A Cornell staff member for more than a decade, Amy Somchanhmavong, MILR ’02, was recognized as a “distinguished volunteer in Tompkins County” and received the 21st annual Anne Tompkins Jones Awards for Community Service March 19. The award was given during the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County annual luncheon at the Country Club of Ithaca.

As associate director of service learning at the Public Service Center, Somchanhmavong directs its PreK-12 Outreach Programs and works with Cornell’s faculty members to connect them with members of the local community. But she is best known in Ithaca for co-founding the Ithaca Asia American Association and for its Finger Lakes Dragon Boat Festival, which is celebrating 10 years in July.

Somchanhmavong, who was born in Taiwan and spent most of her childhood in the Dominican Republic, came to Ithaca about 15 years ago and has been an advocate for and supported refugee and immigrant families. Her husband’s family was the first Laotian family to resettle in the Tompkins County area.

“I and the Public Service Center staff and students were delighted to learn that Amy received such distinguished recognition from our local community in Tompkins County,” said Leonardo Vargas-Mendez, executive director of the Cornell Public Service Center. “Amy is a concerned citizen who … has become an economic, cultural and community development landmark for Tompkins County. We are proud to be her colleagues and friend.”

She said the workforce is becoming increasingly diverse in ethnicity, culture, age and work style. Older workers are remaining in the workforce instead of fully retiring, she said, and it is common to see up to four generations of workers in one place, all with different work styles. An increasing number of military veterans and people with disabilities are entering the workforce, and occupations in health care and information technologies are growing. Over the next two decades, immigration will account for most growth in U.S. labor, with greatest increases in Hispanic and Asian workers, she said.

Corresponding to those demographic changes are new regulations to move the workplace toward greater equity, Chappell-Williams said, including hiring veterans and people with disabilities and, in the areas of sex discrimination, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Social media and information technologies already have helped distribute decision-making, she said, and flexible workspaces, wherein staff work from home, share jobs or otherwise shift the time and place of their work, will become the norm.

At the luncheon, Lynette Chappell-Williams, Cornell’s Title IX coordinator and associate vice president for inclusion and workforce diversity, gave the keynote address on “The Future Workforce.”
East Avenue to close to buses, bikes near Klarman April 13-19

The good news: The Klarman Hall construction project adjacent to Goldwin Smith Hall is progressing well, and East Avenue soon will reopen. The less-than-good news: For a week beginning April 13, the portion of East Avenue located between the traffic-control gates will be closed to all vehicular traffic, including buses and bicycles, to facilitate road repairs.

East Avenue is scheduled to reopen to all two-way traffic Monday, April 20. During the closure, cyclists must use an alternate route to avoid the construction zone and dismount if traveling on the sidewalk. Flaggers will direct pedestrians.

Bus traffic will be detoured to West Avenue. TCAT bus stops will be relocated to Milstein Hall for northbound routes and Uris Hall for southbound routes. The Campus-to-Campus bus will continue to serve the Sage Hall stop.

Vehicles will continue to have access to the Lincoln Hall loading dock from the north and to the A.D. White House from the south. Emergency vehicle access will be maintained.

Check the university operating status at http://www.cornell.edu/status for road closings and other emergency information.

Office professionals to be recognized April 22

The 2015 Jennie T. Farley Office Professionals Celebration will be held April 22 at the Ramin Room, Bartels Hall. Lunch will be served at 11:15 a.m.; the program, with keynote speaker Vice President Mary Opperman, will held 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Each year the Cornell community honors its office professionals by recognizing both the important role they play on campus and the changing nature of their profession. The Jennie T. Farley Office Professionals Celebration, named for its co-founder and a late faculty member of ILR, draws more than 750 office professionals from across campus; it is now one of the largest workplace observances at Cornell. The annual event was inaugurated in 1988, when Professor Farley teamed up with ILR colleague Alice B. Cook to organize the first Secretaries Day Symposium. Today, the celebration is sponsored by the ILR School, the Office of the President, and the Office of Human Resources.

A limited number of door prizes, donated by local vendors and Cornell University, will be distributed.

Register by April 15 at http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/office-professionals-day.

Reminder: Volunteers still needed for Charter Day Weekend

Volunteer positions are needed Wednesday, April 22 to Monday, April 27. Volunteers will receive a commemorative Charter Day Weekend shirt. They will also receive a Regal Cinemas movie ticket for every event at which they volunteer.

Visit the Charter Day 150 site http://150.cornell.edu/events/charterday/volunteer/ to register for one or more of the Charter Day events and select your preference of volunteer opportunities. All volunteers are expected to attend one of two training/orientation sessions in Uris Auditorium, either April 16, 3-4:15 p.m., Uris Auditorium, or April 17, 10:30-11:45 a.m.

If you are interested in volunteering, make sure you can commit to the responsibilities listed on the website, including attending a training session, before signing up. Employees are asked to talk with their supervisor if they want to volunteer during work hours. For more information about recording volunteer time or other payroll-related questions, visit the website.

Division’s new name reflects its broad reach

Facilities Services has a new name: the Division of Infrastructure, Properties and Planning (IPP).

The new name better aligns with IPP’s work, said KyuJung Whang, vice president for IPP: “As the roles and responsibilities of the division have evolved over the years, the name Facilities Services has come to capture only a fraction of what we do.”

Whang continued, “The new name reflects the fact that the division does more than maintain facilities. We produce and distribute electricity, drinking water and steam for heating. We play a prominent role in the design and construction of new buildings on campus. We manage roadways and parking for thousands of people. We transport people and move things. We manage Cornell’s real estate and care for its built and natural environment. We design physical spaces and landscapes. The division is in the forefront of Cornell’s efforts to achieve a truly sustainable campus. We also plan for what the future of all these things will look like so we can continue to ensure that the university has the physical assets it needs to fulfill its mission of learning, discovery and engagement.”

All departments within the division will continue to use their current names.
Personal sustainability: the conservation of happiness

BY SUE BRIGHTLY

If you ask most people about personal sustainability, they’ll likely point out their efforts to properly recycle and compost after meals, and perhaps a few other environmentally sensible habits, such as turning off lights, reducing water use and riding the bus to work. Most folks will say it’s kind of a hassle, but it’s the right thing to do. But there’s a new way of thinking about personal sustainability that goes way beyond the “Three R’s” of reduce, reuse and recycle. Proponents claim that living sustainably isn’t just the right thing to do for the planet – it’s the right thing to do for your own happiness.

So what exactly is personal sustainability?

Sustainability is generally described as the process of supporting a system in a manner that doesn’t deplete or damage it over time.

To apply the sustainability model individually, imagine someone who is always working long hours, constantly checking mobile devices, spending long hours commuting. In the short term, these actions can result in more income or better career opportunities. But from a sustainability standpoint, all the fast-food meals, lack of sleep, missed exercise and misused energy are likely over time to result in increased toxic by-products, such as impaired fitness, frustration and depression.

Pilar Girasimo, in “The Better Good Life: An Essay on Personal Sustainability,” writes that, “instead of making us happy and healthy, all of this has left a great many of us feeling depleted, lonely, strapped, stressed and resentful. We don’t have enough time for ourselves, our loved ones, our creative aspirations or our communities.”

Sound familiar?

As a remedy, she suggests we examine our choices through a lens of sustainability to understand the resources we may be depleting or damaging in our lives, such as the precious non-renewable resource of time, or the toxic waste we may be building up, such as stress and financial debt, that may require great effort and expense to clean up later.

Girasimo concludes that “when enough of us are in a chronically diminished state of well-being, the effect is a sort of social and moral pollution – the human equivalent of the greenhouse gasses that threaten our entire ecosystem.”

If you find the idea of personal sustainability compelling, you’re in the right place to find out more. Cornell is a leading hub of research in the study of sustainability, with a wealth of resources to help you pursue sustainability at every level. Start at the Cornell Sustainability web page, at http://sustainability.cornell.edu, with links to campus departments and organizations such as the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, or go to the Cornell Sustainable Campus web page at http://www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu to see what Cornell is doing in our operations, research, education and engagement. The “People” page lists initiatives that relate to personal sustainability. And be sure to check out the Staff and Faculty Wellness Program for a wide range of opportunities to foster joy, balance and well-being in your life!

Sue Brightly is the content manager in the Division of Human Resources and Safety Services.

Career/Life Workshops

For more information on the following workshops and to register, see http://recreation.athletics.cornell.edu/wellness/outreach:

Cooking Demo: Low Carb Desserts – Beth McKinney, RD. will demonstrate three easy desserts that have five grams of carbs per serving or less, April 10, noon-1 p.m., at 360 Martha Van Rensselaer Hall.

Lunch Walks With Guthrie Docs – Bring your Cornell ID to Barton Hall, and enjoy a 15-minute health lecture, followed by a half hour of walking the Barton track, noon-12:45 p.m. Topics for March 31: exercise and joint pain; April 14: strain vs. sprain

For more information on the following workshops and to register, see https://www.hr.cornell.edu/life/support/wellbeing_programs.html:

Exploring the Tapestry of Gender Identity and Expression (2-part) – April 14 and 21, noon-1 p.m., 102 Mann Library.

Breastfeeding Basics – April 10, 4-5:30 p.m., 140 East Hill Office Building.

Downsizing and Decluttering – April 15, noon-1 p.m., 140 East Hill Office Building

Pumping with Success and Returning to Work as a Breastfeeding Mother – April 17, 4-5:30 p.m., 140 East Hill Office Building.
Who was George Peter?

The Employee Assembly’s most prestigious award given to staff is known as the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service. The EA would like to highlight the life of George Peter and how instrumental he was to the progression of staff visibility and involvement at Cornell.

George was hired at Cornell in 1947 as an electronics technician and spent 41 years as an active employee. Throughout that time period he made the word “communication” his mantra. Many years ago the Cornell Chronicle focused on faculty, research and students, and did not highlight staff successes. George and others pushed for a newspaper that would allow for better communication and highlight the contributions of staff. In 1980 George would help found the “Networking” newspaper, which in 1995 would be renamed “Pawprint.”

George was also a founder of the Cornell Recreation Connection and Employee Day. During the 1969 Willard Straight take-over, George became a vocal advocate for a greater role of staff in Cornell governance, and in 1975 would become the first employee-elected trustee, a position that he would hold for four terms.

While George Peter had many accomplishments throughout his illustrious career at Cornell, it was how he touched many people’s lives that stand out most. Hazel Hall, a current EA member, worked with George, and one of her most important memories was sitting next to him at her first President’s Address, by the new President David Skorton: “When the president was done, George looked at me and said, ‘he is going to be a very good president for staff.’ I asked how he knew and he stated, ‘he said staff in his speech more than 20 times, so he is a true person.’ I will never forget that.” Mary Opperman, vice president for human resources, met George after he had already retired from Cornell, but he gave her his time, wisdom and guidance. He introduced her to staff and faculty around the university, making sure they knew she had his support. “George really cared about the staff of Cornell. He was vocal when he believed they were not being acknowledged and he was not afraid to make his concerns known. George was also an amazing family man – he loved his wife Gloria and his children. He cared for Gloria as her health declined in the home they had on the lake in Aurora,” Mary said.

George Peter was a legend in advocating for Cornell staff. He touched many lives with his energy, excitement, kindness and his passion for Cornell. He had an unwavering belief in the special value of each individual. In 1999 the Employee Assembly renamed the Dedicated Service Award as the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service, honoring George for the 41 years of service to Cornell and his advocacy for its staff. George made a point to attend the presentations of the award at the staff member’s location on campus, even after he retired, a tradition the EA continues. It is a great honor to be awarded the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service and the EA is passionate about this award just as George was passionate about Cornell. While George may no longer be with us, his name and legacy live on through this award, honoring those staff members who have served Cornell, positively impacting those around them and leaving their own legacy.

Cornell is full of deserving individuals, and the EA highly encourages Cornell community members to nominate a staff member whom you believe should be considered for the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service TODAY.

Eric Lee is the chair of the EA’s communications committee, and a medical technologist in the Animal Health Diagnostic Center. He credits Dennis Stein’s tribute to George Peter in the August 15, 2008 issue of Pawprint for much of the background biographical material for this article.

As end of United Way campaign nears, goal remains unmet

With less than two weeks left in the Cornell United Way Campaign and in the Hunger and Food Security Drive that was launched for the last six weeks of the campaign, Campaign Chair Anne Kenney asks those who still would like to make a difference in the lives of people in the local area to pledge to the campaign. As of March 28 the university had reached $752,772, 92 percent, of its $815,000 goal.

Anne Kenney

“Each year, whether we meet our goal or not, people in the community still are in need of prescription medications, still undergo unforeseen disasters or expenses, still go hungry, still can gain some measure of relief in their daily lives from the funds the United Way makes available to our local service agencies,” she said. “Every gift, even those coming in at the last moment of the campaign, makes a difference in the lives of people in our neighborhoods.”

Kenney noted that while giving levels were down from last year in many units, they rose in several, including the College of Engineering, School of Hotel Administration, Samuel Curtis Johnson Graduate School of Management, Division of Student and Academic Services, and the University Library.

More importantly, nearly half of all units increased their participation rates to above 20 percent of total staff or faculty, a good indicator for next year. Among the larger units, these included the divisions of Alumni Affairs and Development, Human Resources and Safety Services, and Financial Affairs, and the School of Hotel Administration, Johnson, University Library and University Relations.

“The success of the Cornell United Way campaign truly does hinge on the engagement of its supporters all across campus, and that really came home to me this time around,” Kenney said. “I want to thank everyone – our ambassadors, our student leaders, our senior staff – for their roles in supporting, advocating for and giving to this year’s United Way campaign.”

Mary George Opperman, Cornell’s vice president for human resources and safety services, has been named one of the top 15 most influential and prominent women leading human resources today. The recognition was given by editors of the national magazine Human Resource Executive and places Opperman in the company of human resource leaders at such organizations as Merck, IBM, Coca-Cola and General Electric.

“Mary has skillfully guided us through times of great organizational change, while advancing employee engagement and career growth with programs, benefits and services that support our employees and their families,” said President David J. Skorton. “I am delighted that she has received this national recognition for positioning Cornell among the leaders in promoting responsive and responsible workplace practices.”

Under Opperman’s HR leadership, Cornell has received numerous workplace awards, including being named AARP’s top U.S. employer for workers 50 and older in two consecutive years, and being listed as a “best employer” for working mothers, prospective and adoptive parents, information technology professionals, veterans and women executives.

Opperman also helped lead a campuswide effort to advance diversity and inclusion by focusing accountability at the dean and vice president/provost level. She has worked to attract and retain top talent while addressing workload increases and institutional knowledge gaps created by the retirement of key faculty and staff.

Her portfolio includes oversight of the Division of Human Resources, Inclusion and Workforce Diversity, Environmental Health and Safety, Campus Police, Emergency Management and the Center for Regional Economic Advancement. Most recently, Opperman has taken on a role guiding Cornell’s Charter Day Operations Committee.

Opperman has served on numerous boards of local and national organizations, including Challenge Industries, the Tompkins Cortland Community College Foundation, the Community Dispute Resolution Center, the Workforce Investment Board, the Women’s Opportunity Center and the United Way of Tompkins County. She is active on the boards of Kendal at Ithaca, Foodnet, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes, Tompkins County Area Development, the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council, the Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County and the TIAA-CREF Advisory Council.

The Cornell men’s lacrosse team will host its annual fundraising “Clinic for a Cause” for the Dream Factory of Central New York April 19, 11:21-2:30 p.m. at Schoellkopf Field. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. at the field entrance to Schoellkopf Field. Team members will be on hand to teach skills, give instruction in strategies and sportsmanship and run games with youth lacrosse players grades 3-8. 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 Central New York.

Reserve your spot now by contacting Brennan Donville at bwd36@cornell.edu, 607-793-7297. Donation: $40 per participant. Payment: Preregistration encouraged by sending checks, payable to Dream Factory of Central New York, to Cornell Lacrosse, Teagle Hall, Campus Road, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850-6501 by April 15. Payments can also be made on the day of the clinic. For more information, see https://www.facebook.com/events/891486557608377/

The Dream Factory of Central New York

The Dream Factory of Central New York is a local chapter of a national non-profit that grants dreams to critically and chronically ill children. 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, or contact centralnewyork@dreamfactoryinc.org, or call 607-272-1264.
The three decades following World War II were characterized by rapid growth in the 1950s, social and political turmoil in the 1960s and economic inflation in the 1970s. During this period, Cornell faced the same challenges and these events had their effects on staff life as well.

Educating and employing veterans added energy to campus and to staff life in the 1950s. In his introduction to the 1952 “You and Cornell,” President Deane Malott wrote that most employees work at Cornell because the university “is more than a place of employment.” Among Cornell’s benefits, Malott enumerated the opportunity to take courses, to engage such social events and to learn skills and trades on the job. In addition to the dairy store, Cornell had its own meat store: Employees could buy meat in the basement of Wing Hall from lambs, pigs and beef raised for the animal science department. The store moved to Morrison Hall in 1961.

The first annual service recognition dinner was held in 1955, and the 1957 booklet on “General Information for Faculty and Staff” noted that employees receive three weeks of vacation, retirement is required at age 65, and benefits include group medical and accident insurance and tuition scholarships for employees’ children.

The university’s growth created a greater need for parking and improved campus transportation; the 1965 Report of the President noted that two new parking lots were added and a fleet of seven shuttle buses employed. Also in 1965, a Cornell Newsletter was begun to keep faculty and staff advised of news on campus. As a result of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the personnel department was designated to handle draft or military concerns. Growth in administration included the formation of an Office of Institutional Studies in 1965 and, in 1966, the Office of Computer Services and the Office of Public Information, the latter led by the head of the news bureau.

The events of 1968–69 leading up and following the take-over of Willard Straight Hall are well-delineated in Glenn Altschuler and Isaac Kramnick’s “Cornell: A History, 1940-2015,” and so need little explanation here. Thereafter, several other administrative positions were created: Joseph Bugliari was appointed the university’s first judicial administrator; Alice Cook became the first university ombudsman.

Replacing the Cornell Newsletter, the Cornell Chronicle started publication in September 1969 as the “official weekly newspaper of record for the university,” intended to “provide official information, important to its readers as members of the university, but not readily available through existing communications channels.”

In the 1970s Cornell continued to focus on social change. Womens’ sports expanded under Title IX; co-ed housing began in 1972. Cornell’s painters, sheet metal workers, bricklayers, carpenters and plumbers unionized in 1970, but the Civil Services union attempted and failed to organize technicians and cleaning personnel.

The first Employee Day was held in 1974, and the inauguration of President Frank Rhodes in 1977 brought new excitement to campus. But the steady rise in inflation eroded employees’ pay and union activity on campus increased: Workers in the heating, filtration and chilled water plants joined the International Union of Operating Engineers in 1979; over the next four years, janitorial, maintenance, service, grounds and dining workers organized, with the largest union being the United Automobile Workers (UAW). The UAW tried unsuccessfully to unionize clerical staff.

In the midst of these changes, the monthly newsletter Networking (renamed Pawprint in 1995) was born. The Committee on the University as an Employer (predecessor of the Employee Assembly) had advocated for increased coverage of employee concerns. Funding for the paper was granted in January 1980 and in March 1980 the first issue of Networking appeared. Its objective was to “promote a sense of community and help all employees see how they are part of the whole university,” and its statement of intent (created in March 1980 and revised in October 1993) included disseminating information, providing recognition of Cornell employees, accenting positive news about campus, facilitating communication, and providing a focus for employee talent and interest.

The first Networking editorial board consisted of 12 staff volunteers who, according to the first issue, worked on the paper “on their own time.” Among them were three staff members who served terms as employee-elected trustees: George Peter (1975-77; 1978-80; 1980-82; 1984-88), Margaret Secord (1979-81) and Dominic Versage (1983-85).
April 17 reception celebrates Graham Hall photo exhibition

LARISSA HENSLEY

The Carol Tatkon Center has benefited this semester from Graham Hall, a Cornell Information Technologies professional with more than 25 years of service, who reveals another side of himself – that of a talented photographer.

Visitors of the Tatkon Center, Cornell’s intellectual, resource, and cultural center for first-year students, have been enjoying his exhibition, “Graham Hall: Miksang Contemplative Photography.” Hall’s photographs, which focus on color, light, texture and space, are both beautiful and intriguing. One image on display shows a fallen, late-autumn leaf on a gray, damp Ithaca day, looking stunning as its copper-colored surface is bejeweled with water droplets. Hall’s images, created using an approach called Miksang Contemplative Photography, remind the viewer of the visual richness of our everyday world that can be accessed when we slow down our thinking and pay attention. The initial impression that caught the mind’s attention is captured with the camera – the resulting image is not artificially altered or enhanced with tools like Photoshop.

Hall first encountered Miksang photographs when he attended a conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Large photographic prints were hung around the oak-clad walls of the dining hall at Dalhousie University. “They were quite unusual – very spacious, colorful and captivating.”

Several years later in 2009, Hall took a couple of classes with the photographer of those images at the Miksang Institute for Contemplative Photography, reminding the viewer of the visual richness of our everyday world that can be accessed when we slow down our thinking and pay attention. The initial impression that caught the mind’s attention is captured with the camera – the resulting image is not artificially altered or enhanced with tools like Photoshop.

Hall invites all to visit his photograph exhibit on display at the Carol Tatkon Center until May 20, and his reception and talk with a presentation of additional images, April 17, 4:30 p.m., at the Carol Tatkon Center, South Balch Hall, Rm. 3343.

Larissa Hensley is program assistant, Residential and New Student Programs

Community supported agriculture comes to Cornell

Starting this season, you can order locally grown vegetables, fruits and other food items and pick them up at Cornell. Pick-up will be available beginning April 2 at the East Hill Office Building (Tanya Grove, coordinator at tl40@cornell.edu) and at the Vet Tower (Cindy DeCloux, coordinator at cmd56@cornell.edu; pick-up for veterinary staff, students and faculty only).

Check out the CSA’s that have the capacity to deliver to the Cornell campus:

The Full Plate Farm Collective (http://www.freewebs.com/fullplatefarms/) – Accepting sign-ups for 2015 season organic vegetable and fruit farm shares. Contact Sara Worden (info@fullplatefarms.org) directly with questions.

Good Life Farm CSA+ (http://www.thegoodlifefarm.org/order-here/) – Accepting sign-ups for spring shares (starting Apr 2) and a la carte items (vegetables, meats, breads, and more). Contact Melissa Madden (melissa@thegoodlifefarm.org) directly with questions.

Early Morning Farm (http://www.earlymorningfarm.com) – Accepting sign-ups for 2015 organic vegetable farm shares. Contact Anton (support@earlymorningfarm.com) directly with questions.

Additional information can be found at https://recreation.athletics.cornell.edu/wellness/outreach/csa-information. A listing of local CSAs is at: http://ccetompkins.org/agriculture/buy-local/csa-directory.
New York City day trips

The Cornell Recreation Connection (CRC) is offering trips to New York City on the following Saturdays: April 11, May 9, June 13, August 8, Sept. 12, Oct. 10, Nov. 14 and Dec. 12, 2015.

The discounted fare for these trips is $50 per person for Cornell employees and up to four guests.

Contact Swarthout Coaches at http://www.goswarthout.com/tours/cornell-faculty-tours-31.html to make a reservation. Full payment is due at the time of reservation.

Itinerary for “Day on Your Own in NYC” trips

6:30 a.m. – Bus leaves Cornell’s B-Lot (you must have your boarding pass to board the bus).

11:30 a.m. – Bus arrives in NYC with drop offs at Bryant Park and Macy’s (34th St. and 7th Ave).

You will spend the day on your own in New York City.

The bus leaves from Bryant Park ONLY at 8 p.m. sharp, returning to Cornell at about 12:30 am.