Happy Birthday, Cornell!

Charter Day Weekend at the Ithaca campus began April 24 with brief remarks at the Tompkins County Public Library and the dedication of a plaque and planter bed on the Ithaca Commons, and ended April 27 with a formal academic procession and program. In-between, participants enjoyed the festivities of the Big Red Birthday Bash, the concert “My Cornell: A Celebration of Words and Music,” and the academic discussions covering a wide range of topics relevant to contemporary life.

For full coverage, see the Cornell Chronicle site at: http://www.news.cornell.edu/categories/sesquicentennial.
Employee Assembly News

BJ R. Siasoco

Employee Assembly (EA) elections are fast-approaching, and the EA is looking for candidates to serve. Below, BJ R. Siasoco outlines the reasons why joining the EA at this point could make a difference for years to come.

Change. It is a concept that many staff grapple with every day. As Cornell celebrates its 150th birthday, as a staff community we look to what changes the next 150 years bring. How will we shape that change? I believe we can by participating in shared governance.

The Employee Assembly is the shared governance body for non-faculty staff members at Cornell University. The staff community is comprised of more than 7,000 members - facilities staff, academic advisors, coordinators, staff assistants, technicians, writers, and many more. These staff members work side-by-side with senior administrators, faculty and students to bring Cornell to life each day. I have been on the Employee Assembly for almost two years - this year finishing my term as executive vice chair - and during this brief period, I have witnessed first-hand the unique opportunity staff members have to directly participate in Cornell's decision-making processes.

The Employee Assembly is empowered by the university board of trustees and president to “explore opportunities to enhance the role, function and contributions of employees to the wellbeing of the university.” Our 19 members jointly represent staff views to university trustees, senior administrators, faculty, graduate and professional students, and undergraduates on such concerns as human resource policies, staffing needs, transportation issues, university planning and many more. We are a uniquely collaborative assembly, not representing personal interests or ideologies but serving as volunteers who advocate for all staff interests in an effort to empower staff and improve the staff experience.

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The 1980s: a decade of staff firsts

NANCY DOOLITTLE

The ’80s were packed with “firsts” for Cornell staff.

Networking. The first issue of the staff paper Networking was distributed March 6, 1980. The word “Name me” appeared in the masthead. It would gain its name by the next issue through a staff contest and would be renamed Fairprint in 1999, also by staff vote. In 1982, the first annual Networking photo contest was held, the photo contest continues to the present.

The Employee Assembly. In the ’70s, the self-governance structure consisted of the Council of Campus for students and staff and the Faculty Council of Representatives. The Campus Council was then divided into two assemblies, one for staff and one for students. The Employee Assembly charter was approved by President Franklin Rhodes in late 1980 and the trustees accepted it shortly thereafter.

Commencement date moved. In 1980, Commencement was held - for the first time - on the Sunday preceding Memorial Day rather than on Memorial Day, so that employees could spend holiday time with their families. The standard 39-hour workweek was formally adopted in June, benefitting 1,800 nonexempt employees.

Employee Assistance Program. In 1982, Cornell contracted with Family and Children’s Services to begin offering confidential counseling services to faculty and staff.

Cornell Recreation Club. Also in 1982 the Cornell Recreation Club (now the Cornell Recreation Connection) was formed “to provide recreational and social activities for employees, faculty and graduate students.” It held its first holiday dinner dance in Barton Hall that December. In its early years, the club offered Magic Kingdom Club discounts, discounts to Bermuda and Caribbean cruises, and a trip to Hawaii in 1987. It offered a “trip of a lifetime” to Alaska. The club started construction of a park and pavilion in 1986 and was given dishes, china, chairs, folding tables, two ovens and a stainless steel sink from the Statler. In June 1989, the CRC held its annual picnic at the CRC Park pavilion, on Han Shan Road near Monkey Run and in October held a phonathon, raising $7,000.

Employee attitude survey. In November 1982, nearly 3,300 Cornell employees responded to the first Cornell Employee Attitude Survey, a 72 percent response rate. The survey was followed by a series of networking supplements to the Cornell Chronicle addressing concerns expressed in the survey. A second Employee Attitude Survey was administered in November 1996.

Child care concerns. A group of Cornell staff and students formed the Cornell Childcare Coalition in 1979. In 1987, the EA formed a child care committee; the university-wide Task Force on Working Families was established in 1988. Ithaca Community Daycare Center moved to its current site off Warren Road in 1989, accommodating 160 children.

Cornell Retiree Association ( CRA). The CRA was formed in 1994 and had 2,300 members by 1997. Today, all Cornell retirees are members of the CRA.

Employee Night. The first Employee Day was held in 1974; the first Employee Night at the Court was held Jan. 24, 1987.

Recycling. In 1988 a campuswide recycling program began, requiring that waste be separated into recyclable or non-recyclable bins.


Office professionals. Throughout the ’80s, Secretaries Week was observed on campus through lunches, flowers and, at the Statler, a fashion show. It took on universitywide status in 1988 when ICR Professors Jenine Farley ’54, M.A. ’69, Ph.D. ’70, and Alice B. Cook held a lunch and symposium to recognize National Secretaries Day. Today, the Jenine T. Farley Office Professionals Celebration draws more than 650 Cornell community members.

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Mark Holton recognized with George Peter Award

TANYA GROVE

A midyear event to honor seniors in the Cornell Outdoor Education (COE) program and the dedication of a new composting bathroom facility, Mohan Hall, at the Hoffman Challenge Course, the Employee Assembly took a moment to surprise Mark Holton, associate director of risk management and programs, COE, with the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service.

In nominating Holton, Mark Magnus-Shapka, Jon Lindseth director of Cornell Outdoor Education and Holton’s supervisor, wrote, “If there was a ‘Cornell treasure’ distinction, I would nominate Mark Holton in an instant. He has served the university most ably and is truly at the heart of some of the best moments ever here at Cornell Outdoor Education.”

Andrea Dutcher, senior associate director of athletics, said in her letter of support, “In my 25-plus years as a supervisor in the athletics and physical education department at Cornell, I cannot think of any other person I have worked with ... who has worked as hard, has produced such quality work, who has brought as much acclaim to his department and who has done so with as much positive attitude, grace and humility as has Mark Holton. He truly exemplifies the spirit of the George Peter Award.”

Amy Kichut, associate director, Cornell Outdoor Education, wrote that “Mark is the one that people go to for advice, for laughs, for incredible stories, for problems, for just about anything. Everyone seeks his guidance – children, staff, colleagues, elders – he has amazing life experiences ... He is a wealth of knowledge and information.”

While working toward his Ph.D. in Cornell’s chemistry department, Holton had taught a few COE courses. After completing his degree, Holton realized that his passion was not in chemistry but in teaching COE.

In accepting the George Peter award, Holton said, “I’m a generally happy person and working for COE makes me happy” – to which one of his children jokingly responded, “I’ve never seen you cry, dad!”

The longest serving and most prestigious university-wide peer-nominated award, the George Peter Award for Dedicated Service is given by the Employee Assembly to staff members who consistently demonstrate a high degree of excellence in doing their jobs and who extend themselves to help others and go above and beyond the normal expectations of their job responsibilities.

Tanya Grove is help desk and operations manager for HR Information Systems and a member of the Employee Assembly.

Cornell staff pay tribute to others at Real Heroes Breakfast

SUSAN RILEY

Cornell’s Office of Community Relations hosted eight university staff and faculty at the 7th annual Real Heroes Breakfast sponsored by the American Red Cross of Cortland and Tompkins Counties. The group joined approximately 200 breakfast attendees at Greek Peak, April 15, to honor 13 people and two dogs for heroic efforts during the past year.

The invited Cornell staff members were selected by university leadership as individuals who contribute in multiple ways to Cornell and local communities. They are employees whose day-to-day efforts support the lives, safety and experiences of others, both on and off campus. Chosen from among many other Cornell staff who contribute to their communities, this year’s invited Cornell employees were:

Pam Arnsenaut, radiology supervisor for Gannett Health Services
Josh Aumick, facilities assistant for Gannett Health Services
Mark Conrad, manager of Technical and Security Services, Cornell University Police

During the 90-minute breakfast held in the Hope Lake Lodge, Greek Peak, attendees observed the Presentation of Colors by the City of Cortland Fire Department, a procession of Red Cross volunteers and staff, and the procession of heroes.

The heroes represented nine categories: Medical, education, military, law enforcement, emergency response, law enforcement, military, local government, and volunteer.

In collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Cayuga Bird Club, Cornell Plantations is offering five Friday morning bird walks at 8 a.m. in The Newman Arboretum, and Sunday wildflower walks 1 p.m. in Sampson Woods. Friday walks will be held May 7, 15, 22 and 29 (meet by the Sculpture Garden, in the F. K. Weyer Arbor (off Catrett Rd.); Sunday walks will be held May 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 (at the Meet of Ornithology visitor center). Walks will be held rain or shine. Free. No registration needed.

Ornithology

Birds and blossoms

Julia Leonard

Have you ever wanted to explore the breadth of tasks, skills and interactions expected in a business analyst professional role? An upcoming four-day course provides a complete foundational set of practical tips and hands-on exercises to build expertise and confidence using requirements delivery strategies, independent of methodology. Register now for the four-day class: Essential Skills for Business Analysis - . The course is relatively new and will be utilized as a schedule allows, we will work with those registered to schedule the actual course (hoping for this fiscal year).

To receive training announcements, send an email with the subject: join to IT-Training@cornell.edu.

For a complete listing of technical training resources, see www.it.cornell.edu/training.

Email questions to wsklp@cornell.edu.

Tech Talk


In this work, Erickson and wildlife photographer Marie Read document every stage in the family lives of birds, from courtship to nest construction, egg-laying and first attempts at flight by the young.

Walking meditations

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Cornell University’s Gannett Health Services are teaming up for two walking meditations May 4 at 9 a.m. and May 11 at 12:15 p.m. in the Sampson Woods Sanctuary as part of National Meditation Month in May. Meet in front of the lab’s main entrance (the second walking meditation is also scheduled for May 1 at noon, Cascadilla Gorge (meet at the Schwartz Center for Performing and Media Arts) and May 12, noon, Beede Lake (meet at the parking lot next to 626 Thurston Ave.). Participants will learn about mindfulness meditation techniques, get tips on listening for birds, and simply enjoy a quiet walk along the trails. The walk will last about 45 mins., but visitors are welcome to stay longer. Free. No registration needed.

Tales of the Golden-winged Warbler

Aaron Rohrbaugh, assistant director of conservation science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will discuss how the imperiled Golden-winged Warbler has shaped contemporary avian science and conservation, May 11 at 7:30 p.m., Lab of Ornithology. Doors open at 7 p.m. Enjoy snacks and conversation 7:15-7:30 p.m. Cayuga Bird Club business meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. with the presentation to follow at approximately 8 p.m. Note that there is limited seating and the doors will be closed when the auditorium is full. Open to the public.

Huge spring garden fair and plant sale

The Annual Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale, organized since 1984 by Master Gardener volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, will be held May 16, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., at the Ithaca High School.

More than 50 area vendors, representing plant nurseries and specialty growers from across the region, will bring a wide selection of choice stock to sell, including organically grown and heirloom vegetable transplants, colorful annuals, herbs, hanging baskets, small flowering shrubs, hardy roses, fruit crops, evergreens and specialty perennials. Garden groups will include Auraca Herbartists, the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society, several garden clubs, the Adirondack Chapter of the Rock Garden Society, CCE-Tompkins Master Composter Volunteers and others. Vendors are encouraged to bring carts or wagons to help transport plant purchases to their cars.

Master Gardeners from CCE-Tompkins and other community groups take part in the sale to raise funds or to create awareness of their programs. Bring a soil sample for FREE soil pH testing by CCE’s Master Gardener Volunteers. Educational exhibits, food concession and hands-on activities will be available for kids with Ithaca Children’s Garden. For more information, visit http://ccetompkins.org/plantsale or call 607-272-2222.

Annual campus-wide steam shutdown, May 26-28

The annual campus-wide steam shutdown allows essential maintenance work to be performed on the steam distribution system and at the Central Heating Plant. This year the steam will be turned off May 26 at 6 a.m. Steam will begin to be restored to buildings May 28 at 7 p.m. Some buildings may not have full steam pressure, heat and domestic hot water until after midnight on May 29.

Anyone who anticipates any problems, has questions, or needs an official shutdown notice should call the Facilities Customer Service Center at 607-255-5322.
New York City day trips

The Cornell Recreation Connection (CRC) is offering trips to New York City on the following Saturdays: 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/hotels.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.