Summer 2009

WPI Transformations: A Journal of People and Change, Summer 2009

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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About the Cover
Whereas purposeful, elegant design is created by artists and engineers alike, there are myriad illustrations of the beauty of design in nature. One such example is the nautilus shell, whose chambers are arranged in an approximate logarithmic spiral.
"Design is where science and art break even."
—Robin Mathew

When I was in middle school, I aspired to be an architect. I was fascinated by blueprints and I would continually revisit the sketch of the house my parents had built some years before. Enamored by Frank Lloyd Wright, I somehow amassed a collection of books detailing his work. And when I was sick of practicing the piano or bored with Barbie, I would sketch out one-dimensional residential floor plans. (They were fairly functional homes, although I would sometimes forget the bathroom.)

The beauty of design is that it bridges technical with creative, science with art, left brain with right brain. And the same can be said about WPI. Just look at our innovative curriculum, in which students take a humanistic approach to engineering and science. Or our musical and theatre productions, in which students find an outlet for their many talents. Or the myriad humanities projects, in which students channel their creative energy into purposeful projects. Last year, for example, Damien Kane Rigden ’08 painted a beautiful portrait of the WPI campus—with panels depicting different aspects of campus life—which now hangs in the Goat’s Head Restaurant.

True, design means something different to everyone and every field. But that’s what has enabled us to share the stories of so many alumni, students, and faculty across a broad range of disciplines and industries in this issue of Transformations. In some way, shape, or form, each person featured in this magazine is involved in designing things—medical devices and video games, city streets and buildings, brand names, and WPI’s newest major, robotics.

There’s more: faculty research focuses on artificial intelligence in design and a student project in Hong Kong looks at redesigning the city’s waterfront to make it more functional and aesthetically pleasing.

In designing this edition around, well, design, we also took the opportunity to refresh the look and feel of the class notes section. After all, we couldn’t let this designer issue go by without a little redesign ourselves.

Thanks for reading.

Charna Mamlok Westervelt, Editor
Pride for All Things WPI

I am a graduate of WPI, Class of '53, and was quite pleased with the current document [winter '09 Transformations]. Frankly, I have always been, especially when I compare the material to that which comes from other universities where I was also degreed—University of Michigan, Harvard University, and Vanderbilt University. All was quite professional and well done.

Worthy of note was the spectacular message from President Berkey and how it ties in so well with America today, as we are guided by our new President, Mr. Obama.

Also worthy of note is Bill Grogan, ["Honoring a Man, a Plan," winter issue] who I knew personally while attending WPI from 1949 to 1953. There was no question in our minds, our class, as to what this person would mean and represent to WPI as he lived his professional life. He is one of the many important anchors of the school and the traditions it represents.

Thank you for the excellent reading opportunity!

Philip E. Simon '53
Vista, Calif.

Where in the World?

I am puzzled. Do we live on the same planet? I have been unable to match what appear—on the front cover of the winter '09 publication—to be continents on the globe held in someone's hand with continents I find on current maps of planet Earth. There seem to be some similarities in places, but relationships do not continue to match. Alternatively, the presumed continents do not agree with what I have seen as resulting from early breakup of Pangea or with projections of future continental drift. Where are we!? I found no comment or description of the front cover anywhere in the magazine.

Please elucidate when you have time.

Earl C. Klaubert '52
Northwood, NH

Editor's note: The image used on the cover of the winter '09 Transformations was not intended to be taken as a literal interpretation of planet Earth. Rather, it's an editorial comment to express the care we must take to repair a world that faces economic turmoil, energy and health crises, and war—to name a few—and the important work we must do to solve some of these global issues. So, where are we? We are here. Together. Making a difference in the world. Or, as my father likes to say, "Wherever you go, there you are."

One of Two

I just found “The Women of WPI” article online [spring '08 Transformations]. I work at the Volpe Center in Cambridge, and in the past three weeks we hired two new female employees—both graduated from WPI. (I was looking for pictures of our first female class to show to them and found the article.) In our group of 30 engineers, six are female, and now three of us have WPI connections!

Jayne Rossetti Granville '72
Cambridge, Mass.

< In the fall of 1968, Jayne Rossetti (left) and Lesley Small were the first female undergraduates to enroll at WPI, both math majors.
A message from President Berkey

As Good As It Gets

Whether observed in nature or practiced by human beings, design is a powerful and pervasive concept. Even in a subject as esoteric as fractal geometry, one finds deeply complex geometric patterns, resembling such natural phenomena as snowflakes, mountain ranges, or coastlines resulting from repeated iterations of simple equations.

Aristotle said of the natural world that it "does nothing uselessly," and that seems to me an apt description for the best of human design as well. Consider the wheel, perhaps the most important mechanical invention in history, which the Mesopotamians attached to their chariots in 3000 BC and New Englanders used to propel the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th Centuries AD. Or the Gettysburg Address, remarkably economic at only three paragraphs in length yet so enduring in its power and effect. Or Michelangelo's Pietà, with every fold of drapery, every detail of expression, adding to its beauty and impact.

The principle of doing nothing uselessly can also be found in the mission and ethos of WPI. During my inauguration five years ago, I said of WPI that its "curriculum and research program centered on science and technology, complemented and enriched by the other fine and liberal arts and by programs in management, seem to me about as good as it gets in higher education." Today it is clear to me that I wasn't doing this splendid university justice. When it comes to preparing young men and women with the knowledge, skills, and imagination to contribute to this world, I believe a WPI education is as good as it gets in higher education.

If nature does nothing uselessly, it is also ever changing, with the shift of continents, fluctuations in climate, and spawning of new species and even new planets. This, too, characterizes the WPI curriculum—not lurching from field to field but evolving and expanding by design in areas where we have real leadership to provide, where there is profound interest on the part of our students, and where opportunities exist for collaborations and connections with firmly established programs and initiatives. These were the principles we followed when we recently became the first university in the nation to offer a bachelor's degree, and then a master's degree, in robotics engineering. In just two years, WPI's robotics engineering major has seen an explosion of interest and activity, with students and faculty working together to develop intelligent machines that can bring so much progress to our world, in such wide ranging areas as national defense and security, elder care, and interactive entertainment. This is the stuff of amazement, and I encourage you to see it for yourselves when WPI hosts the first Robotics Innovations Competition and Conference this November. Eagerly anticipated, this competition will challenge undergraduate and graduate students from across the United States to create robotic solutions that improve the quality of life.

If it sounds like a pretty exciting time at WPI, it is! And the world is noticing. Again and again this year, WPI was cited among the top universities in the nation for our innovative curriculum and the competitiveness of our graduates who are so highly sought after for their intellect, leadership skills, and ability to get a job done. Mothers and dads may be glad to know that WPI was recently ranked among the top colleges and universities that produce the best-paid graduates, including 9th in the nation among Ivy League engineering schools, and 10th in the nation among all schools for highest starting median salary. Just as gratifying, our students are also among the very happiest in the nation according to a recent survey in The Princeton Review. Finally, WPI climbed three places among the nation's top universities in the latest U.S. News and World Report. While numerical rankings can never capture the richness and complexity of a university like WPI, we can be most proud of this collective recognition and good news.

Happily, the theme of design in this issue of Transformations captures beautifully the richness and complexity of a WPI education. Design crosses science, engineering, management, humanities, and the arts—and so do our alumni, who are artists and engineers, writers and gamers, entrepreneurs and inventors, and scientists and playwrights. Their stories, their lives—your stories, your lives—provide vivid evidence that a WPI education is indeed as good as it gets.

The principle of doing nothing uselessly can be found in the mission and ethos of WPI. When it comes to preparing young men and women with the knowledge, skills, and imagination to contribute to this world, I believe a WPI education is as good as it gets in higher education.
Faculty News

Rick Sisson, George F. Fuller Professor of Mechanical Engineering, was recently named WPI’s Dean of Graduate Studies, a new half-time position. Sisson, a long-time WPI faculty member and director of the university’s Manufacturing Engineering and Materials Engineering programs, is ranked among the top five percent of scholars in his field. His contributions to the literature in materials science and engineering over the course of three decades at WPI include over 200 technical articles on materials process modeling and control, hydrogen embrittlement of steels, and environmental effects on metals and ceramics.

Kristin Wobbe, John C. Metzger Jr. Professor of Chemistry, has been named associate dean for the First Year Experience. Having co-developed and co-taught one of the First Year Seminars, Feed the World, Wobbe is intimately familiar with the university’s innovative program for first year students. As a member of WPI’s Interdisciplinary Plant Research Group, she has explored a number of ways to augment the plants’ production of artemisinin, a potent antimalarial compound. Wobbe, who joined the WPI faculty in 1995, holds a BA in chemistry from St. Olaf College and a PhD in biochemistry from Harvard University.

Kristin Boudreau joined the WPI faculty this fall as head of the Humanities and Arts Department. Boudreau was most recently professor of English at the University of Georgia. In her research, she seeks to understand cultural influences on literature and literary influences on culture. She earned a BA from Cornell University and MA and PhD degrees from the University of Rochester.

Frank Hoy, an international authority on entrepreneurship, has joined the WPI faculty as the inaugural Paul R. Beswick Professor of Entrepreneurship and director of the Collaborative for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Most recently director of the Centers for Entrepreneurial Development, Advancement, Research and Support at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), he holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UTEP, an MBA from the University of North Texas, and a PhD in management from Texas A&M University.

The Beswick Professorship—established through the generosity of Paul R. Beswick ’57 and his wife, Siang Kiang—enables WPI to make entrepreneurship an integral element of its mission and helps instill the spirit of innovation necessary for students to succeed in today’s technology-driven world.

High Five for WPI Athletics

It was a slam dunk for women’s basketball last season, as the team captured its second ECAC Division III New England Championship in three years. With a 43–36 victory over top-seeded Nichols College, the WPI team’s final season stood at 24–6, a new school record for most victories in a season.

On the men’s basketball team, their fifth straight appearance in the NCAA Division III Championship ended in round two with an 81–68 loss to UMass Dartmouth.

WPI baseball also had an excellent spring season—for the first time in the program’s 106-year history, the team earned a spot in the NCAA Division III Championship. “It’s a nice reward for all the hard work the guys have put in this year,” says coach Mike Callahan.

The team ended its best season yet with a 30–13 record, a third place finish in the eight-team regional, a first-ever regular season NEWMAC championship, and an all-time WPI record for wins. In July, the men’s crew team competed—for the first time in the university’s history—in the world-renowned Henley Royal Regatta in England. WPI was one of just 27 American institutions participating in the prestigious crew event this year.

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2009 Commencement

The world needs people with passion, creativity, and drive. And, according to 2009 Commencement speaker Ursula Burns, the world needs people who will ask questions and challenge convention. "We're finding that some of our old assumptions and ideas don't work anymore, and we can use people who are willing to ask 'Why do we do it that way?' and 'How can we do it better?'" said Burns, now CEO of Xerox Corp.

Burns spoke during WPI's 141st Commencement, held on the campus quadrangle on Saturday, May 16. During the ceremony, 617 bachelor of science degrees, one bachelor of arts (the first BA awarded in WPI's history), 312 master's degrees, and 25 PhDs were awarded. Honorary degrees were conferred upon Burns, as well as Helen Greiner, co-founder and former president of Bedford, Mass.-based iRobot Corp.; George C. Messenger Jr. '51, owner and vice president of Las Vegas, Nev.-based Messenger and Associates, and a recognized authority on transient radiation effects on electronics; and Charles M. Vest, president of the National Academy of Engineering and president emeritus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

5,000
Square footage of East Hall's living green roof, comprising sedum, chives, and other plants. (WPI's newest residence hall recently received Gold LEED certification.)

930
Number of incoming first year students. Overall, the number of applications for the Class of 2013—a record—is up 10 percent over last year.

500
Approximate number of pages included in the launch (phase 1) of WPI's new website.

20
Number of new faculty members for the 2009-10 academic year.

15
Nationwide rating for WPI's MBA program in the finance category of a student survey in The Princeton Review.
Supporting the City in Many Ways

This July WPI and the city of Worcester began a new voluntary Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program that will support Worcester Public Library and Institute Park. Through this 25-year commitment, WPI will increase its voluntary annual payment to the city to approximately $270,000. This amount, in addition to the real estate taxes on properties that qualify for tax exemption, will bring the university’s total voluntary payments to $450,000 in the first year of the new agreement. WPI will further increase its contributions by 2.5 percent annually over the next 25 years, for a total of more than $9 million over the life of the agreement.

“We hold fast to the principle that what’s good for Worcester is good for WPI,” says President Dennis Berkey. “I am pleased to have reached an agreement that reflects our strong relationship.”

Designed for a lifetime of learning

in math, science, and engineering

The work of the WPI K-12 Outreach Program challenges students to grow academically, making a difference in educating the next generation of leaders and innovators.

wpi.edu/K12
Recognizing WPI Entrepreneurs

James Van de Ven, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, and Allan Katz '07, '09(MS) hope to turn their invention into a licensed product. And the duo just might be on their way. Their invention—a high-speed hydraulic valve for use in switch-mode control in hydraulic hybrid vehicles—won the 2009 Kalenian Award, recognition that supports innovative ideas or the development of commercial products. The award includes a $20,000 prize.

Established in 2006 by Alba Kalenian in memory of her late husband, inventor Aram Kalenian '33, the award encourages innovation and entrepreneurship among WPI students, faculty, and alumni by providing seed money to advance their ideas. This year's award-winning invention is a new method for controlling hydraulic systems that uses a hydraulic valve to rapidly switch between efficient on and off states. The researchers' ultimate goal is to develop the invention into a licensed product at a major hydraulics manufacturer.

Receiving an honorable mention this year were Robert Breznak '09, Alexander Camilo '09, Kevin Harrington '09, and Mark Mordarski '11 of Neuron Robotics, for a system of interconnecting modules, software, and parts that work together to allow researchers, hobbyists, and developers to increase their productivity while reducing their costs and waste.

In Their Own Words

"The goal is to genuinely replace a muscle that's lost. I appreciate that's a very aggressive goal."
—Raymond Page, research assistant professor in biology and biotechnology, on his research to regrow limbs
March 25, Wired.com

"People laugh when I say we have another record-breaking year. But [interest in WPI] keeps going up."
—Kristin Tichenor, vice president for enrollment management
April 24, Christian Science Monitor

"It saves a lot of spacecraft mass, and you can go a longer way."
—Nikolaos Gatsonis, George I. Alden Professor of Mechanical Engineering and director of WPI's Aerospace Engineering Program, speaking about new propulsion technologies that increase fuel efficiency
July 20, Worcester Telegram & Gazette

"It's like a Tower of Babel situation. You have police, fire, Coast Guard—all with different wireless standards."
—Alexander Wyglinski, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, on research to develop cognitive radio applications for first responders
March 27, Mass High Tech

"We're asking companies, 'What are you struggling with? What are your skill gaps?' We come back and talk with our faculty: 'How does WPI play a role in solving workplace issues?'"
—Stephen Flavin, associate provost and dean, Corporate and Professional Education
May 7, MetroWest Daily News
Science Summer Camp for All

Underrepresented students from Boston, Worcester, and Southbridge middle schools experienced WPI's state-of-the-art robotics, science, engineering, and mathematics programs during the ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Science Summer Camp, which the university hosted for the first time. The two-week residential camp promoted future careers in the STEM fields.

"WPI is honored to be selected this year as one of 11 new institutions to provide this program to students who may not otherwise have an opportunity to participate in such an intensive academic camp that encourages participants to pursue technical and science careers," says Nicole Bradford, WPI's director of diversity programs.

Bernard Harris, a former NASA astronaut and the first African American to walk in space, created the camps four years ago, with support from ExxonMobil. More than 1,500 students across the country took part in this year's camps.

November 7–8 at WPI

Robotics Innovations Competition and Conference

CALL FOR ROBOTS AND SPONSORS

ricc.wpi.edu

The competition challenges college-age students to design and engineer innovative robotic solutions to real-world problems. Cash prizes up to $5,000 will be awarded. Conference activities will provide networking opportunities as well as interesting speakers. Learn how you can get involved as a participant or sponsor.

This two-day event is free. Register now to attend.

Other sponsors include Tufts University Center for Engineering Education & Outreach, IEEE, and ACM. RICC is supported by the National Science Foundation under Award No. CNS-0722218.
Running Fast, Going Far

The leitmotif that plays through Indraneel Sircar's life seems simple enough: to seek out that which he does not know.

"I like the challenge presented with learning new things," he says, speaking via phone from San Francisco, about to depart for a trip to the Arctic Circle. "I'm easily distracted from something that gets repetitive and mundane."

His life has been anything but dull. When he came to WPI in 2005, he'd already lived in India, Austria, Zaire, Israel, and Malta, before moving to Worcester for four years. The son of a diplomat, Sircar originally planned to study international relations, business, or economics at a liberal arts school. "WPI was the school I knew the least about," he says, "and that excited me to come here."

Having graduated with a mechanical engineering degree in May, Sircar is now pursuing a PhD in the same field at Purdue—an impressive track for any youngster, especially one who didn't originally set out to be an engineer. And yet he looks forward to a career in sustainable energy, ultimately returning to academia to teach.

"As engineers, I believe it's our duty to look at each and every problem critically, with the intent to improve it and ultimately better our society," he says. "We need engineers and scientists to reshape our world—in developed and underdeveloped countries—and realize a sustainable future for our planet."

Sircar speaks from experience—his Major Qualifying Project investigated the use of a liquid piston to optimize the efficiency of gas compression technologies. The project's scope included identifying the optimal operating characteristics of the liquid-piston compressor, establishing a foundation for future research. That project, along with his academic record and involvement in extracurricular activities, gained him entry to the Second Team in USA Today's 2009 All-USA College Academic Team program.

On campus, Sircar was a Crimson Key tour guide and the founding president of the Engineers Without Borders WPI chapter. He also ran track and field, a sport he'd never tried prior to WPI. "It gave me extreme confidence in myself as an individual," he says. "On the track, you must find the strength and motivation within yourself, much like in most areas of life."

"Plus," he adds, "I never knew how fast I could run."

—CMW
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Learn from the expert faculty teaching on campus. You will be a virtual student in the campus class with asynchronous access to lectures and materials.

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To learn about registering for an upcoming course:
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Hidden behind imposing government buildings or barricaded by chain-link fences topped with barbed wire, waterfront parks lie isolated at the edges of Hong Kong's bustling metropolis.

Last winter, four WPI undergraduates set out to help connect these scattered boulevards, pools, and beaches with their respective neighborhoods. Nate Jannetti, Aubrey Scarborough, Paul Smith, and Liz Tuite, all Class of 2010, assessed 48 cultural and recreational sites, most of which lie along Victoria Harbor, situated between Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula.

The development patterns along the harbor have been less than ideal. "The government of Hong Kong owns the land and leases it to developers who, in order to increase profits, build tall buildings on the scarce land," says Creighton Peet, director of WPI's Hong Kong Project Center. "Construction goes right up to the edge of the harbor."

"The push is on," he continues, "to get the government to redesign the waterfront as a more aesthetically pleasing place."

Launched in 2002, WPI's Hong Kong Project Center began working last year to address the harbor-front issues with Designing Hong Kong, a prominent nonprofit striving to protect and improve the local living environment. Hong Kong's Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) also worked closely with the students. A branch of the Hong Kong government, LCSD owns and maintains more than 1,500 public sites in Hong Kong, including those the students studied.

Not exactly walks in the parks
Building on last year's work, the students each took on a dozen sites, riding on buses, ferries, and trams to the playgrounds, cultural centers, and other sites on their list. They visited each place twice—once to make firsthand observations, next to interview park visitors. (Graduate urban design students from Hong Kong University helped translate for the WPI students.)

Before flying to Hong Kong, the students established criteria to systematically assess the sites. "We spent a lot of time discussing how we ought to define each of the four criteria," says Tuite. "This was one of the biggest challenges about this project." After examining prior studies of the area, the students chose four main characteristics—accessibility, connectivity, quality, and design and maintenance—and developed a methodology to evaluate each.

"They had to be clear about, for example, what they
The development patterns along the harbor have been less than ideal. “The push is on to get the government to redesign the waterfront as a more aesthetically pleasing place.”

—Creighton Peet

meant by ‘good design’ so they could evaluate consistently across sites,” says Jeanine Skorinko, assistant professor of psychology at WPI, who accompanied and advised the team.

The students characterized accessibility as a measure of available facilities, such as buses, that allow people to reach a site. Connectivity meant how well the park connects people to the waterfront and vicinity. Quality referred to on-site activities and amenities that encourage people to stay. Design and maintenance was determined by aesthetics and upkeep. The team created detailed checklists for each characteristic. Every site received a score of one to four stars.

After criss-crossing Kowloon, Hong Kong Island, and the New Territories to examine the sites and interview harbor visitors, the students reported that the properties scored poorly. Accessibility scores suffered because only 19 percent of the sites were marked with directional signs from the closest public transportation stop, even though most sites had at least one form of public transportation within walking distance (400 meters).

Connectivity lost points because at 81 percent of the sites, access to the water, to nearby neighborhoods, and even to the site in question was impeded by construction, fences, walls, or roads. Within each park, the team kept an eye out for signs pointing the way to facilities and nearby transport and destinations, as well as for site layout maps; they found that while 83 percent of the parks posted site signs, most lacked other visuals to help visitors make their way around the parks and environs.

Indicators of site design and maintenance included the presence of trash bins and landscaping aesthetics. This category scored higher than the others since all sites offered some form of greency; only a third had broken or closed amenities. Still, interviewees wished aloud for less pollution and more trees.

Quality encompassed a range of amenities including food and drink, shade from Hong Kong’s strong sun, and toilets. Students also watched for the biggest amenity of all, Victoria Harbour, and found that it’s impossible to see the water at nearly one-third of the sites. Interviewees frequently voiced the need for shaded seating that faced the water, requirements the students also noted in their observations.

One site—the Lei Yue Mun Typhoon Shelter Breakwater Sitting-Out Area—provided a perfect example of poor design: when visitors sit on park benches, their sea view is blocked by a massive concrete breakwater. Another site received high marks across categories: Hoi Sham Park in Kowloon City is easy to find and offers plenty of shade, harbor views, and food.

After scoring the sites, the team correlated each park’s grade with its popularity. “We found that the sites with the higher scores were also the ones where we saw greater numbers of visitors,” says Scarborough.

Sensitive presentations, positive results
On paper and at formal presentations, the team offered practical suggestions to improve each of the parks: putting up signs between transport drop-off points and sites, adding recycling bins at all locations, and improving shaded seating and food services. “We also suggested that chain-link and barbed wire fences be removed or changed to be more aesthetically pleasing,” notes Jannetti.

The team had spent three-quarters of their time on site visits, interviewing, and assessment, which left only two short weeks to finish up their report and make recommendations to LCSD. “The students presented to officials who’ve been running these properties for many years,” notes Stanley Selkow, professor of computer science, who advised the team. “It would have been so easy for these administrators to get defensive. But the students showed tremendous sensitivity in how they made their presentations, and high officials at LCSD were impressed with the students’ results and recommendations.”

So impressed, in fact, that LCSD will be enhancing its facilities. “They will add shaded seating, food and beverage facilities, toilets, and signage to improve the vibrancy of waterfront sites,” says Paul Zimmerman, founder of Designing Hong Kong, a sponsor liaison.

“The team balanced multiple competing demands on the project,” Selkow says. “They worked long hours to complete it, and cooperated well with each other throughout.”
A group of engineers sits at a table discussing the design of a new cell phone. As they toss ideas back and forth, they’re gesturing to show the possible width of the screen and placement of functions such as volume control. A computer watching the human gestures presents the group with visuals that approximate the potential phone’s dimensions. The engineers manipulate the images—changing, saving, or discarding them as the discussion continues.

Creative Computations

Professor of computer science David Brown envisions a time when computerized systems, through the groundbreaking field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Design, will assist people in harvesting their creativity in such scenarios.

Brown first discovered the world of AI in Design as a PhD student in computer and information science at Ohio State University in the early 1980s. As he considered his thesis options, his advisor suggested that he solve a design problem faced by a sensor manufacturer: the company, seeking to boost production, wanted a computer to recreate the problem-solving skills of their in-house expert.

The sensors detected thickness for machines that milled plastics and paper. For each milling application, the staff engineer crafted routine but painstaking designs. Brown interviewed the engineer at length, essentially mining the expert’s knowledge of the design process.

Now firmly established as a pioneer in the field, he has delved ever deeper into how AI can leverage and mimic human creativity. “The field has changed dramatically over the last 25 years,” says Brown, who arrived at WPI in 1985 and has held a collaborative appointment as professor of mechanical engineering since 1999. “We’ve gradually moved from programming routine tasks to ever more complex efforts—those involving creativity,” he says. “So we’ve gone from solving relatively easy problems to a point where now we don’t have much of a clue anymore about where we might be headed.”

Brown received his appointment in mechanical engineering when he began advising ME PhD students, guiding them in programming designs for manufacturing and other fields. One of his protégés—Janet Burge ’05 (PhD), whose thesis explored software engineering using design rationale—is now an assistant professor in computer science and systems analysis at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. In 2009 Burge won the National Science Foundation’s CAREER award, one of the most prestigious for young faculty members, to support her continuing research into design rationale, which explores not only the results of design processes but also the reasoning behind design choices.

While AI in Design may sound esoteric to the uninformed, Brown sees it as a utilitarian tool, grounded in logical reasoning. Creativity, after all, “exists as a judgment relative to personal or group norms,” he says. “AI in Design looks to take the subjective and make it objective and, therefore, computable. Creativity can be modeled in computer code because it includes processes involving knowledge and reasoning.”

Brown’s recent writings explore computational creative design. His articles began touching on the subject in the late 1970s, when he explored a natural language graphics project. More recently, Brown reported on how the AI in Design community is developing definitions of creativity with an eye toward designing and judging products. For example, Susan Besemer, founder of ideafusion, has shown that people judge the creativity of commercial products by their novelty, resolution (usefulness and user-friendliness), and style. Brown thinks that computers should also be able to do that.

Additional characteristics refine those main categories. For example, novelty refers to the use of new processes, new techniques, and new concepts in the
product. It also includes the newness of the product within and outside of its field. Resolution, the degree to which the product addresses a specific need, "underscores the fact that, for products at least, new but bizarre objects aren't seen as creative." Salvador Dali's surrealist Lobster Telephone, for instance, is widely accepted as creative in the art realm. But if viewed as a product, the lobster phone would flunk the creativity exam due to its limited utility.

As such definitions emerge, Brown sees AI in Design stimulating creativity by assisting human experts while they toil at complex projects. Computational models that grasp the basic processes involved in, say, creating buildings, could provide advice and cautions about potential pitfalls in emerging designs.

Next-generation computational design systems could also stimulate creativity by alleviating tedium. Far more ambitious than Brown's PhD thesis for designing part of a sensor, he suggests that a brave new AI program might look more like an architectural grammar to help create buildings. Such a tool would be similar to a language grammar for word processing applications. But instead of piping up when sentences ramble, this lexicon of windows, doorways, materials, and other architectural elements could open imaginations to new ideas for floor plans.

Brown is excited to think about AI in Design interfacing even more actively with people. He points to a special issue of a journal he edits, Artificial Intelligence for Engineering, Design, Analysis and Manufacturing, that explores gesture. When computers are capable of interpreting human gestures within a knowledge context, such as architecture, building design discussions could evolve more rapidly or simply more creatively. "I find this area of AI in Design fascinating," he says. "Computer design aids that interact with human designers to support their activity seem to me the most practical next step in this field."

But how or when will AI succeed in computationally modeling creativity? "It's up in the air," says Brown. "AI in Design is so complex and rich that whenever I look at it, I know we're just scratching the surface."
Author Isaac Asimov did not live to see Susan Calvin's field evolve from science fiction to reality. In 2007—as his futuristic heroine was completing her doctoral work—WPI launched the nation's first undergraduate major in Robotics Engineering (RBE), followed by a master's degree track just this year. (A PhD program is also in the works.)

The new program has taken flight faster than expected. Undergraduate enrollment reached 150 within two years—four times the initial projections—and it's slated to comprise 10 percent of the undergraduate student body by next year. The first RBE diplomas were awarded in May—two years ahead of schedule—to upperclassmen who jumped at the chance to switch to the new major.

Building a new breed of engineers
Put simply, robotics integrates the skills of three traditional disciplines to create a machine that can sense its environment (electrical engineering), make decisions about the input (computer science), and act on the decision (mechanical engineering). The well-rounded roboticist brings a toolbox of solutions to every challenge, employing an integrative, systems engineering approach. And WPI is the ideal place...
for such a collaborative, hands-on program that brings together theory and practice.

The birth of the university's newest major was driven by a push-pull, says Mike Gennert, program director and computer science department head. Pull from an industry gearing up for applications in manufacturing, defense, medicine, and healthcare; and push by a generation of young people motivated by high school robotics competitions such as FIRST. *

Ken Stafford, director of the Robotics Resource Center, calls FIRST the catalyst for the robotics academic program. “Around the middle of the decade, we were seeing more and more students coming to WPI expecting to do robotics,” he says. “It had gone beyond a hobbyist thing—they wanted to do academic work in it. They were coming here because of their FIRST experience, only to find that the only academic work they could do was in industrial robotics—which is not as satisfying, or sexy, as mobile robots.”

The first step was to offer an introductory robotics course, which Stafford adapted from a popular summer program. All 48 slots in Introduction to Robotics were filled before first year students arrived on campus. Extra sections were added, but there was still a waiting list. At the provost's

*See sidebar on page 18.
request, a committee was formed to begin research toward establishing an undergraduate robotics major.

"Initially, I was not enamored with the idea," Stafford admits. "I thought it was too specialized for a bachelor's degree, and that it could turn out to be engineering lite, with no real depth." But he worked with the faculty committee to forge a curriculum with full academic rigor. "Little by little," he says, "I became a believer. Now I believe that robotics is the elite major at WPI—'elite' meaning the most challenging form of engineering."

"Just in time" education

Introduction to Robotics, one of the first courses a WPI robotics engineering major will take, is a microcosm of the university's project-based education, says Stafford. "Our vision is that if you lecture it, it should be used right away. And when we review these courses, we make sure that the word robot is spoken in every lecture, because the content can't be isolated from the context.

"As a product of a more traditional ME program, I remember how my eyes glazed over while I suffered through the groundwork," Stafford continues. "In our robotics courses, all the cool projects are put into practice, at an appropriate level, in the freshman year. It's a 'just in time' fundamentals approach. We do lecture, but we tell the kids, 'You probably ought to listen up, because you're going to need this in lab tomorrow.'"

The challenge is to teach the content of three different degree programs in four years without sacrificing depth. The Unified Robotics curriculum was designed using a "spiral" approach, which wraps the fundamentals of each discipline into an integrated curriculum, rather than a "silo" structure that slices off each discipline vertically. Or, as mechanical engineering department head Gretar Tryggvason explains, "Instead of reading each book all the way through, one by one, and waiting until the final year to put the pieces together, we start by reading Chapter One in all the books. Then we read Chapter Two. We teach the students a little bit about everything. Then we teach them some more about everything, and then even more." All courses are team-taught, merging fundamentals that are common across disciplines and focusing on content essential to the robotics context.
That doesn’t mean it’s all fun and games. “This is not LEGO,” Gennert stresses. “This is real engineering. We have students who come in as tinkerers, who might have done some neat things in high school, but it wasn’t formal engineering. They didn’t learn to solve the mathematical equations involved. Now they need to use their background to learn serious engineering and design.”

**Help Wanted: Robot Visionaries**

Although 2007 was a dismal year for the robotics industry in Isaac Asimov’s fictional timeline, reality tells a different story. The year began with the less fanciful Bill Gates heralding the dawn of the robot age on the cover of *Scientific American.* (“A Robot in Every Home,” January 2007). Gates made an analogy to the 1970s, the era of industrial-sized mainframes and kooky electronics hobbyists, when the idea of the average person owning a computer—and relying on it to get through the day—seemed preposterous. Today, with the cost of robot components falling and the sophistication of technology rising, we are about to see a transformation that’s the magnitude of electricity—or the Internet.

“The world is going to look very different in a few decades,” Tryggvason says confidently. “You’re already starting to see that. It’s not always going to look like the humanoid robots in the movies. It could be as simple as an automatic door that senses when you actually intend to go through and doesn’t open every time someone passes by. We already have luxury cars that park themselves. We may not think of them as robots, because there’s no droid sitting in the driver’s seat. We’ll also see more agile, versatile robots on the assembly line, in the military, and in medical operations.”

WPI faculty and students are already leading the way in this research. Greg Fisher, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, specializes in technologies for medical robotics and robot-assisted surgery. Computer science professor Charles Rich explores human-robot interaction, with the help of Melvin, one of the few existing robots with human features and an expressive face. Aaron Holroyd ’09, a member of the inaugural RBE graduating class, was part of a Major Qualifying Project (MQP) group that improved Melvin’s hand-eye coordination. With software designed by the project team, Melvin can see, name, and point to the correct object in response to the actions of a human partner. Holroyd, who is interning at iRobot this summer, is continuing in WPI’s computer science program. “My goal is to study the interactions between tutor and student, and to develop robotic tutoring systems,” he says. “My degree will enable me to be part of a robotics research company, or to do funded research at a university.”

This year’s winner of the Provost’s MQP Award for Robotics Engineering was a “sand-swimming snake” designed by Brian Benson ’09, a mechanical engineering major with a robotics concentration, and Neal Humphrey ’09, another of the first RBE graduates. The snake, which travels beneath the surface of a granular media, could have military or surveillance applications. The two students were involved with all aspects of the project: from the mechanical design and circuitry of the snake’s networked segments, to analyzing the physics of a real snake’s locomotion and writing software to replicate it. Humphrey spent last summer as a robotics engineering co-op/intern at Boston Engineering, and now holds the well-deserved title of multidiscipline systems engineer at MITRE.

In fact, all of WPI’s RBE students are graduating into a billion-dollar robotics economy right here in Massachusetts, with 150 companies, institutions, and research labs employing more than 1,500 people. CNET recently ranked WPI among the top 10 colleges for the robotically-inclined, noting the proximity to metro Boston, a “geographic hot spot” for academia and industry. To maximize their impact in this new sector, all RBE majors are required to take a course in entrepreneurship.

“The world needs engineers who not only are problem solvers, but are looking ahead to see what products are feasible, attractive, environmentally conscious, and ethically significant,” says Stafford. “It requires not just people who can figure out stresses and strains, but also people who are visionaries.”

"The world needs engineers who not only are problem solvers, but are looking ahead to see what products are feasible, attractive, environmentally conscious, and ethically significant.”

—Ken Stafford

If the enrollment trends continue, RBE will soon be one of the most popular majors on campus. What began as a joint effort among three departments will eventually demand a department—and a building—of its own.

Regardless of their majors, all students will benefit from studying robotics, says Fred Looft, electrical and computer engineering department head. “Students will likely need some background in the areas of autonomous operations, sensing, and actuation, which is the core of robotics,” he says. “They should have some grasp of the advantages and disadvantages of robotic systems and autonomous operations. And they’re going to need to understand the systems-level design concepts involved, because you don’t design just a robot or an autonomous vehicle, you have to design the full system and consider other factors, such as the operational environment.”

As for those students who do pursue WPI’s undergraduate or graduate robotics program, the world awaits. “These are some of the best and brightest and most creative students on campus. They haven’t taken the easy path, but they have a real passion for what they do,” Gennert says. “There’s a world of untapped applications out there. What they’ll be, I don’t know exactly, but I’ll tell you this—our students will figure it out.”
They are two very different people from different generations, but Harry Wotton ’94, ’96(MS) and Doug Noiles ’44 share a common passion—solving important problems by looking at them in new ways. They also share the entrepreneurial courage to launch companies, developing their innovative designs when others would not take the risk. Because of their work, people who need knee or hip replacements now live better lives, and pets who suffer from orthopedic injuries or disease have better care. Meet the bone fixers.
When freshman Harry Wotton stepped onto the WPI campus in 1990, he had a plan. Train as an engineer, then apply that knowledge to medicine. He hoped to become a medical doctor, but along the way—while planning for his Major Qualifying Project (MQP), actually—a flash of insight set Wotton on a different path.

It started when his advisor, Rick Sisson, the George F. Fuller Professor in Mechanical Engineering at WPI, spoke with Dr. Karl Kraus, who was then a veterinary surgeon at Tufts University. Kraus told Sisson that orthopedic devices to treat dogs with broken legs were not optimal: many dogs did not heal well because the existing devices were prone to failure. Sisson arranged for Wotton to meet with Kraus, and the seeds of his MQP took root.

As Wotton listened to the veterinarian, he immediately realized an underlying flaw with the existing orthopedic products—they were derivatives of devices first designed for humans. “When people leave the hospital with a broken leg they have crutches or a wheelchair, so they don’t have to carry their weight on the broken limb while it heals,” Wotton says. “That doesn’t work for dogs—they need to walk on the broken leg right away. The design for a dog device had to be different.”

So Wotton began to design a new orthopedic device for dogs with broken legs. The project combined engineering with his passion for working in a medical field. The fact that it was a canine, not human, medical problem was a modest adjustment he was comfortable making.

For the remainder of his senior year and into his graduate studies at WPI, Wotton worked on the problem and eventually designed an external fixation device. The design provided stability for the bone and tissues to heal, while carrying the animal’s weight while it walked.

Wotton built and tested his prototypes in the Washburn Shops. When the design reached a mature enough stage, and the mechanical testing results were optimal, Kraus agreed to test it in the clinic. “A dog had come into the emergency room at Tufts with a fracture and, with the owner’s consent, Dr. Kraus used the new device,” Wotton recalls. “It worked well, right away.”

That first success led to several additional clinical studies at Tufts, with similar results, all of which were published in leading veterinary journals. Kraus confirmed that the new device was a breakthrough—it helped the dogs heal quickly and it was exceedingly reliable. “After those studies, I tried to sell the idea to a company that is now my competitor. But they didn’t want it,” Wotton says. “Professor Sisson encouraged me to start my own company.”

It was 1996 and Wotton faced a major decision. In spite of his growing interest in product design, and the success of his MQP (shown in photo), he had applied and was accepted to medical school. He could have been a doctor if he so chose. “Ultimately, I had to say no to medical school. I was having too much fun,” Wotton says. “I love the creative process of design—and there is a real excitement to building your own company. I’ve never regretted the decision.”

With an initial investment of $250, a $5,000 gift from his mother, and hours of sweat equity, Wotton started SECUROS in 1997 to build and market the external fixation device. (SECUROS comes from “secure Os,” a nod to the Greek word for bone.) The product was a success from the start, and SECUROS attracted a following among veterinary surgeons, who in turn became a source of ideas for new products. “The surgeons were constantly telling me about the

by Design

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problems they were dealing with," he says, "and asking me if I could come up with something to fix them."

Since 1997 Wotton has designed hundreds of innovative products, from small screws to large implantable devices, to meet the surgeons' needs. "I tend to do my best thinking at night," he says. "I'll have a thought during the day, and I'll fall asleep thinking about a problem or a design, and I'll often wake up in the middle of the night with ideas to write down."

SECUROS has since grown to 29 employees, with locations in Massachusetts and Germany. The company has seven product lines, hundreds of products, five U.S. patents, and seven patents pending.

In 2007 Wotton sold SECUROS to MWI Veterinary Supply, one of the country's largest animal health products distributors. But Wotton, who lives in northeast Connecticut with his wife and three children, remains the principal designer for the company. "I sold the company only to make it better," he says. "As part of a larger company with a national sales force, we can do so much more. I stayed on as president, and I have quite a long-term contract, so I'll be here for a while. It's fun for me."

This year, Wotton's story came full circle when he became directly involved in the MQIs again, this time as an advisor. Working with Glenn Gaudette, assistant professor of biomedical engineering, Wotton advised four seniors who took on his challenge to design a new product to treat chronic hip dislocations in dogs.

The students, Meghan Pasquali, Nicholas Pelletier, Jennifer Richards, and Jonathan Shoemaker, developed a product design, then built and refined several prototypes. They received the 2009 Provost's Award for their work, and now SECUROS will explore commercializing their concepts. "It was great working with the students," Wotton says. "WPI changed my life, and I want to continue to be a part of it. So this is my way to stay involved and give back."

Doug Noiles was in San Francisco for a conference of orthopedic surgeons and had gone back to his hotel room in Chinatown to think about the problems that doctors were having with replacement hips and knees. It was the early 1970s, and Noiles wasn't a physician but an engineer with a track record of designing successful surgical equipment. Specifically, he was in charge of the design and development team at United States Surgical—a small but growing company in Norwalk, Conn.—who had developed the first commercially viable, clinically effective, surgical stapling system. Business was booming.

“Stapling has a lot of advantages over suturing,” he says. “Less handling of tissue makes for faster healing. Staples can be placed more quickly and precisely. Some procedures and delicate tissues permit stapling when suturing isn't possible. Plus, the body accepts stainless steel well.”

Orthopedic surgeons were among the biggest users of the staplers, and while the surgeons Noiles spoke with at the conference that day were pleased with his products, they had many problems with the artificial knee and hip joints available at the time. The failure rate for the artificial joints was high, and when they did fail, they caused more damage to the remnant bone and muscle, necessitating additional reconstructive surgery. Patients who suffered a failure were often left with little or no motion in the newly repaired joints. “The devices used after the initial prosthetic failed were pretty awful,” Noiles recalls. “Some were, essentially, heavy steel hinges.”

Noiles listened to the surgeons at the conference, and, as he had done all his life, he began to think about the problem in a functional, mechanical way. Ever since he was a young boy growing up in Hudson, Mass., he had been captivated by how things worked. When he was just 6 years old, he began building his own kites and model airplanes, inspired by both the creative process of design and by understanding the mechanics that allowed them to take flight. "As far back as I can remember," Noiles says, "I liked to pick up things and ask, 'What does it do? How is it made? Why is made that way? Is there a better way to make it?'"

As he focused on the problems of the existing knee joints, Noiles took a new approach. "For the most part, those devices were designed by physicians to reproduce the natural structures of the joints—to make them look like what nature had created—and that just wasn't working," he says. "Rather than trying to duplicate the natural form, I believed these devices had to be designed like machines. First, they had to be durable, and then they had to closely replicate the forces and the motions of the natural joint."

After the conference, the design of an artificial knee captured his thoughts as he settled into bed in the hotel room. "I remember this as vividly today as when it happened," he says. "That night I woke up with a start, sat straight up in bed, and said, 'Why not let it rotate?'"

Although some doctors said it wouldn't work, from that insight Noiles would develop a revolutionary design for a total knee replacement prosthetic that allowed natural rotations. It would eventually become the global standard, but his colleagues at U.S. Surgical were not interested in pursuing the development of artificial joints. The stapling business was growing so rapidly, the company wanted to stay focused on that product line.

Noiles decided to leave the security of a prosperous business and founded his own firm to commercialize the new knee design, along with a new hip device he had also invented. "I couldn't just let these concepts die. I believed they would be better for people," Noiles says. "Plus, U.S.
Surgical was getting so big I wasn’t comfortable there anymore. There was something I liked about being part of an embryonic start-up environment.”

In 1982 Noiles convinced three of his colleagues to make the leap with him, and they founded Joint Medical Products Corp., which developed his new knee joint and other devices. After a successful 13-year run, Noiles and his partners sold the company to Johnson & Johnson in 1995.

Noiles is now retired and living in Connecticut with his wife, Edna, a Navy nurse he met while serving as a Marine in World War II. He looks back on a 50-plus-year career as an inventor and engineer with 90 patents to his name, from his early days designing textile machinery and electronics to his landmark work in medical devices. He is humble about his impact on the industry, although the numbers speak for themselves: Each year in the United States, more than 500,000 people have knee replacement surgery and some 200,000 have hip replacements. And most of those people are living better, healthier lives, because of Noiles’s contributions to the field.

The key to a successful design, he says, is to first understand the problem clearly. He favors simplicity over complexity when imagining potential solutions and, most important, he tries to keep an open mind. “When it came to the knee, I say I had the advantage of ignorance. Not being a surgeon, I had no preconceived ideas about what the product should be,” Noiles says. “And an important part of the creative process is to recognize that a good idea can come from anyone, anywhere, at any time. You have to be willing to listen to people.”

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"Engineers design, they adapt, they fill a specific need—the form, the size, the scope, the functions—so that it all works. It’s a more holistic view."

—Phil Clark
Design can be an elusive concept. But to Phillip Clark '67, '72(MS) and Mary Ellen Blunt '79 design is at the core of what they do—from planning bridges to building museums. These alumni are big picture planners, approaching each project from a conceptual point of view. They design. They plan. They manage a project in its entirety from purpose to compliance to return on investment. Top in their fields, their experience at WPI fueled their desire to look at projects wholly and holistically and ultimately answer the question, “How are we going to make this happen?”

**Chances are** you’ve been in the presence of Phil Clark—if not the man himself, then certainly his work. As chairman and CEO of Clark Patterson Lee, a design firm based in Rochester, N.Y., Clark has been instrumental in numerous high-profile civil engineering, architecture, and planning projects, including a regional water supply system in Genesee County, N.Y., and the Mint Museums in Charlotte, N.C. Over the last 40 years, leveraging the civil engineering education he received at WPI and advanced studies in transportation planning, Clark methodically built a company from scratch to the nationally recognized 200-employee firm it is today.

What makes Clark and his company stand out among his peers is his low-key but purposeful common sense approach. He knows what works—whether that means designing a multimillion dollar state-of-the-art emergency room or a $400,000 addition to a public middle school.

Clark knew in the 7th grade he wanted to be a civil engineer, after working on a career-focused social studies project. “With civil engineering I could work with big trucks,” he laughs. “It was cool.”

Like most men entering college during the ’60s, the Vietnam conflict had a life-changing influence on him. “For my generation, it was the focus, right or wrong,” he says. At that time, ROTC was a two-year requirement for incoming WPI students. Vietnam was ramping up and the war weighed heavily on decisions about the future. “You had a choice: Join the military (engineering corps). Get married. Be a teacher. Work in aerospace,” he says. “For a civil engineer, the choice was the Navy. It seemed pretty safe. Had there not been a war, I probably wouldn’t have gone that route, but I still would have pursued civil engineering.”

He joined the Navy Reserves, received commission in the civil engineering corps, and began a master’s in civil engineering. But his reserve unit was activated just months before graduation and a tour of duty as a Navy Seabee Company Commander in Vietnam followed. Discharged in 1971, and married with a child on the way, he obtained a position in New York along with finishing his graduate studies through WPI.

His next job was for New York’s Monroe County, where he helped manage its wastewater construction program. He broke away in 1975 to start his own business. “I was as good as anybody at it,” he says, “and I assumed I’d continue with it until one of the firms I was working with offered me a full-time position.”

But when he landed a major project, everything changed. Within two years, the firm had grown to a staff of 20. “I had a young family to support,” he says. “It was like staying afloat in the middle of the ocean without a life vest. Survival is motivation.” Eventually, the firm branched out into other areas of expertise, including architecture, transportation, and building systems engineering, in order to be a “full-service” operation. “We do it because it works,” he says.

Today, the firm focuses on the process of developing projects, not just designing a building, a bridge, or a museum—a point he considers key to meeting market needs. “We develop projects on all spheres,” he says.
For instance, Clark Patterson Lee is the architect of record for the $50 million Mint Museums complex in downtown Charlotte, N.C. “We lead and manage the project team, which includes urban design and architectural specialists from Harvard, as well as the building engineering and detailed architectural plans.”

The perception of design is flawed, he says, for it applies to both engineering and architecture. “Engineers design, they adapt, they fill a specific need—the form, the size, the scope, the functions—so that it all works. It’s a more holistic view.”

But high-quality, multidisciplinary design is not the only cog in Clark’s business model. Stay out of big markets, like Boston, where you can’t compete, he says. Focus on markets that allow you to work on projects that are purposeful and meaningful. Know the company you are and the company you want to be. “We work on relationships,” he says. It’s more important to focus on reasonable growth in a way that is rewarding and fulfilling, without dramatically changing the company.

“We’ve created a culture here that works,” he says. “We are not a mega firm, not an international firm; never will be, never want to be. Being a mega firm is not on my bucket list.”

Outside of Worcester’s Union Station, Mary Ellen Blunt is standing on a small grassy meridian, waiting to have her photo taken. Behind her, a swirl of cars winds its way through a rotary (a traffic circle, if you’re not from New England). A driver, entering the rotary from Summer Street, rolls down her window and asks Blum for directions to UMass Memorial Hospital.

The fortuity of the situation is not lost on Blunt, transportation planning manager for the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC). If you need directions, she’s the one to ask. Few people in the Commonwealth know the roads better than she does. (In fact, she explains that the rotary outside Union Station is a modern roundabout—it was designed specifically to move traffic more safely and efficiently than the old rotaries or traffic circles.)

The CMRPC includes the City of Worcester and surrounding 39 communities. Through its regional perspective and coordinated approach to planning and development, the commission aims to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in the area.

“There’s a complex process that goes into designing transportation corridors,” says Blunt, who has worked for the CMRPC since she took an internship one summer as a student at WPI.

And while her department doesn’t actually design the roads, it does play a pivotal role in determining—and recommending—how the roadways, or other areas of transit, should be designed. They conduct major studies and collaborate with local and state officials, planning experts, and engineers, all with an eye toward ensuring that projects meet state and federal guidelines.

Blunt began at WPI as a math major, but she switched to a degree in planning, an area that better suited her interests. The program offered a mix of disciplines from urban development to environmental science, ecology, geology, and biology. “The classes took a conceptual point of view,” she says. “In other words, we asked, ‘How do you make that happen?’ It gave me a holistic approach to how things are done.”

For her Interdisciplinary Qualifying Project, she focused on planning transit services in the Blackstone Valley for elders and people with disabilities. That project—coupled with her internship at CMRPC—solidified her future career in planning.

Indeed, WPI taught Blunt to consider all elements that factor into any design decision. “If we know that an area is a high-crash location,” she says, “we have to look at why. It may not be the design of the intersection, which is the conclusion people often jump to. We might conclude that people are driving while distracted. If that’s the case, we can’t design something that prevents that.”

Today, Blunt continues to ask how and why questions, focusing on the impact of an overall project, rather than on the minute details of one engineering problem. “I’m much more the big picture planner,” she says. “I like to decide where to put bridges. I like to think about where people are coming from, where they are going, and what they want to do once they get there. I like to think about the purpose, the order of magnitude.”

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"I’m much more the big picture planner. I like to decide where to put bridges. I like to think about where people are coming from, where they are going, and what they want to do once they get there. I like to think about the purpose, the order of magnitude."

—Mary Ellen Blunt
For some WPI alumni, it’s not so much whether they win or lose, but how they keep playing the game. Even well into adulthood, they have found ways to use their advanced training in such fields as engineering and computer science to design toys and games. **Mercedeh Mirkazemi Ward ’86**, a mechanical engineering major, and **Michael Melson ’02, ’03 (MS)** and **Michael Gesner ’03**, who both studied computer science, have successfully tapped their educations in the service of what might seem to be more lighthearted enterprises. Mirkazemi Ward focuses on girls’ products for Spin Master Toys in California. At ImaginEngine in Massachusetts, Melson and Gesner develop both casual and serious games for consumers ranging from children to prospective defense contractors. All three individuals are serious about making fun an integral part of their solutions to professional challenges.

**Serious About Games**

Less than 24 hours after returning from two weeks of work in Hong Kong and China, Mercedeh Mirkazemi Ward is too busy to deal with jet lag. As she speaks on the phone from her home in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif., the family’s bird chirps in the background, a dog occasionally barks, and her son needs to figure out transportation to his junior prom. Elsewhere in the household, her husband and daughter and an assortment of pets are enjoying the Saturday morning. For the moment, the prospect of Spin Master Toys’ next new girls’ product is taking a back seat to this pleasantly hectic existence.

“My life is fast,” Mirkazemi Ward explains, referring to the toy industry—but also, by extension, to the rest of her activities. “One of the reasons I love this business is it changes constantly. You’re always working with new products.” The WPI graduate, who began with the Class of ’86, but completed her degree in mechanical engineering in 1997 after working at Mattel full-time, is a pro at navigating shifting conditions.

She started young, long before arriving at WPI, or even in the United States. When she was only 14, the Iranian-born tomboy daughter of an architect father and sociologist-trained mother decided she did not want to remain in a country where, as a female, she would have to cover her hair with a chador. Having attended an American school in Tehran and having visited the United States with her family quite a few times, she hoped to move to the home of an aunt and uncle in Worcester and go to school there. “I was always an independent child,” she says. Currently the director of girls’ products at Spin Master Toys, she admits to having been “my dad’s boy” as a youngster, more interested in basketball than Barbie.

With the support of her parents, Mirkazemi Ward left for high school in Worcester on the last day of 1978 and never looked back. (The rest of her family followed her lead several years later when they immigrated to California.) Design dazzled her—whether it was creating theatre sets at Worcester Academy or making an oil painting of a flower split into four panels for her freshman project at WPI. She began college as a civil engineering major, with plans to pursue architecture, but after a summer course in drafting, she switched to mechanical engineering. “I thought, ‘That’s what mechanical engineers do. They draw a lot,’” she says. “I like drawing. I loved kinematics, anything to do with drawing, graphics. I loved machine shop, carving things, drilling, spot welding, arc welding, anything hands-on.”
What she didn’t like was getting sick with mono and pneumonia her junior year and falling behind in her studies. True to form, however, Mirkazemi Ward turned a stint at home in California into a design career opportunity. While taking courses at California State University, Long Beach, she began working for Mattel, in a job she directly attributes to her experience at WPI, especially in the machine shop. She also credits WPI’s philosophy with her professional success. “What I learned allowed me to do what I do now: thinking on my own, working as a team member, brainstorming, coming up with solutions, being open. Open to ideas. Open to people. Professors’ doors being open to you—it’s a big benefit that’s not feasible for students at other universities.” She adds, “If that type of education was available to any child in this country, what a country we would be!”

If WPI initially made Mattel a possibility, the knowledge gained at the toy maker and at Cal State enabled Mirkazemi Ward to return successfully to WPI to finish her course work. She did her senior project on Talking Barbie—something she knew well from her time at Mattel—and drew the doll on Pro/ENGINEER, the 3D CAD modeling system.

After eight years as an engineer at Mattel, Mirkazemi Ward concluded, “I wanted to up my skills,” and she transferred to product development, a role that exposed her to every step in a toy’s evolution. By the time she was hired at MGA Entertainment in 2000, she was prepared to work on development for the first four Bratz dolls. While in this position, she made her initial trip to China, to select a manufacturer for what would become a hot girls’ toy. She has been dozens of times since then—so often, in fact, that one of the border guards between Hong Kong and China recognizes her whenever she passes through.

The pace of traveling back and forth to Asia a dozen or more times a year represents only one piece of the high-pressure toy business Mirkazemi Ward loves. For her first assignment at the relatively young Spin Master, she developed a line of plush, fashion-conscious dogs called Tini Puppini. “Right now the doll market is low,” she says. “Bratz and
Barbie are down. Every company is trying to come up with a new product line.”

During the quest for the next hit, she is involved in every stage, “from conceptualization to making the first samples to sewing up outfits for dolls.” Spin Master’s design and development departments collaborate with in-house sales and marketing teams, who in turn consult and present to buyers at Walmart, Target, and Toys “R” Us to determine the proper price and audience. Fashion designers become part of the process, too, as Mirkazemi Ward chooses what sort of accessories a human—or canine—doll might need. There are four seasons in the toy year, and so every three months she must have new lines to show to management.

“Never give up. Never surrender,” Mirkazemi Ward says about finishing her WPI degree, wryly quoting from the movie Galaxy Quest. She could as easily be referring to her move to the States, her doggedness in founding a women’s swim team at WPI, her persistence in creating novel toys in a down market. A year ago, when her son returned from a summer program at WPI wanting to be a robotics engineer, the one-time mechanical engineer found herself thinking back on her own history. “I am very proud of my degree from WPI. It has opened doors for me—more so than most mechanical engineers get,” she says. “I would be so proud to have him attend WPI.”

They have attempted to balance the Massachusetts state budget, explored the nuances of office culture and defense contracting, and ventured into the sugar-loaded universe of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. For Michael Melson and Michael Gesner—creators of MassBalance, Q'Bicles, and a variety of other titles—the world of videogame development has been sweet. So sweet—in carbohydrate terms—that they had to accept a vast batch of chocolate chip cookies as partial payment for the Charlie game. In the decade since meeting at WPI, they have already founded a company—Dragonfly—which joined forces a year ago with ImaginEngine, part of Foundation 9 Entertainment, the largest independent game developer in North America.

On a June afternoon, while the two are busy readying a Christmas game for the pre-release certification process, they take a break to discuss their lives and work. In a nondescript conference room at the Framingham, Mass., headquarters of ImaginEngine, Melson and Gesner trace the two very different paths that brought them together as schoolmates, business partners, and friends. Conversation flows easily between the two. They don’t quite finish each other’s sentences, but they share so many experiences that the mere mention of spice drops brings back memories of a game they named Crystallum.

“We were dealing with a design problem with a game,” Gesner says. “Mike called me up as he was eating spice drops.”

“I kept eating like-colored drops,” Melson explains, “but I wanted to maintain a balance. I found myself subconsciously grabbing the color I had the most of. I noticed what I was doing and thought we could turn that into a game.”

Gesner adds, “Sometimes the most inane things become a game.” To underscore his point, he mentions to SimCity, the urban planning hit that drew upon city management for its inspiration.

Both alumni journeyed far to meet at WPI, where Melson received his undergraduate degree in computer science in 2002 and his master’s in 2003, and Gesner was in the class of 2003 but left before finishing. Melson started out in Oregon City, Ore., a bright young student who “lettered in chess” but couldn’t afford a computer until high school, and took his first plane trip when he arrived at WPI for classes. Gesner, who lived in Hawaii, Virginia, and Colorado with his military family, received his first computer at the age of five, and at seven programmed a rudimentary game in which the user played against Michael Jordan shooting at increasingly higher hoops.

In college and beyond, Melson approached his field from the more technical, pragmatic aspect. “I was the visionary, the loudmouth,” says Gesner, who started WPI’s Game Development Club—which Melson later joined—and had a role in establishing the university’s Interactive Media and Game Development major. Introduced in 2005, IMGD was the first major of its kind in the United States.

Their professional lives really took off in the summer of 2003, when Gesner brought the MassBalance game with him to the Electronic Software Association summit in Washington, D.C. People in the industry told him he should start a game development company. The two friends eagerly followed that advice, launching into Q'Bicles, a fun journey into the minutiae of life in an office. Before long, they were involved in more offerings in the “serious” games category, too—such as JRTS MindRover, developed for Defense Acquisition University (an actual entity), which teaches people how to be government contractors. The biggest design obstacle there was sorting through DAU’s 600-page table of contents—just in the contract. A later application, Play the Case, was invented for the New England Journal of Medicine, allowing doctors to practice interacting with case studies. Another project, a

Whatever the game—whether it is casual or serious, aimed at federal workers or schoolchildren—Gesner and Melson ask one essential question: Is the game fun? "If it's fun, players will forgive a lot of flaws," Melson says. And if it's not fun, there's a very good chance players won't be interested. It need not have fancy graphics, although clearly the visual component has come a long way since the early 1970s, when Atari released the minimalist Pong as an arcade video simulation of a tennis match.

In nearly 30 years, games have become more complicated, users have become more sophisticated, and the industry has grown to encompass bigger companies, more applications and formats, and a greater range of audiences. Gesner and Melson look back fondly at the days when you would order a game from someone working out of a garage, who wrote the game, put it on a floppy disk, and stuck it in the mail. In many ways, Gesner believes, the profession hasn't matured from that garage development ethos. For one thing, a spirit of sharing has survived. At postmortems—which feature speakers and discussion groups and often sponsors—developers get together to look at past games and review what went well and what didn't. "The exchange of ideas is what helps our industry grow," Gesner says. "We are happy to share that information whenever possible."

All the thinking in the world does not guarantee success, however, as Melson and Gesner have discovered. "A lot of times, you don't know a game will be good until you make it," Melson says. Critical raves—such as those Q'Bicles received—do not necessarily translate into sales.

As for the stereotype of gamers as antisocial young men alone in their rooms, Melson and Gesner hold that it isn't true, and never was. Gesner says, "Gaming is a very socializing thing. Rock Band and Guitar Hero encourage people to sit in the same room and be social." He lists the many audiences that exist for games today—from musicians to soccer moms. "Everybody plays games now," Melson says. "There's no stigma attached."

At ImaginEngine, where Melson and Gesner are always happy to have WPI students as fellow employees or interns, the two are thinking of where this expanding universe of gamers might lead them. "The entrepreneurial spirit hasn't died," Gesner says. "We're using this time to develop relationships and skills, and become better managers. We wanted to pursue the creation of our own titles in a more stable environment." They have ideas for new games for health, a relatively recent category, as well as less serious enterprises. They never know when or where a new game concept will surface, but they are ready to work—and play.
Brand Name Design

By Joanne Silver

"I have worked for companies where I believed in the product. If you can find a way to delight consumers, you can generally be successful."

—Joe Dzialo
Selling jeans may not seem like rocket science, but that fact doesn’t keep Joseph Dzialo from turning to physics in his role as president of Lee. The 1976 graduate explains his logic: “The most valuable aspect of WPI is it helped grow rigorous thinking capability—a skill essential to success in any career endeavor. As one example, I still teach my folks about the physics law F=ma. We use it frequently in business life to create programs that are powerful, and we evaluate some based on their mass and our ability to bring them to life quickly.”

In the past three decades, Dzialo’s forces, mass, and acceleration have propelled products ranging from shoes to tampons to eyeglasses onto store shelves with a steadiness that has earned the respect of higher-ups at organizations including Procter & Gamble, where he worked for a dozen years, and his current employer, VF Corporation, the world’s largest apparel company.

Between an afternoon meeting in Boston’s Prudential Center and a flight back to Lee headquarters in Kansas, Dzialo has stopped at the Prudential’s food court to chat about the route that has taken an environmentalist civil engineering major deep into retail territory.

Youthful looking in jeans and a sports jacket, Dzialo sounds enthusiastic, even about products he handled years ago. He is as happy describing the inking process in designer Bounty paper towels as the mindset of middle-age women trying on jeans. Challenges—past, present, and future—captive him, and he offers recaps of some of his favorites.

Easy Spirit shoes, for instance. When he was named president of the company in the early 1990s, after working at Procter & Gamble and LensCrafters, Dzialo was eager to develop a shoe that would be both stylish and comfortable. That’s when the company turned to an unlikely source for inspiration. He says, “We knew that in New York City women would go to work in sneakers and carry their shoes in a plastic bag. We studied the NFL: How do these guys run into each other and not get hurt? We looked at cushioning systems—in helmets, in pads. We took cushioning technology, which was developed before I arrived there, and looked at ways to improve upon it and put it into footwear that was stylish.”

Sales soared. Dzialo’s career moved along nicely, as well. He tends to credit “lucky breaks” for his progress, although the breaks came from people with whom he had worked at previous companies, who were familiar with his dynamism and can-do approach. When he joined LCA-Vision in the late 1990s, he was so positive about their service, he had laser vision correction surgery himself. “I have worked for companies where I believed in the product,” he says. “If you can find a way to delight consumers, you can generally be successful.”

At LCA, he realized this objective required finding two groups of people: customers who would be receptive to having the vision-improving surgery, and top-of-the-line surgeons who would be drawn to the high standards of LCA. Dzialo outlines various steps taken to create a business model that would satisfy both groups, and shareholders, too. He estimates the stock price increased 30-fold, following the lows from post-Sept. 11.

If such achievements have veered far from the subject matter Dzialo pursued at WPI, they nevertheless connect to the education he values. “I remember my Major Qualifying Project with Joe D’Alelio and Rich Allen,” he observes. “We worked with Professor Fred Hart, studying the effluent from wastewater treatment plants and looking for ways to reduce the potential for creating chlorinated hydrocarbons. I don’t know why I still remember that project, as it wasn’t especially brilliant (though we did get an article about it published) and it really has nothing to do with life since WPI. But we managed to find ways to have fun during our classwork at WPI. Professor Hart was a pretty inspirational but clear-eyed guy. A good role model.”

Nowadays, it’s Dzialo who serves as the role model, leading teams on a different sort of quest: building a brand. “At Lee and everywhere else, too, being a multidimensional thinker is important,” he says, ticking off practical, analytical, strategic, and conceptual capabilities. “Lots of Aha! moments come when someone discovers a significant conceptual similarity between things, places, ideas, despite significant perceptual dissimilarities.” Such insights were needed when Dzialo came to Lee three years ago. "It had become kind of sleepy," he recalls. In his assessment, the product didn’t fit that well, didn’t look that good, and didn’t offer a favorable price-to-value ratio.

Dzialo goes on to plot out a path to achieving the goal of a great brand. “You really need to know and value your target customers,” he says. “Then build products that delight them at a price they find desirable. Then have a great back-and-forth dialogue with them. Then convince a retail partner to help distribute your product/service (if you’re a wholesaler). And do all this in a way that competition cannot easily duplicate. It’s that easy!”

There are two moments of truth when Dzialo wants to win over the consumer: when that person makes the decision to buy, and then, later on, when the customer chooses to use the product. To learn more about these pivotal times, Dzialo has gone one-on-one shopping with individuals, and has done what he calls “show me your closet.”

The enterprise has the sound of reality TV—retail style. For Dzialo, it’s just another facet of a professional life that clearly still excites him. Unfazed by the current financial climate, he declares, “The economy is punishing everyone, but especially the weak or faint of heart. It can be a great opportunity for us, done right. That is our goal at Lee.”

Looking back over his 33 years since WPI, he adds, “My career goals were and continue to be pretty simple: I want to be part of a winning team. I want to be where the action is. I want to be able to support my family and give back to my community. And I want to have fun along the way.”

Mission—so far—accomplished.
1940s

Correction: Frank Bodurtha ’42 lives in New London, N.H., not Connecticut, as was stated in the previous issue of Transformations.

Robert C. Taylor ’46 is now retired.

Sidney Madwed ’49 returned for Reunion and shared the following. “Sixty years out of Tech, I’ve found that the wisest investment I or anyone can make is health and happiness. I am now focused on sharing from my life experiences about this wisest of wise investments with others.”

1950s

Andrew Andersen ’51 lost his wife, Joan, on July 3, 2009. She was the sister of William Coffey ’58.

Philip Simon ’53 lives in Vista, Calif., with his wife, Patricia Ann. After retiring from IBM, he taught at National University in San Diego and now runs his own company, Simon Computer Information Systems.

Stanley Jorczak ’54 is a retired project manager.

Classmates mourned the loss of the wife of Donald Ross ’54. Phoe died unexpectedly on June 14, at their home in Newbury, N.H.

Wesley Wheeler ’54 continues as a marine consultant and shipyard representative for Blohm + Voss Repair.

Roger Tancrell ’56 is now retired.

Ronald Fuller ’57 has retired and plans to sell his home so he can enjoy his retirement.

Jim Alfieri ’59 is retired from a 50-year career in construction management. He and his wife, Janet, a retired physical therapist, have three children and one grandson. Jim runs marathons and half-marathons to raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Bob Allen ’59 began his career as a navy officer. He flew with the British Royal Navy, flew in Vietnam, had Pentagon duty, and served as commander at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base from 1983 to 1985. After retiring from the Navy he became an environmentalist for the state of Virginia. “I now play tennis, volunteer at church and with the Master Gardeners, travel, and walk our sheepdog. My greatest joys of life are my 47 years of marriage to my wife, Linda, and my daughter and son and five grandchildren.”

Don Kirk ’59 lives in Carmel, Calif., where he is involved in service activities and enjoys golf, hiking, and bike riding. “My wife and I spend summers at a small house at Lake Almanor,” he writes. “We have three daughters and, finally, one granddaughter.”

“Sixty years out of Tech, I’ve found that the wisest investment I or anyone can make is health and happiness.” — Sid Madwed ’49

1960s

Richard Brewster ’60 returned from his third trip to Africa in as many years as head technician for Mercy Ships. Since retirement he has served along with his wife, Susan, a nurse.

Kenneth Parker ’61 had a terrific party in December with about 10 other members of Phi Sigma Kappa in Providence. A great time was had by all.

Veikko Uotinen ’61 made a trip to Myanmar and Thailand this winter.

Jesse Erlich ’62, a partner in the law firm of Burns & Levinson LLP, of Boston, was once again named a Massachusetts Super Lawyer, representing the top five percent of New England attorneys. He was honored by the Federal Laboratory Consortium (FLC) with the 2008 Eastern Regional Outstanding Service Award and the 2009 FLC Technology Transfer National Outstanding Service Award.
Milton Meckler '54 commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing with a reflection on his involvement in mission. His 2000 article “Apollo 11 Moon Rocks Revisited” in ASHRAE Journal describes the challenges his firm surmounted in the race to prepare the Geology Clean Laboratory at the University of California, Santa Barbara, to receive and analyze lunar geologic samples collected by astronauts. Curt Carlson '67 took part in Tampa Bay Partnership’s Global Technology Leaders Roundtable, which was moderated by Len Polizotto '70, an interview with Ken Wadland '72, developer of the autorouting algorithms and database architecture for OrCAD’s PC-based PCB (printed circuit-board) schematic tool, appeared in EDN (Electronics Design, Strategy, News). In the “Arabius in the News” section of the Repeating Islands blogsite (repeatingislands.com) spotlighted the ongoing work of Ed Cheung '85 on NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope. Michael Zaramba '87, president of Altron, was profiled in the Washington Post. Mitch Sanders '88, founder and executive vice president of ECI Biotech, offered nontraditional financing advice to startups in Inside Finance. NBC Nightly News interviewed Starbucks senior vice president Michelle Gass '90 on competitive strategy in the restaurant industry’s “coffee wars.” Karen Tegan Padir '90 gave the keynote address at the 2009 MySQL Conference & Expo. Dave Andrade '92 highlighted WPI’s project-based curriculum in his Tech & Learning magazine blog for high-school teachers. Read more at wpi.edu/news/perspectives/techblog09.html. Lisa Sorgini '98, global director for municipal strategic marketing for Siemens Water Technologies, was interviewed by WaterWorld magazine. Medical Design magazine sought out Lisette Mannrique '03 for her views on the status of women in the medical device industry in an article called “Women engineers and execs speak out.” (She was also one of the female engineers featured in PBS’s “Engineer Your Life” campaign). An interview with Create a Comic founder John Baird '04 appeared in Carmine Magazine. The Grand News Community Newspaper covered his involvement in the 3rd annual Comic Making Tournament in New Haven, Conn.

Ronald Lemansky '63 is now retired. Tom Newman '64 is retired from Teradyne as vice president, corporate communications. Tom and his wife, Bonnie, live on Lake Winnipesaukee in New Hampshire. He looks forward to traveling in his retirement and continuing his WPI involvement as a member of the Annual Fund Board. Carl Youngman '64, chairman of Youngman & Charm, was recognized by Cambridge Who’s Who for career excellence. In addition to his work in investment management, he teaches entrepreneurship and business management at Babson College.

Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce CEO Richard Kennedy '65 took a stand on old-fashioned business cards in a Worcester Business Journal article called “Who Needs LinkedIn?” “My archaic system works for me,” he said.


Jerry Cronin '66 ('84 MBA) is now in the Worcester area looking to work part time and utilize his experience in motors, controls, PLCs, and control cabinet components. Contact him via alumniconnect.wpi.edu for details and resume.

Asok Shah '66 (MSEE) was appointed to the newly formed advisory board of Persistent Systems.

Curt Carlson '67 gave the 2008 commencement address at Stevens Institute of Technology, where he received an honorary doctor of engineering degree. Phillip Clark '67 ('72 MS) is president of Clark Patterson Lee, an architecture and engineering firm in Rochester, N.Y.

John Tureck '67 is now retired.

Michael DiPierro '68 was honored at Worcester’s annual Character Counts breakfast for his dedicated service as a Boy Scout trustee and board member. He is president and CEO of Baystone Corp. in Shrewsbury, Mass.

Robert Horansky '68 is now retired.

Cary Palulis '68 was promoted to vice president of lubricants for Harrison, N.Y.-based Chemlube International. “I am still based in Avon, Conn., where I live with my wife, Susan. Our daughter, Lauren, is now a second semester junior at Mount Holyoke.”

Joseph Stahl '69 is a professor of engineering at Holyoke College.

Paul Wolf '69 is semi-retired but still doing part-time traffic engineering. “I’ve spent the last two summers working at a summer camp for senior citizens in upstate New York, teaching computer skills and escorting the guests on field trips to museums, theatre productions, Tanglewood, etc.”

1970s

Anthony Ruscito '70 went to Costa Rica with his two oldest sons. He said it was “the best trip ever.” James Kaufman '71 recently gave laboratory safety training presentations in India, Bahrain, Germany, and Japan.

Former football captain Mike Santora '71 was inducted into the Grafton (Mass.) High School Hall of Fame. He is town engineer for Milford, Mass., a position he’s held for 25 years.

Stephen Siok '71 is retired from General Dynamics Electric Boat Division.

Neil Herring '72 works for Partners Healthcare Systems in Boston. His daughter, Kate, is a legislative aide for Alaska State Senator Hollis French.

Congratulations to Diane Gramer Drew '73, winner of the Women in Innovation Award for Large Business Innovation and Leadership from the Connecticut Technology Council. She is manager of thermo/aerodynamics at Hamilton Sunstrand in Windsor Locks, Conn.

Maryann (Bagdis) Goebel '73 joined Fiserv Inc. as executive vice president and CIO. She is based in the company’s Norcross, Ga., office.

Donald Kunz '73 is a principal engineer for Veeder Root Co. in Simsbury, Conn.
Bookshelf
Recent and new publications by WPI alumni, faculty, staff

Early Costa Mesa
by Mary Ellen and Art Goddard ’63 Arcadia Publishing Images of America Series

Vintage photographs document the history of three California farming communities that evolved into a modern “City of the Arts,” with world-class performance and retail centers. Art, who recently retired from Boeing Co., has lived in Costa Mesa with his wife, Mary Ellen, since 1977. Longtime members of the Costa Mesa Historical Society, they have assigned all royalties and proceeds from the book to the Society for the preservation and promotion of the city’s history.

My Italy. My Greece. Our Table.
by Elena Troia and Zino Vogiatzis ’81 Published by the authors

Zino Vogiatzis, a native of Athens, fell in love with the rich diversity of ethnic food in America when he first came to the U.S. as a WPI graduate student. Two decades of cooking and conversations with his Italian neighbor led to a series of popular cooking classes, and then to a cookbook that alternates Italian and Greek recipes based on similar ingredients and includes menu suggestions for complementary dishes. Zino, who holds an MBA from the University of Cincinnati, is a small business consultant and founder of Alexander Consulting. He lives in Maryland with his wife, C. Minje Martinez ’82.

Jinda Maige and the Bone of Evil
by Jack Speight ’84 CreateSpace

Jinda Maige came to life in Jack Speight’s mind during the off season from his job as owner and operator of the Robbins Motel in Bar Harbor, Maine. In the first book of the fantasy series, Jinda—a one-eyed, one-eared tempest on one foot—sets out on a quest to retrieve four magical bones, accompanied by an arrogant teenager who may or may not possess the requisite power to bring the bones together. Fast-paced storytelling (with some gruesome details) and compelling characters quickly snare readers’ attention. Speight is already at work on the second book in the series.

Beverage Industry Microfiltration
by Nathan Starbard ’03 Wiley-Blackwell

In this unique guidebook specifically geared to the beverage industry, Starbard provides a wealth of information on all sectors of the market, including the wine, beer, bottled water, spirits, dairy, soft drinks, sports drinks, and juice industries. As Millipore Corp.’s manager for the North American beverage market, he helps commercial customers optimize all applications of their filtration technology operations. He previously worked for E. & J. Gallo Winery.

Richard Sliwowski ’73 is director of the Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of General Services. He was selected to judge the 2008 Best of the Best Awards for Engineering and News Record magazine.

ME Professor Holly (Keyes) Ault ’74 was celebrated as a 2009 Woman of Strength at WPI.

WPI alumni are reducing the carbon footprint and maximizing the Commonwealth’s education budget at UMass Amherst.

John Mathews ’74 (pictured), assistant director of facilities and campus planning, served as project manager on the university’s recently completed Central Heating Plant. Pat Daly ’73, director of physical plant, is responsible for powering the Amherst campus—essentially a city of 30,000. The innovative combined heat and power energy center, which replaces a 60-year-old coal plant, won a Pacesetter award from Combined Cycle Journal, and was featured on WGBH-TV’s “Making It Here.”

Stephen Page ’74, shareholder in the firm of Page, Mrochek, Fitzgerald & Rose, was named in the Intellectual Property and Commercial Litigation categories of the 2008 edition of “The Best Lawyers in America.”

Peter Thacher ’74 is based in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, where he plans capital projects for Saudi Aramco. He has enjoyed sailing the Arabian Gulf in his Hobie 17, skiing in Courchevel, France, and renovating his wife’s house in Spain. “Anyone from WPI who passes through the Middle East is most welcome,” he writes.

Bill (Wilson) Dobson ’75 (right, with wife, Lynn) and Amy Schneider ’77 (with husband, Ed Scicliore) report reuniting after more than 30 years. “We found each other on WPI’s AlumniConnect site. We arranged a get together with our spouses about a year ago, and since then our families have been getting together regularly for dinners,” she writes.
dancing, and theatre events. We’re still catching up on 30 years of personal history. If you want to learn more about what we have been up to, check out our profiles at alumnicommunity.wpi.edu.”

Harrington Group executive vice president James Rucci ’75 celebrated 20 years with the firm this year.

Kenneth Fox ’77 works for NextEra Energy in Seabrook, N.H.

Barry Hamilton ’77 writes, “I am now open to suggestions in my career, as a Nantucket Yankee living in Exeter, England, as well as Alva, Fla. My background can be found at TechDoctor.com. I sure miss WPI and teaching!”

Kenneth Steinhardt ’78 is the vice president and chief technical officer for customer operations at EMC Corporation in Hopkinton, Mass.

Richard Buckley ’81 received the 2009 Harris Fellow Award from his employer, Harris Corp. A 25-year veteran of the RF Communications Division in Rochester, N.Y., he was honored for his multiband radio communications designs.

Kristi Thompson ’81 celebrated 10 years in business as owner/principal of Sierra Associates (kristithompson.com). Her daughter is now a freshman at Union College.

William Fay ’83 is president of Swift River Hydro Operations in Willbraham, Mass.

Bob Marcotte ’83 is operations manager and concept developer for Marcotte Creative Media.

Both Class of ’83, Kenneth and Dale (DeLibero) Webber’s oldest son, Kenny, is a junior MIS major at Cedarville University in Ohio. Their youngest son, Danny, is attending Belmont University in the fall as an economics major.

Mary (Farren) McDonald ’79 will keynote the NOSHCON’09 conference in South Africa, focusing on Occupational Health and Safety. “I am thrilled to accept this invitation, and can’t wait to go to Natall! My talk will be on ‘Integrating Management Standards for More Agile Implementations (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001).’”

1980s

Theresa (Metcalf) Catanach ’80 writes, “Our younger daughter was married in May 2008, and it was a great opportunity for dear friends to gather. From left, Wally Catanach ’79, Theresa, Michael Curry ’80, with Maggie (O’Keefe) ’80 and Art Huggerd ’80.

Karen Brock Amaoh ’84 is sales and marketing manager for IPS Corporation’s Weld-On structural adhesives.

Sharon (Keyes) Barrett ’84 is enjoying participating in WPI’s Women’s Industry Network. She is married to Kevin Barrett ’83.

Bob Korkuc ’84 returned to campus to sign copies of his book, Finding a Fallen Hero.

Jim Melvin ’84 is president and chief marketing officer for Apparent Networks in Wellesley Hills, Mass.

Josh Reed ’84 lives in Burlington County, N.J., with his wife, Karen, and their two daughters, Kirsten and Hannah. “We all had a great time at Reunion 2009 and look forward to coming back for the 30th.”

Jennifer Udall Roy ’84 and Steven Roy ’83 are the proud new owners of a horse. Steven is now working at BAE Systems.

Gail Anderson Tenney ’85 is a software release manager for IBM National Software. Her husband, Douglas Tenney ’86, is a senior development engineer with Smith and Nephew in Andover, Mass.

Life and Career by Design

Design is a visual word. I see visions of blueprints, drawings, and plans. It’s a concrete object, a concept, a strategy. What design doesn’t immediately invoke is its potential application to life. We didn’t design our family origins, our natural aptitudes or deficiencies, or the unexpected events that occurred as we have lived and grown. Surely, we can look back and boast about some personal design elements, which I like to call 20/20 Design Sight. It’s our ability to discern, with a fair measure of visual acuity, where we applied the brush strokes of design. For most of us, the most relevant application is career.

Designing one’s career may seem a luxury during these difficult times. But you can take control of your design strategy by reflecting on your work to determine if the weight of your time on the activities you truly enjoy is properly balanced with your other obligations. Take a look at your career thus far—when you were most happy? What were you doing? What projects or accomplishments were the most fun and exciting? What does your 20/20 Design Sight Analysis tell you? And if you could apply a computer-aided design tool, how would you re-draw your career path?

How many times have you heard someone say that their career was the result of luck? If you probe further, you’ll often find that the element of luck is intersected with a persistent sense of purpose, a site plan. What is your positioning for the future—your 20/20 Design Site Plan? If you could throw caution to the wind and start over, where would you go? It’s your design to create—have at it.

Pick an entirely different environment and imagine how you would bring out your designated capabilities in a completely new world. And then, with a pinch of luck and a dose of happenstance, imagine how much impact a career by design might have in contributing to a life by design after all.

If you wish to explore the elements of your design, you are invited to contact the Career Development Center for an in-person or phone appointment at 508-831-5260 or cdcalumni@wpi.edu.

Contact Connie at cdcalumni@wpi.edu
Edward Childs ‘86, a portfolio services associate with Back Bay Financial Group in Boston earned his certified financial planner designation.

John Jezowski ‘86, a financial advisor for Merrill Lynch Global Wealth Management, was elected chair of the Board of Trustees for Easter Seals Greater Hartford Rehabilitation Center.

Mark Matulaitis ‘86 is a hardware design engineer for Tritel in Hudson, Mass.

Kathy Notarianni ‘86 was named 2009 Outstanding Alumna by St. Mary Academy-Bay View. As the academy’s first graduate to attend WPI, she paved the way for other young women to choose careers in science and engineering.

Andrew Schwarz ‘86 works for Supply Frame Inc. in McKinney, Texas.

Jeffrey Bloom ‘87 joined Dialogic Media Labs as director, video technologies, in the company’s Eatontown, N.J., research headquarters.

Curt Duffy ‘87 is an adjunct instructor at LA Pierce College. He recently published a short story on storyglossia.com titled “Hobblescrotch.”

Bill McCullen ‘87 is director of Launch Capital’s Boston office.

Dave Partridge ‘87 was promoted to associate at Tighe & Bond in Westfield, Mass.

Suzanne (Lewis) Pisano ‘87 joined Geo-Insight Inc. as a senior associate/compliance specialist in the Westford, Mass., office.

Brian Teague ‘87 was named a shareholder in the Richmond, Va., intellectual property law firm of Thomas, Raring & Teague, PC.

Richard Davis ‘88 (MS) took office as president of SFPE for 2009. He is assistant vice president and senior engineering technical specialist at FM Global.

Joseph Fitzgerald ‘88 works at Cambridge Technology.

Praxair Inc. named Larry Megan ‘88 a corporate fellow in its industrial gases research and development organization.

Joseph Tracy ‘88 was promoted to president of Travelers Inland Maine, where he has worked since 2006.

Donna DeFreitas ‘89 is a senior associate with Genesis Engineers in Pennsylvania.

Daniel Ericson ‘89 (MS EE) is principal technologist for M/A-Com.

Heidi Franklin ‘89 is a marine researcher at the University of Maine.

Jeff Goldmeer ‘89 and his oldest sons, Ezra, 12, and Eitan, 8, received their second-degree black belts in Tae Kwon Do in May. On the day of testing, the three Goldmeers broke four bricks and 22 wood boards. “The good news,” notes Jeff, “…no broken bones!”

When you link business, technology, and innovation, something powerful happens.

WE CALL IT SUCCESS.

Today, businesses around the world face unprecedented challenges. More and more, they are hiring WPI MBAs to turn these challenges into opportunities. They have learned that our graduates possess the rare ability to approach opportunities from new angles, develop innovative solutions, and move organizations boldly forward.

Visit our website to learn more about our highly ranked MBA program.

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THE DOLAN CHALLENGE

Your gift makes an even greater impact

Trustee Mike Dolan '75 is challenging WPI alumni from the last 20 years (1990–2009) to support WPI's innovative approach to science and engineering education. He will match (50 cents on the dollar) gifts to the Annual Fund of at least $100, now through June 30, 2010.

When you give to the WPI Annual Fund, you demonstrate your belief in your alma mater and its noble mission—to educate the next generation of leaders in science and engineering and to create positive change in the world through the purposeful application of engineering, science, and technology.

Your participation in the Annual Fund helps make WPI a world-class experience for students and faculty.

Take advantage of the Dolan Challenge today: wpi.imodules.com/dolan

Fran Hoey '89, senior vice president of Tighe & Bond, has become a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited professional.

Rebecca Hutnak Berchem is a senior systems engineer with Raytheon NCS and is married to David Berchem '06 (MS).

Julie Bolton was appointed vice president of risk services for Zurich Canada, part of the Zurich Financial Services Group.

Christopher MacGregor works for Amazon.com.

Scott Manchuso works in client development for Boston-based Circles Inc.

Michael Pace is an associate vice president of investments for Wells Fargo Advisors.

Patrick Welge became president of Controx Cutting tools in Springfield, Ohio, in May.

Richard Willet is president and CEO of NewPage Corp. in Miamisburg, Ohio.

1990

Jason Kallio, a self-described "edutainer," entertains schoolchildren with his magic act while educating them about serious subjects, such as bullying. His business, "Say it With Magic," is based in Sutton, Mass. See Jason in performance in the News section of WPI's alumni site, wpi.edu/alumni.

Suzanne (Mador) Sturm and her husband, Jeff, live in Waterford, Conn. Sue left her job at Millstone Nuclear Power Station six years ago and now stays at home raising their five daughters. "Yes, five daughters, you read that correctly!" she writes. "We are looking forward to someday filling our own four-woman boat, plus coxswain."

1991

Concetta DePaolo and her husband, David Rader, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Abigail Marie, on Feb. 10, 2009. Abby joins big sister Megan, who is now 6.

Cosme Furlong (MS, '99 PhD) was promoted to associate professor of mechanical engineering and awarded tenure. He joined the WPI faculty in 1999.

Jeff Mathieu has been working for Tetra Tech, Inc. in Santa Maria, Calif., for 11 years. He has also been an instructing Pollution Prevention at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, for the past seven years.

Ellen (Madigan) Newman and her husband, Ben, are excited to announce the birth of their first child, Riley Elizabeth, on Jan. 8, 2009. They live in East Cambridge, Mass. Ellen works for the Stop & Shop Supermarket Company headquarters in Quincy as director of organizational development.

David Rostcheck works for Brinks Inc.

1992

After 12 years of corporate and foundation fundraising for WPI, Terry Schmidt Adams has become WPI's K-12 outreach program manager. She, her husband, and their 8-year-old son live in Douglas, Mass.

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Christopher Cyr and his wife, Heather, are pleased to announce that their 4-year-old son, Nolan, became a proud big brother to Elliot, who arrived in October 2008.

Aline (Sangrey) and Kevin Davis are the proud parents of twins, Rachel and Hope, born in 2006, and a son, Nathan, born in September 2008.

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Ashton Kane works for Westside Animal Hospital in New Hampshire.

1994
Jason Johnson is production manager at Karl Storz Corporation in Charlton, Mass.

1995
Tom Dube joined J. M. Coull in Maynard, Mass., as vice president of the company's pre-construction group.

Yin-Ying Lu and Nicholas Sushkin '98 are the proud parents of Nathaniel, 5, and Maya, 1.

Jeff Mullen and his wife, Kerry, are proud to announce the birth of their second child, Olivia Ann, born Jan. 9, 2009. She joins a very excited big sister, Julia, age 4.

Michelle (Bruneau) Atchison is a global trial leader in Pennsylvania. She and her husband celebrated the arrival of their second child, a boy, last year.

Weston Clarke is a software engineer with Sepaton Inc. in Marlborough, Mass.

Sameer Junaid is a clinical neurophysiologist for Surgical Monitoring Associates.

1996
Michelle (Bruneau) Atchison is a global trial leader in Pennsylvania. She and her husband celebrated the arrival of their second child, a boy, last year.

1998
Douglas Cloutier is demand manager for The Timken Company.

Matthew Johnson and Melissa Clark '99 welcomed a son, Shane, in October 2008.

Jeremy Johnstone is happily tweeting, blogging, and enjoying life in Maryland.

Prudence (Martin) and Aaron Jones welcomed a baby boy, Quinton Connor, in August 2007. They live in Portland, Maine.

Ichiro Lambe is president of Dejobaan Games. He returned to WPI last year to teach a master class in WPI's Interactive Media and Game Development (IMGD) program last year. He shared his enthusiasm for his career with students in a presentation called "Make the Most Happy Game in the Whole World," noting that he aspires to become the Walt Disney of the game world.

Eduardo Oliveira is a senior applications engineer for Vicor Corp. in Andover, Mass.

Nilufer (Saltuk) Soucek and her husband, Paul, welcomed their first child, Sofia Emine, on Jan. 25, 2009.

1999
Family and friends gathered to witness the marriage of Leigh Anderson to Michael Cooke on July 26, 2008. The couple honeymooned in Stowe, VT., and currently resides in Perth Amboy, N.J. Leigh is completing a dietetic internship through the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Janet Burge received an NSF CAREER grant for her research on a Rational Management System to capture design decisions during software development. She is a computer science professor at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Read about Janet’s work with CS professor Dave Brown.

Homecoming 2009
BACK TO TECH
OCTOBER 30–31
Mark your calendars now! All alumni are welcome to attend Homecoming 2009.

Reunion activities are planned for these classes: 1994, 2004, and 2009
New Faces in Development/Alumni Relations

Aubrey Valley, associate director of alumni relations, is leading WPI’s Alumni Chapter and Club and the Graduates of the Last Decade programs. She also coordinates Homecoming, annual events at Tanglewood and the Boston Museum of Science, and on-campus events geared toward alumni families. She also oversees the online presence for the Alumni Relations Office. Valley brings to WPI strong marketing and communications expertise. Most recently, she served as a marketing communications professional at Hyperionics Corp. in Hudson, Mass., and has held numerous positions in higher education including Nichols College, Suffolk University, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Audrey Klein-Leach, executive director of planned giving, directs efforts to strengthen and grow the university’s planned giving program. She works with WPI alumni and friends who are interested in giving to the university through a deferred gift, such as a bequest, Charitable Gift Annuity, and Charitable Remainder or Lead Trust. She also advises staff and volunteers regarding deferred gift options. Klein-Leach has extensive experience as a trust officer and development professional. Prior to joining WPI, she was vice president and trust officer at U.S. Trust/Bank of America Private Wealth Management in Worcester, she was also the first full-time development and communications officer at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. In addition, she has held development positions at Concord Academy in Concord, Mass., and The Nature Conservancy.

Maria Mike-Mayer, executive director of corporate and foundation relations, is responsible for planning and implementing a comprehensive engagement strategy for corporations and foundations. Working closely with senior administrators and faculty, she will promote substantive interactions with industry and philanthropic agencies to secure resources for WPI and establish long-term, productive relationships. Mike-Mayer comes to WPI with expertise in both corporate grant-making and development. At Tufts Medical Center in Boston, she established a new and successful corporate and foundation relations unit. Prior to that, she served as director of corporate and foundation relations at Boston College, and director of corporate relations and interim director of foundation relations at Yale University. She gained firsthand knowledge of foundations while managing Texaco Inc.’s worldwide corporate contributions program, but was also secretary of the Texaco Foundation. Through a program that loaned the expertise of Texaco executives to United Way, Mike-Mayer spent three months in Europe establishing United Way of Hungary, a rewarding experience that motivated her career change to the nonprofit sector.

James and Gisela (Field) Carlson welcomed a son, Benjamin, in November 2008.

Jennifer Copponi is a structural engineer at Ocean and Coastal Consultants in Massachusetts.

Major Matt Poisson graduated from the Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB, Calif. He is the third WPI alumnus to complete the course in the past three years. He was also recently promoted to major and will be spending the next three years in Southern California, where he will be flight testing new weapons and systems integration on F-16 aircraft.

2000

Brittany (Noga) and Eugene Campbell ’01 welcomed a son, Cole Raleigh, in July 2008.

David Maxson is a senior investment officer at ACCION International.

2001

Alex Knapp writes for “Outside the Beltway,” an online political journal. A graduate of the University of Kansas School of Law, he is a self-described political, philosophic, and pop culture junkie.

Jennifer Headman Van Vleet completed her PhD in microbiology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in April 2009 and relocated to Visalia, Calif. In her second promotion in a year, Michael Quigley has been named a principal of WB Engineers Consultants.

2002

Michael Dorval married Nadia Saleh, Oct. 11, 2008. He is a fire protection engineer with ESPN in Bristol, Conn.

Brian LaPlume is an electrical and systems engineer for Raytheon in San Jose, Calif.

Gosia Machate was named a New Face of Engineering by the National Engineering Week Foundation. Nominated by ASME, she works for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, R.I.

2003

Caitlin Callaghan (MS, ’06 PhD) received the degrees of juris doctor and master of environmental law and policy from Vermont Law School in May. She will be working for the American Association for the Advancement of Science as a science and technology fellow at the U.S. EPA Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation.

Edward SaiChung Lo is a test engineer with Draper Labs in Cambridge, Mass.

2004

John Chrzanowski has a new home in Marlborough, Mass., and is newly married.

Tom Daly and Jeremy Hitchcock’s company, Dynamic Network Services Inc. of Manchester, N.H., released its new global server load balancing system, Dynect Traffic Management.

Adam Flaherty is an instructor pilot with the U.S. Air Force in Columbus.

Andrew Freeman is a software engineer with Aastar Telecom USA.

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Sarah Belfy Koniers received her VMD from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine in May. She will be working with VCA Northside Animal Hospital in Bethlehem, Pa.

Andrew Mellors is a software developer at BMC Software in Lexington, Mass.

Michael Orrel and Nicole McMahon had a healthy baby boy recently.

Elisa Rodriguez is a lab manager and research assistant with Carient Therapeutics in New Haven, Conn.

Daniel Rucci is a software engineer at IBM in Boston, Mass.

Jillian (O’Toole) and John Urban ‘03 welcomed a son, Quinn Thomas, in August 2008.

2005

Hunter Bennett-Daggett joined Weston & Sampson in Portsmouth, N.H.

Matthew Chowaniec and Jessica Blanchette ‘07 were married Oct. 11, 2008. Matthew is a biomedical engineer for Covidien, and Jessica works for Avefion, monitoring clinical trials. They live in Middletown, Conn.

Jack Coyne is an electrical engineer with Stoneridge Technology in Maryland.

The marriage ceremony on Oct. 17, 2008, of Sean Hoey and Elizabeth Szafarowicz ‘06 included classmates Rebecca (Nacewicz) Hallinan, Angela Martino, and Gilead Zieba in the wedding party. They currently reside in Franklin, Mass. Sean is a project superintendent with Northern Construction, and Elizabeth is a project engineer with Gale Associates Inc.


Jonathan Meredith is president of Meredith Enterprises Management in Melrose, Mass.

Marek Twarog is an independent consultant with Plymouth Rock Assurance Co.

2006

Bardio Alavi works for Cisco.

Air Force 1st Lt. Rebecca Casey was named 50th Space Wing and Team Schriever Company Grade Officer of the Year for 2008. She is chief of military strategic and tactical relay operations, weapons, and tactics.

Lieutenant [jg] Matthew C. Currid was recently designated a naval flight officer. He received his "Wings of Gold" after completing the Advanced Jet Navigation Course with Training Squadron 21, Naval Air Station, Kingsville, Texas.

Michael Lundy works in the Robotics Division of NASA in California.

Jason Overson is thrilled with the purchase of his new condo in Manchester, N.H.

Daniel Pickett and Shannon Smith were married May 23, 2009.

Daniel Torrey works in tech support with Hewlett-Packard in Spain.

2007

Jessica Clark is an analyst with IMPAQT. She is recently engaged to be married.

Timothy Connor is a business systems analyst with Mass Mutual Life Insurance Co.

Tarra Epstein and Paul Marchetti ’05 are engaged and plan to marry in September 2009.

Batsirai Mutetwa is soon moving to London to join her fiancé, Taku Mutasa, whose family has been close friends with hers for generations. Batz recently completed a master’s degree in epidemiology and intends to pursue a medical degree in England.

Suzanne Peyer, a civil engineer in Woburn, Mass., Office of GEI Consultants, recently passed the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) exam for accreditation.

Jessica Rosewitz just got back from Singapore.

Larry Sartoris has spent the last few years working at Raytheon in California. He was married in October 2007.

2008

David Beal is a civil engineer with Vanasse Daylor in Fort Myers, Fla.

Catherine Casey is a graduate student at Dartmouth College.

2nd Lt. Kyle Dedmon is stationed in Georgia.

Eric DeLuca is an application engineer at ITW Devcon in Danvers, Mass.

Timothy Ebner is an R&D engineer with Covidien in New Haven, Conn.

Ryan Graves completed Naval Officer Training School and was commissioned with the rank of ensign. He is continuing naval aviation training in Pensacola, Fla.

Robert Groezinger is a process consultant with OMKT, LLC.

Ryan Hollister is a system engineer with Hamilton Sunstrand Corp. in Connecticut.

Jennifer Hosker works at FCI in New Hampshire.

Hai Ling is an analyst at Sunlight Financial.

Marty Maccaberti received a master’s in mechanical engineering from WPI in May 2009 and starts work at GE in the fall.

Paul Moran is back at WPI as a grad student.


Lee Pappas works for Gilbane Building Co. in Providence, R.I.

Vincent Ran is an associate product developer at Atrium Medical Corp. in Hudson, Mass.

Michael Richard stayed on at WPI to earn his master’s in civil engineering through the BS/MS program. He was a TA in the CE department and graduated in May 2009. He will spend the next three years at the University of Pittsburgh to get his PhD in CE.

Sean Waithe is working at Immedia in Worcester.

James Yasuhara is a design engineer for Linear Technologies in Grass Valley, Calif.

In the spirit of WPI by Design we’ve redesigned Class Notes

What do you think?

transformations@wpi.edu
OBITUARIES


Philip J. Foster ‘35 (Alpha Tau Omega) of Eliot, Maine, died Nov. 20, 2008. He worked for Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co. and was a certified financial planner. Predeceased by his wife, Doris (Loehrl) Foster, he leaves two children.

Alfred C. Ekberg ‘36 (Phi Sigma Kappa) of Indianapolis, Ind., died March 12, 2009. He leaves his wife of 22 years, Leslie (Shippey), and a stepdaughter. He was retired from Adams Machinery.


Lucian T. Allen ‘38 (Phi Gamma Delta), former owner of Rockport Marine in Maine, died April 6, 2008. Predeceased by his wife, Norma, he leaves four children.

Norman C. Coffin ‘38 of Melbourne, Fla., died Dec. 3, 2008. He was retired from Allied Chemical Co. Survivors include his wife, Norma, and his two children by his first wife, Jean.

Richard J. Donovan ‘38 of Winchester, Mass., died July 11, 2008. He leaves his wife, Sally (Mittiga), and two children. He founded Richard J. Donovan Inc., a design and construction firm.

William D. Holcomb ‘38 (Phi Gamma Delta) of Lake Forest, Ill., died Feb. 27, 2009. He was the founder, president, and later chairman of Homaco Inc. (now part of Wiremold), which grew to more than 200 employees. Holcomb leaves his wife, Beulah, and a son.


Henry M. Ritz ‘38, retired president, treasurer, and CEO of R & R Plumbing, Worcester, died Feb. 4, 2007. Known to classmates as “Big Ritz,” he was the cousin of Francis “Little Ritz” ‘38, who died last year. He leaves his wife, Roslyn (Schott), and three children.

John W. Sutcliffe ‘38 of Harrisville, N.H., died Dec. 10, 2008. He leaves his wife, Margaret (Getchell), and a daughter. He was a retired project engineer for Engineering Services Co.

Eugene L. Grovlin ‘39 (Phi Kappa Theta) of Peoria, Ariz., died Sept. 25, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Ella (Dunn), and three children. He was retired from Knapp Shoe Co. as vice president of the Safety Shoe Division.

William F. Payne ‘39 of St. Augustine, Fla., died March 27, 2008. He leaves his wife, Shirley, and two children. He was predeceased by two sons. Payne was retired from the former Singer-Kearfott Corp. as a navigation systems engineer.

George F. George ‘41 of Hillisboro Beach, Fla., died May 26, 2008. He leaves his wife, Mae (Kouri), and two sons. He was predeceased by a son. After working in the electronics industry, he founded George Associates Real Estate Development Co.

Arthur H. Allen ‘42 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Hopedale, Mass., died Oct. 28, 2008. Husband of the late Barbara (Lee), he is survived by two daughters. He was retired from a 25-year career with Draper Corp.

John M. Bartlett ‘42 (Lambda Chi Alpha) died Dec. 24, 2008. Predeceased by his wife, Genevieve (Mitchell), he leaves two sons and a daughter. Bartlett joined the Navy after graduation and served in the Naval Reserve as a captain until 1980. He retired from Precision Kidde Steel Co. and founded Bartlett Engineering.

Mitchell Lerer ‘42 (Alpha Epsilon Pi) died May 9, 2009. He leaves his wife, Phyllis (Yovner), and a daughter. He was founder of Belvidere Wine Co. in Lowell, Mass.

Francis J. Oneglia ‘42 of Harwinton, Conn., and West Palm Beach, Fla., died Nov. 26, 2008. He was the retired president of O & G Industries, the diversified construction company co-founded by his father in 1923. Survivors include his wife, Louisa (DaRoss), and two sons. Oneglia was a 1992 recipient of the Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement and a member of the WPI Athletic Hall of Fame.

Gordon H. Raymond ‘42 of Southington, Conn., died Dec. 9, 2008. A loyal member of Phi Sigma Kappa, he took pride in the fact that the fraternity house telephone was listed in his name many years after he left WPI. His survivors include his wife, Shirley (Erickson), and two daughters. Raymond was the retired vice president of engineering for the Electrolux Vacuum plant in Greenwich, Conn.

Philip J. Walker ‘42 (Theta Chi) of Harrisburg, Pa., died Aug. 16, 2008. He leaves his wife, Helen, and three children. Walker was retired from AMP Inc. as a design engineer.

Samuel W. Williams ‘42 (Alpha Tau Omega) of Manlius, N.Y., died July 23, 2008, leaving his wife, Linda (Vonning), and two children. He was the retired chairman and director of O’Brien & Gere.

Robert E. Gordon ‘43 died Nov. 15, 2008, at his home in Easthampton, Mass. He was retired from Monsanto Co. Predeceased by his wife, Eunice, he leaves two children.

Chester E. Holmlund ‘43 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Brevard, N.C., died Sept. 29, 2008. He leaves his wife, Kay, and two children. He was a retired chemistry professor at the University of Maryland.

Arthur L. Lindroos ‘43 ‘44 MS) of Sandwich, Mass., died May 29, 2008. He earned a doctorate in chemical engineering from Yale University and specialized in research and development of pharmaceuticals and plastics. He retired as director of engineering for Beesfoods. His wife, Helen (Nieminen), and four children survive him.

Albert J. Platt ‘43 of Framingham, Mass., died Sept. 5, 2008. He was retired from The Richie Organization, Architects and Engineers, as vice president. Survivors include his wife, Alice (Wood), and two children.


Nicholas N. Economou ‘44 (Alpha Tau Omega) of Rogersville, Mo., died Feb. 5, 2008. He leaves his wife, Eleanor (Foley) and five children. He was the retired owner of Western Road Machinery Co.
OBITUARIES

Richard G. Holden '44 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Newark, N.J., died Dec. 21, 2008. He was an electrical engineer for the former Singer-Kearfott Corp. Predeceased by his wife, Hedwig (Berthold), he leaves four children.

John W. Fondahl '45 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Los Altos Hills, Calif., died Sept. 13, 2008, leaving his wife, Doris-Jane (Plisker), and three children. He joined the civil engineering faculty of Stanford University in 1955 and retired as professor emeritus.

Robert W. Lotz '45 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Darien, Conn., died Aug. 19, 2008. He leaves his wife, Betty (Borgeson), and two children. He was retired as RND engineer for Printing Developments, a subsidiary of Time-Warner.

Robert E. Powers '45 of Red Bank, N.J., died Sept. 7, 2008. He leaves his wife, Helen (Spirkowyc), and a son. He worked for Bell Labs and Western Electric.

John Lorenz '46 of Cincinnati, Ohio, died March 25, 2008. A former quality control engineer for General Electric Co., he is survived by his wife, Mildred (Clark), and five children.

Former Alpha Tau Omega president Robert C. Manahan '46 of Hudson, Fla., died Sept. 8, 2008. He was a long-time manager for Johns Manville. Predeceased by his first wife, Mary Jo, in 1982, he leaves his wife, Connie (Wakenshaw), and eight children.

Albert H. Rawdon '46 ('47 MSME) (Phi Sigma Kappa) of Kingston, Mass., died Nov. 19, 2008. He leaves his wife, Constance (Paul), and two children. He was retired from Riley Stoker Corp., where he served as director of research and development.

Charles M. Richardson '46 (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) of South Setauket, N.Y., died March 13, 2008. Predeceased by his wife, Mildred, he is survived by three children. He retired from UNISYS Corp. and founded The Literacy Council to advocate for efficient methods for teaching reading and writing.

Andrew T. Goettman '47 of Benson, N.C., died Nov. 16, 2008. An electrical engineer, he taught, worked in private practice, and later retired from Lorillard Corp. His wife, Dorothy, and four children survive him.

Teddy J. Morawski '47 of Cary, N.C., Pre-deceased by his wife, Lorraine (Trask), he leaves two children. After 30 years with the Federal Highway Administration he retired as division engineer for the state of North Carolina.

Frederick A. "Mike" Curtis Jr. '48 of Fort Worth, Texas, died May 1, 2008. He was retired from General Dynamics, Fort Worth Division, as vice president of special assignments. His first wife, Constance (Rheume), died in 1987. He was also predeceased by a daughter. He is survived by his wife, Rose (Miller), two sons and a stepdaughter.

William S. Dorman Sr. '48 (Phi Kappa Theta) of Tulsa, Okla., died Oct. 27, 2008. A patent attorney, he also served as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Tulsa. Survivors include his five children.

Norman M. French '48 of West Boylston, Mass., died Jan. 7, 2009. He leaves his wife of 20 years, Gail (Flagg), three children, and three stepchildren. His first wife, Anne (Swicker) died in 1982. He was also predeceased by a stepson. French was retired from Applied Plastics as a quality & manufacturing engineer.

Carroll B. Church '49 (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) of San Jose, Calif., died July 14, 2008. He leaves his wife, Peggy (Pellerin), and a son. He worked for the Santa Clara Valley Water District for 30 years.


Gordon G. Duncan '49 of North Palm Beach, Fla., died April 12, 2008. He leaves his wife, Judith, and two children. Duncan retired from Pratt & Whitney Aircraft after 28 years of service.

Donald G. Weikman '49 (Phi Gamma Delta) of Katy, Texas, died Sept. 8, 2008. He was a retired vice president of Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co. He leaves his wife, Suzanne, and three children.

Louis J. Bauer '50 (Phi Kappa Theta) of Port Richey, Fla., died Jan. 27, 2009. He was retired after a 33-year career with Norton Co. His wife, Rosemary, and five children survive him.

Stanley Friedman '50 (Alpha Epsilon Pi, Skull) of Ventura, Calif., died March 9, 2008. He leaves his wife, Sharon, and three children. He was the retired vice president of ITT Industries Inc.

Former Class Board president Daniel J. Harrington Jr. '50 (Sigma Alpha Epsilon), died Dec. 29, 2008. He was the retired president of Sunnyside Motor Co. in Holden, Mass. He leaves his wife, Ann (Oliver), and three children.

R. Ross Chapin Jr. '50 (Phi Sigma Kappa) of Readington Township, N.J., died Oct. 4, 2008. He leaves his wife, Phyllis (Spoonier), and three children. He was retired from Beecham Laboratories as a chemical engineer.

Laurent C. Jutras '51 (Alpha Tau Omega) of Amesbury, Mass., died Sept. 21, 2008. A meter reader and lineman...
in his college years, he spent almost four decades with New England Power Services, retiring as a division manager. His wife, Leona (Ouellette), and seven children survive him.

Robert E. Baker ‘52 (Phi Sigma Kappa) died April 6, 2008. He leaves his wife, Evelyn (Sutari), and three children. A graduate of Tufts Dental School, he lived and practiced in Marblehead, Mass., for almost 50 years.


Bruce S. Campbell ‘52 (Sigma Phi Epsilon) of Livingston, La., died Dec. 19, 2008. He leaves his wife, Joy, two children, and six stepchildren. He was predeceased by a daughter. Campbell was a mechanical engineer who specialized in construction of commercial and heavy industrial projects.

Robert C. Henegan ‘52 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Margate, Fla., died Nov. 21, 2008. He was an electrolytic engineer and production manager for General Instrument Corp. He leaves his wife, Ruth, and four sons. He was predeceased by a son.

Donald J. Kranz ‘52 (Lambda Chi Alpha) of Waltham, Mass., died March 28, 2008. He was a retired accountant for Raytheon Corp.

Albert C. Nasitano ‘52 of Cherry Hill, N.J., died May 19, 2008. He was retired from the New Jersey Department of Systems and Communications. He is survived by two sisters.

J. Hamilton Givan ‘55 of West Boylston, Mass., died Sept. 25, 2007. He leaves his wife, Patricia (Hedlund), and two children. He was owner and operator of Givan Associates Inc. and product sales manager at David Clark Co.

Christopher R. Collins ‘56 (Alpha Tau Omega) of Arnold, Md., died May 22, 2008. He was retired from Westinghouse Electric Co., where he worked in the defense electronics business. He leaves his wife, Josephine, and four children.

Andrew Manzi ‘56 of San Diego, Calif., died Oct. 4, 2008, leaving his wife, Ruth (Hines), and two children. He was retired from the Convair Division of General Dynamics.

Michael Spiegel ‘57 (Alpha Epsilon Pi) of Milwaukee, Ore., died Dec. 21, 2007. He leaves wife, Sue (Lead­ingham), three children, and two stepchildren. He taught drafting at vocational schools in New Hampshire and Oregon and worked for York Electronics.

Kenneth W. Clay ‘58, founder of Spring Lake Products, died Oct. 4, 2007, in St. Cloud, Minn. Survivors include his wife, Marjorie (Webber), and three children.

Bernard T. Cournoyer ‘58 (SIM) of Holden, Mass., died Sept. 28, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Philomena (Risi), and four children. Cournoyer earned 17 patents in his years as design supervisor for Wright Line.


Neil T. Buske ‘59 (Phi Sigma Kappa) died April 12, 2009, at his home in Syracuse, N.Y. He is survived by his wife, Anne (Worboys), and two daughters. He was retired from Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. as manager of the Central Engineering Division.

Joel T. Callahan ‘59 of Lincoln, Calif., (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) died July 29, 2008. He leaves his wife, Phyllis, and two children. He retired from the Army Corps of Engineers as a lieutenant colonel, then worked as an engineering consultant.

Leo F. Cournoyer ‘59 (Theta Chi) of Roseville, Calif., died June 26, 2009. He worked for the Santa Clara Valley Water District from 1974 to 1993 and retired as water supply manager. He leaves his wife, Lorraine (Roy) and two daughters. His wife draped his 50-Year Associate medal from WPI over his funeral urn.


Roy A. Benson Sr. ‘61 (SI) of Worcester died Sept. 5, 2008, at age 92. He was a retired machine shop superintendent. He leaves his wife, Mildred (Ewing), and three children.

Edward F. Dowling ‘61 (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) of Forest, Va., died Oct. 7, 2008. A nuclear controls engineer, he retired from Framatome in 1998. Survivors include his wife, Rita (Fortier), and five children.

Vincent A. Kost ‘61 of Longboat Key, Fla., died July 20, 2008. He was the brother of Robert Kost ‘65. He worked for United Illuminating Co.
Paul E. Nordborg '61 died at his home in Holden, Mass., on Jan. 16, 2009. He leaves his wife, Penelope (Bissonnette), and two children. He worked as a senior system analyst for Norton Co. and later became an independent consultant for Liberty Mutual.

Garo G. Papazian '61 (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) of Thatcher, Ariz., died April 15, 2008. He worked for Digital Equipment Corp. and retired as principal software engineer. Survivors include two children and his best friend, Carol Meredith.

Lawrence A. Staats '61, a longtime resident of Rensselaer, N.Y., died July 28, 2008. He leaves his wife, Torill (Kamsvaag), and two daughters. Staats was a chief engineer for the Merchant Marines and also worked for the Lake George Steam Boat Co.

Wilfred E. "Chip" Brown III '63 ('65 MS EE) died Jan. 7, 2009, at his home in Okeechobee, Fla. He leaves his wife, Karen, and three children. He was retired from MITRE Corp.

Robert M. Mellor '63 (Phi Sigma Kappa) of Worcester died Jan. 5, 2009. He was retired from New England Electric as a general supervisor. He was also co-owner, with his brother, of the Gray Barn in Whitinsville, Mass.

Joseph B. Brinkmann '64 (MS MTE) of Oxford, Conn., died Aug. 2, 2008. He was retired as director of the materials engineering laboratory for the Schick razor blade company.

Bruce O. Elliott '64 (MNSE) of Bristol, Conn., died May 3, 2008. He was 88. A longtime mathematics and physics teacher in the Bristol schools, he leaves his wife, Madelyn (Callaghan), and three children.

David L. Gendron '64 (Theta Chi) of South Hadley, Mass., died Sept. 19, 2008. He was retired from a 30-year career with Monsanto Corp. (Solutia). Survivors include his wife, Nancy (Mahlman), and two sons.

Ross A. Moir '64 of Marlborough, Mass., died Sept. 12, 2008. He was retired from Norton Co. as a senior product engineer. Predeceased by his wife, Audrey (Holdridge), he leaves his companion and friend, Patricia Berwald, and two children.

J. William Bowen '66 (Theta Chi) of Delaplane, Va., died July 6, 2008. After earning an MBA at Harvard Business School in 1970, he helped revitalize the City of New York under former mayor John Lindsay. He later held executive positions with GE Credit, Chase Manhattan Bank, Booz Allen Hamilton, and First Manhattan Consulting. In 1997 Bowen relocated to Salem Hill Farm in Virginia, where he developed several business ventures. His survivors include his two sons, their mother, Carolyn Sweeney, and his former wife, Christina Bowen.

Frank B. Bryan '66 of Lakeland, Fla., died July 23, 2008. He leaves his wife, Eve, and two children. He was planning and purchasing manager for Rexnord Co.

Waldo M. Libbey '69 (PhD) of Bangor, Maine, died Jan. 10, 2009, at age 86. A member of the electrical engineering faculty of the University of Maine since 1943, he retired as professor emeritus in 1990.


Ernest A. Carroll '70 of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., died Aug. 13, 2008, leaving his wife, Anna. A businessman, scientist, and inventor, he worked for the U.S. government and private consulting firms.

Donald A. Hathaway '72 (SIM) of Port St. Lucie, Fla., died Dec. 10, 2008, at age 80. Survivors include his wife, Ruth (Duhame), and three children. He was retired from Webster Lens Co.

John F. O'Donnell '72 (Phi Kappa Theta) of Killington, Vt., died July 5, 2008. A former civil engineer for the Town of Wilmingtont, Vt., he also worked in the private sector. He is survived by his girlfriend, Sheryl Molea.

Richard C. Ojerholm '72 (SIM) of Auburn, Mass., died July 31, 2008, at age 82. He leaves his wife, Ruth (Ruskaitis), and two children. A specialist in the creation of dies for shape wire, he worked for the former New England High Carbon and Wire Corp. and later retired from American Spring Wire.

Homoud A. Al-Rqobah '74 (77 MS CM), a former member of the Kuwait parliament, died May 25, 2007. A recipient of the 2004 Robert H. Goddard Alumni Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement, he served as minister of electricity and water, and as minister of oil. Al-Rqobah joined the faculty of Kuwait University in 1981 and became dean of the College of Engineering and Petroleum. He was also chairman of the board of Kuwait Petroleum Corp., managing director of Abyar Engineering General Trading and Contracting Co. and vice president of HEMOCO Selayar International. He leaves his wife, Lamiya Mohamed Bu-Hannah, and two sons.

Gary L. Drake '76 died Feb. 21, at his home in Sudbury, Mass., after a three-year battle with cancer. He was a partner and contributing engineer at S.D. Inc. Sur-
James E. with Huntington's disease. He died March 24, 2007, at age 65. He was vice president of operations for 3Com Corp. Two children survive him.

Paul B. Mountain '79 (SIM) of West Brookfield, Mass., died Dec. 8, 2008. He was 64. He was a plant engineer in the wire industry. He leaves his wife, Gladys, and the four children they raised together, as well as his first wife, Susan.

James E. Shannon '79 (SIM) of Worcester died Oct. 4, 2008, at age 75. He leaves his wife, Bettyann (Setterquist), and three children. He retired from Wyman-Gordon Co. after 35 years and started his own construction company.

Richard D. Goldman '80 (Alpha Ep silon Pi) died peacefully at his home in Bristol, Conn., on April 24, 2008. A graduate of the University of Connecticut Law School, he worked for the Connecticut Department of Health. Survivors include his loving partner, Paula Bombola, his mother, and three brothers.

Nelson A. "Marty" Martel Jr. '83 of Ashville, N.C., died Aug. 1, 2008, after a long battle with cancer. He was a product manager with IBM. Survivors include his parents and two siblings. He also leaves his beloved Denise and her two children.

Robert J. Hunter '84 of York, Maine, died March 24, 2009, after a long battle with Huntington's disease. He leaves his beloved Debbie O'Leary and her two sons, his mother, and three sisters. He worked for AMETEK Aerospace Products.

Richard R. Carlson '85 of Worcester died July 5, 2008. He was proprietor of Ensured Commercial Services Inc. He leaves his fiancée, Susan Lovett, and four children.

Robert W. Walters '85 died Sept. 30, 2008. He designed steam engines for Coppus Engineering Co. and operated his farm in Athol, Mass. Survivors include his wife, Mary (Page), and three children.

David W. Kellerman '86 (MS MTE) of Washington, N.H., died April 27, 2009. He leaves his wife, Charlene (Epley), and two sons. Kellerman worked for Digital Equipment Corporation, where he was awarded five patents. He also owned and operated Material Solutions Consulting LLC. While studying at WPI on a fellowship from DEC, Kellerman orchestrated the donation of more than $2 million worth of DEC workstations and computers, which significantly enhanced the university's computational capabilities.

Thail J. Inman '88 (SIM) of Webster, Mass., died Oct. 1, 1988, at age 54. He was general manager of Wagner BMW Motorcycles (now Wagner Motorsports International) and had retired as president of Berlyn Extruders after 27 years of service. He leaves his wife, Deborah (Tittle) Makowski, and a stepson.


Karen Hawes '97 (MBA) of Amherst, N.H., died June 24, 2008, at age 58. A graduate of Assumption College, she was an executive for FLR Systems.

Brian A. Swanson '97 of Providence, R.I., died unexpectedly on June 1, 2009. He was a mechanical engineer for Inverness Corp., a division of A. Cookson Co. Predeceased by his father, he is survived by his mother and his twin brother.

Kevin P. Nordberg '00 of Charlton, Mass., died unexpectedly on Dec. 17, 2008, leaving his wife, Jennifer (Zybort). He was a senior manager for DHL.

Capt. Michael E. McCaffrey '06 (MS) of Sutton, Mass., died April 14, 2008, at age 52. A 1978 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he earned a master's degree in operations and information technology at WPI and was a project manager at Morgan Construction Co. He leaves his wife, Patricia (Fox), and two children.

WPI has also received notice of the following deaths:

- Gustaf H. Hakala '28 in 1993
- Henry N. Deane '31 in 1998
- Robert F. Webster '37 in 1995
- Pierce Chesworth '38 in 2006
- William B. Mullin '39 in 2005
- Joseph J. Conroy '46 in 2006
- Gerald D. Ryan '47 in 2004
- Elmer R. Griffith Jr. '49 (MS CM) in 2001
- Raymond E. Hodgerney '52 in 2004
- Herbert F. Kelly '52 in 2006
- James H. Merrill '53 (SIM) in 2001
- Davis C. McLeod '59 in 2000
- Samuel J. Cashman '60 in 2005
- Anthony J. Cirrito '60 (SIM) in 2006
- Louis A. Castriotta Jr. '62 in 2006
- Charles E. O'Connor Jr. '62 (SIM) in 1999
- Albert E. Truran Jr. '64 (MS ME) in 1988
- William J. Barlow '65 (SIM) in 2006
- Frank E. Brigham '65 (SIM) in 2001
- Edwin L. Knight '76 (SIM) in 2005
- Armen Mardirossian '80 in 1994
- Deirdre Anne Malley '82 in 1991
- Edmund V. Olson '85 (SIM) in 2006
- Rajan R. Kumar '97 in 2005

**Cyclist's Legacy Creates a Path for Others**

Charles L. Semprebon '64 was touring the United States by bicycle when he died May 24, 2009, in Santa Fe, N.M. He had retired from the family business, Calmont Beverage, in Barre, Vt., late last year to pursue this long-held dream. An avid cyclist and runner, he skied and played soccer at WPI and belonged to Sigma Alpha Epsilon.

Charlie bequeathed $1 million to complete a bike path connecting Barre and Barre Town. His will also names the City of Barre as the primary beneficiary of the remainder of his personal estate, to provide civic improvements that are beyond the reach of the town's general budget. At its June 16 meeting, the Barre City Council voted to establish the Central Vermont Regional Bike Path Committee and approved the appointment of Charlie's brother, Thomas Semprebon '69, and two of his nephews as the initial members. The mayor says he looks forward to dedicating the Charles Semprebon Memorial Bike Path soon.
The weathervane that adorns the Washburn Shops cupola remains a distinguishing characteristic on campus today. Since 1868, the arm and hammer has symbolized the "practice" in the WPI motto, Theory and Practice. It was originally designed by Charles H. Morgan, a WPI trustee and a leader in the American wire industry, whose original sketch was given to WPI in 1911 by his son, Paul B. Morgan, upon his father's death.

In October 1975, near tragedy befell the campus when the arm and hammer went missing. "No one thought it was funny," then President George Hazzard remarked in the student newspaper, Newspeak, on the one-year anniversary of the prank. "There was just downright indignation all over campus." While the original weathervane was never found, the university received, two months after the prank, a ransom note with a color photograph of the copper gilded vane lying in the woods. (A mailing snafu prevented any opportunity to recover the familiar sight. WPI received the letter on a Monday, but it was postmarked on the previous Friday afternoon, the same date the ransom amount was to be received.)

In 1977, WPI received a replica of the arm and hammer as a gift from Richard Johns, a contractor who had done considerable work on campus and who, at the time, had been restoring the Washburn Shops. Today, that replica remains firmly mounted atop Washburn Shops, the oldest building in the nation used continuously for engineering education.
WPI's Science and Engineering Graduate Programs feature world-class faculty and facilities. At WPI, graduate students and faculty work closely together in a number of cutting-edge research areas, leading to breakthroughs and innovations in such fields as biotechnology, fuel cells, nanotechnology, and information security.

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• Chemical Engineering
• Chemistry and Biochemistry
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• Fire Protection Engineering
• Management
• Manufacturing Engineering
• Materials Process Engineering
• Materials Sciences and Engineering
• Mathematical Sciences
• Mechanical Engineering
• Physics
• Social Science and Policy Studies

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The following programs are available online:

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To Register for an Upcoming Information Session

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This fall, you may receive a phone call from a WPI student on behalf of the WPI Annual Fund. Over the years, the generous support of alumni and friends has made it possible for students like Shaun Price ’08, ’09(MS) to take advantage of a WPI education. As a student caller, he spoke with alumni and friends like you about the importance of giving to WPI. On campus, Shaun studied mechanical engineering and was a member of the National Society of Black Engineers, Sigma Pi fraternity, the varsity track and field team, and Graduate Student Government.

So when it’s Tech calling, please take a moment to talk about your WPI experience and the WPI of today. And please consider making a gift. Thank you!

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