Dear alumni and friends:

A chapter in the great history of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management has closed; Steve Siegel has retired from Niagara University, effective at the end of spring 2013.

Steve began teaching at Niagara University in 1977. At that time, we were known as the Institute of Transportation, Travel and Tourism, which began in 1968 when we offered the world’s first bachelor’s degree in tourism.

Steve is the longest serving member of the faculty in the history of our program. We are thankful that he devoted the great bulk of his professional career to Niagara University. Steve was the person who was at the forefront of all the major curricular changes in the college. He developed our current curriculum and its unique structure. This curriculum has been ranked the eighth highest in the country.

Steve made the Hotel Show excursion a reality for our students. For more than 30 years, he has organized the college’s annual excursion to the International Hotel, Motel, and Restaurant Show in New York City. He set up countless interviews for our students at the Waldorf=Astoria and developed a consulting course with the executive management team at that iconic property.

I best remember Steve for helping students. It could be helping them find jobs, preparing them for interviews, determining which job offer to take, or just giving wise advice.

Personally, Steve Siegel was a great friend. He never sought the spotlight and he never boasted of his own achievements. He was just interested in helping others and, believe me, he and his wife, Nancy, have made life much better for many people in this community. From first-hand experience I can say that when you need a friend, there is no better friend than Steve. Everyone in and associated with the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management will miss him greatly.

Steve Siegel, with Paul Verciglio, offered for many years at the Park Hyatt Toronto a special two-day shadowing and mentoring experience for our students. Paul, who retired in February, was a legendary and highly recognized general manager in Hyatt and a great friend of this program for decades. Paul helped this college in countless ways over several decades, and we are thankful for what he did for us.

Another great person in our college’s history is featured in this issue of Purple Concierge. Alumnus Hugh Cresser, ’75, is, perhaps, the leading authority on tourism in the Caribbean and is an expert on sustainability. Hugh spent three days on campus this past semester, lecturing in several classes and working on projects for the college. He will be teaching an online course this spring semester entitled: “Sustainable Tourism Development: a Caribbean Perspective.”

We welcome this fall two new full-time faculty members to the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Dr. Youngsoo Choi, who will teach hospitality and tourism courses, joins us from the Rosen School at the University of Central Florida, and Dr. Jimmy Smith, a sport management faculty member, joins us from Newbury College in Massachusetts. Please welcome them personally at the Alumni Advantage program in October.

We are adding a new international program in sport management, we begin a master’s degree in sport management in the fall, our career fair continues to add more quality employers, the alumni association gets larger and makes more of an impact, and our placement remains at 100 percent. Thank you for all your help!

Sincerely,

Gary D. Praetzel, Ph.D.
Dean
Hospitality Convocation Is College’s Showcase Event

Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management held its 12th annual convocation Thursday, Oct. 18, 2012, in the university’s Alumni Chapel. Sponsored by the Maid of the Mist Corp., the convocation is the college’s showcase event, during which it annually honors national and international leaders in the hospitality and tourism industry.

This year’s honorees were Nancy Johnson, executive vice president, development, the Americas, Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group; Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame member Nancy Lieberman, also an accomplished commentator, author and motivational speaker; and Catherine F. Schweitzer, the executive director of The Baird Foundation, who was instrumental in bringing the National Preservation Conference to Buffalo last October.

“Our convocation is an excellent opportunity for our students and those in the Western New York community to hear from some of the brightest minds in the tourism and hospitality industries,” said Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of NU’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Graduate Program in Sport Management Approved

The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management will offer its first-ever master’s degree program in sport management beginning in September 2013. The program was approved by the New York State Education Department in October and applications are now being accepted for students to begin study in the fall 2013 semester. The 36-credit hour program provides a thesis or an internship option and is flexible enough to meet the needs of today’s graduates and industry professionals.

For more information, please contact Michael Gentile, associate professor and program director, at mgentile@niagara.edu or call 716.286.8652.

**Graduate Courses in Sport Management**

- SPM 525 Strategic Sport Management
- SPM 533 Technology and Information Management
- SPM 535 Issues and Ethics
- SPM 545 Research Methods
- SPM 555 Sport Marketing
- SPM 560 External Relations
- SPM 573 Event and Facility Management
- SPM 580 Legal and Regulatory Environment
- SPM 585 Financial Management in Sport
- SPM 595 Structure and Function of Sport Organizations
- SPM 541 Special Topics Seminar
- SPM 598 and 599 (Thesis I & II)
- SPM 593 Internship (six credits)

Depending upon undergraduate record, students may be asked to complete some foundation courses in Niagara’s College of Business Administration.
A New Era of Internships

By Catherine Trzaska

After an interim internship with Acclaim Meetings and TravelSavers in June 2012, I was offered a satellite internship with the marketing manager of Travel Market Report during the spring semester of 2013. Travel Market Report is an online publication and is updated on a biweekly basis. My primary responsibilities rested in the social media promotion of the newsletter. I updated the TMR Facebook page about three times a day, with links to new stories from the publication, travel trivia, or travel facts. I also created and was the manager for the group on LinkedIn, and consistently worked to build the group with professionals from across the globe. We currently have hundreds of members, from a variety of sectors of the travel and tourism industry. In addition, I researched and contacted hospitality universities, professors, students and professionals directly to subscribe to TMR and follow our social media accounts.

The list of things I learned throughout this experience is far from short. Anne Marie Moebes, the executive vice president of Well-Being Travel, Inc., TravelSavers Partner Services, and Acclaim Meetings Inc., and Debbie Press, the marketing manager, were extremely forthcoming in teaching me about the travel industry and marketing for it. Tourism classes are one thing, but nothing matches first-hand experience. I have developed a greater respect for marketing in general, and for the travel agency industry, in particular. Both are difficult and demanding areas, but I have a better understanding of these aspects of the travel industry after working so closely with such accomplished professionals.

NU’s Club Manager’s Association of America Chapter Attends National Conference

The Club Manager’s Association of America World Conference and Business Exposition was held in San Diego, Calif., Feb. 7-11, 2013. Club managers from all over the world and students throughout the country came together for this convention. The Niagara University student chapter brought 19 students for six days to sunny California so they could attend education sessions, network with managers, seek out internship and post-graduation employment opportunities in the field of club management, and learn how CMAA supports club managers and students alike. Some of the education sessions dealt directly with different aspects of the club industry, while others were more geared toward general leadership development.

For many of the students attending this conference, this was their opportunity to obtain a summer internship. At the Career Showcase, there were clubs from around the country seeking students to fulfill internship positions. Niagara students did their best to “work the room” and introduce themselves to the various club representatives. It definitely paid off as some NU CMAA students will be interning at clubs that the chapter has not previously held a relationship with, including the Milwaukee Country Club, Evanston Golf Club, Exmoor Country Club, and The Country Club in Pepper Pike, Ohio. Other NU CMAA students had the opportunity to meet and sit for interviews with managers from clubs that our chapter has previously worked with, including Cherokee Town & Country Club, Chevy Chase Club, Columbia Country Club, and Maidstone Club. What was very clear is that Niagara University club students were highly sought out, with many of them receiving multiple offers as a result of the conference. This is undoubtedly because of the high level of devotion exhibited by each NU CMAA student, the extensive educational requirements our student chapter maintains, and our willingness to take full advantage of every networking opportunity for the full, five-day conference.

For the fourth year in a row, Niagara University was recognized by CMAA as the “Student Chapter of the Year,” and our chapter also was recognized for the Best Club of the Future submission in the golf category for its proposed golf cart windshield heads-up display information board.

Overall, the conference was a great learning experience and networking opportunity for current club managers and students who will become club managers of the future. The conference helped us better understand the career path we have chosen to be a part of. More significantly, this conference was very beneficial because it took education out of the classroom and immersed every student directly into the offerings and benefits of CMAA.
Dual Degree Graduate Earns Award

Isa Witte, who earned a dual degree from Niagara University and the International University of Applied Sciences in Germany this May, received the Best Undergraduate Research Paper Award at the 2013 Korea America Hospitality and Tourism Educators Association Conference, held April 12-13 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Witte’s paper took the top prize in the undergraduate student forum category, earning the Berlin, Germany, native a plaque and $500.

This is the second straight year that a student enrolled in the dual degree program at Niagara University has captured the conference’s top honor.

Entries for the award were judged based on the topic’s relevance and contribution of research to existing knowledge; sound methodology and statistical analysis, structure and clarity of writing; and conclusions and implications.

“We are quite proud of the dual degree program that we offer with our partner institution in Germany, as it presents us with a chance to host outstanding students like Isa, while also providing extremely unique opportunities for our students to learn abroad,” said Dr. Gary Praetzel, dean of Niagara’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management. “I commend Isa for the remarkable work that she put in to earn this international honor.”

SOUL FOOD: In April, College of Hospitality and Tourism students catered the Heart & Soul annual fundraising dinner. Heart, Love & Soul is a nonprofit organization located in Niagara Falls, N.Y. It is dedicated to feeding those in need and providing opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Meet our New Faculty:

Dr. Youngsoo Choi has taught hospitality human resource management, tourism destination management and marketing, and international tourism management courses at the University of Central Florida. He received a master’s degree in economics and a Ph.D. in hotel, restaurant, and institutional management at Pennsylvania State University. His research areas include: tourism destination management and marketing, hospitality human resource management, tourism economics, and hospitality education. His work has been published in referred academic journals such as International Journal of Hospitality Management, Tourism Management, International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration, Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism. He has also served as reviewer for various
Eddie Friel Presents During Global Tourism Economy Forum in China

Eddie Friel, expert-in-residence in Niagara University’s College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, served as a keynote speaker during the inaugural Global Tourism Economy Forum, held Sept. 9-11 in Macau, China.

Friel presented on destination planning in front of an audience of approximately 1,000 delegates from 20 countries.

The forum was established to drive a new chapter in the tourism industries across the world. The event was an interactive discussion platform designed to capture a macro view of the interplay between tourism and other major economies, and how the momentum of each builds upon the growth of the other. By bridging the economic advantages and resources of the East with the innovation and expertise of the West, the forum aimed to spark beneficial partnerships that have the power to shape the industry toward sustainable growth on a global scale.

“For the first time in recorded history, the majority of the world’s population now lives in cities,” Friel told TravelDailyNews Asia-Pacific. “Cities are centers of creativity and innovation. Our responsibility as citizens who inherited these places is to return them to future generations in better shape than we received them.”

Dr. Youngsoo Choi and Dr. Jimmy Smith

Dr. Youngsoo Choi earned his Ph.D. in agricultural economics and has been involved in professional associations such as The International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education and Asia Pacific Tourism Association.

Dr. Youngsoo Choi earned a Ph.D. in physical education with an emphasis in sport management at the University of Alberta. During his time there, he worked closely with the university’s athletic department to update and develop new policies and procedures. His area of study focused on major change within the Canadian intercollegiate athletic sport system as well as the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Dr. Smith has a master’s degree in sport administration from Central Michigan University and a bachelor of science degree in kinesiology from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, where he was a student-athlete with the baseball team. At Central Michigan University, Smith made his way up the ranks of the university’s athletic department, working in areas of development and marketing where his primary duties included community outreach and revenue generation.

Smith’s current research continues to focus on change in college athletics, and he also has research interests in athletic administrative career paths and intercollegiate marketing techniques. He has recently published an article in the Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics and the Journal of Contemporary Athletics.

An active member with the North American Society of Sport Management, Dr. Smith also stays busy with his family of five, which includes his wife, Maybelle, and their three children, Dylan, 7, Houston, 4, and Evelyn, 2.
hat started out as a Saturday morning class of 20 Niagara University students and 30 special needs athletes has grown into one of the most popular courses on the NU campus. Thanks to the collaboration between professor Mike Gentile, associate professor of hospitality and tourism management, and Dr. Chandra Foote, associate dean and professor of education, and their rigorous work with the curriculum committee, Special Olympics Coaching and Management, a cultural diversity class, connects more than 100 athletes from Heritage Christian Center, Opportunities Unlimited, Niagara Cerebral Palsy, and the Niagara Falls City School District with more than 40 student coaches.

The two-part class, which was first offered in spring 2008, centers on the sport of basketball. One part focuses on coaching philosophy, practice planning, safety and management, fundraising and the characteristics of Special Olympic athletes, while the second part puts those concepts into action. The athletes come to the Kiernan Center on Thursday each week for 11 weeks, where they are placed into one of two groups: skills and team. The coaches, who are assigned to be either a skills coach or a team coach, are required to bring compassion, commitment, energy and enthusiasm (C2E2) to every practice. These coaching characteristics make these practices very “special” for the athletes.

Practice begins with the athletes and coaches saying the Special Olympic Oath: “Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” Each practice ends with a group huddle as “1, 2, 3, NIAGARA” is shouted. In between, the athletes complete warm-ups, stations, skills demonstrations, and team practice. But most importantly, they all have a great deal of fun, smiling and laughing.

NU student Steve McCarthy said this about Special Olympics Coaching and Management: “This is the best class I have ever taken at Niagara University!”

The course’s final exam is a bit unusual: the students host the Western New York Regional Special Olympics. Two hundred and fifty athletes from 11 different training clubs, as well as more than 200 spectators, gather at the Kiernan Center to watch the event. However, the fun begins the night before, when coaches from both sessions of the course meet to set up the Kiernan Center for team competition, skills competition, the Olympic Village, food stations, a disc jockey, and a dance floor. They also hang banners and signs for all 11 training clubs.
This event wouldn’t be the success it is without the help of many on-campus agencies, which go out of their way to help the athletes and show that Niagara is truly a Vincentian university. Sodexo provides a bag lunch for all the athletes and coaches. NUSGA, the student government association, pays for all the lunches. Campus Activities provides all the paper and paint for the banners and signs that hang around the Kiernan Center. Niagara’s Physical Plant sets up all the tables and chairs in Olympic Village. The Kiernan Center staff goes above and beyond the call of duty to assure the event runs smoothly. Niagara’s danceline, sports teams, sororities, and staff from various departments give up their time to dance, help and cheer on all the athletes at the event. This shows all of the athletes, wherever they are from, that they are welcome on our campus and the spotlight is on them, not their disabilities.

The day begins with volunteers forming a tunnel outside of the Kiernan Center, clapping and cheering on every athlete as they enter the building. Once all of the athletes are inside, there is an Olympic parade of teams, presentation of the flag by the color guard, singing of the National Anthem, a performance by the Niagara University dance team, and the Special Olympic Athlete’s Oath. The rest of the day entails the organization of the skills competition, setting up and running the basketball team games by the Niagara coaches, setting up and assisting athletes in Olympic Village, and, of course, clean up. Olympic Village consists of arts and crafts, board games, dancing, a photographer, a disc jockey, and free lunches for athletes and coaches.

The day concludes with an awards ceremony during which every athlete is awarded a ribbon and a medal, and given a high five or a hug. As all of the athletes receive their awards, their smiles and excitement are contagious. This is the reason that Special Olympics is so “special.”
NU College of Hospitality and Tourism Management on the Path to Sustainable Development

By Hugh Cresser, ’75

The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management is launching three initiatives that will help lead to sustainable development: the introduction of a sustainable tourism development course; greening Niagara University; and developing an online training course for owner/managers of small hotel establishments in the Caribbean and Niagara regions.

The Sustainable Tourism Development Course

In the spring of 2014, the college will introduce its first sustainable tourism course, which will address the issue on a worldwide level, with a strong focus on the Caribbean region, whose tourism market consists of more than 65 percent of visitors coming from North America. The course will also look at sustainable tourism development and the Millennium Development Goals worldwide, investigating case studies in places such as Costa Rica, Dominica and Xel-Ha, Mexico. The course will also include a field trip to a Caribbean destination, where the students will see sustainable tourism practices incorporated in the tourist experience and have the opportunity to do some volunteer work in that destination.

Greening Niagara University

Niagara University is also investigating the possibility of pursuing an environmental “green” certification program, which will take into consideration the entire university’s role in sustainable development, paying much attention to the environmental, social and economic impact the university has on the community which it serves. There are a number of international certification programs that can be considered, and a “green team,” which will be established at the university, will be investigating the most suitable program to be implemented. At present, Dr. Mark A. Gallo, associate professor of biology at NU, has been actively working with initiatives on campus to try and help the university become greener and more conscious of its choices in plants and processes used around the physical campus. Being aware of the many efforts of individuals to gather information about our carbon footprint, a recommendation was made that the university begin with the National Arbor Day Society’s Green Tree campus program. This would lead into a broader sustainable program that will move the university toward international certification by programs such as Green Globe or Earth Check.

The College of Hospitality and Tourism Management will take the lead role in establishing Niagara’s environmental program, providing students with the opportunity to track the university’s performance in the conservation of its energy, water, solid waste management, chemical use, and responsible operations campuswide. This program is still in the planning phase and has been sanctioned by the university’s president.
Online Training Program for Small-Hotel Operators

This program was originally conceived for Caribbean small-hotel operators who have not had formal training in management and are unable to afford the time to seek training in an established institution. The program is being designed to provide them with training opportunities which they will be able to access online at times convenient to them. The areas of focus will include, but are not limited to: cost control, front office operations, basic accounting, social media marketing and environmental management.

More than 65 percent of Caribbean hotels are small hotels (under 100 rooms) and offer a variety of services ranging from family operated bed & breakfast facilities to luxury boutique resorts. Unfortunately, many are suffering from the inability to reposition themselves in an ever-changing marketplace and, as a result, have not been achieving their revenue potential. The concept has been introduced and endorsed by the Jamaican Hotel and Tourism Association and once completed, it will be piloted in Jamaica and then taken to the wider Caribbean region. It was also felt that many of the small properties in the Niagara region suffer from similar challenges and therefore the program will be offered to the region as well.

The program will be developed under the supervision of Dr. Deborah T. Curtis, CMP, director of the university’s Hospitality Training & Research Center, and Hugh Cresser, ’75, CEO, Hugh Cresser & Associates, a leading consultant in sustainable tourism and rural enterprise development in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

Cresser’s career in sustainable tourism management and planning spans more than 35 years in Jamaica and the Caribbean. His career has covered technical areas such as project management, development of community tourism enterprises, tourism product development, sustainable tourism planning and development, hotel and tourism management, marketing, hospitality training and education. He developed the hospitality and tourism degree program at the University of Technology, Jamaica, and was also the general manager of the then-Runaway Bay HEART Hotel and Training Institute.

In addition, he has worked on a number of sustainable tourism development projects both in Jamaica and the Caribbean region, and just recently implemented the British Virgin Islands Sustainable Tourism Programme, taking three hotels through to Green Globe Certification.

He presently sits on the advisory board of the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Niagara University, served on the Standards Committee for Quality Tourism for the Caribbean Project, served on the Prime Minister of Jamaica’s Committee for the Development of Portland, and was chairman of the National Blue Flag Jury in Jamaica. He is a member of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and of their accreditation board.

In July 2005, he was recognized by the Government of Jamaica for his work in tourism when he was honored with the Jamaica Tourist Board’s 50th Anniversary Award for exemplary work in the development and promotion of sustainable tourism in Jamaica.

He holds an MA in tourism planning and development from George Washington University, where he was an OAS Fellow from 1977-1978.
Alumni Spotlight: Kevin T. Kreczko, ’05

What has your career progression been since graduating from NU?
Upon completing a dual degree in the hospitality and theatre programs, I moved to Southern California where I pursued a master of fine arts degree from the University of California, Irvine. While completing my third year at UCI, a former colleague, whom I worked with during a summer internship opportunity through Niagara University, contacted me, and I found myself relocating to San Antonio, Texas. While in San Antonio, I was the production manager for SeaWorld San Antonio, where I produced their Howl-O-Scream and Christmas events, as well as multiple Shamu productions. I left SeaWorld to pursue a career in academia and took a position with Northeast Lakeview College as the head of drama. After a short and successful tenure, my career led me to freelance producing, directing, and management positions. Some of my recent projects include: associate producer (In Motion Entertainment) - Verbolten, a new roller coaster at Busch Gardens, Williamsburg; director (CE Group Inc.) of the Opening Salute Ceremonies for the NCAA Division I Women’s Final Basketball Tournament; and most recently, creative director for Oak Island, a premiere creative company specializing in turnkey production solutions in the event and entertainment industry. Some of Oak Island’s clients include Disney World Hong Kong, Busch Gardens, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, Hershey Park, Cleveland Botanical Gardens, Canada’s Wonderland, Ocean Park Hong Kong, and many more!

What is your current position and what does it entail?
I am currently a freelance producer and director for many events and entertainment venues, as well as the creative director for Oak Island. My work brings me into projects at various stages in the process, from creative to management. A typical production timeline includes:

Inception: This is where the creative team develops the concepts of a product. The goal is to create a captivating and immersive experience. Through this phase, the team of producers, directors, and designers are consistently going through research and development phases, as well as making sure the final product can meet the schedule and budget guidelines of the project.

Preproduction: Here, the production starts to become tangible. Music and scripts start to become developed, and designers begin to bring the idea to life through scenic, costumes, audio, lighting, and effects.

Production: During the production process, everything is being constructed, built, painted, and rehearsed!

Show Operations: The show or event is up and running! This is the moment everyone has been waiting for and the ultimate guest experience. This phase also calls for consistent and effective management to make sure the event, show or experience maintains a high artistic quality and seamless execution.

Aside from the timeline above, it is also important for me to create, build and maintain relationships. Business equals relationship. At the end of the day, my final product has to make a connection. This connection needs to be with the client and the guest. Not only will this connection increase the success of a client’s relationship with the guests, it will lead to further successes for myself and ultimately increase my business through positive referrals.

When looking at old family photos in various destinations, such as Disney, SeaWorld, or various resort and holiday events, I am immediately reminded of the awesome memories my family and I have … now I get to create these memories for millions of families each year!

In conclusion, I would call myself a storyteller. I get to work with many awesome artists and designers to allow dreams to become reality.

Up until this point, what has your greatest challenge in the workforce been?
Developing and creating new and unique ideas! Everything I do is custom to each client. It is important for me to create an immersive experience through the engagement of all five senses. What does one see, taste, smell, hear, and feel in an environment? It is important for me to stay tuned to all the new technologies, as well as their efficiencies and cost for all of my products. It is also important for me to develop the craziest of ideas because you never know which one is going to be new and never seen before. I was once told there is no bad idea, it just wasn’t good right now! I have many ideas in my creative box, which I pull out and put back many times.

With the increased use of the Internet, benchmarking becomes readily available through YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and even Pinterest. While this information is on the Internet, you realize the key to success in events and productions is through the human connection and interaction. The experience begins long before people drive to the event; it begins when the experience hits them first in the marketing message: what is the invitation or the key marketing message? How do we build the excitement
and anticipation that keeps kids asking “Are we there yet?” The magic continues as guests pull into a parking lot and proceed to check in. This is HUGE! If a guest has a bad experience before they even get to experience the magic, you will have a very hard time touching the heart. Once guests enter, let the magic begin and allow them to enjoy the story. A successful product is going to guide a guest and allow them to create their own memories.

There are two things I must always remember when creating events, building relationships, and developing business.

1. Your first impression is your last impression.
2. Business is not an emotion.

What has your greatest reward been?
My greatest reward is seeing the joy on the faces of children and how families experience the happiness I have created. A smile, an expression of awe, and repeat business is not only an awesome reward, it is the indication of a job well done. You know your story is compelling when a child is full of expression, awe, and happiness!

How has the hospitality industry changed since you graduated from college?
The hospitality industry has not changed and it never will. Our profession is built on creating experiences and stories that entertain guests. Our goal is to create and/or transform an environment to allow guests to relax, enjoy, and escape the mundane tasks of everyday life. We strive to develop creative solutions and fantastic guest service. This will never change! How we accomplish this changes. We should always try new and better ways of creating the message and guest experience … learn from the good and the bad!

Kreczko directed and provided creative concept for the NCAA Division I Women’s Final Four Salute on Parade (produced by CE Group Inc.).

What is your favorite part of your job?
My favorite part of the job is being able to make people’s dreams and visions a reality! It is fun and exciting to create environments and see them come to fruition. Then seeing the delights of guests is incredibly awesome! It is great to know you have created memories for millions of people each year!

What do your future plans entail?
I am very lucky to do what I love and I want to continue to do what I love! I am always looking for the next opportunity and if you are a dedicated and passionate individual who embodies the code of professionalism, your opportunities keep growing. It is difficult to have to turn down jobs, but I am fortunate to have to turn them down. A good employer will support your personal advancement in the industry and will celebrate your growth with you! Always look for the next opportunity, and take it when you find a great one!

What is your advice to students entering the hospitality industry?
I am in the process of developing a book entitled Building YOUR brand and Setting YOUR Stage. This book uses the ingredients of show development to create a personal show for you and your business … it assists you in creating your brand. Remember, you are unique and no one brings to the table what you can, so create a compelling story, full of costumes and props and rehearse these stories! Rehearsals (or preparation) are important, followed by creating a professional image for yourself. There is a reason why people say dress for success! The first impression, which occurs immediately, is hard to change, so wow everyone right away. Passion, dedication, showing up on time (which is hard for people to do) and executing a job 110 percent will prove successful and lead to promotion! Finally, the world is too small. You will cross paths with everyone you meet at least one more time again in your life and that person could be a future boss or client … so be NICE to everyone!

Kreczko served as managing producer for the Cleveland Botanical Gardens’ BIG SPRING (produced by Oak Island).

For more information on Kreczko’s or Oak Island’s services, please contact him at 716.310.7887, kevin@kevinkreczko.com, or kevin.kreczko@oakislandattractions.com.
Alumni Updates

Let us know what is new in your life! Send your updates to kfinamore@niagara.edu.

JOE WHITE, ’70, launched a new sports company with three friends who reside in Germany, Spain and Austria. Visit www.sportsuphealth.com for more information.

MICHAEL PUGLISI, ’78, was promoted to employment services manager II with the New York State Department of Labor, Division of Employment & Workforce Solutions. He and his wife, Deborah, moved to Ontario, N.Y., in June.

MARK TAMBINI, ’85, ran his first-ever 5K in the ChristFit 5K Run in Lewiston on June 23. In addition, he was a Security Committee volunteer at the Wegmans LPGA in Rochester in June, and will be a Media Center Committee volunteer at the PGA Championship in Rochester in August. He also celebrated his 50th birthday this year!

TRACEY CAPONERA, ’90, married Jamie Cucinelli of Rochester, NY. Jamie attended NU from 1988-1990 before transferring to a college in the Rochester area. Niagara is where they first met and will always hold a special place in both of their hearts!


LORI ALSTROM, ’98, recently passed the Certified Meeting Professional exam, the most respected certification in the meetings, conventions and exhibitions industry.

SARAH (PEMPSELL) HUMMELL, ’04, is in the process of opening her second business, called SiP Wine & Coffee Bistro. It is located in Holly Springs, N.C.

SHELLY (MC LAUGHLIN) CIESLAK, ’05, was promoted to area general manager for Buffalo Lodging, now managing Fairfield Inn & Suites and the new TownePlace Suites Buffalo Airport (opening this summer).

MIKE MEDICI, ’06, is employed by the Toronto Blue Jays and serves as an adjunct professor at Canisius College. Last November, he married Beth McDannel and they are expecting a baby boy in September.

ELENA OXFORD, ’07, was promoted to director of rooms at Jackson Lake Lodge, outside of Jackson, Wyo.

JOSEPH KALIL, ’07, is the general manager of Toby Keith’s I Love This Bar & Grill in Syracuse, N.Y.

Megan (Weber) Manning, ’07, was recently promoted to assistant general manager for the Hampton Inn & Suites Buffalo Airport.

Danielle Winarski, ’08, completed her master’s degree in tourism administration with a concentration in event and meeting management from George Washington University.

KATLYN (BANACH) MOGLE, ’09, was promoted to operations manager at the new TownePlace Suites Buffalo Airport (opening this summer).

Amanda Farrell, ’09, was promoted to assistant sales manager at Rembrandt Charms. Rembrandt is a family-owned business that has been designing and manufacturing charms and charm bracelets for over 40 years. In addition, she also became engaged this year to Eric Lux. An August 2014 wedding is planned.

Joshua Nightingale, ’09, was promoted to night manager of The Lodge at Torrey Pines this year. He lives loving in Southern California and having his days free to enjoy a multitude of outdoor activities!

Mike Wheaton, ’09, is a cruise and events manager for Walt Disney World. He supports all four Disney ships as well as California, Japan, New York, Hawaii and Chicago.

Gab Foe, ’10, recently became engaged. She is looking forward to her upcoming August 2013 wedding.

Lynzy Zielonko, ’10, got promoted and has relocated. She was at the Boston Marriott Copley hotel as an assistant rooms manager and is now at the Ritz-Carlton Charlotte as a housekeeping manager.

Steve Atlas, ’11, was promoted to front office supervisor at the Courtyard by Marriott Buffalo Airport.

Jessica (Adams) Tomaino, ’11, got married this past September and rescued a Springer Spaniel puppy named Ruby who is now a year old. She also recently started as an administrative assistant, was promoted in July 2012, and now works full time as a group travel specialist for Raptim International Travel in Lewiston. In addition, she is getting ready to launch her artwork online through Etsy.

Christie Lee Fodera, ’11, started her new position as guest services manager at the O’Henry Hotel, the number one hotel in Greensboro, N.C. Christie was previously with the number one boutique hotel: the Hotel Indigo in Sarasota, Fla.

Anika Loeffler, ’12, graduated from IUBH, our partner school in Germany, this April, and is now working for a small German hotel group called MEININGER in Berlin. In this role, she is responsible for the refurbishments, energy management and maintenance for their 16 existing hotels.

David J. Hoover, ’12, is finishing his first year as an event coordinator at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex, the largest sport/event complex in the southeast. He works closely with the Greensboro Aquatic Center running national swim and dive meets and serves as the event manager of North Carolina’s largest Super Flea Market.

Jordan Moore, ’12, was promoted in December to assistant director of athletic facilities at University of Detroit Mercy. He was the intern there from Aug. 1 to Nov. 30, 2012.

Colleen George, ’12, was promoted to area sales coordinator for the Buffalo Lodging Marriott Airport Hotels Cluster.

Karen Rajsky Harrington, ’12, got married last February to the love of her life! She also relocated to Denver, Colo., and is now an assistant store manager for Abercrombie and Fitch.

Rebekah Rutkowski, ’12, accepted a new position as a concierge at 70 Park Avenue, a Kimpton Hotel in New York City.

Aubreyanna Curtis, ’12, moved to Rochester, N.Y., where she was recruited to work for the men’s professional indoor soccer team, the Rochester Lancers, as their sponsorship director. In her new role, she focuses on selling sponsorships for the team, planning events and assisting with player and dancer appearances. In addition, she’s working for Salvatore’s, a locally owned pizzeria chain, on catering events.
**Mark your calendars!**

**Oct. 22, 2013 – College of Hospitality Convocation**
Held in Alumni Chapel, our annual convocation is an award ceremony during which we honor distinguished executives in the hospitality and tourism industries.

**Nov. 10, 2013 – College of Hospitality New York City Reception** *(in conjunction with IHM&RS)*
This annual reception is open to all alumni and friends of the college who live in the New York City area or will be in the area to attend the International Hotel Motel & Restaurant Show. The reception will take place at the Waldorf=Astoria.

**Feb. 19, 2014 – Hospitality and Tourism Career Fair**
Our annual career fair will take place from 1-3 p.m. at the Castellani Art Museum on campus. All alumni and friends who are interested in meeting and interviewing our students for internships, summer jobs or full-time positions within the hospitality, tourism and sport industries are encouraged to attend.

For more information on all of the events listed above, please check our website, [www.niagara.edu/hospitality](http://www.niagara.edu/hospitality) or contact Katie Finamore at kfinamore@niagara.edu.

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**Save the date and join us for Alumni Advantage!**

**When:** Thursday evening, Oct. 10 and Friday, Oct. 11, 2013  
**Where:** Niagara University  
**What:** An interactive program to encourage sharing, networking and professional development between students and alumni

**Schedule at a Glance:**
Thursday evening: Welcome wine tasting  
Friday: Half day of workshops, panel discussions and networking opportunities during which YOU do the presenting.

Remember, no preparation on your part is required in order to participate. We will create an atmosphere in which you can share your experiences and advice with students to help prepare the next generation of hospitality executives!

*For more information and to register:*
Please visit [www.niagara.edu/hospitality](http://www.niagara.edu/hospitality) and click on “events.”

There is no charge to attend. Thursday evening wine tasting and lunch on Friday are complimentary.

*Questions?* Please contact Katie Finamore at kfinamore@niagara.edu.

Thank you for your support. See you in October!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Company/Position</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>JAMES BEDARD III, '77</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Buffalo Hotel Supply Company, Inc.</td>
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<td>DREW CERZA</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Just Wing It Productions, Inc.</td>
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<td>HUGH CRESSER</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Hugh Cresser &amp; Associates</td>
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<td>DEBORAH CURTIS, DBA, '84</td>
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<td>Center for Events and Management Development</td>
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<td>Hyatt Regency Buffalo</td>
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<td>ANTHONY DEMUNDA</td>
<td>Brand Performance Consultant</td>
<td>Choice Hotels International</td>
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<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Executive Vice President of Sales</td>
<td>Snyder Corp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PETER FLORCZAK</td>
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<td>Buffalo Niagara Marriott</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOTTIE GALLAGHER-COHEN</td>
<td>President and CEO</td>
<td>Buffalo Niagara Partnership</td>
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<td>INNTEL Hospitality Management</td>
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<td>MICHAEL JOSEPH, C.E.C.</td>
<td>National Account Culinary Manager, Food Service Division</td>
<td>Rich Products Corp.</td>
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<td>PAUL M. MCMANUS</td>
<td>President and CEO (Retired)</td>
<td>The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd.</td>
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<td>InnVest Lodging</td>
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<td>Director, Western District</td>
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<td>Park Hyatt Toronto</td>
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<td>EDWARD ATKINS</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Lodging Hospitality</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Hospitality Consultant</td>
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<tr>
<td>JERALD I. WOLFGANG</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Western New York Regional Education Center for Economic Development</td>
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