Cornell Catering staffer Kimberlee Smith responds to call of need

NANCY DOOLITTLE

It is just part of Kimberlee Smith’s job as a sales manager in Cornell Catering to answer calls of requests for Catering’s services.

But when she took a long-distance call from a daughter whose 84-year-old father – a Cornell professor emeritus living in Ithaca – was in distress and in need of nourishment, Smith knew she had gotten a request outside of the services Catering offers.

She also knew she had to help.

Smith did not know that her help would later prompt the daughter to write Cornell Catering in thanks for what Smith had done, or that that testimony would find its way to Pawprint.

“In mid January, my Daddy was ill,” wrote the daughter (who prefers her family remain anonymous). “He said he must have the flu and was not interested in eating, and was feeling weak.”

As the days progressed, he became even weaker – too weak to drive to a doctor’s office – so the daughter called all the markets in Ithaca to see if they could deliver food to him. Since he is vegan, calling a pizza place was out of the question, and none of the other markets would deliver. In hopes that Cornell Catering might be able to advise her, the daughter called there, and outlined her dilemma to Smith.

“In mid January, my Daddy was ill,” wrote the daughter (who prefers her family remain anonymous). “He said he must have the flu and was not interested in eating, and was feeling weak.”

As the days progressed, he became even weaker – too weak to drive to a doctor’s office – so the daughter called all the markets in Ithaca to see if they could deliver food to him. Since he is vegan, calling a pizza place was out of the question, and none of the other markets would deliver. In hopes that Cornell Catering might be able to advise her, the daughter called there, and outlined her dilemma to Smith.

“I know that if I were in her situation, I would want someone to look after my father, so I did not feel I could say ‘no’ to her request,” said Smith, who was compelled to find a way in which to accommodate the father’s needs.

Smith and the Cornell Catering culinary team put together a package of food that would give the professor emeritus immediate sustenance and meet his vegan dietary needs.

Smith added some hot soup to that package from the convenience store downstairs, and one of the drivers took the food to him.

“A few hours later my Daddy called me (with a mouthful of delicious bisque) to inform me of the delivery and how happy he was,” wrote the daughter. Her father arranged for a former Ph.D. student to take him to urgent care, where he then learned he had had a stroke.

The daughter updated Smith on his condition and said she would come to Ithaca.

“I could not get the family out of my mind,” said Smith, who kept in touch with the daughter over the next few weeks through email to learn of his progress back to health. Now, the professor emeritus is home, and Smith and the daughter continue to correspond. “It warms my heart to know that someone else cares,” wrote the daughter.

“Thank you to Kimberlee and all the great people who made my Daddy’s recovery successful.”

Volunteers still needed for Slope Day

Slope Day, slated for May 3, needs volunteers to provide support and care for their fellow Cornellians.

The task of volunteers is not to police Libe Slope, but to help ensure that the last day of classes is safe, relaxing and enjoyable.

Volunteers may select from among a variety of duties and two shift lengths. Volunteers are needed for four-hour shifts (so-called level 2 volunteers) and to a lesser extent, for two-hour shifts (level 1 volunteers). Volunteers can choose from a variety of duties.

To volunteer

Supervisory approval is needed for release time from work for volunteer hours that coincide with scheduled work hours. Hours spent volunteering will be considered paid release time (i.e. paid leave) only if they coincide with scheduled work hours. Hours spent volunteering that fall outside of scheduled work hours will be without pay. For more information about volunteering and pay practices for Slope Day, see http://pawprint.cornell.edu/?q=articles/2013/04/volunteers-needed-for-cornell-slope-day-may-3.

Staff and faculty who wish to volunteer are asked to submit an online application, found at http://slopeday.cornell.edu/volunteer/, where the dates, times and location for the training can also be accessed. Volunteers should plan to attend one of the training sessions to review their volunteer duties.

E-mail slopehelp@cornell.edu or call 255-3513 with questions.
How is spam getting in your mailbox if Cornell supposedly blocks it?

When you scan your Inbox each morning, chances are you’ll spot a few messages that turn out to be spam (junk mail). Lately, they aren’t even marked with the telltale PMX signature that Cornell’s anti-spam system adds to questionable messages. What’s going on?

Cornell is, in fact, still blocking gargantuan quantities of spam every minute, using Sophos PureMessage. On April 8, for example, Cornell received 4.2 million messages and rejected almost 2.9 million.

That’s not unusual: the average reject rate for the past year was two-thirds.

What is unusual is how much more email Cornell is getting. Since April, it’s leaped from an average 2 million messages a day (counting rejected spam) to 3-4 million.

Several hundred spam tests, updated all the time, are run against every message that comes through the Cornell email system. Over 90 percent of spam is caught and rejected.

The spam that slips through reflects the power of human ingenuity. Spam costs almost nothing to create applications that draft an unending variety of subject lines and fake addresses, and collecting email addresses – or guessing at them – is also incredibly easy.

This relentless onslaught of spam means that, although Cornell’s email administrators tirelessly tune the university’s spam defenses, some spam will make it through. If they could keep everyone at Cornell from ever receiving spam again, they would, but in the end your (and Cornell’s) best defense is to tune the university’s spam defenses, some spam is caught and rejected.

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This relentless onslaught of spam means that, although Cornell’s email administrators tirelessly tune the university’s spam defenses, some spam will make it through. If they could keep everyone at Cornell from ever receiving spam again, they would, but in the end your (and Cornell’s) best defense is always the Delete key.

Learn more about how to guard against Internet fraud at www.it.cornell.edu/security/safety/fraud.

Tech Training Spotlight:

Want to learn how to create and format multi-page publications such as newspapers, books, newsletters, and brochures? Would you like to be able to correct photos or create photographic special effects? Register now for an Adobe InDesign or Photoshop class scheduled for June 13.

For a complete listing of technical training resources, see www.cit.cornell.edu/training. Email questions to workshop-info@cornell.edu.

Incoming students on a Fall Creek Gorge hike cross the Suspension Bridge.

Police Chief Zoner urges biking, running and gorge safety

As the weather begins to warm, students, faculty and staff are spending more time outside, and Police Chief Kathy Zoner has issued reminders about biking, running and gorge safety.

A full set of resources for bikers and pedestrians, including Cornell and New York State regulations, can be found at the Cornell Bicycle and Pedestrian website (http://www.bike.cornell.edu/index.html) (see box below).

“Remember: ‘Be Safe, Be Predictable, Be Seen!,’ said Zoner. “Whether you are a biker or runner, please travel on the correct side of the roadway, heed the traffic signals and wear high-visibility reflective and fluorescent gear. Walkers and runners should face oncoming vehicular traffic. Cyclists should travel with traffic, in bike lanes where provided.”


The dangers as well as the beauty of the gorges increase with higher water levels. “Most gorge trails are presently open, except those under reconstruction,” Zoner said. “I urge trail users to enjoy the outdoors while using caution, not to wade into creeks, and remain on open trails, staying off of closed trails or other restricted areas.” Hikers should also watch for rock falls, as variances in air temperatures can increase the likelihood of these and create a hazard, Zoner said.

Information about hiking in the gorges can be found at: “The Gorges of Cornell: Trail Map and Safety Information” (http://www.risk.cornell.edu/pdfs/gorgebrochure.pdf) and at the Cornell Plantations webpage, Hikes on Campus (http://www.cornellplantations.org/trails/hikes).

Cornell guidelines for cyclists and in-line skaters

Bicyclists, in-line skaters and skateboarders are allowed anywhere motor vehicle travel is permitted, staying as far right as practicable. The same rules of the road that apply to motorists apply to these modes of transportation.

Travel in the street or on paths marked with white symbols as bike lanes. When you travel on a shared path (marked with yellow symbols), ride slowly, yielding right of way to pedestrians. If a sidewalk or path is marked with a red symbol, or not marked at all, you must dismount.

A headlight and tail light are required by law when you are biking in darkness.

Wear bright and/or reflective clothing day and night.

It is illegal to wear headphones while traveling.

Don’t weave in and out of traffic.

The more predictably you ride, the safer you are.

Look, signal and look again.

Use hand signals to let drivers and other cyclists know where you’re going.

Don’t listen to music, talk on the phone, text or be otherwise distracted while riding.
No Excuses participants have lost a ton

Just past the half-way mark in the eight-week No Excuses contest, 897 participants have already lost 3,911 pounds, or nearly two tons of weight.

The contest is based on the greatest percentage of total weight lost for each of the 86 competing teams. Currently, only half of a percentage point separates the top four teams.

Defending champs No CalZones are currently in fourth place, feervishly battling against their co-workers on another Facilities Services team, Gym Class Heroes, who are trying to hold onto first place. Six other teams from the Division of Facilities Services are participating in the challenge, as well as eight teams from the College of Veterinary Medicine and four teams from Dining Services. Many teams have a mix of people from all across campus, even including off-campus locations.

Prizes include $50 Wegmans gift cards, Regal Cinema movie tickets and trophies for first, second and third place.

Contest participants have been encouraged to try new physical activities or new recipes. So far, participants have walked all over campus, with some even tackling the stairs at Schoelkopf; tried such group exercise classes as Jazzercise, Muscle Pump and Zumba; used DVD’s for pilates, yoga, Jillian Michael’s 30-day shred, P90X and dance fitness; and started such new activities as swimming, ice skating, unicycle riding, trampoline-jumping, belly-dancing and underwater hockey.

Participants also learned about healthy weight loss through educational webinars created by Wellness Program staff on such topics as using online food and exercise tracking programs, emotional eating, eating out, and how to lose eight pounds in eight weeks. These webinars are available to all at http://wellness.cornell.edu/noexcuses_recorded_webinars.php.

See the full contest standings on the Wellness website.

Wondering how the top teams are succeeding?

Scott Pedersen, No CalZones team captain, said, “Our main driving force is to stay on top to repeat our performance from last year. The competition is proving quite resilient and our plans of an easy victory have been thwarted by the drive of our competitors.” Kevin Grant, Blazing Lovehandles team captain, said, “Sometimes I feel as though we are at a disadvantage: we are a team of dining staff and are around food all day. But, promoting knowledge of the food ingredients that we eat has helped. At the end of the day, weight loss is as simple as calories in, calories out. For as much as you consume in a day, you must burn more calories through exercise and daily work in order to lose weight. The key to our weight loss is not dieting, but restricting ourselves on certain items, and using those items as our ‘rewards’ when we reach certain goals.”

Matthew Casey, Gym Class Hero team captain, said, “We all keep our support groups involved with our success and setbacks. Friends and family are always asking how much the team has lost or what place the team is in, which is very encouraging.”

Vice President KyuJung Whang has also shown his support for the Facilities Services teams by highlighting his division’s involvement in the contest at Facilities Services’ Employee of the Quarter Celebration April 11. So far, his division accounts for more than 500 pounds of the total weight lost by all teams. Whang encouraged all staff to get outside and enjoy Cornell’s campus.
Government relations VP Johnson announces retirement

Stephen Philip Johnson, vice president for government and community relations, has announced his retirement after 40 years of service to Cornell University.

“In his roles as assistant vice president for government relations, heading the Washington lobbying office, and most recently as vice president for government and community relations, Steve has given exemplary service to the Cornell community and to the people of Ithaca, Tompkins County, New York state and our country,” said President David Skorton. “He has advocated for effective legislative action to help support the educational, research, health care and public engagement missions of Cornell and others in higher education and, in so doing, has had an enormously positive effect on us all.”

Johnson will continue in his current leadership role until a successor is found. See Skorton’s statement on changes in Cornell’s external relations organization, at www.cornell.edu/statements/2013.

For the past six years as vice president, Johnson has led the strategy and operations of Government and Community Relations, with offices on the Ithaca and Weill Cornell Medical College campuses, in Albany and in Washington, D.C., directing the university’s legislative efforts and coordinating its involvement with government-focused higher education associations.

Johnson has also advocated for the university’s interests by developing strong relationships with members of Congress, White House and federal agency officials, and special-interest groups; supervised the university’s lobbying activities at state and federal levels; and worked on behalf of such regional economic development initiatives as the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council.

“It has been an honor to represent all parts of this great university,” said Johnson. “I’ve enjoyed the privilege of working for and with President Skorton, his senior leadership team and Vice President Glenn Altschuler. I appreciate all that my staff has done to support me and the office, and to further the university’s objectives at the federal, state and community levels.”

Johnson also advanced revisions in immigration law to permit the employment of outstanding scientists and scholars under the H-1B visa program, including securing permanent exemption for higher education. He organized the first joint federal lobbying day for New York medical colleges. He also established the university’s federal relations office in Washington, D.C., in 1999.

For the past several years, Johnson has served as an informal mentor to underrepresented Cornell students interested in public policy, introducing them to Washington lobbying efforts and helping them develop various student programs.

“Vice President Johnson is simply a legend – smart, passionate and filled with kindness,” said Julio A. Cabral Corrada ’13. “I met him four years ago when we organized together the visit of Puerto Rico Gov. Luis Fortuño to Cornell. Since then, we have collaborated in a myriad of ways. Whether lobbying for student Pell Grants or advocating for faculty research funds, Steve works with a deep sense of responsibility and determination. I am genuinely grateful to have him as a mentor.”

Prior to serving in government relations, Johnson was a program coordinator and extension associate for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, 1972-84. He helped secure federal or state funding for such initiatives as Cornell’s Food Science pilot plant, the Cornell University Center for Advanced Computing, the Wilson Synchrotron Laboratory, other capital facilities on the Ithaca and Geneva campuses, and the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico. He also helped establish the first interstate nutrition education program and pesticide safety education program for Cornell Cooperative Extension’s program for migrant farm workers and their families.

Johnson received his Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and his B.A. from Pennsylvania State University. His wife, Lorraine, is a 1966 graduate of Cornell; they have two sons who also are Cornell graduates: Chris ’96 and Marc ’01, MPA ’04.
Cornell Plantations receives landscape architecture award

Cornell Plantations has received national recognition by the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) for its parking and storm water management site plan for the Brian C. Nevin Welcome Center, including a strip of trees in the parking area and a bioswale garden. SCUP’s Honor Award for Excellence in Landscape Architecture will be accepted by Minakshi Amundsen, Cornell University planner, at the society’s annual conference in July 2013.

In concert with the construction of the Nevin Welcome Center, which was opened in 2011, Cornell Plantations made significant improvements to the surrounding botanical garden. These improvements started with a new parking area and tour-bus drop-off zone. The parking area and arrival plaza were partially constructed of a special substrate soil design that allows better root penetration to encourage vigorous tree growth. The filter strip at the parking area is shaded by trees that will become part of the Plantation’s urban tree collection.

Adjacent to the parking area, a new bioswale provides an innovative landscaping approach that precludes the need for conventional underground drainage systems. The bioswale garden includes plants that can withstand dry and wet conditions, and that filter surface water runoff from the parking lot and surrounding areas.

“We are thrilled that our hard work and conscientious development has been recognized by this prestigious organization,” stated Don Rakow, the E. N. Wilds Director of Cornell Plantations. “Cornell Plantations strives to be a model of bold, sustainable design in all of our projects,” he said.

The Society for College and University (SCUP) Excellence Awards Program was begun in 2000 to acknowledge innovative, collaborative, multidisciplinary and integrated approaches to planning and design.

Magazine hits 50

The display “Living Bird at 50: Celebrating the Lab’s Flagship Publication,” a retrospective of the Cornell Lab’s award-winning quarterly serial, is now showing at the Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods, Ithaca, highlighting major progressions in the magazine’s focus and design as well as major stories. The display is available for viewing daily when the library is open (normally Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-noon and 1-4 p.m.), until the last weekday of the month.

Birds and blossoms

In collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Cornell Plantations is offering Friday morning bird walks at Cornell Plantations and Sunday wildflower walks in Sapsucker Woods. Walks are free and will be held rain or shine. Pre-registration is NOT required.

- Bird walks will occur at 8 a.m. on the following Fridays: April 26, May 3, 10, 17 and 24. (Meet at the Mundy Wildflower Garden entrance, corner of Caldwell Rd. and Forest Home Dr.)
- Wildflower walks will be held at Sapsucker Woods on the following Sundays, at 1 p.m.: April 28, May 5, 12, 19 and 26. (Meet at the Lab of Ornithology visitor center, 254 Sapsucker Woods Road.)

Zoner takes it in the face for charity event

To raise funds for a non-profit organization, Sharsheret, that supports Jewish women with breast cancer, Chief of Police Kathy Zoner volunteered to be “pied” with whipped cream pies, April 16 on Ho Plaza.

The event, called AEPie Toss, is hosted by Alpha Epsilon Pi.
The Ithaca Dragon Boat Club (IDBC) completed its annual “Inlet Cleanup” on April 13, organized by member Paul Closs. More than 500 pounds of trash, including clothing, metal, and glass, were collected. “This is our opportunity to give back,” says Closs. “We use the inlet each year to practice and represent Ithaca in the International Dragon Boat Competition, and we appreciate the opportunity to use it.”

Joining the IDBC were members of the Stand Up Paddleboard and Outrigger Community. The three clubs compete regionally and nationally each year, and also host the Finger Lakes International Dragon Boat Festival, which will be held on July 13 and 14 at Cass Park.

For the dragon boat festival this year, community members are encouraged to create a team of 20 paddlers to compete for the title of “community champion.” In the past, such local higher education organizations as Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College have been represented.

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**2013 Locally Grown Dance Festival, May 1, 2 and 4**

Faculty and student dancers, actors and choreographers from Cornell and Ithaca College will show off new work during the 2013 Locally Grown Dance Festival, sponsored by Cornell’s Department of Performing and Media Arts, May 1, 2 and 4 at 7:30 p.m., in the Kiplinger Theater, Cornell’s Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts, 430 College Ave.

The 2013 festival, focusing on the theme “cultivating risks,” questions and examines the idea of risk that lies at the heart of the arts. To challenge the dancers and illustrate the risk in the concert, co-directors Jumay Chu and E.D. Intemann, the department’s resident lighting designer, asked sound designer Warren Cross to score the production independent of the dancers and choreographers. After developing the score and their choreography separately, they shared their work to find how it fit together.

Tickets: $11 for students and seniors; $13 general. Tickets can be purchased at www.schwartztickets.com, in person at the box office or by phone at 607-254-2787.

**Kareiva to reboot environment debate in Iscol Lecture**

Peter Kareiva, Ph.D. ’81, chief scientist for The Nature Conservancy, will deliver the 2013 Jill and Ken Iscol Distinguished Environmental Lecture, “Overcoming Dogma and Prophecies of Doom to Save Nature,” April 22 at 5 p.m. in Call Auditorium, Kennedy Hall. Kareiva will argue that although conservation is on the defensive, it can move forward by embracing the potential for recovery, restoration, and even rewilding, while realizing that nature never stands still. New messages, new science, new alliances and a new nature are conservation’s best hope, he believes.

Kareiva mentors more than 600 staff engaged in conservation science around the world. Kareiva received his Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from Cornell in 1981 and joined the faculty at Brown University. In 1984 he began a 20-year tenure at the University of Washington before becoming director of conservation biology at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

He moved to The Nature Conservancy in 2001. His visit is sponsored by the Jill and Ken Iscol Distinguished Environmental Lectureship, which brings prominent scholars, newsmakers, scientists and leaders to Cornell to address environmental issues. It is presented by the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future.
Kudos to Pat Leonard ...

Pat helped lead a successful Great Backyard Bird Count, the largest ever worldwide bird count, with more than 26 million bird observations submitted from 107 countries in just four days! She went above and beyond before, during and after this historic count to ensure best possible experience for participants and for national and international news media.

Congratulations to Pat and the team!

– Anonymous

If you would like more information on the Kudos program, or to submit a Kudos, see: http://assembly.cornell.edu/EA Awards/Kudos.

Kudos received to date, but not previously recognized, include:

George “Wes” Buchanan
I have had to rely on Wes many times to resolve complex payroll challenges. He is exceptionally patient, but drives hard to resolve any problem quickly. I appreciate his exceptional service.

– Joseph D’Abbracci

Gloria Loehle
This is just the latest example in a long line of acts of excellent service that Gloria provides to our department every day. Gloria single-handily ensured that an extremely important conference in the Virgin Islands could be held after the hotel there refused to sign the required documents from Cornell University. She doggedly ran interference between purchasing/procurement, the financial transaction center and risk management, the hotel’s risk management office, and the project, coming up with a document that all were comfortable signing. She saved the day!

– Deborah Fisher

George Spisak
THANK YOU to George Spisak for his understanding and amazing help in allowing us to get through the latest round of deadlines and information-sharing for Activity Insight. He never got frustrated (though given ample opportunity) and was quick with explanations and the necessary ‘insight’.

– Allison Pelletier

Jose Zavala
I want you to know that you have an exceptional employee in Jose Zavala; he is an asset to your department and the university. His calm, patient manner was a great help in answering questions regarding the project here at 116 Maple. His knowledge of the network and explanation of the process demonstrates great communication skills. He stayed calm during the outage yesterday and continued to demonstrate a great ability to work well under pressure. The quality of his customer service is an indication of how seriously customer service is taken in your department, and I personally appreciate that!

– Gary Cremeens

Men’s Lacrosse to host Clinic for a Cause, April 28

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once again, the Cornell men’s lacrosse team will host its annual fundraising event for the Dream Factory of Central New York, holding the Clinic for a Cause, April 28, 12:21-3:30 p.m., at Schoellkopf Field. The Clinic for a Cause gives youth lacrosse players in the community, grades 3-8, an opportunity to learn skills, strategies and sportsmanship from one of the top collegiate lacrosse teams in the nation. Cost: $40 per participant.

The members of the Cornell men’s lacrosse team will be on hand to teach skills, give instruction and run games. Afterwards, participants will be treated to a tour of the Big Red locker room, as well as an autograph session and pizza party with the Big Red. Proceeds from the clinic will benefit the Dream Factory of CNY, which grants wishes to critically and chronically ill children in the local area. It is the second largest wish-granting organization in the United States. Should you know a child who might be eligible for a dream, or for more information about the Dream Factory, visit www.dreamfactoryinc.org, http://youtu.be/0eN75BOqTv4, or contact centrenewyork@dreamfactoryinc.org, or call 607-272-1264.

Preregister by contacting Ross Gillum at rpg46@cornell.edu or by calling 972-978-0672, or by sending checks, payable to Dream Factory of Central New York, to: Cornell Lacrosse, Teagle Hall, Campus Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850-6501, by April 23. Payments can also be made on the day of the clinic. Same-day registration begins at 11:30 a.m. at the field entrance to Schoellkopf Field.

For more information, see: https://www.facebook.com/#!/events/528186843889799/
MUSICAL PICKS

Many concerts and other musical events occur over the next month. Here is just a sampling of some upcoming. For more, see the Events Calendar, at http://events.cornell.edu/.

Folksong concert: California-based folk singers Larry Hanks and Deborah Robins will present a mix of cowboy songs, work songs, political and topical songs, and old ballads, April 20, 8-10:30 p.m., McGraw Hall. Hanks has performed with Mike Seeger, Utah Phillips, Geoff Muldaur, Malvina Reynolds, and Janis Joplin, and now his partner in music and life, Deborah Robins. Tickets:Ithaca Guitar Works, GreenStar Market, Autumn Leaves Books, Bound for Glory, online http://www.folksong.org/, or at the door.

Jazz festival: The 22nd annual Jazz Festival will be held April 20, 8 p.m., at Bailey Hall. Directors Paul Merrill, John White, and John Rowehl will direct the Jazz Mass Festival Big Band; Cornell University Chorus; and Glee Club. Admission.

Symphony orchestra: The Cornell Symphony Orchestra, with Chris Younghoon Kim, conductor; violinist Ariana Kim; guest cellist Inbal Segev; and pianist Miki Yampolsky will perform April 21 at 3 p.m., Bailey Hall. Beethoven’s “Triple Concerto,” op. 56, Lutoslawski’s Mala suite (Little Suite), and Samuel Barber’s Symphony No. 1. Free and open to the public; no tickets are required.

Swedish Chamber Orchestra: The Swedish Chamber Orchestra will appear with American pianist Garrick Ohlsson, April 26, 8:10 p.m., Bailey Hall. Mozart K.271 and Beethoven “Eroica” Symphony. General public $25/32/35, students $17 any section. CU faculty/staff $23/30/33, CU students $15 any section.

Cornell Chorale: The Cornell Chorale, with John Rowehl, conductor, will present Carol Barnett’s “The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass,” which combines the sacred classical choral tradition with down-home sounds of banjo, mandolin, and fiddle, April 28 at 7:30 p.m., Sage Chapel. Free and open to the public; no tickets required.

MORE PICKS

Tough Turtle race: The Ithaca Children’s Garden (ICG) and Island Health & Fitness will host Ithaca’s first obstacle course race, April 20. Races begin at 9 a.m.; the closing ceremony is at 12:30 p.m. Many members of the Cornell community have signed up to race.

The Tough Turtle Obstacle Race will take place along the Cayuga Waterfront Trail, Black Diamond Trail and the south shores of Cayuga Lake, along a 5k route, with 12-14 unique and challenging obstacles, designed by Cornell Outdoor Education. For more information: http://www.toughturtleithaca.com.

Recognizing Earth Day: Earth Day will be celebrated at the Ithaca Farmers’ Market pavilion April 21, noon–5 p.m. This free family event, hosted by Sustainable Tompkins, will feature educational and informative exhibits.

5K Earth Day: In recognition of Earth Day, a 5k race will be held, rain or shine, April 26 at 5 p.m., at the Cornell Plantations Arboretum. Check-in and registration begin at 4 p.m. Parking is available in B Lot by the Vet College.

The race is co-sponsored by the Society for Natural Resources Conservation (SNRC) and Cornell Running Club. Profits will benefit the Cayuga Nature Center. Information: https://sites.google.com/a/cornell.edu/snrce-earth-day-5k/resource-center.

Open house on Lincoln: An open house at the Krock Library, Level 2B, Rotunda, will be held April 27, 1-5 p.m., with a public display of the unique original manuscript copy of the proclamation signed by Lincoln. The exhibition, Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation at 150, closes the end of April.

The newly installed Now Scream! the Hip Hop Collection exhibition will also be on display. Curator tours of the Emancipation Proclamation exhibition will take place at 2 p.m. and tours of the Hip Hop exhibition at 3 p.m. The exhibitions are on view Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on April 13, 20, 27; and closed on Sundays.

Companion animals: Bioethicist Jessica Pierce, Ph.D., author of “The Last Walk: Reflections on Our Pets at the Ends of Their Lives” (Chicago, 2012), discusses such topics as animal death awareness, pain management, quality of life assessments, hospice care and euthanasia, April 29, 6-7 p.m., Lecture Hall 1 in Schuman Hall. She will draw connections between human medical ethics and animal end-of-life care.

Pierce’s work has been published in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and Scientific American Mind. She has appeared on numerous radio and television programs, including the Diane Rehm show, and writes a blog on animals at the end of life for Psychology Today.

Open to the Cornell community; dinner included.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR COMMENCEMENT WEEKEND, MAY 25 AND 26

This year, Senior Convocation and the Ph.D. Hooding Events will be held Saturday, May 25, and Cornell’s 145th Commencement, Sunday, May 26.

Help make graduation special for Cornell’s students and families, and automatically be entered in a drawing to win a free iPad or two free round-trip tickets to New York City on the Campus-to-Campus bus when you register at http://www.commencement.cornell.edu/May/ushers/index.html. Volunteers will also receive:

- a paid day off to use by December 31 (time-off guidelines are available at http://www.commencement.cornell.edu/May/ushers/index.html)
- a free continental breakfast on Saturday, May 25, before Convocation
- a free continental breakfast on Sunday, May 26, before Commencement
- a special thank-you gift
- an invitation to a Thank You Reception with President Skorton on June 13, at which the iPad, bus tickets and many door prizes will be awarded.

To learn more and to sign up as a volunteer, go to: http://www.commencement.cornell.edu/May/ushers/index.html.

Questions? Contact the Commencement Office at commencement@cornell.edu or 255-9541.