From the Desk of Dr. Charles Wall, President of Massasoit Community College

A Welcome to Massasoit’s Alumni and Friends

Dear Alumni and Friends, I hope you will enjoy the second edition of our newsletter. The Associate. I look forward to your feedback concerning this publication.

I am delighted to tell you that we are moving ahead with plans for our wonderful Gala celebrating 40 years of service to the community. Our 40th Anniversary Celebration will be held on June 29, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. We are planning an enjoyable evening of good food, entertainment, and reminiscing. All proceeds will go towards establishing a Modern Language Lab at the college. For more information please visit our website at www.massasoit.mass.edu and click on the Gala page.

We continue to progress on many fronts. We are currently underway with our 40th Anniversary Annual Fund Appeal sent to alumni and friends asking all to contribute $40.00. Thus far we have received over $16,000 from 170 donors. Our goal this year is $20,000. The gifts may be unrestricted or restricted to different funds (see our website) including the University Fund to assist eligible students with books, health insurance or to the Modern Language Lab Fund (to help establish a state-of-the-art Language Lab). It is not too late to participate in this appeal as every dollar raised is crucial to the college’s ability to serve the community. We warmly welcome your support and we appreciate your efforts to help us reach our goal. For further information, please visit our website or call us at 508-888-9100, x.2902, 2007. Thank you.

We have established a series of Alumni Art Receptions, Art, Art and More Art on the Canton Campus. At present, we are showing the work of Bonnie Tuck-Petruze, V2. Please feel free to drop by the Development and Alumni Office at Canton in any time to view her work. We will have an art opening in the fall of 2007 for another alumni artist to be determined. Please watch our web site for further information.

Our alumni have made the foundation of our Massasoit Community College family. We sincerely appreciate your input and we would like you to stay involved with us. Please email, call, or write to me with any stories or updates, as we would love to hear from you. We will continue featuring alumni and friends in future newsletters.

Again, please enjoy The Associate. I will be waiting to hear from you!

Sincerely,
Bonnie Blackler, President MCC Alumni Association

The Alumni Association

Hello To All! My name is Bonnie Blackler, member of the Alumni Class of 1992. I am President of the Massasoit Community College Alumni Association. The Alumni Association meets on the second Thursday of each month from September to June at 7:00 p.m. The meetings are held in the Student Center Conference Room, lower level of the Student Center on the Brockton Campus. Please feel free to contact me by email at alumni@massasoit.mass.edu. I will get back to you as soon as possible.

The Alumni’s primary mandate is to continue to increase funds for money scholarships, build working relationships with the many valuable organizations at Massasoit and to develop awareness of the Alumni throughout Massasoit Community College. Come join me and my other Alumni members in our efforts to develop high standards and widen the horizons. We will be putting together a gala reception for the Massasoit Community College graduating class of 2007. Do you like this event and do we hope to do this for many more years to come! We welcome any new ideas. Any student with us is considered a graduate and all graduates are welcome to be a part of the Massasoit Community College Alumni Association.

Terms, serving as President of the Massasoit Community College Alumni Association is a great honor! During my years as a student, Massasoit gave me so much and I have great memories. I now return some of those gifts as President.

Sincerely,
Bonnie Blackler, President MCC Alumni Association

Alumni Profiles

Flemming Peterson was a key player and captain on the Massasoit Community College soccer team that won back-to-back national junior college soccer championships in 1985-86 and 1986-87. He went on from Massasoit to star at Wake Forest University in Winston Salem, NC, earning All-Atlantic Conference honors in his senior year and earning a degree in Business Administration. He remained in Liberal Arts at Wake Forest, and has gone on to a dual career, as a part-time coach and as an elite women’s soccer team in his home country of Denmark, and as a Consultant for Infrastructure for BBS Nordic, a Business Partner of IBM. This is a compelling story, not unlike that of last issue’s featured foreign student, Panayides Hall.

Flemming was in the US for business in January of this year, and Coach Nick Palantzas, now Athletic Director and then Flemming’s coach, arranged a luncheon for Flemming and former teammates, associates and friends to celebrate his selection into the National Junior College Soccer Hall of Fame. The Associate recently spoke to Flemming to get his impressions about the role Massasoit has played in his athletic and professional career.

How did you wind up at Massasoit Community College in Brockton, Massachusetts?

Before coming to school in America, I attended the American School in Paris, I played soccer there, and as a student-athlete I was a member of the St. Mulier Soccer Club in Europe. I was on the French national soccer team and played for the university team at Yale University. I had also been coached by the coach of the American Soccer Association, who I was fortunate to meet. My former coach recommended me to Nick Palantzas, then Athletic Director at Massasoit, and the Massasoit coaching staff recommended me as well. It was a great chance to come to America and it was the best decision ever.

At the time, I knew almost about the States from the movies.

So when you arrived, was there a little culture shock?

Yes, a total new environment at a different scale was the first. I had been a soccer player in high social environment in Paris, around people with a lot of money and prestige. I wasn’t rich, but I was comfortable and secure in that environment. I arrived in Boston with my suitcase and headboard. Accustomed to high standards and protocol, I am enjoying life here. I am proud of Massasoit, but also moved around a bit at first, staying with families, along with Nick and his family, and then finding my own. The tone was not a lot harsher and more direct that what I was used to. I moved to Pleasant Street

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“Massasoit Community College will always be part of my story.”

Was it still hard to keep your focus? People from Scandinavia know how to work hard. People from India know how to do it. People from America know how to be average. So we’re able to cross borders, to fit in where we go. Plus, while they adjust, after getting over the early hurdles, I found the States a comfortable place after all. Soccer was important, but your career was your school and family.

So you graduated with honors?

I was an English major and minors in literature and American cultural history. I received a B.A. in English Literature with Honors.

We’re all hardworking people, but some are more successful than others. How do you explain what makes someone a success?

My parents. They taught me that the only thing you can control is your own actions. Your future is in your hands. I applied that to Massasoit. I took advantage of the opportunities provided by the College. I knew that I had to work hard and be disciplined to succeed.

What was the biggest challenge you faced while attending Massasoit?

The transition to American college life. I enjoyed soccer, but it was a different experience in Massachusetts compared to what I had in Norway. I wanted to learn about American culture and to make new friends. Through Massasoit, I met people from diverse backgrounds who helped me integrate into American society.

How did your time at Massasoit affect you?

It gave me a sense of identity in those days. It helped me develop self-confidence and a sense of purpose. It was a stepping stone to my future. Massasoit provided me with the skills and experience I needed to succeed. I am grateful for the education and support I received there.

What is the most memorable thing about your time at Massasoit?

Meeting the people, the faculty, and the staff was the most memorable. Massasoit was my home away from home during those formative years.

How are you doing now?

I am doing well. I have continued to pursue my education and have had the opportunity to work in various capacities. I have had the pleasure of working as an illustrator, and have even begun to pursue my career as an illustrator. I have also taught drawing, 3-D design, and sculpture at Taunton State University.

What advice would you give to someone starting their college journey at Massasoit?

I would advise them to take advantage of all the opportunities provided by the College. To work hard, be disciplined, and make the most of their time there. Massasoit is a community that values its students and offers them a supportive environment to succeed.

Carol Smith with her husband, Bill Smith

Carol Smith and Nancy Timmins

An issue we puzzled over is Elin and Stephanie Valzada, two graduates joined by marriage. This issue we feature two graduates joined by their careers and the similar path they took through Massasoit on their journey to professional success.

Recent Events

Massasoit Art Students Create Mural for Multi-Sensory Therapy Program at Taunton State Hospital

This fall, three MCC art students, directed by Prof. Robert Priest, designed and painted a five panel twenty-five foot mural for the “Sensory Room” at Taunton State Hospital. The mural will hang in a multi-sensory therapy room designed to provide a calming and relaxing atmosphere to patients who would otherwise require drugs or restraints to calm them. Sandy Epstein, Director of Community Resources at the Hospital, worked with Massasoit Professor Priest to secure the project as part of the hospital’s “Private Art, Public Experience” program.

The mural, proposed, designed and executed by Massasoit Art students, Christine Vinet, Sheryl Sage, and Nick Palantzas, was a continuous panoramic landscape that flows from a wintery mountain scene in Europe, through an American desert. Flowing water is the motif that links and harmonizes the expanse of the piece. Taunton State Hospital has worked with Massasoit previously, on a series of profile-promoting projects commissioned by Linda Dunn, and has over a hundred pieces of art hanging on its campuses, from schools such as Leslie College, Massachusetts College of Art, Shenandoah College and Westminster College. The mural was created as part of one of the many volunteer projects during the summer by these three students.

The China-section was painted by Christine Vinet, who had her first formal art training at Massasoit. Marion LaFlamme, who painted the European scene, staged a visit to the hospital to orient her to the location and purpose of the piece. The honors program gave her a support and pride for pre-calculus. "I would not have believed that pre-calculus could be fun, until I had the pleasure of Professor Joseph Cleary." The honors program gave her just the encouragement and self-confidence she needed to succeed. Then she learned about the honors program at Massasoit, and was accepted into the program in her first year. At age 47, while keeping up her honors and literature studies, Nancy made a career decision. She had worked at the Cushing Cinching School in Somers, and she knew that the Massasoit program was respected, and would give her the skills and confidence she needed to succeed.

Nancy Timmins received her honors program honors, learned about success and self-confidence and at the same time was inspired enough to become a part of three championship teams.

Timmins, with her husband, Bill Smith.

As Professor Priest says: “I see the mission of the school as an institution that gives the students a chance to make it as memorable as possible. We are committed to our students and to the community we serve.”}

What is “Multi-Sensory Therapy”?

Multi-sensory therapy is an activity which usually takes place in a dedicated room where patients experience a range of simultaneous visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli. These rooms are designed to create a feeling of comfort and safety, where the individual can relax, explore, and enjoy the surroundings. For additional information, see Baker, R., Dowling, Z., Warner, L. et al. (1997) Sensemaking: Its impact on living and working environments for elderly people with dementia. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 60, 213-218.

Contact Sheryl Savage at 508-588-9100 X 2603.

W e get our students off the ground when we start Visual Arts Professor Robert Priest if he had a goal for his students, that was his brief answer. As a graduate of the University of Massachusetts, he had worked with Massasoit students on a number of what a community-oriented college can do for its students, and that community binds itself to its students. It is a community that includes the student as a part of the team. Nancy Timmins with her husband, Bill Smith.

“Peopling the space and opportunity for people to grow, and to transform themselves.”

Professor Priest with the Taunton State Hospital Mural.

Another way that Professor Priest looks beyond the classroom is developing what are called “articulation agreements” with area schools for the very best students. These agreements with Bridgewater State College, Mount Ida to the MassArt College of Art, allows students to qualify for a dual degree program. By qualifying students to transfer to four-year schools and completing their professional training, Massasoit is a step, but not the final step. The goal is to launch the student, to get her or him ready for the next step. Professor Priest, Massasoit gives him the chance to reach beyond the classroom. “I think we are unique in the way we interact with our students. We understand that they have lives, that they have goals and challenges outside the college walls and we work with them. By the same token we are drawn to being productive, well transfer students and graduates through the use of rigorous curriculum and demanding instruction.”

Mural created by Massasoit Community College students.

Going back to the beginning, the first 40 years of service to the community. We hope you will be able to be a part of this joyful celebration filled with remembrance, fun, and the chance to connect with old and new friends! For more information please call 508-588-9100 x 1102 or visit our website www.massasoit.mass.edu.