Student Michael C. Snyder, of Northumberland, provides music at the college’s Walk It Out event, which raised $5,724 for the American Cancer Society. Organized by the Wildcat Events Board, the Residence Hall Association and the Student Government Association, the mini-Relay for Life held on the Madigan Library lawn drew participation from 23 teams comprising 154 walkers.
Economic Avalanche
Abdul B. Pathan, professor of economics, explains the practices that led to the housing bubble and its eventual burst, and what we can do now.

Time-Tested Wisdom Prevails
Class of '09 alumnus Michael Best reflects on the legacy of his grandfather, Kenneth E. Carl, who was an instrumental figure in the institution’s history.

Wildcat Athletics Q&A
Douglas T. Byerly, who became Penn College’s second director of athletics in September 2008, talks about what good things might be in the future for Wildcat athletes.

Alumni Among Local Pioneers in Gas Exploration
Amanda M. Kennedy, '08, and George Patrick Moriarity, '06, are among the talent in demand as the rush begins to extract natural gas from the bedrock of the Allegheny Plateau.

Keeping Pennsylvania’s Workers on the Cutting Edge
For the past decade, WEDnetPA has been keeping the state’s businesses competitive by providing customized training to their employees.

Universal Language
May graduate Daniel J. LaSota shares photos from a construction service project halfway around the world.

On the Cover
Amanda M. Kennedy, of Montoursville, who earned an associate degree in heavy construction equipment technology: Caterpillar equipment emphasis in 2008, now uses her degree working for Chief Oil & Gas, one of several companies drilling natural-gas wells in northcentral Pennsylvania. Read about her experiences on page 10.

Web Extra
additional content at www.pct.edu/oca

degrees that work.

Regular Features
Campus News 2
In Touch With Alumni 18
Focus on Faculty & Staff 20
Student Leader Legacy Scholarship Grows

Pennsylvania College of Technology’s Student Government Association exceeded – by more than $2,000 – its fundraising goal for the Student Leader Legacy Scholarship Fund.

The SGA raised a record of more than $4,500 for the scholarship fund in 2008-09 through a car show, a bread and pastry sale, a silent auction, and appeals to students and employees to “Feed the Pig” by dropping change in a large piggy bank in the Bush Campus Center. The SGA set a goal of raising $2,500 for the scholarship fund.

The Student Leader Legacy Scholarship was established by SGA in 2007 to encourage and reward student leadership. Recipients are selected from applicants who, among other eligibility requirements, have demonstrated through activities on campus and in the surrounding communities a strong determination to continue the legacy of student leadership at Penn College.

The Student Leader Legacy Scholarship Fund is designed to generate annual scholarship awards while building to an endowment of at least $25,000, at which time it will become a permanent source of scholarship awards at Penn College.

Adult Students Gain Peace of Mind

More than 30 new Pennsylvania College of Technology students, some of whom have been out of the classroom for decades, recently received a comprehensive introduction to campus resources. The students are enrolled under Trade Adjustment Assistance, a federal program that provides financial aid to workers who lose their jobs due to the impact of foreign imports.

During their daylong orientation in Penn’s Inn – arranged by counselors Kathryn A. Lehman and Mary Lee Kelly – the students heard from Carolyn R. Strickland, assistant vice president for academic affairs; Counseling and Academic Support Services staff; representatives of other student-centered business offices; and current TAA students who shared their experiences of enrolling in college after job-related setbacks.

Counseling Services expects to see an increase in the number of TAA referrals from CareerLink this fall due to the economy’s effects on the area workforce.

Student in Free Enterprise

Canned goods collected by Students in Free Enterprise await delivery to a local food bank. The student organization coordinated a food drive that collected 8,777 nonperishable items – 5,105 pounds – in conjunction with the Campbell Soup Co.’s “Let’s Can Hunger” effort.
Two Pennsylvania College of Technology students were selected to participate in the National Institute of Standards and Technology’s Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship, in which they gained experience in hands-on research alongside world-recognized scientists.

Students David M. Blumenfeld, of Lincroft, N.J., and Matthew C. Cox, of Selinsgrove, both manufacturing engineering technology students, contributed to ongoing research projects under the guidance of an NIST scientist or engineer during the 11-week program at NIST’s Manufacturing Engineering Laboratory in Gaithersburg, Md.

Blumenfeld worked on creation and measurement of a five-axis part that is being considered for use in ISO standards for machine tools. Cox experimented with 3-D printing – also called rapid prototyping – capabilities in the computer-aided design division.

About 100 fellowships are awarded at the nine Gaithersburg laboratories each year. NIST, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is one of the world’s leading research organizations and home to three Nobel Prize winners.
The downturn/recession in our economy started in December of 2007.

The main reason for this current economic crisis is the bursting of the housing bubble, which was caused by high default rates on mortgage loans.

This downturn caused the unemployment rate to rise. The number of unemployed Americans exceeded the total population of our home state. (The population of Pennsylvania is about 12.4 million.) What happened?

**How the bubble grew and burst**

Homeownership is a major goal in our country. The government, through tax incentives, encourages people to buy houses. In 2004, homeownership – which historically was very low – rose to 70 percent.

During the late ’90s and earlier this decade, house value was appreciating fast. People were buying more houses because the interest rate was so low. Borrowers were offered adjustable-rate mortgages and interest-only mortgages. An adjustable-rate mortgage has an interest rate that changes based on market factors, and as a result, the payment increases when interest rates rise. Interest-only mortgages are set up so that during the first several years of the mortgage, the borrower pays no principle, so initial payments are low. It’s like a bait, to hook you into taking a higher mortgage than you could afford otherwise. Overall, more than 40 percent of borrowers took adjustable-rate mortgages, which had lower initial interest rates.

Banks started lending to subprime borrowers who otherwise would not qualify. According to some estimates, 25 percent of lending was subprime.

The banks were willing to lend. Since home value was appreciating, they didn’t care much about default, because they thought borrowers could refinance or sell their houses and be able to repay. This created a housing-construction boom.

The lowering of mortgage underwriting standards, faulty credit rating, lack of government oversight on some of the financial institutions and other risky behavior on their part played a big role in this housing boom, and that created a peak in home prices.

In 2004, homeownership – which historically was very low – rose to 70 percent.
During the middle of 2006, when the Federal Reserve Board started raising the interest rate, forcing banks to raise mortgage interest rates, some borrowers started to default, and as a result, house values started to fall. People simply could not make payments on their adjustable-rate mortgages as rates started to go up. Many borrowers – some estimate as many as 10.5 million in December 2008 – started to owe more money to banks than the actual market price of their houses. So literally, it was easier for them to walk out of the house. Foreclosures shot up to more than 3 million in 2008.

Some of those borrowers, while house values were appreciating, built some fake equity in their houses, so they took home-equity loans to lead lavish lives. When house values dropped, they not only owed more on their mortgages than their houses were worth, they also owed the home-equity money. It’s unfathomable. People were borrowing against their houses as if they were ATMs.

Another contributing factor to this bubble is financial innovation. As a practice, lending institutions do not keep the mortgages they issue. They sell those mortgages in the secondary market. This innovation is called securitization. Examples are collateralized debt obligation and mortgage-backed securities (CDO and MBS).

This process shifted the credit default risk to other investors and institutions from the initial mortgage lenders. One estimate found that, of the $10.6 trillion worth of U.S. residential mortgages, as of November 2008, $6.6 trillion were held by mortgage pools and only $3.4 trillion by traditional depository institutions.

The two largest issuers of mortgage-backed securities are the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac). They are institutions called government-sponsored enterprises, meaning that they are privately owned with links to government. Both of them own or guarantee almost $5 trillion worth of mortgages, which is half of all mortgages.

The lending institutions, when they sold those mortgages to Fannie and Freddie, didn’t worry about the default risk, because it’s all passed on. And Freddie and Fannie, in turn, sold those securities to private investors.

There were other issuers of mortgage-backed securities, such as Morgan Stanley, Lehman Brothers and investment banks like Merrill Lynch.

Hedge funds also buy mortgage-backed securities. Hedge funds are privately owned investment funds dealing with large investors. They are not regulated. They didn’t have to declare quarterly reports, unlike mutual funds. Some estimates put the total value of those hedge funds at $3 trillion in 2008. When hedge investors move their funds around, they affect the value of the mortgage-backed securities, stock prices, and commodity prices, creating a lot of volatility in the economy.

As subprime defaults rose, the prices of securities backed by subprime mortgages plummeted. Losses by Merrill Lynch, Citi, Bank of America, Bear Stearns and Lehman Brothers mounted. Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. The Fed intervened in the Bear Stearns takeover by J.P. Morgan and the Merrill Lynch takeover by Bank of America.

The MBS and CDO investors bought credit default swap, which is sort of an insurance – if someone defaults, the investors receive payment. Some estimates put the volume of credit-default swap at $47 trillion. That was one reason insurers like AIG got in trouble. AIG lost $62 billion during the last quarter of 2008 alone, because it was insuring all these securities, and defaults were climbing.

This intermixing of risks is now called systemic risk. What that means is that previously, these risks were borne by different people. Now, they became correlated, affecting the entire financial system. The credit market froze, affecting many industries. The stock market index dropped, people’s savings in 401(k) and other retirement funds dropped, consumer spending dropped, and the auto industry, relying on bank credit, began suffering immensely. Tax revenues of states and local authorities plummeted, which caused cutbacks in many programs, raising unemployment along with other side effects we are now seeing, like an increase in violence and other crimes.

**INTERVENTION**

Since the problem was so enormous, the government tried to intervene as much as it could. During this turbulent time, it took specific measures.

To protect banking customers, the Federal Reserve Board raised the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. insurance limit from $100,000 to $250,000 per account. It also made several moves to ease the credit of financial institutions, including lowering the federal funds rate – the rate at which one bank can borrow funds from another bank – from 5 percent to near zero, and infusing money under several programs.

The Fed gave $600 billion to Fannie and Freddie to purchase mortgage-backed securities. AIG got a loan of $175 billion in 2008 to help lower mortgage rates. The Fed also lowered the 30-year mortgage rate below 5 percent by investing money into various programs and – on March 18 – announcing another $1.2 trillion to buy long-term government bonds and mortgage-backed securities.

The federal government, through the Treasury Department, also stepped in.

On Feb. 13, 2008, President George W. Bush signed into law a $168 billion economic stimulus package in the form of income tax rebate checks mailed directly to taxpayers. Then came the $700 billion
Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008/Troubled Asset Recovery Program that was signed Oct. 3. It was intended to purchase from financial institutions large amounts of mortgage-backed securities and collateralized debt obligations, or toxic assets. In reality, the Treasury injected half of that money into the banks, buying dividend-paying, non-voting preferred stocks. In effect, we – as citizens – own Citi and other institutions. Some of the money was spent for the auto industry, too.

On Feb. 16, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, a $787 billion stimulus bill in the form of tax cuts and spending. This was designed after former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal program. On Feb. 18, Obama announced a $75 billion program to help 9 million homeowners to avoid foreclosures.

The government also established task forces to monitor the activities – including CEO pay and benefits – of institutions taking government money, like the auto and banking industries.

In late March, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner announced a $500 billion private/public partnership to buy out toxic assets to clean up banks’ balance sheets and make them stronger. Government is trying to ensure more transparency from the banks, big and small. The Treasury Department also tried to help big banks to assess their liquidity needs by running stress tests.

**How has it helped?**

**The goal of all government action is to:**

- Restore liquidity of the banking system so credit can flow again for all kinds of economic activities.
- Restore people’s confidence about the economy so they can go on with their normal spending habits.
- Revive corporate sectors, the housing sector, the auto industry, the appliance sector and other manufacturing industries so they can start hiring and earn profits, which will revitalize the stock market, allowing investors to regain confidence and start investing again.

The Dow Jones index dropped to less than 8,000 from its high of 14,000 in July of 2007, wiping out the perceived wealth of a lot of people from their retirement funds, which further impacted people’s spending, causing a downward spiral. Consumer spending constitutes 70 percent of our gross domestic product. Household net worth dropped by $11 trillion in the U.S. in 2008 and $50 trillion globally.

The massive bailout plans will take time to take effect. Many economists predict it may take a couple more years for the economy to rebound. Lack of action would be more disastrous. As we learned from the Great Depression of the ‘30s, people trusting classical theory were hesitant to support bold action on the part of the government.

With this additional government spending, our annual deficits will run around $1.5 trillion, and our total national debt will approach $12 trillion. This may cause high inflationary trends and high interest rates, and possibly a falling value of the dollar. That is why government has to be very careful in taming the deficit by cutting unproductive government expenditures and giving the tax cuts that will create the most jobs.

The government is taking the right steps, I would say, by trying to get rid of toxic assets so the banks can start lending.

The Fed should be given more regulatory power to oversee other financial institutions, and once-secretive hedge funds should be required to be more transparent to the public about their investment vehicles. Credit-rating agencies should be monitored for any wrongdoing on issues of conflict of interest.

Most big banks are in shaky positions – most smaller ones are OK so far – because of huge losses, falling value of their stocks and their inability to raise private-equity capital due to public fear that they may be nationalized. So government should make a clear pronouncement regarding their bold action to reassure public confidence and dispel any rumor. The surplus inventory of unsold houses should be disposed of before building new ones. New job creation programs should be encouraged, and government should give financial incentives to laid-off workers to get retraining from colleges like ours.

**What do we do now?**

We should be patient. Our current economic slide – I’ll compare it with a tidal wave or a big avalanche – will need a huge barrier to be stopped and prolonged time and effort to be stabilized. I believe it will get better slowly with the proper handling of the economy. People may be advised not to do anything drastic and get caught in the frenzy. A lot of people try to sell and get out of their 401(k)s, but that is never a wise decision. Most economists believe we have reached the bottom, and the economy will start to rebound by the last quarter of this year.

In a market economy, we are bound to see booms and busts: the oil boom in the ’70s, the savings and loan crisis in the ’80s, the dot-com boom in the ’90s, and the recent housing boom and subsequent bust. It has taught us to be cautious and make money the hard, honest way. We should not buy something we cannot afford, and we should not rely on others to bail us out. We should be prudent in our economic decisions. ■
Editor's Note: Michael J. Best, who earned an associate degree in electronics and computer engineering technology: robotics and automation emphasis in May, is the fourth of Kenneth E. Carl's grandchildren to graduate from the institution. A 1931 graduate of Williamsport High School's vocational education program, which begat Williamsport Technical Institute, Carl's tenure stretched from his appointment as a drafting instructor at the high school in 1937 to his retirement as Williamsport Area Community College president in 1973. “I am very proud to be a part of my grandfather's legacy and am pleased that I can be a part of his dream,” Best said.

AS A YOUNG CHILD, I can remember arriving at my grandparents’ home filled with excitement. I would wait for the car to come to a stop and jump over whichever sister happened to be in my way. I would greet my grandmother at the door with a hug, “hello” and a kiss. Through the hallway to the living room I went, maybe to scour the porch for a moment, or raid the candy jar upon entering the kitchen, and then complete the circle near the bathroom. The door to the basement was across from the bathroom, and if I saw light escaping from under the door, I knew my grandfather was down there working hard.

The cellar steps were steep and always seemed dark.

If I went straight at the bottom of the steps, I would enter my grandfather’s greenhouse, filled with orchids. My grandfather had beautiful orchids. As an adult, I appreciate and respect the amount of talent and patience it takes to keep orchids. As green as I’d like to believe my thumb is, and the different plants I have in my home, I’ve tried an orchid, and the orchid won.

But, if I took a right at the bottom of the steps, I would enter my grandfather’s workshop. Quiet in nature, and an observer by trade, I would usually remain unseen until the lathe stopped, the drill silenced, or the chisel rested, until I investigated his latest masterpiece. His workshop was always such an amazing playground. Ducks, geese and other birds seem to come alive in wood. I’d look around his workshop and see pieces of wood that were twice the size of me. Their unique colors, age lines and distinct smells I can still remember to this day. The tools my grandfather had on his workbench looked so intriguing to my young eyes. As soon as my cover was blown, he quickly embraced me, and off to play with my cousins I went.

As I grew up, my family would give my grandfather a hard time around Halloween because each year he insisted to give out apples instead of candy. I wasn’t informed until much later that each year he took the time to travel to the orchard and hand pick, off the tree, only the finest and reddest apples. One Halloween toward the end of my high school years, he set out to prove us wrong. He went to the store and the orchard and returned with only the finest treats for young souls. The test of time and wisdom defines ages. The basket of candy did remain full. The apples, gone.

- Michael Best
Byerly assumed the role of director of athletics at Pennsylvania College of Technology in September 2008. A former teacher and coach in the Line Mountain School District, he earned a master’s degree in athletics administration from West Chester University. He worked in Lock Haven University’s Camp and Conference Office and was manager of athletic fundraising at Bucknell University before taking the helm at Penn College. He participated in a Q&A with One College Avenue at the close of his first academic year. Here are excerpts.

Wildcat Athletics
Q & A

with Athletics Director
Douglas T. Byerly

You’ve been trying to ignite more excitement around the athletics program on campus. What does that mean to the athletes?

We’ve done some very, very small baby steps, for lack of a better term. We offered some game promotions that we had not been doing on a consistent basis. At our basketball games, we offer concessions and PA announcing, with introduction of lineups and call of the game action, attempting to provide that “true” collegiate event atmosphere. Also, we have plans for radio broadcast of 10 basketball games for 2009 on WLYC/ESPN 1050 AM-104.1 FM and via www.espnwilliamsport.com. We’ve done some of those activities throughout the years, but we’re trying to maybe come up with a more consistent plan. We’re looking at putting together a game-day promotions calendar where we would work with Student Activities, student government and Greek Life to offer, for example, Greek Life night in Bardo Gym. Somebody had a good idea that I think we’re going to pursue. “Feed the Neighborhood,” it would be called, where you bring in a canned good through Greek Life at one of our basketball games. So it gives a reason for the kids to come as part of their organization and support the teams.

We’d love to get other groups and organizations here on campus involved with our athletic programs, and we’d love to do it starting right in the fall by doing a couple of promotions for the soccer teams. Our goal is just to increase the game-day promotions and increase the awareness of our campus community as to what the student athletes have to offer: pretty exciting play.

Byerly (left), outside the Field House. On facing page, the Wildcat golf, archery and softball teams helped to continue the college’s winning traditions in 2008-09, with a first-place finish in the USCAA Golf National Invitational, a second-place finish in the Penn State University Conference softball championships, and one individual and three team championships at the U.S. Intercollegiate Archery Championships.
What has joining the USCAA and its opportunities to play for national championships done for student athletes?

I think it’s been a real nice reward for them. A great example is our men’s soccer team. They’ve now won five league championships in a row, and previously, that was it. They’d win the league championship, and their season was finished. Now they get rewarded by having a chance to go to the national tournament, which they did. The women went to Vermont, and the men went to Rochester, Mich., and had a chance to play for a legitimate national championship.

And even if students would want to come here and would not want to play a varsity sport, there are some club sports available, and there are a ton of intramural programs that we do a very nice job with. So, athletically, students can get their fill even if they don’t participate in a varsity program. There’s always something to do. And that’s really the goal in the end. We want to provide healthy alternative activities for our student body, and that’s what it’s all about.

What should the community or prospective students know about Penn College athletics?

I would say they should know that we offer probably a lot more programs than they realize: 14 athletic teams and a dance team. So there are certainly many opportunities for participation on both the male and female side. Two, I think they should know that the teams are very competitive, not only in our conference – the Penn State University Athletic Conference – but many of them have a chance to be very competitive at the national level, as well, with the USCAA. So students have a chance to play for a league title, and they could have a chance to play postseason for a national title.

You replaced Mike Stanzione, who was the athletic director for 17 years. What would you like to say about your predecessor?

I would just say – and I’ve said it to everybody – Mike’s been a tremendous asset to me, staying on board here and continuing to handle all the daily tasks that must be coordinated in an athletic department: scheduling, transportation, handling all the day-in, day-out money for teams going here and there.

Mike’s really done a great job, has really been a trouper in helping with the transition, and he’s really taken athletics from its infancy, when we reinstituted the programs and had three sports, all the way up to 14 sports. Penn College athletics would not be where it is without Mike’s hard work and dedication, and I’ll be sorry to see him leave.

“...And that’s really the goal in the end. We want to provide healthy alternative activities for our student body…”
By her alma mater’s standards, Amanda M. Kennedy is a typical woman in the workforce: dependable in a demanding field, equally at home with transmission fluid and nail polish, and thriving in what Pennsylvania College of Technology calls—with increasing infrequency—employment that is “nontraditional by gender.”

George P. “Pat” Moriarity arrived at his job by a no-less-unconventional route, taking advantage of maternal vigilance and networking skills to run an end-around his initial career hopes.

Both of the Penn College graduates are in the midst of a storybook lives work-wise, when you consider that the “story” is one of the biggest to hit Pennsylvania in the 150 years since Edwin Drake struck oil at Titusville: development of the Marcellus Shale, a geological swath that runs beneath a half-dozen states and could hold enough natural gas to slake a nation thirsty for a homegrown energy supply.

The alumni are employed by an Appalachian arm of Chief Oil & Gas, a Texas-based company that is among those exploring the potentially profitable underground formation. Chief has leased more than 500,000 acres in the Marcellus Shale play, opening a local field office along Fairfield Road and drilling its first Lycoming County well in August 2007.

Moriarity is the materials coordinator at the Montoursville-area field office, and Kennedy is a midstream operator at Chief Gathering’s compression station covering the county’s eastern half.

The subsidiary is responsible for the gathering and selling of Chief gas and has two taps into the Transco interstate pipeline in Lycoming County—one on the east side (known as Barto) and one to the west (Canoe Run). The tie-in to Transco includes metering facilities and ancillary equipment that continuously oversee the flow of gas from Chief to Transco; data is transmitted via a communication tower and is monitored 24 hours a day.

Exploration of the Marcellus Shale already has brought two legislative hearings to the Penn College campus, proceedings at which government officials, industry representatives and environmental groups voiced opinions on a host of regulatory, fiscal and economic-development issues. Kennedy and Moriarity are among the participants in the high-stakes, high-profile enterprise, which has engaged everyone from entrepreneurial drilling companies to optimistic landowners—and which prompted the college to help act as a clearinghouse for the glut of information (and a remedy for the rampant misinformation) that can accompany such a windfall occurrence.

The college and Penn State Cooperative Extension formed the Marcellus Shale Education & Training Center, which provides a variety of resources to the community and the oil-and-gas industry. Its primary goals are to provide concise and accurate information for the public, and to help industry meet its myriad workforce needs with backyard talent.

The first major initiative of the center was to thoroughly analyze the industry’s workforce needs by occupational title and to estimate the industry’s education and training needs.

“This comprehensive workforce needs assessment provides all education and training providers information regarding the number of jobs by title, which will help them identify the types of training that will be required,” said Larry L. Michael, executive director.
QUICK FACTS

• The Marcellus shale is a layer of rock that lies 5,000-9,000 feet underground and runs from the southern tier of New York through the western portion of Pennsylvania, into the eastern half of Ohio, and through West Virginia.

• The shale was formed 380 million years ago as highly organic sediments were laid down. As the organic material decayed, methane was formed and is now trapped tightly.

• New drilling technologies could recover 50 trillion cubic feet of natural gas from the Marcellus shale. The U.S. currently produces roughly 30 trillion cubic feet of gas per year.

Keeping Pennsylvania’s Workers on the Cutting Edge

The Workforce and Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnetPA) celebrated 10 years of helping to strengthen the statewide business environment and providing Guaranteed Free Training to Pennsylvania companies.

WEDnetPA is managed by Pennsylvania College of Technology. It affords access to training funds through an alliance of 33 educational providers throughout the state, including the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities, the state’s 14 community colleges, Penn College, the North Central Industrial Technical Education Center, the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center, the Greater Altoona Career and Technology Center, and the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

Over the past 10 years, as one of the 33 educational partners, Penn College has facilitated funding and training for 60,655 employees at 230 local companies.

At a recent 10th anniversary event at the Capitol Building in Harrisburg, Penn College and three of its clients – AccuWeather.com, of State College; Ralph S. Alberts Co., of Montoursville; and McClarin Plastics, of Hanover – met with legislators to emphasize the importance of WEDnetPA training to the local economy. In all, WEDnetPA participating companies and educational partners met with 60 legislators to foster awareness of the program.

A third-generation, family-owned manufacturing company, the Ralph S. Alberts Co. was started in the basement of his grandfather’s home, Seth Alberts, vice president for the custom-molding business, told legislators.

The company participated in Guaranteed Free Training for Web design and computer-aided product design, which allowed it to bring more of those functions in-house, as well as leadership training, which improved company communication at all levels.

“As an employer, you can never have enough skilled employees,” Alberts said. “The more training he or she can receive in regards to new technology, the more valuable that individual will become, and the better this company will eventually be. WEDnetPA allowed us to market our company in a more efficient manner in regards to the Internet. Furthermore, it helped with the training of CAD and 3D technology, which helped us to quote more efficiently, which further brought more job opportunities in-house.”

“Training done through WEDnetPA helped McClarin to change the culture of the company and move to a world-class company able to compete in today’s most competitive climate,” said Todd R. Kennedy, president of McClarin Plastics. “Employees benefited by having their skills upgraded and becoming more productive, with a noticeable improvement in morale and retention.”

McClarin is a premier supplier of large thermoplastic and fiberglass-reinforced plastic components, serving customers in 17 states, as well as five countries internationally.

Guaranteed Free Training is funded by the state Department of Community and Economic Development through its customized job-training program, which was created to provide employers with opportunities for employee training and retraining in manufacturing fundamentals, product and process control, quality assurance, applied math and measurement, information technology, and many other areas.

“I have had the privilege of working with the commonwealth to help develop the program concept and guidelines from the inception in 1999,” said Larry L. Michael, executive director of workforce and economic development at Penn College. “Watching the teamwork and collaboration grow among the partners over the years, including all of the commonwealth’s community colleges and State System of Higher Education institutions, has been very rewarding. Our partnership provides state government a single point of contact to work with to administer statewide workforce-development initiatives.”

Since its beginning, more than 800,000 workers at nearly 14,000 companies have been trained in the Guaranteed Free Training program.

“Pennsylvania is committed to providing businesses with the necessary tools they need to be strong and successful,” DCED acting Secretary George Cornelius said at a Capitol Rotunda celebration.

“To date, this year, WEDnetPA and the Rendell administration have provided basic and entry-level skills training and advanced information-technology training to more than 37,000 employees in 64 counties,” Cornelius continued. “This investment is providing businesses with an

Seth Alberts (right), of Ralph S. Alberts Co., Montoursville, talks with state Rep. Rick Mirabito (D-Williamsport), who also serves on the Penn College Board of Directors, during the WEDnetPA 10th anniversary festivities at the state Capitol Building in Harrisburg.
educated, highly skilled workforce, and it further encourages job growth and business expansion.”

WEDnetPA was created to help make companies across the commonwealth more competitive by updating and improving the skills of their employees to meet specific company needs. Each year, WEDnetPA partners reach out to significant numbers of Pennsylvania companies and employees, strengthening the commonwealth’s workforce and businesses and, in turn, strengthening Pennsylvania’s economy.

“Penn College is very pleased to serve as the overall grant and fiscal manager of this important commonwealth initiative,” said Davie Jane Gilmour, president of the college. “WEDnetPA partner institutions have effectively delivered workforce-development services to more than 14,000 companies over the past 10 years. The strength of this program is that individual companies choose the training and the training vendor that is most effective for them. I congratulate the system for 10 years of outstanding success.”

Gov. Edward G. Rendell issued a citation to congratulate the network. “The decade-long effort put forth by WEDnetPA on behalf of the working men and women is highly commendable and gives truth to the statement that Pennsylvania is known for its quality workforce and ethic that produces results,” he stated in the document.

“The training provided through WEDnetPA helps Pennsylvania companies stay competitive nationally and internationally by providing training they otherwise might not be able to afford,” said Tom Venditti, statewide director for WEDnetPA. “We provide a well-trained workforce so individual companies can survive, thrive and grow in the commonwealth.”

The anniversary event at the Capitol featured remarks by Cornelius, Venditti, Sen. John R. Gordner (R-Berwick) and Rep. Peter J. Daley (D-Washington/Fayette). Representatives from 30 companies that have been participants in the Guaranteed Free Training program also attended.

As the entire nation endures challenging economic times, WEDnetPA’s Guaranteed Free Training program becomes increasingly important to the commonwealth and its businesses. Now more than ever, the program is needed to keep Pennsylvania’s workers better prepared and skilled, and to serve as a key component in the commonwealth’s workforce-development strategies to ensure future stabilization and growth.

In a recent statewide survey, 98 percent of companies receiving training indicated positive outcomes, including improved product/service quality, a safer workplace with fewer accidents, new customers and increased business, improved communications and teamwork, and increases in employee pay and compensation.

Employers have the flexibility to choose any private-sector training provider, any of the 33 WEDnetPA partners, or the company’s own in-house staff to address their workforce-training needs. More than 7,500 private-sector vendors have provided training through the program.

By giving individual companies the flexibility to get the training they need – how, where and when they need it – WEDnetPA achieves maximum efficiency with 91 percent of the program’s resources going directly to help pay for employee training. This ease of use has enabled more than 1,500 companies to participate this year alone. ■

Since its beginning, more than 800,000 workers at nearly 14,000 companies have been trained in the Guaranteed Free Training program.
Daniel J. LaSota, who earned a bachelor’s degree in residential construction technology and management in May, spent 16 days helping to build a boys’ dormitory for a deaf school in a largely undeveloped area of Palawan Island in the Philippines. The former boys’ dorm was destroyed by a storm, and while the school’s administrators made temporary accommodations, the school was in danger of being shut down without a replacement building. LaSota – who received credit for the work in an independent-study course titled “Construction: International Field Experience” – asked friends to teach him American Sign Language before leaving in order to communicate with the school’s students. Once there, all language barriers quickly crumbled as he worked and played with the school’s students. “All of the experiences on this trip made it unforgettable – and truly remarkable,” LaSota said. He shares a glimpse of his experience on the following pages.

“This is a hand sifter. They sifted the sand to mix with the mortar to make concrete, which is very hard to do; it’s very time-consuming. They were very resourceful. They made their own axe handles, their own tampers – they made a lot of their tools.”

“This was my first impression of the camp. I was walking down the path, and this dog came at me, and (a man was) holding a machete.” LaSota explained that the school grows its own food, and the man with the machete, Felix, takes care of all its farmland. Felix and his family – except for one of his sons – are deaf.

“The machete was his main farming tool. Everything was done by hand. Even the rope in his fence was made from vines.”
“Our group bought the pigs, and they had a pig roast in our honor. They eat meat like this twice a year, so it was quite the celebration. This was to thank us for the project. Nothing went to waste, so there were a lot of unique meals made.”

“Coconuts are probably one of the biggest products on the island. This is one of the coconut groves we passed.”

“This is how we got lumber sometimes. Most people didn’t have cars. There was a government ban on wood. You weren’t allowed to cut any new wood down … so they had to go into the woods and find dead trees wherever they could. They cut everything by chain saw, so that wood may look really bad (rough cut), but that entire load was cut with a chain saw, so it’s actually pretty good. It was unique in that aspect, dealing with lumber and construction in that way, because everything was cut by hand. It’s just very different from how we’re used to it.”

“These are some of the deaf children. Those two guys really helped us a lot; they really wanted to be involved. It truly wouldn’t have gotten done so quickly if it wasn’t for the students. You could easily tell them what to do just by showing them, and once they had a task to do, they got right to it and made sure they did the best they could.”
LaSota’s group took a day to visit remote mountain villages. “This is on the way to the mountains. The cows traveled from field to field, and they had the right of way, so we had to wait for about 10 minutes for them to move.”

“We could only drive so far and then we had to walk up a path to get to the mountain villages. This is some of the village locals washing their clothes.”

“There was no running water, so they would pump the water for the day, carry it in buckets, and then put it in these big barrels. They would use that to wash their clothes and wash the dishes.”

“That’s Mark (holding baby). He did everything with us. We really got along with him.”

Web Extra
additional photos at www.pct.edu/oca
“This was taken in the morning. This is what we had to put up with for the few days we were there.”

“We had enough wood to make bunk beds. We completely ran out of wood at the end of this project.”

“This is the finished product. The dorm was a 20-foot-by-60-foot building. About 20 to 25 boys attended the school and stayed there.”

“This is a group shot of mostly the boys. (LaSota is wearing plaid shirt.) Five of them are showing the sign for ‘I love you.’ That was different there, because the first minute they met us they were doing that. So it wasn’t the same as here. They were very friendly people and very open, and for them to just sign to you ‘I love you’ wasn’t the same as America would take it, maybe. It was really genuine how close they were with people.”
Alumni Relations Director Retires

Barbara A. Danko, the director of Alumni Relations since 1998 and a member of the Penn College family since she was hired as coordinator of outreach programs in 1980, retired from Penn College on June 29.

“Concentrating on developing relationships with the college’s alumni, she was always eager to hear from alumni and took great strides to get to know them and keep them informed, frequently finding or visiting alumni while on family vacations or on personal time,” said Barry R. Stiger, vice president for Institutional Advancement. “She is always proud to share their stories and accomplishments with the college community and other alumni.”

Upon becoming director of Alumni Relations, she was given the task of organizing the alumni database, including a large search effort for Williamsport Technical Institute and Williamsport Area Community College alumni. Today, the database includes more than 40,000 alumni with valid addresses, more than double the number when she started. She has established a solid foundation for engaging alumni in activities and events and was instrumental in developing an alumni awards program, the Penn College Endowed Alumni Scholarship, and the Commemorative Walkway and specialty license plate programs. In addition to serving the college’s alumni, she was liaison to the Penn College retiree group.
Mandy (Duncheskie) Nye, ‘97, medical office assistant, is a home-based medical transcriptionist for Spheris and resides in Sunbury.

Alyse (Mutchler) Sechrist-Helt, ‘99, nursing, is a registered nurse and a transplant coordinator for Gift of Life Donor Program. Sechrist-Helt resides in Cogan Station and received her Certified Procurement Transplant Coordinator certification in February. She also provides community and hospital education on organ donations.

Vicky Elaine Heim, ‘00, occupational therapy assistant, is a certified occupational therapy assistant at Genesis Rehab Services. She received a certificate in human services from Susquehanna University and lives in Sarasota, Fla.

Jesse James Monroe, ‘05, forest technology, received a bachelor’s degree in forest technology from Penn State in 2007. He is a forester for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and resides in Coudersport.

Kirk M. Allen, ‘04, business management and ‘07, business administration, plans to complete a master’s degree in public administration from Penn State Harrisburg this year and enroll in the university’s doctorate program. The Birdsboro resident received a graduate certificate in public sector human resources management and was inducted into the National Scholars Honor Society.

Update Information Online

Please visit www.pct.edu/alumni to update your information online, or call toll-free 877-PCT-ALUM (877-728-2586). Why update your information? The more the Alumni Relations Office knows about you, the more it can offer you. Update your information every time you move or have a significant change in your life and stay informed about upcoming alumni events and activities, athletic outings, and much more. Also, visit the Penn College Alumni Relations page on Facebook.
Business and Computer Technologies

Terry A. Girdon, professor of business administration/management, was honored for his tenure on the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education Board of Commissioners. The citation acknowledged his two full three-year terms on the board – most recently as its chair – and was presented at the IACBE annual conference, held in Louisville, Ky. During the conference, Girdon led a presentation/workshop on evaluator training, designed to prepare selected individuals to conduct the two-day campus site visits that are an integral part of the accreditation process. In addition, he hosted a meeting of the Middle States Region of the IACBE in his capacity as regional vice president.

Construction and Design Technologies

Richard C. Taylor, associate professor of HVAC technology/plumbing, heating and design, presented a session titled “Equipment Trends and Recommendation – High-Efficiency Boilers, Furnaces and Geothermal” during the 2009 PA Home Energy Conference at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College. Taylor discussed new and cutting-edge heating and cooling equipment.

Health Sciences

Patricia J. Martin, assistant professor and clinical director of the occupational therapy assistant program, traveled to Juarez, Mexico, through the nonprofit corporation Therapy Mission Inc., which brings occupational therapy services to parts of the world where therapists are scarce or nonexistent. Martin joined four other occupational therapy practitioners and a physical therapist, who provided volunteer occupational and physical therapy and training at Fundacion Integra’s Villa Integra, a facility that provides rehabilitative services to more than 500 children and adults with disabilities who are not eligible to receive rehabilitation services anywhere else.

Judy Quinti, instructor of fitness and lifetime sports, was an invited speaker at the National Strength and Conditioning Association’s Personal Trainers Conference, where she presented the topic “Personal Training Your Baby Boomer Client.” The baby boomer generation stands at 78 million strong and represents 37 percent of health-club memberships. The presentation addresses how baby boomer clients come with limitations all personal trainers should be ready to work with, such as primary risk factors for lifestyle diseases, rate-limiting medications, orthopedic problems and lack of fitness knowledge.

Integrated Studies

Two articles by William J. Astore, associate professor of history, were published recently in print journals. The Dallas Morning News printed “Aboard the USS Ameriprise,” Astore’s look at U.S. military missions overseas through the lens of “Star Trek,” as a full-page feature essay in its April 12 edition. An article on President Barack Obama’s strategy in Afghanistan, as seen through the lens of Mary McCarthy’s writings on Vietnam, was printed in the May issue of Le Monde diplomatique (English edition). Its title is “Obama’s Afghanistan? Seven Lessons and a Few Questions for the U.S. President.” Both pieces were published originally by TomDispatch.com, for which Astore is a frequent guest author.

Clifford P. Coppersmith, dean, was called upon recently to share his expertise in Native American history. He wrote an article for the Oklahoma Historical Society detailing the history of what today is known as the Fort Sill Apache tribe. The historical society published the work in the Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture. Coppersmith also consulted on an episode of the PBS series “We Shall Remain.” The documentary mini-series shows how native peoples valiantly resisted expulsion from their lands and fought extinction of their culture. He contributed his expertise to the episode “Geronimo,” which chronicles the resistance led by the famed Chiricahua Apache medicine man, whose tiny band became the last holdouts trying to preserve their way of life before surrendering formally to the U.S. government.

Tom F. Gregory, associate vice president for instruction, was promoted from dean of the School of Construction and Design and Technologies to his current post.
Jeremiah C. Gee, assessment coordinator, offered a presentation at the Network for Academic Renewal Conference hosted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in Baltimore. Speaking with chief academic officers, faculty members and administrators, Gee presented examples of a customizable methodology for organizing assessment processes at institution, program and course levels.

Nancy A. Grausam, assistant professor of education/early childhood education, received the Excellence in Leadership award from the Central Susquehanna Association for the Education of Young Children at the association’s annual conference. Grausam was instrumental in founding the Central Susquehanna Association for the Education of Young Children, served as one of its first co-presidents and later assumed the presidency of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children. Among other contributions to the field, she helped write guidelines for Keystone Stars, an initiative of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

Abdul B. Pathan, professor of economics, presented a paper titled “Effective Teaching of Multiplier Process by Using Current Economic Events” at “Teaching Economics: Instruction and Classroom Based Research,” an annual conference held at Robert Morris University. The paper explains the current housing, financial and economic crisis and how best to explain it to Principles of Economics students so they have a better understanding of the situation and a lasting impression about the problems. See page 4.

Debra A. Buckman, assistant professor of environmental technology, presented two workshops at the annual conference of the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators, held at the Raystown Lake Resort and Conference Center. She presented a workshop titled “Macroinverts – Take Your Students Out in the Cold.” The session, designed for middle and high school teachers, involved going to nearby Trough Creek State Park and examining the macroinvertebrates found in the streambed. Buckman also presented a one-hour informational workshop on Marcellus Shale. She was joined at the conference by two environmental technology management students – Mark A. Barbier, of Williamsport, and Kyle A. Shirey, of Clearfield – who presented a poster and computer display of their senior project: a mapping of Black Hole Creek, for which they will photograph the majority of the length of the stream to document current conditions.

Transportation Technology

Alfred M. Thomas II, associate professor of collision repair, co-authored the textbook, “Collision Repair and Refinishing: A Foundation Course for Technicians,” which recently was published by Cengage/Delmar Learning. Thomas collaborated with Michael Jund, an instructor at Eastern Iowa Community College. The book offers a comprehensive introduction to the collision repair profession and industry and is intended as a core curriculum resource in postsecondary courses.

Natural Resources Management

Henriette K. Evans, Act 101 academic and career specialist, presented two workshops at the annual Pennsylvania Association of Developmental Educators conference, held at Grantville. During the workshop titled “Student Advisory Committees – A Winning Deal,” Evans discussed how to make the best use of resources to engage students in leadership activities. She collaborated with Pamela Czapia, director of tutorial services at Lock Haven University, on presenting a second workshop titled “Marketing With Appeal: Increasing the Odds That Students Will Use Learning Centers.” Penn College student Brandon H. O’Dowd, a heating, ventilation and air conditioning technology major from Flemington, N.J., was a guest panelist at the conference.

Academic Support Services

Carl L. Shaner, Student Health Center director, was selected as a program-proposal reviewer for the 2009 National Collegiate Athletic Association CHOICES alcohol education grant. In an effort to educate students about the risks involved with the misuse of alcohol, the NCAA, with the support of the NCAA Foundation and Anheuser-Busch Companies Inc., developed CHOICES, a grant program for alcohol education.

In Memory

Glenn F. Kline, retired associate professor of diesel technology, died Feb. 25.

John W. Miller, retired instructor of computer science, died May 12.

Rita C. Ulrich, retired assistant professor of business/computer technology, died June 11.

Jackie E. Welliver, faculty emeritus, drafting, died Feb. 6.

Williams R. Weyant, retired associate professor of electrical technology/occupations, died Jan. 16.

Lloyd F. Woodling, retired associate professor of mathematics, died June 19.
Give Us Your Nominations

Help the Alumni Relations Office honor worthy graduates from Pennsylvania College of Technology and its predecessor institutions (Williamsport Area Community College and Williamsport Technical Institute) by nominating someone for an alumni award.

The college accepts public nominations for four of its annual awards:

Alumni Citizenship/Humanitarian Award
Presented to two alumni at December commencement, this award recognizes distinguished community or volunteer service.
Nomination deadline is Oct. 1.

Distinguished Alumna/Alumnus Award
Presented at May commencement, this award recognizes significant contributions in the field, as well as a leadership role in the community and commitment to college and community relations.
Nomination deadline is March 1.

Alumna/Alumnus Achievement Award
Presented to a recent graduate at May commencement, this award recognizes noteworthy professional or career accomplishment or dedicated volunteer service to the college or community.
Nomination deadline is March 1.

Outstanding Varsity Athletic Alumni Award
Presented during Homecoming, this award recognizes the accomplishments of Penn College varsity athletic alumni and contributions they have made to their communities.
Nomination deadline is July 1.

A nomination form and the full criteria for each award are published on the Alumni Relations Web site: www.pct.edu/alumni/nominate.htm or call toll-free 877-PCT-ALUM.
THURSDAY, OCT. 8
3 p.m. Team Tennis vs. PSU Mont Alto
Tennis Courts
7 p.m. Women’s Volleyball vs. PSU Abington
Bardo Gym
8 p.m. Flag Football Game
Athletic Field
Come out and watch two great Penn College teams battle for the Homecoming flag football title.
Refreshments will be served.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9
4-6 p.m. Opening Reception: Were You There? The Evolution of a College Campus
The Gallery at Penn College, 3rd Floor, Madigan Library

Don’t miss the opening reception for this exhibit featuring a collection of photographs and artifacts from the Pennsylvania College of Technology Archives. See if you recognize any familiar faces or places from your days at Williamsport Technical Institute, Williamsport Area Community College or Penn College.

5:30 p.m. Friday Night Lights
Athletic Field
Competition heats up under the lights during the annual Homecoming Powder Puff Football Game. Cheer on the ladies as College West and Rose Street take on Campus View and the Village.

SATURDAY, OCT. 10
9 a.m. Williamsport Technical Institute Reunion Registration – W.T.I. Alumni Only
Madigan Library
Connect and share memories with fellow W.T.I. alumni.

9:30 a.m.-noon Homecoming Sale
The College Store, Bush Campus Center
Stop by the College Store before the games to take advantage of a 25 percent discount on all Penn College wear!

10 a.m. Car Show Registration
College West Parking Lot
Have a nice car? Join the Student Government Association and Penn College Motorsports for the Third Annual Homecoming Car Show.
E-mail sga@pct.edu for more information.

11:45 a.m. Ambassador Alumni Reunion Luncheon with Chef Schuman – Ambassador Alumni Only*
Thompson Professional Development Center
Attention former student ambassadors! Director of Admissions Chef Schuman retired after 34 years at Penn College. Wish him well and reconnect with fellow alumni ambassadors. A buffet lunch, catered by Le Jeune Chef, will be served.

12:30-3:30 p.m. Tailgate Party*
Field House
Connect with alumni, students and coaches at the tailgate sponsored by Alumni Relations, Athletics and Student Activities. Mix and mingle with the homecoming court. Meet this year’s Outstanding Varsity Athletic Alumni Award recipients. Enjoy our tailgate menu or bring your own tailgate fare! Space will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

7:30 p.m. Comedian
Community Arts Center
Share laughs downtown with alumni and current students. After the show, socialize at any of the establishments near the theater.

SUNDAY, OCT. 11
11:30 a.m. Homecoming Brunch
Le Jeune Chef Restaurant
Unite and share your weekend stories over brunch at Le Jeune Chef. Sunday brunch ($12.95 plus tax and gratuity) includes student-created breakfast and luncheon favorites, a meat-carving station, and an omelet station.
Call (570) 320-CHEF for reservations.

1-4 p.m. Concert and Exhibition
The Gallery at Penn College, 3rd Floor, Madigan Library
Enjoy a concert of classical guitar music by Alphonse Ciaccio, ’93, 1-2:30 p.m. and the current exhibit: Were you there? The Evolution of a College Campus.

For a complete schedule, visit www.pct.edu/homecoming

RSVP to ALUMNI RELATIONS
at: alumni@pct.edu
(877) PCT-ALUM or (1-877-728-2586)

Pennsylvania College of Technology

*Reservations are required. Contact Alumni Relations today to reserve your seat.
Now, more than ever, our students need your support!

Your gift opens doors.

Institutional Advancement Office
(866) GIVE-2-PC
giving@pct.edu

Please donate online at www.pct.edu/ia
The Gallery at Penn College hosted Artist-in-Residence Miguel Tio, who visited campus for four days to provide art workshops for teachers and parents of young children, including students in the college’s Early Childhood Education major. He also spent three days teaching preschoolers enrolled in the college’s Children’s Learning Center, who later displayed their artwork in the gallery. To view a complete list of upcoming gallery events and to elect to receive the gallery’s e-newsletter, visit www.pct.edu/gallery.
Wildcat archer Lindsey Fackler takes aim during the Eastern Regional Intercollegiate Archery Championships hosted by Penn College. The team earned championships in the women’s compound, men’s compound and men’s recurve divisions and went on to compete at the U.S. Intercollegiate Archery Championships with more than 30 other colleges and universities and more than 200 archers at Long Beach, Calif. The Wildcats won a school-record three team championships, had one individual champion, had a school-record seven All-Americans, finished third overall (the highest in school history) and qualified two archers for the World University Games. Visit www.pct.edu/oca for an update.