

The

## insider

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Scat singer Spider Saloff and pianist Brad Williams entertained at the fifth annual Tree Trimming Party. Mike Korrick, PHY PLT, placed the angel on top. The many student groups, faculty and staff attending was apparent by the large number of handmade ornaments that were hung on the tree. In addition to the coffee, punch and more than 60 dozen cookies served, JoAnn Donovan of Food Service created an edible tree. The tree was made from 24 pints of strawberries and four pounds of chocolate. By 1:00 pm all that was left was an empty plate.

# President's Message

**As 1996 begins I welcome all new and returning faculty. This month I asked Dr. Ed Dolan, Vice President of Academic Affairs, to share his impressions of the programs and academic goals of Harper College. Following is his message.**



The three key academic goals and priorities for Harper College for 1996 include (1) continued advancement of the Teaching and Learning Agenda, which is the very essence of our work at Harper; (2) continued development and implementation of the Academic Technology Plan, which is critical and instrumental to our instructional life; and (3) the completion of our North Central Self-Study.

As we at Harper College begin 1996, we cannot help but be aware of the next century and the changes and challenges the year 2000 will bring. Changes which are already obvious include the technology revolution which has increasingly impacted our daily lives both here at Harper College and at home. Advances in technology change not only **how** we teach, research and communicate, but also **what** and **when** we teach, research and communicate. The implications for curriculum, the learning environment, and learning delivery for all of us as professional and concerned educators are enormous.

Another clear change may be seen in the shifting demographics of both the community we serve and Harper College. With increased disparity between the "haves" and the "have-nots", the shrinking of the middle class, and the increasing diversity of ethnic and cultural groups in our community, the terms "access" and "open door" take on new meanings. In our classrooms we are seeing the reflected diversity. An increased demand for basic skills, developmental skills and language skills is clearly reflected in our enrollment patterns.

As Harper College approaches its thirtieth year, demographics are also changing within the College. Among faculty alone, nearly thirty-five percent (35%) have been hired within the last five years and nearly fifty per cent (50%) during the last nine years. The College's early retirement programs have also catalyzed changes among staff and administrators. Our ability to transmit the values of excellence, quality, and an emphasis on the student (which have characterized Harper College during the past twenty-seven years) are critical to maintaining the standards and success of our comprehensive programs and services.

These changes (technology and demographics) are but two of the changes which face Harper College. Certainly economic (tax cap, etc.), internationalization, school-to-work and federal

funding changes are but a few of the additional challenges. There are undoubtedly others not mentioned here or not known about at this time.

Each of these priorities engages the energies and the creative talents of both our colleagues and ourselves. It is appropriate that we focus on and continue to move forward with the above mentioned initiatives because each is central to the College's educational mission.

Given this era of fundamental shifts within our society, community and at Harper College, I am optimistic about our ability to address our challenges and to develop our priorities. I see a high degree of commitment among faculty and staff to create successful learning-centered programs. Faculty and staff working together will, I believe, embrace the present and future changes while maintaining a focus and direction which enhance and spotlight our articulated priorities.



## Insider's View of Mary Jo Willis

Spend an afternoon with Mary Jo Willis and the expression a *real people person* takes on a new meaning.

This associate professor and director of the Harper Theatre states, "Films are wonderful, but they are a solitary experience. I prefer the interaction of live human beings. That is why the theatre is such a great experience. It is one of the last opportunities to share your humanity. As audience and actors, we are in the moment together."

After graduating from Ball State University in Indiana, Mary Jo moved to Decatur, Illinois. "While teaching high school speech and theatre for four years, I learned that you must do whatever it takes to get a production up—clean the restrooms, mend the costumes." It was all excellent preparation for her next position at Harper's then very new theatre department. Her first Harper set was built inside a barn in Barrington. The temperature was so low that February (1975) that as soon as paint was applied to wood, it separated. At that time, student volunteers were her only help. As the department grew, modest stipends were made available and gradually professionals were hired to build sets, do lighting and create costuming.

"To teach theatre you have to like people. A good teacher cajoles, encourages and discovers the possibilities in the students and helps them reach higher than they ever thought they could reach." In preparing for the play *The Dining Room*, Mary Jo was on campus 24 days in a row. This is typical of the amount of time spent on such projects. But Mary Jo points out that it is always by choice. "It takes time to get quality stuff, but when it happens the payback is great!"

When asked if anyone can be an actor, Mary Jo points out that we all perform social acting every day. "Think about the excuse you used when turning down a party invitation. You can learn to act, but not everyone can learn the artistry of a great performance. Few can be stars. I am equally proud of the kids who make a living as designers, set builders and teachers."

Presently, Mary Jo's focus is on the need for a theatre building. While plays are held in either the Drama Lab or J-143, there isn't an actual theatre. J-143 is a lecture hall which means there is no backstage or running water. In order for an actor to leave the stage without being seen by the audience, he must exit the building. This is especially difficult during inclement weather.

During her 20 years at Harper, Mary Jo has directed community and professional theatre. Someday, she would love to portray Martha in the Edward Albee play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* or Alma in Tennessee Williams' *Summer and Smoke*.

As Blanche DuBois might say, Mary Jo has always depended on the kindness of strangers as well as the familiar faces of the College for support. "Without Public Safety unlocking doors, Graphics designing posters, Maintenance getting us out of a million jams, our projects would not have been as successful. I appreciate everyone!"

**Born:** Peoria, Illinois

**Family:** single

**Education:** BA from College of St. Francis, MA from Ball State University

**Interests:** theatre

**Best advice my parents ever gave:** Every day counts!

**If time and money were not a problem:** I would go back to school full-time, travel, sit on a beach with 20 great books.

**I would like to learn:** to say "no." It's hard for me because there is so much to be done.

**I don't care for:** sitting around too much

**One thing I've learned in life:** Do what you do intensely and with joy.

**Favorite food:** all the wonderful Lebanese food my mother taught me to make

**Favorite play:** Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and everything Tennessee Williams wrote



## Focus on Program Assistants

Thirteen people at Harper share the job title Program Assistant. Each month they meet on an informal basis seeking solutions to common problems. Jeanne Kline of the Women's Program set up the first meeting as a way to help trouble-shoot some of the questions she had about the new Regent system. Everyone attending found it so helpful that it has become a regular session. *Insider* editors sat in on their December meeting in order to learn more about this position and the employees who fill it.

Joanne Parke, OC/PS, explains they have gone outside the group for advice, too. "We recognized that we needed help running aspects of MicrosoftWord that were specific to our needs. We set up a custom-made class through the Help Desk. We learned how to fine-tune that program!"

Joanne's area encompasses both continuing education and the College credit division. Her students' age range is great. Participants in the PEAK program are as young as 11 years old while the Senior Lecture Series is geared for students over 50.

Karen Cutlan finds her department, CTR WK DEV, very exciting. "Because operating and networking is a career package, I have ongoing contact with the students. Our programs are costly, intense and trend-setting! I enjoy helping people with career decisions and guiding them on their career paths."

Working in LIB ARTS, Dawn Spannraft deals with cultural and personal enrichment programs. "Everyday is a character builder. When three instructors call in sick at 4:30 pm for their 7 pm classes, I have to get on the phone and contact every student a.s.a.p!"



**Pictured from left are: Pamela Frye, Bonnie Kurth, Jeanne Kline, Geri LaBeaux and Karen Cutlan**

Sahar Mikhail, LIB SER, is responsible for credit classes, including telecourses and distance learning classes. Sahar deals with instructors on a daily basis, and part of her challenge is trying to satisfy everyone with their schedules.

Jacque Blount-Dancer understands that each instructor in LS/HS has his/her own style, and one of her strengths is adapting to that. "Being able to deal with the many personalities I come in contact with daily is of utmost importance." She enjoys interacting with students who come to her for everything from locating a room to advice and reassurance.

During 1995, Pam Frye created and coordinated over 30 new programs for WHP. Pam also organized Harper's first Country/Western Shindig in conjunction with country radio station US99. "There were 600 people, concessions and a fashion show. And it was great!"

In addition to her position within the Women's Program, Jeanne Kline is responsible for the secretarial support required by the Displaced Homemaker and Single Parents Grants which serve

approximately 250 participants each year. Jeanne is also involved with the annual Women's History Week Presentation.

Working in Corporate Services, Marlene Bernstein provides training for corporations at their sites rather than at the College. Marlene credits her staff, instructors and her own ability to prioritize for her success in this position.

Gladys Lawson, BUS/SS, realizes her patience helps her function effectively. She enjoys working independently, but often the phone is ringing off the hook with prospective students seeking information about the continuing education classes her department offers.

Halina Polakowski's BUS/SS motto is "never a dull day." Sometimes it is all phone calls, other days she spends paying instructors, vendors and answering customers' questions. She points out that program assistants share some common traits; "patience and the ability to provide excellent customer service."

CAD/CAM open-entry registration is unique from the other programs, so

**continued**

## Inside Harper



**Rebecca Smith (left) celebrates with her daughter Sydney. A sister and brother (above) take a candy cane break and Sue Walton (right) hugs the granddaughter of a Harper student.**



In December, the Women's Program hosted a holiday party for mothers who are working through the Women's Program. Typically these women juggle children, school and part-time jobs, with the help of Displaced Homemaker Grants and Non-traditional Career Grants. Cathy Lindstrom and Rebecca Smith coordinated the festivities.

The African American Club gave new, gift-wrapped toys to each child. A potluck-style meal was served, made up of dishes contributed by Harper employees. The Women's Advisory Committee, which is an off-campus organization, provided funds that were used to purchase food for the event and canned goods for those in need.

Between feasting and opening presents the women took time to stand in a circle. There they introduced themselves and announced their goals, hopes and dreams. Hearing others' success stories as well as the adversity they have overcome helps motivate the program's newcomers to continue their education.

### **Program Assistants continued**

Bonnie Kurth and other CAD/CAM staff handle their own registration. Bonnie often spends most of her day talking with students, making sure they enroll in the appropriate class. Geri La Beaux joined the department in September.

Their interests are as diverse as the divisions they work for. Bonnie Kurth is a quilter, Pam Frye rides motorcycles; Halina Polakowski and Jeanne Kline are avid readers; Marlene Bernstein is a dedicated Chicago sports fan; and Gladys Lawson teaches Sunday school. Sahar Mikhail enjoys swimming; Karen

Cutlan loves to garden; and Dawn Spannraft spends her free time with her children, grandchildren and husband.

Joanne Parke believes she needs to learn as much as possible as soon as possible. A program assistant for only a year, Joanne has taken 15 different classes and seminars on a variety of topics. She is currently working on her M.S. in adult education.

Jacque Blount-Dancer is also working toward her M.S. in education. Jacque's background is perhaps the most unusual of the program assistants' experiences.

She served 21 years in the U.S. Coast Guard and is an active member of the American Legion Fleet Reserve Association.

Jacque put it this way, "Each of us has different responsibilities, but I've clearly realized that our coordinators would be lost without us."

*Editor's note: Gary Nowickas has been working as a program assistant at the Northeast Center since August. Gary's work schedule prevents him from attending the monthly meeting.*

## Departmental Developments

**Jane Thomas**, LS/HS, was a panel member at a preconference presentation for the annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The presentation topic was *Child Care and Laboratory Schools on Campus: Balancing the Real With the Ideal*.

In December, *North Shore Magazine* recognized **Elizabeth McKay**, AE/LS, as one of the *Top Ten Volunteers of the Year*. Dr. McKay's service as treasurer of the Illinois Girl Scouts legislative monitoring network and chairperson of the board of directors of the Illinois Crossroads Council, increased donations by adults in one year to \$300,000, quadrupled family partnership contributions in two years to \$63,000 and secured numerous grants and corporate donations.

Goodbye to a good friend. **Patty Roberts**, COM REL, entered John Marshall Law School this month, in pursuit of what we are sure will be a most distinguished law career.



**Pictured at the retirement celebration held in their honor are: Evaristo Calzada, PHY PLT, Olga Melchert, LIB ARTS, Pat Smith-Pierce, LIB ARTS, Martin Ryan, LIB ARTS, and Susanne Havlic, LIB ARTS.**

### For Retirees, Past and Prospective...

HCAA—the Harper College Annuitants Association (a chapter of the state organization) is off and running with more than 50 dues-paying members. Betty Windham is the new president, and Irene Lavelle president-elect, with Rose Trunk as treasurer. Other executive committee members are Al Dunikoski, secretary/newsletter editor; Anna Harshbarger and Roger Mussell, program planners, and Carrie Dobbs, Margaret Scott and Lill Thiel serving as members-at-large.

Anna and Roger have planned an outstanding program for all Harper personnel. Aimed toward retirees and those about to retire in a few years, the program will feature speakers from SURS and Social Security. Time will be reserved by the speakers for answering individual questions via mini-breakout sessions.

The program will be held on January 26, 1996, at 1:00 pm, in Building E, Room 108. Mark your calendar now! Remember, a knowledgeable retiree is able to make more informed decisions about the many avenues to take in his or her retirement. Plan to attend, especially if you're planning to retire in the next few years.

You can become a member of the Harper College Annuitants Association by sending a check for \$20.00 to Rose Trunk, BUS/SS, Harper College, 1200 West Algonquin Road, Palatine, Illinois, 60067. Make check payable to Harper College Annuitants Association, HCAA. You do not have to be retired to become a member. If you are 55 years of age and contribute to SURS, you can join now!

• The Harper

# insider

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**Editor: Susanne Starck  
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**1200 West Algonquin Road  
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