‘We’re a Penn College Family, 100 Percent’

How adult students make ‘Plan B’ work

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The Grand Prize-winning entry for the fifth annual CalJava International Wedding Cake Competition was designed by Allison K. Myers, who earned a degree in baking and pastry arts in May. The competition—which featured entries from 14 students in an advanced decorating course—is sponsored by Daniel Budiman, owner of cake and decorating supply company CalJava International. During visits to campus, he observed the students’ talent and creativity and conceived the contest to encourage them to push their skills to a higher level.
Re-Visioning Career Services for New Economy
The Career Services Office boosts its activity to help students and alumni prepare to find their dream jobs.

Designer’s Career Flies With Eagles
Ryan Starr, ’00, says his job as the Philadelphia Eagles’ creative services manager changed his outlook on his profession.

Art of Learning
Graphic-design students offer an exhibit to gallery visitors, a capstone to four years of artful learning.

Building Better Future in Afghanistan
Student Jonathan G. McAvoy helps construct buildings for the Afghan government during a summer internship.

Plan B
Students who return to college later in life often question their abilities, but approach the challenge with focus and determination.

degrees that work.

On the Cover
Technology management student Deborah A. Fassman, left, and her children, Courtney and Noah, work together to juggle schoolwork and the family farm. Courtney, 20, is a student in ornamental horticulture: retail management; Noah, 16, is determined to enroll in the college’s on-site power generation major with a minor in diesel technology. And Courtney is engaged to marry a 2009 Penn College alumnus of the diesel technology major. “I guess you could say we’re a Penn College family, 100 percent,” Deborah says. See story on page 14.
Judges’ Award Among Team’s Feats at International Competition

A team of students returned from Baja SAE with a strong finish among some of the top engineering universities in North and South America and a “Best Prepared Award” from the contest judges.

Eight students – members of the college’s Society of Manufacturing Engineers student chapter – spent months preparing a Baja off-road vehicle for competition at the Society of Automotive Engineers’ Baja Carolina event in Greenville, S.C.

Among 100 colleges and universities from four countries, the team finished 20th overall, with an impressive 12th-place finish in the Suspension and Traction challenge and a 14th place in the Endurance Race, which concluded the three-day series of grueling events.

The team’s “Best Prepared Award” was a surprise. Throughout the event, judges observed teams and determined winners for several special awards, announced during a banquet following the competition.

“It is exciting to compete against such schools as RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology), Clemson, Auburn and other large universities,” said team captain Kevin T. Werkheiser, of Northampton. “I know that this experience allows me to become a better leader. The experience with design and manufacturing in producing the car also helps with my knowledge in these fields.”
Members of the Earth Smart student organization, along with the Horticulture Club and other Penn College students, cleaned a portion of Lycoming Creek behind the Weis Market on Lycoming Creek Road, removing 5 tons of trash from the section of the creek and its banks. The April 10 cleanup was held in conjunction with the Lycoming County Conservation District and the Lycoming Creek Watershed Association. Debris included old tires, lawn chairs and general trash.

Natural Gas Industry

More than two dozen companies operating in the region’s natural gas industry were on hand to discuss job opportunities during the May 1 Marcellus Career Expo of North Central PA in Penn College’s Field House. Workforce Development & Continuing Education and the Marcellus Shale Education & Training Center, in conjunction with the Williamsport/Lycoming Chamber of Commerce and Lycoming County CareerLink, hosted the event. The chamber estimated 3,000 people attended.

The college also received grant funding to help train workers for the gas industry. A $94,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry through the Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission enables Penn College, through the MSETC, to provide training to displaced workers through the pre-employment “Fit 4 Natural Gas” (roustabout) program.

The MSETC also received $200,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to provide a variety of training programs, including “Fit 4 Natural Gas” and programs to boost the training for workers already employed in the industry.

The National Science Foundation awarded the college a $294,689 grant – the first in a continuing $882,134 grant the NSF expects to award over the next three years – to develop state-of-the-art, college-level curriculum to educate and train high school students for careers in the Marcellus Shale natural gas industry.

Students Help Prepare Food, Serve Guests at Kentucky Derby

Thirty-six students – representing the culinary arts and systems, culinary arts technology, baking and pastry arts, and hospitality management majors – were hired to help cook for the thousands of spectators who converged on Churchill Downs in Louisville, Ky., on May 1 for the 2010 running of the Kentucky Derby.

Hired by Levy Restaurants (food operator at Churchill Downs), during on-campus interviews, the students helped prepare and serve food in the facility’s central kitchen to feed those in corporate and private guest suites at the Derby.
Students’ Solar Project Allows Firsthand Look at Energy Savings

A grant-funded student project is bringing today’s “green” sensitivity to a campus landmark.

An array of photovoltaic panels was installed just southwest of the college’s Victorian House, a student-designed-and-built guest facility. Penn College was one of a dozen institutions to receive a $15,000 Solar Scholars grant from the Sustainable Energy Fund to introduce related studies into its curricula and convert an on-campus building to partial solar power.

The panels connect to an inverter that turns the direct-current voltage into alternating-current voltage and then right into the breaker box. The inverter has an interface that allows for integration with the Internet, collecting frequently updated data about power production, carbon-dioxide reduction and cost-savings for display at www.pct.edu/sunnyportal.

“If students are thinking, ‘It’s a nice day today; I wonder if our solar panels are generating any power,’ they can access the Web from any classroom or laboratory and see what they’re producing,” explained Wayne E. Gebhart, assistant professor of electrical technologies and occupations. “We can talk about it in our classes, then actually go and see it working.”

The panels will benefit students in one of the college’s newest majors: a two-year degree in renewable energy technologies that will help students develop the skills to install, troubleshoot and maintain photovoltaic, wind-turbine and solar-thermal systems.

Campus Speaker Recounts His Infiltration of KKK

Daryl Davis, whose “Klan-Destine Relationships: A Black Man’s Odyssey in the Ku Klux Klan” details the author’s decades-long battle against racism, delivered a lecture in the Klump Academic Center Auditorium. His appearance was sponsored by the Student Government Association in conjunction with Penn College’s observance of Black History Month.
Students in two-year School of Construction and Design Technologies majors and their advisers, from left: Barney A. Kahn, instructor of building construction technology; students Michael J. Buchalski, Luke F. Bender, Matthew A. Johnson and Michael E. Millan; and Garret L. Graff, instructor of building construction technology.

Weatherization Training Center Catches Energy Department’s Eye

Penn College’s renowned Weatherization Training Center turned soundstage when a video producer for the U.S. Department of Energy shot footage for the agency’s efficiency and renewable-energy division. Brian Sabin trained his camera on instructional specialists Brian K. Wilson (also an alumnus) and Gerald A. Welschans as they demonstrated laboratory exercises typically employed at the newly modernized training center on Reach Road. Sabin also visited a Combustion Analysis and Retrofit class; met with three alumni (Dawn Moody, Kirk Gennett and Karl Orwig); and spent time in the field with STEP Inc., a local Weatherization Assistance provider.

Student Organizations Finish Strong in National Events

Seven members of Pennsylvania College of Technology’s Construction Management Association – representing the smallest institution among the 23 colleges and universities at the Associated Builders and Contractors Inc. national competition in San Diego – returned with four awards, including Student Chapter of Excellence honors.

Penn College finished fifth overall and placed first in safety and third in project management/scheduling during the ABC Student Chapter Construction Management Competition held during the association’s annual convention. CMA also was named a Student Chapter of Excellence.

Seventeen Penn College students also traveled to national competition in Las Vegas.

The students are largely members of the Penn College Construction Association, which entered two teams – representing two- and four-year majors within the college’s School of Construction and Design Technologies – in the National Association of Home Builders Competition held within the International Builders Show at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

PCCA President Brian D. West, a residential construction technology and management student from Newark, Del., was one of only 29 participants to receive Outstanding Student honors at the awards ceremony.

The four-year team, challenged to develop a piece of property in Coriscana, Texas, placed 25th in a competitive 39-team field. The two-year team – which finished fourth among 15 teams – had to provide a complete set of working drawings, a detailed materials estimate and a complete construction schedule for a home to be built in St. Louis.
For most students, college is a value proposition: Invest in a college education with the expectation that, upon graduation, you will enjoy a long-term return on your investment in the form of career opportunities and advancement within your chosen profession.

Pennsylvania College of Technology takes that investment seriously, and the Career Services Office is tasked with supporting the promise of “degrees that work” by preparing graduates to compete and excel in the workforce. However, today’s students and new graduates face unprecedented challenges as they transition into their first jobs, due in large part to the economic crisis that took hold of the country in 2008.

Between 2008 and 2009, the unemployment rate for college graduates across the nation doubled, from 2.1 percent to 4.3 percent, and more than 1 million college graduates lost their jobs. The difficult economic climate has placed greater pressure on college students to prepare themselves for exceptional competition in the workforce as they now compete with not only new graduates, but also with seasoned professionals who have been displaced by the sagging economy. The hard economic climate has been evident on campus with decreases in the number of job openings posted with Career Services, the number of employer participants in Career Fairs and the number of employers participating in on-campus recruiting activities.

Students are aware of the challenges they face, and in the 2009-10 academic year, Career Services saw a record number of students looking for assistance. Career Services has also experienced a dramatic increase in requests for assistance from alumni. Student and alumni requests for support ranged from how to tie a necktie, to mastering the second interview for a Fortune 500 company, to assistance with re-careering and updating skills. To accommodate the rapidly escalating need for services and heightened employer expectations, the office has established additional programming to address student and alumni requests while extending its outreach to the academic schools, collaborating with faculty to tailor Career Services concepts to specific industries.

First impressions do matter. Career Services assists students and alumni to make a positive first impression with résumé help, interview practice, and workshops on professionalism and etiquette.

Career Services has experienced increased demand for:
- student office visits
- student mock-interview appointments
- alumni office visits
- alumni Career Fair visits

Re-Visioning Career Services for New Economy

by Shelley L. Moore, assistant director of Career Services, and Jennifer McLean, director of counseling, career and disability services
Now more than ever, it is important for students and alumni to work with career services to create a résumé and cover letter that highlights specific technical skills and abilities acquired through education and experience. As résumés and cover letters provide the initial “introduction” to the employer, it is critical that these contain enough “wow” to stand out from the competition and generate the best chance to secure the elusive and coveted interview.

Career Services can help with acing the interview, as well. Just as the résumé and cover letter provide the introduction between candidate and employer, the interview is the proverbial “first date” – and first impressions do matter. Research before the interview is critical to success during the interview. Career Services can help students and alumni prepare by conducting mock interviews tailored by position, providing assistance with researching the company and its clients, and stepping through the sometimes daunting process of salary negotiation.

With the economy on the verge of recovery, possibly now is the time to think about graduate school. In the past year, Career Services has assisted a record number of students with choosing a program and getting started with the graduate-application process. An additional two-year educational investment, while the economy continues to recover, may be the key to entering the workforce at a good time, with additional qualifications.

Career development begins as a freshman and lasts a lifetime. Visit or call Career Services to gain insight into job trends, get advice about career advancement and re-careering, and hone the skills to help maximize the return on your educational investment. Check the office’s resources at www.pct.edu/careerservices.
AVID PHILADELPHIA EAGLES FANS
(Is there any other kind?) are likely well acquainted with the work of Pennsylvania College of Technology alumnus Ryan Starr, ’00.

The graphic design graduate, the team’s creative services manager, became the Eagles’ first – and only – in-house graphic designer when he was hired in 2007. As such, his job can be demanding but is filled with variety.

“On a given day, my job duties could go from the simplest tasks, like designing an e-mail invitation for a happy hour for our premium services department, to very high-level tasks like designing our season tickets or implementing our branding campaign for the current season throughout our print and Web materials.

“Some of the larger tasks I have over the course of the year include the design and layout of the cheerleader calendar; the concept, design and integration of the branding campaign over the course of a season; art direction of our publications; and support for our Web department,” he said.

Starr moved to the Philadelphia area following his Penn College graduation and has been working there since. He lives in the city’s suburbs with his wife, Marisa, and daughter Zoe, who is his greatest joy.

Happy as he is, graphic design was not the career path Starr had intended to follow.

“When I was growing up, I always imagined myself a writer, and I thought that’s what I would do when I went to college,” he said.

But his favorite English teacher – watching the enjoyment Starr got editing the high school yearbook – suggested he look into the graphic design program at Penn College.

“I came for a visit and was impressed with the facilities, and while I was already accepted at Penn State, I pulled out and went to Penn College instead,” he said.

He had difficulty at first with the major’s art-intensive introductory courses.

“I think I went in thinking it was all going to be Photoshop and QuarkXpress, and I was disappointed at first for the lack of those classes upfront,” he said. “It wasn’t until later that I realized classes like Color Theory and Drawing were laying a foundation for what we would do later over the four years, and by the end of those four years, I was glad...

Designer’s Career Flies With Eagles

by Jennifer A. Cline, writer/editor-One College Avenue
that I had that background, when I sat down in front of Photoshop or QuarkXpress, that I wouldn’t have had early on.

“When I talk to my peers about their college experiences, I find that no one really had one like I did at Penn College, and I’m thankful for it, because I feel it gives me a different perspective, which is one of the more important things to have in this field.”

One of the projects he’s excited to infuse with his unique perspective is the Eagles’ 2010 season tickets.

“It’s really exciting for me to see this new idea come to life,” Starr said. “This year we reached out to our season ticket holders to share with us their stories, and we were touched by the depths of their passion for Eagles football, so we decided to feature a fan on all 10 of our season tickets.

“The idea came from a comp that I did two seasons ago – which is a lesson to the current class of designers: never throw anything away – and it’s been a whirlwind experiment, from getting the idea approved to reaching out to the fan base to actually whittling down the best stories and finally having them come in for a photo shoot, not to mention finally laying out the tickets in all the various sizes that we need them and getting them prepped for print. I can’t wait to see how we integrate these fans into our game-day presentations. I really think the fans are going to enjoy it.”

The Eagles fans, known for showing unabashed emotion for their team, are at the heart of Starr’s work.

“I really like to think I’m doing things that a fan will look at and go: ‘That’s cool. I want to hang that in my Eagles room.’ We really do have the most passionate fans in the NFL, and I like that I might be adding to the graphic history of the team,” he said.

While Starr has had his share of what might have been dream jobs, including senior designer and later art director at a Philadelphia marketing firm, his current position far surpasses them.

“In fact, this is the best job I’ve ever had,” he says. “Ironically, I think I was about ready to look for something else before this job came along. I was very disillusioned with the job I was at before this one. Even though, from the outside, it looked like I should have been happy, I was very unhappy.

“Then I got the job at the Eagles, and my passion for design was renewed. Being happy with what you do is the most important thing.”

Starr developed the logo that will accompany promotional material for the 2010 kickoff weekend, when the Eagles will commemorate their 1960 NFL Championship win over the Packers. “The shape of the crest is meant to invoke the NFL shield. The Eagle Head, our current mark, at the top of the crest is balanced by the 1960 eagle with his wings spread in the banner at the base of the crest,” Starr said.

See more of Starr’s work at www.ryanstarrdesign.com.
Twenty seniors in the graphic design major exhibited a variety of work during “Design: 2010,” a student portfolio exhibition in The Gallery at Penn College. The exhibit is a capstone experience for the students, who spent the spring semester refining their portfolios. Graphic design faculty pored over 400 pieces of student work, ultimately selecting 10 from each student for display at the gallery event.

“For four years, they’re very critical of your work,” said Hennig, who noted the critiques are an essential part of the learning process. “You’re always striving for those positive comments. You know they (the work selected for the exhibit) are pieces that they absolutely love. This is the first time they say, ‘Here are 10 pieces we think are worth showing off.’ It’s very gratifying.”
Christine M. Yocum

“It’s nice to be able to look back over all the work you’ve done” with the new perspective of a soon-to-be graphic design graduate, Yocum said. Using knowledge gained in courses, students in the final-semester portfolio course improve and create new work. “It’s definitely beneficial; this is what you would take to an interview.”

A major assignment for graphic design students is to create – from concept to final presentation – the entire visual identity for a business, corporation or nonprofit organization, (logo, stationery, brochures, signage, etc.). Shown here is the logo design for an automotive company designed by Summer A. Sweeley.

Simon J. Guglielmelli

“You don’t start out with something that looks like what is printed here. It requires a lot of processing. It’s very demanding,” said Guglielmelli, a Venezuela native, who learned to analyze what images and colors communicate. “It’s very challenging, very painstaking, but once you get it done, it’s really rewarding.”
The Gallery at Penn College is seeking entries for an alumni exhibit, to be called “Kaleidoscope,” in 2011. See Page 22 to learn how to submit your work.

Media Arts

The graphic design major – students of which showed their work during the “Design: 2010” exhibit – is among several media arts related programs at Pennsylvania College of Technology. These majors have been revised and expanded in recent years:

**Bachelor’s degrees**

- **Graphic communications management**: prepares students for production and management positions in the printing and publishing industry
- **Graphic design**: develops students’ skills in the visual arts for a career in graphic design
- **Industrial and human factors design**: prepares students to design products and systems that are stylish, comfortable and intuitive for the user

**Associate degrees**

- **Advertising art**: prepares students for employment in advertising art; the core coursework is nearly identical to the first two years of study in the graphic design major
- **Graphic communications technology**: prepares students to work in production positions in the printing and publishing industry
- **Mass media communication**: offers hands-on writing, production and programming in radio and video fields
- **Studio arts**: develops skills in visual arts through a variety of foundation courses and studio-art electives; prepares students to transfer to institutions offering studio fine-art majors such as painting, drawing, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture and textiles

Suzanne M. La Forge

“I really think that you achieve synthesis in Portfolio (Design) and in Senior Project (courses) when everything you’ve learned in school comes together in unity. The portfolio and senior project demonstrate our versatility as graphic designers,” La Forge said.
Building Better Future in Afghanistan

Far from the comforts of campus, immersed in culture shock — and the 24/7 anxiety of a life during wartime — a Pennsylvania College of Technology construction student learned firsthand about the value and portability of the institution’s educational philosophy.

Jonathan G. McAvoy, of Brick, N.J., who majors in residential construction technology and management: building construction technology concentration, served a five-and-a-half-week internship in Kabul, Afghanistan (with a few trips to Kandahar, the largest of the country’s southern provinces) last summer.

Working through the on-site construction division of RM Asia, an international provider of commercial vehicles, power generators and the like, the 21-year-old had one of the more unique laboratory experiences available to Penn College students.

“We constructed mostly steel-fabricated living facilities, dining facilities, vehicle-maintenance buildings and armory storage buildings … for (use by) the Afghan government (in the) training of police and military,” he said. “I was the safety officer on those jobs. We had a briefing every morning about what we were looking to accomplish that day, how we were going to go about doing that, the safest and best practices.”

McAvoy said he wanted to go to Afghanistan for an eye-opening look at a vastly different society and to gain insight into the workings of business half a world away.

He said he felt uncomfortable at first, adjusting to the different atmosphere that comes with being on the other side of the globe — and in hostile surroundings.

“Just getting around, you know, everyday life is so much more complicated over there,” McAvoy said. “But eventually, you settle in and start getting acquainted with everyone around you.”

Businesses are managed differently, and not everything is at one’s fingertips, as in America, he said. And every day brings ominous reminders that Afghanistan is a battleground.

“On a day-to-day basis, I felt safe,” he said. “You do have a fear in the back of your mind, (but) at the same time, you’ve just got to go along with life and try to make Afghanistan a more livable, better place to be.”

How does a transplanted resident of the Garden State survive in a politically and commercially volatile environment 6,800 miles from home? With the skills he learned at Penn College, he said.

“The company was impressed with the unique, hands-on courses that you’re allowed to take here … and also the management aspect (of) construction that’s not offered at most colleges,” said McAvoy, whose skills allowed him to engage in estimating, scheduling and resolution of occasional on-site turmoil.

He said the interpersonal skills he learned outside his School of Construction and Design Technologies course work also were invaluable.

“My communications classes … helped me drastically (in dealing) with management, locals (and) contractors; setting up jobs and just all-around communicating with people from around the world.” In the process, the commercial exposure took him out of his residential comfort zone and, he believes, made him a more well-rounded person.

“I’m grateful that Penn College has helped make this possible. … And now that I’ve traveled the world, I know that the possibilities are endless,” McAvoy said.

“And now that I’ve traveled the world, I know that the possibilities are endless.”

Web Extra Watch a video of Jonathan G. McAvoy’s Afghanistan experience at www.pct.edu/oca
Deborah A. Fassman operates heavy equipment on her grass-fed beef farm. Her work on the farm inspired her to pursue a degree in heavy construction equipment: operator emphasis.

Adult students conquer obstacles with return to classroom

by Jennifer A. Cline, writer/editor-One College Avenue
DEBORAH A. FASSMAN had a busy life, raising two children and helping her husband run their 113-acre grass-fed beef farm near Nescopeck. She’d already gone through college and had a good job working in the nuclear industry, which she left to rear her children.

But when her husband died in 2005, Fassman had to make a change.

“That’s when I realized I would have to support myself and my children. I could no longer just take care of the house and the farm,” she said.

Her husband owned construction equipment, and he taught Fassman how to use it on the farm.

“There was still a project going on at home when he died,” Fassman said. “So I hopped on and finished the project.”

Perhaps it was the fresh air, perhaps the solitude of the cab, but it was on a construction vehicle that “Plan B” crystallized.

“All the jobs I had before were inside; then all those years working on the farm outdoors, I enjoyed it,” she said. “You put me on a bulldozer, and I could be on it 24 hours a day. I think I just love to do it. So I thought: What jobs are out there that I could do?”

When she learned that Penn College offers degrees in heavy construction equipment, she talked to some acquaintances who had attended the college and researched the college’s website.

“It gave me a lot of information that – before I even came to campus – I thought, ‘Well, that’s the place to go.’”

In Fall 2007, she enrolled full time in heavy construction equipment: operator emphasis. Despite that her home is more than an hour away from main campus. And that her children, Noah, who was in middle school, and Courtney, who was in high school, would also be more than an hour away. Despite that she was 45 and it had been almost 20 years since she had left her last job and even longer since she had taken a college course. And despite that her schedule was already full.

The anxiety threatened to hold her back.

“I was afraid to come. … I didn’t know if I could do it,” she remembers. She took her fears to Mary Sullivan, dean of natural resources management.

“She came in as an adult student with the fears that many returning students face: Did I forget everything I learned in high school? How can I compete with these young kids? What if I’m the oldest person in my class? What if I’m older than my teachers?” Sullivan said. “In her case, she also had the ‘Is this the field for a woman?’ question.

“I told her she had already gotten through the hardest part of her life and that it had prepared her for whatever obstacles and problems she might face as a student.”

DEDICATION

Adults over the age of 25 were 20 percent of the Penn College student body in Fall 2009.

Counselor Kathryn A. Lehman echoed Sullivan’s perspective regarding some of the fears many adult students have about rusty study skills and competing with 18-year-olds.

“And they obviously are very worried about time management – juggling the different responsibilities,” Lehman said. “But most – whatever lackings they might have – make it up with focus and discipline. The stakes are much higher for them. … They are mindful of the fact that they need to get done as quickly as possible and do the best that they can.”

Victor J. Swanger, who graduated in May at age 60, shared classes with both returning and traditional-age students and made the same observation. >>
Most of the older students seemed more dedicated to getting better grades, because they knew they had to return to the job market to support their families and pay their mortgages,” he said. “I still have a daughter in high school.”

Swanger and Fassman proved their determination. Both posted stellar grades, and Fassman earned two graduation awards when she received her associate degree in May 2009. Two months before her graduation, she was hired by a small construction company, adding a full-time job to preparing for finals and managing her family and farm. She continues to juggle a full-time job – as an aggregate technician at Glenn O. Hawbaker Inc.’s quarry in Hazleton – with family and farm responsibilities while continuing as a part-time distance-learning student in Penn College’s technology management bachelor-degree major.

“The price I pay for my education isn’t just my money,” she said. It’s also time away from the rest of her duties. “You’ve got a lot more invested when you get older. You’re more focused on where you want to go.”

LIFE AFTER THE ARMY

Jamie L. Augustine, 33, who enrolled in business administration: small business and entrepreneurship concentration, is equally focused on her education – more, she says, than she was at 18. An Army veteran, she, too, became a single mother without warning when her husband passed away in 2008.

She knew when she graduated from Williamsport Area High School in 1995 that her ultimate goal was to earn a degree. But she also knew she was not prepared to commit the attention college would require.

“I wanted to be free and see the world,” she said.
She put her college plans on hold and joined the military.

During her 10-year Army career, Augustine lived in two foreign countries and was a guard for three years at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. She also met her late husband, with whom she has a 5-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son.

Through it all, college remained a priority. When she left the Army, she began working toward an associate degree through an online institution.

When her husband died, Augustine decided to return to Williamsport. She completed her online associate degree in December 2008 and enrolled full time at Penn College in Fall 2009.
“When the Post-9/11 GI Bill came out, I decided I would be silly if I did not take up this opportunity to go back to college,” she said. “Penn College had the degree I was interested in, and they accepted the GI Bill. So, it was a given.” It was also the alma mater of her brother, sister-in-law and mother – also a nontraditional student who enrolled when Augustine was a high school freshman.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill provides funds toward tuition and fees, a monthly housing allowance, and a stipend toward books and supplies.

The benefit allows Augustine to focus on her children and her schoolwork without adding another job to the mix. Her day begins early, getting her children ready and dropping them off at day care, spending most of the day in classes, squeezing in some time to study and complete errands before picking them up, then finishing her homework after the children go to sleep.

While juggling her roles as a full-time student and a single mother of preschoolers is tiring, she has not – through all her experiences – abandoned the positive attitude with which she faces each day. She even added a new activity: competing in 5Ks and sprint-length triathlons, and she was nominated as the marketing director for Students in Free Enterprise for 2010-11.

“I approach my long list of responsibilities as a mission,” Augustine said. “I am very mission-oriented. Sometimes I get overwhelmed with managing my time. But I lay it all out on the table and set my priorities straight and get the mission accomplished.”

Fassman, too, said her success is the result of time management, self-discipline and determination – and the support of her teenage children.

“Since their father died, my kids have accepted a lot of responsibilities,” Fassman said. “If it wasn’t for what they’re willing to do with helping out at home, around the farm and helping each other, I definitely wouldn’t have made it where I am today.”

“I am just proud to be here, and to be in school achieving something that I thought I may never be able to accomplish as a single mom and a widow,” said Augustine, a student majoring in business administration: small business and entrepreneurship concentration.
At 60, Victor J. Swanger earned a certificate in electrical trades, several decades after his Air Force training as a computer operator. Above, Swanger receives an Airman of the Quarter award. Inset, Swanger with his wife, Elaine.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

Lehman said many returning students – like Fassman and Augustine – enroll following a crisis.

“You don’t retrain as an adult and take it as a whim or do it lightly,” she said. “It really throws a big monkey wrench into your life. So there has to be a compelling reason.”

For some, it is the end of a marriage; for others, it is the loss of a job they loved – due to the economy or physical problems that do not allow them to continue to do their work. Others retire from the military or another field and want to begin a second career.

Swanger had foregone the opportunity once to return to school. Trained during his four years in the Air Force as a data-processing machine operator and computer operator, he was unable to find a good job related to his military training when he returned to Pennsylvania in 1972, when computers were not widely used in business. Instead, he went to work for International Paper Co. in Lewisburg, where he remained for 30 years, until the plant closed in 2002, and operations moved to South Carolina and Mexico.

The displaced International employees eventually became eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance, a government program that provides training and other benefits for individuals separated from their jobs due to foreign trade. But by that time, Swanger was working at Springs Window Fashions in Montgomery and did not feel it would be worth the financial burden to leave and go to school.

“This was a mistake, but I had no way of knowing what would happen to the economy and that I would have my job eliminated,” Swanger said.

Like International Paper, Springs moved many positions to Mexico and cut many others.

“I decided to take advantage of TRA (Trade Readjustment Allowance) and find a … school to improve my chances for re-employment,” he said.

He had received informal training in electrical jobs from his father and from doing his own electrical work. He looked at schools that offered electrical
courses and ultimately chose Penn College’s applied technical studies: electrical trades emphasis.

“For me, it was a challenge to go back to school after over 40 years,” he said. He was pleasantly surprised to pass the college’s placement tests and not require any remediation before entering his required math and English courses, but he was taken out of his “comfort zone” in other ways.

“The classes were different, with computers and (graphing) calculators being used,” he said. “I had used neither in high school. I was older than my instructors, and most of the students were in their 20s and had better computer skills than I had acquired on the job.

“(But) most of the instructors were helpful and understanding of the nontraditional students, and the Tutoring Center was helpful with calculator use.”

Lehman said the added academic support helps make Penn College attractive to returning students.

“We have more support services per student than a lot of other colleges,” she said. Those include academic support services such as free tutoring, disability services, counseling and career services, and a veterans affairs coordinator.

Also important, Lehman said, is the open-enrollment policy, which makes applying to Penn College user-friendly for adult students, and the availability of one- and two-year programs that present a clear pathway to employment or continuing education.

Fassman, like Swanger, was initially intimidated by the new technology, but found herself embracing the new study tools.

“Once you grasp the technology, college is easier this time around,” she said.

She also found that it didn’t take long to fit in with her younger, mostly male, classmates.

Although she was initially the last picked when students chose lab partners, that changed as soon as students saw that she and her partner earned the best grades.

“Deb became a role model for the younger students,” Sullivan said. “They used her as a resource and tutor.”

Sullivan recalls explaining to Fassman, when she was unsure of herself, that “adult students are a ‘gift from God’ in the classroom.”

“They are motivated, engaged and challenge faculty members,” she said. “They bring a wealth of practical life experience in and have a maturity and wisdom that adds so much to classroom discussions.”

Augustine agrees that she is more likely to succeed as a student now than when she graduated from high school.

“My outlook on life has definitely changed since I was 18. Accomplishing responsibilities took on a different meaning as soon as I became a soldier. … I am a whole different person nowadays. I personally like myself a lot better nowadays! Age 18 was a very long time ago,” she said.

All three of these adult students – while taking momentous steps to return to the classroom and excel – acknowledge that their tests are not over.

“I had an overall GPA of 3.84,” said Swanger, who could be looking forward to retirement. “I now face the challenge of getting back into the job market with many younger people and very few jobs available. I know that I must work beyond the normal retirement age to recover from economic losses in pay and retirement funds.”

Fassman – once so unsure about returning to school – plans to continue earning nothing less than straight A’s as she completes her bachelor’s degree and goes on to pursue a master’s and a doctorate in education.

Augustine has two years of study remaining to earn her bachelor’s degree and hopes, eventually, to use it to open her own small business.

“I would not change a thing that I have gone through, and I would never go back to change my choices in life,” she said. “I just keep looking toward the future with a positive outlook and deal with my challenges as they come to me.”
Four decades of forestry graduates reunite at the Earth Science Center.

Joe J. Pearl, '76, ornamental horticulture, received a bachelor's degree in archaeology/elementary education from Arizona State University in 1984. He is owner of Fidels Insurance in Phoenix, where he lives.

Kari Sauder, '77, engineering drafting, is a partner in K.L. Sauder Restoration Inc. She is responsible for kitchen, bathroom, interior and exterior designs and purchasing and sales in a contracting business focused on whole-house renovation. Sauder, who resides in Montoursville, was the first woman in the union at E. Keefer Co., a manufacturer of industrial boilers.

Franklin P. Stahl, '77, tool design technology, resides in Hamburg. He earned a bachelor's degree in theology in 1983 from Walla Walla University. For the past 27 years, he has been a teacher/administrator for the Blue Mountain Seventh-Day Adventist Elementary School. During his tenure as teacher/principal, he received numerous awards and served on many educational committees.

Mark W. Wendt, '83, welding, is a pipeliner supervisor for the Federal Bureau of Prisons and resides in Wake Forest, N.C. Wendt received an award from the U.S. Attorney General for designing a security device that is used in federal prisons across the country.

Thomas M. Corcoran, '85, service and operation of heavy equipment, is president/owner of Abingdon's Complete Services in Abingdon, Md. His company installs nitrogen-reduction septic systems, grinds stumps, builds fences and does general excavation, demolition and site-specialist work.

Beth A. Vuocolo, '86, word processing, is pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work at Lock Haven University. She resides in Flemington and is employed as department secretary for the university’s Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.

David T. Worthing, '87, automotive mechanics, is a research scientist for The Hershey Co. and resides in Middletown. He works in chocolate flavor/formulation research and development.

Stew M. Merritts, '88, construction carpentry, graduated with a master’s degree in safety and environmental management from West Virginia University in 1994. He manages the Occupational Safety and Health Program for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Matthew W. Miller, '95, building construction technology, lives in Whitehall and is a project superintendent for Allied Building Corp. His job is to oversee day-to-day operations for commercial construction projects.

Gerald T. Showers, '69, architectural technology, is senior bridge technician for Gannett Fleming Inc. He resides in Mount Pleasant Mills.

Gene Stum, '71, forest technology, received a biology degree from York College and is natural sciences coordinator for URS Corp., headquartered in Hunt Valley, Md. His job includes environmental management of forests and wetlands relative to transportation projects, including airports, highways and other civil projects. Stum lives in Glen Rock.

William R. Burns, '72, education and social work, retired in December 1987 as unit manager at the Lewisburg federal penitentiary. Burns, who resides in Fort Worth, Texas, has spent his career working in the federal prison system in Pennsylvania, Texas, Florida and Connecticut.

More than 40 Williamsport Area Community College and Penn College forestry alumni (including Ronald Yaple, of Sheffield, Mass., who drove 282 miles) attended the 40th anniversary reunion for the forest technology program and the Mid-Atlantic Intercollegiate Woodsmen’s Meet at the college’s Schneebeli Earth Science Center. Penn College students – whose team finished third overall at the April 17 meet – competed in 19 categories against their counterparts from four other institutions: Haywood Community College, Clyde, N.C. (which placed first); Penn State Mont Alto (second); Allegany College of Maryland (fourth); and Montgomery Community College, Troy, N.C. (fifth).
Building the Future
Stage X construction and renovations are complete.
Return to campus for a visit!

See the new Dauphin Hall student residence hall and the renovated Parkes Automotive Technologies Center, Avco-Lycoming Metal Trades Center, and Hager Lifelong Education Center.

OCTOBER 8-10
HOMECOMING 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

Friday
Bread and Pastry Sale
Ambassador Reunion*
- Stop by Admissions for a visit, then connect with current and former ambassadors.
Friday Night Lights - Powderpuff football and fireworks
Alumni & Student Hiawatha River Cruise*
- Spend an evening on the river paddleboat and enjoy guitarist Lenny Webber.

Saturday
10th Annual Williamsport Technical Institute Reunion *
Sale - The College Store
Resident Assistants Alumni Luncheon* in new Dauphin Hall
Tailgate Party with prizes
Soccer matches (women’s & men’s)
Alumni Soccer Match*
Car Show
The Gallery at Penn College Exhibit
Alumni Happy Hour*
- Meet alumni downtown at the popular Bullfrog Brewery - 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Snooki with comedian Michael Dean Ester*

Sunday
Brunch - Le Jeune Chef
The Gallery at Penn College Exhibit & Music by Alphonse Ciaccio ’93

* RSVP required - contact Alumni Relations

See complete details (including times and locations) online at www.pct.edu/homecoming

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www.pct.edu/alumni/info
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866-PCT-ALUM
Terry J. Anselmo, ’97, toolmaking technology, is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in adult education from Penn State. He resides in Sunbury and is a precision machining instructor at SUN Area Technical Institute.

Gaye Jenkins, ’97, applied human services, earned a master’s degree in adult education and is pursuing a doctoral degree at The Pennsylvania State University.

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### Business and Computer Technologies

**Terry A. Girdon**, professor of management and business administration, was elected to a three-year term on the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education Board of Directors. He will serve as vice chair of the board during the first year, as chair during the second, and as past chair during the third year. The assembly is one of three business-degree accrediting bodies for colleges and universities worldwide. All of the business and accounting degree programs at Penn College have been accredited by the IACBE since 1998.

### Health Sciences


### Hospitality

**Paul Mach**, assistant professor of hospitality management/culinary arts, presented a workshop at the Pennsylvania Tourism and Lodging Association’s annual Food and Beverage Conference. Mach presented a session titled “Pennsylvania Beer Versus Wine and Sustainable Tapas” with Tim Bowser, owner of Elk Creek Café and Aleworks in Millheim, and John Kollin, of Liberty Wines/Southern Wine & Spirits. The fourth annual conference was held at The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel in State College.

### Integrated Studies

**David L. Evans**, professor of biology, was appointed to the editorial board of BioScience, the monthly, peer-reviewed journal of the American Institute of Biological Sciences. AIBS is an umbrella organization for around 200 biological-sciences societies. In his role, Evans will seek contributors and peer-reviewers for the journal, specifically in human biology.

**Bruce E. Huffman**, instructor of media arts/video production; **Brad L. Nason**, associate professor of mass communications; and **Thomas F. Speicher**, video production developer (College Information and Community Relations), served as a judging panel for the Pacific Southwest and San Francisco/Northern California chapters of the National Association of Television Arts and Sciences’ Emmy Awards. The trio judged the interview/discussion program or special feature segment category for San Francisco/Northern California chapter.

**Debra S. Morris**, assistant professor of English/technical communication, presented a lecture titled “The Censoring of Mothering: Images of Women in Fahrenheit 451.” She was invited to deliver the talk as part of the Honors Lecture Series presented by Harrisburg Area Community College.


### Natural Resources Management

**G. Andrew Bartholomay**, assistant professor of forest technology, presented a session titled “Forest Technology Program Outcome Assessment” at the 8th Biennial Conference on University Education in Natural Resources at Virginia Tech. He discussed Penn College’s new Outcome Assessment initiative and how it is being applied in the forest technology program. His Forest Surveying I class was used as an example of how course-outcome assessment works in concert with program assessment.

**Carl J. Bower Jr.**, instructor of horticulture, reviewed the current edition of “Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Culture and Use” by Ferrell Bridwell. The publisher, Delmar/Cengage Learning, is planning the next edition and requested Bower’s assistance.

### Children’s Learning Center

**Karen Woland Payne**, director, presented a workshop at the Annual Conference of the National Coalition of Campus Children’s Centers, held in Orlando, Fla., April 7-10. Her presentation, “Grantwriting Tips for Beginners,” offered basic tips on how to write successful grant proposals, a comparison of government versus private foundation grants, how to work successfully with a campus grants office, and the grants reader’s perspective – how grants are “graded” and what was learned from sitting on the other side of the table.

### Student Health Services

**Carl L. Shaner**, director, was chosen as a program-proposal reviewer for the 2010 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. Through the program, the NCAA provides funding for its member institutions and conferences to integrate athletics into campuswide efforts to reduce alcohol abuse.

### In Memory

**Jack A. Mirto**, retired assistant professor of auto body, died June 29.

**Ramon H. Palmer**, faculty emeritus, physics, died March 22.

**Joseph G. Mark**, retired associate professor of architectural technology, died Feb. 19.
I told him that to catch a butterfly, you must be a butterfly, meaning that you must think like the animal. Many a prospective entomologist has made a fool of himself by chasing butterflies – they can easily outfly you! But if you think like a butterfly, wanting some lovely nectar from a flower, you almost always will bag your bug!

Steve (the names have been changed) was an autistic child in the “Bug Camp” that I used to direct on Pennsylvania College of Technology’s campus, and thinking of him made me think of all the other insect-fanciers I have worked with over the years. The fine adult men and women who acted as my mentors are certainly among those folks. Also, there was the lovely late spring morning in the mountains of Lebanon, collecting for a friend in Germany, with my baby son on my back, accompanied by his grandfather – three generations of lepidopterists!

What a joy African butterflies were! I remember one afternoon coming across a jungle glen to see a cloud of flying jewels. How about the time I was with my much older son in a Costa Rican dwarf forest and saw a squadron of the rare blue heliconius?

But most of all, I think of Jackie. Jackie was the best male friend I ever had. Jackie had Down syndrome. We would spend hours and days together, moving from one group of desert flowers to the next in the frying Arizona sun. The desert rosewood flowers were a dependable stop for the two young bug collectors. Those were wonderful, innocent times, and I will remember him until I die. He and I won many blue ribbons in the county fair for our insect collections; eventually, I won several major prizes and even a scholarship to the University of Arizona. But Jackie never would go down the long trail I have traveled.

You see, we were also into baseball: him – passionately; me – a sometimes right fielder with more interest in cloud-gazing than baseball-playing. One day in the middle of a game, as I warmed a bench, Jackie suddenly fell over dead at shortstop – his fragile heart would fly no longer. Nobody had told the young David that, in those days, a diagnosis of Down syndrome was often a diagnosis of early death from cardiac failure.

I haven’t had an insect collection of my own for decades; I gave everything away. But my mind still flies back to those wonderful afternoons at the desert rosewood.
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Start your collection of memorabilia in celebration of the 100th anniversary!

This book captures the images and recollections that were shared during the 2009 retrospective exhibit in The Gallery at Penn College. Included are photographs and memorabilia from Williamsport Technical Institute, Williamsport Area Community College and Pennsylvania College of Technology.

Copies will be available for purchase this fall at The College Store in the Bush Campus Center. Preorder online at www.penncollegebooks.com