

“Ahh, The Better to See You With My Dear,” said the Menacing Wolf of the deep, lush Forest – Or was that the Menacing Man of the barren one...?”

Dr. David Ellum, Class of '96

When Dr. David Ellum was fifteen, the world was slightly greener than it is now. “Oh yes, we had our share of concerns

environmentally, but all in all, a lot of the ‘good stuff’ was still visible. Of course that was before you could, ‘see the smoke through the trees,’ so to speak,” said Ellum.

From GED to Doctor of Sustainable Forestry, Ellum never dreamed he would love school so much; HCC in particular. After dropping out of school, Ellum spent fifteen years working in aquaculture and backpacking around the country on what he labeled as his, “extended road trips.” At the age of 30, he chose HCC to start his college experience.

“I can’t say why I picked HCC, it was close and I wanted to go to a community college to see if I would like it,” Ellum said. “I had no idea I would spend the next fourteen years of my life in school!” Ellum received an AS in General Science and from there it was “off to the races.” “I have a lot of fond memories of HCC. I can say that the two years I spent there were as influential on my life as the eight years I spent at Yale University.”

While at Yale, Ellum took part in a study with his environmental studies program: *The Journal of the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies*.

In a thirty-five page journal of extensive information on a variety of studies, Yale Dean, James Gustave Speth sites, “Environmental Management is



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bringing our Human Enterprise into harmony with the Natural World in which we are a part.”

He goes on to say that 50% of the world’s tropical and temperate forests are gone as well as about 50% the wastelands and mangroves.

Speth threatens that species are disappearing at rates of 100-1000 times faster than normal and that persistent toxic chemicals can now be found by the dozens in essentially all human-beings.

“By 2010 everybody in the world is going to realize that the goals... to address global warming are too low,” Speth said.

Ellum’s research during this study focused on the ecology of forest below the trees. “The forest undergrowth is still in there some place,” he said. “But the cards

are stacking up against us.” Adding, “Keeping the understory plants alive is an important part of managing a multi-use and sustainable forest.”

While at Yale, Ellum was taught by professors Graeme Berlyn and Mark Ashton, both of whom were on his doctoral committees.

“He was an excellent student and is an excellent scientist and teacher. In addition he is a really fine person – the kind you meet once or twice in a lifetime,” Berlyn said.

Of Ellum, Ashton said, “He was one of my best students and regarded by the masters as one of the best doctoral student teachers within the school, which he was given an award for.”

Ellum, originally from Milford, was offered a position at Yale after graduating. He taught graduate students for two years before accepting a teaching position at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina where he has been for the last year teaching undergraduates. He made the move because Yale’s position involved more researching. While he loved the idea, he still felt he would rather teach.

“What I really want is to be a good teacher,” Ellum said. “I love what I do!”

He feels that educating undergrads has more of an impact on their future than teaching grads who already have a plan for their future.

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Laura Schmelzer

MLT (ASCP) MT (HEW)

Class of '77

In 1971, I became a Ward Secretary at the old St. Vincent's Hospital. This was a good vantage point for observing hospital jobs. I admired the nurses who I worked with but realized that nursing was not for me.

I wasn't sure about my scholastic ability and I did not want to start something that I couldn't complete. General College Chemistry seemed like a good "test hurdle."

While Raymond, my youngest, was having his first day of kindergarten, I was at University of New Haven putting General College Chemistry on master charge! I earned a C grade for each semester.

Respiratory Therapy was my next choice until I learned that the program was in Norwalk. Cold, hard reality again made my decision. We were living in the White Hills of Shelton and Norwalk was very far away. My three children were in elementary school and I couldn't be that far away from them every day.

A technician at St. Vincent's told me about the MLT program at Housatonic Community College. I drove from Shelton and looked at the old Singer Sewing Machine Factory and its psychedelic elevator, the bongo drums being played in the courtyard, all situated in a really scary neighborhood. I loved it!

I graduated from HCC in 1977 and we moved to South Carolina. In 1998, I received a Bachelor of Health Sciences Degree from Medical University of South Carolina. I worked at Lexington Medical Center, South Carolina's Departments of Mental Health and Corrections. In the midst of all this, for a few years, I was a tech at Kennedy Space Center. I retired in June 2006.

I want to thank HCC for giving me and many other "Mommies" the opportunity to get an education, good jobs and indirectly contribute to the education of the following generation.

Laura can be reached by email at lauraschmelzer@comcast.net. •

Keep in Touch!

Got a new job? Finished your degree? Got married? Had a baby? Do you want to keep in touch with other Housatonic alumni? We want to know what's happening with you – and your Housatonic friends want to know too. Please take a few moments to tell us your name, year of graduation, email address, current job, and what you have been up to since graduation.

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Dr. David Ellum, Class of '96

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According to Ellum, sustainable forestry has been around for about one hundred years in America and there is some good and some bad. He explained that forests are now becoming certified like within the farming industry and has to meet a three part criteria: ecological, economical and social.

The campus in North Carolina owns 650 acres of forest in which Ellum teaches his students the concept of Sustainable Forestry. "Typically, when you think of forestry, you think of a bunch of guys with chain saws cutting down trees, that's not it. Forestry is about wild-life and water shed management, and so much more," he said.

Ellum explains that rather than to plant trees, which he never does, he and his students weed (if you will) the pine trees out, leaving the oak trees to "release." Essentially, allowing the older ones to seed and produce more for a future forest.

"Yes, we are going to have to cut trees, there's no getting around it, but what you leave behind is what's important," he said.

Ellum is a Silva (Latin for trees) Culturist: someone who grows and manages forests.

"If you are doing it right, you pull the timber, leaving food for the wildlife," he said. Basically, the oak trees shed acorns, which is wildlife food on the East Coast. It's like weeding a garden so the good plants will have the room they need to flourish.

According to Ellum, 75% of forests are privately owned, as in families for generations who actually live and work on the land. Getting them to follow Sustainable Forestry rules is pretty easy. The other 25% is owned by timber companies like Georgia Pacific.

He reassures that Acts such as: the Endangered Species and Clear Water, have made a big difference and feels that sooner or later people will simply have to accept the fact that they may have to pay a little more for a product in order to do their part to help sustain the forestry.

Ellum has found his calling and he owes it to Housatonic Community College. "I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for HCC," he said. "My first class was English and Composition with Professor Isaacs and I fell in love with HCC. I went on to receive my PhD at Yale which is one of the premier colleges in the country for Sustainable Forestry." •

by Deb Torres

The Lady in Red

Barbara Lopez, Class of '03

by Deb Torreso

The walls of her home are covered in deep red daisies and poppies and every so often a bright, yellow sunflower jumps out to join them. Red also signifies the warmth that draws you into her dining room for a chat – made cozy by a hand-built fireplace, which she and hubby Mike created of stones from their Monroe property.

Barb Lopez was six when her artistic calling was born. Adults in her life often coached her doodling-and that fed her hunger.

“Hunger” that’s exactly what she refers to her need to paint and create.

“I get cranky if I can’t paint,” she confesses.

From 1983-1985 Lopez attended the Paier College of Art in Hamden, Connecticut. With a class of thirty-two, she felt fortunate to have an intimate surrounding in which to absorb knowledge and gather information she would need to succeed in her art.

From early on Lopez was inspired by her mentors. Paier Professor, Sante Graziani urged her to believe,

“Love what you do, paint from your heart and don’t let anyone tell you what to do.”

After Paier, Lopez got married and had her daughter, Carmen and son, Ray. Eventually, she decided to go back to school. She enrolled in HCC for one class at a time until finally in 2003, received her Associates in Fine Arts.

HCC Art Professor Michael Stein remembers Lopez well. He was pleased with her commitment and consistency and always felt that she was one of HCC’s success stories, a “hard worker with a great attitude.”

“She was always open to suggestions,” he said. Adding, “She was a delight to



Lopez’s signature red poppies

Photos by Deb Torreso

work with and had an uncommon combination of ambition and intelligence.”

After HCC Lopez tried to continue on to Southern, but they would not recognize her Paier credits due to the time lapse. Fortunately, by that time, Paier had become an accredited college allowing her to return for her Bachelor’s.

She went on to teach drawing for five years at the Sterling House in Stratford, after which she met and began working with Jill Holmes, owner of All About Art on Route 25. Lopez’s work hangs in the



Lopez with sunflower

gallery as well as in her own Moose Hill Arts Studio.

While on her artistic journey, Lopez met other people who shared her love for the Arts. Together

with founder and dear friend Holmes, they formed a group called For Art’s Sake. At 30 strong and growing, its members include authors, illustrators,

painters, ceramists and photographers, most of whom, meet regularly and discuss projects of common interest.

Presently, they host a “Fairy-House” building project at Great Hollow Lake every other July. For a few bucks, area kids work around picnic tables strewn with natural elements such as: wood, leaves and bark. The kids are given a map where they can pick out where their house will be erected for its celebratory showing a month later, in August.

The group also shows their work at the yearly Apple Festival and as of this year, the first Annual Art’s Festival, both held at St. Peter’s Church in Monroe.

Lopez’s work has been equated with that of the famous Georgia O’Keefe. Though proud to be honored in such a way, she explains that her love for painting poppies was one of her earliest desires. Throughout the years she developed an interest in the colors of green and red which splash and dance through her signature flowers.

When not busy doing her many other projects, Lopez shares in the designing of textiles on dinnerware, bedding and bath items (sold at Linen’s and Things), with friend Susan Gatchell of Gatchell/ Clarke Designs.

“She has a beautiful hand and is great at flowers,” Gatchell said.

“Her enthusiasm for life shows up in her work, which she is very passionate about.”

Lopez feels lucky to have had the experiences, especially in her college years, which have helped to enrich her abilities.

She feels it is beneficial for students to take notice in what their professors are striving to teach them. She remembers how their artistic guidance affected her own vision.

“You should try to absorb what they are telling you and take what they say to heart,” she said passionately - as with a splash of red! •

Alexander Pagán Jr., Class of '07

As a recent graduate of Housatonic Community College, I am writing this letter to inform you of the wonderful experience I had at Housatonic and how it helped me change my life in the most positive way.

I started at HCC in the fall of 2000, but due to the illness of an immediate relative, I had to drop out to take care of my household. I returned to HCC in the fall of 2003 and ended up changing my major a few times until I decided on General Studies. I graduated this past May with my Associates degree in General Studies with a 3.31 GPA. I am now attending the University of Phoenix working on my B.S. in Information Technology.

I work for Career Resources Inc. in Bridgeport, CT as a Computer Skills Coordinator and IT Associate. My current position would not be possible if it were not for Housatonic. Before I started my second year back at HCC (Fall 2004), I lost my job and was worried about trying to keep my apartment. I went to HCC to finish up some financial aid paperwork before the coming semester and spoke with Marilyn Wehr about Cooperative Education; she helped get an internship with the WorkPlace Inc., Southwestern CT's Workforce Investment Board, as a presenter for their Career Coach, a high-tech computer lab on wheels providing mobile career services. I interned with the WorkPlace for a few months and then was given a part-time job with the agency as a computer instructor. I held that position from March to July of 2005, when they promoted me to full-time as a Workforce Development Specialist, teaching computer courses, preparing résumés and cover letters, and preparing eligibility paperwork for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth training programs.

The hard work ethic instilled in me by my mother, the same ethic that got me through my time at HCC, led to our partner agency, Career Resources, making me an offer to come on board with them

preparing eligibility paperwork for the WIA Adult training grants in March of 2006. Part of the hiring agreement included their sponsoring me for a computer certification. I now have two that they sponsored, the CompTIA A+ and Network+ certifications, for PC Repair and Network Administration.

I am very proud to say that since coming on board with Career Resources, I have been promoted again to my current position of Computer Skills Coordinator and IT Associate, the former as of December of 2007 and the latter as of August 2006.

I can honestly attribute a lot of my success to my time at HCC. While attending I had the privilege of serving two years each as President of the Student Senate and President of the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS) and one year as the Treasurer for the Student Senate. I also served for a year as the Student Representative on the Standing Advisory Committee to the Board of Governors of the Department of Higher Education, a position I was elected to by the students representatives of the 12 community colleges across the state at our annual electoral assembly in Hartford. I also served two years as a member of the City of Bridgeport's Hispanic Heritage Month Committee and am currently a member of the Greater Bridgeport Latino Network (GBLN).

My time at Housatonic allowed me to learn the necessary academic skills to complete my A.S. and continue to work on my B.S. It also gave me the opportunity to learn and refine my public speaking, leadership, advocacy, and people skills. I have learned a lot through my experience at HCC and have made many amazing connections. This experience strengthened the importance of networking to me and how important it is to be active in our school and our community. This is the reason why I try to assist with as many events as I can as an alumnus. My favorite event to attend is the annual job fair hosted by Career



*Alexander Pagan, Jr.
in his HCC days*

Resources, my employer, at Housatonic, my alma mater. I have worked the job fair for the past three years and will do so again next year and hopefully for many years to come. I love being able to connect community and educational services to better the upcoming generations. A value I learned in my time at Housatonic while working with the various departments and programs within the college.

This is my way of saying "Thank You" to Housatonic Community College for the wonderful experiences, skills, and opportunities I have been blessed to receive. •

Leie Hamilton Class of '06

I graduated from Housatonic Community College in December 2006 after studying as a part-time student for four years. I have also attended Southern Connecticut State University and Sacred Heart University. I must admit that HCC has been the best college experience for me. I enjoyed the smaller classes, one on one with the professors, and understanding that students at HCC come from all walks of life. In addition, the Financial Aid Department was always pleasant, as was the Registrar's Office; this is often lacking at other colleges or universities.

I will always remember Mrs. Eady, she gives it to you straight, but I know that she takes pride in watching students work on their educational goals. I now live in Atlanta, Georgia with my seven year old daughter. I just purchased my first home and I am studying at American Intercontinental University online for my Bachelors Degree.

Thank you Housatonic Community College! I wish you much more success in the years to come. •

HCC Theater Arts Program

presents a

Class Act Theater

performance of

Metamorphoses

by Mary Zimmerman.

A new look at the Ovid Mythology tales.

May 8 & 9 at 7:30pm; May 10 at 12 pm

HCC Performing Arts Center.

Free and open to the public.

CONNECTIONS STAFF

Contributing Writers • Linda Bayusik '96,

Deb Torreso

Design • Blaine Kruger

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Student Art Show

May 5 to May 30, 2008

Opening reception Monday, May 5

12 noon to 1 pm in the Burt Chernow Galleries

Alumni Invited to The 2008 Courtyard Festival Celebrate the Future at HCC

Sponsored by

HCC's Center for the Arts Committee

May 7

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

In The Courtyard

Art, Dance, Food, Fun, Music, and much more including: African Drummers and

Dancers • Capoeira Dancers

Break Dancers • Contemporary Irish Rock

by Black 47 • Magician • Graffiti Art

Sculpture Demo • Taco Loco food • Pizza

Popcorn • Drinks • Ice Cream

HCC House Band • Art Walls

Caricature Artists

Please RSVP to LBayusik@hcc.commmnet.edu or call

203.332.5058

Commencement

May 29, 2008

Arena at Harbor Yard

7 pm

Come join your fellow alums, faculty and staff as we celebrate the graduation of the Class of 2008

Space is limited

If you are interested in attending, please contact Linda Bayusik at LBayusik@hcc.commmnet.edu or call 203.332.-5058 for more details and to make your reservation.