

# ROCKY NOW

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*Rocky Now: Keeping our friends and supporters informed about what's new and exciting at Rocky Mountain College*

## All about our students



*Cathy Daem is enjoying her experience as an actor with the Virginia City Players.*

*Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07*

When the curtain rose for a new season at the historic Virginia City Opera House, it celebrated the union of Montana's oldest professional acting company and the state's oldest institution of higher learning. The Illustrious Virginia City Players and Rocky Mountain College inaugurated a new era as the 60th anniversary of the opera house is commemorated this year.

For RMC this not only creates a higher profile for the College in the southwestern region of Montana, but also an important collaboration with the Montana Heritage Commission, national historic organizations and academic institutions.

It also presents a new opportunity to provide scholarships and internships for our students in theatre, business and education. One of those students, Cathy Daem, is our first student to perform with the Players. She benefits from direction by Prof. Gerry Roe and by mentoring from RMC alumni in the cast, including Jessica Siegfried-Gruensfelder, Alishia Shubert and Brandon Lahren.

Cathy, a junior at Rocky Mountain College majoring in theatre performance, is extremely excited to join the Players. She has been seen in "Once Upon a Mattress," "Moon Over Buffalo," and "The Music Man." Cathy hails from Billings.

If you have not had the opportunity to see Rocky's students and alumni perform, it's well worth the trip to Virginia City to attend one of the four shows to be presented this year.



## Morledge-Kimball Hall *Open House* August 27

*Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07*

*Finishing touches are being completed on Morledge - Kimball Hall which provides new classrooms, faculty offices and conference rooms. The open house for the new complex, made possible by the generosity of the Morledge family, is scheduled for Aug. 27.*

## Flying High at Nationals

The Intercollegiate Flight Team at Rocky Mountain College competed recently at the National Competition of the National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) held in Cahokia, Ill.

The six-day event, hosted this year by Parks College of St. Louis University, pitted the best 28 collegiate flight teams in the nation against each other.

The invitation to nationals was Rocky's third in the past six years and considered an excellent showing by the small college. There is only one national competition for all collegiate aviation programs, regardless of size.

"To earn a spot on the national stage took a great deal of work by our students," said Dan Hargrove, RMC director of aviation. "We're proud of their teamwork and commitment. They really are a great team of professionals."

The competition includes nine different events in which students compete in both flying skills and ground

knowledge. Flight events included navigation, precision landings, and message drop. Ground events included precision flight in a simulator, flight planning, aircraft preflight, and aircraft recognition. Seventy-seven colleges and universities competed at various regional competitions, hoping for a berth at nationals.

The overall top performing male on Rocky's team was Brandon Templeton, team captain, who excelled in the simulator event. The top performing female was Heather Kasubowski. The Outstanding Team Member Award went to Grant Gagnon.

Team members included: Brandon Templeton (captain), Grant Gagnon, Heather Kasubowski, Kevin Keegan, Jacob Keierleber, Brian Kelleher, Hans Kellogg, Hannah Neel, Dmitriy Nesmeyanov, Jesse Taylor, Chris Wiens (advisor), Matt Cichosz (coach).



# Insider



## RMC Faculty Performs 'Educational Magic'

When my wife and I contemplated college choices for our children, what mattered most to us was that they would receive a solid education and not just training. No matter what major they chose, we knew that several career opportunities would be open to them if they had a college degree that included a wide range of educational experiences and not a narrowly-focused curriculum.

We also wanted them to attend an institution of higher learning which would graduate them in four years. With the cost of a college education, that's an important aspect.

Now, as president of Rocky Mountain College, I believe our mission is to inspire individual growth through a distinctive personal educational process in professional studies grounded in the liberal arts, to equip students with practical reasoning for decision and action, and to prepare graduates for independent and creative thought that benefits their careers and the greater good.

Sometimes I think my esteemed and venerable colleague, Obert Udem, director of planned giving, sums it up best when he says simply, "Rocky is a place where educational magic takes place. We transform students."

We believe in a world where parents want their college-bound students to achieve academic success, regardless of their grade point average, and provide value to those making that investment in education, be they the students, the parents, or grandparents.

What makes Rocky Mountain College's brand of liberal arts, science and professional studies relevant and attractive to today's career-focused students and their families is that one-dimensional talent won't take you very far in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; RMC offers a much more complete package.

We develop exceptional organizational leaders who are self-assured and adept. They are prepared with the versatile savoir-faire needed to thrive in a competitive world which changes at a blinding pace.

Rocky is also a place where students learn to learn for a lifetime. They give back with civic engagement to their communities. They matter.

What makes this transformation possible begins with the faculty. Many colleges boast of the pedigree of their faculty, and we are no exception. Nearly 90 percent of our faculty have doctoral terminal degrees. Many colleges boast of their small class size and the ratio of faculty to students. Again, we are no exception. We have a 13:1 student to faculty ratio.

But not many colleges can boast that their faculty is more interested in teaching than tenure. Not many can say their faculty is devoted to their students' success; Rocky Mountain College can.

In the annual RMC Gift Report, due out in August, we will give some examples of those mentoring professors, who nurture a desire for learning in our students, who are invested in their success, and who make all the difference in the quality of education our students acquire.

The positive energy that propels Rocky Mountain College projects in a progressive direction is remarkable. These are just three wonderful gifts which will help our students:

- Our new RMC Board Chair, Barb Skelton, returned recently from Washington, D.C., with a commitment from U.S. Senator Max Baucus and U.S. Senator Jon Tester for a \$125,000 grant to the College for new science equipment. We appreciate the efforts of both our senate representatives to recognize RMC's outstanding science programs and to show their support. The grant is part of the 2010 Commerce, Justice & Science Appropriations Bill.

- Former U.S. Senator Conrad Burns earmarked funds from the Senator Conrad Burns Foundation for Scholastic Excellence to give to four educational entities and Rocky Mountain College was one of the fortunate recipients. Remarking that RMC has always been a leader in higher education in Montana, Sen. Burns presented a check to RMC for \$79,800. Nick Cladis, Capstone Wealth Management, who was president of the foundation, introduced Sen. Burns at the event.

- A small Methodist church long-serving its rural membership was dissolved this year, a victim of dwindling population. A trust fund of \$50,197.39, supporting this church's operation since funded in 1983, was transferred in July to establish the Kevin Community Methodist Church Scholarship Endowment at Rocky. Initial awards will be made in September of next year with first preference for students from Methodist families in the Kevin area of Toole County, and if there are none, to students from other counties east of Toole County along the Montana "High Line". No scholarship will be for less than \$1,000, nor exceed the income of the endowment fund.

"Such gifts change lives and realize dreams in magical ways, allowing ordinary people to make extraordinary gifts," said Obert Udem, RMC Director of Planned Giving. "We gratefully accept stewardship of this legacy, humbled by its good work in Kevin for its first 29 years of existence, which record we will strive to equal," he remarked.

Best regards,

Michael Mace, RMC President



Photo by Dave M. Shumway, RMC '07

RMC President Michael Mace, former U.S. Senator Conrad Burns, RMC Board Chair Barb Skelton and Nick Cladis, Capstone Wealth Management, were all smiles as Sen. Burns presented a check from his foundation to Rocky Mountain College.

## Focus on Faculty & Staff

# NMR Program Praised in National Journal

The NMR Partnership Project at Rocky Mountain College received national attention in June when it was the cover story for the journal of the American Chemical Society. The Chemical and Engineering News focused on a project initiated in 2002-2003, when Rocky's chemistry and biology professor, Dr. Cristi Hunnes, secured \$620,000 in grants from the W. M. Keck Foundation and the Rocky Mountain Technology Foundation to purchase a nuclear magnetic resonance spectrophotometer (NMR).

This powerful instrument can be used to determine the exact chemical structure of compounds and has applications in all areas of science, including chemistry, biology, environmental science, and physics. Allowing RMC students hands-on experience with the NMR, starting at the freshman level, is unique and enhances scientific learning.

Besides improving the education of students at RMC, Dr. Hunnes envisioned the NMR as a way of increasing the interest of American Indian students in science. Since the NMR can be used in a variety of environmental science applications, it is a natural fit for the interests of many of the students enrolled in the tribal colleges in Montana. The grant funding allowed RMC to begin a partnership with six of the tribal colleges in Montana in order to introduce students to the NMR. By allowing these students to work with the NMR on a project of interest to them,

either remotely or by coming to RMC, Dr. Hunnes hoped to increase the interest of the students in science and the likelihood of some of the students continuing on from the tribal college to a four year school in order to complete a bachelor's degree.

In order to make such a project possible, an NMR director was hired. For the first two years, Dr. Jingdong Mao traveled from RMC to the tribal colleges in order to engage students in NMR work. In 2007, Dr. Hunnes hired Dr. Robin Jose to continue the project. Dr. Jose's enthusiasm for this project, along with the challenges, are described in the C & EN article.

Dr. Cristi Hunnes grew up in Montana, developed a passion for chemistry and yearned for a career teaching in a small college, which was realized when she was hired at Rocky. For Dr. Hunnes, teaching allows her to spend her days combining her love of chemistry and biology with the joy of helping students learn and become excited about her subject area. She enjoys teaching small classes so she can truly get to know the students and engage them more actively in the material.

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Hunnes is the mother of three young children. She plays the flute in the community band and enjoys helping her children learn musical instruments. She is passionate about travel, photography, hiking, skiing, and reading good books.



*Dr. Cristi Hunnes oversees program that benefits many Montana colleges.*

## Focus on Alumni & Friends

# MS Awareness is the Goal of Mrs. Montana

Lacey (Irion) Kraft, RMC '98 knows that persistence pays off, which is why she prevailed in her quest to become Mrs. Montana 2009. She is not embarrassed that she tried four times before she won the title that will allow her to advance her mission of educating the public about multiple sclerosis.

"I enjoyed the experience every time. When I entered the first time I had no idea of what it would take to win, but each time I learned more. I made new friends and learned new things and became convinced it was important because of my platform," said the 33-year-old mother of two.

Teaching the public about multiple sclerosis is the important platform she will address during her tenure with the title. She was diagnosed with the disease six years ago. Pregnant with her daughter, Bella, and with her son, Ely, only three years old at the time, she was terrified of the diagnosis.

"I had never heard of it before or known anyone that had it," she said. "Not much is known about the disease. There is no known cause and no known cure. When I was told I had multiple sclerosis, I was very scared."

With her husband Joshua's support, running for Mrs. Montana was a higher calling.

"I first decided to enter because I thought it would be fun. I liked the idea of a pageant for married women representing family life. I'm a native Montanan, love the outdoors, graduated from college here and am raising a family here, so I thought I could represent the ideals of Mrs. Montana," she said. "But to

be able to do some public education about multiple sclerosis was the main purpose."

Lacey was inspired by her friend, Heather Rathbun Nitz, RMC '01, who was a Miss Montana and later RMC alumni director.

"I knew if I could win, I would have a platform to talk about a disease which does not even have a registry -- we don't even know how many people are afflicted."

About two-thirds of those diagnosed with multiple sclerosis are women, most are between the ages of 20-40, and the public often confuses it with muscular dystrophy. There are approximately 1,600 Montanans with MS.

Lacey hopes she will be a good Mrs. Montana representative for her college as well as for the state.

"I treasure my time at Rocky even though I lived off campus and was married for half of the time I was there. I had a wonderful learning experience. The campus is beautiful, the small class sizes were definitely an advantage, and I was really grateful for an equestrian program that is offered in this state," she said.

With a double major -- in history and equestrian studies -- Lacey prolonged her time at Rocky by working as a library assistant for two years after graduation.

"I hope and pray my children will be able to attend Rocky," she added.

Lacey will be competing for Mrs. America September 1-8 in Tucson, Ariz.



*Persistence paid off for Lacey (Irion) Kraft, RMC '98 in her quest to be Mrs. Montana.*

# Coming Attractions

## AUGUST 14

Rocky Campus Clean Up Day: RMC staff, faculty, alumni and friends will volunteer to spruce up campus, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., followed by a BBQ.

## AUGUST 20

White Coat Ceremony: Physician Assistant Program Graduation, Rocky Green, 1:00 p.m. Reception following in Fraley Lounge.

## AUGUST 22

All Euro Car Show -- Sponsored by the Absaroka Region Porsche Club on the RMC Green. For more information contact: Fred Magers, 406-245-6733 or email abs.pres@gmail.com

## AUGUST 27

Philanthropist of the Year Awards / Official Open House for Morledge - Kimball Hall: The Philanthropist of the Year awards will include two -- one to individuals and a second to a business. This year's recipients -- Jim and Sandy Almond, and HiTech Construction -- will be honored at a reception in the Great Hall of Prescott Commons.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

(details will be coming soon):

## SEPTEMBER 26

Hall of Fame Dinner in the Great Hall of Prescott Commons

## OCTOBER 9-11

Decade of the 90's Reunion Homecoming Weekend

## NOVEMBER 7

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Black Tie Blue Jeans Scholarship Benefit



Photo courtesy/Michael North

## Rocky Walkers Wow

Rocky Mountain College's Relay for Life team, the Rocky Walkers, made an impressive contribution to this year's Relay event, raising almost \$4,300 for the American Cancer Society.

Leading up to the event, the Rocky Walkers sponsored two bake sales and a campus chili feed.

This year's team members included Robyn Cummings, team captain, and her husband, Bob, along with Bob Wilmouth, Claire Oakley, Deb and Greg Wiens, Erin Reser, Jacquee Dundas, Kathy Sabol, Lisa Browning, Mike Mace, Pam Turner-Milligan, and Vicki Davison. Pam Turner-Milligan was the team's leading fundraiser, selling the third most luminaria for the entire Relay for Life event.

Despite the warm weather, Robyn Cummings donned the Rocky mascot suit for several laps around the track, drawing lots of applause from the sidelines.

Plans are already underway to begin fundraising for next year's event. To learn more about getting involved with the Rocky Walkers, please contact Robyn Cummings at 657-1067.

