed his skills quickly at the station, WBTW-TV, shooting a variety of stories and logging many hours on the cameras and associated equipment. He said it’s probably the same at all small-market TV-news outlets. “It’s just constantly running,” he said. “You don’t get your lunches.”

Hess was gaining valuable experience, but the pay was not to his liking, and he was ready for a change. Again, networking led him to an employment opportunity. While
covering the Daytona 500 for WBTW, he met other TV crews, including some employees of WSLS. When a position became available at the Roanoke station, Hess sent a tape of his work. A month later, in August 2002, he was offered a job there.

WSLS is the nation’s 66th-largest market, and Hess soon was covering an area that stretches about four hours’ driving time from north to south and 3 1/2 hours from east to west. It encompasses southwest Virginia and includes Washington, D.C., and a portion of North Carolina. “It’s a huge area,” he said. “We’re pretty spread out here.”

The range of stories Hess has covered for the station is vast: everything from Virginia Tech football games and political rallies for the 2004 presidential candidates to the infamous D.C. Sniper shootings, hurricane-induced flooding and the crash of an F-15 fighter jet. Sometimes it means traveling outside the station’s normal viewing area if the story has widespread impact or appeal. “Our station really believes in sending you to where the story is,” he said. “If it’s big enough, we will go to it.”

Hess, who has been chief photojournalist at WSLS since August 2003, has met a slew of celebrities along the way – everyone from entertainers and NASCAR drivers to PGA golf pros. “You get to meet all kinds of people,” he said. “The best thing about this job is you get to do things and see things that most people will never get to do or see.”

Danger is often a part of the job, too. Hess and a reporter nearly became victims themselves when pursuing a flood story, and setting up his equipment and photographing the scene of one of the D.C. Sniper attacks when he didn’t know if the sniper was still lurking in the area made for some tense moments.

“Our job is about as dangerous as a police officer’s,” he said. “Our ‘weapon’ is our camera, and it’s the only thing we have. I can tell you the sniper (story) was the scariest thing I’ve ever been at in my life.”

Stories that have an impact on the lives of everyday people, though, are what interest Hess the most. He recalled one that involved a young girl who fell from a 60-foot cliff while hiking and defied the odds by surviving. “That’s really what it’s all about: telling someone else’s story and making it worthwhile to watch. ...It’s really about storytelling. It’s not about video,” he said, acknowledging his own preference for “feel-good” pieces.

Hess garnered Emmy Awards for stories he shot and edited in 2002 and 2003 about a “Bicycle Boot Camp” for bike-patrol police officers in Roanoke and the dangers of young children not being awakened by smoke alarms in time to escape injury or death in house fires.

In the 2002 “boot camp” piece, which won in the “News Series: Feature” category, Hess photographed reporter John Carlin as he participated in the grueling weeklong training sessions with the officers, who were not especially delighted to have the media documenting their struggles.

Hess and Carlin joined forces again in 2003 for “Getting Out Alive,” a feature that earned them the Emmy in the same category. Hess calls it “the best story I’ve ever done.” The piece demonstrated how perfectly functioning smoke detectors/alarms often won’t wake children because of their deeper sleep. Fake “training smoke” was used, which complicated the already problematic nighttime photography. The story featured the participation of two families and area firefighters.

In addition to shooting and editing the story, Hess was responsible for coordinating all the cameras that were needed. He is justifiably proud of the final product because of the potentially life-saving information it imparted to viewers. “That story is one that every person in the world needs to watch if they have kids,” he said.

Eventually, Hess hopes to use the skills he’s developed as chief photojournalist to land a job as a news director at a TV station. Having risen through the ranks, he reckons “I might be able to give them better perspective as a leader.”

He concedes he would miss working in the field, which frequently involves shooting all day before returning to the studio and having “one hour to make it happen.”

He adds, “You see a one-minute, 30-second story on the air; that’s eight hours’ work for us.”
Robert O. Rolley Jr. says his job – publishing a community newspaper – is a dream come true.

“People who know me know I’ve had my sights set on being a publisher for a long time,” Rolley said.

Publishing the paper from an office that overlooks Main Street in the town where he has lived for 15 years has made the job a blessing, he said. In 2001, Rolley was hired as publisher of The Express in Lock Haven, where he manages a staff of 45. The newspaper circulates to more than 10,000 readers in four counties.

Rolley spent the first 18 years of his career in the newsroom of the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, where he rose to the rank of news editor. He said a publisher’s job is similar to managing a newsroom, but has the added responsibility of revenue and finance.

“You’re the editor, advertising sales director and circulation manager all in one. … It’s all about solving problems,” he said. “You manage challenges inside the building, and you do the same for the community as a newspaper publisher.” He said a newspaper empowers a community to solve its problems by informing its members and offering a forum for differing opinions.

A Williamsport native, Rolley is a 1983 graduate of the former journalism program at the Penn College forerunner Williamsport Area Community College. But his degree and later job success were the result of his second time around at W.A.C.C.

Rolley first enrolled at the College as a business major after high-school graduation in 1979. “I’m not embarrassed to say that I was very immature,” he said, adding that he didn’t understand his responsibilities and quit after his first year.

He opted for having some spending money and a social life and took a job two blocks away from the College at Lubrikup. The company made gaskets, and the process involved powdered graphite. He left work every day covered in black dust.

“I would come out of that place unrecognizable,” Rolley said. He calls it the classic blue-collar job, one that was not for him. “The future demanded that, if I wanted to succeed in anything, I needed an education,” he said.

So he found a job at the Sun-Gazette driving a delivery truck, which he knew would have a flexible schedule to accommodate his college plans. He returned to W.A.C.C., where his first point of contact was Thomas M. McNally, a now-retired counselor and student ombudsman. McNally told Rolley that he would have to take a limited number of credits in his first year.

“I had to prove myself one class at a time that I deserved to be a student there. … They want good students. They want good citizens,” he said.

He credits McNally with setting the rules for his future efforts.

“I worked at the Sun-Gazette and at my grandmother’s sub shop in Newberry (in the west end of Williamsport) and went to school,”
Rolley said. “And I woke up. I began to understand the hard work it takes.”

He earned his way into the College’s journalism program, where he met instructor Anthony N. Cillo and became part of the Spotlight, the school’s student newspaper. The Spotlight was published from the basement of the Klump Academic Center, which housed both a darkroom and newsroom. Rolley was a staff writer and photographer and spent one semester as the photography editor.

“The basic fundamentals and teamwork that Tony taught fueled my desire,” Rolley said. “It opened up my understanding of what impact newspapers can have on a community, how it can breed understanding among people.”

Rolley said the paper, which covered the issues and events important to W.A.C.C., offered him real journalism experience. The students performed every step in the process of publishing the Spotlight – writing and editing stories, shooting and developing photos, designing pages and taking the package to Milton, where staffers watched the paper come off the printing press.

“It truly felt like a community newspaper. It was real life to me,” he said.

He says joining the staff of the Spotlight helped him to get an internship in the Sun-Gazette’s newsroom. “The editors were tough there, just like my adviser. It helped me understand what kind of responsibility you have when your name is on top of a story,” Rolley said.

He earned an associate’s degree from W.A.C.C. in 1983 and began working immediately as a full-time, general-assignment reporter for the Sun-Gazette. While there, he climbed to the rank of news editor. He wrote obituaries, covered political bodies and wrote investigative pieces. He remembers breaking a story on the awarding of a $1 billion contract by the U.S. Postal Service to a local company.

Still, he said: “Some of the most memorable stories I’ve written were not the ones on the front page. Really, really important issues were covered in education, road maintenance and zoning.”

Rolley takes pride in his ability as a newspaper publisher to empower people – those who become subjects of stories when they volunteer for public boards, and those he works with inside The Express.

“It’s a dream come true. I am blessed,” he said.

Publisher Robert O. Rolley Jr. looks over a copy of The Express with News Editor Lana Muthler, another graduate of the journalism program at W.A.C.C.
Dr. Daniel J. Doyle traveled to Egypt during the Fall 2003 semester to teach students about 17th- and 18th-century European intellectual history. But the Fulbright Scholar and professor of history at Pennsylvania College of Technology couldn’t leave his research specialty – visual media – at home.

“I was curious to see what the response would be from a primarily Arab audience,” explained Dr. Doyle, who delivered a report on dominant media images resulting from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks to a group of college students at the American Center in Alexandria, Egypt. “I wanted to have an Egyptian audience understand the propaganda to which people in the United States have been subjected and to understand that in light of the Iraqi war.”

One of 800 U.S. faculty and professionals chosen for a Fulbright Fellowship during the 2003-04 academic year, Dr. Doyle believes images pack a stronger emotional punch than written and spoken language because images convey a “reality” that often camouflages the truth behind visual media – the intent of the image maker and the technology at hand.

Collecting images on Sept. 11 and the ensuing six weeks from news Web sites, television networks, traditional publications and tabloids, Dr. Doyle discovered two patterns: highly charged imagery and an assumption of guilt.

“When asked where I was from and I said, ‘America,’ usually, the response was that they loved America, and America was ‘No. 1.’”

images – the planes flying into the World Trade Center and the collapse of the buildings were shown on some of the networks 30 times an hour on Sept. 11 – served as an emotional re-inoculation that heightened people’s sense of disorientation and made them more open to potential manipulation.”

Dr. Doyle, who plans to retire from his 38-year career at Penn College in May, says his presentation was well-received by the Arab audience.

“They saw very easily some of the manipulation that was going on, particularly in the collages and some of the language that was being used,” he recalled.

Thanks to the Internet, BBC World News on television and a weekly English newspaper, Dr. Doyle could monitor images of America’s latest conflict – the war in Iraq – during his three-month Egyptian stay. While the Iraqi situation and the broader war on terror have top-of-the-mind awareness among Egyptians, it is not the main focus of Middle Eastern media.

“The overriding issue is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and U.S. policy related to that,” he said. “The perception is that America is not supporting the Palestinians.”

Learning that “media lesson” was just one highlight for the past recipient of the College’s highest faculty honor, the Master Teacher Award.

“It was a great opportunity to live in another country, particularly a country as rich in history as Egypt, and to be in the Middle East at a time when so much attention is focused on that region of the world,” said Dr. Doyle. “The key for me was that the experience was a chance to learn.”

According to Veronica M. Muzic, the College’s vice president for academic affairs/provost, Dr. Doyle was the perfect choice for the prestigious Fulbright program, which has facilitated global educational exchanges since the late 1940s.

“As countless students throughout the years can attest, Dan is an exemplary teacher and scholar,” she said. “It’s difficult to imagine a better candidate to serve as an ambassador for the Penn College community and to bring his experiences abroad back to the classroom for the benefit of our students.”

Dr. Doyle received his most memorable lesson from the Egyptian people.

“I was told, and correctly so, that Egyptians are very warm and welcoming of people who are not from the country,” he said. “A smile or a simple wave went a long way. It would be responded to ten-fold. As we walked the streets of Alexandria,
sometimes individuals would walk by and simply say, ‘welcome’ to us. They knew we were outsiders. That was the greeting that we received.”

The friendly Egyptian nature that Dr. Doyle and his wife, Mary, experienced living in Alexandria, Egypt’s second-largest city and main port stretched along the Mediterranean Sea, contradicts the anti-American Arab stereotype fostered throughout the years by Hollywood depictions and media accounts.

“Stereotypes hurt that part of the world,” he observed. “People there are wonderful and very helpful. When asked where I was from and I said, ‘America,’ usually, the response was that they loved America, and America was ‘No. 1.’”

Dr. Doyle, who captured more than 1,000 digital images during his travels, ranks interacting with the Egyptian people as his favorite experience, which included cruising the Nile River and visiting the pyramids on the outskirts of Cairo, the temples of Luxor and the ancient tombs tucked in the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens.

“The people meant more to me than the famous sites and tourist areas,” he said.

“Early on, I was taking pictures of architecture, and an older man, seated next to the building I was photographing, wanted me to take a picture of him and who I assume was his grandson,” he said. “They beamed in the photo. I showed them the photo on my digital camera, and the man got up and motioned for me to sit in his chair.

“One day, I smiled and waved to a security guard by our apartment building. This continued for several weeks. During my last week there, the man gestured for me to sit in a chair. He gave me the cleaner chair. He embraced me when he found out I was leaving. In both cases, we never spoke a word. I didn’t know Arabic, and they didn’t know English.”

Dr. Doyle’s fond memories include Egyptians who spoke English – his students at Alexandria University.

“The students were very bright and very committed to learning,” he recalls. “They were not obsessed with time. At the end of the class, they wanted more!”

They also wanted more information about America.

“I had to counteract some of the misunderstandings they had because they believed that what they saw on (satellite) television and in the movies (high amounts of violence, gunplay and sexual promiscuity) was how life was here in the United States,” he said.

The students gave Dr. Doyle a rare look inside their lives during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month marked by daily fasting from sunrise to sunset. Dr. Doyle and his wife were the students’ guests of honor at ‘Id al-Fitr, a feast that signifies the end of Ramadan.

“An open expression of religious belief is fairly common in Egypt,” he said, “much more so than here in the United States. I had several interesting experiences in taxis in which I was asked whether I was a Christian. When I replied, ‘yes,’ it was received rather positively.”

When Dr. Doyle asked his Egyptian students what they wanted him to convey to their American counterparts, the answer was simple.

“They asked me to stress that Egyptians are a cultured people,” he said. “When thinking of Egypt, Americans tend to think of pyramids and sand, not the cultural history that existed long after the pyramids. Yes, those sights are amazing, but there is a rich society there today. The country has a long, rich history that extends well beyond the pharaohs to the present.”

Dr. Doyle says his experiences with the Egyptian people provide a lesson that all Americans can apply outside of the classroom for years to come.

“My hope,” he said, “is that we in the United States could be as welcoming to people who come from outside the United States as the Egyptian people were to my wife and to me.”
How I moved from journalism to public relations without losing my dignity

by Elaine J. (Helm) Lambert, ’79, director of college information and community relations

I vividly recall the advice posted above my adviser’s desk: “Lead. Follow. Or get the ---- out of the way.”

Thank you, Tony Cillo! As a former Williamsport Area Community College journalism instructor and adviser to the student newspaper, Cillo nurtured the development of many budding journalists, including me, with this call to action.

I loved getting behind the scenes at campus events. I loved interviewing administrators and faculty who could explain the reasons behind decisions to me, so that I could explain them to my fellow students. I never expected that campus news would continue to be an important part of my life more than 25 years after my graduation.

Like many of the College’s graduates, I was hired for my first postgraduation job – as a newspaper reporter – before I graduated from the community college.

This was the era of “All the President’s Men.” Inspired by reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, whose Watergate investigation led to the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon, investigative journalism was at its peak. I was in awe of the great investigative reporters, but after only a few short years, I knew that I was not destined to walk among them.

I interviewed Vietnam War refugees – a family of “boat people” who had escaped their ravaged homeland by traversing dangerous waters at night. After my initial news story was published, I wanted to follow the family’s progress. I hoped to share with readers what it would take for this family to overcome its trauma and make a new life in a new country. My editor was not interested. I was assigned to cover other stories. I never connected with the family again, but I never forgot them.

I investigated an accident in which an individual was seriously injured. Nearing deadline – with pressure to get the most up-to-date report on the victim’s condition into the daily edition – I harassed a hospital spokesperson via telephone until I could get the update I needed. While pressing for answers, I forgot that a life was hanging in the balance. I still remember the dismay I felt when I realized how off-balance my perspective had become.

Finally, I accepted that I was not meant to be a great investigative reporter. I could not find the right balance between connecting with my subjects and maintaining an appropriate distance in order to be an objective, unbiased journalist.

When my alma mater announced an opening in its communications department, I saw an opportunity to connect my skills with people and subjects that I cared about very deeply. First as a clerk and eventually as director, I used my journalism background as a foundation upon which I added more layers: publications management, advertising, public relations and marketing.

But it was the experience of being a working journalist that taught me what I most needed to
know. I learned to work fast and be accurate. I learned to sift the core truth out of long meetings and conversations. I learned that my words could lift someone up or tear them down. I learned that integrity matters.

In my heart, I remain a working journalist. I am content to serve in a public-relations capacity because the mission of my employer is so close to my heart. In my own life and in the lives of students that I have met over two decades at this institution, I have seen the College’s impact on individuals and the community. This is a cause I am proud to represent – and for me, believing in what one represents is the first key to success in public relations.

I may be biased by personal experience, but I believe that the most successful public-relations and marketing efforts are based in good journalism. Straight truth always trumps fiction or exaggeration. The truth – especially as presented in the testimony of students and alumni whose lives have been enriched by their Penn College experiences – is the most effective message that we use to promote Penn College. I believe there is dignity in sharing this truth.

Students who ask my advice when preparing for a career in public relations are surprised when I tell them to focus on the basics of good journalism and be prepared to stay off center stage. Somehow, they perceive that “PR” is smooth talking, socializing and salesmanship. I do my best to convince them that a good public-relations professional looks for a story that is worth telling, and helps the people involved to tell the facts of that story most effectively.

Like a good journalist, a good public-relations person does not insert herself into the story. I read that advice when I was in college, too: “No one gives a ---- about you, you are not the story.”

Thank you, Dan Rather! This quotation from your 1970s autobiography “The Camera Never Blinks” still reverberates in my brain when I am tempted to let things get too personal.

Yes, Mr. Rather, I’m hearing you now!

“I never expected that campus news would continue to be an important part of my life more than 25 years after my graduation.”

Want to Be Happy & Successful in Public Relations?

1. Believe in the people and the products you represent.
2. Always be prepared to represent your organization to the public and to represent a public perspective to your organization.
3. Listen carefully before you speak; it is far more important to listen well than to be a great speaker.
4. Don’t crave the spotlight; be willing to hand off your ideas to others and to step back while they receive the credit.
5. Don’t hype or spin a worthless story; look for a story that is worth telling, and let the facts and the people involved speak for themselves.
6. Read. Read the newspaper – not only local, but one(s) with a national perspective. Read materials that represent various political viewpoints. Read what opposing voices have to say about the people, services and products you represent. Read opinion columns. Read biographies of successful people. Read industry publications. Your organization needs you to be a knowledgeable person; you become knowledgeable by reading as much as you can.
7. If you want to be credible, be correct. Don’t assume that you know the answer to the question or the spelling of the person’s name or their title or the name of their organization, etc. Always check sources for verification and confirm information. Check the facts whether you are writing a press release or a simple business letter.
8. Use the dictionary (not just spell check). Use a style guide (such as The Associated Press Stylebook). Pay attention to your grammar, punctuation, etc.
9. Keep up with technology. Technology influences communication. You must know how to use the media that people use to get information. Don’t be content to know just one medium; learn about others (print, broadcast, Web, direct mail, etc.)
10. Make time for a personal life. Your position will be stressful. You will face deadlines, problems and the pressure of dealing with difficult people on a regular basis. If you become totally caught up in your work, you will lose perspective and you will burn out. No organization wants a “burnout” serving its PR needs.

Elaine J. Lambert
Publicity’s Glow
Spotlights Student-Focused Mission

by Tom Wilson, writer/editor

“The true art of memory is the art of attention,” wrote the oft-quoted Samuel Johnson, and Pennsylvania College of Technology and its predecessors have found an attentive audience all along their memorable timeline. From its earliest days to the Internet age, the College’s homegrown formula for teaching and learning has consistently provided the fodder for widespread and respectful recognition.

Our students and alumni make for credible ambassadors wherever their travels and careers take them, and faculty/staff and administration have brought considerable esteem through their endeavors. But attention from a national publication or a global audience can go a long way toward taking a success story out of the shadows of its rural roots.

“Historically, the institution has enjoyed a reputation far beyond its local region,” noted Elaine J. Lambert, director of college information and community relations. “During the days of Williamsport Technical Institute, the nation knew of us through the popular ‘Williamsport Plan,’ which trained unemployed individuals to fill specific workforce needs – one person and one job at a time.

“As a community college, we drew national attention with a curriculum that focused on emerging technologies, in addition to the more traditional college transfer programs. Now, as a Penn State affiliate, we continue to stand apart from the crowd with our focus on applied technology in more than 100 different career fields.

“Continuing to expand our national reputation is very important to our future. Our strategic vision for this decade includes increasing out-of-state enrollment. We are working toward doubling our current enrollment of out-of-state students to reach 15 percent of our total population by 2009. In order to reach that goal, we must continue to make audiences outside of Pennsylvania aware of Penn College and its wide range of ‘degrees that work.’”

Here, then, are a few high points along the continuing journey from local success to international acclaim:

Industrial-Strength Publication

The practicality of vocational education – providing the hands-on background needed for the lion’s share of the day’s available jobs – was applauded in “Industry Beckons Youth,” an article by Webb Waldron in the November 1940 issue of Reader’s Digest. The magazine piece, reprinted to wider circulation from that month’s Woman’s Day, profiled George H. Parkes (W.T.I.’s first president) and his innovative “Williamsport Plan” to keep America working.

“A man wanting all-round machine-shop training may come to school four hours a day for a year; a man aiming at electric welding may become proficient in a few weeks,” the author noted. “Parkes promises a job to every student who follows his directions – a thing no other vocational school has dared do.”

Eye on Penn College

Two Penn College students were profiled in an early November 1993 edition of the “CBS Evening News.” The students, who enrolled at the College after losing their jobs when C.A. Reed’s Williamsport factory closed, were the centerpiece for an “Eye on America” feature.

In mid-September of that year, a CBS crew – including national correspondent Wyatt Andrews – visited the College for two days. The team followed the students in their classes and visited their homes, as well as the College’s industrial and engineering area, to offer the institution as a shining example of how retraining programs can work.

A “Red”-Letter Month

Sharon Waters, director of counseling, career and disability services, was included in a December 1998 Redbook article about “Mommy strategies.” The piece shared the perspective of a number of women in switching gears from work outside the home to “mommy duty” upon their return.

Don’t Touch That Dial!

The College’s public-affairs series “Penn College & You” has enjoyed the national spotlight for several years. In 2004-05, it is distributed cross country to all DISH Network satellite subscribers, who can watch the series on the Universityhouse Channel. Additionally, the series is carried by approximately 45 cable and broadcast outlets in 17 states. In all, the series potentially reaches over 16 million television households.
Since going national in the winter of 2001, the College’s cooking series “You’re the Chef” has aired about 3,900 times over 101 public-television stations covering 30 states and 50 million television households. Outside the continental United States, the series has aired in Alaska, Puerto Rico, Guam, Canada and Japan.

CBS Radio also has featured Penn College in notable broadcasts:

- November 2002 – Veronica M. Muzic, vice president for academic affairs/provost, discusses the “SMART Girls” program that encourages young women to consider careers in the sciences
- December 2002 – Suzann L. Major, assistant professor of hospitality management/culinary arts, talks about the “chocolate house” auction to benefit Habitat for Humanity
- October 2003 – A participant in an annual Career Day event, in which high-school students power race cars with a mousetrap spring, talks about that experience

“You’re the Chef” also was featured in an Associated Press article about its national syndication in July 2001 that was carried by too many newspapers to count – and on CNN and MSNBC’s Web sites – under headlines that playfully mocked “finicky” co-host Tom Speicher and celebrated the show’s “average Joe” appeal.

The AP returned to main campus in September 2002 to interview several students who received Ben Franklin/Williamsport-Lycoming Foundation scholarships. That article received broad publication in newspapers and on high-profile news sites on the Internet.

No Present Like “The Times”

Penn College was featured in The New York Times Magazine among “Great Places to Learn in Pennsylvania + Virginia,” published in September 2002. The article included the College among the “larger, technologically innovative schools such as Carnegie Mellon University.”

High Marks in a High Ranking

Nationwide, the reputation of Penn College was enhanced further by its first appearance in “America’s Best Colleges,” published by U.S. News and World Report, in 2003, when the College was one of only two public Pennsylvania institutions ranked in the second tier of comprehensive colleges offering bachelor’s degrees in the nation’s North region.

A Three-Hitter in USA Today

In recent years, USA Today has featured Penn College in articles related to:

- A partnership with Susquehanna Health System to help students pay tuition and find employment upon graduation
- The mass appeal of “You’re the Chef”
- The success of distance-learning programs in allowing working adults to complete their bachelor-degree requirements online

A Garden Spot

Not all national media exposure has been in the broadcast or news media, however. One of Penn College’s most endearing landmarks is featured in David Schiff’s recently published book, “Building the Perfect Gazebo.” A step-by-step construction guide, the book includes two photos of the gazebo, a beautifully contemplative spot adjacent to the student-designed-and-built Victorian House.

“…we must continue to make audiences outside of Pennsylvania aware of Penn College and its wide range of degrees that work.”

Dan Lewerenz, The Associated Press’ reporter from the State College Bureau (in blue shirt), interviews Tanya J. Budman of Allenwood, now a Civil Engineering Technology major, during a September 2002 visit to campus.
As Radio Evolves, College Fine-Tunes Training

The protagonist of John Updike’s quartet of novels chronicling American life in the last half of the 20th century wouldn’t need to be concerned about the lonely overnight radio disc jockey today. In all likelihood, anything heard now would be voice-tracked, recorded earlier at a more convenient time to sound live when it airs.

The overnight studio – and, increasingly, multiple studios during the day – is now run by a computer. God may not be bored just yet, but he clearly has fewer live DJs to check in on.

Voice-tracking is just one example of the rather dramatic changes that the radio industry has undergone in the past decade. Since the 1996 Telecommunications Act, consolidation and efficiency have been the sine qua non of the field that was once known more for its local quirks and personalities. That legislation took the limits off the number of stations one company could own nationwide, raised those limits significantly in local markets and forever changed radio’s relationship to its audience.

This “Clear Channelization” of radio has been well-documented. The company has been a lightning rod of sorts for various protests and movements against the alleged evils of consolidation – from a purported “Do Not Play” list of songs following Sept. 11, to its domination of the concert-promotion business to its owners’ political contributions. And while Congress and the courts are currently re-evaluating the fallout, if not the wisdom, of consolidation, don’t expect a return to the days of mom-and-pop radio stations anytime soon.

For both broadcasters and critics of today’s radio, localism is the buzzword, the issue around which the industry’s future is focused. Depending on your perspective, how stations are serving the public is either radio’s saving grace or prima facie evidence for the Federal Communications Commission to begin revoking licenses.

“Localism is the buzzword, the issue around which the industry’s future is focused.”

The National Association of Broadcasters, the powerful industry lobbying group, argues that despite industrywide consolidation, broadcasters are unique in their ability to serve their local communities. As evidence, the NAB cites broadcasters’ contributions of millions of dollars’ worth of public-service announcements, local election coverage and community-service projects.

But critics point to the homogenous-sounding music playlists, the heavy commercial spot loads, the greater use of syndicated formats and programming, and the overall lack of creativity and initiative as evidence that radio has lost its local way. Stories of emergencies unfolding while radio stations cruised along on automatic pilot, phones unanswered, don’t help.

Add to the mix satellite radio, which is now offering commercial broadcasters competition for listeners’ time and dollars. At the end of 2004, the two satellite services, XM and Sirius, had a total of more than 3 million paying subscribers. Defections from terrestrial radio, including National Public Radio’s Bob Edwards and Viacom’s Howard Stern in 2006, have given satcasters a new energy and legitimacy.

The technological and ownership revolution in radio has, of course, brought challenges for academic programs that train students for careers in the field. At one time, college and university students were the equivalent of baseball’s rookie leagues for commercial radio stations, supplying a regular flow of eager workers to fill overnight and weekend shifts. With the increased reliance on automation systems, however, the need to fill those slots with part-timers has receded. Today, to get their proverbial foot in the door, students must be willing to accept positions that may not mean immediate on-air work, for example, running the console for local football games or setting up remote broadcasts. Tom Scott, a 1982 graduate of Williamsport Area Community College and the program director and operations manager of Clear Channel’s Williamsport cluster,
acknowledges that consolidation has made students’ career paths more challenging. But he sees an upside to the tighter part-time job market.

“It really shakes out the talent,” he says. “You really find the people who truly want to work and just don’t want to play radio. They really want it. You find the ones who are willing to do almost anything are the ones who are going to stick it out.”

To refine their air work, students must rely more on their college media experience. In other words, it means staying on the “farm team,” as Scott calls it, for a little more seasoning. The career path is still there; it simply doesn’t move quite as seamlessly between commercial and college radio as it once did.

The Mass Media Communication major at Penn College has adapted to the reality of a radio field that is starkly different from the one that existed when the College’s radio station, known then as WWAS, first went on the air in 1980. In the past year, we have introduced a new curriculum that sharpens the focus of the radio courses while increasing the number of video offerings. We also have added a video-production facility and full-time instructor. Our goal in this revision is to give students more technical skills across formats.

We also continue to encourage students to get as much practical experience as possible, both in college radio and at the commercial outlets. Students have successfully interned and held part-time paid positions at both local radio-station clusters, Clear Channel and Backyard Broadcasting, and at a number of stations in students’ hometowns, as well.

As Clear Channel’s Scott sees it, students are increasingly recognizing the need for that experience beyond the classroom. “Their eyes are open a little bit wider now,” he says. “They understand that things are different. They know that there really aren’t that many opportunities, and they need to make the best of the ones that they can find.”

Finally, the College has made a commitment to supporting the curriculum with the best possible equipment so that students have the technical training that commercial stations desire. WPTC, as the College station is now known, recently installed a new automation system that uses the same voice-tracking technology that has made breaking into the commercial job market more challenging. Instead of airing satellite-fed music overnight, we now generate our own programming from 1 to 7 a.m. between the live portions of the broadcast day. That gives students solid training for commercial radio while providing the station with a programming consistency it never had. And that’s important, because you never know who might be listening.  

Mass Media Communication students Asa E. Kelley and Rachel Foist practice their on-the-air skills at WPTC.
Alumna Sees Newspapers as ‘Force for Positive Change’

by L. Lee Janssen, ’82, news editor, Williamsport Sun-Gazette

Editor’s Note: Janssen received an associate’s degree in Journalism from the former Williamsport Area Community College. She joined the Williamsport Sun-Gazette in 1984 after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

It’s Saturday morning, and only a skeleton crew is slated to work tonight. But across northcentral Pennsylvania, rains from Tropical Storm Ivan have creeks over their banks, and the river is rising fast. Communities are cut off from one another as the raging waters spill across roadways and a state of emergency is declared.

Most people’s first priority is to take care of their homes and families, but not for those of us in the media. To me and anyone else within easy reach, this becomes just another day at the office (and out in the mess taking pictures and collecting information for news reports), even if it is supposed to be a scheduled day off.

The news doesn’t care about the clock, after all. It happens when it happens, at its own pace, regardless of your perceived ability to keep up. But one thing is for certain: Life inside the walls of a newspaper is never boring. In my 20 years at the Williamsport Sun-Gazette, I’ve gone from reporting the news to coordinating it in my role as news editor, a position I’ve held for nearly three years.

Every day is new. You wake up and don’t know what has or will transpire in the 24 hours since midnight last when the presses rolled until midnight tonight when they roll again. Maybe nothing, though that is a rarity, in which case you better be ready to punt. Maybe everything, history is in the making, and somebody has to document it from as many angles and points of view as possible.

Who knew how the day would go at 8 a.m. Sept. 11, 2001? An hour later, the routine beats we cover daily...
and day out at the newspaper didn’t seem as relevant as the state of our nation and our loved ones in cities under attack. That story took precedence, and people were sent out into various corners of the community to document the initial response locally and then to continue to tell the story of how people here could help and would help out in the days and weeks to follow.

All the while juggling, of course, the local news of the day. Keeping up with the schools and municipalities, the crime, the tragedies, the politics that always are playing out around us. And looking for inspiration and uplifting stories to balance out the portrait of life in our region.

And while we journalists are quick to jump on the story, I find myself in the position of having to stop and think through the best way to attack it ... how to deploy staff in a manner to get the most complete story possible while still covering everything else that is going on in the community.

Some stories are too big for just one or two people to tell. Some stories require staffers from across the board to dive in. That was the case eight years ago, when TWA Flight 800 exploded over Long Island, N.Y., with 21 people from Montoursville aboard. Still a reporter at the time, I was amazed at how it took every person in the newsroom to tell the stories of each of the victims and to cover the ensuing tragedy amid the chaos created when the national media descended on the borough.

While our coverage won the staff statewide awards, the heaviness of telling this particular story – maybe it’s the mother in me who grieved for the families of 16 children who wanted nothing more than to try out their French studies during a trip abroad – greatly overshadowed any achievement for a job well done.

Some stories are like that. They are important to tell, and you have to go into some highly emotional situations with a great deal of sensitivity to get the job done. Setting aside personal feelings can be difficult, but it’s vital to doing this type of work. Sometimes you meet some truly despicable characters, but keeping an open mind as they tell their side of the story is a must. Then you lay it out and let the readers decide. It helps that I’ve been on both sides, reporting and editing, so I know what I am asking of people when I send them out into some uncertain situations.

Such has been the case in recent months when this county encountered a string of fatal domestic-violence episodes. It’s one thing to cover one such story, but then a second that same week and a third a few weeks later ... being so close to breaking news can numb a person, and having too much news of this nature can overwhelm those who are assigned to tell the story.

Fortunately, there are many other stories out there, many that could be classified as “positive news,” though they don’t seem to stick in the minds of readers as long as the more negative, some would say sensational, news.

While many people read the stories about the actual acts of domestic violence, I have to wonder how many will have paid attention to the weeklong series intended to raise awareness about this issue. We take a lot of criticism for reporting reality, and we try to follow it up with responsible reporting on the issues at hand, but that doesn’t seem to get as much notice as the horrific scenes that played out days earlier. Even if it’s placed on Page One. To hear some people tell it, you would think those of us who work in the media are immune to such harshness, that we’re in it for the grisly details, yet that’s about as far from the truth as it goes.
We live and work in the communities we cover, and though we do our best to separate our personal feelings from the stories we pursue, we still have to care about what goes on. It’s our community, too, so when we see dangerous trends developing and raise the red flag, it’s not because we want to paint a “negative” picture. Rather, it’s because we want to be a force for positive change.

To that end, this work can be very rewarding. It’s stressful, yes, and it’s anything but routine. It may be Friday night and the weekend is here, but when flood waters rise, so much for any plans for the time off. The stories must be told now, and for the vast majority of us, we are only too happy to report for work at whatever odd hour it may be to do just that.

The Education of a Journalist

Though I am known casually as Laura, my byline, L. Lee Janssen, first appeared in the Spotlight, the student newspaper of the former Williamsport Area Community College, while I was a student there from 1980-82. Fresh out of a four-year enlistment in the Air Force and in the midst of a divorce, I enrolled in the College’s journalism program out of a need to support my children. The GI Bill made it possible. Dana was 2 months old, and Christopher was 2 years old when I sat in my first class that fall.

The College, I must say, was instrumental in giving me the confidence I needed to be successful not only in a field of work, but as the primary source of support and guidance for my very young sons. Though it surprises most people who know me now, back then I suffered from a very low self-esteem, considered myself shy and had only one driving motivation: taking care of my offspring and being able to do right by them.

I credit many of the instructors and professors I had at the college for helping me to grow beyond that frame of mind. The late Dr. Peter B. Dumanis, who was an inspiration to just about everyone he touched, is chief among them. I’ll never forget the validation he gave me when I wrote my first English Comp I paper. When he handed back my graded paper, he made a nice comment, though I don’t remember specifically what it was. But what I do remember is the look he gave me – he looked at me genuinely, like a real person with something to offer, something I really wasn’t used to at that time in my life.

But that’s just one instructor ... there were many who inspired me and instilled a confidence previously unknown to me, and though they may no longer remember me, just one of thousands of students with whom they have had contact over decades of teaching, I will long remember them with much esteem, fondness and admiration.

Back to the byline. Tony Cillo was the journalism instructor at the time. Actually, he was the whole department, teaching every class that dealt directly with any topic related to newspapers. And I must credit him with giving me the education I needed to step into a newspaper job even before I went on to get my bachelor’s degree at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. In fact, every credit transferred, and the only course required of my major at IUP that I didn’t have from W.A.C.C. was Introduction to Communications.

One requirement of the program at W.A.C.C. was to be involved in the student newspaper, and that kept me quite busy. As a full-time student and a double-time parent, I split my attentions between my studies and my children, whose father, meanwhile, had dropped from the radar screen. Any time spent away from them was in my new role as “father,” and my middle name with its masculine spelling somehow seemed oddly appropriate. Plus I liked the way it looked typographically.

Now the young ones are grown and pursuing their own dreams. Besides an empty nest, I’m left with the byline and a career that is satisfying. Thank you, W.A.C.C., for starting me down this path!

L. Lee Janssen
Raymond R. Remener, toolmaking technology, said he was able to get a job in the trade even before completing the course. He is retired and resides in Montoursville.

Gary W. Harrier, mechanical drafting, retired from PennDOT in 2003 after 38 years as a contract management scheduling and estimating engineer. Harrier, who resides in Woodland, also retired in 2000, after 25 years of service, from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

Dennis J. Ault, business management, received his bachelor’s degree in business administration from The Pennsylvania State University in 1968. Ault, who resides in Montoursville, is retired.

Ronald L. Kuzmovich, graphic arts, retired after 30 years in the printing industry. He lives in Clarion and is director of elections for Clarion County.

Nels L. Malloy, liberal arts, is a corrections officer at Clearfield County Prison and resides in Winburne.

Ronald F. Moore, diesel technology, is transportation supervisor for PPL Electric Utilities. He lives in Scranton and serves on the curriculum advisory board for automotive and diesel-truck degree courses at Johnson College.

Gary Stormer, broadcasting, owns and operates his own advertising agency. Previously, he worked more than 25 years in radio. He resides in Reynoldsville.

Brad K. Gindlesperger, electrical construction, is superintendent for I.B.E.W. Local Union #5 and works for Miller Electric. He resides in Johnstown.

Sharon Louise Trexler McCabe, practical nursing, graduated with an associate’s degree in nursing from Kilgore College in 1996. She is director of staff development and employee health nurse at Valley View Nursing Center and resides in Trout Run.

Bill Ladd, architectural technology, owns and operates a campground in Vermont, close to the Canadian border. He resides in Derby, Vt., where he serves on the zoning and planning boards.

Michael Joseph McNamara, floriculture, is a horticulturist for Due Process Stable & Golf Course and resides in Toms River, N.J.

Robert Eric Day, forest technology, resides in Claymont, Del. He is sales/service coordinator and certified arborist for Davey Tree Expert Co. Day is responsible for maintaining the health of landscape plants on commercial, residential and state properties.

Denise Henrichs Villines, accounting, is office manager/accountant at M&M Auto Repairs Inc. and resides in Kissimmee, Fla.

Donald Petroski, building construction technology, has more than 22 years' experience in the transportation industry and is an account executive at NEMF, the largest LTL carrier in the Northeast region. He lives in Pasadena, Md., and has been involved with coaching youth-league baseball and basketball.

Allen B. Chubb Jr., construction carpentry, is owner of Allen B. Chubb Jr. Insurance Agency and resides in Elizabethville. Chubb is a retired lieutenant colonel from the U.S. Army Special Forces, and a member of 13 U.S. National Shooting Teams and the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Teams.

Brian McGuigan, service and operation of heavy equipment, resides in Pierre Part, La., and is a field service technician for Louisiana Lift & Equipment Inc.

Rebecca Lynne Orr, independent studies, continued her education studies at West Chester University. Orr, who resides in South Renovo, is an American Poetry Association member. She had a poem published in “Anthology” in 1992.

David William Stanley, radiography, received a bachelor’s degree in biology from Oral Roberts University in 1987. He lives in Proctor, Minn., and is an advanced MRI applications/research specialist for General Electric Healthcare Technologies.

Mark Stephen Nicholas, accounting, is employed at Schneider-Valley Farms Dairy Inc. Previously, he worked for eight years at Turbotville National Bank. Nicholas, who resides in Muncy, is past president of the Turbotville Lions Club and served on Turbotville Borough Council as vice president.

Lisa Moyer Weiser, business management, is a fiscal assistant at SUM Child Development Inc. and resides in Mifflinburg.

Stephen H. Matson, welding, is a welding and pipingfitting foreman for S&R King Mechanical Contractors and resides in Corning, N.Y.

Stephen Budd, general studies, received a bachelor’s degree in education from Lock Haven University in 1987 and is a literature teacher at Rosarian Academy in Florida. Budd, who resides in Boynton Beach, Fla., authored the book “Life is a Journey, Not a Guided Tour” and was the recipient of Congress’ 2003 National Leadership Award.

George H. Shaffer Jr., construction carpentry, worked for several construction contractors before starting Shaffer’s Masonry in Sunbury, where he resides, in 2004. He worked on several masonry projects at Penn College after graduation.

Elizabeth Hitchens, human services, is retired and lives in Claymont, Del.

Stewart Merritts Jr., construction carpentry, continued his education at West Virginia University. He received a bachelor’s degree in physical education in 1993 and a master’s degree in safety and environmental management in 1994. Merritts is employed by Washington Group International Inc. as a safety/chemical coordinator and resides in Mechanicsburg.

Dennis W. Renaud Jr., aviation technology, is crew chief for American Airlines and resides in Owasso, Okla.

Paula Scarcelli Barta, computer information systems, received a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from Temple University in 1993. She is a database manager at La Salle University and resides in Philadelphia.

David Charles Norwood, construction technology, is construction coordinator at County of Chester-Department of Community Development. He lives in Coatesville.

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Retired Faculty/Staff Member’s Artistry Featured on Notecards

Sets of notecards produced from watercolors painted by an alumnus and retired faculty/staff member at Pennsylvania College of Technology are available for purchase at The College Store.

The four watercolor scenes – of the Klump Academic Center, the Breuder Advanced Technology and Health Sciences Center, the Victorian House, and the Student and Administrative Services Center – were painted by Frederick T. Gilmour III.

Gilmour, who retired in 2001 after 20 years at the College, had been director of instructional technology and distance learning, an assistant professor of advertising art, and executive director of the Penn College Foundation. He painted the scenes for the notecard project as a donation to the Foundation. The boxed set contains two notecards of each scene. The cost for the set is $10, with all proceeds earmarked for the Student Scholarship Fund.

Gilmour, who was trained as a technical illustrator at Penn College forerunner Williamsport Technical Institute, relied upon the precision techniques he learned there to complete the watercolors for the notecard project. While Gilmour was attending W.T.I., another Penn College predecessor (Williamsport Area Community College) was established. He earned a certificate in Technical Illustration from W.A.C.C. and returned to earn an associate’s degree. He then earned a bachelor’s degree in Art Education from Mansfield University. Gilmour taught Advertising Art at Penn College part-time for a number of years while administering the Instructional Technology/Distance Learning program. He holds “professor emeritus” status at the College.

This is not the first time Gilmour has used his ample artistic talents to benefit the institution. He designed the College’s original official seal when it was established as Williamsport Area Community College in 1965, the College mace, the first College catalog cover, the masthead of the first newspaper the College published, and the large sculptural piece in the courtyard of the library. He also volunteered to redesign the seal when Penn College was established as a Penn State affiliate in 1989.

“Donating my talent is my way of helping to further the work of the institution,” he said. “The notion of being able to give the art to the College and help it gain a secondary advantage through the sale of the cards – which benefit the Foundation and, in turn, students – at the same time those who purchase them get to enjoy the art, or remember a campus visit or a past class experience, is a win-win-win.”

Paramedic Lab Opens in Renovated Academic Center

This fall, Pennsylvania College of Technology’s paramedic program moved to its new, permanent home in the renovated Klump Academic Center.

The new paramedic lab includes a crash car, an ambulance and emergency-room booths to help students practice in realistic simulations. The lab also features a designated classroom for the program.

Penn College purchased a used ambulance for the lab last year. Robert C. Karschner Jr., master mechanic for the College, cut the ambulance in half in preparation for a crane to lift it over a three-story building and lower it into the basement of the Academic Center. Karschner completed reassembly of the ambulance box to include operational lights and sirens. The chassis and cab were converted for use as a dump truck by the College.

The crash car is the passenger compartment of a compact car – the trunk and engine compartments have been removed – placed on a rotisserie device that will allow instructors to tilt the vehicle as if it were on its side. Students will practice extricating people from the car, which has a removable roof. Bambi A. Hawkins, interim director for the paramedic program, said she will start by placing mannequins in the crash car, but the rotisserie device should allow for practice with people, as well.

“We run a lot of scenarios that we try to make as realistic as possible,” Hawkins said. “We can take patients out of the car, put them into the ambulance and then move them to the emergency-room booth, all in the same lab.”

Stephen T. Duna, instructor of collision repair at the College, painted the car, and Alfred M. Thomas II, associate professor and department head for collision repair, cut out decals to be applied to both the ambulance and the car.

A “crash car” and an operational ambulance box are among the state-of-the-art learning tools in the new paramedic lab at the Klump Academic Center.
Student’s Device Speeds Perfume-Manufacturing Process

With his senior project, a Pennsylvania College of Technology student proved he could create an electronic process for bottling perfume that large companies, including French manufacturer Chanel, didn’t believe could be accomplished.

Chad E. Wagner of Williamsport, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Electronics Engineering Technology, created a control device that will allow metal valves on the tops of perfume bottles to be squeezed closed – or “crimped” – while moving along a conveyor belt.

His stepfather, Rich Caswell, owns Caswell Machine Works in Leeper, which designs the machinery to crimp the tops of bottles for perfume, cosmetic and pharmaceutical companies around the world. Some of his clients include Chanel and Avon. Typically, Wagner explained, Caswell’s clients buy the crimping machinery and create their own software to make it run as part of their production line. But Caswell asked Wagner to create a working display that would allow him to show clients how his equipment operates.

Wagner worked at Caswell Machine Works during the summer as a Cooperative Education experience. He engineered both the hardware – switches and sensors – and the software to make the automated system work. The software was developed for a programmable logic controller or PLC.

At many factories, a machine stops the bottle and checks to make sure it is full before crimping the valve to the top, but both Wagner and Caswell believed that machines should be able to crimp the valve without stopping the process. Wagner said this requires less time and fewer moving parts. “Chanel didn’t believe it could be done,” Wagner said. He said the company hadn’t implemented such a system on its own because as a conveyor belt ages, it sometimes moves slower, which would mean the timing of the crimping device – which lowers to meet each bottle – would be wrong, and some bottles could be missed. Increasing the number of bottles on the belt at one time could have the same slowing effect.

But Wagner developed an optical encoder that determines the speed of the conveyor belt, so no matter what speed the belt is traveling, the crimper can crimp every bottle. It is one of three sensors on his system. The second sensor determines whether the bottle is full as it travels past. If a bottle is not full, it is not crimped and is retrieved later from the production line. This saves the atomizer – a relatively expensive part. The third sensor tells the machine that the bottle has arrived, and it is time to lower the crimper.

“The co-op was a great deal,” Wagner said of being able to create a device that is useful in a real industry. “If I went to work for Chanel, I would do the exact same thing.”

‘Parent Career Fair’ Offered for Middle-School Parents

It’s never too early to begin exploring career possibilities for children, and parents of middle-school students enjoyed a unique opportunity when Pennsylvania College of Technology offered a “Parent Career Fair” on Oct. 21.

The event, which was held from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Field House on the main campus, was designed to help parents become involved in their children’s career choices. It helped parents encourage their children to consider a wide variety of professions and focus on ways that education can help them achieve their career goals.

Representatives of employers who were at the College earlier in the day for a Career Expo event for current Penn College students and alumni were invited to participate. Each of the eight academic schools at Penn College – Business and Computer Technologies, Construction and Design Technologies, Health Sciences, Hospitality, Industrial and Engineering Technologies, Integrated Studies, Natural Resources Management, and Transportation Technology – offered displays and made faculty and staff available to discuss career opportunities.

Additional displays addressed the importance of math, English, writing and reading skills in college and in the workforce. A table staffed by representatives from the Counseling and Career Services Center at Penn College featured a PowerPoint presentation and information on high-demand career fields, as well as professions that students may not have considered previously.

Another display highlighted the SMART Girls (Science and Math Applications in Real-World Technologies for Girls) initiative at the College, which addresses the gender gap in technology employment by exposing middle- and high-school students to career options in emerging technologies while strengthening their foundation in math and the sciences.

Free refreshments were offered at tables staffed by School of Hospitality students, who prepared the food and were available to answer questions about the training and education required in their profession.
Linda S. Ranck, accounting, is a bursar services specialist at Bucknell University and resides in Watsontown.

Keith Steven Cavanaugh, HVAC technology, resides in Lewisberry and is an HVAC technician at H.B. Reese Candy Co. He also completed the four-year apprenticeship and is a Pennsylvania-certified journeyman refrigeration mechanic.

Michelle Angeline Geitz, dental hygiene, received her dental doctorate in 2001 from the University of Pittsburgh. She is a captain in the U.S. Air Force and lives in Panama City, Fla.

Brian Koehle, HVAC technology, is a field-service representative for Enersys Inc. and resides in Sinking Springs.

Brad Moore, mass communications, is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in elementary education at Juniata College. Moore lives in Mount Union and is a marketing assistant for Westminster Woods, a retirement community.


Dr. Irwin H. Siegel, associate professor of business administration/business law, presented a paper titled “Application and Limitations of Organizational Memory: Hewlett-Packard and the ‘H-P Way’” at the 2004 Conference on Emerging Issues in Business & Technology, held at Myrtle Beach, S.C., on Oct. 28-30. The paper was published in the conference proceedings.

Nicholas A. Vonada, associate professor of computer science, has been appointed to the COMMON Americas Advisory Council of the COMMON Education Foundation. The Foundation works with IBM Partners in Education to underwrite a variety of educational programs and provide training. Vonada also gave a presentation on iSeries/400 education at the IBM-sponsored international COMMON users’ conference in Toronto from Oct. 16-24. In November, he presented a paper on “Human Computer Interaction in Modern Education” at ISECON 2004 (the Information Systems Education Conference) in Newport, R.I. Upon student nomination, Vonada also was selected for the 2003-04 edition of “Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers.”

Dr. Lawrence J. Fryda, dean, published a paper at the International Conference on Engineering Education and Research, which was held at Technical University of Ostawa in the Czech Republic in June. His paper, “Short-term International Student/Faculty Exchange Programs,” focused on sharing the lessons he has learned during 12 years of developing short-duration international exchange programs between engineering and engineering-technology programs. Dr. Fryda has helped to establish short-term exchange programs for students at three colleges and universities.

Dr. Dennis F. Ringling, professor of forestry, has begun a two-year term as chairman of the Council of Eastern Forest Technician Schools, which will hold its 2005 annual meeting in August at Penn College’s Schneebeli Earth Science Center. The group represents schools offering two-year forest technology majors from the Mississippi River to the East Coast and from Florida to Newfoundland.

Richard S. Ruben Jr., electronics technology, lives in Spencer, N.Y. He is a technician for Vergason Technologies Inc.

Kendra Lynn Sheard, occupational therapy assistant, is pursuing her bachelor’s degree in occupational therapy from Penn State.

Michelle Keiser Bastian, nursing, is a registered nurse at Evangelical Hospital Hospice and resides in Milton.
Attention Alumni & Friends:

Public is invited!

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Klump Academic Center
Saturday, March 19, 2005, 3-5 p.m.

Built originally as the Williamsport High School in 1913, the Klump Academic Center is the most historic building on the College campus.

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A Note to Parents

If this issue of One College Avenue is addressed to a daughter or son who has established a separate permanent residence, please notify us of that new address by sending an e-mail to onecollegeavenue@pct.edu.

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