Human Ecology BBQ

Human Ecology staff, from left, Al Armstrong, Jeff Surnie, and Lance Streeter head for their tables with full plates during the Human Ecology BBQ Monday afternoon, Sept. 20, in the MVR Courtyard.

Four tons of donations launch 2010 Untied Way Campaign
Cornell employees organize boxes of food at Day of Caring

BY NANCY DOOLITTLE

More than four tons of nonperishable food and household and personal care items were collected as part of the 2010 Stephen E. Cerurer Day of Caring, sponsored by the United Way of Tompkins County, Sept. 16. Volunteers also collected 20 cases of school supplies and six boxes of bread from Panera and Tops Markets.

Donations were collected over a two-week period during a "Stuff the Bus" drive by Cayuga Radio Group from the local community and by students from Cornell University, Ithaca College and Tompkins Cortland Community College at their campuses. The contributions will be distributed to local food pantries and community agencies. Organizers estimate that 40 percent of donations came from the Cornell community.

The brief noontime event, held at Ithaca's Stewart Park, kicked off the 2010 United Way of Tompkins County Campaign—with a memorable goal of $2,111,111—as well as the Cornell United Way Campaign. Cornell's goal is $790,000, up from $725,000 last year. Recognizing the need generated by last year's economic downturn, members of the Cornell community gave more than $800,000 for the 2009 campaign; the stalled economy estimates will be distributed to local food pantries and community agencies.

Contributing substantially to the success of the "Stuff the Bus" drive was the third annual Cornell Creek Week Can Drive, a friendly competition among Cornell fraternity and sorority chapters. Held on Ho Plaza, the Creek Week drive brought in an estimated 830 pounds of food.

Leading the student drive were Mike Mascarenhas '11 of Cornell's Interfraternity Council and Emily Cusick '12, vice president of programming for the Panhellenic Council. "The great outpouring of support for the "Stuff the Bus" drive from our students, faculty and staff will have an immediate impact on our friends and neighbors in the surrounding area," said Paul Streeter, assistant dean for finance and administration at the College of Veterinary Medicine, who is serving as this year's chair for the Cornell United Way Campaign. Pledge cards will be mailed out soon, he added.

From firehouse to warehouse, Bestys knows books as an author and handler

BY NANCY DOOLITTLE

Dove Bestys knows books. He knows them from having written one about his 19 years as a volunteer firefighter.

And he knows them from his work as a materials handler for the textbook division of the Cornell Business Services Warehouse, the unit responsible for receiving some 210,000 titles each academic year.

Shipped in by the skid-load, these university books need to be logged in, organized by course listing and shelved on 310 movable bookcases, with new shelving tags printed out daily as prices change and new books are added. Once arranged for sale, these bookcases are locked shut and transported to the Cornell Store at the start of each academic semester, 20 boxes at a time.

At the end of the semester, the reverse occurs: Used books are sold to the store, placed on the movable bookshelves and returned to the warehouse to await the next semester. "We get to look at a lot of books," Bestys says.

All these books give Bestys ideas for better marketing his own book, "Reflections in Red and Blue: My Years as a Volunteer Firefighter," which sold about 400 copies when first published in hard copy in 2003 and has recently become available again for purchase online and through print-on-demand. It can be found through a search of his name at www.authourhouse.com.

"In this book, I stayed close to reality, changing only the names of people and fire departments, because I was writing for people who work in or are related to people who work in fire departments," he says. "I wanted to share the stories that others would identify with, the humorous, fun parts of the work as well as the serious and sometimes life-threatening moments – the whole range of emotions from laughter to sorrow, from relaxation to intense stress."

His descriptions of answering distress calls, administering CPR and pulling people from house fires and crushed cars, sharing the camaraderie that comes from fundraising and recounting the joy that comes with participating in parades do exactly that.

Bestys admits that his reasons for becoming a firefighter "had nothing to do with bravery or helping others. It all had to do with having fun."

But as he began answering calls of those in need, he found himself "drawn in by the pride and tradition of the volunteering spirit." Nearly two decades later, Bestys retired from his volunteer firefighter role in 2002, having a wife and two sons to look after instead.

Bestys is now writing a novel based on his experiences as a firefighter – a mystery set in a small town where "I wanted to develop a plot with more moral appeal," he says, "a truly fictitious work gives you more leeway to do that."

And, with his exposure to so many books in his Cornell job, Bestys has become much more familiar with the marketing aspects of publishing. His goal this time around? To be picked up by one of the publishers whose titles he handles every day.

Important benefits reminders

One week remains for adding children between ages 19–26 to endowed health plan and/or Select Benefits and for applying for child care grants.

By Sept. 30:
• add your children between ages 19–26 to your endowed health and dental plans
• enroll in/increase your Select Benefits elections for reimbursement for medical expenses incurred by your children in this age bracket.

By Oct. 1:
• apply for child care grant subsidies.

Details:
• The new national health reform legislation, effective Jan. 1, 2011, allows parents to cover their young adult children on their health plans and pre-tax medical reimbursement accounts until their children reach age 26.
• A special enrollment period, ending Sept. 30, allows Cornell endowed faculty and staff to enroll their eligible children on their endowed health and dental plans, effective retroactively to Sept. 1.
• Both endowed and contract college employees already in the Select Benefits medical reimbursement program can now submit medical bills incurred by their eligible children that insurance plans did not cover, going back to March 30, 2010. Both employees also may enroll or increase their Select Benefits medical reimbursement plans if they have a child between the ages of 19 and 26.
• Applications for Cornell’s 2011 child care grant subsidies for faculty and staff members must be completed online and submitted to Benefit Services, 130 Day Hall, in paper copy along with the signature page and supporting documentation, either hand-delivered or U.S. postmarked by Oct. 1.

Information:
Web: www.hr.cornell.edu/benefits
E-mail: benefits@cornell.edu
Call: Benefit Services, 607.255.3936
Get to know computing at Cornell
Shaley DeGiorgio

This is the current status of CIT services, www.cit.cornell.edu/services. The page can be found on the right side of the home page.

For a complete listing of technical training resources, such as Inside Higher Ed and The Chronicle of Higher Education, visit the “Current Status of CIT Services” page at www.cit.cornell.edu/services.

Take the IT Training Spotlight:
Tech Training Spotlight:

Kathleen Jercich ’11 is a writer intern at the Cornell Chronicle.

In 2006 Maureen Broid of Cornell Benefit Services saw her son’s old desktop at his first day of kindergarten. To Broid’s surprise, her grandchild returned troubled.

“The child told me, ‘Grandma, there’s a little girl that comes to school and she has no backpack,’” Broid said. “The girl brings home a grocery bag.”

Broid decided to anonymously provide the child with a backpack filled with supplies for the new school year. But the incident heartened her.

“We think about kids in need at Christmas time, but that first day of school is traumatic... kids are worried about how their clothes and lunch look, but we don’t even afford a backpack,” Broid said.

So Broid decided to launch the Backpack Elves of the Albertus L. Cross School, a program that sponsors needy families around the winter holidays. At Albertus’s suggestion, Broid entitled the “elves” to determine how many children at the schools they represented needed supplies.

“When the PACS event out of business, they were offering backpacks for two dollars each,” she said. “One of the volunteers bought the whole lot because she thought of the Backpack Program when she saw them.”

Although the program cannot help schools that cannot represent a Cornellلق in the program, Broid said the Backpack Elves is evidence that activism at the personal level is more accessible than many think.

“We’ve all seen things that we think need changing,” she said. “If you care about something, there’s got to be an organization to help.”

And if there isn’t one, start one,” she advised.

“Then there’s no one, start one,” she advised.

To get involved with the Elves Backpack Program or to see which schools are represented, visit www.cornellelves.org.

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September 23, 2010

FOR SALE

West Coast Customs by Orion 12-inch dual subwoofers with built in 800 watt amp. Excellent condition. $385. PRS6.

3 yr old female snapping turtle, $50. $100 w/Tank & accessories. 255.8579.

Set of women’s left handed Aastads golf clubs. Only used a few times. $50, 253.4418.

Beautiful adult 7 yr old Calico cat needs a home. Spayed, good with dogs and children, not so much with other cats. BED36.

2005 Silver Honda CRV Two Wheel Drive, automatic, Low Miles, great condition, $16,000. SFL33.

Bunkbed, white sturdy metal frame, twin over full, built in steps, $150. Picture available. AD810.


4BR/1.5 BA Fall Creek house for sale on Utica St. See the Craigslist for pictures and more info. Vicki, 254.4386.

Registered Treewing Walker Coonhound pups for sale, $100 each. Please contact Annemarie for details, 255.8304, AL6AL.

2 live Ficus trees approx 6 – 7 ft. tall. In tact Annemarie for details, 255.8304, AL6AL.

FOR RENT

Beautiful 4 BR house for rent; Cortland, For rent matching brown ceramic pots. Selling 2 live Ficus trees approx 6 – 7 ft. tall. In tact Annemarie for details, 255.8304, AL6AL.

FURNISHED/UNFURNISHED

$900 a year, save some techniques could cut energy a low-interest loan and pellet stove subsidy to prove it. Dan Burke, project coordinator, and Guillermo Neto, green building and renewable energy program coordinator at Cooperative Extension, are looking for 24 Tompkins County homeowners to participate. The homeowners would first have an energy audit to determine how to lower the heating needs with weatherization techniques so the house could be almost entirely heated with a pellet stove. INHS will then offer the homeowners a five- to 10-year low interest loan to pay for the work needed from a certified contractor. Other than federal and weatherization energy-saving incentives will also be available to those who participate in the pilot program.

Participants will purchase and install a pellet stove for their heating needs, with a $900 rebate available from Cooperative Extension.

There is no income cap, but depending on their income level, some homeowners will qualify for a 50 percent cut on the total cost of the weatherization and stove. To get a tax credit, all work needs to be completed by Dec. 31.

Participants will also receive delivery of bulk or bagged pellets at a guaranteed below-market price for two years. Over the long run, pellets are far cheaper – and more stable in price – than propane or oil, says Burke.

In return, program participants will be asked to share data with Cooperative Extension about their energy usage and cost savings. Those interested in being part of the program should contact Burke at 607.527.0031 or e-mail burke.cc6@cornell.edu, or Neto, 607.272.2292, ext. 185, e-mail gm379@cornell.edu.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!

Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services are offering a pilot weatherization project, with a low-interest loan and pellet stove subsidy to prove it. Dan Burke, project coordinator, and Guillermo Neto, green building and renewable energy program coordinator at Cooperative Extension, are looking for 24 Tompkins County homeowners to participate. The homeowners would first have an energy audit to determine how to lower the heating needs with weatherization techniques so the house could be almost entirely heated with a pellet stove. INHS will then offer the homeowners a five- to 10-year low interest loan to pay for the work needed from a certified contractor. Other than federal and weatherization energy-saving incentives will also be available to those who participate in the pilot program.

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** Service Recognition Dinner**

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** Fall and Winter Employee Celebrations**

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