Bringing Cuba to Notre Dame

By Carol C. Bradley

The typical visiting fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies is a scholar, says interim director Edward N. Beatty. But now and again, someone outside the academy can make an unmatchable contribution.

This semester, visiting fellows Gary Marx, former Havana bureau chief for the Chicago Tribune, and his wife—freelance journalist Cecilia Vaisman—are teaching a course on contemporary Cuba. The couple and their children, 11-year-old Ana and 9-year-old Andres, recently returned to the U.S. after living in Cuba for five years.

The couple brings something special to campus, Beatty says. “Their on-the-ground experience, reporting the situ-jittery of political and social change—combined with their willingness to lay their experience out on the table with students. The students feel very free to ask questions.”

The most common question Marx was asked, before Castro publicly named leadership, ceding power to his brother and handpicked successor Raul Castro. “Raúl is very capable,” Marx says. “But he’s a transitional figure. He’s 76 years old. He may ease restrictions on travel. There’ll be some modest economic reforms, modest political reforms.”

The real question, Marx says, is what will happen when Raúl Castro steps down or dies.

Cuba, Vaisman notes, is a beautiful tropical country. “We spent a lot of time going down to the beach with our kids,” she says. “Their children attended a local Cuban school, and the family shopped alongside Cubans in the agro-markets, where farmers sell fresh fruit—mangoes and papayas—and vegetables.

Students who see pictures of their life in Cuba are astonished at the level of poverty on the island. ‘There’s no cottage economy,’” Vaisman says. “No car dealerships, no Wal-Mart.”

Vaisman spent most of her time there considering “what the Cubans call resolviendo and conseguindo—resolving and finding,” she says. “Those are no simple matters in Cuba.” Finding something as simple as children’s ibuprofen or a lamb for Christmas dinner could take days.

“It took me a while to find out that it was illegal to buy a potato on the open market,” she says. “They’re controlled from the state ration card system. But it didn’t take long to figure out how to get a potato on the black market, putting our nieces and nephews in standard operating procedure for everyone on the island.”

They lived under the constant pressure of a police state. “There was a sense that we were always being watched and listened to,” Marx says. “We assumed that our employees were being monitored for the government. We assumed that our house was bugged. There was a sense that no conversation was private. It was difficult to work as a reporter, or to make friends.”

His answer? “He’s alive. It’s not something they could hide for long.”

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“Looking Forward: Democracy in Cuba?” at 4:15 p.m. Thursday, April 3 in Room C-105 of the Hesburgh Center. The lecture, sponsored by the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, is free and open to the public.

Marílidi Pérez-Stable, professor of sociology at Florida International University and vice president for democratic governance at the Inter-American Dialogue, will present a lecture “Looking Forward: Democracy in Cuba?” at 4:15 p.m. Thursday, April 3 in Room C-105 of the Hesburgh Center. The lecture, sponsored by the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, is free and open to the public.

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The fiscal 2009 operating budget, approved by the Board of Trustees earlier this month, tells a story of positive fund-raising and investment performance that will be directed toward support for students, the academy and the University’s major goals.

Specifically, the fiscal 2009 budget focuses on affordable tuition, competitive salaries, financial aid, research growth, graduate support, infrastructure investments, library and training.

The fiscal 2009 budget is set at $964 million. It anticipates generating more than $45 million in new revenue, as compared to fiscal 2008. The majority of this revenue is generated from the following key sources:

- An additional $18.5 million from increased payout on unrestricted University endowments. This increase in endowment payout is possible because of strong investment returns over the past four years.
- An incremental $16.9 million will be generated from a 4.7 percent increase in tuition and fees. This increase is the smallest tuition and fee increase since 1961.
- An additional $4.7 million will come from “unrestricted” donor gifts—benefactions given to the University for general use. The increase in unrestricted giving revenue represents an 18 percent increase over fiscal 2008.

Linda Keiff, director of University budgeting and financial planning, says, “For the first time in memory new revenue provided by increased unrestricted endowment payout is greater than new money generated by the annual tuition increase.”

That point represents a bellwether moment for the University and reflects its strategy of “revenue diversification” aimed at distributing the cost of supporting University priorities more broadly across several areas rather than lessen the burden on student tuition, Keiff says.

Increasing revenue diversification will continue to be a key goal in the coming years. Success in revenue diversification will depend upon strong investment returns on the University’s endowment as well as the strength of donor giving, both in the form of unrestricted annual support and in the form of new endowment support.

In terms of giving, overall alumni generosity has helped expand operating revenues, says Lou Nami, vice president for University relations. “Our alumni are terrific. We are among the top three nationally in terms of alumni giving. Their experience as students here contributes to that.”

Furthermore, development has seen increased participation in its highest giving society, the President’s Circle. Members make an annual pledge of at least $1 million in unrestricted funds that President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., can use to support key initiatives, Nami says.

As noted above, while the endowment performed well this year, the payout reflects the success of efforts to diversify revenue sources and lessen the burden on student tuition.

This chart on fiscal 2009 sources of new income, at left, and how the resources will be allocated, at right, illustrates how the contributions of investment income, fund-raising and auxiliary services allow the University to rely less on tuition increases. Image from the Office of Budget and Planning.
New fellowship, insurance support improve grad student experience

By Gail Hinchion Mancke
Rebecca McCumbers is a coal miner’s granddaughter, and the daughter of a union organizer, who went on to attend college.

A graduate student in political science, she describes her financial situation as fortunate. She considers herself lucky to have received a University stipend, to have work opportunities supported by various departmental fellowships, and to have completed successfully all the summer programs that have kept her from having to take a job.

As president of the Graduate Student Union (GUS), her opinion on two major strides recently made by the University is an informed one. And it’s interesting to see her face light up when discussing each, because she simply will not qualify for any of them.

The first is a $10 million gift from Richard and Peggy Notebaert to support the University’s construction of a new children’s hospital, whose first recipients will arrive in fall. The Notebaert awards will underwrite the graduate studies of six students for a period of six years, the average time it takes to earn a Notre Dame doctorate.

“By having a prestigious fellowship, we will be able to attract some of the best students in their fields,” says Peter Holland, dean of graduate studies, “which will allow us to cooperate with the very best institutions.”

Each year, explains Holland, a half-dozen students who might be offered a more attractive package elsewhere will be able to choose Notre Dame because of this generous support. The program encourages departments to put forward applicants who are Catholic.

Then, the fellowships also are “a way of encouraging the next generation of Catholic scholars,” he says.

By fall, McCumbers will begin her year of fellowship program and be eligible to compete for a Noteburt award. But she’s thrilled the program has been established: “It can’t be helped but help the rest of us by improving Notre Dame’s reputation.”

McCumbers, however, will reap the immediate benefits of an increased University budget for graduate student health insurance. In 2003, the University began underwriting graduate student health insurance. This program covers 29 percent of the cost of a policy for students on stipends. In full, the subsidy increases to 50 percent. The improvement addresses the single greatest concern championed by GUSU, McCumbers says.

This leap in support is part of a long-term plan to eventually cover 70 percent of health insurance, according to Holland. “We are a quantified student graduate health care,” he says, “And it’s not the end of the road.”

The improvement, McCumbers agrees, is “just amazing.” Like many graduate students, McCumbers receives a $38,800 stipend to support the cost of graduate study. Under the new policy being phased in over the next month, the amount would increase. The 30 percent subsidy is the equivalent of a $36 billion increase for McCumbers.

With those figures, it’s clear that money counts. In a 2006 survey of graduate students, more than 40 percent reported that the financial package they received was the major reason for choosing Notre Dame, according to McCumbers.

In addition to receiving increased amounts of support for academic and graduate school priorities including the library, college priorities, graduate fellowships and additional support for graduate student health care costs, the fiscal 2009 budget also proposes $3.6 million for academic and research programs.

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$4.7 million in additional support for research and undergraduate education and to provide key investments in the infrastructure needed to directly and indirectly support these endeavors, while remaining committed to Notre Dame’s distinctive Catholic mission.

The budget not only supports the University’s operational needs, but also invests in strategic areas that will strongly advance Notre Dame’s mission in the years to follow.

In 2009, we expect to see a number of initiatives that support our performance management program and that also respond to the staff’s call for opportunities to grow and advance, says Bob McQuade, associate vice president for human resources.

One key area for investment was providing additional funding to the Provost’s Strategic Academic Planning Committee (SAPC) initiative, which received initial funding in the fiscal 2008 budget. The SAPC has the process of identifying faculty initiatives that will enhance the University’s distinctive academic profile. That fund will receive additional support in fiscal 2009 and continue this important undertaking.

This will allow the University to support this enterprising process for several years to come,” says Provost Tom Bless.

“We already have seen the benefits of this energized faculty collaboration and creativity, and enthusiasm to pursue funding opportunities through SAPC and a $2.0 million in salaries and benefits to attract and retain talented faculty and staff across the University. The budget anticipates a 10.4 percent increase in benefit costs, mostly due to medical insurance increases.

New awards honor individual staff excellence

President Rev. John J. Jenkins, C.S.C., is introducing two new employee awards to honor individual staff excellence.

Nominations for the two awards—the Presidential Achievement Award and the Presidential Value Award—may be made by visiting insidend.edu/ employee_relations/Presidential_Awards.shtml. Nominations are being accepted throughout April.

“We have many highly accomplished employees doing exceptional work,” says John Affleck-Graves, executive vice president. “These awards provide an opportunity for us to recognize those who make significant contributions to our mission as well as those who exemplify our core values.”

To qualify for the award, an exempt or nonexempt staff member who has accomplished a significant achievement during 2007 or who regularly makes significant contributions to the overall mission of the University.

The nominating committee consists of a campus and school representative to include improved productivity, a creative solution to a significant problem, or ground breaking research that resulted in extraordinary innovation or inspiration, a contribution that had a significant impact on the University’s long-term success, or a suggestion that resulted in a reduction in cost.

The Presidential Value Award recognizes an exempt or nonexempt regular staff member who exemplifies the University’s core values of integrity, accountability, teamwork, and leadership in mission and excellence.

Nominations may be submitted by any Notre Dame employee, and are welcomed from supervisor peers or subordinates. A selection committee will review each of the nominations and present their final approval by Affleck-Graves, and Bob McQuade, associate vice president for human resources.

This is the second staff award program to be introduced this spring. Last May, a Presidential Achievement Award was launched the Presidential Achievement Award is a way to recognize the accomplishments of employees working in a team setting. Presidential Achievement Awards will again be made in the fall.

ND Alert test planned for March 14

ND Works staff writer

ND Alert, the campus comprehensive emergency preparedness system, will be tested the afternoon of Friday, March 14 to verify improvements made for the timely delivery of emergency messages.

“Rapid delivery of information across telephone, text messaging, e-mail and cable television is key to assuring the safety of students, faculty and staff in the event of an emergency,” said John Affleck-Graves, executive vice president.

Two previous tests have helped identify the need to speed the delivery of mass messages. The March 14 test will measure the effectiveness of adjustments made to improve delivery. Another test may take place in April, on a date still undetermined, to assure that the system is running effectively.

As with previous tests, the mass notification system will distribute messages to student, faculty and employee home and office telephones, registered cell phones, University e-mail accounts and any additional personal e-mail accounts previously provided. The mass notification system will broadcast a test message to any live television in residence hall rooms, classrooms, University’s cable system will be tested and classrooms and offices. All common areas such as the LaFortune Student Center and offices. All common areas such as the LaFortune Student Center and offices.

Faculty and staff who have not registered electronic communication information such as personal cell phone or University e-mail addresses are encouraged to do so immediately to be included through the My Resources tab at insideND or insideEDU.

ND Works staff writer

You—and your finger on the light switch—represent a powerful force for energy conservation.

Many of us believe that turning lights on and off as we leave a room consumes more energy than leaving them on, but that’s not true. Lights don’t turn to the lights off too much,” says Paul Kempf, director of facilities operations.

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The Stations of the Cross: A Loser’s Pilgrimage

By Michael Garvey

Vexing skeptical for an easily shocked audience, the media mogul Ted Turner once pithily described Christianity as “a religion for losers.” His6 cracker barrel taunt was unintentionally prophetic and is particularly resonant during the Lenten season, when the very promise of our redemption and our reckoning of its cost make our plight so conspicuously pathetic.

Christianity is all about losers—loving life to gain it, losing selves to find it, bearing the cross to get to the crown. The very Christ whom we celebrate as the one who has been sacrificed. Paul, in First Corinthians, made the comparison to Christ: “For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.”

Let’s face it: If Easter is a “sacrifice,” it is a sacrifice for nothing. What does a sacrifice mean if it is not for something? If we have not been convinced of something, then it is nothing to sacrifice our lives for.

And yet, we do. We are a people who celebrate Easter, who come to church on Easter Sunday, who attend special services on Holy Week and Good Friday. Why? And how—does the date make any difference? Associate professor of theology Rev. Michael Driscoll, whose area of research interest is liturgy and the sacraments, notes that the date of Easter is calculated based on two things: the date of the vernal equinox—the moment in spring when darkness and light are roughly equal—and the time of the first full moon of spring. Thus, the date of Easter can fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25. Because of the importance of the Easter event, what we call the paschal mystery, Father Driscoll says: “The suffering, death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus. It’s more than just a human event, it’s an astronomical event of cosmic proportions.”

The term “paschal” comes from the Jewish Passover (Pesach), which took on new meaning for Christians in the earliest days of the church. And yet, this meaning has been clouded through history by a series of dates we call Easter.

This difference can be traced to the 5th century, when Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar of Julius Caesar by dropping 10 days. Greek and Russian Orthodox churches still use their old calendar on the older Julian calendar. “It’s something that shows that there are still deep divisions between Christians,” Father Driscoll says. “It’s sad that we, as Christians, don’t celebrate a common feast.”

The Paschal Vigil Mass will be held at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at 9 p.m. Saturday, March 22; Easter Sunday Masses will be held at 9 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon on March 23. A complete schedule of Holy Week services at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart is available at bhsurcandhsu.edu/liturgy/liturgy-schedules/index.html.

“Singing the New Song: Medieval song and the popular film he made about them.”

This intention becomes palpable on an intellectual level, when we consider the date of Easter. What does it mean to us? When we think of Easter, what image comes to mind?

“Easter Sunday hasn’t fallen on March 22—the earliest possible date—since 1818, and won’t fall on that date again until 2285. Easter fell on April 25, the latest possible date, in 1943—and will do so only every 53 years. The date of Easter between Christians is more than a question of belief. It’s a question of our memory, of our understanding of the history of our religion.”

By Shannon Chapla

Beginning with a history of the elementary educational institution known to modern scholars as the “song school,” Zieman shows how liturgical and didactic texts profoundly influenced ancient literacy training and spiritual formation. These schools originated from an intention to provide literacy (at a biweekly level) to adult performers who already had mastered the grammatical arts. From the late 10th century they were increasingly devoted to the training of priests and deacons, because choristers needed to be trained before they received instruction in grammar, the liturgical skills of reading and singing took on a different meaning.

A faculty fellow in Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute, Zieman specializes in late medieval women religious, and currently is researching the conceptuality of liturgical voice in Middle English texts and the liturgical practices of the 13th century. She has published articles on the once widely believed to have been brought to Notre Dame in 1857 and inscribed with French captions, are the etchings of the Stations in the Basilicas of the Sacred Heart of the Fatima Retreat Center, a colorful and artistic convention, liturgical fixtures, and icons of imaginative and the pendants sometimes hanging from our necks.

“The Stations of the Cross are devotional exercises designed to enhance our appreciation of our unutterable mystery. Their roots are in ancient pilgrimage traditions made by devout travelers moving to a virtual shrine through a physical act of pilgrimage.”

By the Middle Ages they had become artistic conventions, liturgical fixtures, and devotional practices and definitions of liturgy. She has published articles on English medieval liturgical practices and the liturgical practices of the 13th century, and currently is researching the conceptuality of liturgical voice in Middle English texts and the liturgical practices of the 13th century. She has published articles on the etchings of the Stations in the Basilicas of the Sacred Heart of the Fatima Retreat Center, a colorful and artistic convention, liturgical fixtures, and icons of imaginative

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The work and experiences of new faculty and administrator, who just arrived in January, reflect how a handful of new voices can enrich both the academic and Catholic mission of the University.

‘We just have to be authentically who we are’ New engineering dean settles in

By Gail Hinich Mancini

New Engineering Dean Peter Kilpatrick came from Raleigh, N.C. in January, just in time to experience a wicked streak of winter weather. But take heart. He has seen the campus at its most beautiful.

Kilpatrick says he first stepped foot at Notre Dame last May 14 on a perfect day. The Sunday evening sunset was remarkable, the 65-degree temperature quite pleasant. “First I went to the Basilica, then to the Main Building. Then I went to the engineering building.”

Kilpatrick brings many dimensions to his new assignment. Before he was a chemical engineer—he earned his doctorate from the University of Minnesota—he was a chemist with a bachelor’s degree from Occidental College in California. His research relates to Notre Dame’s increasing focus on energy issues. For eight years, he chaired North Carolina State’s chemical and biomolecular engineering department. He also directed a center there dedicated to improving a state shortage in skilled labor.

A tour of Notre Dame that began at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart is a tip to another dimension of Kilpatrick. “I am a Catholic convert. I’ve always wanted to be some place where there is intelligent discourse about Catholicism and how it interacts with the world.”

Kilpatrick has no idea if the committee that searched for a new dean was initially aware of his religious affiliation. But it was important in his decision to come here, and the University’s Catholic mission seems to ground his understanding of the challenge that faces him.

There is, first, the task of solidifying the college’s niche as the University moves toward research preeminence. One way to gauge quality is the ranking system. Notre Dame is a day’s drive from any number of engineering giants: Purdue, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, its alma mater Minnesota. Kilpatrick’s colleagues at North Carolina State tried to keep him from leaving by arguing “You don’t want to go there. North Carolina’s a better engineering school than Notre Dame.”

“First,” he responds, “As great as any of these schools are, there are still areas of research where Notre Dame outshines them. We’re not all things to all people, and we can’t. But in the areas that we excel in, we’re as good as anyone in the country or better.”

Notre Dame’s engineering program isn’t on the scale of the state universities, and it isn’t trying to be a giant. “We don’t have to say we’re one-quarter of the size of Purdue. We just have to be who we are, and authentically who we are.”

And that is? “The college and the University have a preferential option for the poor, for service. ‘We want to do what we can to become this kind of person,” he says. “We are, by our very nature, an academic research university. We are in the business of teaching young people about science and engineering.”

Now Kilpatrick has the opportunity to bring those young people into the world of work, and he no longer needs to go as far as Houston to do it. “I am a Catholic convert. I’ve always wanted to be some place where there is intelligent discourse about Catholicism and how it interacts with the world.”

What is the role of religion? A sociologist’s compelling question

By Gail Hinich Mancini

Christian Smith received a call late last month from the Wall Street Journal, wanting his thoughts on survey results that 44 percent of Americans leave the religion they were raised in.

Reflecting on that call in his office in Flanner Hall, where he is director of the Center for Religion and Society, Smith seemed puzzled by the attention to the report, which was released by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

“It didn’t seem new,” says Smith, Kenan Professor of Sociology, whose prominence in the field of the sociology of religion makes him a frequent media contact. “We’ve known many of the report’s findings for a long time.”

In 2005, Smith’s profile as a sage in the field of religion and culture increased with the release of his book “Soul Searching.” The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers. “It summarizes the findings of the National Study of Youth and Religion, a multi-year study of teenagers and their religion. He also worked with filmmakers to create a video documentary.

Reading “Soul Searching,” one finds the classic sociological vernacular—“multivariate regression analyses,” “statistical coefficients” and “demographic controls.” But Smith also tackles his subject with an appetite for first-hand experience. “I’m examining spirituality among Catholics, he placed himself in the midst of teenagers from other religions,” he concludes.

Religiously engaged youth inspire Smith, and he no longer needs to go as far as Houston to be in their midst. He and his family are transitioning to South Bend from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Although they are not Catholic, Easter will find them in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, a setting he finds rich with superlative music, ambiance, liturgy and homilies. “I keep thinking, ‘Boy, if only everybody could experience such a great service.’”

The feeling extends beyond Mass, he says. “I’m impressed by what appears to be United States, contemporary U.S. Catholic teens are faring rather badly.

“They are religiously lax, more than teenagers from other religions,” he concludes.

Christian Smith and his family are spending their first full semester in South Bend. He directs the Center for Religion and Society.
By Gail Hinchion Mancini

Teaching and learning through the lens of disabilities

By Gail Hinchion Mancini

Watching the primaries, more closely than we do

The work and experiences of new faculty and administrator, some

involvement of so many students expressing genuine devotion. Notre Dame is a rarified environment. It attracts many committed people.

Smith is driven by simple questions with no easy answers: “What role does religion play in the United States and beyond? What difference does it make in peoples’ lives? What is a just treatment of religious minorities as part of the human family? How do sociologists theorize the person, the meaning of religious life? But spring break at Notre Dame, he gains bedrock, “an orientation of words that apply to ability or disability. It seemed it could grow.”

He has been successful at this work for sometime. But doing it, now, at Notre Dame, he gains bedrock, “an orientation of words that apply to ability or disability. It seemed it could grow.”

By Gail Hinchion Mancini

At some juncture 20 years ago, the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies was a fresh but undeveloped idea. The same was true of the Center for Social Concerns 25 years ago, when it first opened its doors.

What does a new field look like in its infancy? In the case of Essaka Joshua, it looks like an idea that one energetic person is willing to champion on a campus that has been quick to respond.

Joshua joined the faculty in January and has introduced a College Seminar course called “Disability” that focuses on disabilities in literature, politics, law and human rights. Students augment their classroom work with a community learning component—the Center for Social Concerns helped with this aspect—by volunteering at Logman Center and a local camp for handicapped children.

Although here for fewer than three months, already Joshua foresees a thriving Disabilities Studies program, “a work like Othello Studies,” she says. If she succeeds, it will be one of the earlier in this nascent field. Only about a dozen U.S. colleges and universities offer majors or minors in this area.

Disabilities studies is a natural direction, she adds, for an institution that attracts people with a social conscience. “I can see Notre Dame being a place where this is fostered.” Judging from the way the topic resonates with students, it is a field well worth developing, she says.

Becoming a university professor is a special focus to the conversation, “Disability Studies in Context”—an interdisciplinary nature of her class.

By her seventh week here, she had already convinced nine faculty to participate in a disabilities research group, “a kind of workshop where we discuss our work, and the work of others who are publishing. I’m hoping to encourage collaboration in research and teaching.” In the near future, she would like to see the research group develop an academic conference on disabilities research.

A specialist in late-18th-century British literature, Joshua’s background did not portend this shift in interest, although that is the era when Mary Shelley wrote “Frankenstein,” a character personified for being “different.” It is one of the texts her students read.

Joshua says she was teaching literature at the University of Birmingham in England and began to wonder, of the ideas of human rights, “What is the war could they possibly connect with?”

When she began discussing themes of disability in literature, “It became such an attention grabber to the students. They began to question what those images of the body, their use of words that apply to ability or disability. It seemed it could grow.”

She is re-experiencing student enthusiasm here at Notre Dame. Class enrollment is full, generally of students who have experienced disability themselves. “A really savvy campaign strategy” to get them out to vote. “We will experience some of the same issues that we had in the past, and I’m hoping to encourage collaboration in research and teaching.” In the near future, she would like to see the research group develop an academic conference on disabilities research.
Take care of your back at home, work

By Carol C. Bradley

“Don’t like to separate home from work when it comes to back safety,” says Scott Knight, industrial hygienist in the Office of Risk Management and Safety. “Back safety is a 24/7 job. What you’re doing to take care of your back at home is actually more important than what you’re doing at work.”

That’s because back injuries don’t usually occur from a single event, like lifting a box that’s too heavy. “If your back is weak, lifting something incorrectly is the trigger, not the cause,” Knight says.

Knight’s office trains staff on proper lifting techniques, he says, “so if your back is vulnerable, you don’t pull the trigger.” But more importantly, he adds, “We emphasize caring for your back day-in and day-out. Your back is with you all the time.”

Keeping your back safe means staying in good physical condition and maintaining a healthy weight. “As we age, we get out of shape. We’re more vulnerable to injuries,” Knight notes—back sleepers should put a pillow under their knees to maintain the lumbar curve. Side sleepers can benefit from a small pillow under their knees to maintain the lumbar curve. “And always bend at the waist to pick something up,” Knight warns. “If you’re bending at the waist, multiply the weight of the object by 10, and add the weight of your upper body. That’s how much stress you’re putting on your back.”

Risk factors for a back injury include the force exerted (the weight of the object being lifted) and the duration of the task. The likelihood of injury also increases with repetitive motion. One overlooked risk factor for an injury is emotional stress, Knight adds. “Stress leads to muscle fatigue. When you’re under stress, you need to be more careful.”

Knight’s tips for safely lifting objects can be applied both at home and at work. First, test the load to see if it’s manageable. If it’s too heavy, identify ways to reduce the weight—break the load into smaller loads and make more trips, or share the load with another person. Use appropriate tools and equipment such as dollies, if necessary.

To lift an object that’s below your waist, maintain a wide footing, bend at the hips and knees and squat over the object. Then tighten your stomach muscles, hug the object to your body and use your legs to rise.

Keep the object as close to your center of gravity as possible. “If it’s held close to your body, it’s safer,” he says. “Extending your arms, or having the weight to one side or the other as you lift increases the risk of injury. If you need to turn with an object, use your feet to move your body rather than twisting your torso.

And never bend at the waist to pick something up. Knight warns. “If you’re bending at the waist, multiply the weight of the object by 10, and add the weight of your upper body. That’s how much stress you’re putting on your back.”

Back and other ergonomic injuries are among the most prevalent types of on-the-job injuries on campus, Knight says. “And they’re the most costly, both in terms of money and in terms of debilitation of employees.”

That’s why it’s important to be conscious of back safety at all times, not just on the job, he emphasizes. “Taking care of your back is a lifestyle. It’s a lifetime commitment.”

Winter driving safety

The Notre Dame Security Police recommend checking your tire pressure at least once a month. Tires heat up—and the pressure goes up—when you drive, so check the pressure before leaving home.

If you have to drive a distance to get air in the tires, check the pressure first and add the appropriate amount of air when you get to the pump. Never “bleed” or reduce air pressure when the tires are hot. And remember to check the spare tire and add air if necessary. Air pressure in a tire goes up in warm weather and down in cold weather to one by two pounds of pressure for every 10 degrees of temperature change.

You should also visually inspect the tires to make sure there are no nails or other objects embedded in the tire that could puncture the tire and cause an air leak. The sidewalls should be checked regularly for gouges, bulges or other irregularities.

Addressing benefit questions, face-to-face

ND Works staff writer

Sometimes, the best way to get an answer is through a face-to-face discussion. The Office of Human Resources has adopted that philosophy in organizing an employee benefits fair in the Joyce Center Concourse from 2 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 26 and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, March 27.

Called “ND Discover,” the event will assemble representatives of such benefit providers as Meritan, Medco, Delta Dental, LifeWorks, Fidelity, TIAA-CREFF and Vanguard.

Community resource representatives from such groups as Medicaid, Social Security, Weight Watchers, and McDonald’s Physical Therapy also will be available.

Employees are encouraged to address benefit questions to aHR, the general call center. But at times, the employees would be better assisted by being able to sit down with an actual benefit provider, says Mary Warner, manager of benefits and Work Life.

Memorial Hospital and St. Joseph Regional Medical Center will offer health screenings during each day of the event. Two massage therapists will provide chair massages from 4 to 6 p.m. March 26 and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 27.

Concurrent with the first day of the conference, representatives from health benefit representatives will be available from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Room 200 of Grace Hall to address specific claims questions. The meetings will be confidential; the representatives will have access to individual claims records. To make an appointment, call aHR at 631-9500.
WebMD summary points to programming options

By Gail Hinchion Mancini

Senior administrators and wellness representatives are analyzing the aggregate findings of last fall’s personal HealthQuotient survey in an attempt to identify group programming innovations that are sure to have a positive impact on employee health.

While they plan for a long-term future, opportunities are growing for employees who would like to address their individual health issues. Among them, if you didn’t take the WebMD assessment last fall, you still can; you can use the online tools of a special Notre Dame WebMD online site, and you can work by telephone with one of Notre Dame’s health coaches.

The HealthQuotient summary provided by WebMD includes a snapshot of overall employee health by combining the answers of all who took the assessment. Among points:

• The survey was taken by 2,492 employees; 4,720 were eligible.

• Everyone who took the survey received a risk factor rating of high, medium or low. Overall, 10 percent of employees rank at high-risk, a number greater than is typical. Conversely, the 51 percent ranked as low-risk, is a slightly smaller pool than typical. About 38 percent rank as medium-risk.

• The assessment asked respondents to differentiate between their awareness of a health problem and their willingness to work on it. This data is the richest source of guidance for the University overall, because it suggests areas where people already are motivated. Notre Dame employees say they are ready to work on losing weight and improving their diet, managing their stress and improving their cholesterol levels.

The Office of Human Resources, in conjunction with the University Wellness Committee, will review the information with the goal of creating engaging opportunities in those areas where people are motivated to change behavior, says Jessica Brookshire.

Human Resources are looking equally closely at how to convince more faculty and staff to take the survey. One effort will be to close the WebMD assessment online and to survey online and those who, because their jobs are not technology-related, took the survey on paper. Human Resources handed out thousands of paper surveys, only about 25 percent completed.

The issue of trust also is being examined, based on feedback that some respondents felt WebMD was taking too step toward penalizing them for having health problems, explains Denise Murphy, director of compensation and benefits. “We introduced WebMD to change behavior and improve the quality of life.”

One effective means of changing behavior is to introduce employees to a health coach, the immediate benefit of taking the WebMD assessment. Beyond providing information about health issues, coaches help employees identify goals and provide reinforcement for achieving those goals.

Employers with many modifiable risks were classified as high-risk and will be contacted at least quarterly and those with zero or just a couple modifiable risks will receive post-survey contact. The ND Healthy Campus tool of the WebMD site provides users with a running list of ideas and strategies and information update specific to their health profile.

For YoUr Health

Exhibition focuses on migration issues

American, Mexican-American and Mexican artists explore journeys, border crossings and settlement with the exhibition “Journeys of Migration” on display at Crossroads Gallery through April 22. The gallery is in the ND Downtown office, 217 S. Michigan St. The show opens April 9 and runs through April 22. The gallery is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and admission is free. The exhibition is one in a series of programs through the academic year supporting the 2007 Notre Dame Forum.

Investment representatives on campus

Representatives from Fidelity Investments and Vanguard Group will be on campus in an intensive, one-on-one counseling session on retirement planning. To schedule an appointment, contact the vendor directly by phone or by visiting their Web site.

Fidelity Investments, 800-642-7131, will be on campus Thursday and Friday, April 10 and 11.

Representatives from TIAA-CREF, 877-267-4507 or www.tiaa-cref.org/moe, will be on campus Wednesday and Thursday, March 26 and 27.

The Vanguard Group, 800-662-0106, or www.mess Vanguard.com, will be on campus Tuesday, April 8. You may also contact Vanguard for individual retirement consultation if this date is inconvenient.

Science and math conference for girls

Girls in 6th through 8th grade are invited to attend the “Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Math” career conference for middle school girls from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 26, at the University’s Science and Technology Center. The fee is $10, which includes a complimentary lunch. Participation is limited, so early registration is recommended. For information or to request a registration form, contact Karen M. Morris, mservic3@nd.edu, 631-631-6585, Girls, Inc., 722 Notre Dame Ave., or a registration form from their school counselor. The registration deadline is Friday, March 21.

FOR YOUR HEALTH

How to access the WebMD Survey

The WebMD health quotient may be found online at webmd.com/ndhealthycampus. Taking the assessment will provide you with a general profile of your health, access to Web-based health information specific to your health profile, and at least one conversation with a WebMD Health Coach who can help you identify your health strategies. The University’s employee assistance program, LifeWorks, also provides information and personnel who can field numerous health questions. It is accessible at lifeworks.com or by calling 888-267-8126.
Archivist saves murals from destruction

By Carol C. Bradley

When the Main Building was renovated in 1997, it looked as though historic murals of two Notre Dame presidents—Rev. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., and Rev. William Corby, C.S.C.—and pre-Notre Dame missionary priest Rev. Stephen Badin would be reduced to rubble in a landfill. Over the years, the murals—painted by unknown artists—had been paneled over and painted over and partially covered by a drop ceiling. “They hadn’t been part of the décor of the room for a long time,” says Wendy Clauson Schlereth, director of the Notre Dame Archives.

The murals were in a room, now part of the third-floor offices of News and Information, which had once been home to the Columbian Literary and Dramatic Society and other student literary and debating groups. In the late 19th century, the four walls of the room were decorated with portraits of Notre Dame presidents and other historical figures such as Washington, Lincoln, Henry Clay and Napoleon III.

The portrait of Rev. Auguste Lemonnier, C.S.C., Notre Dame’s fourth president, couldn’t be salvaged. But there were still the portraits of Fathers Sorin, Corby and Badin, which archivists felt were of potential historical significance to the University.

Could the murals possibly be saved and restored? The hitch was that the portraits weren’t painted on canvas—they were painted directly on the plaster. “And the plaster had to come down,” Schlereth says.

Senior archivist Peter Lysy had an inspiration.

It helped that he’s something of an expert on old houses—he’s been working on restoring his own Greek Revival house for the past 17 years. “I was curious about how the lathe and plaster were attached to the brick wall,” he says. “I realized the plaster was connected, but not real securely. The lathe was nailed to small blocks of wood set at regular intervals in the brick.”

If the plaster wall was braced, he realized, the murals could—in theory, at least—be pulled away from the brick in one piece.

His plan involved stabilizing the plaster with a wooden box, cutting around the mural, and gently pulling the plaster away from the outside wall. The carpenters who handled the job added some innovations of their own—for example, the box was hinged at the bottom, so the mural—each of which weighs over 300 pounds—could be gently levered off the wall and onto a table. “It was a little easier because we had nothing to lose,” Lysy says.

“We started with the portrait of Father Sorin,” Schlereth recalls. “It was just beautiful. The box Peter designed worked perfectly.”

Art conservator Monica Radecki has since restored two of the murals. The portrait of Father Sorin is on display at the Northern Indiana Center for History. The portrait of Father Corby, which was restored in late 2007 with a gift from Ursula and D. Chris Bolding (’75), was recently installed in the Eck Visitors Center and is once again on public display—144 years after the painting was originally unveiled.

The final painting of the three, a portrait of Father Badin, is yet to be restored. At some point, the Badin portrait was painted over with latex paint. “We’re anxious to see if the portrait is interesting enough and savable enough to be worth a restoration,” says Schlereth. There are no extant photographs of Father Badin, and the few portraits that exist are head and shoulders only. The mural, if it is restored, would represent the first known full-length portrait of Father Badin.

The role of the Archives, Schlereth notes, is to preserve institutional memory. Most of the records of the University are papers put into boxes and kept for the informational value of the record, she says. “This is a piece of history that is far more public and visible,” she says. “I go into the visitors center and think, ‘that’s a job well done.’ I’m glad we saved it. I’m glad it all worked.”

Photos provided by Charles Lamb, Notre Dame Archives.