All invited to officially welcome President Schmotter

by Yonna Johnson

If you've been on the Western Connecticut State University campuses or attended a Greater Danbury community event since Aug. 1, you've likely met WestConn's new president, Dr. James W. Schmotter. And if you've met him, you already may be calling him your friend.

His personal style is revealed in a willingness to listen, an easy smile that's often followed by laughter, and an ability to make friends with those he meets — whether they're students, faculty and staff, alumni or members of the community. He's also deeply interested in advancing the university's mission, while changing the lives of its students and all those they touch.

With that in mind, the university is planning a number of activities from Friday, April 8, through Friday, April 15, to celebrate the inauguration of Schmotter as the university's eighth president. The activities will focus on "Changing Lives."

Director of University Relations Dr. G. Korey Amin-Wright, who is co-chair of the Inaugural Steering Committee overseeing the festivities, explained that the week's events — like its theme — will mirror Schmotter's style.

"In the brief time he's been at the university, Dr. Schmotter has become a very familiar face around campus. He's made himself available and accessible to students, alumni, members of the community, faculty and staff," she said. "Just about everyone I've talked to is very pleased with what he's been able to accomplish in his short time here. By joining the inauguration activities, we all honor him, the opportunity for people who've come to know and like him to attend the inauguration of a friend," Amin-Wright added.

Schmotter selected the focus for the week. Dr. Schmotter chose the theme "Changing Lives" because it reflects what this university has been doing since its founding," Amin-Wright said. "Keeping that in mind, everything scheduled during the inaugural week will have some element that incorporates the 'Changing Lives' theme. We want to present meaningful activities and programs that will showcase the many lives this university has changed over the years."

Senior Justice and Law Administration major Elizabeth Dyer, who is the Student Government Association (SGA) representative on the 16-member steering committee, said she's seeing first-hand that WestConn and Schmotter are committed to helping students enhance their lives.

"He's involving himself with student clubs and SGA activities as much as he can," Dyer said. "It's very impressive that he's involving himself so closely with our education and our lives."

The steering committee is working with a planning committee and a number of sub-committees to develop and implement the events for the week. The organizers have established an e-mail address and are asking those who have suggestions about events, are interested in volunteering, or want to request more information to send an e-mail to inauguration@wcssu.edu.

The organizers intend to host events that will involve and appeal to specific members of the university community, such as students, alumni, faculty and staff, and members of the public. Some of the possibilities being considered include a community day, a faculty day to highlight faculty-developed programs...end. as page 5

Renowned economist speaks for President's Lecture Series

by Shami Hill


Frank, Henrietta Johnson Louis Professor of Management in the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University, was the first speaker for the 2004-05 President's Lecture Series at WestConn. He shared some intriguing economic — and psychological — perspectives with an attentive Student Center audience as he discussed "Does Rising Inequality Harm the Middle-Class?"

Using what he called "thought experiments," Frank asked the audience to consider whether their ideal world would have them living in a 4,000-square-foot home while everyone else had a 6,000-square-foot home, or if they would prefer owning a 3,000-square-foot home while others make do with a 2,000-square-foot residence.

In the after-lunch session, Frank asked the audience to choose between a scenario where they got two weeks of vacation each year or everyone else only received one week, versus a situation where they had four weeks off while everyone else got six.

Most people pick the second option in both cases, despite the surprise of many economists, Frank said. That's because context matters. But, he cautioned, the degree to which it matters varies in different domains.

One domain includes necessities, such as housing, which Frank called "positional goods." Leisure time, on the other hand, is a non-positional good. When the top 1 percent of the highest earners spend exorbitant amounts on positional goods, they trigger an "expander's arms race" in each of the earning rungs below them on the ladder. This cascade effect diverts resources from areas like leisure time, maintaining the infrastructure, basic public services, and other non-positional items.

As members of the middle class struggle to reach an ever-rising bar of how much should be spent on a house, a car, an interview suit or a hostess gift, they find themselves working longer hours, with longer commutes and less leisure time. As a result, they are more likely to face marital problems leading to divorce, over- indebtedness leading to bankruptcy, and increasing unhappiness.

One solution, Frank suggested, would be to reward people who tested an arm's length to gear down. If the top earners all bought $300 job interview suits instead of $1,500 suits, then everyone would give up $500 suits, not $1,500 suits. The job applicants would still be on the same field as before — but there would be less stress on the middle class and more room to the left over for other things.

The problem lies in situations where resources are at stake, because people naturally will react with jealousy. Making more money does not make the middle class happier — minimizing the inequality with the upper echelon does. And the only way to remedy Frank suggested, is to raise the marginal tax rates on the country's top earners, which appears to be the opposite of the tax strategy proposed by President George W. Bush.

WestConn Professor of Economics Dr. Steven Skinner attended the President's Lecture event and was intrigued by Frank's proposals.

"I found the presentation stimulating, especially the way he combined psychology with economics to come up with what he called the 'cascading effect,'" Skinner said. "The latter formed the major basis for his explanation of many problems now facing our society, which range from high levels of consumer indebtedness to very light public budgets. According to Dr. Frank, the remedy is to raise marginal tax rates on high-income earners through a progressive consumption tax.

"This policy, according to Dr. Frank, would result in every person ultimately leading a more pleasant, fulfilling life, which is not a bad outcome," Skinner continued. "Now if only the politicians could be convinced..."
COMMUNIQUE
AROUND CAMPUS

Sponsor change, theme among new elements of annual computer animation festival
Newly formed Center for Graphics Research organizing events

by Yvonne Johnson

WestConn’s annual festival featuring computer animation and graphics created by college students, faculty members and industry professionals has become known as a top shelf event. This year’s festival, AniFest 05, promises more of the same — with some new elements.

The university’s fourth festival to feature computer animation and graphics will run Monday, April 25, through Wednesday, April 27, at the Student Center on the Midtown campus.

Those familiar with the free, public festival will note that there are two changes to the elements they have come to appreciate. First is the addition of a theme, “Children’s Toys,” which is expected to generate new works.

“The theme is intended to focus the festival on a specific area, but we are encouraging those who participate to interpret the theme as broadly as possible,” said Center for Graphics Research Director Dr. William Joel, the chief organizer of the festivities. “It’s an element that will be woven throughout the festival — from the promotional materials to the submissions for the student competition.”

Also, the festival is now being sponsored by the newly created WCSU Center for Graphics Research. In the past, the university’s Graphics Research Group (GRG) organized the events. The group formed in 1999 to offer students, often enrolled in various imaging courses, the opportunity to work with faculty and other students to blend their curricular pursuits with extra-curricular projects in the fields of computer graphics and animation. Those projects took a number of forms, including one student’s work to create graphics for the WCSU Weather Center.

However, the GRG almost immediately took on duties beyond its original research scope to better serve student needs, pointed out Joel, who was the director of the GRG and is now the director of the Center for Graphics Research. Those additional projects included organizing the annual animation festival at WestConn and providing scholarships for students to attend an annual national conference focused on computer graphics and interactive techniques. Acknowledging that, the Connecticut State University (CSU) Board of Trustees approved the creation of the Center for Graphics Research earlier this year. The GRG now will operate as an arm of the Center for Graphics Research. That means the GRG will focus on its original mission: research. And the Center for Graphics Research can expand its scope.

“This recognizes the true nature of the projects originally being supported by the GRG,” Joel said. “With the recognition of the CSU Systems, the Center will have the opportunity to entertain other non-research projects.”

Additional support comes with its growth as the Center’s focus is to be an official center that is part of the CSU System, and the Center now has the structure to pursue other funding. That means the Center for Graphics Research may be able to bring in additional guest speakers to address computer animation and graphics topics.

“We are looking to develop relationships with local animators and to partner with them in the work of the Center, including the animation festival and beyond,” Joel said.

With the help of the Center’s five-member advisory board, Joel also is exploring a number of other possible ventures, such as animation workshops for local high school teachers. Another possibility is a two- or four-week summer animation institute that would allow area high school and college students to earn college credit as they learn about computer graphics and animation.

WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY is an affirmative action/equal opportunity educator and employee. It is fully committed to the goal of providing equal opportunity and full participation in its educational programs, activities and employment without discrimination.

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

This action is reserved for correcting errors or clarifying information appearing in the COMMUNIQUE. Please report factual errors or omissions using clarification by calling (203) 837-7432 or sending by email to news@wcsu.edu.

COMMUNIQUE STAFF

Dr. G. Kyrene Ame-Wright
Director, University Relations
(203) 837-4471
awright@wcsu.edu
Yvonne Johnson
Assistant Director, Public Relations
(203) 837-8285
laveryh@wcsu.edu
Sharil Hill
University Assistant, Public Relations
(203) 837-4474
shill@wcsu.edu
Sharle Reppel
Secretary, Public Relations
(203) 837-8285
reppel@wcsu.edu

To request additional copies, please call Sharil at (203) 837-4488.

Vol. 7, No. 4
December 2004

Organizers accepting submissions for AniFest 05 Deadline is March 31

Whether you’re a college student interested in sharing your skill as a computer animator with a larger audience or a faculty member who wants to display your graphic design expertise, WestConn’s annual festival featuring computer animation and graphics is just the showcase for you.

AniFest 05, the university’s fourth festival to feature computer animation and graphics, will run Monday, April 25, through Wednesday, April 27, at the Student Center on the Midtown campus. And organizers now are accepting submissions for the juried student animation competition and exhibition, one of the highlights of the festival that will be free and open to the public.

Students attending a college or university in New York and the six New England states (Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont) are invited to submit works for the competition. Thursday, March 31, is the deadline for submissions, which should be sent via CD and not exceed five minutes in length. “Children’s Toys” is the theme of the festival. Students may submit works in the following categories: storytelling, character animation, special effects, art or ambient animation, games, and commercial or educational work.

Student entries will be judged on the basis of content, design, originality, technical excellence and artistic merit. A panel of judges representing various areas of the field will review the entries. Selected works will be displayed in a continuous loop during the three-day festival sponsored by the university’s newly formed Center for Graphics Research. "The Art of Animation" exhibit and creative works submitted by faculty from various post-secondary institutions also will be displayed daily during the festival.

These are possibilities now that the Center has been created,” Joel said. Many GRG activities have been supported by the same private donors for the last several years. With the creation of the Center for Graphics Research and the push for additional projects, Joel said he and the advisory board members hope to secure funding for current and future projects from a number of other sources.

Joel invited those who want to know more about the Center’s activities or who may be interested in providing financial support to contact him at (203) 837-7432.

“We are inviting local individuals, organizations and businesses to get involved in all Center efforts,” he said.

WestConn Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Eugene Bucchina praised Joel’s efforts in creating the Center, which combines areas of interest for both computer science and art majors.

“We did not think it was an exciting field, such a cutting-edge field,” Bucchina said. “But we also think it is an interdisciplinary effort.”

Joel has emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of computer animation and graphics and efforts to continue that with future Center projects. In fact, he spearheaded the university’s creation of

1

Brooke Hill
Associate Director, Public Relations
(203) 837-4474
bittona@wcsu.edu

For more information, call the WCSU Center for Graphics Research at (203) 837-6550 or the Office of Public Relations at (203) 837-4488.

www.wcsu.edu/ugr

Communique is published monthly (September - December & February - May) by the Office of Public Relations at Western Connecticut State University.

Managing Editor
G. Kyrene Ame-Wright, Ph.D.

Editors
Stacey Hall
Yvonne Johnson

Copy Editor
Peggy Poulsen

Page Design
Elise MFJ

Send comments/requests to pr@wcsu.edu
WestConn alumni, faculty, students help elderly homeless
Shelter of the Cross concept born at university

by Terresa Johnson

Twins well in 59-year-old Carissa's eyes and fear ripple in her voice as she talks about the clinical depression, anxiety and financial troubles that left her homeless when she supposed to be enjoying her "golden years." But that pain and fear seem a world away only minutes later when the grandmother's eyes twinkle and a grin spreads across her face as she talks about painting with acrylics or — almost shyly — shows a visitor the colorful paintings of woodland and seaside scenes she has created.

Carissa, one of five people now living at Danbury's Shelter of the Cross, credits the shelter that only accepted Great Danbury elderly homeless as the reason for her interest in painting and her newfound happiness.

"It’s the best thing that ever happened to me. It was a miracle," Carissa said of moving into the shelter last January. "I feel very safe here." Located in what was a two- family house on Aaron Surnam Boulevard near the city's downtown, the non-profit, 16-bed transitional program is the only one in the state that specifically serves homeless men and women who are 60 or older. For the dozens of homeless people who have been helped by the privately funded program and found homes of their own, it's a miracle. It’s a concept that was born at WestConn — and continues to flourish with the help of the university's alumni, faculty and students.

"It’s been very helpful for us to have the support of WestConn's faculty and students," said Karen Messina, the shelter's founder and executive director, who also is a WestConn alumna.

Messina saw first-hand the plight of elderly homeless people, who often have needs that differ drastically from those of younger counterparts, during her social service work on the city's streets and in area soup kitchens. While pursuing her Master of Science in Counseling Education at WestConn in the early '90s, Messina took a course focused on community counseling that was taught by Professor Emeritus Dr. Daniel Joynt. During the course, Joynt asked the Redding resident and her classmates to each identify a specific need in the community and then develop a program to meet the need.

"I identified a need for housing for elderly homeless because their needs are so much more severe," Messina said. "And there are a lot of elderly homeless people — many more than most people would like to believe."

The elderly homeless represent a cross-section of economic, racial and cultural groups, according to the shelter's Web site. Some suffer with psychiatric disabilities, substance abuse problems or lost jobs. Several are highly educated. Most suffer with medical complications due to years of neglect of their health. In 2003, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty estimated that 5 to 10 million people experience homelessness at some time during their life. Messina estimates that 5 to 10 percent of the homeless population is elderly.

Armed with the stories of the area's elderly homeless who defy stereotypes and have individual reasons for becoming homeless, Messina wrote the plan to create Shelter of the Cross. She then enlisted Joynt's help and set about making her concept a reality.

"He was very instrumental in the development of Shelter of the Cross and even agreed to serve on the board of directors," Messina said.

In 1993, Shelter of the Cross was incorporated as a non-profit, full-time employer. Assistant Director Lydia Kehl, a Danbury resident who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from WestConn, and the shelter's resident services coordinator, work with Messina to provide case management services to the residents. The program continues to receive outreach and support for 18 months after their shelter's closure.

"The program provides in services with plenty of ongoing help from members of the WestConn community," said Messina. "For example, the organization's only other paid full-time employee, Assistant Director Lydia Kehl, a Danbury resident who earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from WestConn, and the shelter's resident services coordinator, work with Messina to provide case management services to the residents. The program continues to receive outreach and support for 18 months after their shelter's closure.

"Right from the start, we’ve worked with the internships and practicum students from the counseling education graduate program," Messina said. "I find the graduate counseling program at WestConn to be exceptional. All the students we’ve engaged from the program have been extremely competent. They’re very well-trained and well-qualified."

To earn their degrees, the students must complete a practicum, which requires they serve 100 hours in a community counseling setting. That’s about 10 hours a week for a semester. The students also must complete two internships. Those require about 300 hours, or 10 hours a week, for a semester.

"WestConn students provide unpaid counseling services in a host of community settings throughout the region. Some choose to spend a portion of their time helping Shelter of the Cross residents.

Working with Messina and Kehl, Joynt and Assistant Professor of Education and Educational Psychology Dr. Michael Gilles oversee the work the WestConn students do at the shelter this semester. Sheila McLaughlin, a Danbury resident who is pursuing her Master of Science in Counseling Education, is splitting her practicum hours between Shelter of the Cross and the Women's Counseling Center in Brookfield.

"It’s been a great experience," McLaughlin said of her work at the shelter. "I’m really enjoying the individual counseling. The residents continue on page 7

University’s maintenance department receives Governor’s Service Award

by Dr. G. Kayne Ann Wright

In an October ceremony in the Old Judith Rood Auditorium, State Capitol, Gov. M. Jodi Rell presented the Governor's Service Award to 53 state employees in recognition of their outstanding service to the state.

WestConn was one of the 10 agencies represented at the ceremony.

"This program started in late 1995, early 1996," Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Administrative Services Alan J. Mazzeia said. "We’ve held about 30 ceremonies and presented awards to about 1,800 state employees who have been awarded for outstanding achievements for service in their agencies and recognized by their superiors."

WestConn’s award went to the maintenance department. Plant Facilities Engineer Mike Andryck and Maintenance Supervisor Gene Trovetti received the award on behalf of the department.

"It’s a privilege for me to be here this morning," Rell said at the beginning of the program. "Congratulations. You’ve been recognized by your peers for an outstanding job. I have to say thanks for what you do, for how you handle your job, and for your optimism, ideas and innovative ways."

With friends, family and co-workers looking on, Rell presented the employees with their award and a pin.

"Thanks to everyone," Rell said in closing. "I am proud of you.

Joe Lovano Nonet named guest artist for April jazz fest

by Terresa Johnson

From Thursday, April 28, through Saturday, April 30, WestConn will become the center of the jazz world. That’s when the Ninth Annual Jazz Festival and Connecticut Jazz Spectacular will take place in Ives Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. This year’s featured artist will be the 2005 Down Beat Critics Poll Winner for Tenor Saxophonist of the Year. Joe Lovano, who will perform with his Joe Lovano Nonet.

The New York Times wrote, "It's fair to say that he’s one of the greatest musicians in jazz history," while Jazziz.com proclaimed, "Lovano evokes the best tenor saxophonists of their time and the hardbop genre — Lester Young, Ben Webster, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane — without sacrificing his own voice."

A Grammy winner in 2000 for Best Large Ensemble, Lovano and his nonet have amassed a sizable discography and numerous music industry accolades. WestConn students and jazz aficionados likely will be awed by Lovano’s prowess on the tenor saxophone as was the Very Special Orchestra in the film "Move over Pavarotti, the great Italian tenor around today isn’t Luciano, but Lovano."
WestConn events challenge voters, spark debate

by Yvonne Johnson

Whether or not you like the outcomes, the votes in the recent presidential and local elections have been tallied and the results decided. However, the questions raised and the issues explored during the “Will You Decide Election 2004?” events at WestConn linger.

Meant to challenge voters to get informed and take part in the elections, the October events offered as part of “The Future: Its Promises and Threats” series provided a dynamic forum for discussion. Hundreds of participants took part in several free events that touched on topics ranging from the War in Iraq to a host of domestic issues.

The events on the Midtown campus included a forum for candidates in three areas — state house and senate races to debate issues important to their constituents, a screening of Michael Moore’s controversial documentary “Fahrenheit 9/11,” and a discussion where 10 students and alumni with differing political beliefs shared their opinions about the presidential candidates. Dr. Avrell F. Mames and Dr. Christopher Kold, professors in the university’s social sciences department, organized the October events and said they were pleased they sparked a great deal of interest and participation.

In introducing the panels for the final October event, “Students Speak Out: Will You Decide Election 2004?” Mames pointed out that election-year rhetoric often focuses popular attention on differences and on issues that divide. Those differences of opinion and points of contention were obvious as the panelists who identified themselves as Democrats, Republicans, Green Party Members, Libertarians or Independents traded opinions about a number of issues and answered audience questions.

With concerns about the strength of the economy, homeland security and the War in Iraq still at the forefront of American consciousness, the School of Arts and Sciences will continue its yearlong series to explore the promises and threats of the future. The series is meant to encourage discussion and urge participants to consider differing viewpoints, said Dr. Linda Vaden-Goad, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

In December, “The Future of Learning With (or Without) Technology: Lessons From Cognitive Science” will be the focus. Assistant Professor of Psychology Dr. Robin Flamang will discuss questions such as “How do humans learn best?” and “What have we learned about learning?” at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 2, in the Student Center Theater on the Midtown campus.

Flamang will explain principles of cognition, share the results of her research in elementary school classrooms to test those principles, and explain why the topic should matter to those concerned with learning and education. Offered in partnership with the university’s continuing education, “Science-of-the-Night” series, the event will be free and the public is invited.

For more information about the December event, call Professor of Biological and Environmental Sciences Dr. Thomas Pulick at (855) 837-9797. For more information about “The Future: Its Promises and Threats” series, call the School of Arts and Sciences at (855) 837-9601.

Hall of fame inducts six more

It was a night of accolades, celebrations and remembrance as the 2004 inductees to the WCSU Athletic Hall of Fame gathered for the annual dinner and award ceremony.

“It’s great to see everyone who will be inducted tonight,” said Master of Ceremonies and WLAD sports announcer Bart Batuman. “It’s also wonderful to see past hall of famers and folks who might be future inductees.”

“Our inductees are not only winners on the scoreboard, they are winners in life,” WestConn President Dr. James W. Schmotter noted in his remarks. “We are here tonight to celebrate a great past and great accomplishments. I look forward to joining you in honoring our inductees.”

The induction ceremony held a common thread. All the inductees attributed their successes to support from WestConn and their community of family and friends.

“I think about how basketball has guided my life, and I feel lucky to have had wonderful coaches, teammates, friends and family who got me there,” said Angela Mela.

(Women’s basketball coach) Jody Rajcic taught me to excel on the court and in the classroom.”

Paul Ellis, a basketball player and 1994 WestConn graduate, thanked everyone for the recognition and the award.

“Much of who I am is thanks to those I’ve come in contact with,” Ellis said.

“Thanks to WestConn, it’s been a great ride and I’ve been successful. And I owe that to the quality of folks and the education I received at WestConn — and to those that showed me.”

Softball inductee Andrea Franck Jones said she considers herself truly blessed.

“My parents, siblings and coaches have played a huge role in my life. It’s been wonderful to have played with such great teammates to have been coached by a great coaching staff and to have received an outstanding education from WestConn.”

With awards of this type, the recipient is the focus,” WestConn’s outstanding baseball pitcher Gary Lenne reflected. “Yet so many people were responsible for us being here tonight. I am grateful to have learned from so many great coaches.”

I established wonderful friendships and received an education from WestConn that enabled me to succeed in life.”

Wendy Patenaude-Baker, inducted for her accomplishments in soccer, echoed the gratitude expressed by the other inductees.

“I’d like to thank my parents, who are my greatest supporters,” she said. “I’m very proud of this award. It took a lot of hard work, and I thank you for recognizing that.”

Agreement opens door for transfer students from Japan

by Shawna Hill

In mid-October, a small delegation of Japanese educators came to Danbury to meet their counterparts at WestConn. Their goal was to explore the potential for establishing a reciprocal alliance for international student exchange. As a result of the discussions that followed, the educators signed an articulation agreement that will pave the way for qualified students from the International College of Foreign Languages (ICFL) in Japan to attend WestConn to pursue undergraduate degrees.

“We have for a very long time had in place a number of intriguing agreements for international student and faculty exchange,” said Professor of Anthropology Dr. Robert Whiteman, who was present at the meeting. In addition, “we’ve recently seen a dramatic increase in the number of students who are interested in studying abroad. What’s different about this agreement is that the students who will be coming here will come not as exchange students, but as regular tuition-paying students working toward a degree.”

Whiteman, who coordinated International Education Week events on campus in mid-November and runs WestConn’s International Center, is a vocal proponent of student experiences that promote global citizenship. He explained that the current agreement only allows for ICFL students to come here, but both institutions have indicated a willingness to explore building upon that in the future. In order for that to happen, he cautioned, the university will have to develop an infrastructure to support both incoming international students and WestConn students who wish to study abroad. For now, Whiteman said, the Japanese students who come here will benefit from the experience of living, studying and obtaining a degree in the United States, while WestConn will enjoy a new source of enrollment that brings a different voice to classroom discussions and campus discourse.

John Wallace, special assistant to the vice president for student affairs, said the new agreement does not provide for WestConn students to take courses at ICFL yet, but that may change as the relationship between the two institutions develops.

“What this school system wants to do is to be able to tell its students that if they obtain good grades and high TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) scores, that they can come study in the United States,” Wallace said. “It’s a motivator and an incentive for them.”

About a dozen American colleges and universities have executed agreements and accepted transfer students from ICFL, in the past, but WestConn would be the first such institution on the East Coast. The other affiliated colleges are in California, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and North Dakota.

“We’re probably a very likely place for someone from Japan to want to go,” Wallace said. “We could offer them complete immersion in English, a wide variety of programs of study, and proximity to Manhattan, Boston and the rest of the Northeast. I think there’s a lot of potential that WestConn will be very attractive to international students.”

President Dr. James W. Schmotter agreed.

“Our new partnership with Hiroshima College of Foreign Languages will bring enthusiastic Japanese students to our campus,” he said. “I know they will learn from the experience here at WestConn and that their Connecticut classmates will likewise learn from them. That’s the beauty of student exchange experiences — everyone benefits.”
Around Campus

Guests impressed by new Westside residence hall

by Donna Rill

Despite the chilly morning air, the dignitaries came out in droves on Oct. 25 to celebrate the official opening of the new 126,000-square-foot, 550-bed, state-style residence hall on WestConn’s Westside campus.

In his opening remarks, Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Walter Benedict acknowledged the high-profile crowd that included several state representatives, a state senator, a first-semester, the state’s commissioner of higher education, representatives from the Connecticut Board of Education, Connecticut State University (CSU) trustees, local school superintendents, WestConn deans, alumni, faculty and staff.

Benedict joked, “Someone once said, ‘if you build it, they will come.’ And they have.”

Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who was scheduled to cut the ceremonial ribbon, was unable to attend. She was called upon instead to be present at the funeral of U.S. Chief Warrant Officer William Brennan, a fallen helicopter pilot from Bethel, Conn.

Department of Public Works Commissioner James T. Fleming, who spoke on Rell’s behalf, asked those assembled outside the residence hall to observe a moment of silence. He then went on to express pride in the reason everyone was there.

“This university has seen an extraordinary transformation over the past five years,” Fleming said, citing a number of ongoing and recently completed building projects on both campuses. “This really is an incredible success story to see a project completed on such a tight time frame. I hope the students enjoy this place — it’s really beautiful.”

WestConn alumnus and Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, and CSU Chancellor Dr. William Gilreath made remarks, then WestConn President Dr. James W. Schmotter addressed the crowd.

“We’re on a beautiful day in the neighborhood,” Schmotter began, garnering laughs. “Where we’re standing now was just a pile of mud in July. I was worried about students sleeping in my office. But the mattresses came on Thursday and the students came on Friday, and they have a new home on our Westside campus.”

Schmotter acknowledged that the construction of the residence hall in such a short time required the efforts of a very talented group of people.

“This brings the campus together. This adds to our learning community,” he said.

Once the ribbon was cut, a reception was held in the residence hall’s sizable lower-level common room. From there, student residents gave guided tours of the facility.

“Big screens televisions, conditioning, microwaves and trash compactors — we had nothing to compare,” she said. “This is a beautiful building and it’s so big, so clean, so pristine.”

Planning for April inauguration is ongoing (cont’d.)

that are improving the lives of many in the community, a student day, which will include the groundbreaking for the new Westside campus student center and other student-sponsored events, and an event that may feature WestConn students and alumni who will talk about the changes they’ve experienced as a result of their education.

The formal ceremony to install the president is scheduled for Friday, April 15.

“We want to have active participation from the community, students, faculty and staff, and alumni throughout the week,” Hawkins said.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity to honor Dr. Schmotter and showcase what we do best here at WestConn — change the lives of those who come through the university’s gates and the lives of all those they encounter as they make contributions to the Greater Danbury region and beyond,” Annin-Wright added.

For more information, visit the website of WestConn, call Archives and Special Collections Librarian Meg Whaugh at (800) 437-4982 or the Office of Public Relations at (800) 437-4986.

“Amahl and the Night Visitors”

WSU Opera production of GianCarlo Menotti’s holiday classic

Friday & Saturday, Dec. 10 & 11

8 p.m.
Ives Concert Hall
White Hall
Midtown campus

For cost and other information, call (203) 437-4926.

Curious can get glimpse of Skitch Henderson’s life, career through Dec. 12 at WestConn

Exhibit chronicling icon’s life is direct result of Smithsonian Institution affiliation

by Yonna Johnson

WestConn Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Eugene Bucciarelli pointed out during the opening reception.

Henderson said the exhibit made him think back throughout his career to the early days when he and others would perform for $10 on a Saturday afternoon from the back of a pick-up truck.

“When I look at every one of these items, there’s a story,” he said.

Brooklyn resident Jeff Allred attended the opening and urged others to make time to see the exhibit.

“I think Skitch Henderson is a very important part of our community, and he has a fascinating history that’s woven into our popular culture,” Allred said. “Each of these things tells you about the man and his wonderful career.”

For more information about the exhibition at WestConn, call Archives and Special Collections Librarian Meg Whaugh at (800) 437-4982 or the Office of Public Relations at (800) 437-4986.

Photo of The New York Pops founder Skitch Henderson with legends ranging from Irving Berlin to Frank Sinatra to Judy Garland. An elaborate bar kit that entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. gave Henderson as a gift. And much, much more.

Henderson used to create original compositions. Each depicting a moment in Henderson’s entertainment life or hinting at his deftful sense of humor. These items are among the nearly 60 photos, publicity pieces and personal mementos that make up “Skitch Henderson: A Man and His Music.”

The exhibit celebrating the life and career of music icon Henderson is on display through Sunday, Dec. 12, in the Buhl Haas Library on the Midtown campus. It’s free to the public and open during library hours.

Eighty-six-year-old New Milford resident Henderson is the founder and music director of The New York Pops and a cultural icon who has been referred to as “a one-man celebration of 20th-century music.” He’s well-known for his stint as the band leader on “The Tonight Show” in the 1950s and ’60s. And Henderson’s career includes live performances, as well as work in movies, television and radio.

The exhibition was prepared in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution Affiliates Program and Smithsonian Curator Bobbi Cottrell, who is a cultural historian at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. Cottrell is curator and co-author of the “Red Hot & Blue: A Smithsonian Salute to the American Musical” exhibition and book. Both the Hunt Hill Farm Trust, which owns the Silo Gallery in New Milford, and WestConn are Smithsonian affiliates.

After a run at the Silo Gallery, the exhibition opened at the university on Nov. 1. The opening included a reception attended by Henderson and his wife, Ruth, who is president of The New York Pops. Once the show wraps at the university on Dec. 12, it will be available as a traveling exhibit offered to other institutions as part of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliates Program.

“The honor of having your career immortalized by the Smithsonian Institution is not given to many people.”
Connecticut Court of Appeals comes to WestConn
Alumnus judge honored during day’s events

by Shem Hill

History was made in late October when the Connecticut Court of Appeals convened in Ives Concert Hall to hear three cases pending on the appellate dock. And while the Court of Appeals and the Connecticut Supreme Court have made an effort to go on the road to expose the public to the inner workings of the judicial system, this was the first time a sitting judge — Thomas G. West — held court at his alma mater and then celebrated his impending retirement from the bench.

Professor of Justice and Law Administration (JLA) Dr. Harold Schramm, one of the organizers of the court’s appearance at WestConn, said the day was an unprecedented success and how excited they were to have the Connecticut Court of Appeals on our campus,” he said. “It was a great opportunity for students to see a real appellate court in action, the judges were amazing in their presentations, and it really showed off the court in its best light. I was especially glad to see the extent to which the universe of the community came out. It was a wonderful mix of law and education that brought many people to WestConn for a new experience in learning.

“Having Judge West here as presiding judge served as an especially wonderful role model for the students to see,” Schramm added.

Associate JLA Professor Michael Foley, who orchestrated the event with Schramm, agreed. “I think it was a huge success,” he said. “It showcased WestConn as a center for academic excellence in the community. The day was enormously beneficial for our students, as well as the more than 100 high school students who also attended. The question-and-answer sessions really helped them understand what was going on, and why.

“It had broad implications for many academic departments and crossed numerous disciplines,” Foley continued. “And it was wonderful to see the diversity of the judges, who included a female (Judge Alexandra D. DiPietrantonio), an African-American (Judge West), and a white male (Judge C. Ian McLachlan). When the decisions in the cases are posted online in about three months, it will precipitate further discussion and will provide another opportunity for learning.

Patricia Kaiser, a social studies, civics and economics teacher at Henry Abbott Technical School in Danbury, saw that she couldn’t pass up a hands-on learning opportunity like this. She and Samantha Faitove, another social studies teacher, brought 120 10th-grade students to “experience government in action.”

“We thought this was a wonderful idea, because it made the court system seem much less remote,” Kaiser said. “Trying to explain the difference between a trial court and the appellate court is much easier when the students can see it first-hand. They were intrigued by the cases and speculated about who they thought won each appeal — and they’ll be curious to see how cases turn out when the decisions are published. What a great learning experience.”

Twenty-two Ridgefield High School seniors taking an elective law and justice class taught by WestConn alumnus Patrick Higgins also attended the daylong session.

“The students were very impressed,” Higgins said. “It was the first time any of us had seen the appellate process in action; and for them, it made the clinical classroom process come to life. We prepared in advance by studying a famous search-and-seizure case. They love Fourth Amendment issues, and I’m just so pleased to be able to nurture their interest in law in this way.”

“Good for them — I’m glad some of the local high schools brought their students,” said Assistant JLA Professor George Kam. “And I’m impressed by the way the proceedings were conducted in a way to reach out to them. It’s important for students to see that we are human beings in a human system. And even at this level, where people’s freedom hangs in the balance, you have to be in a position of opportunity and conduct business with a smile on your face. We can teach students the nuts and bolts of the system, but until they see it first-hand they don’t get the full importance and impact of the humanity involved.”

The students weren’t the only ones interested in the cases. For the first time, New Haven attorney Trisha Morris Porto found herself arguing her first case before the appellate court in Ives Concert Hall, instead of the courthouse in Hartford. Porto was the only civil case on the day’s docket.

“Nothing like having your first appellate argument in front of more than 200 people,” she laughed.

Porto, who has practiced law since 1998, has written appellate briefs for the senior partners in her firm, but this was her first oral argument. She was notified about a month ago that the trial would be at WestConn.

“This was a really great experience,” she said. “My first obligation was to my client, and I was totally focused on my arguments and the judges during the hearing. I couldn’t allow myself to be distracted, so having an audience didn’t harm my client’s interests. After the arguments, the students asked really insightful questions and made some very good points. It was great to be able to have the opportunity to tell them why I thought the original trial judge was right.”

University establishes Center for Graphics Research (cont’d)

A digital media major, which includes art and computer science requirements. The center formally will offer its first digital media course in the fall 2005 semester. And Joel already is looking for opportunities to collaborate with other departments, such as theatre arts and music, and their students.

Baccina said research shows interdisciplinary approaches can be very effective in educating students.

“This is a wonderful example of that interdisciplinary approach at work,” he added.

For more information, call the WCSU Center for Graphics Research at (203) 877-4555 or the Office of Public Relations at (203) 877-4498.

AniFest 05

WestConn’s annual festival featuring computer animation and graphics
April 25 - 27

Student Center Midtown campus
Free and open to the public

For more information, call (203) 877-5958.
‘In Celebration of Veterans’ events emphasize dedication, sacrifices of troops

by Yvonne Johnson

With the United States and the world focusing attention on American troops’ activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, the university’s “In Celebration of Veterans” events throughout the day on Nov. 9 were especially poignant.

The day opened with nearly 100 people attending a solemn ceremony of remembrance that featured the U.S. Navy Silver Dolphins Honor Guard and the WCSU Police Color Guard posting the colors at the flagpoles in front of the Old Main Building.

Most of President James W. Schmotter spoke to the crowd about the sacrifices that veterans and their families have undergone, reading a excerpt from a letter President Abraham Lincoln wrote to a mother whose five sons died while serving in the Civil War. In the letter, Lincoln praised the mother who had “laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom.” Schmotter pointed out that active-duty troops and their families continue to make similar sacrifices daily.

“These were all made throughout our history with pride, with dedication and with honor,” he said. “We all owe them our gratitude.”

Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton, a WestConn alumnus, agreed, saying those who attended the day’s events sponsored by the WestConn Office of Multicultural Affairs to thank those who are serving and who have served in the U.S. military.

“We thank them for their commitment, and we remember those who have given their lives so we can stand here today,” he said.

The ceremony included two touching contributions from WestConn students: Kim Finlay sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” and America the Beautiful,” and Lisa Gutreuter played “Taps.”

The day included a number of other activities, which featured participation of the Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars organizations. Presentations from local veterans, poetry readings and more were offered.

The U.S. Navy Silver Dolphins Honor Guard took part in the university’s “In Celebration of Veterans” events on Nov. 9.

SPS honors five outstanding graduates at third annual event

by Shern Hill

Five distinguished alumnae from WestConn School of Professional Studies (SPS) recently were honored for the significant impact each has made in her respective field since graduating from the university.

At a Nov. 9 SPS Distinguished Alumnae Achievement Awards were bestowed upon graduates from each of the school’s five departments: education and educational psychology, health promotion and exercise science, music and music education, nursing, and social work. As part of the event, each award recipient was invited to make a brief presentation about a personal topic of interest.

This year’s honorees include:

Laurie Kerbs, a well-known author of several highly acclaimed children’s books, including “The Bremen” and “We All Went on Safari,” which was named by Child and Family Fun magazines as one of the 50 Best Children’s Books of 2003. She worked for 20 years as a first grade teacher in the Ridgfield public schools before launching her career as a successful author, which began when she wrote short stories for her students. Kerbs, who obtained a master’s degree in education in 1981, discussed “Never Too Late.”

Karen M. Zaccaria, a health educator and chair of the health and physical education department at New Milford High School. Zaccaria graduated magna cum laude in 1979 with a major in health education and worked at Avon High School, Planned Parenthood of Danbury and the Wooster School before becoming New Milford High School’s full-time health educator in 1992. As a Connecticut State Department of Education BEST Teacher Mentor, she supervises several student teachers who also graduated from WestConn. A Danbury resident, Zaccaria spoke about “High School Health Education: A New Dimension.”

Jeanne D’Angelo, who obtained two degrees: a Bachelor of Science, magna cum laude, in 1974; and a master’s in music education in 1977. Named the Connecticut Music Educator Association 1994 Teacher of the Year. D’Angelo has taught music in Connecticut for 25 years. Now the band director at Memorial Middle School in Middlebury, she also serves as an educational consultant to Region 35. Also the Music Teachers-in-Residence for the Connecticut State Department of Education BEST Program, D’Angelo shared her thoughts about “Teaching Beyond the Song Standards-based Music Teaching in Connecticut.”

Christina N. Braudon, M.S.N., A.R.N., R.N., a clinical nurse specialist at the Danbury Hospital Emergency Department Crisis Intervention and the Community Center for Behavioral Health. She graduated in 1991 with a Master of Science in Nursing and began a career that has led to her recent receipt of the 2004 Yale University Award for Nursing Excellence in Caring in Chronic Illness. An avid historian who writes about the history of nursing, Braudon spoke about “A Nurse’s Sense of Gratitude.”

Joyce B. Burns, M.S.W., a school social worker at the Park Street Elementary School in Danbury. Burns was a 1994 social work department summa cum laude graduate who received the Dean’s Award for Outstanding Student and was inducted into the Phi Alpha Honor Society of Social Work as an undergraduate. A non-traditional student while at WestConn, Burns has worked with students in her service to the community and schools, including the Danbury Character Highlights Award. Her presentation was entitled “Learn to Serve, Learn to Learn.”

During the ceremony, Dr. Lynne Clark, dean of the School of Professional Studies, spoke about the purpose of the awards. “The SPS and its departments are proud of each of the five alumnae that were honored at tonight’s School of Professional Studies annual Distinguished Alumnae Achievement Award Ceremony,” Clark said. “Each of these alumni exemplify the best of what WestConn hopes all its students and eventual graduates will strive for, attaining the highest level of academic achievement and the highest standards of public and professional service.”

Shelter of Cross, WestConn ties are strong (cont’d.)

have an array of issues, so it’s an excellent opportunity for me to work with them and gain valuable experience.”

Most of the residents, most of whom don’t have medical insurance, would not have access to the one-on-one counseling they need without the students’ help, Messina said.

“Overall, I would say our residents are very receptive to the students coming in,” she added. “It’s an integral part of the program.”

For her part, Cecilia said she is grateful for all the opportunities the program offers her. That includes her painting, which she took up because Kehl urged her to try art classes at the Dance and Sensory Center.

“For me, it’s a miracle,” she said. “I was at the bottom; now, I’m not.”

Shelter of Cross welcomes donations and volunteerism from WestConn and the larger community.

Visit www.shelter-cross.org/volunteer or call (203) 781-1352 for more information.

November event gets participants to open their minds, noses to aromatherapy

by Yvonne Johnson

Opening their minds — and their noses — participants at the Nov. 9 presentation offered by the Institute for Holistic Studies (IHSS) at WestConn and the Connecticut Holistic Health Association (CHHA) Danbury branch learned about aromatherapy, a modality used to heal the mind, body and spirit.

Robin Spiegel presented "Aromatherapy: Nourishing Your Body and Soul with Nature" in Alumni Hall as part of a series of events offered by IHSS and CHHA during the 2004-05 academic year. A certified aromatherapist, licensed massage therapist, reflexologist, and sound and color practitioner, Spiegel has 20 years of professional experience. Her private practice is based in Rye Brook, N.Y., and New York City. She also is the owner of Aromatic Arts, an aromatherapy company offering high-quality, organic, therapeutic-grade essential oils.

Spiegel explained the science of distilling therapeutic-grade essential oils and pointed out that they are concentrated extracts derived from plants, leaves, trees and ends of fruit. These oils offer many dimensions for healing through aromatherapy, Spiegel said, and they can be used to support emotional, physical and spiritual well-being.

Asking the audience members to get their noses and the rest of their bodies involved in the presentation, Spiegel passed around individual strips of paper scented with two different oils, blood orange and ravensara.

“I invite you to take them in and experience them from the information you body gives you,” Spiegel said. “Trust your own intuition and trust your own body.”

The participants then shared their physical and emotional responses to the scents. Spiegel also answered questions throughout the presentation.

IHSS and CHHA are teaming up to offer a number of events during the current academic year. Sponsored by Topical BioMedics Inc., an affiliate of WestConn Division of Student Affairs, the upcoming monthly presentations will explore subjects ranging from positive energy healing to hormones. The public is invited to all the monthly events, which will be free, open to the public and held on the university’s Midtown campus. WestConn also will host the Third Annual CHHA Holistic Health Fair, showcasing acupuncture, meditation, nutrition, feng shui, yoga and many other modalities, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 9 in the Bill Williams Gymnasium in Berkshire Hall. General admission will be $5. Senior citizens, and WestConn students, faculty and staff with valid ID will be admitted free.

For more information, call CHHA Danbury Branch Director Dr. Jeanette Telica at (203) 753-0886 or (203) 837-4812.

For more information, call CHHA Danbury Branch Director Dr. Jeanette Telica at (203) 753-0886 or (203) 837-4812.
THROUGH DEC. 12, "Skitch Henderson: A Man and His Music," an exhibit celebrating the career of music icon Skitch Henderson, will be on display in the Fluit Mass Library on the Midtown campus. Henderson was a composer and master director of the New York Pops and a cultural icon whose career has embodied the progression of American music during the 20th century. The show was presented in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution Affiliates Program. It will be free and open to the public during Monday hours. Call Archives and Special Collections Librarian Meg Mumphord at (608) 973-9992 for more information.

DEC. 2, WestCon will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the early winter sky from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. Call (608) 973-8672 for more information.

DEC. 2, Dec 12, The Newmann Center will host Sunday Mass at 7 p.m. at the center. 7 Eighth Ave., near the Midtown campus. The event will be free and open to WestCon students, staff and faculty only. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

DEC. 6, Music Professor David Smith will conduct a performance of the WSU Percussion Ensemble at 7 p.m. in lens Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. The concert will be free and open to WestCon students, staff and faculty only. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

DEC. 7, The Newmann Center will host Mass and lunch at noon at the center. 7 Eighth Ave., near the Midtown campus. The event will be free and open to WestCon students, staff and faculty only. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

DEC. 8, WestCon will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the early winter sky from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

DEC. 10, 11, The WSCU Opera will perform "Gaetano Merola's "Amahl and the Night Visitors" at 8 p.m. in lens Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. Music Professor Dr. Margaret Wivate will direct the 10th annual production of this holiday classic. Admission will be $10 for adults and $5 for senior citizens and children under 12. WestCon students will be admitted free with valid ID. For more information, visit www.wescu.edu/music or call (608) 973-8672.

DEC. 11, The theatre arts department will present "Foolish Willy," a family holiday musical, at 2 p.m. in the Berkshire Theatre in Berkshire Hall on the Midtown campus. Tickets are $7 and will be available at the door. Call the Berkshire Theatre Box Office at (608) 973-6722 for more information.

DEC. 12, WestCon will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the early winter sky from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Ambridge Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. Call (608) 973-8672 for more information.

DEC. 13, The WVSC Jazz Combos will perform with bass virtuoso Christian McBride at 8 p.m. in lens Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown. McBride, one of the most-acclaimed acoustic and electric bass players of his generation, will be on stage with six outstanding WSU Jazz combos. Tickets cost $10 for adults and $7 for senior citizens and non-WestCon students. WestCon students will be admitted free with valid ID. Tickets are available at www.ticketweb.com. Visit www.wescu.edu/music or call (608) 973-8672 for more information.

DEC. 18, The WVSC will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the early winter sky from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

JAN. 9, WestCon will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the winter sky from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

JAN. 10, The WVSC Opera will perform "Gaetano Merola's "Amahl and the Night Visitors" at 8 p.m. in lens Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. Music Professor Dr. Margaret Wivate will direct the 10th annual production of this holiday classic. Admission will be $10 for adults and $5 for senior citizens and children under 12. WestCon students will be admitted free with valid ID. For more information, visit www.wescu.edu/music or call (608) 973-8672.

JAN. 14, The WVSC Jazz Combos will perform with bass virtuoso Christian McBride at 8 p.m. in lens Concert Hall in White Hall on the Midtown campus. McBride, one of the most-acclaimed acoustic and electric bass players of his generation, will be on stage with six outstanding WSU Jazz combos. Tickets cost $10 for adults and $7 for senior citizens and non-WestCon students. WestCon students will be admitted free with valid ID. Tickets are available at www.ticketweb.com. Visit www.wescu.edu/music or call (608) 973-8672 for more information.

JAN. 20, WestCon will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the winter sky from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.

JAN. 27, 28, The WVSC will host a 5:30 p.m. planetarium show, followed by telescope viewing of the winter sky from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Westside Observatory and Planetarium on the Westside campus. The event will be free and open to the public. For more information, call (608) 973-8672.