



News for and about Macomb Community College's alumni and friends

Mentoring: Finding people who add value to our lives

Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel nearly had himself and his audience in tears at the "Mentoring Matters" event held Sept. 27 at the Macomb University Center on Center Campus when he described to the audience special moments he has shared as a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"He was looking for someone to make proud," said Hackel of the nine-year-old he "adopted" as a little brother at the age of three. "But I think I get more out of that relationship than he does."

Hackel, former Macomb County Sheriff, a Macomb alumnus and a longtime instructor in the college's police academy, shared how he has been on the giving and receiving end of mentoring his entire life, and considers it a defining factor in his personal and professional development. "The most important things are the connections you have with other people," said Hackel, who counts Albert Lorenzo, former Macomb president, among the most influential in his own life. "You don't get to where you want to be unless you surround yourself with people who have good intentions."

The event, sponsored by Macomb's Career Services, also included a networking session that matched students with alumni and covered such topics as goal setting, business ethics, building self-confidence and the power of positive thinking. Alumni interested in participating in future mentoring opportunities can call Career Services at 586.445.7321.

"You can't always wait for the opportunity to mentor or be mentored to come to you; you have to go out and make it happen," advised Hackel at the September event. "You have to find people who add value to your life."



Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel introduces himself to Macomb student Kristen Lobstein at the "Mentoring Matters" event held Sept. 27 at the Macomb University Center on Center Campus. Hackel, former Macomb County Sheriff and a Macomb alumnus, shared with the audience how he has been on the giving and receiving end of mentoring, and considers it a defining factor in his personal and professional development. "The most important things are the connections you have with other people," said Hackel.

Students work to keep lakes great

If you paused to take in the view along the banks of the Clinton, Belle or Black rivers this summer, you have something in common with several Macomb Community College students and faculty who spent much of theirs looking at it as part of a bigger picture.

"Water quality is a snapshot in time," offers Joe Sarnecki, Macomb science professor, who recruited students to participate in his Great Lakes Source Waters Quality Study this summer, "and it can be quite revealing."

The study, along with several other faculty projects, was funded by an Innovation Grant, awarded internally by the college for community service projects that enhance students' learning experiences. For two credits over three semesters, Sarnecki's students developed a research plan, ordered monitoring equipment and conducted field studies over the summer that would provide a baseline for further research into the quality of local waterways and their impact on the Great Lakes that they flow into.

"The students came back making conclusions from what they learned. For one thing, they could see that certain sorts of monitoring are more effective than others," says Sarnecki. "And they saw how some parts of the rivers were still in a natural state while others showed signs of significant cultural impact."

The students are now documenting their findings, and Sarnecki hopes to have the students present them to such organizations as the Clinton River Watershed Council and the Michigan Academy of Science.



Joe Sarnecki, Macomb science professor, measures the total dissolved solids in the Big Beaver Creek in Warren with Macomb student Curtis Walls as part of the Great Lakes Source Waters Quality Study he and students conducted this summer.

Freeing students up for experience of their lifetime

The benefits of studying abroad are not confined to any one discipline, but what is confining for some students is the cost. That is where Macomb's Student Study Abroad Fund, supported by private donations, can make a world of difference.

The Student Study Abroad Fund is for students 18 or older who have successfully completed at least two semesters or 15 credits at Macomb. Travel must be connected to an academic program, a Macomb study abroad program or an activity approved by the Macomb Multicultural International Initiatives, which oversees the granting of awards from the fund.

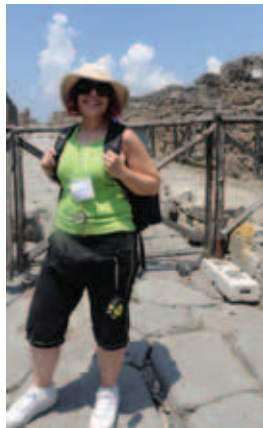
One recent recipient was Priscilla Byrne, a legal assistant major, who spent two weeks in Italy each of the past two summers assisting in a long-term project to create a computer database that catalogs all of the bakeries, food shops, hotels, kitchens and wineries that existed in ancient Pompeii. While she says that learning firsthand about some of the origins of Western culture was personally rewarding, she is certain the insight gained into international law will prove invaluable in her future career.

"It took negotiation on a daily basis with agents to get into various areas of the ruins that had not been recorded," relates Byrne, who was recruited by Mary Meier, Macomb archeology

instructor, to participate in the Pompeii Food and Drink Project. "I learned that networking is key."

The past summer, Byrne was responsible for producing architectural drawings of the ruins for the database. As an unpaid volunteer, she was also responsible for \$1,500 room and board, Macomb tuition for the four-credit course, and air and bus fare from Detroit to Pompeii. The award she received from Macomb's Student Study Abroad Fund helped turn wishful thoughts into two trips she won't soon forget.

"I had never been to Europe before, and I enjoyed tasting the foods, learning about the traditions and establishing international friendships," says Byrne, who will graduate from Macomb next May. "It was the experience of a lifetime."



Macomb student Priscilla Byrne works on the Pompeii Food and Drink Project in Pompeii, Italy, last summer. An award from Macomb's Student Study Abroad Fund helped her participate in the project, which she considers, "the experience of a lifetime."

Celebrate holidays and more at Macomb Center

The quintessential *Nutcracker* ballet and the folk and Celtic Christmas music of Natalie MacMaster are just some of the performances at the Macomb Center for the Performing Arts that embrace the holiday spirit. The Macomb Center then welcomes the new year with a range of performances that include comedy, ballet and the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*.

- *The Nutcracker* with the Macomb Ballet Company—Dec. 2 at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m., and Dec. 3 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., \$15 adult, \$12 student/senior
- *Holiday Concert* with the Macomb Symphony Orchestra—Dec. 4 at 3 p.m., \$24 adults, \$20 student/senior
- *Holiday Brass*—Dec. 6 at 7:30 p.m., \$25 adult, \$20 student/senior
- *A Letterman Christmas*—Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., \$52 pit, \$47 gold circle, \$42 house
- *Natalie MacMaster: Christmas in Cape Breton*—Dec. 11 at 4 p.m., \$52 pit, \$47 gold circle, \$42 house
- *Come Home for Christmas* with the Detroit Concert Choir—Dec. 18 at 3 p.m., \$20 adult, \$18 senior, \$10 ages 21 and under

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Keeping the best and brightest in Macomb County



Janet Schrade (Soulliere) and Todd Soulliere (far right) are sister and brother, and alumni of Macomb and its baseball and golf teams, respectively. In June, they played host at Bello Woods Golf Course, which has been family owned since their parents opened it in 1968, to the Athletics Department/ Student Life and Leadership Golf Outing benefiting athletic and academic scholarships and student life activities at Macomb. More than 100 faculty, staff, students and alumni, including (left to right in the photo) Christine Beels and Denise Salgent, participated in the golf outing that raised \$5,000 in support of Macomb students. "If the community is thriving, we all do better," said Schrade, who, along with her brother, donated prizes for the golf outing. "We need to keep it here; we need to keep it in Macomb."

It's the journey not the destination for young alumnus

Nikola Bulajic is, perhaps, not your typical University of Michigan student. A native of the former Yugoslavia, he lives in a 25-year-old motor home in Ann Arbor, showers at the university's sports center after boxing practice, studied in Brazil and Germany, and spent the summer traveling across the United States on a Kawasaki KLR 650 connecting with friends, catching rainbows and collecting donations for the American Cancer Society.

And, oh yes, on weekends, he visits his mother in Shelby Township.

"A minimalist lifestyle appeals to me," offers Bulajic, who graduated from Macomb in 2009 and is majoring in international studies and minoring in philosophy at U of M. "I wanted to try and beat the system in Ann Arbor. I wanted to do it a little differently."

As philosophies go, that last one pretty much sums up Bulajic's approach to life, which he has even greater respect for after his mother, Ksantipa, underwent treatment for colon cancer.

An apt icon

Ksantipa, whose name is the Serbian equivalent of Xanthippe, Greek philosopher Socrates' wife, was diagnosed just as Bulajic was to start his first semester at U of M. He decided, instead, to postpone his studies to be there for his mother. Once treatments proved successful, the 24-year-old embarked on a four-month cross-country motorcycle adventure with the goal of raising money for cancer research.

"Much of it was very new to me," says Bulajic, of his fuel-driven fundraiser. "I contacted the American Cancer Society, and they gave me some tips on how to do it."

"You can let the rain get you down or curse at the flat tire. Or you can say, 'what a great adventure I am having.'"

Bulajic kept a journal of his trip at www.thepegasusproject.net, where donations to the American Cancer Society are also accepted. Pegasus, the winged-horse of Greek mythology, served as an apt icon for his extended road trip, which took him from Michigan to Florida to Texas to Arizona to California and up the western seaboard through Seattle, where he had to make major repairs to his motorcycle, and through Vancouver. And then there was that concrete universe known as Los Angeles, which was decidedly inhospitable to Bulajic and his Kawasaki

"I suppose it would be fair to say that in LA there is no good time for avoiding traffic," wrote Bulajic in his journal. "But nonetheless people, the ordeal is horrendous, I tell you."

A great adventure

But the good experiences far outweighed the bad. When his pup tent proved too flimsy to withstand fierce winds, there were the couches of strangers found on a website dedicated to the frugal traveler. There was the Grand Canyon at sunrise, where he ran into a photographer who had just lost his wife to cancer, and the 'biker' dad with two little girls who shared a lunch of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with Bulajic and told him about his brother who was undergoing treatment for a rare form of leukemia at a hospital in Utah. Bulajic made it a point to stop and say hi while passing through Salt Lake City.

And there was the certified motorcycle mechanic who came along at just the right time in Jackson, Calif.

"I had just broke down, and he pulled over on his motorcycle and asked if I needed help," relates Bulajic, who intends to pursue a career alleviating poverty. "I ended up staying at his house for a few days while we fixed my bike. I had an amazing amount of luck and good fortune that day."

For Bulajic, who regards the glass as half-full to begin with, the challenges he encountered on the road only strengthened his belief in a positive attitude as the balm for life's travails.

"Literally daily, I would meet someone who impacted my life," says Bulajic, who logged 200 to 300 miles a day during his four-month motorcycle journey. "You can let the rain get you down or curse at the flat tire. Or you can say, 'what a great adventure I am having.'"



Macomb alumnus Nikola Bulajic against the backdrop of the Grand Canyon—one of the stops he made on a four-month motorcycle trip across the United States last summer as part of his effort to raise money for the American Cancer Society. To the right, his Pegasus—a Kawasaki KLR 650.

Refugees are learning about their new country one letter at a time

Beginning in May, nearly 90 Iraqi adult refugees gathered two or three times a week at Macomb Community College's South Campus to learn English as a Second Language (ESL) and to learn about the culture of their newly adopted country—America.

Their educational attainment levels vary, from second-grade through college, with professions such as doctors, lawyers and engineers represented among their ranks.

Macomb is offering the English ESL training in partnership with the Chaldean Community Foundation, which is funding the training. The training program developed following a meeting earlier this year between Macomb President Jim Jacobs and Wayne State University President Allan Gilmour about how to best meet the educational needs of southeast Michigan's growing immigrant population.

Macomb's Workforce and Continuing Education Department, which is running the classes, tailored the training to meet the Chaldean Community Foundation's specifications. The students have been in the country anywhere from a few months to two years prior to enrolling in the program. Their native language is Aramaic and/or Arabic.

Feedback from the students who recently completed the first two rounds of training—a third session began in October—is positive. Some students have enrolled in Macomb's academic credit courses.



Jim Jacobs and Martin Manna, executive director of the Chaldean American Chamber of Commerce (in suits, left to right), visited a class of ESL students at South Campus (some pictured here) as they learned not only about the language but the culture of their newly adopted country.

Alumna marries successful mystery series with life in northern Michigan

Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli was reading Homer's *Iliad* to her two-year-old son when she decided she needed a journey all her own to balance out the demands of raising five children. Married at 18, she had bypassed college on the way to motherhood. But, in her 20s, she thought it time to retrace her steps.

"I told my husband that if I didn't get to go," remembers Buzzelli, "I was going to lose my mind."

With husband Antonio cheering her on, Buzzelli, a graduate of Detroit's Pershing High School, enrolled at Macomb. It was the late 1960s, and both the antiwar and women's liberation movements were gaining momentum on South Campus. For the young wife and mother, the rush of new ideas and intense opinions she encountered both in and out of the classroom did nothing less than change her life.

"It was a huge experience—going to Macomb. I had always hoped to write but never thought I had a right to," offers Buzzelli. "My first English professor saw something in me and gave me an armful of books about women's liberation and set me on a path I have stayed on."

After graduating from Macomb, Buzzelli earned a bachelor's degree in English from Oakland University and a master's degree in English language and literature from the University of Michigan. She is the author of a series of mystery novels published by Midnight Ink, teaches creative writing at Northwest Michigan College, is a book reviewer for *The Northern Express* in Traverse City, recently served on the panel choosing Michigan Notable Books for the Michigan State Library and was the recipient of a Michigan Council for the Arts grant for a collection of essays on northern living.

True to life

"I live on a little lake just outside of Kalkaska; GPS won't even take you here," relates Buzzelli of the home she and Antonio moved into seven years ago after raising their family in Washington Township. "It's so very nice here, except for a few days in the winter. And my life here with bears, raccoons and people with interesting stories to tell is what started me writing the Emily Kincaid mystery series."

Northern Michigan is the setting for all of Buzzelli's novels, and she peppers the rustic landscape with interesting characters based on people she has met. The author's next novel, *Dead Philosopher's Wife*, a psychological thriller

and not part of the Emily Kincaid series, is due out soon.

Delicious homecomings

For *Dead Philosopher's Wife*, Buzzelli spent hours last winter reading Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, as well as everything she could on particle physics, quantum mechanics and cosmology. In fact, she says, between research and book reviews, "I have very little time to read for pleasure." And the same applies to cooking. Fortunately Antonio, an Italian food exporter whose parents were born in Italy's Abruzzi region, loves to spend time in the kitchen.

"His dinners are spectacular," offers Buzzelli. "His pastas and salads are to die for."

While the couple used to undertake regular trips to Italy to visit family, Buzzelli is "traveled out." When she's not on book tours, she prefers reacquainting herself with the flower gardens that surround her northern Michigan home rather than with the finer points of packing a suitcase. The upcoming wedding of her grandson, one of 10 grandchildren, on the Italian island of Capri, however, will be an exception.

While her wanderlust has been satisfied for now, its first stirrings still come to mind against the backdrop of Macomb's South Campus.

"The time I spent there took me out of the little world that I lived in with my family," relates Buzzelli. "Everything in my life changed—right after I graduated from Macomb."



Elizabeth Kane Buzzelli at a book signing at the Romeo Library in September. Prior to the signing, Buzzelli, a Macomb alumna, was part of a panel of mystery writers who had been invited to discuss their craft. "I like to write the truth about women's lives," she told the audience.

Electrifying invitation



Four students from Macomb's alternative energy program were invited to join U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu on a tour of A123 Systems Inc., a lithium battery coating plant in Romulus, Mich. Also joining Chu and the students on the July tour were U.S. Senator Carl Levin and U.S. Representatives Sander Levin, John Dingell and Hansen Clark. Pictured with Chu at the plant are, from left to right, Kenn Evenson, Gerald Schuette, Chu, Philip Denys and Jason McDaris.

Exploring the birth of Great Lakes State

As Michigan enters its 225th year of statehood, the next series at the Lorenzo Cultural Center will explore many of the historic events and cultural influences that preceded its entry into the union, including the battle for control of the Great Lakes, a booming fur trade, the war between Britain and France, dissension between Native Americans and early settlers, and the War of 1812 between the United States and Britain, which brought the infamous surrender of Detroit.

Becoming Michigan: From Revolution to Statehood will open at the cultural center on Feb. 25, bringing Michigan's early history to life through exhibits, activities, speakers and other avenues for discovery. A few of the legends and locales that will provide a historic context for the birth of Michigan include Lewis Cass, Rev. Gabriel Richard, Tecumseh, Libby Bacon, General William Hull, Augustus Woodward, Detroit, Mackinaw City/Mackinac Island, Erie Canal and Sault Ste. Marie.

With the exception of the speakers' series, there is no charge for admission to the Lorenzo Cultural Center. The *Becoming Michigan* series will run through May. For the complete program series, go to www.LorenzoCulturalCenter.com in February.

New Car Czar learns about Macomb's CAM program



Jay Williams, executive director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers, visited Macomb's South Campus in late August to learn more about the college's job retraining programs, including one funded by a federal grant to train displaced workers for jobs in the defense industry. Here Williams (far left) and Rep. Sander Levin (middle), stop on a tour of the Haas Technical Education Center located on the college's South Campus to examine a piece of computer-aided manufacturing equipment as Gary Walters, applied technology faculty, explains the processes that students are learning on it.

1950s series went on the road

When *The 1950s: Affluence and Anxiety in the Atomic Age* series wrapped up at the Lorenzo Cultural Center in May, a large portion of it was packed up and sent to the Detroit Historical Museum, where it remained through Nov. 6.

"It's the first time one of our exhibits has traveled," noted Christine Guarino, Macomb's director of cultural affairs. "And because of the museum's invite, a whole new audience will see what it is that we are doing."

The museum, operated by the Detroit Historical Society, has been an ongoing educational sponsor of the cultural center, including the 1950s series. In fact, the museum contributed to some of the exhibits that comprised the series, which explored the often contradictory facets of post-WWII American society—from its growing affluence to Cold War fears and atomic anxiety. Much of what was on loan, however, was pure Macomb.

"The exhibit did include a few of the artifacts we borrowed from the museum," acknowledged Guarino. "All of the other pieces were crafted by the college's cultural center and graphics staff, including storefronts and a bomb shelter."

Alumni notes

Anne Brown, 1985, earned bachelor's (summa cum laude) and master's degrees in information technology management from Central Michigan University. She is employed as a business systems analyst for Macomb County.

Amy Luce, 1987, earned a bachelor of fine arts degree in musical theater from Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. She is currently working on a master of fine arts degree in stage management at Virginia Technical University, where her husband, Vince DeGeorge, is working on a master of fine arts degree in directing and public dialogue. The couple celebrated their 10th anniversary this year.

Jessica Beels, 2004, has been appointed chief of police in Memphis, Mich. She previously worked for the New Baltimore and Marine City departments.

Pamela (Bird) Weatherwax, 1991, earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and worked as a teacher for Macomb County Head Start for 10 years before leaving to raise her family.

News about alumni

Send us a note, and let us know what you've been doing since you graduated from Macomb. Please include the year you graduated (or last year attended), advanced degrees earned, job history since leaving Macomb and any other items of professional or personal interest.

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Making a “dramatic impact” on animals’ lives

When students, staff and alumni from Macomb’s veterinary technician program volunteered to spay and neuter 88 dogs and cats from the Macomb County Animal Shelter last spring, they received a couple of life or death reminders about the significance of their chosen field.

“One of the puppies from a litter that was brought in was really sick, and we couldn’t operate,” recalls Lori Renda-Francis, veterinary technician faculty. “If we had sent her back to the shelter, she probably would have been euthanized.”

Instead, volunteers fed her intravenously and kept watch on her 24 hours a day for a week until she recovered, stabilized and was healthy enough to be spayed. The two-month-old pit bull, Snickers, has since been adopted.

In another instance, one of the surgical teams encountered a life-threatening infection in the uterus of Ginger, a five-year-old beagle they were operating on.

“Immediately, we had to change things up in the surgery room,” relates Francis. “What was a routine spay turned into us taking life-saving measures. She surely would have died from the infection if she had not been included in our surgery schedule that day.”

Ginger, too, recovered after being nursed back to health by vet tech students, staff and alumni and has been adopted—as have all of the other 87 cats and dogs the Macomb volunteers spayed or neutered. The operations, which would have cost the shelter \$50 to \$200 apiece for each animal, were funded by one of the college’s Innovation Grants, which support community service projects that enhance the learning experiences of Macomb students. The marathon operating sessions averaged 10 hours each and were held eight times February through May. Alumna Marla Gray was there for all but one.



Some of the students, alumni and faculty who volunteered to help spay and neuter 88 pets for the Macomb Animal Shelter this spring. From left to right: Kristine Hahn, Angelique Wylomanski, Jennifer Parmenter, Shelly Tislerics, Stephanie Szczesny, Lori Renda-Francis and Arielle Paleno. Shown with them is Snickers, a pit-bull puppy who was too sick for the operation before he received round-the-clock attention from volunteers.

“It meant a lot to work side-by-side with my former educators in the surgery room,” says Gray, 22, who graduated from the program in 2009 and is employed as a licensed veterinary technician at the Animal Medical Center of Troy and the Animal Medical Emergency Center in Novi. “Not only was it a very self-fulfilling experience, but it helped increase the chances that these animals would be adopted. This event that the vet tech faculty created had a dramatic impact on the lives of these animals. I was glad to be a part of it.”

A salute to service

The Lorenzo Cultural Center concluded its series of programs, *The 1950s: Affluence and Anxiety in the Atomic Age*, with a tribute to each of the branches of military service, with emphasis given to veterans of the Korean War. The 1950s program focused on the key people and events of that decade and included a special exhibit about the Korean War. The tribute featured the 338th Army band and the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 154, Color Guard.



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