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ROCKY NOW

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

RMC IS ABOUT KIDS FIRST, HERS AND OTHERS

FOCUS ON FACULTY



Sandra Barz winds up 32 years of teaching at RMC this year.

Thirty-two years ago, Sandra Barz felt like she was at home when she was on the Rocky Mountain College campus. She watched her young daughters tumble down the gentle green slope at the football field. She laughed with them and their friends when they celebrated their birthdays at Battlin' Bear basketball games. They had swimming parties in the Fortin Education Center pool.

"It felt good. My kids kind of grew up here," said the professor of accountancy and business. "In a way, I grew up here, too. I had two wonderful mentors in Cliff Clark

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RMC students frolic in the foamy surf on the shore near Churchill where they ventured to see polar bears and study climate change. Below, a polar bear checks out RMC students who traveled to the Canadian Arctic.

STUDYING ALL AROUND THE WORLD

ALL ABOUT OUR STUDENTS

The Arctic. China. Italy. Ireland. Israel. Cuba. Africa. The opportunities for Rocky Mountain College students to travel and learn abroad are boundless.

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RMC students who traveled this past year to those countries learned what St. Augustine recognized 18 centuries ago: "The world is a book and those who do not travel it read only a few pages."

For 10 weeks, RMC students ventured for a semester of study in Italy, taught by RMC art faculty Jim Baken, Mark Moak and Rhett Moak. The group, accompanied by students and professors from University of Montana Western and University of Great Falls as part of the Montana Alliance, arrived in Rome where they visited museums at the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Vatican and the National Museum of Roma. From Rome it was off to Florence,



where the troupe visited museums and galleries, followed by a trip to Perugia. There the group stayed at the Villa Pieve, enjoying side trips to other cities across Europe. The Pieve International School hosts university programs and workshops in art, photography, design, literature, sculpture, architecture, history, business, multimedia, Italian language and Italian cooking. Steeped in history, the Pieve International School Campus has been the setting for a variety of overseas study programs since 1987. "The value of these kinds of experiences can be summed up simply. Travel opens eyes and changes lives," Baken said.

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RETIRING PROFESSORS REPRESENT CENTURY OF CARE

INSIDER

BY MICHAEL R. MACE - *President*



"Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes . . . 525,600 minutes.... how do you measure a year . . . in daylights, in sunsets, in midnights . . . in cups of coffee . . . in laughter, in strife. . . how do you measure a year in the life" . . .

Those are words from the lyrics of the Emmy Award winning song, Seasons of Love, in the hit musical Rent. I heard that song recently and it made me think about some of the faculty we have retiring this year. I thought about how many minutes over the course of careers like James "Doc" McDowell, Susan McDaniel, Sandra Barz,

Vickie Christie, and Marilyn and Ray Randall have been devoted to our students. Consider the nearly 50 years that Doc McDowell has taught here. Or the 32 years of Sandra Barz, featured in this issue. What a remarkable impact they've had on the future, teaching and mentoring hundreds of students who are now leading productive lives, with successful careers.

Taken altogether, our retiring professors have dedicated more than a century of teaching, guiding, and mentoring students while also contributing in other ways to the welfare of this institution.

Beginning last month with Doc McDowell, we will continue to feature these distin-

guished professors in Rocky Now in Focus on Faculty through June.

These articles can barely scratch the surface of 525,600 minutes a year for all the years they devoted to serving students and the community, but I hope they represent a measure of our appreciation.

I also hope you will, with me, extend a warm thank you and best wishes to these fine professors. Rocky Mountain College is what it is today because of their diligence and devotion.

SVEE HONORED FOR LIFELONG DEVOTION TO PEOPLE

103RD CANDLELIGHT

BY JENNY LOCKHART - *RMC*

On Thursday, February 9, the Great Hall at Rocky Mountain College was lit with the warm flickering glow of candlelight. The burning wicks served as a reminder of the first Candlelight Dinner at RMC 103 years ago, when candles were used to rectify a lack of electricity. Although the RMC of today certainly has no shortage of modern amenities, the traditional candlelight remains an annual custom to uphold the College's values.

The dinner, while changing with RMC over the years, has always been a time to recognize one alumni for outstanding service to the community, and this year's Alumni Association Outstanding Service Award was presented to Rodney Svee, RMC '69.

Starting out at Rocky Mountain College when tuition was a mere \$1,300 a year, Svee secured a \$1000, scholarship to attend school - paying the remainder of his tuition with money earned working at a local gas station.

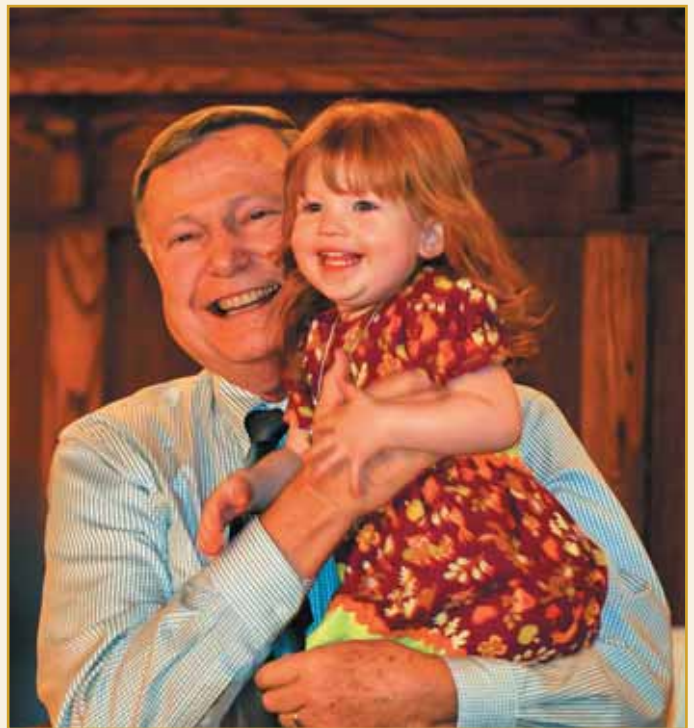
"Coming to Rocky was the greatest gift I could've had," he said. "But the thing with Rocky wasn't what they gave me, but

what they did for me personally. I learned that all people have worth and that if you care and you serve, you will be successful. There is no greater gift than to serve."

Svee took the lesson of service to heart and with his wife, Pat, "the most important thing I got from Rocky," he set out to make a difference.

His work with Montana public schools, the Human Rights Commission and the RMC community all fall back on the values he learned as an RMC student.

"The professors taught us that it's all about the people," he said. "They didn't push us into anything. They let us grow."



Rod Svee received a congratulatory hug from his granddaughter, Vivian Svee, after speaking at the 103rd Candlelight Dinner where he received the Alumni Association Outstanding Service Award.

In honor of Svee's life-long devotion to people, RMC was proud to recognize him as an embodiment of the College's values.

ALL ABOUT OUR STUDENTS STUDYING ALL AROUND THE WORLD: ITALY, CHINA

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RMC Photo

RMC students joined other students from Montana Western and University of Great Falls, all members of the Montana Alliance, for the trip to Italy. One of the hosts was Michele Vasta (far left, second row), patriarch and owner of Villa Pieve and former general manager of Perugia chocolates. RMC faculty Jim Baken, Mark Moak and Rhett Moak (front row left) guided students for a semester in Italy.

While RMC students traveled Italy, other students, accompanied Kayhan Ostovar, RMC biology and environmental sciences assistant professor, to the Canadian Arctic. The field course was conducted over fall break after a semester of lectures on Arctic ecology. Students had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the plight of polar bears and the Arctic environment at a research station. Churchill is famous as the location to see polar bears as they wait for the sea ice to form so they can leave land and spend the winter hunting seals on the ice pack. Days were spent exploring the area by vehicle and foot, and nights included more lectures on arctic ecology, polar bears, and native people.

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime,” said Mark Twain.

RMC students had their minds expanded when they accompanied Dr. Karen Beiser, RMC assistant professor of business administration and economics, to China before Christmas. The ten students who joined Dr.

Beiser spent two weeks divided between Shanghai and Beijing visiting businesses and industries. According to senior Angela Stewart, RMC students spent the fall semester discussing the challenges that arise when American businesses approach the Chinese with business opportunities. Topics included negotiation, building relationships and political issues. “Once in China, these concepts came to life with each lecture and business visit,” Stewart said.

Students enjoyed tours at BAO Steel, China’s largest steel manufacturer, JA Solar, and Lenovo. They also engaged in discussions with business people from Dolphin Logistics, Motorola, UniqueSoft and others about the differences between how the Chinese approach business relationships and the “American way” of doing business.

In January, RMC students had an extraordinary opportunity to visit Trinity College in Ireland, guided by Shelby Jo Long-Hammond, RMC assistant professor of communication studies. Ten RMC students acquitted themselves admirably against some of the best debate teams in the United Kingdom and Europe. Since the 16th century, Trinity has been a center for



RMC Photo

RMC students enjoy a dip in the Dead Sea during their trip to Bethsaida.



RMC Photo

The Graduate Memorial Building at Trinity is dedicated to the historic debate program. RMC students marveled at the debate room inside the GMB.



RMC students bound for China held fund raisers, like a Chinese buffet, to help with expenses for their trip.

world-class debate with an entire building on campus devoted to debate teams, classes and research. RMC was soon in the forensics fray with teams from Oxford, London School of Economics, University College Dublin, and University of Galway, as well as teams from universities in Germany, France and Belgium.

“They were as excited to meet students from Montana as we were to meet students from some of the most prestigious universities in the world,” Long-Hammond said. “It was an eye opener for everyone. It was simply an amazing experience.”

More travel is on tap for RMC students.

Continued next page

NA, IRELAND AND ISRAEL

FOCUS ON FACULTY

Dr. Jennifer Lyman, RMC professor of environmental science and studies, will lead a birding, natural history and culture tour of Cuba, February 24 – March 3, 2012. In June 2012, students will be able to go to Bethsaida, Israel. Bethsaida is a town frequently associated with the ministry of Jesus, and was home to five of the apostles. Buildings and artifacts found here are throwing light on early Christianity. “It is one of the most important archaeological digs going on today,” said Dr. Elizabeth McNamer, Rocky Mountain College assistant professor of religious thought. Dr. McNamer heads the annual trip. This year, RMC art professor Mark Moak and his wife, Rhett Moak, an RMC adjunct art instructor, are also guiding the trip.

RMC has developed a reputation as a school focused on experiential field-based programs for students. All of the environmental science international ecology courses at RMC are open to the general public. Past courses have included Island Biogeography of the Galapagos Islands, Tropical Ecology of Costa Rica, and Environments of Cuba. A new paired course offering will include a fall photography course and a spring ecology course (Nature Photography and Conservation in Tanzania, Africa). The trip for this course will occur over summer break 2013.

RMC is excited to announce a second study abroad opportunity in Italy during the fall semester of 2012. Students will begin in Rome, Pompeii, and southern Italy for an up-close and personal art history encounter, led and taught by RMC professor Mark Moak. After two weeks of touring, the program continues at the Villa Pieve near Perugia, in the heart of Italy, where studio courses will be taught. Students will learn Italian from a local instructor and will record and post their experiences in a blog. Sixteen semester hours of college credit are offered.

Additionally, RMC is offering an Alumni/Parents'/Friends' Italy Tour from October 10-18, 2012. For information on that trip, contact Kristin Mullaney, RMC alumni coordinator, (406) 657-1007 / kristin.mullaney@rocky.edu.

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 25

The 1956-57 Battlin' Bears will be inducted into the RMC Ring of Honor during a ceremony at halftime of the men's home basketball game between RMC and Montana Tech. They will become the fourth team to be featured in the Ring of Honor, which is prominently displayed on a wall at one end of First Interstate Bank Court at the Fortin Education Center on the RMC campus. For more information, contact Kristin Mullaney, RMC director of alumni, students and parent relations, 406-657-1007 / kristin.mullaney@rocky.edu.

MARCH 22

The 2012 Alumni Association Wine Tasting, The Great Room of Prescott Hall, from 6-8 p.m. Alumni, friends of RMC and senior students are invited to attend. For more information, contact Kristin Mullaney, RMC director of alumni, students and parent relations, 406-657-1007 / kristin.mullaney@rocky.edu.



The Christian Science Monitor described the Montana Logging & Ballet Company as “looney with talent.”

APRIL 27

The Montana Logging & Ballet Company, featuring a famous quartet of RMC alumni, winds up nearly a half century of performing with its farewell concert to benefit RMC art scholarships. Their last public concert will be at 7:30 p.m., Babcock Theater. Tickets will go on sale beginning March 2 at six City Brew locations: 1640 Grand Ave.; 405 Main Street, Suite D; 2425 King Ave, Suite C; 802 Shiloh Crossing Blvd.; 1131 North 27th Street; and Billings Heights on the corner of Main and Hansen. Tickets can also be obtained at: Ernie November, 919 Grand Ave.; RMC bookstore; and the ticket kiosk at Rimrock Mall. For more information, contact Vicki Davison, RMC director of advancement, 406-657-1007 / vicki.davison@rocky.edu.

PHOTOS

Credit

Photographs appearing in Rocky Now, unless otherwise noted, are by Dave M. Shumway, RMC staff photographer and web content manager.

VACHAL, LONG-HAMMOND NAMED TO 40 UNDER 40

FOCUS ON ALUMNI

Two people with Rocky Mountain College affiliations -- Jonas Vachal and Shelby Jo Long-Hammond -- were honored this year in the annual Billings Business Journal 40 Under 40 Exceptional Business Professionals.

Jonas Vachal, RMC '06, was honored because his company, Vertex Consulting Group, is an industry leader for provider services. Vertex had a record-setting year with the launch of private cloud and virtual desktop services. With a monthly average 23% revenue growth, Vertex was chosen by MSP Mentor, a comprehensive guide to managed service providers which compiles a list of the world's 250 most influential providers.

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Jonas Vachal, RMC '06, is president and CEO of Vertex Consulting Group, which had a record-setting year with the launch of private cloud and virtual desktop services.



David Grubbs/Billings Gazette Staff

RMC IS ABOUT KIDS FIRST, HERS AND OTHERS

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(now deceased) and Doc McDowell, and they were inspirational. They were also a lot of fun."

Barz came to RMC via a private accounting firm, but as a self-proclaimed "people person," she has enjoyed introducing her real world experiences to her classes.

"The only teaching experience I had was Sunday school and Bible school for pre-schoolers," she laughed. "But I jumped in and it worked out."

Don't be misled by her temperate manner. While Barz is firmly based in family and faith, a poster on her wall states: "I may look harmless, but I raised a U.S. Marine."

She and her husband, Art, also raised engineers, following in his footsteps: Tonya, who went to the Naval Academy before becoming a Marine and marrying one, and who is employed locally with WorleyParsons, a global engineering consulting firm; Karla, who earned her degree at Washington State University, worked for BNSF and Texas Instruments before moving back to Billings where she landed a job at Billings Clinic; and Darcy, a Northwestern University graduate with a degree in electrical

engineering, who lives in Chicago, and is employed by Nokia Siemens Network, formerly Motorola.

The three daughters and a half dozen grandchildren are why Barz says she is not retiring.

"I'm just moving to new adventures," she smiles. Her daughters will accompany her to Ireland to climb the family tree. She longs to go to Hawaii.

"And I want to do a lot more fly fishing," she said, although she acknowledges that, unfettered, her famous "big hair" could get in the way.

What she'll miss is what kept her at RMC for three plus decades.

"Kids, colleagues, and cash," she laughs. "In that order."

She'll miss teasing Doc McDowell, who shared her love for jokes, pranks, and Irish adages. She discovered early on the way to disarm him was to simply be quiet. "Oh, that would irk him," she said.

She'll miss engaging students in class and casual conversation. "I always felt proud when I saw them graduate because, with a small student body, you get to know

students so well," she said, although she remembers leaner days when the college population was less than 400 students. "That was too lonely feeling," she added.

She'll miss the cash, but only because she knew she earned it. "I want to leave at the top of my game, so to speak," she said.

She will not miss the campus completely, she said. She looks forward to staying involved in the RMC Institute for Peace Studies, where she will serve as chief financial officer.

"We're delighted we get more of her," said Cindy Kunz, IPS administrator. "She's been on the Board for decades and her accounting expertise is invaluable."

She wants to be more involved in some of her not-for-profit organizations.

"Sandy has always been someone who cares about her students and Rocky Mountain College," RMC Provost and Academic Vice President Anthony Piltz said. "I am sure there are many people who would not have graduated had it not been for her inspiration."

That will be a good measure for whoever is her successor.

40 UNDER 40

Continued from page 5

"It was definitely a feather in our cap. It's a big honor," Vachal, who started the company in 2007, told the Billings Business Journal. Vachal worked for Computers Unlimited while pursuing his degree in computer science.



Jo Long-Hammond was also honored as a 40 Under 40 Outstanding Leader.

His company's success is a long way from his first job - a bagger at the Columbus IGA.

Vachal, who is active as a volunteer with the Western Heritage Center and Yellowstone Boys & Girls

Ranch, said he "would like to see more individuals and families engage with our local nonprofit organizations. Billings has many nonprofit organizations that provide great value and services to our community, and they all deserve our support."

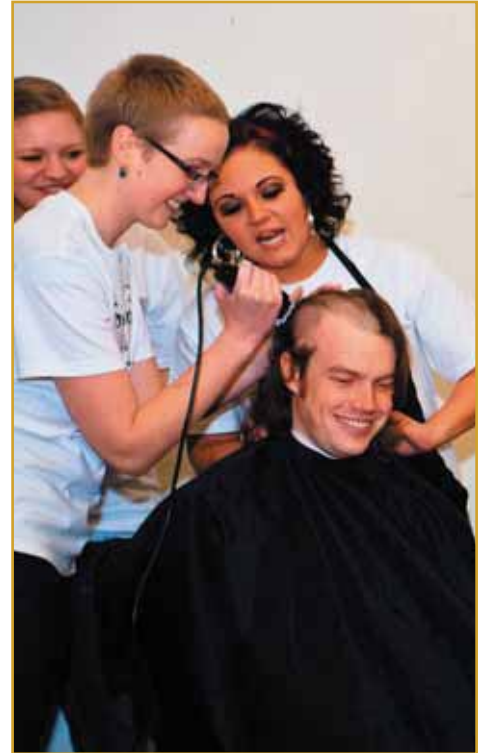
(Shelby Jo Long-Hammond, who has been previously featured in the Rocky Now Focus on Faculty, was selected for her work promoting forensics - debate, not criminal investigation - in the community. The assistant professor of communication studies and debate team advisor, recently returned from a trip to Ireland with students where they debated some of the best college debate teams in the United Kingdom.)

GOOD SOUNDS & A GOOD CAUSE

FEBRUARY AT RMC



High school students came to sing and to play musical instruments for the Fourth Annual Rocky Mountain College Invitational Honors Concert held Friday, February 3, 2012, at the Alberta Bair Theatre. Nearly 200 high school music students from Montana, Idaho, and Washington rehearsed under the direction of Steven Hart, RMC associate professor of music and director of choir, and Anthony Hammond, RMC visiting instructor and director of bands. They performed to a full house at the ABT.



Battling cancer herself, RMC student Christina Mark attends to barbering Phil Jensen, RMC assistant professor of biology, one of the 30 participants who volunteered for the "hair raising event" organized by Mark and RMC Chaplain Kristi Foster. The event "was to raise awareness, raise money to fight the disease, and raise solidarity with those battling cancer," said Rev. Foster, who is also battling cancer. The event, held in Fortin Education Center gym the night of Battlin' Bears basketball games, exceeded expectations, raising more than \$5,000 in one night. "We're still receiving contributions, so it could easily eclipse \$6,000," Rev. Foster noted. To send financial donations, mail checks made out to the American Cancer Society, to Chaplain's Office, Rocky Mountain College, 1511 Poly Drive, Billings, Mont., 59102. For more information, call Kristi Foster at 657-1098 or by email at Kristi.foster@rocky.edu.

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