CSB and SJU Grads Take the High Road to Promote Goodwill
Professor Díaz Goes to Washington
By Mike Killeen
The subway car was packed — so packed, in fact, that it sped past several stops because there was literally no room to get on.
In this cramped, crowded and highly unlikely setting, some few hours before Barack Obama was to be sworn in as the 44th president of the United States Jan. 20 in Washington, D.C., Miguel Díaz was almost brought to tears.
Díaz and his wife, Marian, were riding the train with a group of African-Americans. Miguel Díaz shared with them how excited he was about the promise of change that Obama offered, that it would not be business as usual. Then he asked them, how do you feel as African-Americans?
“One of them said to me, ’My great-grandmother was a slave. And I never thought that I would live to see this day.’ I was almost in tears with them,” Díaz said. “That was kind of like a mood setter that spoke so much in terms of what the country was about to overcome, when we inaugurated the first African-American president.”
It would not be the last time Diaz, an associate professor of theology at the College of Saint Benedict, Saint John’s University and Saint John’s School of Theology, was emotionally moved during two days of inaugural festivities in Washington.
Díaz was invited to Washington because of his work with Obama’s Catholic Advisory Council. He joined the council in June 2008, and discussed issues such as faith in politics, the specific role of Latinos and religion in the campaign, how to advance a consistent ethic of life, and the Catholic response to various other issues facing the nation.
“We tried to provide a more moderate voice to underscore that, when properly understood, faith and religion can have a very positive role to exercise in the political sphere,” Díaz said.
Upon arriving at the Capitol for the inauguration, Diaz was struck by “the diversity of peoples gathered” and the “excitement in their faces.” Obama’s speech about creating a new era of responsibility was a consistent theme in his campaign, Díaz said.
And Obama’s inclusion of “Christians, Muslims, Jews and non-believers to contribute to the common good” was a call to all of us to embrace responsibility and service, Diaz added.
That message continued at the Inaugural Prayer Service Jan. 21 at the Washington National Cathedral.
“The president was sitting across from me, and so was the vice president (Joe Biden). That physical presence of Obama being so close definitely added a reality to my involvement in the campaign… it made it real,” Díaz said.

Students Take Part in Electoral Politics
Ben新手s and Johnnies rocked the vote in 2008. From door knocking in support of a candidate to internships at a national convention, students at CSB and SJU embraced political activism with hearts and minds.
Nearly 75 students attended the first-ever debate between the College Democrats and the College Republicans in October, moderated by Matt Lindstrom, associate professor of political science and director of the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy and Civic Engagement.
Renae Bartusch, CSB sophomore and College Republicans treasurer, kept a full schedule of civic engagement: she participated in the debate, wrote letters to the campus newspaper, attended rallies and helped put up signs for campaigns.
“I did all of these things because I felt like this election year was really important — it was also the first election I could vote in,” Bartusch said.
SJU senior Jacob Lantry debated for the College Democrats and helped coordinate U.S. Senate candidate Al Franken’s campus appearance. He valued the political climate on campus.
“(Here at CSB and SJU) we kind of take for granted the amount of freedom we have when it comes to political activity,” Lantry said. “I think that is the best thing about campaigning here; both sides are allowed to get out and spread their message without significant limitations.”

CSB junior Kelsey Gustafson worked for PBS’s “The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer” at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul. She and four other CSB and SJU students and graduates participated in frequent political discussions on campus.
On Election Day, local candidates visited the campuses, and buses ran all day to transport students to and from the voting booth. As a reminder to vote, free hot apple cider, in cups with the question, “Which cider you on?” was available at bus stops. There was little need for the reminder, however, as “I Voted” stickers were as common on campus as campaign buttons.
Students celebrated their involvement in electoral politics at a non-partisan election night party hosted by the College Democrats, College Republicans, CSB and SJU Student Senates and the Eugene J. McCarthy Center for Public Policy.

**STUDENT SNAPSHOTs**

**World**

**Johnnies Put Pop Bottles to Good Use**

"99 bottles of pop on the wall, 99 bottles of pop! Take one down, pass it around..."?

Most everyone recognizes this catchy tune. Even now, this rather pointless song is probably repeating over and over in your mind. After all, who would really want 99 bottles of pop? A person couldn’t possibly do anything productive with all of those plastic bottles... right?

Why then, would two graduates from Saint John's University collect over 4,000 20-ounce plastic bottles in poverty-stricken Guatemala?

**Answer:** To help combat poverty, little by little, in Guatemala.

Inspired by a trip to an ecological park in Guatemala, Sperl and Anderson decided to pay children of Esquipulas six cents for each bottle they brought filled with trash. Local construction workers built concrete pillars before the Johnnies and other volunteers took over. They added the roof and wood scaffolding. Next came the bottles, secured with chicken wire. Adding the bottles to make the walls took about two weeks. Then they covered the building with cement stucco. The project involved over 1,000 volunteers, most of them children.

"By paying for the bottles, we would give some money back to the community, as well as clean the streets, and, in the end, build a children's library," Anderson said. "It was a good process all around."

**Study Abroad: Not for the Faint-Hearted**

CSB and SJU students document their experiences in photos.

(Left) Laura Bredeck captured Megan Hedstrom paragliding in Interlaken, Switzerland.

**Study Abroad Rates Rank No. 2 Nationally**

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University are ranked No. 2 nationally among baccalaureate institutions with students who participate in semester-long study abroad programs, according to Open Doors 2008, the annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

This marks the fifth year in a row that Saint Ben's and Saint John's have been among the top four undergraduate liberal arts colleges nationally in the international study ranking. The two schools had 375 students study abroad in what the report called “mid-term duration” programs during the 2006-07 school year. The IIE defines mid-term duration as study abroad programs that take place during one semester, one quarter or two quarters.

The report also found that:

- CSB and SJU ranked No. 5 nationally among baccalaureate institutions for total number of study abroad students, with 495 students who studied abroad in 2006-07;
- CSB and SJU ranked No. 16 among baccalaureate institutions, with 216 international students for the 2007-08 school year.
- Fully 62 percent of CSB students and 55 percent of SJU students from the class of 2008 studied abroad.

**London Blog: One Student’s Experience**

Each year, CSB and SJU rank among the nations’ top liberal arts schools in study abroad participation. Those rankings represent a campus culture that values global study, but they don’t tell the whole story. Each study abroad experience is unique. Here is a snippet from CSB junior Jennifer Richter, a theater and communication double-major from Sartell, Minn. Richter wrote this entry in a blog about her experiences in London during the 2008 fall semester:

"It’s amazing how much you learn about a country by living there, not just its history, but its current state, too. In my experience, when you visit a place for a day or two, you see it and get a taste of its flavor. But by studying and living in a place for the semester, you experience its daily rhythm, and it becomes a part of you. I have fallen into a routine in London, but not a monotonous one like most routines I have experienced in my lifetime previous to being here. Instead, my schedule features class and then the opportunity to explore the places and the culture I am learning about in the classroom. My routine is also one with more tedious tasks like grocery shopping and doing an internship. But those aren’t anything like back home. Shopping for food abroad is a new adventure as you never know what new item you’ll discover among the aisles of a grocery store or food stand along the street or within a local farmer’s market. My internship has also been very unique. I have been working at a talent agency representing West End theatre, television, and movie actors and creative professionals, and although it has been the “typical” internship at times, filled with filing paperwork, responding to e-mails, and making tea and coffee, it has also allowed me the opportunity to sit in on auditions for a West End musical and meet people directly working in the theatre industry in the UK.”

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"Let us move forward with certainty and conviction in the promise of a great and prosperous Athens provided by ending once and for all the destruction of the past and looking toward the image of a grand Athens.”

-Moderate Democrat, fifth century Athens.

After the speech, chaos ensues: the rich athlete speaks out of turn; a radical Democrat issues a threat; the oligarchs count their money; and the Socratics question each other and laugh at the injustice of men. Will Athens advance amid such disorganization and division? That is the challenge facing 21st century students in five CSB/SJU first-year seminar classes.

The students assumed the roles of fifth century Athenians and immersed themselves in historical moments of political crisis and social change. They wrestled with the big questions of the day. What is a democratic society, and how should it work? What are the rights of citizenship, and who should have them? How should society balance the promise of democracy with its dangers, particularly in a time of war?

For three weeks, students assumed such Athenian identities as a radical Democrat, a moderate Democrat, a Socratic, an oligarch, and a rich athlete, among others. As they split along political divisions, each faction pursued its own objectives.

The radical Democrats desired a radical direct democracy. The moderate Democrats wanted to restore democracy. The oligarchs sought to maintain their high political status. The Socratics yearned for utopia. Meanwhile, the rich athlete deceived all in an attempt to become a heroic tyrant.

Students read and analyzed historical texts, adopted historical personas, and made oral and written arguments from their characters’ personas. The game allowed these students to get inside the heads of people from the past, make critical decisions, and shape the course of western history.

As the students maneuvered, in character, to achieve historic change, they experienced change of a different sort. The process of enacting their characters changed the students themselves academically, psychologically, politically, personally.

“I absolutely loved becoming my character, researching who I was, what I did and how I could influence history. It took me several hours to transition out of my character,” CSB student Carlin Stiles said.

Patrick Mader, SJU student, shaped his understanding of today’s current society and the contemporary world.

“I have a newfound respect for the way our government system is set up,” Mader said.
One World, Two Wheels  Five CSB/SJU Grads Pedal for Peace

Start with five CSB and SJU graduates. Add some bikes, 16 countries, 10,500 miles, 13 months, and throw in some musical instruments for good measure. What do you get? Fueled by Rice, an experience of a lifetime.

CSB graduate Nakia Pearson ’03, and SJU graduates Andrew Spidahl ’03, Jim Durley ’04, Adam Wolf ’05 and Peter Ehrenmann ’04 rode bikes from Beijing to Paris from September 2007 to October 2008, playing music at stops along the way. They called themselves Fueled by Rice, to express the goals of their trip.

“We want to encourage people to bike and show people that biking is a reasonable form of transportation. We are fueling ourselves with rice, not petrol,” Jim said. They also wanted to experience a big cross-section of the world, build bridges of understanding with people they met and advocate deliberate, simple, low-impact lifestyles.

Along the way, they developed their own “bike band.” They brought two guitars, a bongo, egg shakers, a harmonica and a Chinese instrument, the erhu. They played after lunch and during breaks, combining musical elements from folk, gospel, soul and experimental, and sometimes drawing crowds up to 60 people.

“Music became a good way to connect with people when we didn’t know the language, like in Southeast Asia,” Nakia said.

Group members tell their stories with blogs, photos and musical clips on the FBR Web site www.fueledbyrice.org. Information also is available on the Web about a CD the group has recorded, featuring music they wrote and performed during their travels.
Transcontinental travel by bicycle gives new meaning to life’s ups and downs as our adventurers encountered the challenges of terrain, weather and fickle bureaucrats.

In their blogs, they describe how they met people with wide open hearts and minds, and people whose life stories dramatized some of the 20th century’s historic conflicts.
"Overall I believe this trip has changed not my view of the world as a whole as much as my view on my own home. I live, grew up, and am now sitting in one of the most unique cultures the world has ever known. Midwest America will never look ordinary or boring to me again, it provides something that no other place in the world can offer."

— Adam, Feb. 12, 2008

"Time and Time again I have seen God provide for us, showering us in blessings through people we meet, people who invite us in for coffee or to sleep, those who show us the way, and through those who put money in our erhu case upon hearing our music on the street to buy us enough visa-2 days— for 120 Euro. Ouch. But this is our path and time now is of the essence.

July 11, Friday (a.m.) — I finish up this blog in the apartment of the Kahyas as we wait for breakfast and wait for 12 noon to find out about the elusive Bulgarian Visa. We have been treated as family here, having a place to wash clothes, sleep, shower, and sharing traditional Turkish meals with the family twice a day.

It has been emotionally draining turning through hope and uncertainty like the pages of the latest Harry Potter novel, but there is this thread of glistening hope and direction and blessing— as strong as steel— leading us along the way. Whatever happens today, I am grateful to be a witness and recipient of such generous providence and unexpected adventure here in Turkey.

July 9, Wednesday — Nakia and Peter manage to get us to the Bulgarian Consul (a significant achievement in itself in our experience) and apply for the "quick" visa—2 days— for 120 Euro. Ouch. But this is our path and time now is of the essence.

With Louise and Ignacio in Istanbul

*Patrus and Louise, two professional photographers from Brazil, found us our first day on Istanbul’s famous pedestrian street, Istiklal Street, in Taxim, when we were brand new to European street performing." — Pete, Aug. 29

time online, we decide to leave Istanbul for the border town of Edirne at 5:45 p.m. By 7:30 we are out of the city and shopping in a small town for our usual bread, yogurt, and jam dinner with tomatoes and cucumbers when we are invited to stay at a house. Doa, a twenty-eight year old career woman with a great English, invites us to her beautiful country home suggesting we can camp in the garden. We have a hot shower, tea, pleasant conversation, and breakfast with the Dad (an uncommonly proud Turk with a warm heart) before we continue into a beautiful sunny summer day.

July 4 - July 7 — We pedal up and down big hills. The first day we are hailed down big hills. The first day we are hailed

— Nakia's Home Away from Home

Editor's note: At CSB and SJU, the Benedictine ideal of community care shape many forms. In this reflection, Jane Opitz, director of the CSB/SJU Writing Centers, tells how Nakia Pearson became a member of the family.

In the fall of 1999, the name “Nakia Pearson: Nassau, Bahamas” showed up as the international student assigned to us in the CSB/SJU “Friendsy Family Program.” Then we met the person herself: diminutive stature, bright eyes, chocolate-milk skin, quick sense of humor, strong and academically curious student, infectious laugh. Nakia was with us: all smiles and an expert at grabbing pizza and movie nights, plays at the Guthrie, the Renaissance Festival, the MN Zoo and Como Conservatory, camping trips “up North.” And how were we to know, in that first month after meeting her, that the autumn leaves never looked so colorful, the stars on a cold October night never looked so vast or so bright, as the first time Nakia camped on the North Shore with us. Other times, it’s more complex. When Nakia was with us, we became aware that different people looked at us and different people talked to us—or didn’t talk to us—because of her presence, the ordinary world we knew changed slightly.

We could see and understand things to which we would not normally have access. When we traveled through Southeast Asia with Nakia & company via e-mail and blog and Web site photos, she gave us an intimate person-to-person peek at a world which we would not normally have access to.

In addition to living in our home when the residence halls closed or when she wanted a break from them, Nakia spent a couple summers with us and worked for me in the CSB/SJU Writing Centers as her on-campus job. Her lasting legacy to the family is that she is the person who organized the CSB/SJU poetry slam. Nakia Pearson became a member of the family twice a day.

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Like most of our international students, Nakia is extraordinary. She is a poet and writer, a vocal performer and teacher. Finding it hard to narrow her interests, she spent her time at CSB/SJU earning an individualized liberal studies degree, taking mostly English, communication and peace studies classes—but she also squeezed in as many courses as she could to the institution’s political science and women’s studies. She speaks two languages fluently and “gets by” in a couple others. She spent her after-college years teaching English abroad, and has recently completed her biking/music making trek from Beijing to Paris. Now she wants to go to graduate school to prepare for a career that supports women’s advancement efforts in developing countries.

After our first meeting, Nakia settled easily into our lives. Being the youngest in her family, she liked having a younger sister here; being the same age as our middle child, she fit right in. She loved new experiences and that meant doing almost everything that came her way. She energized us because we enjoyed sharing with her the things that we love: pizza and movie nights, plays at the Guthrie, the Renaissance Festival, the MN Zoo and Como Conservatory, camping trips “up North.” And how were we to know, in that first month after meeting her, that the autumn leaves never looked so colorful, the stars on a cold October night never looked so vast or so bright, as the first time Nakia camped on the North Shore with us. Other times, it’s more complex. When Nakia was with us, we became aware that different people looked at us and different people talked to us—or didn’t talk to us—because of her presence, the ordinary world we knew改变了

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“Time and Time again I have seen God provide for us, showering us in blessings through people we meet, people who invite us in for coffee or to sleep, those who show us the way, and through those who put money in our erhu case upon hearing our music on the street to buy us enough food for a few more days… God’s provisions are most obvious when we put ourselves out there in vulnerability and uncertainty; things always work out… it is always OK… and we are again and again provided for.”

— Pete, Aug. 2, 2008
Will You Keep Your Promise?

By Glenda Isaacs Burgeson

‘There’s this man who said you promised to pay his tuition. He’s now a janitor at our school and wants to know if your promise is still good.’

More than a quarter of a century ago, Tom Sibley made a promise to a young African boy in Liberia. But civil war broke out and decades passed before he could fulfill his promise to J. Menaikpeh Kolleh to pay for his education.

Tom, a CSB/SJU professor of mathematics for 25 years, met the child in 1980, while teaching at Cuttington University, then the only private liberal arts college in sub-Saharan Africa. Menaikpeh was in grade school and also cleaned Tom’s house.

Tom helped him with a small tuition for grade school, then paid for him to attend a private junior high. In 1983, when he left Liberia, Tom promised to pay Menaikpeh’s tuition through college, and he continued to pay as Menaikpeh progressed through junior high, high school and his first year at Cuttington.

Then, in December 1989, civil war erupted. Cuttington, only five miles from rebel headquarters, was shelled in the conflict and closed its doors.

“I lost track of him,” Tom said.

In 1997, a small window of opportunity opened. He received a letter from the Red Cross that Menaikpeh was in a refugee camp and in desperate shape.

“I tried to send money but the money was returned, and I lost track of him again,” he said, explaining that, for security reasons, the Red Cross does not handle cash transactions.

Years later, he received an e-mail from a vice president at Cuttington.

“It said, ‘There’s this man who said you promised to pay his tuition. He’s now a janitor at our school and wants to know if your promise is still good,’” Tom recalls.

“I said yes!”

Menaikpeh is now in his senior year, studying agriculture and on track to graduate this spring.

Tom expresses amazement that Menaikpeh managed to survive the war that killed more than 200,000 and produced 1 million refugees. “He’s got tenacity.”

As a young man in Africa, Tom witnessed firsthand the impact of injustice in the developing world. Liberia had been resettled and ruled by the sons of American slaves and their descendents until a coup in 1980. Four months after the coup, Tom arrived in Liberia, and he recalls the euphoria among the students.

“It was the first time in decades they had had freedom of speech.” The school served students from throughout Africa, including refugees from Zimbabwe, Kenya and S. Africa, and he remembers the students debated endlessly about which social, political and economic direction would best serve Africans.

“They were always talking about issues,” he said.

Of his many experiences in Africa, Tom said there is one story he shares each election year with his students at CSB and SJU.

After the coup, the military government declared there would be no elections. Some student leaders from Cuttington and other schools wrote an open letter asking for student elections. The seven students were arrested, charged with treason, convicted by military tribunal and sentenced to death.

The day before they were to be put to death, they were pardoned. When the student from Cuttington returned to school, Tom said it was obvious he had been tortured.

“Freedom of speech died that day,” he said. “I left in 1983, and things got worse. It breaks my heart to think of what happened to Liberia.”

For Tom, the discovery of Menaikpeh’s survival is a small sign of hope in a land still emerging from the destructions of civil war. Africa holds a special place in Tom’s memory. It was there that he discovered his calling as a teacher.

“I just loved teaching. I couldn’t imagine doing anything else,” he said. Years later, he is still doing what loves teaching — and keeping a promise he made to a young boy.
When the wife gets fed up, good things happen.
For Jim Poff, CSB/SJU professor of biology for 33 years, those good things happened first in his private life, then in his professional life.
Over 25 years ago, Jim’s uncle took up painting with watercolors. Inspired by his uncle, Jim used to say, on more than one occasion, “I would like to do that.”
He said it one too many times. Nine years ago, his wife Chris surprised him on Father’s Day with a set of watercolors and a gift certificate for classes at the Paramount Theatre and Visual Arts Center in St. Cloud.
“I loved it,” he said. He decided not to paint people, focusing instead on still life, landscapes, buildings and flowers.
At first, he considered watercolors a hobby, something separate from his day job. Over time, however, as he developed his skill, the two interests would collide with unexpected benefits in the classroom.
With the arrival of grandchildren, Jim decided to tackle the challenge of painting people, thinking he might want to do portraits.
Once again, he went to class, as a student in a figure drawing class taught by Br. David Paul Lange, CSB/SJU associate professor of art.
He discovered that drawing people, while hard, can be done, with patience and practice — lots of practice.
“I wasn’t an instant success,” he recalled.
Still, he found the hobby relaxing, and he discovered the rewards of practice.

“The more I practiced, the better I got,” he said.
To his surprise, he realized that he started seeing differently in his biological fieldwork. Jim specializes in insect and animal behavior, and teaches a course for non-majors in fieldwork, focusing on local plants and animals. As a scientist, he considered himself a good observer. Now, as an artist, he noticed he was seeing details he hadn’t spotted before.
“I thought, if it works for me, maybe it will work with my students. One of the fun things about teaching at CSB/SJU is I have the freedom to try nontraditional methods in the classroom.”
Jim prepares much of his text. If he wanted to use art as a learning tool, he knew his artwork would need to be specific for his text.
With funding from a faculty development grant, he attended a biological illustrator workshop at Cornell University.
It was an intensive workshop that gave him the skills to introduce illustration in the lab. When he assigns a drawing exercise, he hears a common refrain from students: “I can’t draw.”
With a little prodding and a minimum of instruction, he convinces the students to try.
“The advantage is I now have a better idea of what they’re seeing,” he said.
Within a few weeks, Jim said he sees improvement in their observational skills, a difference he plans to start documenting systematically.
“Students are looking more carefully and seeing more detail,” he said.
“Without Chris, it wouldn’t have happened.”
DEREK LARSON
Pick an environmental issue, and Derek Larson has probably addressed it. The CSB/SJU associate professor of history and environmental studies is the co-founder and chair of the Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability, a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, Advisory Council, a founding member of the recently established National Council for Science and the Environment, and a member of the Council of Association for Environmental Studies and Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Advisory Council, a founding member of the recently established Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability, and a member of the Council of Association for Environmental Studies and Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

“Among the first visible steps on each campus will come in the form on new construction: a 3kW photovoltaic solar array was installed on SJU’s New Science Building in November, and the new Flynns Community Center — currently under construction — will be Saint John’s first green building. Saint Ben’s has committed to a green building standard for all future construction and is in the process of selecting a firm to design a new academic building that will be the first of green design on campus. Both schools have also established Green Funds that will allow donors to directly support sustainability initiatives by contributing to endowed funds, the returns on which will be used to fund projects that otherwise might not be possible. Education of our students and the campus communities in general will be a big part of the shift toward sustainability as we understand it not as a technical challenge but a cultural change that will reflect our Benedictine values of stewardship and community.”

If President Obama tapped you on the shoulder and said, “Derek, I’d like you to be in charge of environmental issues in my administration,” what would your first priorities be?

“…It’s the ultimate enviro-geek fantasy. To me there is only one priority: climate change. Wrapped into that single issue are all the core elements of sustainability: ecological, economic and social justice challenges that are so deeply interconnected they simply must be approached as a package. A rational response to climate change will require major changes in consumer behavior, massive investments in conservation and renewable/alternative energy programs, and a renewed focus on the equity of global resource distribution.”

CINDY MALONE
As faculty director of the Literary Arts Institute (LAI), Malone has more than just a passing interest in books. After all, the LAI has organized events and discussions that focus on the future of book making in all forms: printed, electronic forms and artists’ books.

“Like the larger population of the U.S., faculty seem more aware of forest management issues than any other environmental costs of printed or online material. Tools like a general formula for comparing the environmental costs of printed and electronic texts would increase awareness of the other, less visible costs (including water for the electronic emissions from coal-fired generation of electricity, etc.).”

“...My aim in the LAI’s ”Chronicle article” was to highlight the environmental issues at stake in the choice of online and printed course texts. Others with greater expertise in the area will, I hope, serve as advocates; I’d simply like to call attention to environmental issues. Perhaps colleagues in environmental studies could develop a means of calculating the carbon emissions and other environmental costs of printed and online course texts. That calculation is extraordinarily complex, of course, but a formula that helps faculty make comparisons between printed and electronic texts would help all of us make informed decisions about the format of required readings for our courses. Until we have a means of making informed comparisons, it may be useful to engage our imaginations in the consideration of these decisions. We’ve grown accustomed to thinking of paper as filled trees; perhaps we could also begin to see printed books as little packets containing several pounds of carbon (generated primarily from trips around the country on trucks). When we turn on our computers, we could perhaps begin to picture a little chimney popping up and puffing out coal smoke.”
Dear Dad, Send Money
By Angela Schmitz ’09

Each year, college students from around the country come together to send letters to their families and friends the old-fashioned way, by snail mail.

Their letters are not the usual requests to mom and dad asking for money. These are requests of a different sort. Members of Up ’til Dawn write their loved ones to ask for donations to St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

Last year, CSB/SJU Up ’til Dawn chapter raised $78,000, giving them the seventh highest donation to the hospital among 250 other colleges with Up ’til Dawn programs.

The donations that Up ’til Dawn members collect go toward operating expenses for St. Jude’s.

“The great thing about St. Jude’s is that families don’t have to pay for bills that insurance doesn’t cover,” said CSB/SJU Up ’til Dawn chapter president Rachel Horn, a CSB student. “The hospital covers transportation, hotel bills and other essentials for families.”

This year, Up ’til Dawn members held their letter sending event Nov. 13. The event provides members with a time to get together and write letters asking for donations. The chapter will throw an even bigger party this spring to announce and celebrate the donations they collect.

Students Get “Cheeky” in the Lab
By Benjamin Besasie ‘12

Have you heard of the Human Genome Project? Maybe you have watched forensic scientists on “CSI” use DNA analysis to solve a murder. These two applications of DNA analysis are only a few grains of sand in a biological playground.

Last fall, CSB/SJU biology students analyzed DNA not to find a murderer, but to look at evolutionary relationships among other human individuals.

During a series of four laboratories, students collected mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from their own cheek cells. They then isolated their mtDNA and amplified it by making many copies. Later, they analyzed their DNA sequence to find possible ancestral origins.

“...are complex and challenging techniques that are at a very early stage of the students’ biology careers,” said Carol Jansky, CSB/SJU biology lab coordinator. “DNA sequencing is just the beginning, because there are a lot of additional applications of DNA analysis.”

In Memoriam
Br. Dietrich Reinhart, OSB

A Tribute to Br. Dietrich has been scheduled for April 17 at Saint John’s. All are welcome. Details will be posted at www.csbsju.edu. Visit www.caringbridge.org/visit/brotherdietrich to read the many messages from alumnae, alumni, students, staff and friends sent to Br. Dietrich during his illness as well as his letters to his online community of support.

Afterthought

In the last lab of the sequence, students loaded their DNA in the CSQ8000 Genomic Analysis System, which was purchased recently with a $60,000 grant from Beckman Coulter. Barb May, CSB/SJU assistant professor of biology, secured the grant. CSB and SJU provided an additional $47,000 for the equipment.

“This shows the support that the schools have for continuing research and introducing new research technologies to students,” May said.

Students used large databases to analyze their results. National Geographic, in cooperation with other groups, started a five-year study, the Genographic Project, evaluating ancient human migration worldwide using DNA analysis. Students interpreted their results through the Genographic Project to identify their most probable ancestral groups.

“The neatest aspect of these labs is that the students get to use this complex technology while they have a personal attachment to the project. To be able to look at your own ancestral lineage makes it that much more exciting,” May said.
A Thousand Cranes was performed last fall on the CSB campus. The play is based on the true story of Sadako Sasaki, who at the age of two survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, only to develop leukemia at the age of 12. Inspired by an old belief, Sadako tried to fold 1,000 origami cranes to recover her health. During production, CSB/SJU Japanese students taught students in the Amnesty International club how to fold the paper cranes.

Photo by Michael Becker