Photographer Tom Becker brings a new perspective to campus scenes you’ve viewed thousands of times.
Our mission statement emphasizes how valuable we believe the community fostered with a worldview focused not on self, but on God and others. Instead of asking, "What’s in who God is, who they are, and who their neighbors are. This in turn provides our students community of Northwestern provides an ideal environment for students to learn more about learning and serving.

Corps and complete doctorates, as well as in its support for community service. Northwestern helps co-workers realize the importance of their work. "Ron has a unique ability to be professional and with the people who work for him," he says. "He values everyone's contribution and makes the workplace enjoyable. He doesn't take himself too seriously, which helps employees realize they don't have to be perfect—just committed."
Enrollment Up

A strong recruiting effort and excellent retention of last year’s students resulted in a 3 percent increase in enrollment this fall. Total enrollment is up by 37 to 1,243. In addition, this year’s entering freshman class is 351, the largest since 2006.

“We had success identifying students who would be a good fit with Northwestern,” says Ron De Jong, vice president of external relations. “That’s due to a great effort by the admissions staff and the entire campus community.”

The retention rate of freshmen returning for their sophomore year was 80 percent, second best in school history. “That shows we are providing the kind of experience students anticipated they would receive,” De Jong says.

This year’s enrollment includes the highest-ever percentage of American ethnic minorities, nearly 7 percent. Of the freshman class, more than 10 percent are ethnic minorities.

That increase is partly attributable to a special effort to recruit students from the Southwest. California is now the fifth most represented state on campus, with 19 students.

New in the Classroom

Six new full-time faculty are teaching at Northwestern this fall. They include:

Frank Bentrem
Assistant Professor of Physics
Ph.D., Southern Mississippi

Bentrem has 10 years of experience as a research physicist at the Naval Research Laboratory, where he worked on algorithms for acoustical seafloor images. A frequent presenter at scholarly conferences, Bentrem was also a visiting research professor of physics at Tulane University.

Diane Smith
Instructor in Music
Ph.D., candidate, Northwestern University

Smith, a registered nurse, has experience in admissions, outpatient, surgery, labor and delivery, nursery, emergency room, intensive care unit, and skilled nursing departments of rural hospitals. She also provided community health education for Woodbury County and in a family practice setting.

John Hubers ’76
Instructor in Religion
Ph.D. candidate in world Christianity and global mission, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

A Reformed Church in America missionary in the Middle East for 13 years, Hubers also supervised the denomination’s mission programs in the Middle East and South Asia. In addition, he pastored churches in three states, most recently in Plain, Texas.

Carol Kleyer
Instructor in Nursing
M.S.N., Briar Cliff University

A registered nurse, Kleyer has worked with patients ranging from pediatric to geriatric, and her experience has included medical clinic, emergency room, coronary care, labor and delivery, post-partum, and medical-surgical. Kleyer coordinated nursing care in an Orange City long-term care facility for many years.

Tom Tiahrt
Instructor in Computer Science
Ph.D. candidate, University of South Dakota

Tiahrt was previously chief scientist for BrightPlanet Corporation, where he oversaw research and development of novel indexing, storage, search and retrieval software.

Paul Whitley
Instructor in Music
D.M., candidate, Northwestern University

Whitley is serving a one-year appointment after teaching piano at the Hindleus Center for the Arts and Wheaton College, where he obtained extensive experience as an accompanist. He earned a Master of Music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music.

Leadership Emphasis

A new effort to enhance the leadership development of NWC students was officially launched in October. The Franken Servant Leadership Institute was introduced with an inaugural address by Dr. Richard Mouw ’59, author and president of Fuller Theological Seminary.

The institute was established through the generosity of donors in memory of Jim Franken ’75, a Northwestern board member who was president and CEO of Interstates Companies and Harbor Group in Sioux Center when he died in 2001; Drs. Jennifer Frenson, associate professor of psychology, and Jeff VanDerWerff, associate professor of political science, serve as co-directors.

“These are a lot of leadership development efforts taking place on campus,” says VanDerWerff. “We want to offer substantive support to these efforts and provide opportunities for other students to focus on leadership and faith-at-work integration.”

The program has an experiential component, seeking to develop students’ leadership skills through such efforts as the pre-orientation Portage trip for freshmen to Minnesota’s Boundary Waters and opportunities to work with local youth. The institute also focuses on helping students anticipate the challenges of living out their faith in the workplace.

More Than a Facelift

Northwestern’s website, www.nwciowa.edu, has a new look and content overhaul. The revised site is focused on providing information for Northwestern’s external audiences, particularly prospective students and their families. Packaged in a bright, bold design, the site seeks to convey Northwestern’s strengths and unique personality through compelling content and photography.

The site allows users to receive constantly updated news and sports stories by subscribing to RSS feeds and makes it easy to forward Web content via e-mail or social networking sites. In addition, prospective students and employees have the ability to create personalized accounts for navigating the application process.
Few undergraduate college students can say they’ve written a full-length play. Northwestern theater majors and some non-majors alike have that opportunity as part of an elective taught by a published playwright.

“Writing a full-length play is a huge project. For me, it’s the toughest kind of writing,” says Jeff Barker, author of more than 50 plays, who teaches the NWC playwriting course. Perhaps that’s why the experience is usually offered only in graduate theater programs.

Northwestern’s emphasis on playwriting is distinctive for an undergraduate Christian college theater program. It’s also part of the theater department’s mission. “We’re out to change the culture,” says Barker. “Since the theater arts field is a script-based form, we realize if we’re going to be culture-changers, we need to contribute to the pool of writers.”

Two other members of the theater faculty—Bob Hubbard and Jeff Taylor—are also playwrights. Taylor teaches a playwriting course on one-acts, which is required of all theatre majors. The one-acts are produced every other spring, while in the alternate years when the full-length playwriting course is offered, an external judge reads the students’ plays and chooses one for production. For both courses, students direct the work of their peers.

Barker warns students in his course it’s very difficult to get a play published and there’s little money in playwriting. “You have to be in it because you love it and think it’s important,” he says.

Northwestern Classic

On Board

The Northwestern Board of Trustees welcomed two new members at its fall meeting in October.

The Rev. Tim Breen ’92 is the new local pastor at Orange City’s First Reformed Church. He previously served as teaching pastor at Sunrise Ministries in Hudsonville, Mich., and director of youth and family ministries at First Reformed Church of Sidney, Iowa. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Western Theological Seminary.

The Rev. Jerry Sittser, Northwestern’s chaplain from 1979 to 1985, has been a theology professor at Wheaton College since 1989. He is the author of seven books, including, A Grace Disguised, The Will of God as a Way of Life and Where God Doesn’t Answer Your Prayer. He earned a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and a doctorate in the history of Christianity from the University of Chicago.

The Play’s the Thing

Class

Playwriting: The Full-Length

Instructor

Jeff Barker

Professor of Theatre and Speech

Texts and Assignments

• August: Osage County, by Tracy Letts
• Solving Your Script, by Jeffrey Sweet
• The Value of Names and Other Plays, by Jeffrey Sweet
• Unstoppable For Time, by Jeff Barker

In addition to reading about how to write a play, students read scripts. They then write a 90-page full-length play using classic dramatic structure, attempting to craft a drama that will stand the test of time.

Northwestern was rated second in Washington Monthly’s 2010 rankings of the top baccalaureate colleges in the nation, based on how well graduates are prepared for lives of achievement, service and research.

Bard College at Simon’s Rock in Massachusetts was ranked first. Other institutions in the top 10 include Taylor University, third; Messiah College, fifth; Augustana College of South Dakota; ninth; and Trinity Christian College, ninth.

An article at www.washington-monthly.com says the magazine’s rankings feature a different approach than other ratings. “Instead of asking what a college could do for you, we asked, ‘What are colleges doing for the country?’ Colleges should be judged not just on who they enroll and how many graduate, but on what students do with their lives after they leave.”

Among the factors figuring into the rankings are the number of bachelor’s degree recipients who go on to earn doctoral degrees or serve in the Peace Corps, the number of students who participate in community service and the staff support those efforts receive; the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants; and the predicted and actual graduation rates based on percentage of Pell recipients and incoming SAT scores.

“It’s great to be affirmed externally for what I witness every day,” says President Greg Christy. “Our students, faculty and staff have an incredible commitment to serving others and impacting the world for good. Society is in desperate need of leaders, especially Christian leaders, and Northwestern is in the business of educating Christian scholars and servant leaders who are actively engaged in research, scholarship and service.”

The Washington Monthly ranking was the latest among several impressive recognitions of Northwestern. NWC ranked second in the nation, based on the in- volvement of alumni in leadership, service and research.
Adoption-Friendly

For the second year in a row, NWC is ranked fifth—behind Cornell University and New York University (tied for first), Harvard (third) and Ohio State (fourth)—on the 2010 Best Adoption-Friendly Workplaces education list released by the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption.

"We are pleased and humbled to receive this recognition," says Deb Sandbulte, director of human resources. "The support we provide employees in the adoption process is another example of our commitment to being a family-friendly place of employment. And it resonates with our mission to pursue God’s redeeming work in the world by caring for all of his children."

Northwestern offers financial assistance of up to $2,000 per adopted child to faculty and staff, with an additional reimbursement of up to $1,000 for the adoption of a child with special needs. Adoptive parents are offered up to seven days of paid leave in addition to accumulated sick leave, vacation and personal leave. Sherr (De Zorow ’95) Langton, cataloger/library systems specialist, used Northwestern’s financial assistance to pay court and attorney fees incurred in the adoption of son Ahman, now 4, from Ethiopia. "I felt very fortunate to have a supportive employer," she says. "Northwestern’s efforts benefit families greatly and show acceptance of adoption as another way to build your family."

Parents of the Year

Jerry and Dor Herlyn’s daughter, a Northwestern alumnus, nominated them as Northwestern’s Parents of the Year because of their lives of service. It’s an example their children have followed.

The Herlyn, who farm near Marion, S.D., spend several months each winter in Texas, where they build houses with Habitat for Humanity, make meals for people in the community, and interact with those who lost their homes to Hurricane Katrina. They also regurlary donate time to the Lives Under Construction Boys Ranch in Lamp, Mo., doing electrical work, installing Sheetrock, painting and performing other jobs. “They’re just so giving,” says their daughter, Kelsey, a senior at Northwestern. “If they see somebody in need, they’re right there.” Kelsey spent spring break this year on one of the college’s Spring Service Projects (SSP). Her team went to Jackson, Miss., where they worked in a community health clinic that offers free services. Her sister Megan, a junior, was part of an SSP team that served with City Youth Ministries in Jonesboro, Ark. And Jennifer ’07, the oldest of the Herlyn siblings, participated in three Spring Service Projects—to Oklahoma, Trinidad and New Orleans.

Northwestern recognized the Herlyn as part of Family Weekend in October.

Dorm Demolition

Heermstra Hall, which housed Northwestern students since 1950, was torn down in July. The Board of Trustees had decided last fall to close the building due to fire safety code violations.

Construction is under way on a new suite-style residence hall, which will be ready to house 68 men next fall. Due to a shortage of housing for men this year, first south Stegenga Hall was converted to a men’s wing.

After 60 years of service, Heermstra Hall was razed in July.

Darla Hettinga

Quietly diligent

What are your main job responsibilities?

I track chapel attendance, make ID cards, keep housing records, maintain the student handbook, supervise work-studies in the student development office and do a variety of other things. New to me this year is issuing parking tags and supervising the switchboard.

What makes your job great?

I especially enjoy working with students, helping them however I can. It’s fun to watch them grow from freshmen to seniors—to see how they have matured and grown spiritually as they make plans for the future.

Describe yourself in three words.

Organized, honest, concerned.

What have been some of your favorites?

I enjoyed the “I Have a Dream” student chapel speaker last year, especially Sarah Earlywine, who spoke about trusting the Lord to lead her after graduation. I also like musical chapels like the one done by Ken Medema.

What do you do in your free time?

In the summer I like to ride my motorcycle with my husband and spend time with our children and grandchildren. I also enjoy gardening.

If you’d like to see a particular Northwestern faculty or staff member featured in Face Value, e-mail classic@nwciowa.edu.
Achivers

Three receive distinguished alumni awards

Barb (Jacobs '70) Lubbers

Service to Northwestern

Barb Lubbers and her family served as a host family for NWC international students every year from 1985 to 2009. For six of those years she was the host family coordinator. She also served for many years on the National Alumni Board and Women's Auxiliary and chaired the auxiliary's Hostess Supper event.

In 1991, Lubbers became the office assistant in Northwestern's campus ministry office, supporting staff and students involved in chapel programming, campus ministry and short-term missions. She retired in 2008, the same year she received the college's Diane Murphy International Inspiration Award.

Brian Renes '85

Service to Humankind

Brian Renes and his wife, Donna (Rensink '87), have been Reformed Church in America missionaries since 1989. The Reneses started their ministry as Bible translators among the Tojolabal people in Chiapas, Mexico.

Since 1996, Renes has worked for United Bible Societies as a computer consultant, providing training and support for Bible translation projects in the Americas, Europe, Middle East and Asia. Using what he's learned traveling to translation projects around the world, Renes is one of the developers of a translation software program, Paratext, which is used by nearly every Bible translation project worldwide.

Rachel Klay '80

Professional Achievement

Rachel Klay joined the Secret Service in 1983 when she was one of just 56 women in a force of 2,000. Over her 23-year career, she protected Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, hunted child abductors and serial killers as part of a joint task force with the FBI, and served as the Secret Service liaison to the Pentagon, CIA, and legislative and judicial branches of the U.S. government.

Klay retired from the Secret Service in 2007 and is now senior special agent in the protective services unit for Federal Reserve Board Chairman Ben Bernanke.

Recognized as Northwestern's 2010 alumni of the Year at Homecoming were, left to right: Barb Lubbers, Brian Renes and Rachel Klay.
Volleyball Unbeaten
The Raiders set a new Great Plains Athletic Conference record with 58 consecutive regular-season match wins, dating back to 2007. NWC went unbeaten in the league this fall and was 32-0 overall entering postseason play. With nine victories over ranked opponents, the squad won its third consecutive regular-season conference title and qualified for the NAIA national tournament. Kaetlin Beaver was a three-time conference setter of the week. Rozenboom was named to the all-conference team and was a three-time conference player of the week.

Football Great Ground Game
Taylor Medal and Brandon Smith led the league’s leading rushing offense and were in the top five nationally, averaging 123 and 121 yards apiece, respectively. Northwestern was ranked 15th in the nation and 6-2 with two games left. Medal, Smith, and defenders Aaron Jansen and Grantley Malm, Smith and defenders were ranked teams, the squad won its third consecutive regular-season conference title and qualified for the NAIA national tournament. Beaver was a three-time conference setter of the week. Rozenboom was fourth individually.

Women’s Soccer Tournament Qualifiers
The women qualified for the postseason tournament, losing in the first round to Dakota Wesleyan, after finishing the season seventh in the conference with a 5-5-1 mark. The Raiders were 7-10-1 overall. Goalkeeper Ariel Watts was named a GPAC defensive player of the week.

Men’s Golf Player of the Week
The men compiled a 5-10-2 record, placing 11th in the conference at 3-7-1. Goalkeeper Jeff Lansi received GPAC defensive player of the week.

Cross Country Nationally Ranked
The women’s team was ranked as high as 23rd in the national poll and won two fall invitationals. Northwestern was ranked 15th in the nation and 6-2 with two games left. Medal, Smith, and defenders Aaron Jansen and Grantley Malm, Smith and defenders were named GPAC conference players of the week.

Time in a Bottle

President Jacob Heemstra (front left) and other Northwestern Junior College employees gather with construction workers for a ceremony celebrating the laying of Heemstra Hall’s cornerstone in 1950.

W orkers were removing Heemstra Hall’s cornerstone this summer in preparation for the building’s demolition when they discovered a metal box tucked inside. It must have seemed a good idea at the time: Fill a container with Northwestern memorabilia, solder it shut, and place it inside the building’s cornerstone. Unfortunately, the same can’t be said for the one-of-a-kind archives. Unfortunately, the same can’t be said for the one-of-a-kind correspondence from the building’s namesake.

“The was an envelope with a letter from President [Jacob] Heemstra, but all the ink was washed away,” says Jill Haarsma ’95, the president’s assistant, who was present when the box was opened. “That’s the piece that turned up the first sod.” In the Guide for Conduct, one learns women were required to be in their dorm by 7:30 on weeknights. They had to sign in and out, giving their destination and name of escort, and when leaving town, were given a card to return with the signature of their host or parent. Rooms were to be clean and ready for inspection anytime after 8 a.m. Heemstra Hall opened in the fall of 1950. Built and furnished for $195,000, it had rooms for 60 years—eventually becoming a men’s dorm known for its unique, tight-knit community of “brothers”—before the fire marshal declared it unsafe. The college closed the hall in May and razed it in July. As one dorm went down, another is going up. A new suite-style men’s residence hall is under construction on the northwest corner of campus. If a time capsule is involved, maintenance director Scott Simmelink has a plan: Put it in a PVC pipe, glue the ends shut, and locate it inside the building—away from any potential source of rain or snow.
Northwestern alumni might think they spent enough time on campus to know it completely: every building, hallway, doorway—even the nooks and crannies. We asked photographer Tom Becker to give us a new view of campus. His shots make the familiar seem peculiar, and the ordinary, fresh and fascinating.

For 35 additional images of campus locations, visit our online photo gallery at classic.nwciowa.edu.
Capitalizing on the Internet

Joel Anderson ’02 lives in Massachusetts and teaches at Smith College and the University of Hartford; this fall his class Total Noise: Going Deaf in the Information Age was named a Hot College Course by thedailybeast.com.

Remember when using the Internet meant no one else in your house could use the phone? Remember when your computer contained less memory than today’s coffeemakers and loading even a modest-sized graphic was like watching a window shade being pulled down your screen by an arthritic hand? Of course, you didn’t mind because the Information Age had arrived, and everything was about to be possible.

Well, from where I’m sitting (in a café, surrounded by the blue glow of laptops) there are at least two ironies of the Information Age. The first is that one of its effects has been a decline in vetted news: Journalists are out of work, and print news agencies are fiscally broke. That’s unfortunate for anyone who believes being a responsible participant in American democracy requires access to reliable information about what is actually going on across our nation.

A corollary to this first irony is that a lot of information is still out there; I just have to do some industrious sifting, sorting and hyper-nuanced Googling to make sense of it—assuming I don’t want to just go ahead and take Glenn Beck’s or Keith Olbermann’s word for it.

Which brings me to the second irony of the Information Age: The technological tools I can use to figure out whether or not lowering taxes might jumpstart the economy (enabling informed citizenship and voting) are the same tools I use to watch YouTube videos, read celebrity gossip, and tweet my friends for movie recommendations.

And at the end of a long day, chances are deciphering the U.S. tax code and figuring out how it affects GDP is not even within a high-powered telescope’s view of watching some dude fail to execute a backflip on YouTube. It just isn’t—most of the time, anyway.

In July, Facebook hit 500 million “friends.” According to Wikipedia, that means about 1 in every 14 people on the planet is on Facebook.

Is the ubiquitous nature of social media a boon—or bane? It depends. A mom watching her son thumb his smart phone through dinner won’t be as enthusiastic as the dad whose daughter has just texted, “Storm over. I’m OK.”

The same technology that enables new parents to chat about Afro hair care with other U.S. families who’ve adopted children from Ethiopia has been complicit in suicides by teenagers bullied online. The potential and pitfalls seem as boundless as the medium itself.

In Super Sad True Love Story, author Gary Shteyngart satirizes a future in which handhelds track data—like credit ratings and cholesterol levels—and broadcast the information publicly when users pass kiosks on the street or in the mall. Anyone can stream their own reality show, and “verballing” (talking face-to-face) is quaintly nostalgic. Is that where we’re headed? Or will broader connectedness lead to deeper community? Will a society with unlimited access to information be more informed?

We asked 10 alumni and students to share their thoughts.

Social Media and Society

edited by Tamar Afrand

In Super Sad True Love Story, author Gary Shteyngart satirizes a future in which handhelds track data—like credit ratings and cholesterol levels—and broadcast the information publicly when users pass kiosks on the street or in the mall. Anyone can stream their own reality show, and “verballing” (talking face-to-face) is quaintly nostalgic. Is that where we’re headed? Or will broader connectedness lead to deeper community? Will a society with unlimited access to information be more informed?

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So to make time for all the Information Age has to offer, I might simply resort to the comfortable dogmatism of the TV Right or the TV Left, choosing the sound bite that supports what I originally thought anyway. We were promised a brave, new world, but instead we’ve settled for just a bigger version of the planet that already exists behind our eyelids. There’s an “I” in Internet, after all, and it’s capitalized.

Social Media and the Masses

Dr. Ellen Ringnaldal ’86 Barney is the Utah communications and public involvement manager for Parsons Brinckerhoff, an international engineering firm. A blogger and tweeter, she tracks industry trends in social media use and also teaches communications at Utah Valley University.

In mass media like newspapers, radio and television, the term “gatekeeper” refers to those who decide what is published or given air time. TV anchors, newspaper editors, and magazine publishers all are gatekeepers. But social media gatekeepers are a relatively small number of people, like producers or editors.

Social media revolutionize the gatekeeper role, enabling information seekers to be their own information gatekeepers. You decide who you want to hear from by clicking on links of interest, visiting recommended websites, and participating in online chats or discussions of value to you. We’ll still turn to mass media to meet certain information and entertainment needs, but social media’s customizable information facilitates a new kind of interaction with the larger world—one, I believe, that is earning its place alongside other media formats in our multimedia society.

Ski Tweets

David Harding ’10 is a senior writer and constituent response manager for "Family Talk with Dr. James Dobson," available online at myfamilytalk.com.

While driving to work recently, enjoying the golden aspens beneath Pike’s Peak, I caught part of an advertisement for a ski resort proclaiming itself “the most wired ski resort in Colorado!” and offering to “alert you when my friends hit the slopes?! It’s annoying enough that we’re being tracked on the slopes. Let me enjoy the view without having to check my phone every 15 minutes.

Do I really want to be tweeted when my friends hit the slopes? Nah.

While driving to work recently, enjoying the golden aspens beneath Pike’s Peak, I caught part of an advertisement for a ski resort proclaiming itself “the most wired ski resort in Colorado!” and offering to “alert you when your friends hit the slopes!”

Alert me when my friends hit the slopes?! It’s annoying enough that we’re being tracked on the slopes. Let me enjoy the view without having to check my phone every 15 minutes.

Do I really want to be tweeted when my friends hit the slopes? Nah.

Evans’s text messages may enable him to share his emotions instantly with Diana, but his digital sweet nothings aren’t quite as sweet—or substantive—as if he had communicated them in person.

Social theorist Slavoj Žižek takes this one step further by suggesting that social media doesn’t just dull our experience of the social, it destroys it altogether. Social media transforms our interaction into “interpassivity” by severing our emotional connections to one another while simultaneously providing a simulation of social life. Consider “Girlfriend Keeper,” the iPod app that sends automated text messages to your significant other. Diana doesn’t realize that Evans’s electronic endearments have been randomly chosen from thousands of pre-written text messages in Girlfriend Keeper’s database. These virtual love notes transfer the romance to the technology, freeing Evan from any real emotional effort while interpassively simulating romance.

One danger of social media is the “poverty of affect” that comes with interpassivity. Žižek cautions that we are becoming so embedded in a culture of social media that we are losing our sense of touch.

To Friends on Facebook

Anna Bartlett is a Northwestern College junior majoring in English literature and serving as an R.A. in Ferr Smith Hall.

Hey, buddy. I’ve noticed you spend an inordinate amount of time staring at a screen. I walk down the hall and see you clicking through someone’s pictures. Two doors down, Carrie is reading someone’s wall post. Why don’t you sign off and chat with each other? Last year one of the wings in Fern held a Facebook fast, and for once, wingmates hung out together in the hallway instead of alone in front of their computers.

Humans are always inventing new technologies for the purpose of increasing efficiency, saving time and expending less effort. But I’d argue that relationships should be neither efficient nor something we wish to spend less time and energy on. There is something rich and gratifying about giving your entire attention to the person in front of you.

So, friend, if you are going to procrastinate, procrastinate by spending time with people on your wing, get to know someone you haven’t talked to very much or reach out to someone who isn’t well-known. Think how much better you will feel procrastinating in the name of loving others rather than for the hollow “community” Facebook offers.

Writing in Decline? DSL. (Don’t Seem Likely.)

Tom Truesdell ’01 is the director of academic support at Northwestern College. He also teaches writing and is earning a doctorate in composition and teaching English as a second language from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Truesdell does not have a Facebook page, but he watches the kids while his wife updates hers.

Invariably when I announce I teach writing, someone will use my career confusion as an opportunity to lament the degradation of students’ writing skills. “Kids today just do not know how to write,” they’ll say before adding the caveat, “I blame technology. Texting and e-mail are ruining the English language.”

I probably shouldn’t be surprised by this response. As someone who studies writing, I know people have been lamenting declining writing skills throughout history. In the 17th century, the Royal Society of England endorsed the creation of a National Language Academy to rectify the declining writing and speaking skills of English citizens. Two
Not substitutes, for the personal contact necessary to build deep and meaningful relationships. So even if a Facebook friend were to decline if they were allowed to erase and revise. The truth is, more people are reading and writing today than ever before, and they’re reading and writing more than they ever have. Perhaps students are writing fewer carefully crafted thesis statements, but they are more aware of their audience because they have learned writing is shaky. Instead I echo Denis Baron’s observation that digital technology is simply the latest step in a long line of writing technologies. pencils were initially resisted by educators who believed that student writing would decline if they were allowed to erase and revise. The early advocates of the haiku--and the computer--made this argument too. Indeed I wrote only hint at what I’m trying to express. Short as it is, the haiku loses its beauty when its meaning is reduced to something more mundane. I often ask the guys on my wing; What brought you to Northwestern College? Trying to get to the heart of the matter, I ask, What brings you to this community at Covenant? The responses vary, from talk through tough issues in class, and live as close as family in our residence halls. But they’re also having conversations by Facebook chat, commenting on each other’s photos and sending invitations to events. Facebook doesn’t replace community, instead, it broadens it. It helps us stay connected with family and friends across time and place, which makes relationships feel less temporary and transient. It reminds us we’re all part of a larger world—and that a life far away does not have to be a life far removed.

One of our freshmen was having an especially difficult time transitioning to college this fall. A California native, Julie didn’t meet anyone on our Georgia campus before arriving. But when she was having a particularly rough time dealing with a situation back home, she felt immediately comfortable going to her R.A., Carrie*, because Carrie had connected with Julie on Facebook during the summer. In fact, Carrie had used Facebook to start building relationships with all the women on her floor before they arrived on campus. Their Facebook friendships weren’t a replacement for the personal relationships they’re building with each other now, but that initial connection helped Julie and her roommates feel like they already had a home and a community at Covenant.

Students at Covenant eat meals around tables full of friends, talk through tough issues in class, and live as close as family in our residence halls. But they’re also having conversations by Facebook chat, commenting on each other’s photos and sending invitations to events. Facebook doesn’t replace community, instead, it broadens it. It helps us stay connected with family and friends across time and place, which makes relationships feel less temporary and transient. It reminds us we’re all part of a larger world—and that a life far away does not have to be a life far removed.

The Social Network Film

As depicted in the recently-released film, The Social Network, Facebook started on college campuses. As someone who spends a lot of time on a college campus, I often observe how social networks like Facebook affect the relationships we seek to develop in residence life. Yes, there are negative aspects of Facebook (Fanville, anyone?), but if used properly, it can be an effective tool for nurturing communication and community.

Social Networking @ Work

Emily (Gosselin ’09) Ford is the associate dean of students at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Ga. She’s had a Facebook account since the website was launched in 2004.

As depicted in the recently-released film, The Social Network, Facebook started on college campuses. As someone who spends a lot of time on a college campus, I often observe how social networks like Facebook affect the relationships we seek to develop in residence life. Yes, there are negative aspects of Facebook (Fanville, anyone?), but if used properly, it can be an effective tool for nurturing communication and community.

One of our freshmen was having an especially difficult time transitioning to college this fall. A California native, Julie* didn’t meet anyone on our Georgia campus before arriving. But when she was having a particularly rough time dealing with a situation back home, she felt immediately comfortable going to her R.A., Carrie*, because Carrie had connected with Julie on Facebook during the summer. In fact, Carrie had used Facebook to start building relationships with all the women on her floor before they arrived on campus. Their Facebook friendships weren’t a replacement for the personal relationships they’re building with each other now, but that initial connection helped Julie and her roommates feel like they already had a home and a community at Covenant.

Students at Covenant eat meals around tables full of friends, talk through tough issues in class, and live as close as family in our residence halls. But they’re also having conversations by Facebook chat, commenting on each other’s photos and sending invitations to events. Facebook doesn’t replace community, instead, it broadens it. It helps us stay connected with family and friends across time and place, which makes relationships feel less temporary and transient. It reminds us we’re all part of a larger world—and that a life far away does not have to be a life far removed.

“Facebook reminds us we’re all part of a larger world—and that a life far away does not have to be a life far removed.”

The Beauty of Being Two-Faced

Julie (Vermeer ’97) Elliott teaches Christian ethics and interdisciplinary studies at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pa. She has written about the face friendships fostered by纳入’s “Towards Christianity” and in The New York Times “Room for Debate” blog post.

When I was in middle and high school, I often participated in a favorite pastime of teenage girls: scrutinizing one another. We were always on the lookout for fashion and social faux pas. Was her skirt too poofy? Her hair too poofy? (Given it was the late ’80s, it was never poofy enough.)

On worst of all: Was she two-faced? Reflecting back, I realize this was not merely a teenage social ethic, but rather, a universal one. A two-faced person is deceitful and hypocritical; she’s resented because she alters her authentic self depending on her company and context. But what if there is something right about being two-faced (or three- or four-faced)? While it’s wrong to be dishonest or phony, I’ll argue there is something appropriate about shifting our words, tone and gestures according to our intended audience. I project a different person when I’m teaching than when I’m chatting with my auto mechanic.

The ability to present different faces to different audiences is a key to being a discerning communicator. Unfortunately, it’s just this ability that is inhibited by social networking sites, where people know from diverse contexts—former classmates, co-workers, distant acquaintances, family members—all converge into one indistinguishable group of “friends.” Whenever I post something online—whether a photo, link or status update—it’s broadcast indiscriminately to all my “friends.”

The problem, of course, is that this information is not filtered or nuanced, as it is in person encounters. While half my Facebook friends may appreciate my perspective on the proposed cultural center in lower Manhattan (a.k.a. the “Ground Zero Mosque”), the other half may be offended. Although my close friends may like to know if I am frustrated by my job on a given day, my supervisor might not appreciate that tidbit. Online postings lack a specific audience, which leaves me with two imperfect options: Post something substantive and risk offending someone, or post something superficial that neither offends nor enriches anyone.

On Facebook we have only one face for an amorphous audience. Perhaps it’s time to reclaim a more discerning kind of communication that recognizes the inherent complexity of relationships and embraces, in the very best sense of the word, the beauty of being two-faced.

Facebook Friends to the End

Todd Thompson ’85, Lubbock, Texas, is a writer and author of the blog AdviceOfTheGeek.com. Self-described as “always late to the technology party,” Thompson recently purchased a Droid Incredible and is still unsure whether buying a smart phone was a smart move.

The small world/big world nature of Facebook hit me for the first time recently when an elderly missionary friend serving in a remote part of Kenya became very sick with a life-threatening kidney ailment. He was transported to a hospital in Nairobi, where he had no support network. I put out a prayer request on Facebook, asking for help from anyone with connections in Kenya. A Facebook friend I’ve never met personally e-mailed for me. And another friend, who she used to live across the street from in the Nairobi hospital and a friend was still a physician there. A couple of quick e-mails, and my missionary friend had a physician by his bedside.

Most of us underestimate the potential of these friends-of-a-friend connections. If one has 200 friends—be they Facebook or otherwise—and each of them has 200 friends, you’re one introduction away from 40,000 people.

Most of us wouldn’t know where to start if we wanted to communicate with a quarter-million people, but that’s the networking potential of a fairly average Facebook friend list. Apply that to business, politics or ministry, and you quickly realize the potential to organize, impact and influence.

If Facebook is that powerful a communication tool, how are we using it? Are we using it to connect people for kingdom purposes, reveal our needs for prayer, encourage one another, and enhance and equip ministries to share the life-changing gospel of Jesus? The popularity of Facebook illustrates that we want to belong to something bigger than ourselves. That someone would find our status update interesting or care to look at our Colorado vacation photos is indicative of our desire to connect.

Yet I confess that as much as I appreciate the glimpses into my friends’ lives, I also feel a little like I am “on the outside looking in.” I’m thankful I can connect with people far away but sad I don’t live close enough to be more intimately involved in their lives. It makes me look forward to heaven, where relationships won’t be bound by time or place.

On the Web exclusive

Visit classic.nwciowa.edu to comment on any of these articles or add your own thoughts about whether technology is improving or ruining your life.
After four years of classes at Northwestern, students graduate with memories of dorm pranks, service projects, first dates, athletic successes, late-night discussions—and professors who made a difference in their lives.

Who was your favorite prof? We asked that question of our readers, and these are some of your responses.

Toward the end of my freshman year, I began to talk with a sociology professor about wanting to become a counselor. Through that conversation, Dr. Scott Monsma convinced me to become a sociology major. To this day I’m not sure how that happened or even why I thought sociology would be a good major to prepare me for a master’s degree in counseling. I didn’t know it at the time, but that proved to be pivotal in my approach to education. Upon changing my major, I also changed academic advisers. This became one of the best things that could have happened to me, as my new adviser—the same man who encouraged me to major in sociology—taught me to learn for the intrinsic value of learning.

I came to college to jump through the necessary hoops so I could get a degree and get a good job. I remember telling people it was ridiculous we had to take all the “extra” classes to graduate. Until I met Dr. Monsma, my definition of learning was simple: memorize data and then regurgitate it on a test or paper so I could tell the professors what they wanted to hear and get a good grade.

In my first Monsma class, he threw the idea of regurgitating information out the window and challenged me to learn for the simple value of bettering myself so I could give back to the world around me. His approach to learning was really based on the idea that students needed to develop holistically in order to reach their full potential academically.

In many ways he set the foundation for my beginning to understand the importance of self-authorship.

My love for learning was very much developed by Dr. Monsma. For that, I will forever be thankful.

Josh Perkins ‘04
Canton, OH

There is no doubt in my mind that Dr. Ron Juffer is a favorite among many alumni. He knew my name, where I was from, my hobbies and more even before I completed my first week in his class my freshman year. I always looked forward to seeing him in the RSC or the halls of VPH because he made sure to say hi and ask how volleyball practice was, or if I’d been back to Lincoln. He knew specific information about me—I don’t know how he remembered that about all of his students. You could just tell he loved what he did.

Rachael (Martin ’05) Becker
AUSTIN, TEXAS
Dr. Adrienne Forgette taught me research methods and more. She had such high standards for us, and she prepared me so well for graduate school. I remember she made us homemade cookies to help us get through our final exams.

Mark Vellinga taught me computer programming, but more importantly, I learned lessons about being a good teacher. He challenged us, encouraged us and understood that we were individuals. Perhaps most importantly, he showed faith in our abilities.

A younger student needed help but was too nervous to talk to her professors, so he taught me what he wanted her to know and then I taught her. He went above and beyond to see that his students got the help they needed! I teach college courses myself now, and he is one of the teachers I try to emulate.

Laura Whitworth ’90

Laura Furlong was an amazing instructor who always found ways to get her students engaged in her courses. I will never forget taking Invertebrate Zoology and Water Ecology with her. These courses didn’t require us to stay in the classroom every time we met, which made class exciting. We actually got an opportunity to do field projects. One of the best math teachers we ever had was Dr. Vander Werff. He was a truly inspiring instructor who cared for his students and Northwestern. He is one of the most caring, gentle and tender-hearted professors I ever encountered. He was an encourager to the choir. I have a memory of him being totally speechless after we finished a song. When he recovered, he described how our singing filled his heart with joy.

After I got married, he continued to show interest in my life and what my husband and I planned to do with our future. He encouraged us to listen to God’s calling in our life and to support each other in love.

Dr. Holm also is the goofiest, most hilarious professor I ever encountered. He can get pretty intense during a game of four square. And when the choir made some dance moves using his unique, passionate directing style, he would dance those moves right along with us! His gentle spirit and outrageously funny characteristics make Dr. Holm absolutely unforgettable for me. I was so blessed to have him as a professor.

Bethany (Landegent ’09) Norine

Drs. Mike Kugler was amazing, eclectic, and made me think beyond what I knew. He connected with students well and cared deeply about helping us grasp how wide and deep our world is.

Dr. Ray Weiss’s freshman biblical studies class was extremely hard for me. He only accepted the best. I didn’t like it then, but now I understand the same academic rigor can be applied to my walk with Christ.

Jason Sniff ’99

Hands down the best math teacher we ever had was Ralph Moos! He was very knowledgeable, a great professor who cared for his students and Northwestern. You could tell he was in it to help students progress and for Northwestern to receive the credit. He was a truly humble servant.

Nellie (Fikse ’66) and Dennis Harmelink ’65

I have fond memories of Dr. Lyle Vander Werff and how he blessed me as a student my junior and senior years at NWC. It was during those years I sensed God calling me into full-time ministry.

Despite my academic struggles and indiscipline, Dr. Vander Werff encouraged me to be a lifelong learner and to give my struggles to God. He could have written me off as an unfocused and undisciplined student, but through his encouragement, he assured me that with God’s help, I could endure the rigors of seminary. I thank God for bringing Dr. Vander Werff into my life.

The Rev. Mark Haverdink ’96

Dr. Scott Monsma

I didn’t fully appreciate Dr. Monsma until after I graduated. I thanked him several times for interesting discussions after class, but it wasn’t until I had left the NWC community that I began to see how lessons learned in his classroom would become valuable for my everyday life.

His courses, especially Cultural Anthropology, deal with the beauty and complexity of social interactions. As someone who loves and works in a cross-cultural environment, not a day goes by that I don’t talk to Dr. Monsma for being able to live and work here—and not a day goes by that I’m not grateful to Professor Monsma for being able to live and work here yet!}

Kadie Becker ’08

Dr. Scott Monsma

Dr. Laurie Furlong

I miss Greek. But more than that, I miss Prof. V., the grand orches- ter of Northwestern. He is one of the most caring, gentle and tender-hearted professors on campus.

He invites the choir to stop by his backyard and jump on their family’s trampoline. In my fourth year at NWC, he and his wife hosted a dinner at their house for all the married choir students and their spouses.

He was an encourager to the choir. I have a memory of him being totally speechless after we finished a song. When he recovered, he described how our singing filled his heart with joy.

After I got married, he continued to show interest in my life and what my husband and I planned to do with our future. He encouraged us to listen to God’s calling in our life and to support each other in love.

Dr. Holm also is the goofiest, most hilarious professor I ever encountered. He can get pretty intense during a game of four square. And when the choir made some dance moves using his unique, passionate directing style, he would dance those moves right along with us! He also used funny metaphors like “It’s as if you’re holding a baby chicken, and if you drop it, it will die” to help us visualize how he wanted us to sing.

His gentle spirit and outrageously funny characteristics make Dr. Holm absolutely unforgettable for me. I was so blessed to have him as a professor.

Bethany (Landegent ’09) Norine

Dr. Laurie Furlong

John Vonder Bruegge turned class into an adventure. While his Greek course demanded more work than my other three classes combined, his class was much more fun. I miss Greek. But more than that, I miss Prof. V., the grand orchestra of Northwestern. He is one of the most caring, gentle and tender-hearted professors on campus.

The Rev. Mark Haverdink ’96

Laura (Whitwer ’00) Hilkeman

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FALL 2010

FALL 2010
A red-clad freshman tosses a small plastic bucket to a teammate in one of the tanks who reaches down, scoops up liquid, and wades toward the large tanks in the center of a playing field.

During the race, Lori Couch never stops moving. The director of student activities for Northwestern, she runs over to give advice to a referee, stops to remind a participant of the rules, and checks toward the seniors’ tank to see how they’re doing. Carrying the precious cargo as it leaks out deliberately placed holes in the bucket’s bottom, the freshman sprint toward his team’s tank 80 yards away.

Couch’s imagination and willingness to think big are what make her so good at her job. The first indication of her gift for student activities came when she was a resident director in Hospers Hall. Aiming to make something like that on steroids to make it really great,” she says.

Couch’s reluctance to purchase ready-made, for-
time goods led her to a California company that sells baked bugs—ideal for a Clash of the Classes challenge. Watching Diamond Vogel’s peculiar foods led her to a California company that sells bugs—ideal for a Clash of the Classes challenge.

During the race, Lori Couch never stops moving. The director of student activities for Northwestern, she runs over to give advice to a referee, stops to remind a participant of the rules, and heads toward the seniors’ tank to check their progress.

Slime Fight—and the beginning-of-the-year Clash of the Classes competition it launches—is Couch’s brainchild and just one of 25 major events staged by the college’s Student Activities Council (SAC) each year.

Couch first heard about the powdery product that turns water into slime from a student who used it at summer camp, but as is typical for the event planner, she turned it into something bigger. “You’ve got to put something like that on steroids to make it really great,” she says.

A year’s Clash of the Classes’ Slime Fight won by seniors—that’s Lori Couch’s creativity provides students with events—like this by Anita Cirulis

...continued

Participation in student activities has also grown. Couch remembers her staff feeling thrilled when the former 200-seat Bogaard Theatre was

...continued

...continued

To accomplish that, Couch is always surveying pop culture to see what can be incorporated into a student event. A Food Network show about bizarre foods led her to a California company that sells bugs—ideal for a Clash of the Classes challenge. Watching Diamond Vogel’s peculiar foods led her to a California company that sells bugs—ideal for a Clash of the Classes challenge.

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A year’s Clash of the Classes’ Slime Fight won by seniors—that’s Lori Couch’s creativity provides students with events—like this...
54 The Rev. Dr. David Shyrock's, Grand Rapids, Mich., is the author of Sacred Breath: Forty Days of Centering Prayer published by Upper Room Books. The volume explores the analogy of breathing to the receptivity and letting go that we practice in spiritual life.

58 Dr. Roger Van Ommeren, Nokomis, Calif., recently published a book entitled Revelation to Submission, the story of a Mississippi drug dealer who now has a successful ministry. Dr. Van Ommeren is a retired journalist and professor.

66 Christina McGinnis and Communications Award from the Kalamazoo (Mich.) Alumni Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She was honored for her years of service to Kalamazoo Public Schools, particularly her work to incorporate bilingual studies. She was also honored for a children’s book she wrote on grief, “Forever Friends.”

70 Dr. Bob Doeringer is the new commissioner of the Mid-America Intercolligate Athletic Association. He was an athletic director at Northwestern Missouri State University since 2001.

71 Leilei Kwon traveled with First Reformed Church of Sioux Falls in August to Fukuoka, Japan, to help with an English-speaking vacation Bible school. While there, he met Eunike, a student pastor.

72 Dr. Jerry Van Di, Sioux Center, traveled to Israel this summer with his wife, Kim, an English instructor at NWC. They participated in a tour led by Israel Travel (Hoekstra ’68) and Martian Vite ’70, and were joined by fellow alumni Linda Gernhart ’74 and Lydie Plocher ’72. The men, who played baseball together at Northwestern, climbed Mt. Arbel, which overlooks the Sea of Galilee.

73 Scott Brownworth, South Bend, Ind., was inducted into the Indiana Football Coaches Hall of Fame in May. He coached football for 35 years in various schools in Michigan and Indiana, most recently at Jimtown High School. A past president of the Indiana Football Coaches Association, he helped coordinate football clinics and received a number of coaching awards. His induction class included Lee Hefley, former football coach at Notre Dame.

76 Jim Mickelsson retired from coaching baseball, volleyball, basketball and golf after 32 years. He continues to teach middle school and elementary physical education in Sibley, Iowa, and his wife, Kim (Witte) ’80, teaches fifth and sixth grade special education in Denver.

80 Carol Van Bronklohn is spending a yearlong fellowship in the United States. She is a missionary school librarian in Danau City, Philippines.

81 Christopher Nelson is finance director for the Kearney (Neb.) Public Schools.

83 Jerry Heemstra is vice president of accounting and finance for Simpson Investment Company, a forest products firm in Tumwater, Wash. He was previously the controller at Simpson, where he has worked for the past 15 years. He and his wife, Janet (Pfeffer) ’94, live in Tumwater.

84 Lee Van Wyhe, Springfield, Mo., is the data center manager at Great Southern Bank. His daughter Kiersten is a freshman at Northwestern.

85 The Rev. Donovan Drake, Nashville, Tenn., is the new pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church, which has around 1,500 members and is active in local and world mission. The church is a host site for flood disaster relief teams.

87 Melanie (Oehl) Oelem and her husband, Greg, of Chamberlain, S.D., own their 1300 acre farm and operates of the Old West Trading Post in Oacoma. They sell antiques and collectibles in a tourist destination along interstate 90.

88 Dr. Randall Hight was recently named the vice president of medical affairs at Capital Region Medical Center in Jefferson City, Mo. He continues to practice general internal medicine.

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96 Macklin is the vice president of Marklin Candle Design in Canton, N.H.

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Recently released a CD entitled Incarnation, Londa (Wagner) Revis teaches biology and general science at the International School of Florence, Italy.

Kurt Dykstra's photo with President Barack Obama was published around the country following the July groundbreaking ceremony for a plant that will produce lithium-ion powder (maybe one with a dusting of white powder) is received at a public building in the state of Iowa, Mike Van Berkum gets a call.

Since 2007 Van Berkum has held the position of homeland security coordinator for the Iowa Department of Public Safety. He also works with local, state and federal agencies and through the Iowa Intelligence Fusion Center to deter terrorism.

While Van Berkum's job involves everything from rebuilding terrorist threats, promoting official, and supporting crowd and traffic control—at events such as athletic contests, the Iowa State Fair and campus protests—he also keeps a watchful eye on the weather.

“In Iowa, our major concerns are still natural disasters like flooding and tornados,” he says. “We supply equipment and people to help communities when disasters strike.”

In 2008, when flood waters devasted portions of eastern Iowa, Van Berkum spent two weeks coordinating relief efforts out of the State of Iowa Emergency Operations Center.

With typical Midwest modesty, Van Berkum downplays his role in keeping Iowans safe—whether from raging rivers or terrorist attacks. He considers himself a public servant in the truest sense of the word, he explains.

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bY sarah asp Olson 03

Watchful

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Wanted electric trains. Got electric toothbrushes.

If you don't get everything you want for Christmas, remember you can buy your own presents during Northwestern's annual Gala Auction. Starting in January, bid on electronics, toys, trips and more.

www.nwciowa.edu/auction

Or join us at the live event

February 5
When storm clouds loom, meteorologist David Brommer keeps officials and fans alerted at University of Alabama football games.

Football Forecast

For the 102,000 Crimson Tide fans inside the University of Alabama's football stadium and the 25,000 tailgating outside it, David Brommer '99 doesn't want to be wrong.

The Monday before the national championship winners take the field for a home game, Brommer, a meteorologist and geography professor, hands off his first-game-day forecast. On Wednesday he'll e-mail another, and Friday, one more, culminating in hour-by-hour predictions made early Saturday.

Then Brommer heads to his stadium office, where, for three hours before the game, he huddles with computers and radar, checking weather patterns and keeping an eye on the lightning sensors he installed on the roof.

"We're looking good today," he might say to the Southeast Conference officials, team reps, security and media at the 100-minute meeting. Or, perhaps: "Frontal system coming through around the conference officials, team reps, security and media at the 100-minute meeting. Or, perhaps: "Frontal system coming through around the conference officials, team reps, security and media at the 100-minute meeting."

"You prepare for the worst, hope it doesn't happen, but expect it to happen," he says.

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It helped us really slow down. It’s an experience we’ll never forget.

Then a Raiders’ Nike mini-ball is sure to be a slam dunk or touchdown! Find these and other items on the NWC Bookstore website.

bookstore.nwciowa.edu

Dr. Preston Stegenga, president from 1955 to 1965, died in Sacramento, Calif., on Sept. 17 at the age of 86.

Stegenga became president at the age of 31 and led the institution’s transition into a four-year college. During his tenure, Northwestern received preliminary accreditation; more than doubled enrollment; and built the Multi-Purpose Auditorium (now the DeWitt Theatre), Ramaker Library, Collembauer Hall, Hooper Hall and what is now known as Granberg Hall. He is cited for broadening Northwestern’s relationship with the Reformed Church in America and strengthening efforts to provide a global education.

“President preceded at a critical point in our growth. We are forever indebted to him for the institution we have become today,” said President Greg Christy.

Siegenga came to Northwestern after teaching at Benuga College. Author of Author of Hope—his history of the alma mater, Hope College—he earned a master’s degree from Columbia University and a doctorate in the history of education and political science from the University of Michigan.

After leaving NWC, he advised the president of the University of Liberia in West Africa and then joined the staff of California State University, Sacramento, where he served as director of the International Center, vice president for academic affairs and coordinator of the international student program.

Stegenga was awarded an honorary doctorate from Northwestern in 1989, and he served on Northwestern’s Board of Trustees from 1991 to 1995. In 2003, the newest women’s dorm was named Stegenga Hall in recognition of his service.

Siegenga is survived by his wife, Marcia, and two children, including Susan ’79.

CLASS NOTES

By Amy Scherr
I love moments like that, when I'm ending my day saying goodnight not just to my husband, but also to others in my Stegenga Hall “family.” I live where I work, so the people I work with see me at all times of day, including at midnight when I'm exhausted. There's something about interacting while wearing pajamas that brings authenticity to relationships.

When I was a student, I was encouraged through classes, experiences abroad and living in the residence halls to think about living in community after college. What does that mean? For me, it meant living with others intentionally and with a common purpose—not just as a collection of roommates, each doing our own thing. So when I was considering living with three women after graduation, we talked a lot about having a common vision. In addition to supporting one another, we wanted to reach out to our neighbors and try to live simply as a way to care for the environment.

Scripture teaches that to learn about ourselves, God and the world, we need to be in relationship with one another. For me, living in intentional community meant moving from “I”—What do I think? What do I want? What do I believe is the best way to live life?—to “we”—What do we think and want? How might we best live in community with each other?

Living in community offers constant opportunities to learn the fruits of the Spirit, like patience, for example. In community, you can't control your whole world; you need to give up your own desires. Your space is everyone else's space too—the same goes for your belongings. It wasn't easy to take the labels off "my stuff," but it made me rethink our culture's emphasis on ownership. Is this my coffeemaker or our? Why can't the dishes belong to all of us? For the sake of the environment, might we be able to actually share ownership of and responsibility for something big, like a car, rather than each of us buying and driving our own?

As you can imagine, communication is essential to living successfully in community. When you try to live with others who may do the simplest things entirely differently from you, you have to talk, talk, talk until there is nothing left to talk about. You need to listen carefully, and then, instead of just saying “Whatever everyone wants to do is fine,” you have to clearly state your expectations and the reasons behind them. Then you all work to figure out a new way—a truly communal way—to address the task or issue at hand.

Among the people I lived with in intentional community before I married, there was a gifted carpenter who made our home more functional with shelving. We wanted to help our neighbors, so we talked about what they might need and how our individual gifness could be put to use. We shared music and stories and committed to holding one another accountable in important ways that help a young person figure out how to live as a Christian in today's world.

Living in community takes work, time and intentional togetherness, but the rewards are a joy. You give, but you get things you might never receive if you lived alone—like waking up to fresh apple crisp.

Rebecca Alsum is the resident director of Northwestern’s Stegenga Hall, where she lives with her husband, Mark ’09, and 175 wildly diverse women. She says the best part of her job is living in community and credits Bob, Brian, Brittany, Margareta and Zach, among others, for teaching her some of the lessons described above.

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Thirty alumni and friends enjoyed a Dutch culture immersion from the seat of a bicycle during a Northwestern-sponsored tour of the Netherlands in July.

Under the leadership of Dr. James Kennedy '84, Dutch history professor at the University of Amsterdam, the group biked 180 miles in nine days. Venturing eastward from The Hague into Germany, they walked along the North Sea shore, joined thousands in Rotterdam to watch a broadcast of the World Cup soccer finale, toured the Delft pottery factory, picked cherries, and viewed World War II battle sites.

"The trip packed a lot into a short amount of time," says Sarah (Huibregtse ’05) Jacobsen. "It gave us a good view of the traditional Dutch way of life."

Northwestern is planning a bus tour of the Netherlands in 2012 and a bike tour in 2013. For more information, e-mail events@nwciowa.edu.