OCTOBER

Retriever Fever: UMBC Homecoming
October 12–15
UMBC, Various locations
Do you have the fever? See the full line-up of activities online at www.umbc.edu/homecoming. We can’t wait to see you! $, R

CYA Ellicott City Haunted Tour
Friday, October 28
Networking: 6 p.m., Tour: 7 p.m.
Ellicott City, MD
Just in time for Halloween, join the Chapter of Young Alumni for a family friendly one hour walking tour of haunted places in Ellicott City. http://alumni.umbc.edu/hauntedtour. $, R

NOVEMBER

Entrepreneurship Week
November 14–18
UMBC, Various locations
Connect with current and aspiring entrepreneurs during lively panel discussions and exclusive networking events. Entrepreneurial alumni interested in serving as panelists and/or judges for the student “IDEA” competition should visit www.umbc.edu/entrepreneurship for more information.

DECEMBER

Lion King with CYA
Thursday, December 8
Reception: 6:00 p.m., Show: 7:30 p.m.
Hippodrome, Baltimore
Join us for the Tony® Award-winning Broadway sensation that Newsweek calls “a landmark event in entertainment.” Reduced price ticketing includes a reception prior to the start of the show. Seats are located in the balcony, section M-R. Learn more at http://alumni.umbc.edu/lionking. $, R

STAY IN THE LOOP

Keep up to date on alumni and campus events at Retriever Net, UMBC’s online alumni community. http://alumni.umbc.edu.
Once upon a time, Joseph T. Jones, Jr. ’06 thought he couldn’t escape the city’s mean streets. Now he’s leading efforts to help reclaim the region’s broken families and enlarge its workforce.

By Elizabeth Heubeck ’91

I shared my culture at UMBC...

“My parents brought me up to be really culturally aware of where I came from, so when I came to UMBC, I wanted to focus on the second generation (Bengali) community. My junior year, I founded the Bangla Club and, working with two other universities, started an annual show called Boishaki Bang, which focuses on Bengali culture. This year I attended the sixth show and I’m really happy it’s still going on. I helped start something powerful at UMBC.

I love interacting with people. I love learning about what makes us all different. I love diversity. You know, there were signs along the corridor that said ‘Make UMBC Yours,’ and so I did. I love UMBC, and I really wanted to make my mark here.”

— Narmin A. ’07, ’09

I found myself at UMBC.

Now is your chance to help the next generation of Retrievers make their own discoveries at UMBC. Your donation can help fund scholarships for students – along with other initiatives that strengthen their experiences here – giving them the chance to find themselves, just like you did.

Don’t forget to make your annual gift!

www.umbc.edu/giving
Researchers at UMBC’s newly formed NASA research center wrestle with basic questions about our neighborhood star – and the effects that its weather can create on Earth.

By Anthony Lane

Today’s Forecast: Stellar

UMBC’s Exceptional by Example campaign transformed the campus. But you can’t calculate its true impact without assessing how it helped members of the UMBC community change and grow.

By Jenny O’Grady and Meredith Purvis

Measure of a Mission

Preview a UMBC Homecoming event – sponsored by UMBC’s Department of Visual Arts and UMBC Magazine – featuring five dynamic and distinguished alumni filmmakers.

By Richard Byrne ’86

Film Makers

Visit UMBC Magazine online at www.umbc.edu/magazine for plenty of web extras! Thoughts, complaints, suggestions about UMBC Magazine? Get in touch at byrne@umbc.edu.
Time flies when you’re having fun. And the three years that I have spent as editor of UMBC Magazine have flown by quickly.

One reason this time has flown is the terrific stories about the university and its alumni that I encounter almost every day in the course of editing the magazine.

Sometimes they come in a stamped envelope. Occasionally, it’s a phone call. And some of them come in an e-mail. Many stories also come from encounters that I have with students, faculty and staff on campus. I’ve even been accosted on the MARC train as I commute to UMBC, and in my neighborhood in Washington, DC, by people with a UMBC story to tell.

Each one of these stories is individual. They are unique in their struggles and in their triumphs, their joys and their sorrows. But as the editor of the magazine who gathers them, I see them accumulate a collective weight. They weave together into patterns and create broader narratives.

Part of that narrative is rooted in UMBC’s position as a public university.

Public universities are special because their openness and academic excellence serve as engines of transformation in people’s lives. Most of us who attended UMBC in any era of the university’s 45 years of existence do not come from a position of economic privilege. So many of the stories that I hear are tales of alumni who had to work at a job as they studied through UMBC, or who had to sacrifice – personally or as a family – to obtain their degrees.

Yet the work and sacrifice and smarts that UMBC alumni put into their degrees also left them savoring their university experience that much more. We worked hard at UMBC – and we played hard, too.

I hope that UMBC Magazine is way for you to rediscover that narrative.

In this issue, for instance, you can read about how one alumnus Joseph T. Jones, Jr. ’06, surmounted a life that began with a broken home and selling drugs to become one of the leading voices in the nation for creating economic opportunity and repairing families. You can also read about how many individuals and institutions – alumni, corporations, friends of UMBC – banded together collectively to aid the university in its successful capital campaign (Exceptional by Example) to raise $115 million to support the aspirations of students, faculty and staff.

We’ve also devoted a few stories to another collective experience for alumni and the larger university community: UMBC Homecoming (October 12-15). I hope the stories will entice you to look at the schedule of events at the UMBC Homecoming website (umbc.edu/homecoming).

Whether you like UMBC soccer under the lights, or terrific food and fellowship, or want a chance to sample the work of alumni filmmakers, UMBC Homecoming is another chance to weave your story back into the university community. And also to have a great time as you do it. I hope I’ll see you there!

— Richard Byrne ’86
UMBC Magazine welcomes your letters to the editor on any issue related to the content of the magazine. Readers can e-mail comments to byrne@umbc.edu. Faxed comments are accepted at 410-455-1889. Readers can also send letters to "Letters to the Editor," UMBC Magazine, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Administration Building, Baltimore, MD 21250.

SUMMER (2011) SMILES

A number of readers wrote in reaction to "Retracing Memory," a Summer 2011 story written by alumna Elizabeth Heubeck ’91 on UMBC professor of history Rebecca Boehling’s and Goucher College professor Uta Larkey’s research on the family history of UMBC professor of biology Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg – a history obscured for decades in the ashes of the Holocaust. Another reader enjoyed "Storm Stalkers" – Jack Williams’ article on hurricane research.

Kudos on the new issue. Good looking, great photographs, compelling writing. I was immediately captivated by two articles. "Retracing Memory" really tells several stories: family history, historical research and creative collaboration. I know I certainly want to know more about these people. So I was delighted to see the sidebar with a date far in advance of the book signing. My calendar is marked.

Thanks too for Dr. [Jay] Freyman’s advice ("How To"). Such simple things but good ideas for living a richer life. I’ll be heading out to the bookstore for my own [Oxford English Dictionary] now.

— Mary K. Tilghman ’79, English

Thanks for your e-mail calling attention to Dr. Rosenberg’s discovery of her mother’s treasures and collaboration with her UMBC colleagues in the writing of the book. Indeed, I had read the article beginning to end when I received it in the mail last week.

I recall Dr. Rosenberg’s immunology lectures well and always looked up to her as a biologist and teacher. This new perspective of how she is documenting and sharing her mother’s letters makes her all the more remarkable person. The article, to me, was the best I have ever read in UMBC Magazine and I thank you for it as well.

— Jeff DuBois ’79, biological science (D.D.S.)
Tucson, AZ

Congratulations on another fabulous issue of the UMBC Magazine. I have shared previous issues with the people who produce such things on our campus, because you do so many things so well in the magazine.

The issue I received this week was especially helpful. I am sending the "Storm Stalker" article to our Lieutenant Governor, as it helps make the case for geography education. A graduate of my department here in Bridgewater is also a famous hurricane scientist, and this story helps me to make that connection.

I noticed the "Over Coffee" feature, which I had not noticed previously. Coffee has come to stand for so many things – including conversation itself – that I see connections everywhere. Over the past decade, in fact, coffee has become a defining part of my own teaching in geography. I will be visiting family in Catonsville next week, and will try to get to the campus to see what I can discern about the current status of coffee there. On our own campus, we are moving increasingly toward fair trade, not just as a label, but as a teaching element.

— James Hayes-Bohanan ’86, geography
Associate Professor of Biology,
Bridgewater State University
Bridgewater, MA

PRESIDENTIAL POST

UMBC’s president Freeman A. Hrabowski, III also forwarded two letters that he received about the Summer 2011 issue of UMBC Magazine.

Noted Baltimore attorney, author and civic leader Ronald M. Shapiro wrote that the magazine “is one of the best of the university outreach magazines (and I get more than a few, having sent children to no less than 9 colleges, as well as serving on boards and advisory boards of others).”

Miami Dade College president Eduardo J. Patron wrote that “I commend the hard work, passion, creative talent and intellect of those who produce the magazine, which are evident on every page.”

Join us on Facebook! Did you know UMBC Magazine has its own Facebook page? We’ll keep you up to date on the magazine and alert you to special web-only content. Find us by searching “UMBC Magazine” on Facebook or directly at www.facebook.com/umbcmagazine.
UMBC President Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, takes your questions.

**Q.** UMBC ended its successful Exceptional by Example capital campaign by raising $15 million more than the $100 million target for the effort. What gave you the faith that this target of $100 million could be met? How gratified are you that the goal was surpassed in the end?

— Richard Byrne ’86

**A.** I am very encouraged by the success of the campaign. We appreciate the support that people have given us. This success also lays the foundation for future campaigns.

What we’ve been doing at UMBC is developing a culture of philanthropy. The reason that we thought we could reach the target was the encouragement that we got from our partners. There are certain names that you hear and recognize on campus: Meyerhoff, Erickson, Shriver, Linehan, Dresher and Shattuck. They are very important names, because they are leaders in our community who believe in UMBC. The campaign also speaks to the growing support we get from our alumni – and the ways that we are increasing the engagement of our alumni with campus.

Here is the challenge: We’re still in our first 50 years. But we are competing against institutions that are hundreds of years old and which have had much more experience in developing support from various groups, including alumni. We have to be as good as, if not better, than the best.

The success of this campaign reflects the fact that people are willing to support this institution, because of the quality of the enterprise. You know, 20 years ago, we hadn’t even raised $5 million. So to command the respect to raise $100 million not only shows how far we have come, but how far we could go. Because success is never final.

**Q.** Why has UMBC invested so heavily in Homecoming in recent years? What makes Homecoming matter – to you and to the university?

— Amanda Winters ’11

**A.** Homecoming gives us a great opportunity to get people back to campus. It gives alumni a chance to remember and to reflect on their experience here. It also gives alumni a chance to see how the university is changing – and to understand that the change that’s happening at UMBC isn’t just physical. Homecoming is a chance for alumni to come and talk with people here. And when they do, they have the chance to see the rise in our prominence as an “up and coming” university. They are amazed, for instance, to find out that UMBC is being compared with places like Stanford University in terms of our opportunities for undergraduates.

Homecoming is also a time for alumni to be really proud of their alma mater. To feel that UMBC really is, indeed, home. And it also provides an opportunity, with our annual Outstanding Alumni of the Year awards, to celebrate the achievements of our alumni.

And UMBC Homecoming also points to something else. Our academic program gets stronger and stronger all the time, but the university also celebrates the fact that our athletic program is getting stronger and stronger as well. One of the highlights of the weekend is the men’s soccer game on Friday night, October 14. It’s a showcase for a team that has become a national powerhouse in soccer. A lot of people don’t know that our men’s soccer team won its conference championship last year and went to the NCAA tournament, where they beat Princeton University in the first round.

Homecoming at UMBC is a chance to celebrate our academic and our athletic successes. That’s Homecoming to me.

To send a question to President Hrabowski, visit www.umbc.edu/magazine.
Most students at UMBC don’t consider the view when they look for a place to study, but the seventh floor of the Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery offers some stunning views of the symmetries and activities of the campus below its windows. The seventh floor also hosts a number of prominent lectures, where afternoon sunlight often pours in on speakers and audience.
Wonderful Workplace

UMBC’s reputation as an “honors university in Maryland” and as a place that revels in the diversity of its community have made it a destination for students. But what do the university’s faculty and staff members think about working at UMBC?

If the Chronicle of Higher Education’s annual survey of “Great Colleges to Work For” is any indication, professor and staffers alike are finding UMBC to be a destination as well. The university was one of only 42 colleges and universities in the nation – and the only four-year institution in Maryland – to make the newspaper’s Honor Roll of workplaces.

*The Chronicle* conducts an institutional audit of demographics and workplace policies, and then surveys more than 43,000 faculty and staff at 310 institutions across the United States, in order to compile its list. UMBC ranked highly in eight of the 12 categories surveyed, including “collaborative governance,” “professional/career development programs,” “work/life balance,” “confidence in senior leadership,” “respect and appreciation,” and “diversity.”

Employee responses were the key factor in the rankings, and faculty and staff members were selected at random. To make the Chronicle’s Honor Roll of “Great Colleges to Work For,” a university needed to place in the top ten in one of three respective categories of enrollment.

*Stanyell Bruce*, associate director of alumni relations and the president of UMBC’s Professional Staff Senate, says “It’s no surprise to me that the university won this distinction. UMBC is a place where people truly care about one another, and a place that encourages innovation and out of the box thinking.”

— Richard Byrne ’86

### STEPPING UP

When UMBC provost Elliot Hirshman departed in June to become the new president of San Diego State University, the university quickly tapped two of its distinguished academic leaders to fill key positions for the upcoming academic year.

On June 17, UMBC President *Freeman A. Hrabowski, III*, named *Philip J. Rous*, dean of the College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (CNMS) as the university’s interim provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. Rous came to UMBC in 1990 as an assistant professor of physics, rising to positions as professor of physics and as vice president and president of the university’s Faculty Senate from 2003 to 2007.

*William R. LaCourse*, chair of UMBC’s chemistry and biochemistry department, was tapped to replace Rous as interim dean of the College of Natural and Mathematical sciences. He arrived at UMBC in 1992 as an assistant professor of chemistry.

Both Rous and LaCourse have been in the forefront of UMBC’s nationally recognized efforts to reshape the institution’s curriculum and improve student outcomes. Interim provost Rous spearheaded the creation of CNMS’ Active Science Teaching and Learning Environment (CASTLE), which is reinventing teaching practice with an emphasis on student engagement. He is also principal investigator (PI) for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s National Experiment in Undergraduate Science and Co-PI for the National Science Foundation’s Innovation Through Institutional Integration.

Interim dean LaCourse founded the Chemistry Discovery Center, which has become a national model in teaching innovation in the sciences, and he has been at the forefront of efforts to weave entrepreneurship in disciplines across the university through the Kauffman Entrepreneurship Initiative.

— Richard Byrne ’86
Among the highlights of UMBC’s Homecoming 2011 is a ceremony that honors university alumni who have achieved distinction in a wide range of disciplines and careers.

The UMBC Alumni Association – which selects recipients and presents the awards – moved the annual Outstanding Alumni of the Year ceremony back to campus in 2009, and it has since become a key element of the university’s celebration of school spirit.

This year’s recipients of the awards – which will be presented on Thursday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Albin O. Kuhn Library Gallery – include alumni who’ve reached prominence in the fields of technology, medicine, journalism and business. This year’s recipients are:

Ralph Semmel ’92, Ph.D., computer science, is the UMBC Alumnus of the Year in Engineering and Information Technology. In 2010, Semmel was named as the eighth director of The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory – one of the most prominent hubs of advanced technological research in the world.

Ronita Marple, ’05, Ph.D., chemistry, is the UMBC Alumna of the Year in the Natural and Mathematical Sciences. She is an analytical chemist and senior scientist for consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble. (Read a profile of Marple on page 41 of this issue of UMBC Magazine.)

Jamie Smith Hopkins ’98, English, is the UMBC Alumna of the Year in the Humanities. She has been a reporter at The Baltimore Sun since 1999, and writes and blogs for the paper on the housing industry in the Baltimore metropolitan region. (UMBC Magazine profiled Hopkins in its Summer 2010 issue.)

Garrett Wright ’01, theatre, is the UMBC Alumnus of the Year in the Visual and Performing Arts. Wright is a Bridge Fellow at the Center for Constitutional Rights, where he puts his legal skills to work combating racial profiling in New York City’s Police Department. He is also a staff attorney at the Urban Justice Center’s Community Development Project, which provides legal advice to tenants and tenant organizations.

Dr. Jeffery Wilkinson ’89, interdisciplinary studies, is the UMBC Alumnus of the Year in the Social Sciences. He works at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, and he has won renown as a global leader in combating obstetric fistula in some of the poorest regions of the world – including Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. (Wilkinson was profiled in the Summer 2009 issue of UMBC Magazine.)

Delali Dzirasa ’04, computer engineering, is UMBC’s Young Alumni Rising Star. He is the owner of Fearless Solutions, a cybersecurity company based in the bwtech@UMBC Research Park that focuses on secure software development, and already boasts several contracts with the federal government. (Read a profile of Dzirasa in UMBC Magazine.)

— Richard Byrne ’86
Lights, Camera, Action!

The UMBC men's soccer team's 2010 campaign was a season to remember—and the 2011 squad will have a chance to shine on national television during UMBC's Homecoming weekend as a result.

The America East conference announced that the Retrievers' October 14 match against the University of New Hampshire will be televised nationally at 7 p.m. on Fox Soccer Channel as part of the network's National Soccer Coaches Association of America Game of the Week package.

A traditional part of UMBC Homecoming, the men's soccer game moved last year from its customary slot on Saturday afternoon to a new slot under the lights as a linchpin of Friday night's festivities. The new tradition was a big hit: last year's game against Boston University drew almost 3,000 spectators to Retriever Soccer Park.

This year's game against New Hampshire is a rematch of a bitterly fought America East championship game last November at Retriever Soccer Park, which saw UMBC triumph after double overtime and a series of penalty kicks. The victory sent the Retrievers to the NCAA Men's Soccer Tournament, where they won a thrilling come-from-behind victory against Princeton University before bowing to the College of William and Mary (also on penalty kicks) to end their season.

The national television audience won't only get a glimpse of this year's team and UMBC's Homecoming spirit on October 14; they will also see a revamped Retriever Soccer Park that has added even more seats and more lights to one of the best soccer facilities in the region.

— Richard Byrne '86

Words and Music

Open the door to Annapolis' Rams Head Tavern and the sounds of upbeat banjo and guitar fly out into the warm night air, followed by the gruff voice of Adam Trice '04, English—who's in the middle of a 45-minute set with his band, Red Sammy.

"It ain't you, it ain't her," Trice growls tunefully in a song called "It Ain't You (Carolina Road Anthem)." "I'm heading south, but I'm not sure. You got me high, it's kind of funny. I'm playing bars for gas money."

Trice dubs Red Sammy's music as "graveyard country" because he likes the verbal interplay of the phrase. "I feel like it brings up a lot of different connotations that are associated with those two words," explains Trice. The band has released a few records, including A Cheap Kind of Love Song and Dog Hang Low, both of which are available online or at the band's shows.

Studying literature at UMBC had a hand in his musical direction. "My music's more lyric driven, and I think it really banks off my English degree," he explains. "A lot of electives in the creative writing track. They are the strong focus from which I draw."

While Trice also pursues a day job as director of foundation relations and grant writing and development at Capitol College in Laurel, he enjoys playing for tips in a Jeremiah Weed bucket and is going to keep playing for the foreseeable future. "My plan is to continue pushing the art and seeing where that goes," he says.

— Derek Roper '11

Photo: Todd Henn
Plastic Fantastic

Plastic cups with UMBC’s logo and wild orange and yellow splashes were a hit at the university’s New Student Day. But incoming UMBC freshman Allison Olender decided to make a hit of her own—a sprightly video cover version of “You’re Gonna Miss Me” by Lulu and the Lampshades—in which she used the funky giveaway cup as percussion.

Olender posted her video on UMBC’s Class of 2015 Meet and Greet site—a Facebook group where incoming freshmen can find out who might be in their classes or dorm room, get a head start on making new friends and have their questions answered by fellow classmates.

The video made a splash with Olender’s fellow classmates, which isn’t surprising. The recent Bel Air High School grad with “an affinity for jazz” says that she has “been singing for the majority of my life”—in musicals, on the web and in a new band called “Prison Music.”

“When I posted the video,” Olender says, “I did not expect to generate such a warm and positive response.” She says she was attracted to UMBC by “the terrific atmosphere.... I knew that I wanted to attend a school that had excitement and integrity rooted in the system, and when I visited UMBC, my expectations were met.”

Look for UMBC’s new viral video star in person when she starts attending class in Spring 2012. “It means the world to me that the others were so responsive,” Olender says, “and I hope to share my music on campus.”

— Richard Byrne ’86

(You can check out more of Allison Olender’s music at her website: www.allisonolender.com)

Climbing The Ladder

In 2008, former UMBC Retriever pitcher Zach Clark ’06, psychology, was with the Frederick Keys—a Class A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles—when he got the news that he was needed at Class AAA Norfolk Tides for a spot starting assignment.

The good news traveled fast, but Clark didn’t. It was only after a long bus trip with the Keys from Kinston, NC, to Myrtle Beach, SC, and an early morning flight to Syracuse, NY, that Clark finally joined his new club. He pitched for the Tides that same night.

“I slept at the hotel during the day, went to the field and pitched,” recalls Clark, who has played in the Orioles farm system since 2006. “That was pretty crazy. I didn’t know anybody. That was my first time at Triple A.”

Signed by Orioles’ scout Dean Albany as a non-drafted free agent after leaving UMBC in 2006, Clark started this season pitching for the Class AA Bowie Baysox. He began 2011 with a minor league record of 24-28 and an ERA of 3.61 in 119 games.

Clark knows life as a pitcher on-call is part of the path to the big leagues. He once battled heavy traffic from Bowie to Norfolk, VA to take the mound for Tides in a night game.

In games through Aug. 4 of this season Clark was 6-7 with an ERA of 5.14 in 18 games (with 17 starts) for Bowie in the Eastern League. Clark was named the Eastern League pitcher of the week on May 2 of this season.

— David Driver
Learning (From) The Lingo

“Baldamoreans do not speak the king’s English.”

That’s how one Lexington Market patron jokingly described the city’s linguistic style to Inte’a DeShields ’13 in a podcast that was produced as a class assignment by the language, literacy and culture Ph.D. student.

But that’s exactly how Christine Mallinson, an assistant professor in the program, likes it.

“Not that much linguistic research has been done on the unique accents of Baltimore, but the city is a good laboratory for studying language variation,” Mallinson explains.

Charm City is a living laboratory for Mallinson’s research and pedagogy. The podcast, for example, was a product of firsthand research on linguistic variations in Baltimore by students in Mallinson’s “Language in Diverse Schools and Communities” class.

DeShields’ research and podcast explored common pronunciations among African American communities in Baltimore, especially a tendency to pronounce the city’s name as “Baldamore.” Other students researched language in multilingual communities and what Baltimores women say about themselves when they claim the word “hon.”

Mallinson created her own podcast, too, featuring teachers who discuss how language variation affects students and the strategies they’ve used to improve their teaching. Working with these teachers is the current focus of Mallinson’s research, and the subject of her recent book, Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools, which she co-authored with Charity Hudley, an associate professor of English, linguistics, and Africana studies at the College of William and Mary.

“Language really matters in everything we do,” says Mallinson. She argues language is an important part of social identity: a definitional marker not only for others but for one’s self.

For students without a background in academic English, she continues, language can often be a barrier to achievement.

Mallinson is committed not only to describing that classroom challenge, but also to giving teachers tools to combat it. One teacher in Mallinson’s podcast tells the story of a non-native English speaker who was reluctant to participate in classroom discussions. However, when that teacher had the class read a story containing a Spanish word, the student eagerly joined in the discussion.

Mallinson has recently turned her focus to science and math teaching in K-12 classrooms, organizing workshops that train teachers to recognize and help students who struggle with the language elements of math and science curricula. If students understand the arithmetic in a word problem but produce a wrong answer because they misunderstand the question’s syntax, Mallinson and Hudley offer strategies to assist both students and teachers.

“Linguistically diverse students don’t leave their language patterns at the door when they come to math and science classrooms,” Mallinson explains. She and Hudley were recently awarded a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation to continue conducting workshops in Maryland and Virginia and follow up with teachers to learn which strategies are most successful.

“Linguists have usually studied language variation with respect to English classrooms,” Mallinson says. “Teachers are really excited that somebody is paying attention to language in math and science.”

— Chelsea Haddaway

All of the podcasts are available at www.BaltimoreLanguage.com.
A Collecting Call

It took Marie Spiro five decades – and a bit of heavy lifting – to create her personal collection of ancient artifacts. “Anytime I came back from a site,” she quips, “I had the heaviest suitcase.”

Spiro is an associate professor emerita of art and archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park, and her dramatic recounting of a particular object’s discovery can quiet a rowdy classroom. The collection features over 1,000 Greek, Roman and Byzantine artifacts, and contains mosaics, pottery, figurines and other pieces that date back as far as 15,000 years.

Indeed, students were at the heart of Spiro’s enterprise. She relished sharing the pieces she brought home with them in classes, encouraging them to touch and handle the objects in ways that they couldn’t at a museum, or by looking at a photograph.

So when Spiro decided to donate her collection, she looked for a place that would follow her example. She settled on UMBC’s ancient studies department, where the first third of Spiro’s collection was used in classrooms this past February. (The next third of the artifacts will come to campus in early 2012, with the final portion arriving in 2013.)

“I think the ancient studies program at UMBC is the best, I really do,” says Spiro. “I’m so happy that the collection has found a home. That’s my dream fulfilled.”

Hands-on learning is a priority for

Marilyn Goldberg, chair of ancient studies, who says she is delighted with the gift. She points to the value in the number of objects in the collection that ancient people used in their everyday lives, and how students can now physically interact with ancient artifacts without even leaving campus.

“Students can look at a piece in its entirety, look at the back of it and the profile of it, see how it’s made,” Goldberg says. “You can’t turn a picture over.”

Goldberg and other campus leaders secured the financial support of local Greek organizations – including the Baltimore-Piraeus Sister City Committee and the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Associations of Baltimore and Washington, DC – to bring the collection to UMBC.

UMBC’s plans for the collection include an archaeology lab that will be part of the second phase of construction of the university’s Performing Arts and Humanities Building. It will be a space where students can study the artifacts and display the exhibits they curate.

Students enrolled in a museum studies class taught by Esther Read, lecturer in ancient studies, in the spring semester were the first to use the collection. The class was a lecture/lab hybrid in which students discussed issues faced by museums in each session before working with the Spiro’s artifacts.

“I want them to see that these objects are more than just pretty things in cases. Whoever owned that piece originally, it had meaning to them. It had meaning to Marie Spiro when she collected it. It has different meaning now that she’s given it to us, and it’ll have a meaning here at the institution and for the student who works with it,” says Read. “You have so many groups and so many relationships with one object. Which story do you present?”

— Chelsea Haddaway
The Write Stuff

Many doctoral candidates will tell you that the biggest obstacle they face in obtaining a Ph.D. is a task that’s completely in their own hands: their doctoral dissertation.

That’s why nine UMBC graduate students have assembled on the third floor of The Commons bright and early on a Monday in July to attend “Dissertation House” – a weeklong session of goal-setting, dedicated working time and concrete advice from experts aimed at getting them closer to finishing the capstone of their graduate experience.

The week of coaching was created by PROMISE – Maryland’s Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, which includes UMBC as well as the University of Maryland campuses at Baltimore and College Park. PROMISE is one of 21 alliances created by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to increase the number of U.S. students receiving Ph.D.s in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (or “STEM”) disciplines, with a special focus on boosting the numbers of doctorates taken by minority students.

The “head coach” of Dissertation House is Wendy Carter, a nationally renowned expert on strategies for dissertation completion. (She’s even written a book and created a company – TADA!: Thesis and Dissertation Accomplished – to tackle the completion problems that students face.)

Carter shares her mantra with the assembled graduate students: “A good dissertation is a done dissertation.” After laying out challenges and offering tips (“When you read journal articles, always do a summary”), she has the students write their goals for the week on large sheets of white paper hung on the walls of the room.

The coaching starts as soon as the students present those goals to the group. Carter urges some students to clarify their tasks, and revise them towards greater self-accountability. “They need to be measurable,” she tells the group.

Renetta Garrison Tull, the director of the PROMISE program, says that participants gain valuable tips and advice from Carter and a wide range of guest speakers throughout the week – including Janet Rutledge, the dean of UMBC’s Graduate School and vice provost for graduate education, who stresses the importance of developing a strong mentoring relationship with one’s thesis advisor.

Tull also sees personal transformation and the acquisition of clarity, direction and self-discipline in the dissertation process as the key benefit of the weeklong experience. She tells the students that such things don’t come easily – and that Dissertation House is intended to be a catalyst to get them there. “We don’t leave you where you are,” she tells the group. “We move you forward. And sometimes that’s uncomfortable.”

The Dissertation House was founded in 2006 and has shepherded over 70 students to Ph.D. completion in its first five years.

And when Friday rolls around for the Summer 2011 class, the sense that these nine students are on their way to joining those other alumni is palpable. The room is abuzz with activity, and the lists of goals placed on the wall on Monday are now emblazoned with items crossed out or checked off.

Look for them in a commencement ceremony soon.

— Richard Byrne ’86
A Decade Of Service

When Jason Woody ’05, sociology, received his acceptance letter to be part of the first class of the Shriver Living Learning Center (SLLC) ten years ago, he wanted to be a film major. And though he was interested in the social justice focus of the new center, he was also enticed by Erickson Hall, the sleek new dorm on campus that SLLC students would call home.

Woody found the SLLC’s service mentality contagious and it quickly came to define his worldview. In his sophomore year, he came across a poster asking students to dedicate service hours to honor those killed in the 9/11 attacks and took that call to heart. Back in his dorm room, he paged through biographies of the victims.

The story of Deora Bodley – a college student who died aboard United Flight 93, which crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania – gripped him most personally. Friends remembered Bodley for her own dedication to serving others. In her name, Woody launched a mentorship program for elementary-aged Baltimore youth to learn team-building skills: Project Team. The Shriver Center offered a van, help recruiting volunteers and credibility with partner organizations.

Shriver Center Director Michele Wolff remembers designing the SLLC to reflect “the true essence of service-learning.” Community members are required to complete both regular service throughout their residency and coursework that provides context and promotes reflection. As an affinity program, the SLLC also offers students a purposeful living experience with a built-in peer support network to help them confront the demands of service commitments.

Woody credits the support of fellow SLLC residents for his growth as a service leader. Kelly Subramanian ’08, biology and psychology, a former SLLC resident assistant, understands his perspective. “Personal relationships develop where you’re not only living together, you’re also serving together,” she says.

By the time Subramanian arrived a few years after Woody, the SLLC had already developed a reputation for its unique way of fostering students’ intellectual and personal growth. The program itself – more than the sleek new dorm – had become the attraction. “You’re helping other people and learning about what’s out there, but you’re also learning about yourself, what you value and what you want to do with your life,” Subramanian reflects.

Senior Benjamin Davis ’12, who hopes to teach in Baltimore City after graduation, calls the SLLC “a home for people just like me who expressed passion or interest in volunteering.” Davis tackled personal hardships and shyness, he says, by “working with other civically engaged individuals.”

Jason Woody never did take a single film class at UMBC. Instead, he pursued a career serving adults with mental illness. His organization, B’more Clubhouse, offers transitional employment and social and educational programs to help adults with mental illness develop confidence, skills and meaningful relationships, and reduce stigma against mental illness in the broader community. “I’ve seen people achieve milestones, big and small, that are life-changing,” he says.

Woody adds that he is still learning from others through service. His work has helped him develop patience and understanding. “In this way, he says, the members of B’more Clubhouse are now his teachers.

— Dinah Winnick
Once upon a time, Joseph T. Jones, Jr. thought he couldn’t escape the city’s mean streets. Now he’s leading efforts to help reclaim the families broken by urban ills.

By Elizabeth Heubeck ’91
Photos by Bruce Weller

Searing waves of heat already ripple through West Baltimore at 9 a.m. on a Friday in July. The streets around 2201 N. Monroe Street – headquarters of the Baltimore-based nonprofit Center for Urban Families (CFUF) – are all but deserted.
Inside the center's air-conditioned conference room, 40 or so adults – men and women, black and white, some as young as 18 and others old enough to be grandparents – sit in neat lines of metal folding chairs, sweating about their future. Some look anxious, others bleary-eyed. Most of the men wear ties, pressed pants and dress shoes; the women are in heels, panty hose and skirts. Some are ex-convicts. Many have been involved with the drug trade. Others have held jobs but haven’t been able to keep them.

If the room has the solemn air of a funeral, there’s a good reason. Everyone here is preparing to say goodbye to their old lives and start anew through the CFUF’s signature program, STRIVE, which is modeled after a prototype launched in New York City’s East Harlem.

When the center’s founder and CEO, Joseph T. Jones, Jr. ’06, social work, walks to the front of the room, everyone seems to sit up a little straighter. Standing more than six feet tall in a dark blue pin stripe suit, Jones’ imposing stature and deep, authoritative voice command the room. But his story also grabs attention with this audience: He’s walked a remarkably similar path.

“All the things I did suggest I should be dead, incarcerated, or debilitated,” Jones tells the group.

Jones’ path was particularly rocky. He was the product of a broken family. He shot heroin at 13, and was arrested for the first time at 14. He spent more time in Maryland’s juvenile justice system than he did in a high school classroom. And Jones’ career as a drug dealer saw him only narrowly escape a lengthy federal prison sentence.

But Jones is living proof that hard knocks don’t always knock you out. His West Baltimore center promotes stable career paths and rebuilds strong family units among urban residents, and Jones is sharing his successes with national audiences – including meetings with former Vice President Albert Gore, Jr. and a place on President Barack Obama’s Taskforce on Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families.

Healthy families are the building block for any American renaissance, argues Jones. “Twenty-five million children live in households where their fathers are not present. As a society, we can’t have that number of children not having a relationship with their fathers.”

Rough Beginnings

Jones remembers the breakup of his own family at age nine with chilling clarity.

“My father, he was ex-military,” Jones recalls. “I remember him packing his [military] duffel bag one day.” Jones watched from the living room window, which overlooked the entrance to East Baltimore’s Lafayette Courts projects, as his father put his duffel bag in the car and drove away.

Life with a single mother left Jones “crossing boundaries,” as he puts it. He became friends with a crowd that plunged him into heroin use and selling drugs. And his first drug-related arrest and sentence to 30 days in a juvenile detention facility didn’t exactly scare him straight.

“One of my best friends from the street was there. He created a
UMBC president Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, convinced Jones that an undergraduate degree would “open more doors for him.” He graduated *cum laude* from the university with a degree in social work in 2006.
seamless pathway for me to have no trouble in that system,” Jones recalls. As Jones cycled in and out of the juvenile justice system and grew ever-deeper roots to drugs and crime, a part of him remained open to a different path. Ironically, it was Jones’ father, barely present in his life since leaving with his duffel bag, who planted the seed on a visit to his son in juvenile detention.

Jones’ father brought him Manchild in the Promised Land, a book by Claude Brown which tells the story of the author’s coming of age (and escaping) poverty-stricken and drug-filled 1960s Harlem. The book led Jones to other influential autobiographies, including those of Martin Luther King, Jr. and John F. Kennedy. “I was preparing myself for now, but not intentionally,” Jones says. “I was always attracted to stories about people who were making change in society.”

Almost Lost
Jones says he had a talent for masking problems under a façade of normality. He managed to earn his GED, attend community college, and was even admitted to a management training program with the Social Security Administration.

Under that surface, however, Jones remained unchanged. Indeed, he was brazen enough to sell drugs out of the Social Security Administration building.

He believed he was successfully evading police detection until one day he was asked to attend a meeting during work hours in the organization’s auditorium. When he arrived, he was greeted by members of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. Jones recalls the arrest was “a complete embarrassment.” His mother and grandmother also worked at Social Security Administration, and dealing in that building brought a federal drug charge. He was also suspended without pay and removed from the management training program.

Eventually Jones pled guilty to a misdemeanor and avoided jail time. But even that humiliating arrest did not create a final break with his addiction to heroin and cocaine and his drug crimes. For years, he observes, “faith and fate” allowed him to narrowly avoid lengthy jail sentences.

Jones started to weary of the game, however. On October 3, 1986, he knocked on the door of Spring Grove’s residential drug treatment program. “Part of me wanted to stop doing drugs,” Jones recalls. But the real motivation was to avoid a jail sentence for five new criminal charges. The choice was simple: drug treatment or jail.

A year in drug rehabilitation helped Jones finally make a break with his former life. For the first time since he could remember, he was sleeping and eating well and exercising regularly. At year’s end, Jones was ready to commit to the “phase out” stage of the treatment program, which required him to have a plan to continue his recovery. Jones decided on the community college degree he’d started but never finished.

Now in his thirties, his experience at Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) was decidedly different after rehab, Jones became the top student in the college’s accounting program. He also met his future wife, Debra Scovens, who was an assistant to BCCC’s dean of admissions. They have now been married for 21 years and have three children. Armed with a new family and newfound confidence and stability, Jones was ready to pursue helping others change their lives as he had changed his own.

Making Waves in Public Policy
Jones took several part-time jobs to make ends meet during community college. One job involved working with a community-based organization that provided health and HIV/AIDS education, where his primary role was negotiating contracts with drug treatment centers and providing health and HIV education to their clients. Jones parlayed that job into a grant-funded position with the Baltimore City Health Department to ensure that pregnant women in the city received prenatal care. As he worked with these women, he had an epiphany about the connections between their challenges and his own upbringing. “I’m dragging these women from crack houses to prenatal care,” he recalls, “then they’re going home to these guys who were saying, ‘We need help, too…. Public policy wasn’t addressing the issue of fatherhood.”

Health officials urged Jones to take up the cause on his own. And he did. Using the federal government’s Healthy Start Initiative, Jones developed
and implemented a “Men’s Services” program within the city health department’s Healthy Start program.

His success with that initiative provided Jones with invitations to high-level conferences on urban families, including one hosted by Vice President Gore and his former wife, Tipper Gore. At that conference, Jones chose to make a splash when he was asked to comment. “I went off on a tirade about the surface level of the conversation, and how it didn’t meet the needs of the people in the communities where I come from,” Jones recalls. And though he received a round of applause for his outburst, he felt compelled to apologize to Gore for his strong words. That day allowed Jones not only to establish a personal relationship with Gore, but it also garnered him more invitations to discuss the obstacles facing urban families.

Back to School

Jones’ persuasiveness about the importance of jobs and reconnecting families to create an urban renaissance also found an audience closer to home. UMBC president Freeman A. Hrabowski, III, attended one of Jones’ speeches and was impressed. “It was clear he was a masterful communicator,” says Hrabowski. “He was analytical, used his own story and was able to talk about intervention strategies. Most importantly, he spoke with great authenticity.”

When Hrabowski queried Jones about his education and learned that he had an associate’s degree, he didn’t withhold his opinion. “My first reaction was that he had to go back,” Hrabowski recalls. “I knew it would open more doors for him.” Jones demurred at first, telling UMBC’s president that he was too old, that he had a young family, and that he didn’t qualify for scholarships. But Hrabowski eventually won out, serving as Jones’ mentor as he took his degree at UMBC. In 2006, at the age of 50, Jones graduated cum laude from the university. “His standard of excellence is so incredibly high,” Jones says of Hrabowski. “He uplifts you just being in his space.”

Success and Standards

Jones’ dynamic presence provides a similar uplift for the men and women he’s working hard to help at the Center for Urban Families.

Take STRIVE. On its surface, the program is a boot camp for coping with the challenges of the contemporary workplace: being on time, dressing appropriately and managing office hierarchies. But it’s also a “reboot” camp to help clients gain self-assurance and self-reliance in all areas of their lives.

“When you see people who come in here, and you look in their eyes,” Jones observes, “there’s almost no hope. You have to convince them that if they follow the structure we have established, they can be successful, regardless of their background.”
Jones speaking at the graduation ceremony of another class of STRIVE graduates. The Center for Urban Families' flagship program has been able to place more than 3,900 of its graduates in jobs with an average starting wage of $8.80 an hour.
established, they can be successful, regardless of their background,” he says.

At the first day of the STRIVE training on this July morning, most participants come dressed in their best clothing. But one young man, dressed in baggy black pants and untucked shirt, didn’t get the message. Jones summons him to the front of the room.

“Did they explain to you what you had to do to prepare for today, including the dress code?” Jones barks. “Do you want to go through this program?”

The young man’s response is barely audible.

“You’ve got ten minutes to get dressed like this guy,” says Jones, pointing to a man in the front row wearing a dress shirt and slacks, wing tips, and tie. The young man saunters to the back of the room and out the door.

Jones tells those who remain:

“We’re going to raise the standard real high, and some of people are going to fall off… Twenty percent of you won’t be back on Monday.”

When Jones worked for the Baltimore City Health Department, he designed and oversaw innovative programs like STRIVE. But the bureaucracy of working within a government agency frustrated him. “If I wanted to grow beyond now, I knew I couldn’t do it at the health department,” he says.

With a nod from his then-boss and former Baltimore City Health Commissioner Peter Beilenson – and financial support from the Abell Foundation and its longtime president, Robert C. Embry, Jr. – Jones was able to strike out on his own.

In 1999, Jones opened the doors to the Center for Urban Families. In the attractive new building in which the nonprofit is housed today, Jones has also started a program to help fathers: Men’s Services Responsible Fatherhood program. The center also launched its first national initiative, Baltimore Building Strong Families, in 2005. The program aims to support new low-income parents with financial know-how and relationship skill building.

Tough Love

Jones attributes the success of the center’s initiatives to a tough-love approach that provides structure and demands discipline.

It’s this approach that attracted longtime supporter David L. Warnock, CEO of a Baltimore-based investment firm. He’s been the chairman of the 12-year old nonprofit for more than eight years.

“I like the tough love approach to STRIVE,” says Warnock. “I also like how the model of STRIVE aims to create a sense of accomplishment among a group of people that doesn’t feel much in the way of accomplishment.”

The number of lives touched by STRIVE is also impressive. As of August 2011, more than 4,000 men and women in Baltimore have graduated from the program. And the center has been able to place more than 3,900 of its graduates in jobs with an average starting wage of $8.80 an hour.

Jones relishes telling personal success stories about STRIVE graduates, including La’Roy Charles Alston, Jr., a former gang member in Baltimore City. Two of Alston’s friends were shot within a week. Then Alston himself was shot twelve times and lost a leg. Though he thought about retaliating, Alston decided instead to give STRIVE a try.

“He was saying that he wanted to do something different. Now, he’s getting ready to graduate from Sojourner-Douglass College. He has one of the most infectious personalities, despite living with chronic pain,” says Jones.

Checking back in with Jones on a sunny Friday in August, he’s busily preparing new federal grants for the center and addressing a new class of STRIVE graduates, who enter to strains of “Pomp and Circumstance” decked out in blue caps and gowns.

Jones acknowledges that these graduates are facing some of the toughest economic times in recent memory, but he underscores that their commitment holds the key to success in surmounting it: “Remember when I told you on the first day that we were looking for a few good men and a few good women? You are the few good men and few good women.”

Jones also urges the new graduates not to get complacent. He wants to see them all back at the center bright and early on Monday morning, starting the job hunt.

“We’re going to have your back,” Jones says. “As long as you stay connected.”
Researchers at UMBC’s newly formed NASA research center wrestle with basic questions about our neighborhood star – and the effects that its weather can create on Earth. *By Anthony Lane*
On the morning of September 1, 1859, a British solar astronomer was using his telescope to look at a projected image of the sun when something strange happened: Two brilliant patches of white light pierced the thicket of sunspots he’d been tracking.

Richard Carrington, the astronomer, was astounded by what he saw. He scrambled outside to find someone to join him as a witness to the amazing spectacle, but by the time he’d grabbed a bystander and returned a minute later, the solar eruption was nearly over.

Carrington’s account of the event might have been ignored or forgotten were it not for a much more widespread spectacle that commenced about 17 hours later. Auroras – which are normally seen only from the planet’s far north and south extremes – laced the night sky above Cuba, El Salvador and Hawaii. And according to a whimsical account in the Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser, Marylanders saw an aurora that shined brighter than a full moon, appearing to “cover the whole firmament, apparently like a luminous cloud, through which the stars of the larger magnitude indistinctly shone.”

But the beauties of that 1859 light display masked the minor destruction wrought worldwide by an event that scientists now say was a once-in-every-500-year solar flare. As strands of light pulsed overhead in the early morning of that September day, Earth’s changing magnetic field induced electric currents within telegraph wires. Some transmissions were blocked, and fires erupted at a few telegraph stations.

Aleksandre “Sandro” Taktakishvili, a researcher and space weather forecaster at UMBC’s newly formed Goddard Planetary Heliophysics Institute (GPHI), observes that if such an event were to occur today, the results could be calamitous. He speaks in hushed tones about the likelihood of damaged and destroyed satellites, overloaded power grids, and useless GPS devices.

“It would be devastating,” Taktakishvili says. “The more dependent we are on satellites, the more vulnerable we are to these events.”

Fortunately, our knowledge of the sun and its capacity to hurl masses of plasma toward Earth has come a long way since 1859. Taktakishvili, who works with other GPHI researchers at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, is part of a rotation of scientists at NASA charged with monitoring the sun’s activity and forecasting what impacts it could have on Earth or on the satellites that orbit around it. He has live

“The more dependent we are on satellites, the more vulnerable we are to these events.”

Charged particles from the sun sometimes penetrate Earth’s magnetosphere near the poles, resulting in dramatic auroras, such as this one over Alaska.

Photo credit: Joshua Strang, USAF
Researchers observed this solar prominence eruption only weeks after the Solar Dynamics Observatory was launched in February, 2010.

Photo credit: NASA/SDO/AIA
access to streams of data coming from a battery of instruments trained on the sun, and, based on that information, he is confident he can predict the impact that routine solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs) will have on Earth.

Taktakishvili admits that he and other scientists at GPHI, NASA and the broader research community still have much to learn about how the sun produces flares such as the one that Carrington observed in 1859 – as well as the ways in which such events can play havoc with Earth’s magnetic field.

“With the monitoring we have, we are pretty well prepared,” Taktakishvili says. “Still, you cannot exclude the possibility of something major happening.”

**TRACKING SOLAR WIND**

Despite the possibility of damaging solar events, Jan Merka, director of GPHI, sounds a more soothing note when he talks about the lucky constellation of events that put Earth in just the right position in relation to the sun for life to thrive on this planet.

“Earth is a homey place,” Merka observes. “We need some radiation, but not too much. We need it to be warm, but not too warm.”

Earth’s magnetic field is an essential part of its suitability for life. Produced by the movement of molten iron in Earth’s outer core, the magnetic field effectively guards the planet against solar wind – a constant barrage of charged particles hurled from the sun. Without that protection, solar wind would have long since stripped away much of the planet’s atmosphere, making Earth a dreary and inhospitable place.

In the absence of solar wind, Earth’s magnetic field would send out an expanding and uniform series of field lines stretching from north to south. A drawing of this field would show lines organized in the sort of lobed race-track pattern that iron filings make when strewn around a bar magnet.

The solar wind, however, distorts the magnetic field, giving it a complex, changing form known as a magnetosphere. Artists’ renditions of the magnetosphere sometimes make it look like a ghostly octopus, with a small head facing the sun and spindly legs stretching out into the solar system.

The 16 scientists at GPHI investigate a range of topics related to solar activity and the magnetosphere. Taktakishvili and several others are concerned with making better forecasts and observations of solar events, providing information that can be used to protect satellites or inform decisions about how close airplanes should fly to Earth’s magnetic poles, where charged particles from the sun are most likely to work their way into the atmosphere.

The risk of illness or even death for those exposed to these particles is a particular challenge for space travel, making better predictions very important, especially in the event that a space crew ever ventures out from the relative safety of the magnetosphere for a months-long journey to Mars.

Other scientists at the institute work with teams that are analyzing data sent from the MESSENGER spacecraft orbiting Mercury or other NASA missions aimed at deepening human knowledge of solar activity and its impacts. Merka talks excitedly about seemingly basic questions that researchers still haven’t answered about solar phenomena. For instance, why and how are charged particles quickly accelerated to speeds of several hundred or even thousands of miles per second after they leave the sun?

“We need to understand all the pieces to reliably simulate space weather and make good predictions,” Merka says.

Merka’s own research delves into the complexities of solar wind and the interactions that occur when this torrent of charged particles collide with Earth’s
magnetosphere. In the absence of major solar activity, solar wind can be relatively gentle, with particles cruising through space at about 250 miles per second before being slowed and redirected by Earth's magnetic field. But things get more interesting when particles kicked out during solar events such as solar flares or coronal mass ejections speed through space at much greater speeds.

These fast-moving particles plow past their leisurely cousins. The result, Merka explains, is much like what happens when a jet breaks the sound barrier in Earth's atmosphere. The sonic "boom" you might hear living next to an Air Force base is actually a shock wave that results from air not being able to get out of a speeding plane's way fast enough. This forms a sharp boundary between the undisturbed air and air that has piled up in front of the plane. In space, there's no boom anyone could hear. Instead, charged particles pile up when they encounter Earth's magnetic field and need to find a way around it. This forms another shock wave that scientists refer to as the "bow shock."

In artists' renditions, the bow shock often looks like a massive deflector shield from a Star Trek episode. Things aren't totally calm behind it, however. Solar wind slows, compresses, and then heats up at the bow shock, becoming turbulent in a region known as the magnetosheath. Moving closer to Earth, the pressure from the solar particles gradually decreases until it is balanced by the outward pressure exerted by Earth's magnetic field. The magnetopause is the final boundary beyond which relatively few particles can penetrate.

Predicting and modeling these shocks is one challenge. Another challenge is understanding what happens when solar wind comes in range of Earth's magnetic field. Just as charged particles pile up when fast sections of solar wind encounter slower parts, the particles start to pile up when they encounter Earth's magnetic field and need to find a way around it. This forms another shock wave that scientists refer to as the "bow shock."

Understanding how these layers react when the barrage of particles intensifies due to solar storms and interplanetary shocks is critical for predicting the impact these events will have on satellites, power grids and a host of other systems that people on Earth care about.

GPHI scientist Yongli Wang, who works with Merka and other scientists at NASA to accurately model these changes, explains that current modeling techniques face serious limitations. To understand changes in one layer, he frets, scientists have had to treat the others as unchanging or make simplifying assumptions about their shape.

Wang believes that an alternative he is developing with Merka and other colleagues will allow scientists to "forget about assuming structure." They are working on a new technique which will allow scientists to deal with all the layers simultaneously, drawing on a database that catalogs a wealth of satellite observations collected over four decades. Just as meteorologists have developed ever better models to understand and predict the intensification of hurricanes as they cross Earth's oceans, Wang and Merka are putting finishing touches

“"It is fascinating to realize how little we do understand.”

A Coronal Mass Ejection, as seen using the LASCO instrument. The dark disk blocks the sun to allow researchers to observe structures in the corona. The inner circle shows the size and position of the sun. Photo credit: SOHO/ESA/NASA
on a model that makes sense of data from solar storms. Such a model should help scientists at NASA and elsewhere more accurately predict both the course and consequences of these events.

“This is the golden key to solving this problem,” Wang says.

OBSERVING CYCLES

The prospect of new discoveries in the developing research field of space weather isn’t limited to tracking solar wind and eruptions on the sun.

Keith Strong, a GPHI scientist affiliated with the University of Maryland at College Park, describes a different set of challenges associated with understanding and predicting solar activity. Scientists have known for more than 150 years that solar activity waxes and wanes in cycles of about 11 years, but the mechanism that controls the sun’s magnetic activity—and ultimately produces this cycle—remains a mystery.

“That’s the holy grail of solar physics,” Strong says.

Finding that grail is not just an interesting task for researchers. Sunspots regularly appear on the sun’s surface as small, dark patches. Scientists now know that these patches are associated with intense magnetic activity which reduces the amount of energy escaping. That’s why the spots appear dark: Sunspots are actually cooler than neighboring parts of the sun with weaker magnetic fields.

Even with limited understanding of what causes these spots, astronomers have monitored and tracked them for more than 400 years. And for a 70-year period ending around 1715, there was relatively little such activity for these astronomers to see: The sun had entered an extended period of limited activity that is known as the Maunder Minimum.

Scientists debate the extent to which this period of minimal solar activity can be linked to an extended cold snap beginning around 1650 that brought decades of abnormally rainy summers and cold and snowy winters to Europe and North America. And how and why solar activity ebbed during this period is also a mystery.

More recently, the solar cycle that started in 1996 dragged on for 12.6 years, petering out only near the end of 2008. Predictions about the new cycle have repeatedly been wrong. Strong notes, highlighting the gaps in our knowledge: “It is fascinating to realize how little we do understand.”

Ascertaining the underlying mechanism of solar activity could be a huge asset in protecting our satellites and communications systems. It will also be critical if we ever embark on a new phase of space travel. A trip to Mars, for instance, would take about two years, and astronauts during that time could be exposed to potentially lethal streams of high-energy charged particles. Being able to predict when solar activity will be at a minimum will be critical.

Despite its tendency to belch vast quantities of high-energy particles during solar storms, the sun is a much less volatile neighbor than many other stars in the galaxy. As Merka notes, our sun’s relative consistency has been essential for life on Earth to develop. With astronomers discovering an increasing number of planets in orbit around distant stars, Strong says, the ability to recognize the signature of equally stable stars could serve as a “Rosetta Stone” for picking likely candidates to support life.

“By understanding variability,” Strong says, “we might be able to understand what planets could be habitable.”

Since March, Strong has been sharing his fascination with a potentially unlimited audience by posting daily videos on YouTube under the username “drkstrong.” Each episode of “The Sun Today” lasts about five minutes as Strong guides viewers through a series of observations about recent solar activity and explains the mechanics of such events as solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs).

On Aug. 2, Strong began his program with exciting news: “We’ve had a proton flare!” He notes it was a significant, though not unusual flare, and he quickly segues to the day’s trivia question: “How many times brighter than this... flare was the largest flare ever observed by astronomers?”

Strong goes on to show data and images from a variety of NASA instruments and satellites, with animations illustrating the blast of charged particles surging into space. At the end of the program, he answers the trivia question, recalling that the observation of the largest flare ever was made six years ago by astronomers looking at the star II Pegasi. That flare, Strong says, was 100 million times larger than the one just observed on the sun.

“That would have had some very serious consequences for the Earth,” he observes. “Like, our civilizations would probably be reduced to rubble, assuming any of us survived.”

But you needn’t worry about that happening here on planet earth. At least not yet.

“Just be thankful,” he says, “that we live around a star that is quiescent enough that we survived, but variable enough to be interesting.”

Opening spread photo shows solar flares as seen in extreme ultraviolet range. Photo credit: NASA/SDO
A coronal mass ejection (CME): Though Earth’s magnetosphere will deflect some of the particles headed toward Earth, CMEs and solar flares can have impacts ranging from auroras to damaged satellites and imperiled space travelers. 

Photo credit: NASA

In artists’ renditions, the bow shock often looks like a massive deflector shield from a Star Trek episode.

Researchers can detect different solar phenomena by focusing on particular wavelengths of light — here are images from the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) of the extreme ultraviolet sun over a complete solar cycle. 

Photo credit: NASA/SOHO

On Aug. 1, 2010, NASA’s Solar Dynamics Observatory recorded this image of widespread solar activity, capturing a solar flare at the upper left, a solar tsunami at the upper right, multiple filaments of magnetism stretching from the surface and other activity. 

Photo credit: NASA/SDO/AIA
TrueGritPlanet
by Dan Bailey
UMBC’s Exceptional by Example Campaign transformed the campus. But you can’t calculate its true impact without assessing how it helped members of the UMBC community change and grow.

The tale of a successful capital campaign is often told by the numbers. And by that yardstick, UMBC’s Exceptional by Example Campaign was a success.

The campaign exceeded its $100 million goal by $15 million – and strengthened UMBC in ways that improve access to the university, attract and retain the best students and faculty and support vital research.

But look past the spreadsheets and statistics and you’ll find stories of individual people – those who gave to the campaign and those whose lives and education were advanced in the effort.

One can only measure the Exceptional by Example Campaign’s real impact by assessing its effect on people in the UMBC community.

Greg Simmons ’04, M.P.P., vice president of institutional advancement, says that gifts to the campaign from a wide web of donors (more than 22,000) have allowed UMBC “to continue to be seen as a university that’s really leading the nation in terms of innovation, whether that’s innovation in the classroom, innovation in the lab or innovation in economic development.”

As the campaign officially closes, we at UMBC Magazine want to share some stories of the exceptional things that the campaign has helped achieve at the university – and allow you to hear from alumni about why they feel so strongly about the shared enterprise we’ve just concluded.

By Jenny O’Grady and Meredith Purvis
Pioneering Programs

Students in the now 23-year-old Meyerhoff Scholars Program know this saying well: To whom much is given, much is expected. So much so that, inspired by namesake Robert Meyerhoff and his late wife, Jane, alumni of the program (and their parents) supported the campaign to ensure their landmark program—which has become a much-celebrated national model—continues for decades to come.

Strong Figures

Christine Sweigart ’10, mathematics, knew she wanted to be a math teacher when she was six years old. And in the Sherman Teacher Scholars Program, founded by George and Betsy Sherman, Sweigart has put her passion to use, helping children from low-income families to gain essential math skills. She is now pursuing her master’s degree in teaching at UMBC in order to work in high-needs schools in Baltimore.

Planting Hope

Alumni often understand the importance of access to a UMBC education better than anyone. That’s why the Chapter of Black & Latino Alumni has supported two scholarships—the Second Generation Scholarship and the Esperanza Endowment Fund—to provide financial assistance to outstanding UMBC students committed to the advancement of minorities.

Secure Environment

When it comes to finding better ways to scramble passwords or keep your data secure as it floats in “the cloud,” UMBC is helping keep your computing secrets safe. Through a university partnership with Northrop Grumman, the Sync Program helps emerging cybersecurity companies like Five Directions gain a toehold in a rapidly growing industry.

Thinking Hard

UMBC’s Humanities Forum, sponsored by the James T. and Virginia M. Dresher Center for the Humanities, attracts some of the best thinkers of our time right to our students’ doorstep—and gets the university community thinking hard about broader intellectual issues, including the often-fractious relationship between the humanities and the sciences.

Picture This

UMBC’s nationally-recognized Imaging Research Center (IRC) has created amazing work ranging from a virtual tour of Washington DC’s Capitol Hill in 1800 to helping animate the ebullient work of local cartooning treasure Kevin “Kal” Kallaugher. But the pictures wouldn’t get made without support for the IRC by the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation and other donors.

Steered to Service

At one point in her life, Sheila Williams’ 11 was homeless and separated from her children. But scholarships for mature female students at UMBC—funded by the Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation—helped Williams obtain a sociology degree and begin a career dedicated to service. “Honestly, without my experiences here, I wouldn’t know how to serve them,” she says. “I know I would not have made it through without that support system.”
**Room of Their Own**

UMBC's staff also make gifts that change the university for the better. Vice president of student affairs Nancy Young comes from a family that loved recreational sports and community, and she recently decided to honor her father's legacy through a gift that renamed the UMBC's soccer team's locker room in his honor. "Sport is a great way to build community," says Young. "It supports and celebrates the connections we're trying to make between students from so many different backgrounds."

**Contribution of Notes**

Church has always been an important part of Charles Nicholas' life. One of the few memories he has of his grandmother, Grace, is sitting on her lap as she played "Jesus Loves Me" on the organ at the Market Street Baptist Church in Zanesville, Ohio. So when the computer science and electrical engineering professor thought about ways to give back to UMBC, he made an utterly personal choice: purchase an electric organ (dedicated to his parents, Charles and Barbara) for UMBC's department of music. Budding organists can now train on campus, when they previously had to visit local churches to practice.

**Enriching Arts**

Artists don't take a summer vacation. Linehan Artist Scholars recently wrote thank you notes to their donors, Earl and Darielle Linehan, that breathlessly shared their summer plans: six weeks of studying theatre in London; sharing flute technique in Maccagno, Italy; dancing at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in England; and experiencing the rich visual arts culture of Milan, to name just a few.

**Female Capital**

Associate professor of history Amy Froide, recipient of the Bearman Foundation Chair in Entrepreneurship, spent a year studying the ways women contributed to Britain's financial revolution during the late 17th century. Since 2006, a grant from the Kauffman Foundation has allowed UMBC to infuse more than 60 of its courses with entrepreneurial content.

**Paying it Forward**

Though his parents wanted Jim Hong '73 to go to college, they weren't sure they could afford it. Hong still remembers the look on his father's face when he announced he'd gotten a scholarship. "It was a huge burden off him," Hong says. Hong went on to study biology and pursue a career in microbiology. And, when he was able, Hong took the chance to lift someone else's burden by giving back to UMBC. Now, he's been a loyal supporter for more than 20 years. "I'm grateful for the experience I had there [at UMBC] and I want to give back," he explains. "I look at people with brains, who want to do it, and I want to help them."
Q: When you think of the words chosen for our campaign – “Exceptional by Example” – what comes to mind?

JACKSON: I love the phrase; it shows we’re setting the example, we’re setting the stage, we’re setting the bar to achieve excellence... whether it’s fundraising, or whether it’s the quality of our students and what they’re doing after they leave UMBC.

MOE: It’s a fantastic slogan because it not only speaks to the excellence of the students that we have and we’re trying to attract, but it also speaks to the excellence of the staff and the direction the university is going. It also speaks to alumni in that we have so many alumni who are out there doing fantastic things and are willing to give back to the university.

SMALL: When I looked at this... I think less of the physical plan, and more of the students who are currently here, and those who preceded them, and those who are yet to come. Because that is UMBC the way I see it... It’s the students, even from way back when there were only three buildings... I arrived on campus in August of 1970, so the first class was graduating, but there wasn’t much there but mud, and to watch what’s happened is absolutely phenomenal.
IMPRESSIONABLE TALLIES
The Exceptional by Example Campaign ran from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2011 (with a public launch in 2006, UMBC’s 40th anniversary year). The goal was to raise $100 million, and the final total was $115 million. To compare, UMBC’s previous capital campaign – 1995-2002 – had a goal of $50 million and raised $66 million.

Here’s how the donations broke down:

Q: What does it mean for UMBC to have exceeded our capital campaign goal so handily?
SIMMONS: It’s hard to overstate how important it is for a university our size and our age to cross the hundred-million-dollar threshold, especially considering this is our second-ever capital campaign. It means we have an extraordinary community of people who really believe deeply and have confidence in the work that we’re trying to do: being a research university that cares deeply about undergraduate education…. People are not only telling us to continue that work, but, quite frankly, they are saying that they want to be a part of it. They understand the idea of a true liberal arts experience to make sure people can be good neighbors, be good employees and be good leaders.

Q: Why is alumni involvement in the university and in capital campaigns so important?
JACKSON: Alumni involvement is critical, and I see it as a measure of success for the university. If an individual can get an undergraduate degree or an advanced degree from UMBC, go out into their career, conquer the world, and then remember that, I am where I am today because of the foundation that UMBC gave me: that is an excellent measure of success. It’s one that the university should strive for.

Q: Where does UMBC go from here?
MOE: From an alumni perspective… we’re working on building networks and fostering alumni involvement, looking out towards the 50th anniversary of the university. I think that by that time we will have some very entrenched networks of discipline-based and affinity-based groups that can network between alumni and students and businesses and create some really great opportunities for students coming out of the university.

Q: And future campaigns?
SIMMONS: Right now, we’re taking a period of time to thank people, to help people understand the nature of the investments that have been made and how we’ve been able to steward that effectively. What you’ll then see is a broad, multi-year conversation that really does start thinking about the 50th anniversary. How do we make sure that the people who are central to the success of the campus going forward really have the chance to participate in that dialogue?
You wake up one morning with a big, bright light bulb bobbing above your head. You start your day, feed the dog, the light getting brighter by the minute. Pretty soon, it’s keeping you up at night. Well, congratulations. Your “big idea” has arrived—and with it, a world of possibility.

So, now what? Do you cash in your life savings for seed money? Get a fancy business degree? Buy the book by that guy in the suit covered in question marks?

Maybe you take some (absolutely) free advice from Vivian Armor ’73, American studies. She is director of UMBC’s Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship and has some tips about how to move ahead safely and smartly so you can make all your wildest dreams come true.

Step 1:
REALITY CHECK
Your idea is precious and perfect and unique like a snowflake. But, how does it stand up to the scrutiny of others?

“Nobody wants to hear the baby’s ugly, but maybe it needs braces,” says Armor. She suggests running your brainchild past a few friends or family members you trust to be honest with you, as well as professionals in the industry related to your idea. Doing so can help you step away from your idea, and more objectively assess the pros and cons. The more feedback you get and the more open-minded you are about tweaking your idea to address potential flaws, the better chance you have of starting off strong.
Step 2:
WRITE A BUSINESS PLAN
Once you’ve put your idea through the blender, it’s time to write up some solid plans. Questions to consider: What is your timeline? What kind of support will you need to execute your plan? How will you promote your idea to potential buyers? Who are your competitors and why is your idea better? How much work is this really going to be?

“It helps to take out a piece of paper and really think about these things,” says Armor. Questions like these may take a bit of the wind out of your sails, but they’re important to answer early on.

Step 3:
PERFECT YOUR PITCH
A concept is never enough on its own – you also need to be able to quickly convince investors why it’s a great idea that they should care enough about to support. And that means perfecting your so-called “elevator speech.”

“Look, I don’t know what you’re selling, but if you can describe it well, you’ll help people to connect the dots,” says Armor, who again suggests turning to friends for practice. If you find you can’t describe your plan quickly and easily, you might need to take a quick detour back to Step 2.

Step 4:
KNOW THERE’S HELP OUT THERE
As in so many steps before, one fact rises above the rest in the world of entrepreneurship: it’s rarely a one-person show. Counting on trusted partners to refine your plan and give you new ideas is crucial, but so is relying on the many resources available to you as a budding entrepreneur.

Armor cites the Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship as a one-stop shop for all things “start-up.” The center works with faculty to help infuse courses across UMBC’s curriculum with entrepreneurial material. It also offers a campus “Idea Lab” and mentoring and internship opportunities. In addition, Armor touts the center’s Raymond V. Haysbert, Sr. Entrepreneurship Lecture Series, which provides a platform for successful entrepreneurs to candidly share their experiences and insights with the public.

“People are here to help you,” she says. “We want you to succeed.”

— Jenny O’Grady

(See page 42 for a story of a UMBC alumna who took these principles to heart in opening her own olive oil and vinegar emporium.)
This year’s *Arts and Humanities Afternoon at UMBC Homecoming* on Saturday, October 15 will focus on alumni filmmakers. To whet your appetite for our afternoon discussion on the art of moving images, we’d like to introduce you to some of the filmmakers who’ll be coming to the event, which will be held in the Skylight Room of the UMBC Commons from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m.

See more about each filmmaker, including interviews and trailers, at www.umbc.edu/magazine.

**Daphne Gardner ’09, acting and interdisciplinary studies,**
makes films that focus on the young female experience in America: loneliness, complicated friendships, getting laid, and hunting down the guy that shot your friend in the leg. She and her partner **Patrick Letteri ’09, acting and interdisciplinary studies**, are currently directing and acting in their first feature film, *Get Lost*. She currently resides in Brooklyn, NY.

**Getting Started:** “It was a culmination of events that led me to filmmaking. I always knew I wanted to act, but it was the desire to control action that led me to realize I wanted to direct. Coming from a background in performance it seemed natural to explore the role of directing, and once I took my first production class I’d felt I’d found a way to manipulate my emotional impulses into something bigger than myself.”

**What It Takes:** “In my mind, to be a good filmmaker, you have to be so many different things, but right now as I work on my first feature film, I think of the following attributes: patient, flexible, positive and determined. All of these qualities of course, are extremely difficult to possess at the same time on every shoot, but I’m working on it.”

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**Steven Fischer ’98, visual and performing arts,**

**Getting Started:** “There was no singular event that made me want to become a storyteller. I think growing up I just instinctively knew I was one; or let’s put it this way, I knew that I enjoyed the time in my imagination. I wrote and produced my first script at age 9. It was a silly radio theater-style adventure play, probably 10 minutes long. That’s how it was for me growing up.”

**What It Takes:** “I think ultimately it takes many things…. In a general sense I think it takes dedication to learning the craft, always creating, always writing, continually studying the work of the masters and of those who inspire you. It takes passion. It takes tenacity. It takes experimentation. It takes honesty. Take chances and don’t be afraid of failure. There is no such thing as failure if we learn from it and apply the wisdom to our future.”
Richard Chisolm ’82, interdisciplinary studies,
is a national Emmy award-winning documentary filmmaker and cinematographer with over thirty years of production experience. Based in Baltimore, he has shot films and television programs on a wide variety of subjects in the U.S. and abroad working for PBS, National Geographic, BBC, Discovery Channel and HBO. He was the director of photography for both of ABC’s *Hopkins* prime time medical documentaries (2000 and 2008). In 2011, he directed and shot *Cafeteria Man*, a feature documentary on school food reform. He is also the recipient of a Peabody Award, a Columbia duPont Journalism award, two Kodak Vision awards, three CINE Golden Eagles, and received a Distinguished Alumnus of the Year Award from UMBC in 2001.

**Getting Started:** “I was an artist as a kid, and when I hit adolescence, was given a movie camera by my brother. My creative pack of friends and I began to play with it for fun on weekends, treating it as just another tool for making art and experimentation. Eventually we edited together some footage and submitted a short film to a local film festival. It was accepted and screened publicly to a full auditorium at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Being in that audience, hearing and feeling the reaction of the viewers, was a powerful rush of inspiration.”

**What It Takes:** “I think to be happy and successful in film and video production, a person must either have a deep desire to tell stories, or to make art with it, or to embrace the skills of the craft, or any combination of the three.”

Shawn Vanden ’87, interdisciplinary studies,
says he found his career passion in his junior year at UMBC, when the (then) information systems management major took a film class as an elective. He set up his own production company, and writes and produces infomercials, commercials, and corporate video. He is best known for his creative ventures including the pilot television project *Red Rivers Healing: Untold War Stories from the Archives* (2001). He is currently working on a new project called *Grey Angel*, which weaves together a contemporary dramatic narrative with an actual supernatural legend which originated 200 years ago just a dozen miles from where he resides.

**Getting Started:** “Upon moving to Columbia in 1969, some neighbors were making an apocalyptic monster film in which they used me as an actor. They were also kind enough to allow me to sit in on some showing of “dailies” and some initial cuts. And in 1986, at UMBC, when I took my first film class, I realized that the early doodling in grade school and high school classes, my artistic skills, and my vivid imagination were coming full circle.”

**What It Takes:** “First, a passion to have a perspective, a point of view. Then a passion to tell that story in an original way – a way in which it has not been told before. This is where your unique perspective comes from.”

At press time, *UMBC Magazine* learned that noted filmmaker and 2005 UMBC Alumnus of the Year Brian Dannelly ’97, visual and performing arts, has also accepted an invitation to the October 15 panel. Dannelly is best known for his scathing but hilarious religious satire, *Saved!* (2004). He has also been a director on Showtime’s critically acclaimed show, *Weeds*. Find out more about Dannelly’s career at our website.
UMBC Class Notes is compiled by UMBC Magazine staff from items submitted online and by mail by alumni, as well as from news articles and press releases received by the University. This edition of Class Notes contains information processed by August 15, 2011.

How to Submit Class Notes

The deadline for submitting Class Notes for the next print issue of UMBC Magazine is December 1, 2011. We cannot guarantee the publication of class notes received after the deadline as production schedules and resources require strict deadline compliance. Notes and photos may be submitted online at www.umbc.edu/magazine or by mail at: UMBC Magazine – Class Notes, Alumni House, 1000 Hilltop Circle, Baltimore, MD 21250.

Photo Guidelines

Digital photos should be taken on the highest-quality setting. They should be 4 x 6 inches or larger and 300 dpi. Save the attachment as a TIFF or JPEG. Questions? Please e-mail to byrne@umbc.edu.

1971

Daniel Shub, sociology, pursued his interest in art and went on to earn his B.F.A. at MICA. He has been a partner in the graphic design firm of SDYM for 33 years, a firm specializing in design for nonprofit organizations locally, nationally and internationally. His interest in design is rivaled only by his passion for the sports of swimming and running. For the past two years he has participated in the 7.5-mile swim across the Potomac River to raise awareness and funds for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and other environmental organizations. In 2010, it took him four hours and 57 minutes to complete the course against wind, waves and current – and five hours and 32 minutes in 2011. Shub is also an adjunct faculty member in the graduate program of the School of Communications Design at the University of Baltimore. He is married to Mac Shub, a thermal engineer technician working at NASA.

1972

Peter Hubbard, philosophy, recently retired as a teacher in the Berkeley Unified School District. He now works as a consultant, providing teacher training on the use of technology in the classroom. He is also the ESL/ABE/ASE Student e-testing database administrator at Berkeley Adult School and teaches for the university’s TESOL program in Berkeley.

1974

Madelyn Ball, Spanish, who was recently named the new principal at John Carroll School in Bel Air, says she is “so excited” to be a part of school life. Ball previously worked for two decades at Our Lady of Good Counsel, rising to the position of assistant principal for staff development.

1976

Harry Johnson, political science, has taken his long relationship with the Greater Baltimore Medical Center as legal counsel, patient and board member to a new level, after being named as chairman of the GBMC HealthCare, Inc. board of directors. He joined the board of directors of GBMC’s foundation in March 2000, and he became a member of the GBMC HealthCare Board since September of that same year. Johnson is a partner at Whiteford, Taylor & Preston. In addition to his volunteer service at GBMC, he served as president of the Maryland State Bar Association from 2003-04. He also serves on the boards of the Baltimore Community Foundation and the Office of the Public Defender of Maryland.

1977

James Waller, interdisciplinary studies, will celebrate the publication of Drinkology Beer (Stewart, Tabori & Chang), the latest book in his “Drinkology” series, in October. A revised and updated version of the series’ first book, Drinkology: The Art and Science of the Cocktail, was published in autumn 2010. Waller lives in Lawrenceville, NJ, with his partner, Jim O’Connor.

1979

Jeffrey S. Armiger, English, has been named to the Baltimore-Washington Medical Center’s board of directors for a three-year term. Armiger, a resident of Severna Park, is a senior vice president with BB&T and has spent his entire 30-plus year career in banking. He is a board member of Anne Arundel Economic Development Corp. and a 1996 graduate of Leadership Anne Arundel.

1981

Ira Allen, biological sciences, is a pathologist and partner in Eastside Pathology, Inc. He is also the medical director of the clinical laboratory at Valley Medical Center in Renton, WA. Allen writes that “when I’m not in the office, I enjoy bicycling, playing soccer and singing barbershop quartet music.” His wife, Elizabeth Allen ’82, political science, and I just celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary with a trip to Turkey and Paris. Our daughter works at a veterinary hospital and our son just finished his junior year at Western Washington University in the graphic design program.

1982

Thomas M. Culp, visual and performing arts, works at WBAL-TV in Baltimore, where he is an Emmy Award-winning photojournalist.

Pete Kerzel, history, has been named managing editor at MASNsports.com, where he will shape and direct the website’s coverage of the Baltimore Orioles, Baltimore Ravens and Washington Nationals.
1983

Debra Popiel, M.S., psychology, has been named as secretary of the board of directors of the Association of Community Services (ACS). She is deputy director at Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, Inc., which provides Howard County’s only emergency shelter program and 24-hour crisis intervention services. Popiel is a resident of Catonsville.

1985

Nerry Mitchell, economics, received an ICON award at the Associated Black Charities’ Annual Gala in June. Mitchell is a managing director and senior compliance director at Citi. He also spent 16 years in the Maryland Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulation, eventually reaching the position of deputy commissioner. Mitchell also mentors inner city students on business, financial literacy and student leadership.

1986

James Hayes-Bohanan, geography, is a professor at the Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, MA. He took particular note of the magazine’s “Over Coffee” column, and writes that “Over the past decade, in fact, coffee has become a defining part of my own teaching in geography…On our own campus, we are moving increasingly toward fair trade, not just as a label, but as a teaching element.” He adds that he met his wife of 24 years, Pamela Hayes-Bohanan ’86, modern languages and linguistics, in professor Stan McGray’s French class at UMBC. (She works as a tenured librarian at Bridgewater State University.) Hayes-Bohanan blogs about geography at http://environmentalgeography.blogspot.com/

1987

John C. Berkley, computer science, was recently selected as “Omega Man of the Year” at the Second District of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity’s 63rd Second District Conference, held in Cherry Hill, NJ. Berkley is an information technology specialist with the Social Security Administration (SSA) in Woodlawn.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

As an analytical chemist and senior scientist for consumer goods giant Proctor & Gamble, Ronita Marple ’85 Ph.D., chemistry, observes that it’s not unusual for her to walk past a lab and catch a glimpse of a robot testing a product by performing a household chore over and over again, for hours on end, to identify a product’s weaknesses without stressing out human testers in the process.

Such grueling tests are part of how all of the nearly 125 products marketed by Proctor & Gamble end up in a consumer’s shopping cart. So is Marple’s own job mundane and robotic? “Never,” laughs the recipient of UMBC Alumna of the Year Award in the Sciences, who manages a team of chemists that unravel the technology behind each line of personal care at the corporation’s Cincinnati headquarters.

“Maybe there’s a new ingredient [in a product]: It’s my job to come up with a method to measure it,” she explains. Shampoo, for example. “There are just tons of ingredients in every bottle,” she says. Her team can scan a dollop of shampoo using a technique known as “whole product NMR” to determine the identity and concentration of each ingredient in the formula.

Marple and her team must also help ensure that most important ingredients of all — those responsible for cleaning and conditioning hair — remain stable and optimally concentrated between factory and shower. After all, that dollop of shampoo must trek cross country in a swelling delivery truck before it becomes lather on a lustrous head of hair.

You don’t want to feel like you’re washing your hair with dish soap,” says Marple. “On the other hand, you want enough conditioning that it feels good.”

To get that balance just right, Marple’s team needs hair. And lots of it. “We probably spend more than a million dollars a year just buying hair to test on,” she says. The company purchases real human hair from suppliers in the form of ponytails (or “switches” as Marple calls them), which are sent off to a lab for testing. Once a shampoo has been developed for a specific hair type, the final formulation is tested by consumers in the company’s on-site salon.

Before any of the nearly 125 products marketed by Proctor & Gamble end up in a consumer’s shopping cart, each one — personal care or not — must be beaten, battered, diluted, pressured and manipulated in every imaginable way to see how it holds up under the most grueling conditions.

Growing up in the small town of Bellaire, OH, Marple’s early exposure to science was relatively simple. “We didn’t have things like AP classes or weighted graded systems,” she says. “It was just a basic public school education.”

Graduate school is never easy, but Marple remembers her time at UMBC in the doctoral program in chemistry with great fondness. “Even though it was really, really difficult,” she recalls, “probably one of the most difficult times in my life, trying to do all the research and pass my qualifying exams and finish my dissertation. I just had so much fun. It was such a satisfying experience.”

The research that she did at UMBC made it even more worthwhile, Marple says. “A lot of times you’re doing really cutting edge things that no one has ever done before,” she says. And the best part? “That whole sense of discovery; just knowing that you’re really pushing the limit and discovering new things.”

After graduation, Marple began working at Proctor & Gamble. In addition to her work as a chemist, she also encourages mentoring and networking relationships among emerging female scientists from all corners of the world through the company’s Analytical Women of Excellence program. The job also has her traveling the world — including India, Sweden, Russia, Italy, Germany, England and Belgium — to connect with Proctor & Gamble’s other technical centers and establish projects through the company’s Connect and Development program.

But regardless of how far she’s traveled on her road to becoming a chemist, she credits “the family-like culture” at UMBC with teaching her the lesson of a lifetime: “You can be what you want to be. There might be obstacles but you can overcome them,” Marple says. “Just do what you have your heart set on.”

— Ann Griswold
TARGETING TASTES

Lebherz imports her olive oil from eight different countries and her vinegars from three countries. She buys in small quantities to keep the products fresh. The emporium boasts 25 different vinegars (including lavender and vanilla balsamic) and 30 different oils, including a blood orange and a Persian lime olive oil.

Most first-time visitors expect to see bottles waiting to be picked off the shelves. But Lebherz keep all her product on tap in “fustis,” which resemble ornate samovars. Cubes of fresh bread and small paper cups allow customers to sample oils and vinegars before making a purchase. “The stainless steel fustis have gaskets on top, which prevent oxidation and are key to keeping the oil from deteriorating,” says Lebherz, “and they also block the sunlight.”

Of course, Lebherz is on hand to offer suggestions to customers. “Believe it or not, wild blueberry balsamic vinegar is great on vanilla ice cream,” she says. “It really is a great complement to a number of desserts.” And her customers come up with their own twists — reducing wild blueberry balsamic and pouring it on pancakes, or using a dark chocolate balsamic to craft a terrific mole sauce. Indeed, a Frederick gelato shop rustles up one of its flavors with that wild blueberry balsamic, which is so popular that Lebherz has a hard time keeping in stock.

Lebherz credits her family for providing practical assistance as well as investments. Her store’s own bottles, notes Lebherz, “I told people that Baskin-Robbins ‘just’ sells ice cream.”

Working with the local Small Business Development Center (created by a collaboration of federal, state and local agencies), Lebherz put together a business plan. “My saving grace was Chris Olson, a retired businessman who helped me pull everything together and make projections,” she says. “But it was difficult because there were no other similar businesses to compare what I wanted to do.”

After extensive research and contributions from her own savings and financial help from family and friends, Lebherz threw open the doors of her store, Lebherz Oil & Vinegar Emporium, in June 2010.
Jonathan Heaberlin (IFSM, ’04) married Allison Myers on April 5th, 2011 in Las Vegas, NV, at the Little Church of the West Wedding Chapel.

1997

Dr. Jerome Adams, biochemistry and molecular biology, is an assistant professor of anesthesiology at Indiana University School of Medicine. He contributed a chapter on “Pharmacology Principles” for the recently published book, Anesthesia Student Survival Guide (Springer New York, 2010). Dr. Adams earned his M.D. from Indiana State University in 2002.

Delayne Johnson, mathematics, was a fellow in the first cohort of the National Science Foundation STaR Program for 2010-2011. The fellowship provides support in service, teaching, and research for promising early career mathematics educators. The experience culminated in a presentation of her research on equity issues in mathematics education at the annual meeting of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE) in Irvine, CA in January 2011. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Delaware in 2009.

Charles Maris, biological sciences, is the new assistant dean for research and sponsored programs at Bradley University in Peoria, IL. He writes that “My position involves mentoring Bradley University faculty in pursuing external funding. Although I miss mentoring research scientists in the laboratory and being a part of the tremendous upcoming advances in cancer immunotherapy, my new position allows me to work with faculty across the university, including the social sciences and humanities, as well as scientists and engineers.” Maris will also retain his adjunct faculty position with The Johns Hopkins University, where he teaches immunology and immuno-therapy to graduate students. His wife, Dr. Melinda Maris, joins him at Bradley as the university’s new director for pre-health advising. Maris concludes: “My UMBC diploma will be proudly displayed on my new office wall! Can’t wait to come back and visit campus again soon!”

Ronni Monaghan, M.P.R., policy sciences, has been named director of development for the St. Joseph Medical Center Foundation. She has more than a decade of service in Maryland nonprofits, including stints as director of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges and as director of institutional research at The Johns Hopkins University.

1999

Jeff Clark, visual and performing arts, recently produced, directed, and edited True Otaku – a new documentary about obsessive American fans of Japanese popular culture. After graduating from UMBC, Clark was hired by Fairfax County Public Schools in Fairfax, VA, to create educational television programming, and he continues to work for the district as a producer and director. His other credits include being a co-producer on the regional Emmy award-winning television series Flight School (2007) as a documentary filmmaker tracking the work of the nonprofit organization Heart for Lebanon. Clark’s production company, Cinema Show Films, is named after a festival-winning short video he created in 1989.

Laura Hanyok, biological sciences, is an assistant professor of medicine at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in the division of general internal medicine. She was a University Scholar at UMBC and did research in Suzanne Ostrand-Rosenberg’s lab. She attended medical school at the University of Chicago and returned to Baltimore in 2003 to complete her internal medicine residency at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. Hanyok stayed on as a chief resident from 2006-07, and since then has been on the center’s faculty. Her academic focus is medical education, in particular teaching residents in the outpatient/office setting and in inter-professional education. Hanyok also writes: “My other big interest in college was playing music, and I have continued to play my clarinet and currently play with the Hopkins Symphony Orchestra.”

Jodi Meyers, biological sciences, and Mark Tyler, history, gave birth to their third child, Noah David Tyler, on July 7, 2011. Older sisters Dayna Blair and Sophia Elizabeth welcomed their new baby brother with open arms.

2001

Sheena Taylor Mak, modern languages and linguistics, and her family welcomed a new addition in July. She writes that “Little Arun could not wait to join the brood! He came one week earlier than expected and Mom never made it to the hospital! He was born at home at 8 pounds, 9 ounces, 20 inches. Mother and baby are fine; father and sisters are elated.”

Calvin Williams, biochemistry and molecular biology, earned his M.D./Ph.D. at the University of Maryland, Baltimore in May. He entered the Internal Medicine Residency Program at Christiana Care in June.

2003

Lauren R. Boudra Chhay, biochemistry and molecular biology, joyfully celebrated the birth of Christiana Renee Chhay on June 23 with her husband, Rithy Chhay ’02, computer science. Christiana’s big brother Jeremy, and their families.
Dr. Letitia Dzirasa, biological science, completed her residency at The Johns Hopkins University in June 2010 and is currently working as a general pediatrician at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Odenton, Maryland. Dr. Dzirasa earned her M.D. from Meharry Medical School in 2007.

Jacqueline Eng, M.P.R., policy sciences, has been named president of the board of directors of The Association of Community Services (ACS). She is a director and past president of Bridges to Housing Stability, and has over 25 years experience in the development of regulatory and legislative health policy, including executive positions in the federal government and three nonprofit national and international organizations. She lives in Cookesville.

Amber Jackson, mathematics, earned her Ph.D. in mathematics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2011. Her dissertation title was "Multiscale Modeling of Multiphase Flow in Porous Media Using the Thermodynamically Constrained Averaging Theory Approach."

Jasmine McDonald, biochemistry and molecular biology, will be completing her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania Center for the Integration of Genetic Healthcare Technologies (CIGHT) in early fall. Her postdoctoral work has culminated in four scholarly presentations, one published white paper, two first author papers, and four additional first author papers to be submitted. Most recently, she has successfully competed for a fellowship position at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health in the Cancer Epidemiology Training Program. McDonald earned her Ph.D at Harvard University in 2009.

Luke Smart, ancient studies, is a third-year resident in internal medicine/pediatrics at the University of Rochester. Interested in pursuing overseas medical work, Smart has trained in leading short-term medical teams and also worked in a hospital in Ethiopia in February.

Rachel Dombrowski, political science, and Luciano Gomes ’03, geography, were married on June 18 at Stoney’s Seafood House in Brookeville Island. Luciano is a GIS Analyst with ManTech in Arlington, VA, and Rachel is an assistant states attorney in Charles County. They met and began dating during the first semester of Rachel’s freshman year at UMBC.

Jonathan Heaberlin, information systems management, married Allison Myers on April 5th, 2011 in Las Vegas, NV, at the Little Church of the West Wedding Chapel.

Kenneth Gibbs, biochemistry and molecular biology, was recently awarded the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology Policy Fellowship. Dr. Gibbs will be working with the National Science Foundation in the Directorate of Education and Human Resources where he will contribute scientific expertise and analysis to federal policy making. Gibbs earned his Ph.D from Stanford University in 2010.

Seth Miller, biological science, began his residency in radiation oncology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in July 2011. He earned his M.D. from the University of Miami in 2010.

Samuel Tillman, visual arts, moved to Brooklyn, NY, after graduation, working as a freelance videographer while earning his master’s degree in art education from Brooklyn College. Last year, Tillman moved back to northern Baltimore County. He currently teaches photography and multimedia at Hereford High School.

Kelly Mattingly Harden, American studies, and Eric Harden ’05, mechanical engineering, gave birth to a baby boy, Connor Riley, on April 17, 2011. Connor is the couple’s first child.

Erica McLaughlin, acting, is the TKTS patron services coordinator at Theater Development Fund, where she manages a team of 16 walking concierges at NYC’s TKTS Booth, located in the heart of Times Square. She is also a working actress who recently appeared in T. Schreiber Studio’s production of Lanford Wilson’s Balm in Gilead, which was nominated for seven New York Innovative
2007

DeLeon Gray, interdisciplinary studies, is a doctoral student of educational psychology in the College of Education and Human Ecology at The Ohio State University. He was recently the recipient of the prestigious 2011-2012 Spencer Dissertation Fellowship from the Spencer Foundation. Gray will use the $25,000 fellowship grant as his primary funding source while writing his dissertation, “A New Framework for Conceptualizing School Belonging: The Importance of ‘Fitting In’ and ‘Standing Out’.”

Clare Ryan, ancient studies, began work earlier this year toward her M.A.T. in the College of Notre Dame’s accelerated teaching program.

2007

Lauren R. Boudra Chhay ‘03, joyfully celebrated the birth of Christiana Renee Chhay on June 23 with her husband, Rithy Chhay ‘02.

Once upon a time, Omolola Eniola-Adefeso ‘99, chemical engineering, was on track to attend medical school. But she became a chemical engineer instead — so she could better attack problems such as her number one target: heart disease.

Eniola-Adefeso, an assistant professor of chemical engineering at the University of Michigan, investigates radical ways of delivering medicine that could prove efficient and effective than current practice. And she may succeed because she is thinks like an engineer — and not a doctor.

Eniola-Adefeso came to Maryland from her native Nigeria the age of 16. She began her studies at Catonsville Community College, before transferring to UMBC, where she met the late Janice Lumpkin, an African-American chemical engineering professor. Lumpkin not only guided her student into a field where her passion for engineering professor. Lumpkin not only guided her student into a field where her passion for engineering professor. Lumpkin not only guided her student into a field where her passion for engineering professor. Lumpkin not only guided her student into a field where her passion for

After graduating from UMBC, she took a doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania in 2004. Her scholarship for graduate studies there was actually named after Lumpkin — who also attended Penn and died tragically after childbirth in 1997.

In 2006, Eniola-Adefeso (pronounced ah-DAY-feeso and known to everyone as “Lola”) joined the faculty at Michigan where her lab seeks ways to create and use miniscule synthetic pellets to mimic white blood cells and deliver medicine more efficiently.

So far, she is succeeding with laboratory mice specially bred to have cardiovascular disease. She is moving next to larger animals before she attempts experiments on humans.

Why white blood cells? When there is an infection or injury in the body, nearly cells send out a chemical alarm. On receiving that signal, white blood cells — especially those known as neutrophils — leap to action.

Normally, neutrophils are spherical, but they can change their shape as they charge to the scene of injury, producing a sticky surface protein to match proteins at the target site. As the neutrophils pass injured tissue, their protein grabs onto proteins on the tissue and the neutrophils heist themselves out of the blood stream, infiltrate the cell walls and go about the work of healing.

The system is incredibly efficient and it’s the reason most of us recover from our illnesses by doing nothing but letting the immune system do its thing.

But sometimes the forces of healing need help (such as antibiotics) which come in the form of pills or injections. And that’s where Eniola-Adefeso’s research comes in.

Current methods of drug delivery lack efficiency. A pill goes through the digestive system and is absorbed into the blood stream. Injections take a more direct route into the blood stream. But in both cases, only some of the drug winds up at the target site. Plus, extra medicine can occasionally cause serious and even fatal side effects.

Eniola-Adefeso’s proposed technique solves both issues. And because her father died of a heart attack five years ago, she’s focused her attention on cardiovascular disease. She’s trying to produce pellets that mimic white blood cells and go straight to heart muscle or blood vessels to repair them. Injected into your body, Eniola-Adefeso’s pellets — loaded with the right proteins and medicine — would find their way directly to damaged heart muscles or arteries and deliver medicine contained within it. Ideally the pellets would be designed to release the medicine for weeks or months, possibly even years.

The complexities include identifying target proteins in the cardiovascular system and factoring in significant variations in blood flow in the body. When the heart pumps blood, the arteries proximate to it surge like a river. But by the time the blood gets to your big toe or the skin of your elbow, it has slowed to a mild stream without the surge.

To actually deliver the medicine, Eniola-Adefeso’s pellets must also be biodegradable, so she is also working on testing polymers and plastics, seeking substances which degrade at just the right rate for what she wants to accomplish.

Then there is size. Eniola-Adefeso needs pellets about the same size as the neutrophils, which measure about 100 nanometers to about three micrometers and require a microscope to be seen. “Shape and size matter,” she says.

Eniola-Adefeso also believes the system would work for other diseases as well, including cancer. And her work is already receiving recognition. In April, she was the 2011 recipient of the Lloyd N. Ferguson Young Scientist from the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE), an award that recognizes and honors scientific contributions and achievements and dedication to research.

— Joel N. Shurkin
Lily Rubinstein, history, received her M.A. in the history of decorative arts, design and material culture this year from the Bard Graduate Center in New York, NY. She is currently a research associate in the curatorial department at U.S. President James Madison’s home Montpelier in Orange, VA, where she is working on a project to furnish the mansion’s interior.

2008

Pamela Shurkin Meister, M.P.P., public policy, began her appointment as Harford County Council administrator in August. Meister previously worked as the associate executive director at the Baltimore Jewish Council.

Diana Van, biological sciences, graduated from University of Maryland, Baltimore, in May with a doctoral degree in physical therapy. Van has also passed her board exam, is fully licensed and accepted a full-time position with HCR Manorcare.

2009

Deepak Chinavle, M.S., computer science, has worked at Amazon’s headquarters in Seattle since graduation. His team at Amazon builds the platform which facilitates payments at the company. Chinavle’s main focus at the company is to define, design and implement multi-tier distributed software applications and overcome typical challenges like scaling, latency, etc. encountered in building large scale distributed systems.

Mike Fasulo, ancient studies and history, is in his second year of graduate studies at Texas A&M University. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in diplomatic history, with a specific interest in U.S.-Soviet relations in the 1970s and 1980s.

Chirag Patel, biological sciences, recently earned his M.P.H. degree in health science from The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health.

2010

Jen Kent, financial economics, and Nick Harvey, financial economics, are happy to announce their engagement. The two met at UMBC in early 2008 while taking an economics class together and moved to Boston, MA, shortly after graduating from UMBC. Nick and Jen plan to marry in the summer of 2013.

Benyam Kinde, biological sciences, headlined a national report on the successes of immigrant students in the United States STEM program issued by the National Foundation for American Policy. Kinde was the valedictorian of the class of 2010, and his story is the spotlight of an article about outstanding growth in the numbers of first and second generation American students in the sciences, technology, engineering and math fields.

2011

Phillip Fitzgerald, biochemistry and molecular biology, attended the 61st Annual Meeting of Nobel Laureates in Lindau, Germany, but he was not the only UMBC graduate to attend the meeting. Also in attendance at the Lindau meeting were Melissa (Liriano) Vyfhuis ’05, biochemistry and molecular biology; Isaac Kinde ’05, biological sciences; and Michael Rouse ‘03, biochemistry and molecular biology.

FRIENDS WE WILL MISS

Steven Blum ’71, social work, passed away on June 23, 2011.

John Edward Cromwell, III ’80, M.P.R., policy studies, passed away on December 22, 2010. He was a managing economist in the District of Columbia office of Stratus Consulting, an environmental research firm. He is survived by wife Becky Gatwood Cromwell, and two sons, William and Spencer Cromwell, his father John E. Cromwell, Jr., and a sister: Nancy C. Cromwell ’71, psychology.

Kyung (Suzanne Park) LeBourdais ’90, visual and performing arts, passed away from stomach cancer on March 23, 2010. She was 42 and battled the disease for two years. She is survived by her husband, Robert LeBourdais, and two children: Johnny (7 years) and Lucy (6 years).

Michael Timothy Webb ’08, psychology, passed away on July 25 in Annapolis.
Whether it’s 1967 or 2011, the arrival of a new set of freshmen at UMBC is always a headline event. (Especially when you move in during Hurricane Irene!) And now that the university has cemented its transition from a primarily commuter campus to a residential campus, move-in day becomes a bigger event each year. In 2010, 74% of incoming UMBC freshmen lived on campus. Let the invasion begin!
UMBC Homecoming has undergone major changes over the past three years, and a trio of dedicated staffers who lead the university’s Homecoming Committee – Kevin Gibbons O’Neill ’86, economics, assistant athletic director, Jen Dress, coordinator of major events in the Office of Student Life and Stanyell Bruce, associate director of alumni relations – have spearheaded the makeover. We got them together to talk about why the university has spent so much time and energy improving the Homecoming experience – and just what’s in store when you visit us over the weekend of October 12 through 15!

Why did UMBC decide to shift more emphasis to celebrating Homecoming as an event for students and alumni? And what’s changed as the university has done so?

Jen Dress: I think about the student who’s been here for four years. Our focus has been building an experience that students will think about when they are here – and that makes them want to come back as alumni. Four years ago, we had a lot of the same events, but they felt isolated from each other. Now we’re connecting them and increasing them in size and scope.

Take the Wednesday night bonfire. We now need an agricultural permit for the bonfire – which means a bigger, better, blazing fire. Students had skepticism about it: Will this really be cool? But you look at pictures and see how students are real close at the beginning and then have to move back as the bonfire ramps up. They see it’s a much bigger thing.

Kevin Gibbons-O’Neill: We in the athletics department have become better partners. For instance, we moved the soccer game to Friday night under the lights, and that’s created an amazing atmosphere. From Midnight Madness on Wednesday through the 5K Dawg Chase and club sport games on Saturday, we’re trying to make the experience fun. If students don’t have fun as freshmen and sophomores, they won’t come when they’re juniors or seniors – or when they are 40 years old.

What recent changes do you think will attract alumni – who are, after all, the traditional audience for Homecoming?

Stanyell Bruce: The alumni piece is challenging. But we’re getting better at it. We’ve only been doing Homecoming for 11 years, so alumni who graduated before 1999 really don’t identify with the event as much.

So we’re trying to let alumni know that there are a lot of options for them – and many events on the calendar are designed to appeal to different audiences. We have a community picnic on Saturday because we know that a lot of our alumni have families – and we wanted to have an event with an atmosphere that makes them comfortable bringing the entire family. But we’re also having a number of more grown-up events in the afternoon and evening, including a Taste of UMBC with live music from alumni bands. There is something for everyone.

Dress: Last year, the community picnic was a real gamble. We didn’t know what it was going to look like. But it was cool, because the event really does epitomize what sort of community we have at UMBC. There were athletics alumni coming over after a club game in the morning, or alumni coming for afternoon events stopping to eat first.

Bruce: We’ve put a lot of the day’s activities under the umbrella of “UMBC Festival” – the community picnic, carnival attractions, the Taste of UMBC. For me, it’s going to be exciting to see what the Quad looks like from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Homecoming Saturday.

Gibbons-O’Neill: Stanyell mentioned that we’ve only been doing Homecoming for 11 years. And as a university, we’re only 45 years old. You have to wonder what Homecoming was like at Harvard in 1681. Right now, we’re still the founders of what the tradition of Homecoming will be at UMBC.

— Richard Byrne ’86
Once upon a time, Joseph T. Jones, Jr. ’06 thought he couldn’t escape the city’s mean streets. Now he’s leading efforts to help reclaim the region’s broken families and enlarge its workforce.

By Elizabeth Heubeck ’91

I shared my culture at UMBC...

“My parents brought me up to be really culturally aware of where I came from, so when I came to UMBC, I wanted to focus on the second generation (Bengali) community. My junior year, I founded the Bangla Club and working with two other universities, started an annual show called Boshakhi Bang, which focuses on Bengali culture. This year I attended the sixth show and I’m really happy it’s still going on. I helped start something powerful at UMBC.

I love interacting with people. I love learning about what makes us all different. I love diversity. You know, there were signs along the corridor that said ‘Make UMBC Yours’ and so I did. I love UMBC, and I really wanted to make my mark here.”

— Narmin A. ’07, ’09

“Now is your chance to help the next generation of Retrievers make their own discoveries at UMBC. Your donation can help fund scholarships for students – along with other initiatives that strengthen their experiences here – giving them the chance to find themselves, just like you did...

Don’t forget to make your annual gift!”

Know Your Worth | UMBC Annual Giving

www.umbc.edu/giving
OCTOBER

Retriever Fever: UMBC Homecoming
October 12-15
UMBC Various locations
Do you have the fever? See the full line-up of activities online at www.umbc.edu/homecoming. We can’t wait to see you! $, R

NOVEMBER

Entrepeneurship Week
November 14-18
UMBC Various locations
Connect with current and aspiring entrepreneurs during lively panel discussions and exclusive networking events. Entrepreneurial alumni interested in serving as panelists and/or judges for the student "IDEA" competition should visit www.umbc.edu/entrepreneurship for more information.

DECEMBER

Lion King with CYA
Thursday, December 8
Reception: 6:00 p.m., Show: 7:30 p.m.
Hippodrome, Baltimore
Join us for the "Tony" Award-winning Broadway sensation that Newsweek calls "a landmark event in entertainment." Reduced price ticketing includes a reception prior to the start of the show. Seats are located in the balcony, section M-R. Learn more at http://alumni.umbc.edu/lionking.$, R

STAY IN THE LOOP
Keep up to date on alumni and campus events at Retriever Net, UMBC’s online alumni community. http://alumni.umbc.edu.