Eat Their Dust!

RYAN HENDRICKSON ’08 LEADS A TEAM OF RMU ENGINEERS AT THE BAJA SAE CHALLENGE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Sowing the Seeds of Nonprofit Success

The Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management provides valuable support to nonprofits like the Mattress Factory on Pittsburgh’s North Side.
DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Every year, like clockwork, those of us who work in higher education encounter at least one person who says, “It must be nice not to have to work all summer.”

The truth is that summer is a hectic time in the life of a university. Professors plan courses, coaches prepare their teams, prospective students visit, and workers make repairs and oversee construction.

As you well know, summer isn’t exactly a lazy time for students either. This past summer, for example, we had students who traveled to The Gambia, Ireland and Nicaragua as part of their RMU coursework. Other students helped German exchange students in Pittsburgh produce a documentary about life in the former steel town of Braddock. And in this issue of *Foundations*, you will read about engineering students who went to Illinois to race an all-terrain vehicle at the Baja SAE competition, the culmination of a two-year project that they initiated themselves.

These kinds of opportunities are available all year at RMU, and we attract the kind of student who seeks them out. What students learn in the classroom is vitally important, but what they do outside the classroom – like international studies, internships and community service – is just as important when it comes to shaping their character and leadership skills.

That’s why this fall we are introducing the Student Engagement Transcript (SET), a way for students to formally document their involvement in leadership activities, community service, study abroad, work experience and more. If a student desires, their SET will be provided to prospective employers and graduate schools that request a copy of their academic transcript. Together, these two documents will demonstrate how each student has applied what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations.

The SET is comprised of seven categories: Arts, culture and creativity; Transcultural/global experiences; Undergraduate research; Service; Leadership; Professional experience; Special recognition/special projects/student activity participation.

For students who are currently enrolled at RMU, participation in the “SET for Success” program is voluntary – though we certainly encourage everyone to take part. Starting with the freshman class in the fall of 2009, students must participate in activities in at least two of the seven categories, which will then be documented on their SET.

Not that we’ll have to prod anyone into filling up their SET. Many of the activities that give life to our campus are student-driven, like the Baja SAE project or RMU Radio. This is what sets RMU, and our students, apart.

Sincerely,

GREGORY G. DEL’OMO, PH.D.
PRESIDENT
Sowing the Seeds of Nonprofit Success

As executive director of the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, Peggy Outon is providing local nonprofits with the tools and guidance they need to achieve their goals.

Historical Heritage

The new Heritage Room and Historical Display, located in the Nicholson Center on RMU’s Moon Township campus, pays tribute to the University’s celebrated namesake.

Forgotten Frontier

Through his tireless research and various published works, Daniel Barr, associate professor of history, is shedding light on the importance of Pittsburgh in our nation’s early years.

10 Questions With

Hank Fraley, former left tackle for the Colonials and current starting center for the Cleveland Browns, takes a moment to answer our questions.
School of Education and Social Sciences Earns National Accreditation

RMU’s School of Education and Social Sciences (SESS) has been accredited by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC). The certification is the culmination of a rigorous four-year process in which RMU’s education and teacher training programs were evaluated largely on the quality of instruction and student learning. SESS is the first education school in Pennsylvania to be accredited by TEAC, who granted the school the agency’s maximum initial accreditation of five years. “The faculty and staff of the School of Education and Social Sciences are to be commended for this outstanding achievement,” said RMU President Gregory G. Dell’Omo, Ph.D. “This accreditation is a benchmark of RMU’s academic quality and its commitment to student-centered instruction.” Approximately 700 students are enrolled in SESS, and about 500 of them are pursuing an education degree or teaching certification.

RMU’s five-year strategic plan, which was crafted in 2007, calls for the University to seek and maintain discipline-specific accreditations for its academic programs. Accreditations are significant because they represent third-party validation of the University’s instructional programs. The University’s engineering, computer science and nursing programs have been accredited, and RMU is in the final stages of accreditation for its School of Business. As an institution, RMU is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

John Graham, dean of the school and a professor of education, noted that, among other things, the accreditation process demanded intense assessment of program quality by nationally recognized experts and peers from other TEAC-accredited institutions. “These are professionals from very prestigious universities, and they are evaluating whether RMU faculty provided sufficient evidence to support their case for becoming nationally accredited,” said Graham. “This means a lot for our students, who can say they’ve graduated from a high quality, accredited institution.”

Serapiglia Delivers Keynote

Connie Serapiglia, D.Sc., director of Information Technology Customer Services at RMU, was the commencement keynote speaker at Sto-Rox High School on June 5, 2008. Serapiglia is a four-time graduate of RMU, holding an A.S. in administrative services, a B.A. in communications, an M.S. in communications and information systems, and a D.Sc. in information systems and communications. Serapiglia’s speech focused on the subject of change, its challenges, and the importance of making the most of the opportunities it presents.
> Heroes of Post 639

“The Heroes of Post 639,” a World War II documentary by Justin Seaman ’08, recently won first place in the first MCA-TV Film Fest held in Moon Township on May 31, 2008. The film first premiered at RMU on Veterans Day 2006, with several veterans in attendance. In addition, Seaman’s feature-length film about child abuse, “The Miracle of Danny,” which he made for his senior project at Robert Morris University, premiered in Claysville, Pa., on May 30 to a sold-out crowd of over 500 people. Seaman is currently working a summer internship in Los Angeles with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (Emmys). He is the second consecutive RMU student to receive one of these prestigious internships; the first was Brad Grimm ’07.

> Three Cheers

Randon Willard, community and volunteer services coordinator at RMU and staff member of the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO), was recently named Honorary Brother of the Year by Alpha Phi Omega, a service fraternity. Each year, the fraternity nominates one RMU faculty or staff member for the honor. Willard was initiated into the fraternity on March 24, 2008, and Alpha Phi Omega held their end-of-the-year banquet on April 18, where Randon was invited to speak about the influence that community service has played in his life. CCO is a campus ministry that partners with churches, colleges and other organizations to develop men and women who live out their Christian faith in every area of life.

In its spring 2008 issue, the Hiram Poetry Review published an essay by Jim Vincent, associate professor of English and communications skills. “Living in the Shadow of Hart Crane” was the title of an address given by Vincent at the Seventh Annual Bissell Symposium in March 2006 at Hiram College. Hart Crane, the American poet and author of the long poem, The Bridge, was born in Garrettsville, Ohio, and was anchored in the northeastern parts of the state. Vincent’s personal essay recounted the village life of Crane and the impact of the area on Crane’s poetry.
> Going Global

Shortly after commencement, a group of RMU students traveled to The Gambia as part of a communications course, Communications and Society in The Gambia. The trip was the first for RMU to Africa, and it was led by Michael DiLauro, director of RMU’s Academic Media Center.

On June 28, Jim Vincent, associate professor of English and communications skills, led 16 students to Ireland, where they studied Irish literature at Griffith College in Dublin. “I’m encouraging my students to think of themselves as citizens of the planet Earth and not simply residents of Allegheny County and Beaver County,” said Vincent. Approximately percent of RMU undergraduate students participate in some kind of study abroad experience during their collegiate career, more than twice the national average.

> Howard Speaks in Singapore

Valerie M. Howard, Ed.D., RN, associate professor for RMU’s School of Nursing and Health Sciences, presented at the Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Society Research Congress in Singapore on July 8. The Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Society is a prestigious organization that supports the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. Howard spoke about her research on nursing simulation, which involves the use of realistic computerized mannequins to recreate actual clinical situations.

> Anderson Commissioned

Christopher Anderson M’08 was commissioned a second lieutenant into the United States Army Field Artillery Corps on May 8, 2008, in the Sewell Center. 2LT Anderson was the second RMU ROTC student to be commissioned since the program returned to campus. He received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Pittsburgh before coming to RMU in 2007 to take part in the ROTC program and pursue a master’s degree in information systems management. After completing the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course in Ft. Sill, Okla., 2LT Anderson will be assigned to a permanent duty station in Hawaii.

> We’ll Miss You

After 41 years of service to Robert Morris University, Georgia Ogrizovich, coordinator of environmental services for facilities management, retired in June. Ogrizovich was hired by RMU in 1967 to work as a coordinator in what was then known as Physical Plant Administration. “To Georgia, the RMU community was not simply co-workers of hers, but part of her extended family,” said Perry Roofner, chief facilities officer.

Brad Pendell also retired in June after over 31 years at RMU. Pendell served in a variety of positions at the University in the areas of admissions and financial aid. “Brad was a valuable member of the admissions team and we are thankful for his contributions to our recruiting efforts over the years,” said Kellie Laurenzi, dean of admissions. “He truly loved working at RMU and will always have a great affection for the University.”

Margot Turner, who has been a part of RMU for over 20 years, serving as a secretary in several departments, retired in May. “Margot has been an invaluable asset to the athletics department for the past 18 years,” said Carol Bonner, assistant director of compliance. “We can only imagine how we will continue without her.”
RMU Gallery Unveiled

The RMU Gallery, located in the University’s 600 Fifth Ave. building in downtown Pittsburgh, is holding a grand opening reception to kick off the annual Faculty Exhibition on Thursday, Sept. 25, from 5–8 p.m. The reception will feature tours of the Media Arts program’s new classroom and studio space. “These beautiful and superbly equipped facilities are rich with cutting-edge technology and will add significant support for our mission to place RMU graduates in the very best media arts careers, regionally and nationally,” said Tim Hadfield, head of the Department of Media Arts at RMU. The Faculty Exhibition runs through Oct. 31, and is free and open to the public.

Kalevitch in Greece

In May 2008, Maria Kalevitch, Ph.D., professor of science and associate dean for RMU’s School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science, received the invitation from Athens Institute for Education and Research, Greece, to make an oral presentation at the 3rd International Symposium on Environment. Her presentation was titled “Bacterial and Mineral Content in Manufactured Soils.” More than 100 researchers participated in this International Symposium, with participants coming from Europe, Asia and Africa.

Scholarships

RMU’s School of Business (SBUS) has announced its Integrity First Scholars and finalists for 2008. The recipients of the $2,500 scholarships are Michel Jandrasits, Katie Marselles, Luke Mohamed, Ross Gensler and Erik Herleman. The remaining finalists are Joshua Dadeboe, Peter Fetchin, Kimberly Gardner, Erin Neely and Julie Nelson. Applicants had to address an ethical dilemma in case format and submit it to the SBUS Ethics Committee, headed by Darlene Motley, Ph.D., head of RMU’s Department of Management, and director of its M.S. in Human Resource Management program. The committee then worked with Rande Somma ’73, member of the board of visitors, in doing a blind assessment of all the submissions. All 10 finalists will be recognized at the SBUS Faculty Retreat - sponsored by Somma - on Sept. 26, and each will receive a plaque acknowledging his or her effort.

For the second consecutive year, the Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME) has awarded scholarships to three RMU students. SME awarded only nine scholarships to students in Pennsylvania, and no other institution in the state captured as many scholarships as RMU. “Our students received this recognition due to their excellent academic performance and their contributions to the field of manufacturing engineering,” said Arif Sirinterlikci, associate professor of engineering and advisor to RMU’s student chapter of SME. The RMU scholarship winners are: Chris Bird, a senior from Bridgeville, Pa, who received the $5,000 SME Directors’ Scholarship; Kayla Miller, a senior from Manns Choice, Pa., who received the E. Wayne Kay Scholarship for $2,500; and Justin Laughner, a junior from Indianapolis, Ind., who also received the E. Wayne Kay Scholarship.
Colonial SportsCenter (CSC), a student-produced 30-minute sports highlight show airing weekly on RMU-TV, celebrated its 10th consecutive season in a live special on April 18, 2008. The special recapped the show’s 10 years, highlighted the progress of the University’s athletic department, and reunited many of the show’s current and former anchors and producers. CSC features highlights of athletic events, features on athletes and coaches, as well as commentary on regional sporting events. It has received numerous local and national accolades during its existence. Past anchors and producers have found success as on-air talent at NBC affiliates, sports writers at regional newspapers, a managing producer for a national high school sports website, and a producer/director for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Nothing Expected

Nothing Expected, a band that includes RMU student Adam Dvorsky, took part in the New American Music Union, Aug. 8–9, 2008. Sponsored by American Eagle Outfitters, the festival, which featured a main stage with headliners and a College Music Stage featuring top college bands, took place at the clothier’s Pittsburgh headquarters at the South Side Works. The main stage line-up was selected by Artistic Curator Anthony Kiedis of the Red Hot Chili Peppers and featured Bob Dylan and His Band, Gnarls Barkley, The Roots and Tiny Masters of Today, among others. Other bands in the college line-up included Bears (Kent State University), The Elizabethan Report (BYU), Flying Machines (The New School), Gospel Gossip (Carleton College), Magic Bullets (College of San Mateo), My Dear Disco (University of Michigan) and The Steps (University of Texas at Austin).
> Rooney Scholar

On March 20, Robert Morris University welcomed its spring 2008 Rooney Scholar, Arie Maharshak, Ph.D., and his wife, Dafna. Maharshak was on sabbatical as head of the department of industrial engineering and management at ORT Braude College in Israel. He has worked as senior research associate with the Aeronautics & Astronautics Advanced Robotics Laboratory at Stanford University, co-founded the Israeli Tele-Working Association, and received the Israeli Television Award for Innovation and Creativity. He holds a B.Sc. in electrical engineering as well as M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in regional planning from the Technion Institute of Technology in Haifa, Israel.

> RMU Receives National Science Foundation Grant

RMU’s School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science (SEMS) has received a five-year, $562,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to fund a mathematics, science and engineering scholars program for students entering RMU in the fall of 2009. The grant was awarded under the foundation’s Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S-STEM) program. The S-STEM Scholars Program at RMU will be open to 21 undergraduate students who plan to major in one of the fields offered by SEMS. The program will promote students’ academic success through seminars, internships, research, and cultural and social events, according to RMU Science Professor Maria Kalevitch, Ph.D., who will direct the S-STEM Scholars Program.

> Movin’ On Up

Barbara J. Levine, Ph.D., was named dean of RMU’s School of Communication and Information Systems in June 2008. Levine succeeds David L. Jamison, J.D., who last year was named RMU’s provost and senior vice president of academic affairs. After a national search, Levine, an associate professor of communication at RMU, was one of a small group of candidates recommended for the position by a faculty-led search committee. Levine holds a Ph.D. in communication from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has 18 years of experience in higher education.

RMU has conferred the ranking of university professor on three of its current faculty: Valerie Powell, R.T. (R), Ph.D. (Computer Information Systems), Carl Ross, Ph.D., CRNP, CNE (Nursing) and Robert Skovira, Ph.D. (Computer Information Systems). The university professor title is conferred upon certain faculty members in recognition of exemplary service over eight years or more, following an evaluation by faculty colleagues, the department head and dean, and a specially constituted committee including experts in their field from other universities. These three newly promoted professors join other university professors Denis Rudd, Ed.D. (Hospitality Management), Alan Smith, Ph.D. (Marketing), Jay Carson, D.A. (English Studies/Communications Skills), Ann Jabro, Ph.D., (Communication), Fred Kohun, Ph.D. (Computer Information Systems) and Connie Ruzich, Ph.D. (English Studies/Communications Skills).

> FOR MORE ON THESE AND OTHER 2007-08 FACULTY PROMOTIONS, VISIT WWW.RMU.EDU/FOUNDATIONS.
> OLSON AND GASPER SIGN WITH CHIEFS

Joey Olson ’07 and Joel Gasper ’08 recently signed with the Johnstown Chiefs of ECHL Premier AA Hockey League. Olson, who signed in January, had previously been playing with the Mon Valley Thunder of the Mid-Atlantic Hockey League. Gasper, who was studying engineering at RMU, joined the Chiefs in March.

> COLONIALS RECEIVE HONORS

In the spring of 2008, four Colonials were named to their respective ESPN The Magazine District II Academic All-America Teams by the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Juniors Brooke Panepinto and Susan Perich were named for softball, senior Jeff Witmyer for track and field, and Joel Gasper ’08 of the men’s ice hockey team to the at-large squad. Panepinto owns a 3.53 cumulative GPA as a marketing major, Perich is studying elementary education and carries a 3.78 GPA, and Gasper posted a 3.92 GPA as a manufacturing engineering major. Witmyer, who was also named the 2008 Northeast Conference Scholar-Athlete for outdoor track and field, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in information sciences and a master’s degree in information security and assurance, and owned a GPA of 3.73.

> TICKER

MEN’S LACROSSE > Led by head coach Bear Davis, the Colonials finished with a record of 4-11. Senior attack Andrew Watt led RMU with 55 points, scoring 36 points while adding 19 assists, and was named to the All-CAA Second Team. Earning spots on the All-CAA Rookie Team were a trio of Colonials: freshmen Corbyn Tao-Brambleby, Trevor Moore and Keith Lee. Tao-Brambleby scored 19 goals and added 12 assists for 31 points to finish second on the club, while Moore scored 18 goals and added nine assists. Lee was a faceoff specialist for RMU, winning 134 of his 236 faceoffs for a success rate of 56.8 percent – the highest among all freshmen in Division I lacrosse. WOMEN’S LACROSSE > RMU posted an overall record of 5-11 under head coach Katy Phillips, including a mark of 4-4 in the Northeast Conference. Junior Jennifer Collins paced the Colonials in goals with 23 and finished third on the club in scoring with 31 points by adding eight assists. Junior attack Ashley Levering led the team with 40 points on 15 goals and a team-high 25 assists. Sophomore attack Alana Beck added 20 goals and 18 assists, while junior Emily Tomlinson contributed 21 goals and six assists, and junior Kara Blakeley recorded 22 goals and two assists. TENNIS > Led by head coach Jeff Layman, the RMU men’s tennis squad reached the semifinals of the 2008 NEC Tournament before falling to eventual champion Fairleigh Dickinson. The Colonials finished with an overall record of 7-14, including a mark of 3-1 in Northeast Conference matches. Freshman Robert Switzer finished 11-9 in dual matches to lead the Colonials, including a combined record of...
The softball team had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in May, taking on Team USA in an exhibition game at Consol Energy Park in Washington, Pa., as part of the Bound 4 Beijing Tour. Team USA defeated the Colonials, 16-0, in the six-inning contest in front of a standing-room-only crowd of 4,132. But the final score isn’t what the members of the RMU softball team will remember.

“To have an opportunity like this is something that our players are going to remember forever,” said Coleman. “Our players couldn’t have been happier to take part in something like this. It proves how much the sport of softball has grown in Western Pennsylvania.”

The Colonials mustered three hits against Team USA, as Lauren Nisivocca, Panepinto and Dubovec each singled. Moates retired Team USA in order in the bottom of the fourth inning.

Many of the Colonials had family in attendance, including Paneinfto, whose relatives drove in from Kentucky. One thing Paneinfto can always say is that she got a hit off a gold medalist. “I’m usually pretty modest,” Paneinfto said. “But when I got to first base, I was like ‘Yes! I just got a hit off the Olympic softball team!’ This was a big deal to me and my teammates.”

The Colonials finished seventh at Lake Jovita Golf and Country Club in Dade City, Fla. At Hershey, freshman C.G. Mercatoris finished 14th individually with a three-day score of 224. Jimmy Tomaseski ’08 was one stroke back of Mercatoris, tying for 17th individually with a 225. Mercatoris averaged 75.81 strokes in 2007–08, tops on the club. He also won the Tri-State Amateur Championship at Cranberry Highland Golf Club in June, with a score of 136.

Pacing the women was sophomore Lauren Lancia, who finished 25th individually with a three-day score of 261. Sophomore Ashleigh Frieday finished two strokes behind Lancia with a final tally of 263. Lancia, had the best average round score in 2007–08 for the Colonials, posting an average score of 72.75 strokes.
Peggy Outon is the Johnny Appleseed of nonprofit management support – minus the metal pot hat and rags. Since 1987, she has been spreading the seeds of nonprofit management throughout the country, from Austin to New Orleans to Pittsburgh and beyond. She’s even founded three nonprofit management organizations during her career, including the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University, where she serves as executive director.

Founded in 1999, the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management provides the necessary tools for nonprofit organizations to effectively manage and compete in today’s society. Based in downtown Pittsburgh, the Bayer Center works with nonprofits to assure that the money they receive from both public and private sources is efficiently and effectively spent in order to advance their charitable mission.
The Bayer Center offers consulting services in many areas including board development, business planning, collaboration and alliances, financial management, fund development, organizational effectiveness and technology planning. It also offers workshops on such topics as collaboration, technology, innovative financing, human resources and marketing. The center provides information and referral services, conducts applied research and convenes in-depth discussions on the societal problems addressed by nonprofit organizations. Furthermore, it works to build mutually beneficial partnerships rather than conventional donor-recipient connections.

In addition, the Bayer Center staff members teach some of the classes in RMU’s M.S. in Nonprofit Management Program, which is offered by the School of Business. Students in the program study finance, accounting and human resource management, as well as nonprofit-specific topics like organizational culture, legal issues and fundraising. The Bayer Center staff adds the seasoned practitioner’s point of view to the program.

The Bayer Center was initiated by a gift from the Richard King Mellon Foundation to RMU to ensure that nonprofits had access to good practice, tools, information, education and research, and that they understood how to be well managed. Scott D. Izzo, director of the foundation, was there when the idea for the Bayer Center came about. “The Bayer Center provides value by offering an array of programs, best practices and a variety of services at a relatively large

We had some organizational issues and realized that we needed an outside perspective. Representatives from our board of directors and I met with Peggy Outon to talk about our areas of concern and what services the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management would be able to provide. It was a big decision for our small organization to invest in a consultant, and we discussed it over several board meetings. Peggy talked with our board, discussed the proposed contract and answered our questions. It became crystal clear that not only was engaging the Bayer Center something that would be smart to do, it was something we had to do to help us become the well-run organization we strive to be.

Nonprofit organizations are doing vital work and rely on the members of their communities to help by providing funding and volunteer service. The people who give so generously of their time and money demand and deserve the organizations they support be well-run, organized, ethical and good stewards of the money and talent entrusted to them. The Bayer Center helps nonprofits be all those things.

Aside from never having enough money, I believe the biggest challenge facing nonprofits, especially small organizations, is appropriately educating and utilizing their board of directors, who are legally and fiscally liable for the organization. They are key to developing the vision of the organization and leading it into the future. Too often, however, they are not properly trained as to their duties and responsibilities. Also, since staff is not always adept at tapping the talents of the individual board members or at sharing information, board members can feel disconnected, which is just as bad.

The Bayer Center has helped our board members embrace their roles as advisors, mentors and chief fundraisers. In turn, our staff has learned how to better utilize the members’ talents and expertise and how to keep the members appropriately informed and engaged.

Thanks to the Bayer Center, we are working much better together as a team to provide the highest and best service we can, and to reach even greater levels of service in years to come.
When we decided to merge the five Girl Scout Councils in Western Pennsylvania, we looked for a consultant to help support our work through the realignment process. We had worked with the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management before, regarding training for our board members, and so we ended up choosing them as our consultant through our 18-month realignment process. The Bayer Center made comments and recommendations that helped us move along the process.

The members of our Council Realignment Committee knew how to move the Girl Scout Councils forward, in general, but Scott Leff helped direct us with regard to legal considerations and encouraged us to bring in legal counsel when we needed it. He was also instrumental in guiding us through training of our board members and staff. Scott listened intently to everything we discussed. He was very considerate and gave us an objective perspective, making recommendations for other considerations as needed. We relied upon him to jump in when we were struggling with the proper direction to take. His experience and knowledge regarding the merger process was a tremendous asset as a member of our team.

One of the biggest challenges we faced was helping the members and volunteers of our organization feel good about and support our merger. Scott Leff and Yvonne Von Haitsma worked with us to prepare an extremely beneficial training program for our board members and staff. This really set us off on the right foot and helped everyone feel supportive of our merger.

Another challenge was understanding what was required during the merger process. Scott attended our meetings and guided us on those key parts of the process. We really needed that additional level of merger expertise that Scott brought to the discussion. He was our merger compass. He guided us when we were heading off track.

The staff members from the Bayer Center are absolutely invaluable to this community. They provided a breadth of knowledge that was imperative to our success.

“We are attempting and scale,” says Izzo. “It has truly been a wonderful addition to the region.” Izzo, along with Jim Denova of the Benedum Foundation, and Edward A. Nicholson, past president of RMU, served as the impetus for the center back in 1999.

“It took a few meetings for the concept to evolve,” says Izzo. “We then formed a community committee of several funders and community group leaders, and shaped a job description for the executive director position. Peggy, with her national and regional background in nonprofit technical support work, emerged as the strongest candidate.

The Bayer Center spends enough time to know each client well and be able to help them effectively, whether that takes a few months or as long as a year or more. The center works with clients as large as Pressley Ridge, a storied, international organization for troubled youth; and as new and growing as the Good Grief Center, a bereavement support organization.

“We are market-driven,” says Outon. “We don’t really have an average client. If someone calls us and asks us for assistance, our job is to help them.”

The Bayer Center offers training in fundraising, finance and technology, and tries to remain current in each area. They listen to what their clients are talking about and, in response, try to craft programs around their needs. “We offer summer camps and executive breakfasts,” says Outon. “We do a variety of things. In fact, we are the only place in our region that offers workshops year-round.”
A Growing Demand

Nonprofits are, to a great degree, a phenomenon of the past 35 to 40 years. The explosion of the nonprofit industry can be traced to the early 1980s and the redefinition of the role of government in the lives of its citizens. As government has gotten smaller, services it once provided are now being delivered by nonprofits. What’s more, the amount of money flowing through nonprofits has grown exponentially. Southwestern Pennsylvania alone has at around 6,000 nonprofits.

“Society’s need for the nonprofit solution is urgent,” says Outon.

The Bayer Center serves a 10-county region, bridging the sectors between government and business, and providing things that are essential for quality of life. It brings people’s talent and time into nonprofits through volunteerism and board service as well as through professional staff.

As the nonprofit market grows, it’s clear that there is much work to be done. Fortunately, resources are becoming available to pay for that work. Many colleges and universities are recognizing the need and are offering courses in nonprofit management.

“We’re certainly in a very competitive marketplace,” says Outon. “Being affiliated with RMU gives us a distinctiveness. The way in which we’ve organized ourselves gives us a lot of opportunities.”

As the market grows, the Bayer Center is looking to be an even more comprehensive resource. It has extensive consulting services and offers educational programming on approximately 100 topics a year through its non-credit class offerings. It also conducts vital research including a wage and benefit survey commissioned by the United Way, which documents in great detail the employment practice of nonprofits locally. In addition, the center charts the use of technology by nonprofits and does a biannual survey of connectivity, application, board engagement and technology use.

Few other nonprofit management organizations are as far-reaching as the Bayer Center, and few have such a knowledgeable staff. Nicholson, who writes and teaches in the center’s nonprofit management program, recognizes the center’s importance to the nonprofit community.

“The mission of the center is still vital,” says Nicholson. “Many nonprofit organizations still need to adopt better management practices to serve their clients effectively. We’re here to help them do just that.”

Other staff members include Scott Leff, associate director; Michelle David, consulting assistant; Jeff Forster, director of technology services and research; Cindy Leonard, technology services analyst; Carrie Richards, marketing manager; and Carrie Bennett, staff consultant and researcher.

In addition to its nine full-time workers, the Bayer Center boasts a large team of volunteers from the Executive Service Corps, many of whom are retired executives from Alcoa, Westinghouse, PPG, Highmark and other respected local corporations. These knowledgeable volunteers work with mostly smaller nonprofits on executive coaching, strategic planning and facilities management. The center also collaborates with approximately 60 attorneys in their Law Links program, a service that provides pro bono legal services and clinics where nonprofits can get basic legal consulting for a nominal fee.

“The main strength of our team is its diversity,” says Outon. “No one at the Bayer Center has the same background. They all come at the nonprofit world from a different place. But they all work well together.”

Sowing the Seeds

Contrary to popular belief, Johnny Appleseed didn’t just randomly scatter apple seeds over the landscape. In reality, he planted nurseries, built fences around them and returned every year or two to tend to them, nurture them and help them grow.
As director of the Bayer Center, Outon does the same thing with nonprofits. She helps them plant their seed, so to speak, and then gives them the tools and knowledge they need to grow and thrive. Of course, all this comes naturally to Outon, who’s made a career out of working with nonprofits.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, and raised in Dallas, Outon attended Sweet Briar College in Virginia for two years before earning degrees in drama and government from the University of Texas at Austin. She started her career at the Laguna Gloria Art Museum in Austin as a fundraiser, working in community management. Ten years later, she moved to New Orleans to be the director of development for the city’s contemporary arts center. While there, she helped build the Ogden Museum of Southern Art at the University of New Orleans, and she started a nonprofit center as well.

Outon is a pioneer of the nonprofit movement, and her career reaches back to the beginnings of nonprofit management as a discipline.

She has served as a management consultant to more than 600 nonprofit organizations in fund development, board development, strategic and operational planning, and volunteer management. As a volunteer, she has served on 34 boards – seven as president – including chairing the founding board of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, a national network of nonprofit capacity builders.

Outon started teaching nonprofit management at the graduate level at the University of New Orleans in 1993. Back then, the field was new and resources were scarce. “I had to go to New York City to find books on the subject,” she says. “Now there are nonprofit management books available online and in bookstores everywhere.”

Since then, the nonprofit industry has grown dramatically, creating a great need for the kind of services the Bayer Center provides. “The stakes have gone up exponentially,” says Outon. “If you look at nonprofit study programs, you’ll find that most of them, the earliest ones, are about 25 to 30 years old. This is a pretty young industry. Using evidence to guide decisions is relatively new for nonprofits.”

Outon believes very strongly in the people who choose to work in nonprofits. “We are enormously served by their idealism, their ambition for our communities to thrive and their generosity to us all to try to see that the child gets the vaccine or that the elderly person has a place to live,” she
Kevin Perkey, 3 Rivers Connect, says, “They’re brave and I respect them. If you believe in interconnection, which I absolutely do, we are all so much safer, happier and stronger because of the people who work at nonprofit organizations.

“I always say that nonprofits build strong communities. We (the Bayer Center) build strong nonprofits. I have been a nonprofit employee all of my life and have learned a lot from my own mistakes. So bringing my knowledge and expertise to others who are trying to make the world better is a real joy.”

In July 2006, Outon was named a NonProfit Times Power & Influence Top 50 Honoree. In May 2008, she received the Pearl of Excellence Award from the Girl Scouts of Western Pennsylvania – the organization’s highest honor, which is given to a woman who exemplifies sacrifice in service to the community.

Outon is also a founding member of the Peter F. Drucker Foundation international training team. The late Drucker, who’s widely considered to be the father of modern management, once said that the 21st century would be the century of the social sector. In one of Outon’s favorite quotes, Drucker once asked, “What are you going to do Monday morning?” It is a quote that Outon recalls often for inspiration.

“Unlike a lot of people, I look forward to Mondays,” she says. “Each new week is another chance to help someone grow their nonprofit organization, which in turn will benefit those in need. I love my work, and I couldn’t imagine doing anything else.”

Written By Valentine J. Brkich
Photography By Kevin Cooke
For more than two years, Hendrickson longed for the day when he’d be splattered with mud and breathing the pungent fumes of a Briggs & Stratton engine. Between April 2006 and May 2008, this engineering major, with a concentration in software engineering, led a team of students and faculty that designed and built an off-road vehicle for the annual Baja SAE Collegiate Design Series competition.

Sponsored by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), Baja SAE is a unique competition in which teams of engineering students design and build an off-road, all-terrain vehicle to conquer a rugged course and survive various grueling events. The inaugural Mini Baja event was held in 1976 at the University of South Carolina, and it was the first competition in what would become SAE’s Collegiate Design Series.

Baja SAE offers students a challenging engineering project that teaches them about the process of introducing a new product to the consumer industrial market. The competition pits teams against each other as they battle to have their design accepted for manufacture by a fictitious firm. It’s a comprehensive project that requires students to work together not only to design, build, test, promote, and race a vehicle according to a set of strict guidelines, but also to generate adequate financial support. And they have to achieve all this while still keeping up with their other academic obligations.

This year’s Baja SAE Illinois competition – one of three offered by SAE – took place May 29–31 at Caterpillar’s Edwards Demonstration Center & Learning Center in Peoria, Ill. The testing grounds featured a challenging 1.4-mile dirt and gravel endurance track filled with obstacles that challenged every aspect of the vehicle’s design, and included a log pull, a hill climb and a land maneuverability test.

RMU’s team was led by a core group made up of project manager Hendrickson, freshman and lead engineer Jeff Cox, freshman Craig Hatok, freshman Adam Lutty and junior Mike Wood. Other team members included freshman Jason St. Jacques, sophomore Tim Skelton, junior James Doswell, and Rich Johnson ’08, Tanuj Kohli ’08, Dominiq Perrian ’08, Kevin Silverd ’08, Mike Boehm ’08, Alan Hickey ’08 and Dave Zusinas ’08.

The project was completed with the support of Winston Erevelles, Ph.D., dean of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science; Joe Iannelli, Ph.D., head of the Department of Engineering, who served as resource coordinator; Priya Manohar, engineering professor, who served as full-time faculty adviser; and Gary Yarneak, associate laboratory engineer, who served as the technical advisor. The project came about because Hendrickson approached Erevelles with a request to embrace a project with significant student engagement. The two hunted for a project that would challenge students from various
engineering majors to practice engineering techniques, solve real-world problems, motivate other students to want to participate in the engineering department, and raise national and local awareness of the University.

Hendrickson and Erevelles discovered the Baja SAE challenge while searching online for national engineering competitions. A hands-on project that attracted national attention, it seemed like a good fit. “We wanted something that would enable our students to exercise their engineering skills while getting their hands dirty,” says Erevelles. “Obviously, this was the perfect project for that.”

The engineering team approached the project in four phases: research, design/integration, building and testing/racing, with the first step being the completion of a cost and design report.

By fall of 2006, expecting to race the car in the spring, the team spent numerous hours working on the vehicle, gathering information and building a prototype frame using 3-D modeling software. However, by December they had significant setbacks. They had no sponsors, no budget, and they also had deferred some key decisions that were now coming due. By the time they went to register for the event, the race was already full. Reluctantly, they had to postpone the project for another year.

“We put it off for a year to go back and revisit some of the design decisions that were initially made,” says Hendrickson. “We had to decide whether we were going for 4-wheel drive or 2-wheel drive, what type of transmission it was going to have, and so on.”

The team didn’t let this setback discourage them, however, and they knew that they couldn’t let a semester go to waste. By the spring of 2007 they were diligently working on a PVC prototype, which would give them a better idea of how they were going to design the car and would also help to recruit new team members during the freshman tours. An added advantage of the PVC construction was affordability – the model could be built for under $100.

As the freshman class began arriving that fall, new students became interested and started to participate in the project. Cox, Hatok and Lutty rose to the top. “Of all the students initially considered for the project,” says Hendrickson, “Jeff, Craig and Adam were the most interested. Jeff, especially, really wanted to take a leadership position. So, as my senior semester wound down, Jeff assumed the role of project manager, although I stayed very active in the project.”

By spring of 2008, Lutty had been heading up the chassis design modifications. “This was without a doubt the largest part of the project,” says Hendrickson. “Without having a solid frame design, components may not attach correctly or break during racing.”

Facilitated by Manohar, the team went to TriArc, a Blawnox, Pa., company that manufactures steel rolling ladders, where an RMU Engineering alumnus, Tim Resniti ’02, spent several hours helping them bend the pipe for the vehicle chassis. Manohar and Yarmeak trained the Baja team members on how to use the welding equipment and different welding techniques.

The team also looked at competitors’ cars that did well and modeled theirs off of those. They went through four revisions of their original model before they came up with a final design. “The Baja rulebook is very strict,” says Lutty. “Every time a new part came in, I’d have to change something in the design to make sure we met the guidelines.”
Saturday was the real test for the vehicle, however, as they participated in the endurance part of the competition. The RMU vehicle, piloted by Hendrickson, completed 10 laps and was one of only 25 to survive that long.

Steve Daum, SAE Collegiate Programs manager, was impressed with the RMU team. “Lasting as long as they did in the endurance race exhibited sound engineering practices,” says Daum. “Each time they went around the track, we were waiting for them to be towed off. And yet, just a little while later, there they were going by again.”

In the end, RMU finished 84th out of a field of 94 – a respectable result for a first-year team. They came in 56th in the endurance event and 42nd in the sales presentation category.

“I can now say, without a doubt, that Robert Morris University is a respected name at Baja SAE,” says Hendrickson. “We were definitely the favorite, root-for-the-underdog team.”

In May, once finals were complete, Jeff, Adam, Craig and Ryan dedicated every waking minute to the vehicle’s completion. By the end of the month, they were finally ready to take on the challenges of Baja SAE 2008.

The team arrived in Peoria on Tuesday, May 26. The following day, they worked on putting the finishing touches on their vehicle. On Thursday, the team had a busy schedule that included a tech inspection as well as both a sales and design presentation. Hendrickson and Lutty handled the presentations, in which they marketed their vehicle as two models: a sport model and an economy model.

In 2007, RMU’s Center for Applied Research in Engineering and Science (CARES) received a grant from Pittsburgh-based Innovation Works to design and build a robotic workstation for Penna Flame Inc. – a Zelienople-based company that provides flame hardening for industrial machine parts. On May 15, 2008, the new workstation, developed solely by students and faculty at RMU, was presented to Penna Flame at its 40th anniversary open house.

Flame hardening is a process that leaves industrial machine parts more resistant to wear. Traditionally, this task was done by a worker wielding a hand-held torch. “It can be back-breaking,” says Penna Flame owner Jim Orr, “because you’re leaning over doing very precise work. With the robot, however, the precision is much greater, and the results are much more consistent.” The new robotic arm streamlines the process with a built-in flame torch that heats metals to temperatures as high as 2,000 degrees Celsius (about 1,650 degrees Fahrenheit). “We had accepted the old way for so many years that it just became standard. We were stuck,” says Orr. “RMU opened up our eyes. They not only provided an option, but they took the concept and showed us how it would work, then delivered by making it work.”

The robotic arm is nicknamed Robubb, after the company’s first employee, Robert Bubb. Robubb has already helped Penna Flame cut production and inspection time and increase overall quality. “We were running job shop production work within one week after delivery,” says Orr.

CARES selected an industrial robot appropriate for the company, then designed and built the station where the robot performs its work. The robot itself was built by Fanuc Robotics of Michigan.
Baja SAE 2008 was not only a great way for Hendrickson to finish his studies at RMU, it was also a positive springboard to launch him into his next endeavor as a software developer for Boeing in Houston, where he now works on software quality testing for the International Space Station.

“RMU’s software engineering program is excellent,” says Hendrickson. “It helped me get a job by giving me the tools I need to succeed on the next level. What more can you ask for?”

Written by Valentine J. Brkich
Photography by Kevin Cooke

Erevelles is extremely proud of the team’s results, but even more so of their efforts.

“I offered the team my thanks and congratulations on a job well done,” says Erevelles. “The first race is always the toughest, and each of the team members worked extraordinarily hard to bring this maiden race to a memorable conclusion. I cannot tell you how proud I am of our engineering students for their effort and perseverance in the face of significant odds. This is a prime example of student engagement and active learning. I am also grateful to the members of the SEMS Board of Visitors, whose contributions towards student projects and initiatives funded various expenses associated with the event.”

Iannelli admires the team’s commitment, enthusiasm and determination. “Failure is a word that just does not exist in the vocabularies of these energetic students,” says Iannelli. “I marveled at their stamina as they kept working into the early morning hours, two days before the competition, in the parking lot of a Peoria hotel, welding last-minute components to the vehicle. Their resolve made RMU’s Baja SAE participation an unquestionable success.”

Orr credits Gary Yarmeak, an associate lab engineer in RMU’s Department of Engineering, for creating several additional vital components.

Shawn Auth ’07 was one of the students who worked on the project at RMU, and he was hired by Penna Flame after he graduated in December. The former manufacturing engineering major now oversees the company’s nascent robotics division. “It’s definitely a hands-on job,” says Auth. “The applied lab work I had in my engineering classes at RMU is really helping me now.”

CARES is the industrial outreach arm of the RMU School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. It offers technical and consulting services to local industries while providing hands-on, real-world experiences for RMU students. The center offers a series of professional development workshops throughout the year for manufacturers, managers and other technical professionals. “The Penna Flame project highlights what CARES and our school can do for the region,” says Winston Erevelles, Ph.D., dean of the School of Engineering, Mathematics and Science. “We are pleased to have had this opportunity to work with Penna Flame and Innovation Works for the betterment of our region.”

“The successful completion of the Penna Flame project is one of the examples that demonstrates how CARES can successfully deliver practical and effective solutions,” says Zbigniew J. Czajkiewicz, Ph.D., head of CARES and a professor of engineering. “In the process, we also offer excellent educational opportunities to our students.”
During the Revolutionary War, Robert Morris used his financial expertise to support the Continental Army in its fight against the British. Had the colonists been defeated, there’s a good chance the British would’ve taken Morris’ head – along with those of the other Founding Fathers.

Instead, Morris’ head is on display at the university that bears his name. Well, a model of his head, that is.

The Heritage Room is RMU’s first-ever permanent tribute to its namesake, the celebrated patriot, statesman and financier of the American Revolution – Robert Morris. Located on the third floor of the Nicholson Center, the Heritage Room’s centerpiece is a plaster bust that was used by sculptor Paul Wayland Bartlett (1865-1925) to create his statue of Morris, which stands in Philadelphia’s Independence Mall. The bust, which was given to RMU in 2007 by the Tudor House Gallery and Museum in Washington, D.C., was preserved and restored by artists at the Carnegie Museum.

The idea for the Heritage Room came from RMU President Gregory G. Dell’Omo, Ph.D., who felt it would be a great way to honor the namesake of the University.

“Robert Morris University has long been known as place where students can get a superior education in business and finance. The sound financial principles and strategies that Robert Morris depended upon in his support of the American cause during the Revolution were the inspiration for our University’s name,” says Dell’Omo. “When we received this unique gift from the Tudor House Gallery, we wanted to display it in a way that would pay tribute to Robert Morris the individual. The new Heritage Room accomplishes this goal.”

Robert Morris was born in Lancashire, England, on Jan. 31, 1734 (some sources list his birthday as Jan. 20). In 1748, he emigrated to America to join his father, a tobacco exporter at...
Oxford, Md. In 1754, he and business partner Thomas Willing founded Willing, Morris & Company. Specializing in importing and exporting, the company soon became one of the most prosperous of its kind in Pennsylvania.

Like most of the colonists, Morris strongly opposed the controversial Stamp Act (1765), which put a tax on every piece of printed paper including ship’s papers, legal documents, licenses, newspapers and even playing cards. As a result, he quickly became involved in supporting the Revolution. He was particularly influential in obtaining munitions and other supplies as well as borrowing money to finance George Washington’s army.

“The Heritage Room connects us to Robert Morris as an exemplar of the tradition of American entrepreneurship and business success as well as of the commitment of those with resources to give back to causes and institutions they believe in,” says RMU Provost David L. Jamison, J.D. “It gives the campus a focal point for education of our students and the community about the American Revolution, about philanthropy, and, because of the unique nature of the sculptural piece, even of the fine arts. The Heritage Room is one more way in which we are engaging our campus in learning.”

The Heritage Room, which was completed in April 2008, will be the highlight in a weeklong celebration of Constitution Day, Sept. 17. A formal dedication of the Heritage Room is planned for Tuesday, Sept. 16. To learn more about Robert Morris and view more photos of the room, visit www.rmu.edu/foundations.
Most people know Pittsburgh as the “Steel City.” Just the mention of its name conjures up blue-collar images of Bessemer furnaces glowing below the smoky sky that once hovered above the city. If it were up to Daniel P. Barr, Ph.D., however, Pittsburgh would be remembered less for its industrial past and more for its early history, when the city was a stepping-off point into the American frontier.

Barr, associate professor of history at Robert Morris University, is an authority on early American history, specifically American Indian history, and he understands how important this region was to the founding of our nation.

“Pittsburgh was a massively important location in the early westward movement of this country,” says Barr. “Today, the city is known more for its steel heritage. We can’t take away that image, nor should we want to. The problem is that it has obscured how important the city was in its early days.”

On Nov. 23, 1758, British forces under General John Forbes arrived at the scorched remains of Fort Duquesne, which the French had blown up and abandoned the previous day. Forbes’ army had just completed an historic expedition, cutting a road across the Pennsylvania wilderness in order to drive the French from the forks of the Ohio River. Gaining control of this coveted spot was essential in the British victory in the French and Indian War.

Here on this important piece of real estate, at the confluence of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers, the British constructed a fort and named it after England’s Sir William Pitt. It wasn’t long before a new settlement grew outside the walls of the fort – a settlement known as Pittsburgh, which soon grew to become known as the “Gateway to the West.”

“Until the Cumberland Gap became the main entryway to the western frontier, most people went west through Pittsburgh and down the Ohio River,” says Barr. “Pittsburgh is really the jumping-off point for the ‘First American West’ – Ohio, Indiana, Illinois.”
Barr’s research into the early history of Pittsburgh and the early American West is extensive. He is the editor of The Boundaries Between Us: Natives and Newcomers along the Frontiers of the Old Northwest Territory, 1750-1850, an anthology comprised of 11 original essays that present unique perspectives on the history and significance of the contest for control of the Old Northwest Territory. Barr also wrote the book’s introduction and one of the essays, “This Land Is Ours and Not Yours,” in which he challenges historical characterizations of American Indians as helpless victims. Instead, he depicts the Shawnee and Western Delaware as powerful, mindful participants in the struggle for the American frontier.

“I think we’ve moved toward a more sympathetic view of American Indians,” says Barr. “This is definitely a step in the right direction. We just have to be careful not to portray them too much as victims. But I think we’ve gotten to a point where we’re getting a more accurate portrayal of America’s native peoples.”

Barr is also the author of Unconquered: The Iroquois League at War in Colonial America, a narrative overview of nearly 200 years of Iroquois conflict during the colonial era that explores the complex world of Iroquois warfare. He is currently working on his next book, A Colony Sprung from Hell: War and Society on the Pittsburgh Frontier, 1744–1794, due out in 2009, which is a study of the early settlement of the southwestern region of Pennsylvania – what Barr calls the “Pittsburgh Frontier.” The book’s title comes from a quote from Henry Bouquet, a British officer stationed at Fort Pitt in the 1760s, who correctly foresaw the inevitable chaos that was coming as settlers clashed with Indians.

“The major theme of the book is lawlessness and lack of order,” says Barr. “The Pittsburgh region is really the first settlement west of the Appalachians. When this area was being settled, there were really no rules. And what laws there were weren’t followed anyway. There was no enforcement, and it was chaotic, violent time.”

In March 2008, Barr was awarded the Philip S. Klein Pennsylvania History Prize from the Pennsylvania Historical Association. The award is given biennially to the scholar who writes the best article for the association’s journal, Pennsylvania History. Barr earned the prize for his article “A Road for Warriors: The Western Delawares and the Seven Years’ War,” which examined the strategies and motivations behind the Delaware Indians’ decision to fight with the French during the French-Indian War.

Originally from Erie, Pa., Barr attended Slippery Rock University, where he earned a bachelor’s in history in 1994, and a master’s in history in 1996. He then went on to Kent State University, where, in 2001, he earned a doctorate in early American history with a specialization in the American Revolution and American Indian History.

Barr actually started his undergraduate education at Penn State University, where he was studying architectural engineering. After just a year and a half, he transferred to Slippery Rock.

“Although I had a great interest in architecture – and still do – I realized it just wasn’t for me,” says Barr. He had always had an interest in history and, after taking one history class, decided to focus his studies there.

It was Barr’s grandmother who first got him interested in early American Indian history. “My grandmother was a Delaware Indian from Oklahoma,” says Barr, “and she lived with us during the last couple years of her life. She always impressed on me and my brother and sister how important it was to value your heritage. It just didn’t really resonate with me until I got into college.

“In the recent past, Native Americans were depicted as bloodthirsty savages,” says Barr. “But modern assessments of them are more open-minded. Today there’s more of an attempt to understand their perspective and what it was like to be in their shoes.”

Barr says that this new attitude towards American Indians is a direct effect...
In the classroom, he tries to impart upon his students that history is not just dates and facts, but rather it’s the “how” and the “why” that really matter.

“The reason I teach history is so that I can understand and help others understand how we got to where we are today and where we’re going as we move forward,” says Barr. “I’ve found that people enjoy stories about people, so I try to weave in as many human elements into history as I can. That’s where you really capture the student’s imagination and interest. Most of all, you have to have enthusiasm for what you’re teaching. Enthusiasm will translate to the students. If you’re engaged in it, you have a better chance of engaging the student.”

With Pittsburgh celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, Barr thinks it’s important that we have a better understanding of the early history of southwestern Pennsylvania.

“I’ve always been interested in formative history,” says Barr. “For me, I find so much of what it means to be Americans comes out of that story of initial colonization and starting to settle the first West – the trans-Appalachian frontier. It resonates very strongly with me. This region played such an important part in who we are as Americans today. It’s my hope that we can learn to embrace our heritage and really start to appreciate and celebrate the fascinating early history of the Pittsburgh region.”

WRITTEN BY VALENTINE J. BRKICH
This tree is still thriving on the RMU campus in Moon Twp. We’d like to know if the relationship is doing as well. If “Pete” or “Elaine” are out there, we would love to hear from you. Or, if you remember these two lovebirds, please e-mail the Office of Alumni Relations at rmualum@rmu.edu.

70s

JAMES SPIZARNY 1973 and ELAINE (CHIKOSKY) SPIZARNY 1971 recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. Jim is credit manager with Ameridrives International and Elaine is a customer service representative with Erie Insurance. The couple resides in Erie, Pa.

PATRICIA A. STOCKMAN 1974 was one of 25 women honored by Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN) in May at its annual conference in Mansfield, Ohio. Stockman was nominated by her employer, Therm-O-Disc Inc., a subsidiary of Emerson, where she serves as division controller. A Pittsburgh native, Stockman currently resides in Mansfield, Ohio.

80s

ROBERT FUNDERLICH 1982 was recently named chief financial officer for Emerald Innovations, which is headquartered in Butler. He and his family reside in Wexford, Pa.

LISA OLACK 1983 recently joined Harrington Group Inc. as project coordinator for the Charlotte, N.C., office. Prior to the Harrington Group, she served as the director of accounting for Action 4 Kids, a pediatric therapy center in Shorewood, Ill., as well as a project controls manager for Areva Inc., an engineering and consulting firm in Naperville, Ill. Lisa and her family reside in Aurora, Ill.

CARL E. ERHART 1983 was appointed president of Verizon’s Southwest region. Erhart has served as the company’s vice president of regulatory and governmental affairs since May 2005. His wife, DIANA (CAFRELLI), is also a 1983 graduate of RMU. The couple resides in Austin, Texas, with their daughter, Ashley.

HELEN MCCREACKEN MBA 1984 was recently named the as the first female superintendent of Canon-McMillan School District in Pittsburgh. McCracken, who was raised in North Strabane and attended Canon-McMillan schools, received a master’s in business administration degree from RMU. She lives in Waynesburg with her husband, Jeff, and their daughter Elissa, 16.

JOHN DENNY 1985 was recently appointed as one the 2008 officers of Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners, namely, chair and community relations manager of The Hillman Company. John and his wife, Kelley, reside in Pittsburgh.

DEBORAH A. GRABE 1985 was recently named general manager of business planning for the United States Steel Corporation, where she is responsible for planning and scheduling production at all of the company’s North American steelmaking and finishing facilities. She previously served as general manager of procurement at U. S. Steel Kosice in the Slovak Republic. Grabe currently lives in Pittsburgh with her husband, Thomas Barefoot, Jr., and their two children.

DIANA REPACK 1985, M’00, D’06, a red belt in Tang Soo Do Karate recently competed against many other women from different karate schools to win a Forms (Kata) Competition. Diana and her husband, Bill, are actively pursuing black belts at “Just For Kicks” karate school in Moon Township. Bill is an assistant professor of management at RMU. The Repacks reside in Moon Township, Pa.

RONALD TAKAC 1986 is a mortgage banker with Bank of America in Charlotte, N.C. He and his wife, Lynne, and two children, Lyndsey and Christi, reside in Matthews, N.C.
JEFFREY DEANE 1987, head of the International Business Group of Malin, Bergquist & Company LLP, one of Pittsburgh’s largest and fastest growing certified public accounting firms, has been elected to the board of directors of the British American Business Council, Pittsburgh Region. Jeffrey resides in Baden, Pa.

90s

BRADLEY RYNIAWEC 1991, chief financial officer with Enterprise Bank, and his wife Tiffany, became the proud parents of Kiley Elizabeth on April 8, 2008. Kiley was welcomed home by her brother, Bradley, Jr. The family resides in Imperial, Pa.

KENNETH KEEFER 1993 and ANGELA (SECRETI) KEEFER 1997 are the proud parents of Ben Kenneth, born April 5, 2008. Ken is employed with Alpharma Pharmaceuticals in sales. Angela is an accountant. The Keefer family resides in Canonsburg, Pa.

KATHY (MILLIGAN) DILONARDO 1993, M’02 and her husband, Jim, became the parents of Luca Anthony on April 14, 2008. Luca was welcomed by his sister, Giulia. Kathy is employed with TAP Pharmaceuticals. The DiLonardo’s reside in Mars, Pa.

RODNEY MOON 1993 recently joined the staff of Compass Management and Consulting in Jacksonville, Fla., as director of education for the Compass Team of association clients. Rodney resides in St. Johns, Fla.

KENNETH KEEFER 1993 and ANGELA (SECRETI) KEEFER 1997 are the proud parents of Ben Kenneth, born April 5, 2008. Ken is employed with Alpharma Pharmaceuticals in sales. Angela is an accountant. The Keefer family resides in Canonsburg, Pa.

HAL THOMAS 1993 is auto insurance/claim director for The Hartford. He and his wife, Debra, and their twin daughters, Makenzie and Morgan, reside in Amston, Conn.

DAVID MCCLURG 1993 recently accepted a position as a shareproof analyst with BNY Mellon. David and his wife, LISA (MARINACK) MCCLURG 1994, have two children, Nathan and Morgan. The family resides in Pittsburgh.

KENNETH KEEFER 1993 and ANGELA (SECRETI) KEEFER 1997 are the proud parents of Ben Kenneth, born April 5, 2008. Ken is employed with Alpharma Pharmaceuticals in sales. Angela is an accountant. The Keefer family resides in Canonsburg, Pa.

RODNEY MOON 1993 recently joined the staff of Compass Management and Consulting in Jacksonville, Fla., as director of education for the Compass Team of association clients. Rodney resides in St. Johns, Fla.
MELISSA VENSEL 1995 is a teacher with the Pittsburgh Public Schools. She also is a Carrick High School volleyball coach. Melissa resides in Pittsburgh.

MARK SHOOK M1995 is employed by American Electric Power as a contract administrator. Mark resides in Columbus, Ohio.

TRACY (SILKA) HINDMAN 1998 is vice president, institutional sales, with Raymond James & Associates in Sewickley, Pa. Tracy and her husband, Randy, reside in Bridgeville, Pa.

MARK E. POOLE 1998 and VALARIE POOLE ’00 reside in Greensburg, Pa., with their two children, Morgan and Braden. Mark is a tax in-charge accountant with Schneider Downs.

ANNE (ROCKAGE) SANGER 1998 is director, commercial planning, with Mirant Corporation in Atlanta. Anne and her children, Richard and Christopher, reside in Dacula, Ga.

RICHARD DIETRICH M1998 is engaged to Danielle Hodnicki. The couple is planning an Oct. 25, 2008, wedding at Holy Child Parish, with a reception to follow at Southpointe Golf Club. Richard is vice president, consumer savings and liquidity product manager for PNC Bank. Danielle is an associate attorney with Tucker Arensberg, P.C.

JOELENE (HESTEN) HOLDERNY 1999 and her husband, Dan, became the proud parents of Simon Robert on March 4, 2008. Simon was welcomed home by his brother, Jesse. Joelene is the Senior Financial Accountant with WQED Multimedia in Pittsburgh. The family resides in Ross Township, Pa.

JASON LONGNECKER 1997 is a retire secure employee benefits specialist with The Principal Financial Group. He and his wife, Alyson, and their children, Amelia and Natalie, reside in Belle Vernon, Pa.

FRED PARKER 1999 and APRIL (ANDERSON) PARKER 1999 were married on Nov. 17, 2007, in Aruba. Wedding attendants included RMU alumni: MICHELE SCHMIDT 1999, TESSA (CASTRACANE) DROHAN ’00, RAYMOND THOMAS ’00, M’03, REGGIE CHAMBERS ’02, LUTHER LOCKHART 1999, and Lesley Ricci. April works at Petibon Alarm Company in Crofton, Md. Fred works at Regional Contracting Services in Washington, D.C. The couple resides in Odenton, Md.

JAMIE SAVATT ’00 is a senior financial services consultant with PNC Bank. Jamie resides in Neville Island, Pa.

CHRISTIAN SHANE, M’00, an elementary teacher in the North Allegheny School District, was recently named one of 101 Teacher Excellence Honorees in the 2007–08 Teaching Excellence Center’s Teacher Recognition Program. Christian resides in Pittsburgh.

PATRICIA STUKUS ’00 was recently appointed vice president of management services with the Pittsburgh office of Marsh USA Inc. Patricia and her husband, Daniel, reside in North Huntingdon, Pa.

JAMES LUCOT, JR. ’01, a U.S. History teacher at Seneca Valley High, was recently named one of 101 Teacher Excellence Honorees in the 2007–08 Teaching Excellence Center’s Teacher Recognition Program. James resides in Cranberry Township, Pa.

MARY JO (GIVER) PLUNKARD ’01 and her husband, Thomas, became the parents of Nicholas James, born on March 21, 2008, at Sewickley Valley Hospital. Nicholas joins Victoria, 2 ½. The Plunkard family resides in Aliquippa, Pa.
Michele (Persang) Meehl '01 and her husband, Jarrod, became the parents of Zachary Jarrod on July 17, 2007. Michele is a category development manager at Heinz. The family resides in Pittsburgh.

Jessica Maier '02 was recently hired as an account executive trainee with PLS Logistics. Jessica resides in Monaca, Pa.

Stacey Podlesky '02 was recently hired by McCrory & McDowell LLC as supervisor of audit practice. Stacey resides in Finleyville, Pa.

Kenneth Pomiello '03 recently became engaged to Courtney Woodruff. An Oct. 2008 wedding is planned. Kenneth is a CPA and an auditor with SAIC in McLean, Va.

Joseph Seidel '03 is employed by Duquesne University as an instructional technology specialist. Joe and his wife, Heather, became the parents of Hayley Samantha, born on March 18, 2008. The Seidels reside in Pittsburgh.

Sean Kocan '04, a CPA and an audit supervisor with Malin, Bergquist and Company LLP, received the Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) designation in June 2008. Sean resides in Cranberry Twp., Pa.

James Luparello '06 was recently hired by Blattner Brunner Inc. as assistant account executive. Jim resides in Oakdale, Pa.

Rochelle Oaks D'06 was a guest speaker at RMU’s Women’s History Month Luncheon & Awards Program on March 25, 2008. Rochelle is founder and CEO of The Oaks Group LLC training and development services. She resides in Pittsburgh.

Kevin Bazner '06 M'08 currently works for the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity as a leadership consultant. He recently completed the instructional leadership master’s program at RMU. Kevin lives in Bethel Park, Pa.

Rebecca (Couch) Weatherly MSN'06 is a nursing instructor at the Greenville Technical College in Greenville, S.C. Rebecca and her husband, James, live in Simpsonville, S.C.

Angela (Story) Marino '06 and her husband, Josh, became the proud parents of Philip Joshua “Junior” on March 12, 2008. The Marino family resides in Beaver, Pa.

PITTSBURGH SPEAKERS SERIES
Presented by Robert Morris University

RMU is proud to present the seventh season of the Pittsburgh Speakers Series, the region’s most exciting cultural event! Join us this fall as we offer seven evenings of diverse opinions, profound insights and fascinating discussion. View this season’s incredible line-up of speakers and order your tickets today at www.pittsburghspeakersseries.org.
VALERIE DAWSON ‘06 is a substitute teacher with the Hancock County School District, New Cumberland, W.Va. She and her husband, Donovan, and two children, Grant and Aidan, reside in Ambridge, Pa.

MARTIN PABIAN ’06 recently became resident engineer on the remodel of the VA Medical Center located in Durham, N.C. Previously, Martin worked at the VA Medical Center in the Pittsburgh area. He now resides in Durham, N.C.

WENDY MCSPARREN M’07 is employed by Contact Pittsburgh as a private practice therapist. Wendy resides in Verona, Pa.

MARY TURSKE ’07, employed by Rosewood Capital, was recently promoted to business development associate. Rosewood is an investment management firm in Pittsburgh. Mary lives with her daughter, Rebecca, in Carnegie, Pa.

AARON LEROY ’08, interning with Deloitte & Touche since January 2006, recently accepted a position with them as a staff accountant in the State Strategic Tax Review Group. Aaron resides in Pittsburgh.

ERICA HOLLYFIELD ’08 is employed by Ad-Base Group Inc., located in Robinson, Pa., as a staff accountant. Erica resides in Pittsburgh.

CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON M’08 was commissioned a Second Lieutenant into the United States Army Field Artillery Corps on May 8, 2008, in the Sewell Center. He married Amy Vogel on June 14. After completing the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course in Ft. Sill, Okla., 2LT Anderson will be assigned to a permanent duty station in Hawaii.

IN MEMORIAM

JANE K. (COX) ROTH 1941 of Aurora, Ohio, passed away on Feb. 1, 2008, at the age of 84.

LEONARD R. ROSKY, JR. 1971 passed away on March 4, 2008. He and his wife, Cynthia, resided in Mt. Lebanon, Pa.

WILLIAM R. “BUTCH” COOPER II 1975 of North Fayette passed away on April 27, 2008, at the age of 58. William was retired from Alcoa.

MARTIN W. OBELDOBEL, JR. 1976 passed away April 8, 2008. Martin (cont.)
Diane Battiste Zinkham, captain, coach and den mother to the Steelerettes, died of cancer on July 24 at her home in Indiana, Pa. She was 62.

Born in 1945, Zinkham was a graduate of McKees Rocks High School. She later worked in dentistry as an assistant, office manager and, most recently, as an independent software consultant. She was also a past president of the Junior Women’s Civic Club of Indiana and the Indiana Hospital Auxiliary.

Zinkham coordinated the roughly 50 women remaining from the 1961–70 Steelerette troupes who led cheers at Forbes Field and Pitt Stadium. Along with the Cleveland Browns cheerleaders, the Steelerettes were one of the NFL’s two original sets of cheerleaders.

was employed for 33 years with the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education.

ROBERT C. JENNINGS 1985

passed away on March 16, 2008, at the age of 49. He and his wife, Lisa, were married 25 years.

MICHAEL J. SLUSS M1986

of Scott Township, and formerly of Lower Burrell, passed away on March 14, 2008. Michael was a CPA for Schneider Downs of Pittsburgh, a board member of the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council, a member of the Allegheny County Bar Association, the Pittsburgh Lacrosse Club and the Pittsburgh Poetry Exchange.

Includes news submitted between March 1, 2008 and June 23, 2008.

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Upcoming Events

> SEPTEMBER 08
2 Phon-A-Thon Begins
19 RMU Night at PNC Park, Pittsburgh Pirates vs. Houston Astros (Fireworks Night), 7:05 p.m.
24 Alumni Luncheon, downtown Pittsburgh
30 RMU Career Expo, Sewall Center Arena

> OCTOBER 08
1 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: Steve Forbes, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall
9 Speaking of Business Luncheon, Duquesne Club, Pittsburgh, 11:30 a.m. Speaker: Court Gould
11 HOMECOMING 2008 RMU Football vs. Duquesne, 1 p.m., Joe Walton Stadium
15 Women of RMU Luncheon, & Program, Omni William Penn, Pittsburgh, 12 p.m. Speaker: Rochelle Oaks, Ds.C.

> NOVEMBER 08
5 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: Paul Rusesabagina, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall
14 Hockey Showcase, RMU Colonials vs. Ohio Buckeyes, Mellon Arena

> DECEMBER 08
3 Pittsburgh Speakers Series: Garrison Keillor, 8 p.m., Heinz Hall

RMU ALUMNI NETWORKING AND HAPPY HOURS
This fall, we are planning networking and happy hour events for our alumni in Baltimore, Cleveland, Erie, Harrisburg, Philadelphia and the Washington D.C. area.
Check for updates at: www.rmu.edu/alumni

FOR MORE INFORMATION on these and other upcoming events, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 412-397-2586 or rmualum@rmu.edu.
Hank F. Fraley was born on Sept. 21, 1977, in Gaithersburg, Md. He attended Gaithersburg High School where, as a senior in 1995, he helped his football team, the Trojans, make it to the Maryland state championship game. Fraley studied social science at RMU and had a successful football career as a non-scholarship player, playing left tackle. He is still one of only two Colonials to have his number (75) retired. In April 2000, Fraley was signed as an undrafted rookie free agent by the Pittsburgh Steelers, but was put on waivers later that August. He was claimed by the Philadelphia Eagles shortly thereafter and had six successful seasons with the team. Then, in Sept. 2006, he was traded to the Cleveland Browns, where he remains today as the team’s starting center. Fraley and his wife, Danielle, reside in Woolwich Township, N.J., and have three sons together: Mason, Travis and Beau. Fraley’s oldest son, Trent, currently lives in Moon Twp.

1. **What’s the toughest part about playing center in the NFL?**
   Making sure your line calls and I.D.’s are correct. You have to study a lot of film and really get into your playbooks. Each play has a different I.D. It tells the whole line what to do, as well as your quarterback, running backs and tight-end, who are all listening for the call.

2. **Who’s your favorite NFL center of all time?**
   Dermontti Dawson of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was just so good at what he did. I wish I was half as talented as he was. He was a big guy, but he could really move and run. He could do stuff that most centers could never do.

3. **What’s it really like down there in the “trenches?”**
   I won’t lie, it’s tough down there. Whether it’s in practice or in the games, you’re always banging heads. It’s like being in a small car wreck 60 times a game. Basically, you’re fighting your tail off. Down there, you do whatever it takes, as long as it’s within the rules, of course.

4. **What’s on your iPod right now?**
   A lot of country music. But my favorite country music artist changes everyday, so I really don’t have a favorite.

5. **Do you have any pets?**
   We have two chocolate labs, Brandy and Coconut; one German shepherd, Jager; one pug, Emmie, one English bulldog, Rodeo, which is really my wife’s; and we also have a cat, Star. So, yeah, I guess you can say we’re pet lovers.

6. **Do you have any hobbies?**
   I like the outdoors, and I do a lot of fishing and hunting. I own a 34-foot fishing boat that’s currently docked in Lake Erie, but I also like to take it out in the ocean when we’re back in New Jersey. I also like to ride 4-wheelers with my sons. My wife and I both have our own Harleys – she rides a Deluxe, and I ride a Fat Boy. I also enjoy golfing and playing poker.

7. **What’s your all-time favorite movie quote?**
   My favorite quote is in “Animal House” when Bluto, played by John Belushi, makes his famous speech about “when the going gets tough, the tough gets going.”

8. **If you weren’t an NFL player, what would you be doing?**
   I’d probably be coaching or teaching social studies in school. I definitely see myself coaching one day, either in the NFL or on the college level – maybe even at RMU. I would also love to coach my boys in whatever sport they decide to play.

9. **What do you miss the most about RMU?**
   The college life. It was so much more laid back, and you didn’t have as much responsibility. Then, once you graduate, you have to deal with the real world. I was fortunate to have such a great job when I left RMU.

10. **What was your favorite part about Robert Morris University?**
    I guess, most of all, I liked how everyone knew everyone. My professors were great, too, especially Dr. Charles Zimmerman (Professor of Mathematics), who was a big influence on me.
MARK YOUR CALENDAR! On Saturday, Oct. 11, 2008, Robert Morris University will celebrate Homecoming. A full day of festivities kicks off in the morning with hospitality tents and some good old-fashioned tailgating. Alumni and friends will enjoy various pre-game activities, including a temporary-tattoo booth, balloon and caricature artists and entertainment from the RMU pep band. Don’t miss out on all of the fun this year! WE’D LOVE TO SEE YOU!

YOUR HOMECOMING EXPERIENCE… We want to know about it! Send us your digital photos and video phone flicks from Homecoming 2008 and we’ll post them online at www.rmu.edu. Share your personal Homecoming experience with other members of the RMU family! E-mail your photos, videos (low-res only please) or YouTube links to FOUNDATIONS@RMU.EDU.
RMU NURSING CAMP ATTENDEES, LED BY CARL ROSS, PH.D., CRNP, CNE, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF NURSING, TOUR THE STAT MEDEVAC HELICOPTER ON THE NICHOLSON CENTER LAWN AT THE MOON TOWNSHIP CAMPUS.