In this issue

- Students, faculty, and staff volunteer in the barrios of Santo Domingo
- The Center for Community Engagement pilots outreach programs in greater Reading
- Meet an alumna who brought hope and help to a primary school in Uganda
President’s Message

With instantaneous media coverage of man-made and natural disasters the norm, it is easy to view the world as scarred by religious and ethnic intolerance, rife with hostility and terrorism, overrun by global poverty, and threatened by environmental abuses. Indeed these conditions are at the center of today’s geopolitical environment and our national politics. Even if we are sensitive to their impact on others, it is possible to feel overwhelmed and to dismiss these problems as not affecting us directly.

But it is defeatist to think these problems are beyond our care—or beyond our responsibility. As citizens of a nation and of a global community, we must do what we can. For many of us, there is also strong moral obligation, often inspired by religious belief. Such activism can and should begin close to home, but it must extend beyond concern for the local to embrace the world beyond.

The notion that this desire to create a better world, this commitment to social transformation, begins with each of us has been at the center of Alvernia’s mission since our founding by the Bernardine Sisters in 1958. In fact, for our bold and daring foundresses, personal and social transformation was intertwined and interdependent.

Today, almost a half century later, we aim to educate students of diverse backgrounds and ages not only for personal growth and fulfillment but equally for the common good. The strength and promise of this country rest with men and women—regardless of background—who place equal, sometimes greater, emphasis on what’s best for all.

This issue of the new Alvernia Magazine is filled with the stories of students, faculty, and staff who have contributed to making towns and neighborhoods, near and far, better places for all. Alvernia students are throwing pottery with at-risk teens in a South Reading parish house. Dozens of first-year seminar students and their advisors are strengthening community literacy by reading books to city schoolchildren. Physicians in the online healthcare MBA program are helping the Bernardine Sisters in Santo Domingo find new sources of revenue for their mission school.

In the midst of their fine work, these and many other men and women of Alvernia know that service to others, especially to those less fortunate, offers its own reward: deep personal satisfaction and spiritual joy. Combining the local and the global in one’s thinking, guided by the Franciscan values of peacemaking and justice-seeking, provides inspiration for a life well lived.

Thomas F. Flynn
President
They went to learn about the world. But perhaps the most valuable lesson they learned was about themselves. Visit with students, faculty, and staff who went to Santo Domingo, not as tourists to five-star resorts, but as volunteers willing to face the reality of poverty and hardship.

Community service is a cornerstone of an Alvernia education. Now, the Center for Community Engagement expands opportunities to interact with a variety of organizations throughout Greater Reading.

Lori DiGuardi ’90 graduated with a degree in computer science and lived the “American Dream.” But her path eventually took a new direction and led her to something much better and more rewarding.
On Sunday, November 19, 2006, about 20 nurses from different school districts attended a book discussion on *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. Theresa Adams, nursing, presented the book. About a Hmong or Southeast Asian girl with epilepsy, the book is also used in Alvernia’s Transcultural Nursing course (NUR 312). Written by Anne Fadiman, the book discusses the political implications of Hmong peoples moving from Laos and Thailand to California and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

In addition, Tiffany Xiang, Alvernia freshman nursing honor student, brought Hmong-made clothing, pillows, and other items, including herbs discussed in the book. Although Xiang was born in the U.S., her close connection to the Hmong culture is evident. She answered questions the nurses had about her culture and commented that she loved reading *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, and is sharing it with her family. She said that the book is accurate about Hmong culture and history.

School of Americas protest trip

Kristin Nivison, ministry, Judy Bohler, president’s office, Janine Surmac ’07, and Bernardine Sisters Margaret, Maria, and Sandra made a trip in late November to Fort Benning, Georgia, to protest a combat training facility for Latin American soldiers, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) formerly and more commonly known as the School of the Americas (SOA). According to the human rights organization SOA Watch (www.soaw.org), “SOA has trained over 60,000 Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency techniques, sniper training, commando and psychological warfare, and interrogation tactics. These graduates have consistently used their skills to target educators, union organizers, religious leaders, and others.”

Each year on the same weekend, tens of thousands of concerned people descend on Fort Benning for a peaceful protest aimed at closing the SOA. Rallies, speakers, and seminars on peace topics fill the weekend.

Spreading holiday cheer with homemade cards

Students Lacie Yacko, Janelle Fulmer, Caty Page, and Mekenzie Quigley from Karen Cameron’s OT 204 Activity Analysis class organized a student service project on December 5, making over 200 holiday cards for the USO, U.S. forces in Iraq, elderly shut-ins, and retired veterans.

Santa Claus and student elves welcomed area children to the annual Christmas on Campus event in December. Dozens of area children, as well as several staff member's children, enjoyed crafts, games, and a story from Santa. Pictured are Matt Bigelli (Santa Claus), Kelsey Drake, junior, and Danielle Fitzpatrick, sophomore.
19th Annual Turkey Drive

Three hundred turkeys, 100 hams, an assortment of food baskets stuffed into trucks and vans...it was the 19th Annual Turkey Drive at Alvernia College.

When a couple of adventurous Alvernia College employees got together, many years ago, to collect turkeys for needy people in Berks County, 25 turkeys were stuffed into the trunk of a car and delivered to a local food bank. Nineteen years later, the drive has grown to include over 4,000 pounds of turkey and ham, and about 50 laundry baskets stuffed with other foods, transported in heavy-duty trucks and vans.

Turkeys, hams, food for baskets, and even laundry baskets were dropped off at the College. Monetary donations were also accepted ($10 bought a turkey or ham and $40 filled a food basket).

The 2006 drive culminated on Tuesday, November 21, 2006, when people from all across the Alvernia and Berks communities joined to sort and deliver the donated food.

O’Pake Science Center

The O’Pake Science Center, a $9.3 million state-of-the-art facility, was named and dedicated on the Reading campus of Alvernia College in a formal ceremony on Wednesday, September 27, 2006. “The O’Pake Science Center,” said President Tom Flynn, “is a testament to Senator O’Pake’s vision for and commitment to Alvernia College. The name of the Center also speaks to his lifelong record of service to the people and organizations of Greater Reading and to strengthening all services and programs offered within our higher education community.” The building was then blessed by the Most Reverend Edward P. Cullen, bishop of the Archdiocese of Allentown.

The O’Pake Science Center adds 31,582 square feet of classroom, laboratory, and faculty office space. Each of the two floors is equipped with five laboratory/classrooms, all of which have smart capability, and Internet access, to bring the resources of the World Wide Web as well as research and data from other schools and laboratories into Alvernia’s classrooms.

Junior Achievement symposium

Alvernia College was proud to once again sponsor the Junior Achievement 2006 Young Women’s Futures Symposium (YWFS) on November 10, 2006, at the BCU Education Center. Several Alvernia faculty and staff members were present at the event.

Dr. Shirley Williams, provost, welcomed the women to the symposium. Jada Campbell, student billing, presented on the topic of finance, and Karen Thacker, professional programs, was a panelist. Catherine Emery, admissions, served as a mentor.

YWFS is a program of mentoring, motivation, and opportunity for local high school sophomores and juniors. The goals of the program include developing qualities for success, instilling self-esteem, and presenting information about career options.
Admissions and Financial Aid move to campus

Alvernia College’s Admissions office has moved back to main campus. Admissions is now housed in a newly renovated Welcome Center, located on the second floor of the Student Center. Bringing Admissions back on campus will allow prospective students to experience the campus up-close when they first visit Alvernia College.

Financial Aid has also returned to campus and is conveniently located in Bernardine Hall next to the Learning Center. Having Financial Aid back on campus will better assist current and future students’ needs. Now students can stop by the Financial Aid office on their way to morning and afternoon classes. Evening and graduate students will benefit from extended evening hours.

Altered pottery workshop

Alvernia College partnered with the Institute of the Arts to offer an altered pottery workshop for students in the South Reading Youth Initiative and the Centro Hispano Truancy Program. Dr. Marc DiPaolo’s first-year seminar class, along with middle school students from South Reading, participated in the pottery workshop offered at St. Peter’s Parish House.

The workshop was a great opportunity for Reading students to express creativity. Elise Arnold, of the Institute of the Arts in Wyomissing, worked one-on-one with students to create pottery pieces. The creations will be fired at the Institute and later returned to the students to keep as a souvenir of the event.

Alvernia College sponsored a pottery workshop at St. Peter’s Parish House for middle school students along with Professor Marc DiPaolo’s first-year seminar class.
Ugly quilts created for beautiful cause

Their creators proudly describe them as “ugly,” but the quilts made by the campus community and delivered to the residents of Reading’s Opportunity House in December conveyed a warmth as beautiful as any fabric.

Eleven quilts in all—each wrapped with a necktie—were delivered to Opportunity House for use by their clients.

Opportunity House provides housing, child care, and other services to children, adults, and families facing obstacles to independence. Alvernia College Campus Minister Joanna Pressimone says the quilt is a metaphor for healing, by making something beautiful as we mend together the broken pieces of our own lives. “It is a simple project that had incredible outcomes,” she said.

Material was collected from attics, closets, trunks, and other storehouses—some long forgotten—in early fall. The “ugly” in the quilts comes from the variety of colors and patterns used to create the quilt squares. The quilts, each measuring seven feet by seven feet, were made from patches of old material, such as pants, shirts, blankets, and cloth ends, all stitched together square by square. The “ugly” disappears quickly when the viewer sees the finished product and realizes that each stitch is a gift.

The Alvernia students and staff who assembled these quilts focused on those who would receive these gifts of warmth. And Pressimone says not all the donated fabric was used; there is plenty more to continue making quilts in the spring.

Students help put “Christmas in the Air”

Students from a first-year seminar class helped the Civil Air Patrol’s (CAP) Reading Squadron with their annual Christmas in the Air event. Area sports mascots (including the Alvernia Crusader), local musicians, and even Santa Claus provided a festive atmosphere in the airport terminal as children waited for their holiday plane ride over Reading and Berks County.

The Alvernia students arrived in shifts during the day-long event to help register kids, assist with arts and crafts activities, read stories, and help guide kids to their flights. Two of the pilots also had Alvernia connections. Pilot Rafael Nunez is an MBA graduate and was enrolled in the Alvernia Ph.D. program. Pilot Ted Hershberger is an adjunct instructor.

Alvernia hosted many events in conjunction with the 2006 Greater Reading Literary Festival, a celebration of contemporary literature & authors. The first-ever event boasted activities including an address by Rachel Simon, author of Riding the Bus with My Sister, writer’s workshops, alumni events, and presentations.
La Mision de Amistad:  
**A college mission of friendship and love**

As I reflect on Jesus’s statement from the Gospel, I am thinking in a few days, I will gather with a group of college students and staff for a brief Chapel Service the evening before our annual mission trip to another part of the world, the Dominican Republic. Since 1998, Alvernia College has sponsored this week-long "mission of friendship," La Mision de Amistad, for students and staff wishing to live and work with the Bernardine Franciscan Sisters in Santo Domingo, a service learning experience that has become a college tradition. Some who have made the trip refer to this experience as transformative and life-changing; some have gone more than once, and every year, the limited openings fill more quickly than the previous year.

Since many college students spend winter break working to pay for college expenses, one might wonder about the attraction of the trip, besides the luxury of a week in a sunnier climate. In addition to their travel and expenses, students also raise funds for the mission, collect much needed medical and educational materials for the people and children of the barrio, and spend an entire semester discussing a curriculum that focuses on social justice issues including unjust social structures, effects of globalization, political corruption, and poverty as a root cause of the misery and suffering of the Dominican people.

The barrio where the students work is in one of the poorest sections of Santo Domingo, Los Tres Brazos. The students live with the sisters in their small convent, organizing educational activities, games, and sports for the street children who attend the small school that the sisters opened in 1994. Each day, after the morning and afternoon classes, they accompany the children to their homes to visit the families in the community. Home is usually a pieced-together shack of one, or possibly two rooms with no running water, no drainage for waste, little or no food, none of the basics that we cannot live without— a shocking reality for U.S. students who have never known this depth of want or deprivation. In the evening, when we gather for prayer, debriefing, and a reflection on the day, students are often speechless. There are no words to share, because it is often difficult to name what has been seen, heard, or felt throughout the day.

And yet, in the midst of this heart-breaking reality, we are stunned by the genuine joy shining in the eyes of the children who will gather at the convent gates with cheers and clapping as our rickety little bus pulls up to the mission on the day we arrive. They rush forward with smiles and hugs to greet the students from America, their friends whom they eagerly await each year, jumping up and down with shouts and laughter, grasping their hands and leading them, as only these unspoiled children of the barrio can, to the discovery of authentic simplicity, humility, and gratitude.

This is Alvernia’s mission of friendship, bringing light to the darkness of poverty, offering hope to children who long to believe in a better world, a promising future. The mission trip to Santo Domingo is a reciprocal experience; it is a gift that is both given and received. It is transformative and life-changing because it is illuminated by love. Weeks later, when the students gather for post-trip evaluations, they will share stories, swap photos, eat another meal of rice and beans, and share insights and memories. As we did in the barrio, we will sit in a circle with lighted candles and reflect again on the words of Jesus: I am the light of the world... whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, that is what you do to me.

— Sr. Rosemary Stets, O SF ‘71

“Do not set your lamp under a basket, but set it on top of the lampstand, where it can give light to the whole world.”

- Jesus of Nazareth

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**“Do not set your lamp under a basket, but set it on top of the lampstand, where it can give light to the whole world.”**

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**La Mision de Amistad:**

**A college mission of friendship and love**
“Even though they are the poorest of the poor, these kids are at the top of their class when they are in the public schools. And not just academically. Their manners and discipline are perfect.”

- Camille Cloutier

15-year-old Eduard, a resident of the barrio visited by the Alvernia group.
Imagine that your child is sick, and the closest hospital is several taxi and bus rides away because no ambulance will come to your part of the city. Imagine that you do not have running water, access to a sewage system, or electricity. Imagine that there are no playgrounds, and your children play in the trash and run barefoot regardless of rocks, filthy water, and broken glass. For the residents of the 80-square mile barrio of Los Tres Brazos in the Dominican Republic, these challenges are just everyday life.

A group of 12 volunteers spent part of their winter break in the barrio of Santo Domingo, living among the poorest of the poor in Los Tres Brazos. They stayed in a convent operated by an order of the Bernardine Sisters, who kindly shared their beds and living space with the visitors. The volunteers conduct fundraisers and rely on family support to fund the trip. They also receive some funding from the Alvernia Student Government Association and receive donations of supplies from members of the College community and local churches. The group included one Bernardine Franciscan Sister, faculty,

### 2007 trip participants

#### Bernardine Sister
Sister Rosemary Stets, OSF '71, Vice President for Mission

#### Instructor and Trip Leader
Kristen Nivison, Director of Campus Ministry

#### Students
Camille Cloutier
Amanda Eshenour
Sophie Guzowski
Matthew Nied
Bryan Otruba
Luis Ramos Cruz (also our translator)
Ellen Rodriguez
James Schreiner
Lisa Venkler (also logistical coordinator for the trip)

#### Staff
Judy Bohler, Executive Assistant to the President
Lessons learned

❖ You will be amazed at how each of you will begin to value and respect one another, and how quickly you will bond and become good friends, even if you did not feel particularly bonded when you began the trip.

❖ You will see many things that will make you cry, things that you might have ignored or found boring before you arrived in the barrio.

❖ You will find many things hilarious on the trip, things that might have only irritated you in the U.S.

❖ You will discover that time moves much more slowly in Santo Domingo, and somehow that feels peaceful and relaxing.

❖ You will be surprised at how much you can live without, how little you need to feel comfortable, how often you find simplicity satisfying.

❖ You will wish, by the end of the week, that you could begin again, and you will struggle to keep the experience alive and real when you have returned home and the old life takes over.

❖ You will wonder if it is possible to go back, to make the trip again, no matter what the cost.

❖ At first you might feel sad by the harsh reality of Santo Domingo, but by the end of the week, you might begin to feel angry, and that is a good thing.

❖ You will wonder how people who have so little can be so happy, and maybe you will begin to understand why.

❖ You will learn how small the world is, how similar we all are, and how much we can learn from one another.

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coffee... which probably meant the family would go without a meal to pay for the extravagance.

One of the most rewarding service projects they completed was helping a young brother and sister who had lost both parents. The boy had a kidney disease and was unable to work. The roof of their home was in serious disrepair and the frequent rain drenched their home.

“So we put a roof on their house. Not exactly,” injected Matt Nied, student. “They really did the hard work. We just helped out a little bit.” The team also added a pathway for safer movement around the home. Ellen Rodriguez added, “No matter what project we worked on, other people in the community would always come over and pitch in. They really help each other because there is no one else willing to help them.”

Lisa Venkler, mission and ministry, was struck by the state of the public schools. Before the trip, she said, she had seen websites in which the Dominican Republic stated that their schooling system offered every child the opportunity for an education, “just like here,” said Lisa. But that was not the case in the barrio. “The schools have no books. The conditions are deplorable. The students are supposed to bring their own chairs. There are more than 1,800 students in the nearest school, and class sizes are more than 80 children.” Schools are so taxed that students receive only a half-day of instruction. Plus, Lisa said, “The children are

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About the Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic makes up two-thirds of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, which they share with Haiti. Today, the population of the Dominican Republic is approximately nine million, with the majority living in poverty. The World Bank reported that the Dominican Republic possessed the third lowest standard of living in all the Western Hemisphere. Additionally, the United Nations published a study showing that from the year 2000 to 2003, the poverty level in the Dominican Republic increased from 54% to 62%, while the extreme poverty level went from 29% to 33%. The U.N. also studied the inequality of income in the country, finding that the poorest 20% of the population only had 5.1% of the income whereas the richest 10% had 37.9% of the income.
Dr. Ezzat Hanna, graduate student in the online health care MBA program.

A Moment with:

Dr. Ezzat Hanna

He built his practice, the Kenhorst Family Medical Center, from the ground up in 1982, and he now serves three generations of patients. He is a triathlete. Ezzat Hanna is also a college student, one who plans to go the distance during Spring Break, partly because that’s the kind of person Dr. Hanna is and partly because his course of study in the Graduate and Continuing Studies Division at Alvernia requires a component of humanitarian service. He and his classmates will travel to the Dominican Republic from March 23 to 28 to help the Bernardine Sisters develop programs to fund their mission school.

Dr. Hanna is currently enrolled in the online health care MBA, a 22-month program for doctors and other health care professionals combining online and onsite instruction to give health care providers a stronger business background.

“This community, this country, has been good to me. If I can help others in poor countries by going to Santo Domingo, I should be doing that.”

- Dr. Ezzat Hanna

expected to buy a uniform. They can’t attend school without it, but so many people around Santo Domingo don’t have the money to eat, much less to buy a uniform.” So the children run around unsupervised and uneducated.

Seeing all of this, it is easy to understand why the sisters’ mission is needed and appreciated. The sisters supplement the meager half-day of education and, crucially, supply a meal to the children. The meal is simple—one piece of bread and one slice of salami—but for many kids, it is either the only meal or the most nutritious meal they will have that day. The sisters lay out strict expectations for the schoolchildren, something that some of these children never experience from their parents. Camille noted, “Even though they are the poorest of the poor, these kids are at the top of their class when they are in the public schools. And not just academically. Their manners and discipline are perfect.” Sophie agreed. After working as a camp counselor here in the States, Sophie was surprised at the kids in Santo Domingo. “They were so much more disciplined than the kids here,” she said. “We did almost the same projects there that I had done with kids here, and the kids at the mission did a much better job and were much easier to handle. They behaved better and listened more even though I speak very little Spanish.”

Amanda said, “We were lucky because one day we got to go to the beach. And it struck me that even though the people in the barrio live in this beautiful country, they never get to see it. Many of them live their whole lives without ever seeing the ocean or even leaving the barrio.” Sophie, for one, didn’t pine for the beach, though. “It was much more beautiful to see the children than to spend time on the beach,” she said.

One evening, Luis was talking to the local priest. “He asked me, ‘Why would you want to come and stay in a place like this?’ He couldn’t understand why we would leave a land with everything to ‘rough it’ in a place like Los Tres Brazos.” Kristen added that she hopes the priest has a positive impression of North Americans after “learning of our willingness to sacrifice to help others.”

At one time Dr. Hanna had office hours on campus, offering free medical services to Alvernia students. He is two boys were also enrolled in the Montessori program run by the Bernardine Sisters. His fondness for Alvernia is evident: “Alvernia relates so well to the community. They have such a reputation for doing good in the community, I am comforted whenever their name is mentioned.”

His has always believed in giving back to the community, which is why the humanitarian component in the MBA program appealed to him.
“I’ve never been to see the Sixers,” Stephen said. “I’ve never even been to Philadelphia.” A dark-haired boy with a husky build, he flashed a half smile at his college “buddy”—the Alvernia student assigned to look after him for the night.

“I can’t wait to see Iverson,” he added. Stephen turned and peered out the window of the Intermediate Unit school bus as it bounced along the Pennsylvania Turnpike, anticipating a milestone, seeing a great NBA player take on the New York Knicks.

An eighth grader at Reading’s Southern Junior High School, Stephen was one of 27 young teens from South Reading rewarded with a trip to a Sixers’ game for improved attendance last fall. The trip was organized by Alvernia College’s Center for Community Engagement together with its partners in the South Reading Youth Initiative: Centro Hispano, St. Peter’s Church, and the Jesuit Center of Wernersville.

New initiatives such as reward trips, Creativity Camp for teens from South Reading, and a technology course for Reading High students in the migrant education program complement long-standing programs such as the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive and holiday toy collections. Through a synergy of new and traditional outreach, Alvernia is strengthening its Franciscan identity off-campus through the vehicle of community engagement.

At his inauguration in spring of 2006, President Tom Flynn acknowledged the College’s record of service to the community. He announced plans for a Center for Community Engagement to build on and expand the work of the faculty and to heighten the College’s commitment to community-based learning. Such a coordinated approach does more than put the College’s name out in the community. It is central to a distinctive educational experience possible for Alvernia graduates, one characterized by personal growth through social service activities and enhanced by the ethical reflection that results from learning how people actually live and work outside the classroom.

Dr. Flynn then appointed Anne Skleder, a longtime Alvernia administrator and faculty member, as center director. With Dr. Skleder at the helm, Alvernia could cultivate new community partners and new sources of engagement—Through the Center for Community Engagement

Alvernia students, faculty, and staff engage in learning on and off campus.

GOALS OF THE CENTER:

To assist faculty, staff, and students to engage with the community.

To make the Alvernia campus a destination for the community.

To extend the curriculum into the community.

To serve as the “front door” of the campus.
funding while continuing to engage the wider world as a learning laboratory for students, faculty, and staff.

**Why community engagement?**

Alvernia and a host of other colleges and universities—from Connecticut College to the University of Pennsylvania to neighboring Franklin & Marshall College—have formally established outreach programs. Certainly (continued on page 14)

Anne Skleder has taught every semester since coming to Alvernia fourteen years ago as an assistant professor of psychology. Her administrative talents were quickly discovered and applied wherever the College needed leadership. Her academic portfolio grew to include directing the honors program and enrollment management as an associate vice president and directing student life as vice provost. In 2006-07, she assumed directorship of the Center for Community Engagement and returned to the faculty, notably as a team teacher in the new Ph.D. program in leadership.

**How did administrative work at Alvernia capture your interest and energy?** The College has been in such a growth period, which has allowed me to take on different roles. I’ve learned new things and have had opportunities I never imagined.

**Is that why you were tapped to direct Alvernia’s first center?** All those responsibilities helped me learn about higher education in general and enabled me to work in multiple team positions, something critical to a Center’s operation, which cuts across departments.

**How were you able to get off the ground so quickly?** I had already been doing a number of things in the community as vice provost for several years and had a relationship with Centro Hispano, Senator Mike O’Pake, St. Peter’s, and the Jesuit Center, which has a Latino outreach mission. Reading Mayor Tom McMahon challenged us to connect with the community, and with a start-up grant from Senator O’Pake’s office, we introduced our first program a month later.

**What else allowed for such a high community profile in such a short time?** I have a great support staff. Our project coordinator, April Cunningham ‘04, is a real asset to the Center and deserves much credit for attending to the details of many of our efforts. I also have two student workers—Silvia Guitterz ‘08 and Madeline Perez ‘07—one of whom helps us stay connected to St. Peter’s as their parishioner.

**What are your short-range plans?** We are publishing a newsletter twice a year. We launched a website last month and plan to move to the first floor of the Upland Center in June. Now that our Latino outreach is underway, we plan to introduce more cultural and arts programs, working with the Institute of the Arts and the Goggleworks, and to address partnerships in the best interest of Catholic K-12 education, health care (particularly St. Joseph’s Hospital), and the environment.
Getting involved

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community engagement is the core of the mission of schools who believe values-based education must include caring for the community, nation, and the world around them.

"The health of our communities and our entire democracy," Dr. Flynn has said, "depends on colleges preparing students for civic and social responsibility. The good news is that the best path to a community's economic development and prosperity is through investment in higher education."

"The Center can be a catalyst for stronger collaboration," explained Dr. Skleder, who is galvanized by the challenge of engaging the campus and fortifying the community at the same time. "I'm building on the shoulders of giants. Many of our faculty and staff came to the College with community connections, which they have continued to nurture."

Dr. Skleder also sees the Center as a source for new partnerships to sustain Alvernia's growth. "Ideally, we are a 'front door to campus' and a clearing-house for information—a point of access to the community."

Since its start-up last summer, the Center has collected information on where and how faculty and staff are serving in the community and created an inventory of agencies and the type of help they need.

"Colleges don't have infinite resources. And our community has many needs. So we have to be strategic about our partnerships," Dr. Skleder says. "Though serving is at the core of our mission, Alvernia can't do the work of a social service agency. I like to use the litmus test that any program we support must be beneficial to the College community or make our campus climate better."

For instance, Centro Hispano asked the Center to help sponsor a Latina motivational speaker for city school students in November. In exchange for their support, the College took a group of Alvernia students to hear a powerhouse speaker. This semester Centro Hispano will partner with Alvernia to bring in an abstinence speaker to talk to local high school students, who will then visit Alvernia because Dr. Skleder feels the College students may also benefit from the information.

For now, members of the College community can expect to see more Girl Scouts and local high school students and young parishioners from St. Peter's Church on campus for enrichment programs. More Alvernia students will be delivering quilts to the needy or reading books to school-age children, throwing pots, and chaperoning teens at sporting events.

Some colleges have revolutionized their curriculum based on community involvement. Penn works to revitalize western Philadelphia, and F&M continues to invest in Lancaster City, not only because it strengthens the community. It also benefits students to see how their talents and gifts can address the most pressing issues of our day.
College to receive JA's Spirit of Achievement award

Junior Achievement selected Alvernia for the 2007 Berks County Business Hall of Fame Spirit of Achievement Award for having furthered the mission and the objectives of Junior Achievement in Berks County. The College will be honored on March 14, 2007, at the Berks County Business Hall of Fame Awards Dinner.

In the past, the College has volunteered three to five faculty, staff, and students per year to teach Junior Achievement modules in Berks County classrooms.

Alvernia has also provided student interns to the Junior Achievement organization on a regular basis, and has sponsored the Young Women’s Future Symposium. It has been a prime underwriter of the agency’s newsletter.

Appearing with President Tom Flynn are Tom Minick ’98, development officer, who has taught classes for Junior Achievement, Dr. Karen Thacker (left), dean of professional programs, and Jada Campbell, controller, both presenters at the 2006 Women’s Symposium (see page 3 for related story).

Mary’s Home and Shelter honors College

Alvernia College was honored with the Guardian Award for providing extraordinary support for the young women served by Mary’s Shelter. Alvernia College was cited for its educational outreach to the young women served by Mary’s Shelter in South Reading and Mary’s Home located near the Alvernia College main campus.

President Tom Flynn received the prestigious Silver Award from Jay Sidhu in recognition of exemplary employee participation in the 2005 United Way campaign. Sidhu and his wife, Sherry, co-chairs for 2006, recognized the College community at a luncheon to kickoff the 2006 employee campaign.

Making a difference with local children

Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) is a nonprofit international collegiate organization on more than 1,500 college campuses worldwide. The group challenges college students to take what they’re learning in the classroom and give younger students the tools to learn the free enterprise system in a real working situation.

The Alvernia SIFE team, led by President Lamar Jones, is currently in the middle of several ambitious projects focusing on Reading School District students.

A ten-week project with Southern Reading Middle School will culminate on April 20, when 30 students implement their own “Olympic Day.” To prepare for the event, the teens will listen to speakers and learn important skills from Alvernia SIFE members to help them complete their projects and experience real success.

Another exceptional project the group has planned (coordinated by Alvernia student Amanda Senkner) will involve 20 Southern Reading sixth graders. The group will spend a day in a Reading courtroom with Judge Mary Ann Campbell to learn about business ethics.

Alvernia SIFE members will also visit Reading High on February 1, and talk to about 100 students about the benefits of getting involved in SIFE activities. The group, Lamar says, is determined to “make a difference by helping all children realize that no matter what their circumstances, they have natural skills and talents that are valuable in the marketplace, given the proper guidance and education.”
Lori DiGuardi ’90 CIS

“"A bend in the road is not the end of the road... unless you fail to make the turn.”
~Author Unknown

It is sometimes an easy thing to say that from our darkest times can come our brightest moments. But Lori DiGuardi has done more than say it. She has lived it.

Lori, a non-traditional student, graduated from Alvernia in 1990 with a degree in computer science. She worked in the field for a while, had a family, and, in her words, “pretty much lived the American dream.” But then it shattered, and she entered the hardest time of her life. Instead of letting adversity break her, though, Lori found herself being thankful that she had two healthy and loving children, and that she had her own health as well. Once, in the midst of prayer and meditation, she thought, “I have so much. How can I share my abundance with others?”

Days later, she learned about her friend Martha Mukasa’s mother, Agnes, who lives in Uganda. An incredibly strong woman, Agnes had survived civil war, the brutal government of Idi Amin, drought, the threat of starvation, and more. In spite of these difficulties, Agnes established Brain Tree Primary School for local underprivileged children. Beginning with four nursery students in her son’s garage, the school consistently grew under Agnes’ careful leadership, and the educational opportunities for the children continued to expand. But now, Martha told Lori, the family was encouraging Agnes to close the school due to the enormous financial burden of running it without any outside support. Lori talked to a friend about the situation, wondering aloud what she should do. Her friend simply asked her, “If you don’t help, who will?” Lori had her answer.

For the first few years, Lori simply sent the school her own money and whatever money she could informally...
raise. Eventually, she sent a project proposal (which was approved) to the United Way International program. She has since expanded the funding available by partnering with her children's school, Shipley School in Bryn Mawr.

Her support rose to a new level a few years later when it was determined that Brain Tree Primary School needed a library. From November 2005 to July 2006, Lori worked tirelessly to coordinate book drives, hand-catalog the more than 2,500 books she ultimately received, and manage the shipment of 42 boxes of books to Uganda. In July 2006, Lori traveled to Uganda to help physically set up the library, shelve the books, create a cataloguing system and catalog cards, and teach people what a library was and how it should function. Uganda, says Lori, "is not a reading culture. Generally, kids don't read until secondary school and university." English is the accepted second language and most advanced classes in later education are taught in English. Amazingly, the children frequently don't pick up a book until that time, and then are expected to read the same litany of classics that most Western students read. The library at Brain Tree has helped to change that. Each class now has visits to the library as part of the curriculum, and students at the Brain Tree library realize both the intellectual benefits and enjoyment of reading at an early age.

**About the Brain Tree School**

Founded in 1994 by Agnes and Solomon Mukasa in the small village of Kyanja, Uganda, Brain Tree Primary School is located near Kampala, on the eastern coast of Uganda (see map). There are currently 150-170 students attending the school with nine teachers/instructors. The population is about evenly divided between boys and girls. Of the students, about 30% are orphans, many whose parents both died of AIDS; 30% are children of a single parent or peasant farmers with literally no financial stabil-
2006 Outstanding Alumni

Each year, Alvernia takes the time to recognize some of its outstanding alumni from the growing alumni population, currently at more than 7,300. Deciding who to recognize is always a challenge because we have many deserving individuals, but our awards committee works hard to narrow the field and choose the annual award recipients. For 2006, we are proud to have awarded Valetta Eshbach ’68 with the Ellen Frei Gruber Award, and Wynton Butler ’03 with the Distinguished Alumni Award. The awards were officially presented at a special ceremony at Homecoming Weekend on Saturday, October 14, 2006, in the Ellen Frei Gruber Alumni Gallery located in the Upland Center on the Alvernia campus.

Ms. Eshbach received the Ellen Frei Gruber Award for being a devoted educator, community servant, and Franciscan individual, in the tradition of the award’s namesake, Ellen Frei Gruber, a career teacher in the Wyomissing School District and lecturer in the education and fine arts departments.

Ms. Eshbach has taught mathematics for 39 years, including at Penn State’s Berks campus. She has been a lector, rosary leader, and CCD instructor at St. Mary’s Parish in Kutztown; a judge for the Reading Eagle’s “Berks Best;” an Alvernia College alumni board member; a visitor and correspondent with elderly shut-ins; a SADD advisor; a Youth-to-Youth advisor; a volunteer at Mary’s Shelter, and a supporter of Mary’s Shelter and Lifeline. She holds a master’s degree from Kutztown University.

Wynton Butler, principal of Reading High School, received his master’s degree in urban education and principal certification in primary and secondary education from Alvernia. Butler has been employed in the Reading School District since 1996, as a teacher, assistant girls’ varsity basketball coach, and head coach for basketball and football. He was formerly a staff assistant to Congressmen Gus Yatron and Tim Holden.

He was involved in the Pennsylvania National Guard from 1988-2005, and is currently a member of the District of Columbia National Guard. He served in Operation Desert Storm/Shield (11/1990 to 5/1991) and is a member at Union Baptist Church. Butler was also the 2006 recipient of the Alvernia College Outstanding Principal Award, and is a member of the NAACP, National Guard Officer Association, and Sons of the American Legion.

President Tom Flynn recognized their accomplishments and contributions in the Greater Reading community, saying, “Valetta Eshbach, Class of 1968, and Wynton Butler, Class of 2003, have proven themselves to be reflective professionals and engaged citizens, men and women devoted to the common good and the betterment of others. Each in their special way has invested in the lives of young people. They are a testament to the values and value of an Alvernia education.”
Alvernia offers new school nurse certification courses

Because children need to be healthy to learn, and children need to learn to be healthy, Alvernia College has introduced new course work in nursing and school health. Alvernia is preparing school nurses to meet increasing challenges in caring for students from grades kindergarten through twelve.

Alvernia now offers three options to obtain a school nurse certification; they are available to registered nurses in a bachelor's degree completion program, to nurses who already have bachelor's degrees, and to those pursuing a master's degree in education, with an emphasis in school health. Pennsylvania law mandates that nurses serving public schools be certified through the State Department of Education.

Many children with complex health needs such as asthma, diabetes, allergies, and HIV/AIDS now attend school regularly. Children also have more social and physical needs and may need care and referrals to services because they are abused or have dietary, substance abuse, or mental health problems. Nurses care for them and are also responsible for controlling the spread of disease within school populations.

“Today’s school nurses need a particular skill set. Besides providing direct health care services, they are teachers, counselors, and case managers for students with chronic health needs,” said Deborah Greenawald, assistant professor of nursing and a certified school nurse.

“Consider that they work alone and are making decisions on the spot regarding caring for children’s health. We designed our certification program to meet this specialized area of nursing.”

Because of state mandates such as PA Healthy Kids, enacted in 2006, school nurses are asked to review school food service programs; develop wellness programs for students, staff, and parents; and review school curriculum relating to health.

Two of the courses that are open to all post-baccalaureate students, Coordinated School Health Design and At-Risk School Environments, benefit principals, counselors, health teachers, food-service managers, or any professional personnel serving on school wellness or at-risk committees.

Twenty-three pursue Ph.D. from Alvernia

The first cohort has begun their second term as doctoral candidates in Alvernia's new Ph.D. in Leadership, the only such program in the region. Though the 23 students come from different walks of life and have different reasons for desiring a Ph.D., most agree a doctoral degree is almost universally necessary to becoming a full-time college or university faculty member and to engage in advanced research. A Ph.D. is also desirable for work as a trainer, consultant, program administrator, and often to achieve promotion or that capstone position within a field.

Alvernia’s program totals 63 credits. Students carry six credits a semester during fall and spring terms and three credits in the summer. Ph.D. classes meet once a week, from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. The class work takes three years, and the dissertation generally takes two more years.

Applications for next year’s class will be accepted through March 1, 2007.
What can parents do to cope and where should they turn?

Mary Lynch Barbera was a parent who was asking this very question. Now she’s the one providing the answers in her book The Verbal Behavior Approach: How to Teach Children with Autism and Related Disorders (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, May 2007). Mary, a dedicated wife and mother of two boys, has an outstanding list of major achievements, and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in leadership at Alvernia. “My classmates are from diverse backgrounds which helps foster the entire Ph.D. experience,” she said.

When her older son, Lucas, was diagnosed with autism the day before his third birthday, Mary knew how to cope emotionally with the situation. But externally, there was nothing available to help her. So Mary decided to create something. She earned her certification as a behavior analyst and began working with children with autism, putting her own spin on the techniques she learned.

What kinds of training programs do businesses need?

Sometimes they need something as small as a class on Excel. Sometimes we do a whole management training session. Sometimes they have a cohort of management wanting to get a graduate degree. Then we can offer it to them on-site and customize it to their field (e.g., health care or manufacturing).

How is education delivery different today than it was 20 years ago?

These days, the best venue for classes may not be a college classroom. Many times the optimal location is on site at a neutral location, such as the Reading Hospital, if the program is for hospital employees.

Besides assessment, selling, closing, and other sales skills, what other talents have contributed to your success?

Being flexible and willing to try new approaches have been invaluable. For instance, I have actually solidified contacts and meetings while jogging. There was a doctor interested in one of my programs, and I had to go for a run with him to fit into his schedule. I also ran with the wife of another business contact. Running is the new golf.

What has been your greatest success?

Seeing my students at graduation. Most of them come to me unsure if they can accommodate this educational structure in their busy lives, and then they are beaming at their successful completion. This is not just the graduate student. When an undergraduate student completes 123 credits of college while juggling a family and a career, I am in awe of them.

How do you stay in touch with training needs within the business community?

Besides HR coordinators, I also ask a lot of questions of friends and any business contacts—what needs do they see in their own work or in the community? People are always giving me suggestions. Our community loves Alvernia College.
Institutional Advancement

New faces in the development office

Thomas Minick ’98 joined the institutional advancement team as a development officer in July 2006. No stranger to Alvernia since graduating in 1998, Tom has been an assistant baseball coach since 1999, and helped lead the Crusaders to four PAC Championships and four appearances in NCAAs Mid-Atlantic Regional. In his role as development officer, Tom will be responsible for cultivating and securing major gifts for the College.

Prior to joining the advancement team, Tom spent eight years as the senior program director for Junior Achievement of Greater Reading and Lehigh Valley, responsible for special events, marketing, and overseeing over 500 programs in three counties. “It was difficult leaving Junior Achievement after eight successful years, but the opportunity to come back to my alma mater and be able to help advance the mission of the College was a natural choice and a great opportunity for myself and my family,” he said.

In the six months since joining the advancement team, Tom spent eight years as the senior program director for Junior Achievement of Greater Reading and Lehigh Valley, responsible for special events, marketing, and overseeing over 500 programs in three counties. “It was difficult leaving Junior Achievement after eight successful years, but the opportunity to come back to my alma mater and be able to help advance the mission of the College was a natural choice and a great opportunity for myself and my family,” he said.

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A man arrives at the Pottstown Recycling Center on a Saturday morning, carrying two bags full of dolls. He has no plans to trash the dolls; instead, he would like to donate them to a good cause. So why bring them to a recycling center? Because he’s sure to find Polly Mathys there. If anyone can find good homes for the dolls, Polly can.

“Some people have things that others need. I just connect the ‘haves’ with the ‘have-nots.’”

- Polly Mathys

Whether recycling, helping the homeless, raising money for 9/11 families or tsunami survivors, or even making mittens for a Bermudian man (with exceptionally long fingers) staying in Buffalo—Polly Mathys, professor of computer information systems at Alvernia College, has done it all, and so much more. But don’t call it “service.” For Polly, it’s just a way of life. Something so ingrained that she considers it to be pragmatic.

Polly can’t even remember her first volunteer project. Not because it doesn’t matter to her, but because helping others has always been a part of her life. “My whole family gets involved in whatever one of us starts. It’s just natural to us,” she said. She remembers that her grandmother taught math in Buffalo, New York, and would regularly collect clothing for her students (even if that meant going through her own daughter’s closet).

In more than 20 years as a professor at Alvernia, Polly’s drive to make a difference has become legendary. Whether she’s speaking to a group of students about life in the sixties (wearing a loud tye-dye shirt and a headband), dressing as Santa at an evening basketball game, or counseling a troubled student after class, Polly always has the energy to get others excited. During every graduation, the professor can be found pushing around her “Mathys Emergency Cart” complete with bobby pins and safety pins, super glue, candy, and anything else that someone might need before walking down the aisle. According to Polly, “It’s not noble, just human. I see a need and find a way to fill it.”

Perhaps her most widely known ongoing project has been the Annual Turkey Drive. For the last 19 years, Polly has joined forces with other campus and community leaders to feed more than 265 families in Berks County over Thanksgiving and Christmas. Coordinating such a large campaign is not easy. But Polly says simply, “Some people have things that others need. I just connect the ‘haves’ with the ‘have-nots.’”

The professor’s own daughters, like so many Alvernia students, have taken up Polly’s charge. Her older daughter, Ellen, is a food security and livelihoods expert who specializes in marshalling aid to 28 different African nations. Her younger daughter, Cindy, lives in New Delhi, India, and is a partner in a company that helps Indian farmers organically grow medicinal plants. When the plants mature, her company buys the plants on a fair trade basis, renders them into oils, and sells them.

When thinking about the serious nature of her daughters’ accomplishments, Polly says, “It makes collecting turkeys sound pretty puny indeed.” But the recipients of the professor’s work and those whom she has inspired would consider Polly to be invaluable in their lives.

And the two bags of dolls? Polly made sure they found their way to this year’s Toys for Tots campaign.
Nathan Thomas, arts & sciences, won 1st place in his category of the Berks Arts Council 2006 Music Composition contest for a piece called “Trio for Violin, Flute, and Bassoon.” The piece was later performed in October at the Institute of the Arts.

He also published three articles in Scene 4, an online magazine about theatre arts. His article “Love” appeared in the October 2006 issue. Another piece entitled “Americans at the Theatre” was published in December 2006, in the “In View” section. A third submission, “Talking with Brecht and M. M. M. eyerhold,” was accepted for the January issue. It is a mock interview (using real, published quotes) between two forward-thinking playwrights of the past. All of his pieces can be found at www.scene4.com.

Two Alvernia fall sports coaches were honored by the Pennsylvania Athletic Conference in November. Men’s soccer Head Coach Travis Berger ’05 and women’s field hockey Head Coach Laura Gingrich earned Coach of the Year honors for their sports. Complete details are available on the athletics website: http://athletics.alvernia.edu/.

ATHLETICS

Lindsay Trotter, athletics, played in the Canadian National Softball Tournament over the summer of 2006.

Kevin Calabria M’03, athletics/alumni relations, was inducted into the Holy Name High School Athletic Hall of Fame on October 20. He played point guard on the 1970 Holy Name State Championship team, voted one of the top 10 teams in Berks County history. He also coached CYO boy’s basketball for eight years after graduating from Notre Dame in 1974, then coached Holy Name’s girl’s basketball for seven years, and is now in his 18th season at Alvernia where he has won 325 games.

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BUSINESS

Beth A. Berret, business, is a member of the Human Resource Committee of Home Health Care Management, serving three countries.

Bryan Dreibelbis, business, and ten of his accounting students participated in the Reading Institute of Management Accountants annual Student Night dinner in November. Seniors Sean M. McCoy and Samantha Ganter delivered a formal presentation on their experiences with the Washington Center Internship Program last summer.

Other Alvernia students attending were Zoa Reber, Christina Borns, Stephanie Simmers, Joe Smith, Mike Brokaw, Kyle Levegood, Josh Smith, and Tom Netznik. Approximately 35 members of the local business community were also present.

COMMUNICATION

An essay by Marc DiPaolo, English and communication, called “Italians Know Nothing About Love: The Marx Brothers as Guardian Angels of Young Couples in Jeopardy,” was accepted in September for the anthology One Hundred Years of the Marx Brothers, edited by Joe Mills, to be published in 2007.
Jodi Radosh, communication, co-hosted BCTV’s 30th anniversary “Octoberfest 2006” show, on Monday, October 23. In addition, nine of Radosh’s video production students worked with BCTV during the week-long event. Four students ran the cameras on Monday evening, and five more manned the cameras on Thursday evening.

HUMANITIES

PHILOSOPHY
Bongrae Seok, philosophy, gave a gallery talk on “The Art of India,” on October 4, 2006, at the Allentown Art Museum (www.allentownartmuseum.org).

NURSING
Debbie Greenawald, nursing, is a vocalist with the Ringgold Band. The band had a concert at the Oley Fair in the afternoon of September 23, and another engagement at Reading’s Riverfest in the evening, before and during fireworks that were set off from the Penn Street Bridge. Debbie has been the vocalist and emcee of the band since 1989.

Articles by Deborah Greenawald and Theresa Adams, nursing, entitled “Using the Media Effectively to Advance School Nursing” and “Catches You and You Fall Down,” respectively, were published in the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners (PASNAP) Fall 2006 quarterly newsletter.

Karen Thacker, professional programs, is a member of the executive committee of Home Health Care Management and chairperson of the Medical Professional Advisory Committee.

An engaging article entitled “Empower People to Ensure Change” by Kathleen Z. Wisser, nursing, was published in the October 9, 2006 edition of Nursing Spectrum.

The Alvernia College Nursing Honor Society was approved, in November, to become a Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International. Membership to the organization is by invitation only and provides the opportunity and the responsibility to contribute to the profession of nursing and to the health of the public worldwide.

The Psychology and Counseling Department at Alvernia College was approved in late September by the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) as a testing center for the National Certification Examination (NCE). The NCE is one of the tests approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors for individuals seeking licensure as professional counselors.

This arrangement with NBCC will allow Alvernia students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Community Counseling (MACC) program to sit for the NCE during their final semester of graduate studies. The examination, offered in April and October of each year, will be administered on-campus.

New professor of psychology Elizabeth Matteo had one busy weekend in December. On Thursday, December 7, she successfully defended her Ph.D. dissertation at Lehigh University, and at 1:10 a.m. Sunday, December 10, she gave birth to a 7 lb. 9 oz. baby boy, Jonah. Mother and baby are doing fine, as are doctor and dissertation.

PSYCHOLOGY
Paul West, psychology and counseling, became president-elect of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (PCA), a state branch of the American Counseling Association in July 2006.
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

John W. Luvisi, grant procurement, was re-elected in October for a two-year term as treasurer and officer of the board of directors of Prospect Researchers of Eastern Pennsylvania (PREP/APRA), a chapter of the Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement. The mission of PREP/APRA are to educate, to foster professional development and career growth, and to promote standards of excellence within the field of prospect research.

Gale Martin, marketing/communications, had a short-short story called “The Last Color Game” accepted for publication in the October issue of the Giggle Water Review.

Tim Kershner and Gale Martin, marketing/communication, attended the Fall Conference of the College and University Public Relations Association of Pennsylvania (CUPRAP) at Muhlenberg College on October 23.

Gale Martin also received an honorable mention in HumorPress.com’s humorous essay contest (the week of October 23) for a piece about gawdy tennis shoes. The piece is published online and will be published in an upcoming anthology called America’s Funniest Humor.

Tom Minick ’98, institutional advancement, is president of the Greater Reading Young Professionals Network, an organization of civic-minded professionals ages 21-45, that provides business, career-building, and social networking opportunities through a variety of regular planned events and activities (www.ypn-berks.org).

Mike Pressimone, advancement, was invited to serve on the President’s Advisory Board of Holy Name High School, Reading.

Lisa Ross, marketing/communications, is on the Board of Trustees for the Institute of the Arts, the Special Events Committee of the Reading Symphony Orchestra, and on the Program Committee of the Association of Fundraising Professionals of Reading.

Doug Smith, finance and administration, is in his first term as chairperson of Home Health Care Management (HHCM), the parent company for the Berks, Pottstown, and Greater Lehigh Valley Visiting Nurse Associations, and for Advantage Home Care.

IN MEMORIAM

Please remember in your prayers the soul of Sister Ramona Koloski, O.S.F., who died on Wednesday, November 8, 2006. Sister Ramona taught in the nursing program at Alvernia College from 1977 to 1992.

The history of Francis Hall can now be found on the CIC Historic Campus Architecture Project (HCAP) website at www.cic.edu/hcap.

The HCAP is the first national architecture and landscape database of independent college and university campuses, presenting information about significant buildings, landscapes, and heritage sites of American higher education.

To date, nearly 370 institutions have participated.

Three photos, including a floor detail picture, can be viewed on the site, along with architectural and historical information. Sister Pacelli’s book entitled Threads: A Tapestry of Alvernia College was used as a reference for the website’s narrative.

OTHER

Abby Swatchick, student activities, led student government officials Andrew Connors (junior), Mike Taylor (junior), and Melissa Masone (sophomore) to the ASGA National Student Government Summit in Washington, D.C. from September 14 to 16, 2006.

The Alvernia College United Way contribution goal was exceeded in September with a total of $19,345. Special thanks go to Jessica Hinkel, April Cunningham ’04 and to their entire team.

The “Meet Your Advisor” first year seminar event, on Friday, September 29, connected 43 faculty advisors and about 300 freshmen. Many freshmen now have a solid start to their academic progress thanks to all the faculty and staff who participated. Carol Schwanger and Sue Guay put together this successful event as well as the Genesis Dessert Social that followed.

Jo Pressimone, campus ministry, won the October 13 Friday Flash contest with her entry, “Have Another Cookie,” featuring the keyword puppet. Her winning story can be found at http://fridayflash.wordpress.com.
Campus Leadership

Honored trustees were P. Michael Ehlerman, Carolyn Holleran, Dr. John W. Gruber, and James Boscov, board chair. (Dr. Frank A. Franco was unable to attend.)

Alvernia names four Trustees Emeritus

Four former trustees of Alvernia College were honored with emeritus status. P. Michael Ehlerman, Dr. Frank A. Franco, Dr. John W. Gruber, and Carolyn Holleran provided distinguished leadership and service as board officers and trustees at large.

P. Michael Ehlerman, chairman of Yuasa Battery, Inc., served on the Alvernia College Board of Trustees from 1993 to 2002, also serving as board chair twice during that time. Besides sharing his business expertise and leadership during a time of rapid growth for Alvernia, his faith in the College’s future is also evident in the support he and his wife Judy have extended to numerous projects, including the campaign for the Student Center in the 1990s, and for an endowed scholarship in 2000—the P. Michael and Judy Ehlerman Scholarship Fund for students in need.

Dr. Frank A. Franco, a respected local physician and business owner, has a special passion for Catholic education and for Alvernia. He served as a trustee from 1989 to 1996, the last four years as vice chair. Dr. Franco chaired the College’s Vision for the Future Campaign because he believed in investing in improved facilities for our students. He also hoped that his leadership gift for a new library would motivate others to support the College. Both then and now, his is a vision of the library of the future, enriched with technology, a genuine learning commons, and hub of research, inquiry, and reflection.

Dr. John W. Gruber served on the College Board of Trustees from 1991 to 2001, serving as chair for his last two years. Dr. Gruber’s distinguished career in cardiology includes serving as chairman of the section of cardiology at the Reading Hospital and Medical Center from 1990-1997. Among Dr. Gruber’s distinguishing characteristics is the service and loyalty he has shown to institutions with which he has had a lifelong connection. His mother, Ellen Frei Gruber, taught in the Wyomissing School District and was a member of the Alvernia College faculty from 1968 to 1975. The annually-awarded Ellen Frei Gruber Award is presented to distinguished Alvernia alumni.

A trustee from 1992 to 2000, Carolyn Holleran served two terms each as vice chair and then chair of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Holleran has received countless awards, both individually and with her husband, Jerry, a current Alvernia trustee. Over the years, she and Jerry established a $150,000 Annual Fund Scholarship Challenge Grant, matching every new gift to Alvernia dollar for dollar; co-chaired Alvernia College’s 1996-1997 “Faith in the Future” campaign to build a new student center; provided leadership gifts for the Center in 1998 and 2000; became major supporters of the College’s St. Clare Legacy Society for Planned Giving; and also provided a major gift to the College’s Endowment in 2004. Today, they continue to offer the T. Jerome and Carolyn Holleran scholarship for current Alvernia students.

All the President’s Men... and Women

Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.”

President Tom Flynn and the five other officers in his cabinet are charged with changing the world that is Alvernia and moving it forward into the next decade.

Dr. Shirley Williams began her duties as provost, the College’s chief academic officer, for the 2006-07 school year, bringing with her extensive experience with both undergraduate and graduate education. Sister (Dr.) Margaret Anne Dougherty, RSM, formerly a full-time faculty member and interim academic vice president, was named to the newly created position of vice president of College Life and Student Learning Services.

J. Michael Pressimone, a seasoned advancement executive, was named vice president of Advancement, joining Sister Rosemary Stets, OSF ’71 vice president of Mission; and Doug Smith, vice president of Finance and Administration.

In August of 2006, Business 2 Business reported, "...Most everyone knows Alvernia College as a top-notch business school."

Ed Hartung, criminal justice, was quoted in the Reading Eagle on August 20 after the shooting death of Reading Police Officer Scott A. Wertz.

Thomas Bierowski, English, was quoted in The Philadelphia Inquirer on August 27, in a piece entitled “Thank Rocky.”

Creativity Camp, a South Reading Youth Initiative shepherded by the Center for Community Engagement, was featured in the Reading Eagle and the Allentown Diocesan Times.

Karen Thacker, dean of professional programs, and Sue Wahl, nursing, were featured in a story on Alvernia’s simulation technology laboratory, which appeared in the September 8 issue of the Pittsburgh Catholic.

Mary Sacavage, Schuylkill Center, and the first graduate of Alvernia’s elementary education program at the Pottsville campus, and Vicky Jordan ’06, were featured in the Pottsville Republican and Herald on September 19, in a two-page news story entitled, “Program Fills Need in County.”

The new O’Pake Science Center dedication was featured in the Reading Eagle on September 28. Tom Flynn, president, Jim Klucarits, science, and Elaine Schalk ’76, chair of the science and math departments, were quoted in the article.

Sue Wahl, nursing, and Karen T hacker, dean of professional programs, were featured in a story on Alvernia’s simulation technology laboratory, called “Nursing Students Heal the SIMs.” which appeared in the September 14 issue of the Allentown Morning Call and in the September 21 issue of the Saucon News and Quakertown’s Free Press.

Dana Larkin Sauers, communication, was mentioned in the Gettysburg Times on September 16, for a writer’s workshop and her newly published book, “Between the Space of Grace and Grey.”

In a Reading Eagle article about the affordability of colleges, Tim Kershner, marketing/communications, discussed the positive effects of scholarships raised through alumni and donors.

Sue Guay, English and communication, was featured in a two-page Reading Eagle article on September 17, on the Greater Reading Literary Festival.

Bestselling author Rachel Simon, who kicked off the Greater Literary Festival at Alvernia, was the cover story in the October 12 issue of the Weekend section in the Reading Eagle.

The October 13 edition of the Reading Eagle featured the 2006 Franciscan and Pro Urbe Award winners, Trustee Dr. Ron Smith and his wife Helen, and the City of Reading Police Department, respectively.
Tom Flynn, president, and the College’s support of Mary’s Home and Shelter were featured in the October 19 edition of the A.D. Times, in a news story entitled, “Mary’s Shelter celebrates educational opportunities.”

Sister Pacelli, English, was featured with a photo and two-page article entitled, “A Class with some Bite” in the Reading Eagle on October 30, for her elective course called “Vampires to Batman.”

Alvernia freshman Brian S. Longo was quoted in a Reading Eagle article on November 5 entitled, “Political Candidates Join Trend with Facebook, MySpace Pages.”

The Harrisburg Catholic Witness printed an article about Alvernia’s dual credit program on November 10. The program, coordinated by Beth DeMeo, English, offers college credits to Catholic high school students at significantly lower tuition rates.

The successful partnership between Alvernia College and Mary’s Home and Shelter was featured in the Reading Eagle on November 14. Tom Flynn, president, was quoted in a sidebar on the same day entitled, “Alvernia Welcomes Shelter’s Moms as Students.”

Bishop Cullen’s blessing of Alvernia’s O’Pake Science Center was featured in the November 16, edition of the A.D. Times. Tom Flynn, president, Mike Pressimone, advancement, Shirley Williams, provost, Kevin Burns ’06, and Elaine Schalck ’76, math and sciences, were all quoted in the article.

Alumna Jeannine Fry ’04, and Masters OT student Barb Rezk, were featured in the Reading Eagle on November 18, discussing art as a means of treatment for occupational therapists working at Wernersville State Hospital with individuals who are mentally ill.

Adjunct Charles Sacavage, history, discussed what the first Thanksgiving feast was really like in a front-page Reading Eagle article on Thanksgiving Day.

Five nursing colleagues from the Reading Hospital were featured in an article in the Reading Eagle on November 27. Two of the five women (Denise Spinka and Joan Moll) are Alvernia students.

A November 30, Reading Eagle article about possible changes to paper money in order to help the blind quoted Alvernia graduate Diana Killian ’05.

The Reading Eagle published two articles involving Alvernia College on December 10, discussing the cost of college athletics fundraising as a means to fund college athletics. The articles included the comments of John McCloskey ’94 and M’01, athletics.

The Reading Eagle published an article on December 10, entitled, “Alvernia Students Chosen for Theater Competition,” congratulating Jessica Folk, Heather Kissinger, and Catrina Mayo for their selection to the Irene Ryan Scholarship regional competition. Sarah Heckman was also mentioned as an alternate.

Ed Hartung, criminal justice, was quoted in a Reading Eagle article on January 4, about a recent incident where a local police officer used deadly force on a suspect.
TELEVISION

Jodi Radosh, communication, was interviewed on August 30, by WFMZ Channel 69 news about preventing drinking at college.

A photo and mention of Judge Hall were featured on ABC’s World News with Charles Gibson on Sept. 6, in conjunction with the release of the film The Last Rites of Father Mychal Judge.

Jodi Radosh, communication, was a panellist discussing media manipulation on “BCTV Presents the Eagle Eye” from September 14 to 16.

Jodi Radosh, communication, and Victoria Williams, humanities, were featured in a Channel 69 (WFMZ) news story discussing the upcoming elections.

Anne Skleder, community engagement, Marc Dipaolo and Beth DeMeo, English, Jodi Radosh, communication, David Silbey, humanities, and two Alvernia students provided commentary for BCTV’s election watch on Tuesday, November 7.

Sister Pacelli’s “Vampires to Batman” course was featured in two Channel 69 (WFMZ) news stories running on Monday, October 30 and Tuesday, October 31.

Gail Metzger, AT/OT, was featured in a November 29 WFMZ Channel 69 news story about changing U.S. money to better accommodate the blind.

Tim Blessing, humanities, was featured in a Channel 69 news story (WFMZ) on December 27 about the legacy of the late President Gerald Ford. He also sat in with the Channel 69 news crew (WFMZ) in Allentown, on January 2, to provide commentary during the three-hour funeral coverage of Gerald Ford.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

at
ALVERNIA COLLEGE

Monday, March 19 – The Hesburgh Lecture in partnership with the Notre Dame Club
Speaker: Rev. Oliver F. Williams, “Can you do well while doing good?”
7:30 p.m., The Motherhouse at Sacred Heart Convent, 400 Saint Bernardine Street

Monday, April 30 – “Ethics and Corporate Responsibility”
Panel discussion featuring Greater Reading’s top business leaders
The premier event of Alvernia’s Center for Ethics and Leadership

Both events are free and open to the public.

Look for more information at www.alvernia.edu
Alvernia Athletics
Fall recap / spring preview

The level of success on the athletic fields at Alvernia College continues to keep pace with the growth of the rest of the college.

The field hockey team, under the guidance of eighth-year head coach Laura Gingrich, earned its third straight trip to the conference final and its second invitation to the N CAA championships. Senior Megan Novogratz was the third consecutive Crusader to earn PAC Player of the Year honors. Novogratz and classmate Becky Macchione will graduate as two of the most decorated teammates in school history. Macchione finished in the top 10 in Division III with 216 career points, and she and Novogratz are the highest-scoring classmates in Division III history. Both players represented Alvernia at the NF HCA Senior All-Star game held in conjunction with the NCAA Final Four at William Smith College.

Men’s soccer followed up its first postseason appearance last year with a first-ever trip to the conference final. Senior midfielder Zach Naylon was the talk of the conference, earning Alvernia’s first Men’s Soccer Player of the Year award. The Maroon and Gold also earned its first postseason invitation, advancing to the Final Four of the ECAC South Region championship.

The winter months are well underway with both basketball teams off to solid starts. Men’s basketball finished the first semester with a 6-2 record and women’s basketball is 4-3 heading into the Gettysburg Tournament.

The spring months hold equal promise for fans of the Crusaders. Baseball will soon start preseason practice in search of its ninth PAC title and third in a row. Junior Zach Lutz leads the Crusaders and will attract increased attention from pro scouts this spring. Women’s lacrosse, an ECAC finalist last season, looks to build on two straight PAC playoff appearances. The golf team will build on a solid fall season while softball looks to duplicate recent postseason success.

For up-to-date information on each of Alvernia’s 15 varsity sports and its emerging ice hockey program, visit the website at www.athletics.alvernia.edu.

Senior Megan Novogratz was the third consecutive Crusader to earn PAC Player of the Year honors.

Zach Naylon earned Alvernia’s first men’s soccer Player of the Year award.
1984

William Reinhard accepted a position as senior financial analyst with Wolters Kluwer in center city Philadelphia. Wolters Kluwer is a global publishing company headquartered in Amsterdam. Previously, William worked for MBNA and had the opportunity to help open a location in Madrid, Spain. He lived there for a few years and as a result both of his children are fluent in Spanish.

1990

Lori DiGuardi successfully managed the planning, building, and implementation of one of the few primary school libraries in Uganda, East Africa, at Brain Tree Primary School, Kyanja, Uganda, from November 2005 to September 2006.

1999

Amy (Hollern) ’99 and Rob Stair ’99 welcomed their twin daughters, Abby Elizabeth and Mikeala Lynn on December 23, 2006. Abby was born at 3:15 p.m. and was 5 lbs. 14.5 oz. and Mikeala was born at 3:33 p.m. and was 6 lbs. 15.5 oz. The girls join their big brother Braylon who is 3 years old.

2000

Melanie A. (LaSelva) Hart has been promoted to advanced legal specialist in the Legal Department at First Energy Services Company located in Reading. She has been an employee of the utility for 32 years.

2002

Dawn (Fraser) Wanner and her husband are expecting their first child in June. The due date is June 11, 2007.

Robert Kovacs and Sandra K. Veresink were engaged on November 4, 2006. They are planning a November 2007 wedding. Visit their Knot page: http://weddings.theknot.com/pwp/view/co_main.aspx?coupleid=3275172948986875

2003

Brianne Moyer ’03 was married to Benjamin Speicher in July 2006 at Stoudt’s Brewing Company, Adamstown, Pa. A honeymoon in Tanzania, Africa, followed the wedding. They currently reside in Philadelphia.

2004

Matthew Heaney ’04 and Karen Frey ’05 were united during a nuptial mass at Immaculate Conception BVM Church in Jenkintown, Pa., on November 18, 2006.

Katrina Sipics is a decisioner for Wachovia Bank. She works in the corporate office on Penn Street.

Megan Stamm is a caseworker for Lebanon County Children and Youth Services.

2005

Sheila Carl welcomed her second daughter, Qyn Olivia Witmer, on October 10, 2006.

Patricia O’Gurek is currently pursuing her master’s degree in secondary school counseling at West Chester University.

Sarah (Lang) Takacs gave birth to a baby girl, Leighna Kathrine on September 18, 2006.

2006

Conor Delaney is interested in starting a business networking meeting that will meet about once a month. If interested, send an e-mail to cfdelaney@wradvisors.com or call him at his office at (610)374-6249 x142.

Christopher Mummolo proposed to Priscilla Hole on October 27, 2006 in their new home. A wedding date has not yet been set.

For more class notes, visit www.alumni.alvernia.edu
Each year, Alvernia College hosts several international sisters with full scholarships, so they can work towards degrees and learn about a new culture at the same time. This year, five sisters from Eastern Africa are taking classes while adjusting to the cultural habits and changing weather of Berks County.

While most students attend college to improve their future earning potential, many of the sisters who earn undergraduate and graduate degrees at Alvernia return home to use their knowledge to make lasting differences in their communities. When they return to Africa, the sisters will rely on their respective religious orders to determine how their new skills can best help the congregation.

But while here, the women must learn to adjust to the local climate. In Eastern Africa, the weather is almost always spring-like, and people spend most of their time outdoors. First-year student, Sister Maureen Ouma Achieng of Kenya (an education major) explains, “The most puzzling part of my experience here at Alvernia is ‘life in the house.’ Back in my country, those who spend most of their time indoors are invalids. There is so much activity outside that to find someone in the house is a rare thing. Yet here, the few people I have known are either at work or in the house!”

The transition to American culture has also been challenging for Sister Dorothy Casian of Tanzania. “The culture here is different from mine. No one greets each other in the same manner. I had to adjust myself to the different culture by trying to say ‘hi’ to anyone I met.” Sister Ouma talked about making difficult adjustments. “At first, I struggled to hear and understand even though I already spoke English. Here, each person lives alone and in his or her own world whereas in my country, there is a particular interest to get to know others and associate with them. When we greet back home, we always shake hands, which people here do not do automatically. Although I felt a bit lost in the beginning, I have since adjusted and find it quite good here. Others treat me well and always make an effort to understand when I speak.”

Although all five of the current resident sisters are from East Africa, none of them knew each other prior to attending Alvernia. The sisters live together in the Divine Mercy Convent on Saint Bernardine Street. Sister Jacinta Kimaro, a graduate student with a degree in psychology from Alvernia, has been living in Divine Mercy since it opened in 2004. Before that year, international sisters attending the College stayed with off-campus religious communities that were often far away from Alvernia. The current residence was purchased through a gift from Margaret Impink ’88, in memory of her late husband Dr. Robert Impink. Because the sisters are now closer to campus, they benefit more from campus services, and find themselves more drawn in to the college experience. The sisters have not forgotten home, though. They stay connected to their families in Africa through phone calls, letters, and even e-mail. Once armed with degrees, the sisters will return home to help their communities grow and prosper.
A statue of Saint Anthony graces the lawn of the Sacred Heart Convent, adjacent to the Reading Campus.
## Calendar of Events

### February
- **20** Info Session, Schuylkill Campus
- **25** Honors Scholars Luncheon
- **26** Scholarship Dinner

### March
- **3** Alumni night at the Reading Royals
- **6** GCS Information Session, Reading Campus
- **10 - 17** Spring Break
- **10 - 17** El Salvador Alternative Spring Break Trip
- **19** Hesburgh Lecture, Rev. Oliver F. Williams
- **31** Alumni trip to see Spamalot at The Academy of Music

### April
- **8** Easter Sunday
- **11** Easter Celebration (Prayer Service and Reception)
- **14** Preview Day, Reading Campus
- **17** Info Session, Schuylkill Campus
- **18** Occupational Therapy Department Student/Alumni Dinner
- **30** GCS Information Session, Reading Campus
- **30** Internship Alternative Spring Break Trip
- **30** “Ethics and Corporate Responsibility” Panel

### May
- **10** Alumni gathering at Manayunk Brewery and Restaurant
- **12** Alumni Trip to Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs at The Franklin Institute
- **20** Graduation
- **21 - 30** Alumni Eastern Caribbean and Bermuda Cruise