Inside UNLV

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 Degrees of Possibility

University College Offers Students a Variety of Options for Pursuing Their Degrees

By Diane Russell | Marketing & PR

University College is nothing if not multi-faceted. It’s a place for:
• an undecided student to roost while getting help figuring out which major is best for him.
• a student struggling academically until she gains admission to the college of her choice.
• a student to fashion a degree that meets her very specific needs.

Addressing Retention and Graduation

Founded in fall 2004, University College was created in large part to address challenges in student retention and graduation rates, said John Readence, the college’s founding dean. “Some students were not ready to enter one of the other colleges — either because they hadn’t decided on a major or because their grade point average (gpa) was high enough to gain admission to UNLV, but not yet high enough to get into their chosen college,” he said.

“University College not only gave them an academic home, but also provided them with services designed to help them achieve their goals.” Readence gives much of the credit for success to UNLV’s research programs in nutrition sciences,” said the professor of nutrition science. “We had to step back a bit from developing grant proposals and work on our partnerships in the community.”

Healthy Climate for Research

Professors Take Science to Legislature to Influence Wellness Program

By Cate Weeks | Marketing & PR

A half dozen years ago Susan Meacham was at a roundtable discussion when a Clark County Health District official shared her troubles getting federal grant funding. One reason cited: Nevada was not addressing public health problems related to obesity. “At the time I realized that the state’s policies — or lack of policies — could really hinder UNLV’s research programs in nutrition sciences,” said the professor of nutrition science. “We had to take a step back a bit from developing grant proposals and work on our partnerships in the community.”

The Facts on University College

Test your knowledge about University College. Do the facts below jibe with your perceptions?

Fact: Nearly 32 percent of University College students have gpa’s of 3.0 or above, while another 35 percent have gpa’s between 2.5 and 3.0.

Fact: Students pursuing a university degrees take by far the majority of their classes from UNLV’s other colleges. Their capstone projects are closely reviewed by faculty members from outside University College as well as within.

Fact: Because University College students take only 12 credit hours within the college, other colleges receive the bulk of the students’ FTE funding.

Your Feedback: Readers Rate Inside UNLV

What’s the most popular story recently published in Inside UNLV? With new leadership this fall, it’s not surprising that readers have shown a strong interest in what President David Ashley has to say. Inside UNLV recently adopted a question-and-answer format for this piece. We know you’re busy, so the change is part of our efforts to present information in a way that allows “skimmers” to quickly gauge if the story applies to them.

The second most popular story hit on what is perhaps employees’ biggest collective grumble: parking. In an open-ended question, respondents also indicated that they’ve enjoyed past coverage of campus construction projects.

Suggest a story. Contact editor Diane Russell at diane.russell@unlv.edu or at ext. 5-0894.

Take this month’s survey. Visit facultystaff.unlv.edu.

Not getting your copy? Ask the person who sorts mail for your department.

We have noticed that your enthusiasm seems to drop as stories get longer. We’ll continue to work on providing just the right amount of information. In the meantime, please keep responding to our surveys. It will help mold Inside UNLV into an even more effective publication for faculty and staff.
Share the Power of the Positive Spirit

Just before Inside UNLV sat down for this interview with President David Ashley, the university announced two major gifts for the Invent the Future campaign. The donations will create new scholarships and enhance career services programs (see “Gift Creates Hotel Careers Center,” page 3). Here the president shares his thoughts on fundraising.

What is the biggest misconception about campus fundraising?
That all fundraisers do is ask for money.
Fundraising is about conveying all the good things that are happening here. It’s about showing the direction we’re headed and the opportunities there are for individual gifts to have impact. It’s about sharing the enthusiasm, and about connecting our friends and alumni to the mission of the university.

If we are successful at that, then alumni, community members, and business leaders will turn to us and say, “How can I help?”

And how can they help?
By supporting the things we do best. As a public university, we get about a third of our operating budget from the state. Those funds provide the basics. Private dollars allow us to enrich the experiences for students and faculty; they provide those additional things that truly nurture excellence.

The Invent The Future campaign started quietly in 2002 and publicly in 2005. How does a presidential transition affect campaign efforts?
The short answer is that a change in leadership does not by default adversely affect campaigns, and the reason goes back to my answer to the first question. As long as there’s confidence the university will continue to move forward, donors will continue to support the university.

Keep in mind, too, that campaigns generally last seven to 10 years while the average tenure of university presidents is less than five. Most universities will experience a leadership change—or two—during the life of their campaigns.

How is fundraising at UNLV different from other institutions?
First, UNLV has very few alumni compared to its peer institutions. Most major campaigns focus directly on alumni giving and engagement.

UNLV just doesn’t have that base—50 percent of our alumni graduated within the last 10 years. But UNLV is fortunate that many major corporations and successful individuals in the community are filling in. They view giving to UNLV as an opportunity to provide the kind of life-changing experiences they had in college, and they don’t want to see our top students leave Nevada in order to get them.

One other thing that I think makes UNLV quite special is the number of donors who are very successful, but did not have the benefit of formal college or professional education. They see the tremendous value in UNLV offers, and they want their community to be strengthened by our success.

What role do faculty, staff, and students have in the campaign?
Your role is not at all unlike mine: to simply share your enthusiasm for the good work on campus when you’re beyond the university boundaries. The power of the positive spirit I see across campus will help UNLV achieve so much more than its fundraising goals; it will play a part in every aspect of our success—from attracting top employees and ensuring our students receive a high-quality education to fostering economic diversity and advancing research.

Tips for Hiring and Keeping Better Staff

By Shane Bevell | Marketing & PR

Ever feel a little lost navigating the business side of UNLV? The human resources department has been conducting a series of business operations training classes to help managers (old and new) and future managers be successful in their roles.

Last month Inside UNLV sat in on a session by Sam Connally, associate vice president for human resources. Here’s what we learned about recruiting and retaining the best employees:

Recruitment must be public:
There is a well-defined search process for faculty and professional staff positions. The search can be waived if special skills merit that a search doesn’t need to be conducted or during a work stoppage. All classified vacancies are subject to recruitment and there is no search waiver process.

More info: Contact George Dombroski, director of recruitment and compensation, at ext. 51523.

Nobody gets paid until the E-doc is processed:
For classified staff, human resources initiates the employment document, known informally as an E-doc. For faculty and professional staff, the process is a little more complicated. The department that is hiring the employee initiates the employment document.

Salaries have to be within certain ranges:
Compensation ranges for faculty are based on discipline and rank. Compensation for professional staff is by range (1-7). Classified employees are compensated based on state personnel tables.

More info: hr.unlv.edu/Compensation/index.html.

Promote the benefits UNLV offers:
Many new hires are surprised to learn that as state employees, they will not pay social security tax (but there is a 1.45 percent Medicare tax). Instead, UNLV uses the Retirement Plan Alternative program, which features a generous state match for contributions. UNLV also offers optional supplemental retirement plans.

More info: hr.unlv.edu/Benefits/bene_sum.html.

How resources help all staff grow:
Staff development opportunities include workshops in office support skills, developing and enhancing supervisory and management skills, building on customer service, and university business processes.

Professional growth opportunities include grant-in-aid programs and educational assistance. “We hope that all employees will take advantage of the development opportunities that are available,” said Hilary Bockstahler, director of staff development and employee relations. “All workshops offered through the staff development office are free.”

More info: Go to hr.unlv.edu and click on “Training Catalog” under the “Staff Development” heading to view a current copy.

Merit increases are tied to performance evaluations:
Each year, professional staff, annual evaluations must be completed by March 1. Factor and summary ratings include: unsatisfactory, satisfactory, commendable, and excellent. To be eligible for merit, employees must be rated satisfactory in two categories and commendable or excellent in one category. Merit amounts range from $1,000 to $4,500.

For classified staff, annual evaluations are conducted on the anniversary date of when the employee was hired. Factor and summary ratings include: does not meet standards, meets standards, and exceeds standards. To be eligible for merit, employees must be rated either meets standards or exceeds standards. The salary increase is five percent.

Marketing Materials Available

Making a presentation? The office of UNLV marketing & public relations has developed a number of institutional brochures for campus use, including the UNLV Profile brochure, the UNLV Highlights fact sheet, and the UNLV At-a-Glance card. Order your copies at marketingandpr.unlv.edu/pubs/Order.html.
Mac Lovers Embrace Creativity Through Computers

By Mamie Peers | OIT

In 1984, Macintosh aired a memorable Super Bowl commercial selling its computers as machines of freedom and liberation. Today, many people at UNLV are actualizing the dream of Macintosh creators by using their computers in new ways to create new art, improve teaching and learning, and to just have fun.

Considered the ultimate tool for creativity by many innovators in the fine arts, “Macs” are not only business devices. At UNLV, they’ve become soundboards, supercomputers, and digital cameras.

Macs and Music

One place on campus that uses Macs in creative ways is the music technology lab inside the Beam Music Center, Room 138. Visitors to the lab might question whether they’re looking at musical instruments, Apple computers, or both.

“Music professors use the cameras built into their new iMacs to record lessons with students,” said Mader. “When students leave, professors hand over a copy of the video. This way, students can learn by watching their own recordings,” he added.

Fighting Fear

“Eliminating fear of technology is the key to using it to be creative. This fear can be eliminated through training in the UNLV music tech lab,” said Gil Kaupp, instructor of music technology and recording engineer in the college’s recording studios. “The tools make it fun for students to learn ear training, music notation, arranging, and video editing.

“Saving and rendering files takes a lot of computing power. To speed up the process, Kaupp and Mader connected all the Macs in the lab so that they can use each other’s processing power. If computers are connected to the “node,” the entire lab works like a supercomputer and turns saving processes that typically take hours, into minutes, they said.

Speaking about the potential for podcasting, Mader said, “Students could post their recitals to the Times education store. Or, faculty can post their latest recordings. Theater, dance, music, and other departments could offer live broadcasts of events, drawing more attention to UNLV happenings.”

The capabilities for podcasting are already there, he said. “All I need to do is turn it on.”

Tech Savvy
Across Campus

Business

College Names 2007 Business Hall of Fame Inductees

Jackie Gaughan and Michael Gaughan Sr., the Cashman family, Luther Mack, and Kitty Rodman have been named as the 2007 inductees to the Nevada business Hall of Fame. They will be honored at a dinner Feb. 15 at the Wynn Las Vegas. The college presents the event in association with Deloitte and Touche, USA.

The Hall of Fame honors business leaders who have significantly contributed to the economic prosperity of Nevada and brought positive recognition to the state. The inductees emerged from a large pool of public nominations submitted to the nominating committee and the college’s Executive Advisory Board.

Previous inductees include such prominent Nevadans as William S. Boyd, Hank Greenspun, William F. Harrah, Howard Hughes, Robert Lewis, Jerry Mack, Irwin Molasky, William “S” Redd, Jim Rogers, Glenn Schaeffer, E. Parry Thomas, J.A. Tiberti, Del Webb, Claudine Williams, and Stephen A. Wynn.

Improved Website Launched

The College of Business recently launched an improved website, business.unlv.edu. The new site features up-to-date information on events and news, improved navigation, and a more modern look and feel.

Education

Early Childhood Center Supports Faculty/Student Research

Supporting research by faculty and students is one of the primary goals of the campus’ Lynn Bennett Early Childhood Development Center, home of the UNLV/CSUN Preschool.

The center’s Research Advisory Council was established to achieve that goal. It meets regularly to identify obstacles to using the center for research and to develop strategies to eliminate those obstacles. To conduct research at the center, faculty and students can contact center director Catherine Lyons at ext. 5-1112 or catherine.lyons@unlv.edu or contact professor John Filler at ext. 5-1105 or john.filler@unlv.edu.

The center is a resource for students majoring in education, psychology, physical therapy, nursing, biology, psychology, and food and beverage management. Its two research classrooms are equipped with laptop stations, one-way mirrors, cameras, and microphones. They were designed to allow UNLV students and their professors to observe lessons without disrupting the classroom. A camera in one classroom enables lessons to be filmed and studied later by faculty and their students; all the classrooms are camera-ready.

The preschool was one of the first programs in Southern Nevada to achieve accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. It serves more than 200 children with disabilities and their families. The center is one of the largest employers of student workers on campus, with approximately 130 students working as teaching assistants.

Dental

Crackdown on Cancer Reaches Thousands Across Nevada

Since 2001, the Crackdown on Cancer program offered by the School of Dental Medicine has performed almost 50,000 oral cancer screenings, conducted nearly 2,000 high school tobacco and oral health education presentations, and reached an audience of close to 90,000 students in Nevada.

A tobacco education program, Crackdown on Cancer is offered to students in middle and high schools throughout Nevada. Through its two mobile dental clinics, dental professionals from UNLV provide free, comprehensive oral cancer screenings. Program staff offer tobacco and second-hand smoke education, brief intervention counseling, database information, and referrals for tobacco cessation programs as well as follow-up services for evidence of a tobacco-related disease. Taking the mobile dental clinic to participating schools allows maximum participation by overcoming many access issues.

The goal is to educate Nevada youths about the risk factors for oral cancer, primarily the risk posed by tobacco use. Early detection can reduce the incidence of tobacco use among teens, thereby helping reduce the rate of smoking among adults and the subsequent health costs associated with tobacco use.

Hot Off the Grill

Marty Rawlins of Sodexho, left, mans the grill during the Rebel Rally just before homecoming last month. Hundreds from the campus community turned out to eat, listen to the band, and enjoy some of the last of the nice fall weather.

Engineering

Transportation Conference Draws Record Numbers

The annual Fall Transportation Conference drew more than 230 people from the Western United States to the Cox Pavilion in October, setting an attendance record for the conference.

Speakers and attendees were both transportation practitioners and decision-makers focused on discussing opportunities and challenges, as well as strategies for planning, designing, operating, and managing transportation systems. Martin Rudin, interim vice president for research and graduate dean, opened the conference.

Papers presented focused on transportation and urban planning, traffic operations, safety, intelligent transportation systems (ITS), public transportation, infrastructure management, and advanced transportation technologies. Siddharth David, a UNLV graduate student studying transportation engineering, earned the best student paper award.

The event was sponsored by the Engineering College’s Transportation Research Center, directed by Shashi Nambisan; the Nevada chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers; the Southern Nevada branch of American Society of Civil Engineers; and the Nevada chapter of the Intelligent Transportation Society.

At the conclusion of the technical program, a golf tournament benefiting the student chapter of the Institute of Transportation Engineers was held.

Honors

Awards Recognize Faculty Mentoring and Teaching

Two annual awards to recognize faculty members who have served as research mentors or taught courses for the college and its students are being created.

The Honors College Master Teacher Award will recognize a faculty member for excellence in teaching, commitment to the Honors College and its educational goals, and pedagogical rigor.

The Honors College Research Mentoring Excellence Award will recognize a faculty member for excellence in mentoring student research as shown by the research products and student research successes.

Both awards will be given based on efforts during the academic year preceding selection.

The college is instituting the...
awards with the approval of the Honors Council.

**Hotel College to Expand Recreation and Leisure Studies Program**
The college is expanding once again; this time, in the world of recreation and sports. Starting Jan. 1, the recreation and leisure studies program will be converted into the department of recreation and sports management. The department will focus on providing a challenging new environment for students interested in sports and leisure management. The goal is to develop additional courses for undergraduate and graduate levels, and on creating programs that can meet the needs of local and regional employers. The new department consists of eight faculty members, under the interim direction of Cynny Caruthers, who is currently a faculty member in the department of tourism and convention in the college. The department will house the bachelor of science in recreation, which includes professional golf; the bachelor of science in event management (starting in fall 2007); and a master’s degree in sport and leisure service management.

Once the department receives national accreditation for the bachelor of science in recreation from the National Recreation and Park Association, it will be the only accredited recreation program in Nevada. The department also plans to develop undergraduate concentrations in sports management, youth development, outdoor recreation, and gerontology. An opportunity for students to earn a Ph.D. in hospitality with a concentration in recreation management will be available within the next two years, which will help UNLV advance to the level of a research extensive university.

**Law Strong Fall Class Increases Diversity**
The class that entered the Boyd School of Law this fall is the strongest in the school’s history, coming from 13 states and 67 undergraduate institutions. More than 2,200 students applied for the 150 spots. The school from which the most students received their undergraduate degrees is UNLV, followed by UNR, BYU, Arizona, Utah, and UCLA. The class includes a record number of racial minorities, 43, and a record percentage of minorities in the class, 25 percent. The school saw an increase in the numbers of African-American, Hispanic-Latino, and Native American students enrolling. For the first time, the school of which the most students received their undergraduate degrees is UNLV, followed by UNR, BYU, Arizona, Utah, and UCLA. The class includes a record number of racial minorities, 43, and a record percentage of minorities in the class, 25 percent. The school saw an increase in the numbers of African-American, Hispanic-Latino, and Native American students enrolling.

**Liberal Arts Professors Study Disparities in Health Insurance Coverage**
Sociology professors Jennifer Keene and Anastasia Prokos are studying trends in a persistent topic of national debate: health insurance coverage. They are focusing on employer-provided coverage with an emphasis in the inequality in access to health benefits. The number of African Americans grew steadily from the late 1980s through the late 1990s. Employee health benefits are the primary avenue through which Americans obtain coverage. Keene and Prokos are using a nationally representative dataset that contains information on workers’ family and work lives, including health benefits. They currently have two related papers on this topic.

In one paper they study trends in employer health benefits from 1992 to 2002. Their analysis emphasizes the intersection of gender and race in determining who is offered health benefits and who accepts their health benefits. Results of the analysis showed distinct gender and race inequality in who gets offered health benefits and who elects to participate in health plans. In a second paper, they focus on health benefits in 2002 and study how workers’ family lives and the level of their employers’ contributions to premiums influence the decision to enroll in employees’ health plans. Examining disparities throughout the labor force in the distribution of employer-provided health insurance is important because coverage has a direct effect on health care use and therefore family members’ health in general.

**Graduate Important Reminders About Graduate Assistantships**
Several important dates regarding graduate assistantships are quickly approaching.

- **GA Forms Due** — Forms for requesting a new assistantship for the spring semester and for renewing a fall semester assistantship should be submitted by Dec. 1 so that records can be processed in time for spring semester. The same request form — found at graduatecollege.unlv.edu/PDF_Docs/GAFORM.pdf — can be used to renew an assistantship or request a new one. The completed form should be sent to the Graduate College, mailstop 1017.
- **Reminders for Your Students** — Faculty and staff are encouraged to remind graduate assistants (GAs) who are on nine-month contracts to register for classes before the end of the fall semester to ensure they receive their tuition waivers on time.
- **Reminder for Coordinators** — Graduate coordinators should notify the Graduate College if a GA on a nine-month contract leaves his or her post at the end of the fall semester. Send notification to Eric Lee, graduate program manager, via e-mail in such cases.
- **No Yellow Cards** — As a reminder, the yellow fee waiver cards have been eliminated. The college now processes graduate assistant fee waivers at the time the GA registers for classes. This has streamlined the process and reduced the number of late fees incurred by graduate assistants.
- **Contract Signing** — The contract signing period for graduate assistants in the spring will be Jan. 8-11 in the Graduate College conference room, FDH 312.

**Libraries UNLV Libraries Brings Resources to Entrepreneurs**
Would you have thought spending time at the library might help an entrepreneur make a technology-based business a success?

University Libraries began partnering with Technology Ventures Corp. (TVC) in fall 2005 and is now part of its entrepreneur- ial education program called the Center for Commercialization and Entrepreneurial Training (CCET). The center provides an extensive curriculum to familiarize the new and experienced entrepreneur with the various aspects of forming, planning, financing, operating, and expanding a technology-based business. In addition, University Libraries...

> See Across Campus, Page 7

**Perfect Practice Position**
Ronke Bowman takes advantage of some late fall sunshine to catch a few minutes of tuba practice. A junior music major, Bowman is a member of the UNLV Symphony Orchestra.
Spotlight On Accomplishments

Get to know some of your colleagues who recently arrived on campus.

By Shane Bevell | Marketing & PR

Urban Affairs

Stephen Bates

Stephan Bates, an assistant professor in the school of journalism and media studies, is delighted that his job allows him to combine his two primary academic interests, writing and law. Bates enjoys teaching writing classes because it is a good reminder of the writing basics. In addition, the Harvard Law School graduate is interested in law and the First Amendment.

Bates chose UNLV for his first full-time teaching position because of the growth both the university and the program are experiencing. "The program is not calcified or set in its ways," he said. "With that comes flexibility and openness in innovation."

Teaching media law and forms of journal writing, Bates hopes to focus on teaching the basics of legal reasoning, which is a useful skill for anyone. He has also written books focusing on political and legal aspects of journalism and media studies.

His research interests include reporters' privilege issues and who is considered a journalist under the law.

Business

Leigh Anenson

Curiosity got the best of Leigh Anenson, assistant professor of business law. Because of her penchant for both teaching and discovery, Anenson considered it, but while attending the University of Akron School of Law, a professor told her she had the "curiosity" to teach.

That comment struck a chord with her and after practicing nearly 10 years in the areas of international law, business, and litigation, Anenson left a lucrative legal career and began teaching in her alma mater's College of Business in 2001.

"Doing what you love doesn't have a price," said Anenson. "I consider myself successful, but not for the reasons that others do. It makes such a difference when you love going to work every day."
offers a monthly market research seminar, developed and taught by UNLV librarian Cory Tucker. Tucker’s seminar highlights library resources that are available to help TVC clients with their business planning. The seminar focuses on company information, industry information, and market research.

Founded by Lockheed Martin Corp., TVC’s mission is to help start-up companies that are developing technology in Nevada, California, and New Mexico.

For more information on CCET educational programs, contact Cory Tucker, at cory.tucker@unlv.edu

Goodbye, Old Friend

A student watches a worker hose down the demolition site of the old Donald C. Mayer Student Union to make room for the second phase of the new student union. When the MSU opened in 1967 the student population was 3,902. The new union, which will total 135,000 square feet when the second phase opens in time for the fall 2007 semester, will serve more than 28,000 students.
Sharing Traditions

No matter what holidays you celebrate, December is ripe for family traditions. Here’s the story behind the traditions some of your co-workers love.

Tree Trek
by Nancy Syzdek
assistant director, student life marketing & communications

For more than 35 years, my husband Ed’s family has traveled to Lincoln County to cut down their own Christmas trees. We usually head out, BLM permits in hand, in the dark of night, stopping only in Caliente for a great greasy spoon breakfast at the Iron Skillet. We traverse our way up on four-wheel drive roads to the designated area, to find the perfect 6- to 8-foot Ponderosa Pine that’s as about wide as it is tall.

Now, four generations of Syzdels and their friends enjoy this annual tradition. I even got an early Christmas present on my first trip with the family in 1998 — a marriage proposal! What a way to join the family!

A Burning Tradition
by Molly Michelman
lecturer, department of nutrition sciences

Every Hanukkah is different, since the Jewish calendar causes it to pop up at a different part of December (or sometimes the tail end of November or beginning of January). As a result, it can be challenging to uphold traditions the same way from year to year. The one tie that binds this holiday for me has always been latkes (potato pancakes).

Hanukkah

Latkes
(Potato Pancakes)
5 Large peeled potatoes
1 Large onion
4 Eggs
1/2 c flour
1/3 c Matzo Meal
1 Salt
1/4 t Black Peppercorns
1/4 t Oil
Finely grate potatoes and onion (in food processor or blender with touch of water — but be careful as the potatoes can be too juicy).

Add eggs and mix well. Add Matzo Meal and seasonings and mix well. Fry in hot oil (about a tablespoon per pancake) until golden brown on both sides.

Serve with applesauce and sour cream for guests to garnish to taste.

— Sheldon Gary, international undergraduate recruitment coordinator, office of undergraduate recruitment

Christmas

Peppermint Bark
2 bjs White chocolate, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
12 Large candy canes
1 Peppermint oil

In a large mixing bowl, prepared baking sheet; spread evenly. Chill until firm, 25 to 30 minutes. Break into pieces, and serve. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week. Makes 2-1/4 pounds.

— Isabelle Johnson, administrative assistant, office of marketing and public relations

Kwanzaa

Peanut Soup with Okra Croutons
2 Tbl Peanut oil
1/4 c Chopped red pepper flakes
2 Tbl Coriander seeds
1/2 c Cately, diced
1/2 c Carrot, diced
2 c Butternut squash, diced
2 c Potatoes, diced
1 c Peanuts, roasted, shelled & unsalted
6 c Stock
1 Tbl Lemon juice
Salt & pepper

Puree tomatoes in a food processor or blender with touch of water (but be careful as the tomatoes can be too juicy).

In a large non-stick pot over moderate heat, heat oil, pepper flakes, and coriander until seeds begin to darken. Add vegetables and peppers; cook 5 minutes. Stir in stock and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes. Cool slightly and puree. Gently reheat, add lemon juice & season to taste. Serve in shallow bowls garnished with okra croutons. Serves 6.

— Ron Rieger, fleet service worker, land

Leftovers

Artichoke Turkey Pizza
1 Pre-made thin Italian pizza crust (12 inches)
1/2 c (6 oz) Shredded mozzarella cheese
1 can (14 1/2 oz) Diced tomatoes with basil, garlic, and oregano; drained
1 c Chopped leftover cooked turkey
1 c Butternick
1 Tbl Olive oil
1 Avocado, mashed to a puree

Juice of 1 lemon
2 Tbl Finely minced fresh parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Hot pepper sauce
Garnish: 1 Cucumber, seeded, peeled, and diced, sour cream, plain yogurt, or creme fraiche

Pizza tomatoes in a food processor or food mill, then press through a sieve to remove seeds. In a large mixing bowl, beat the pureed tomatoes, tomato paste, butternick, and oil. Toss pureed avocado with 1 tablespoon lemon juice to hold the color. Add the avocado, remaining lemon juice, and parsley to the tomato mixture; stir to mix well. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and a generous number of drops of hot pepper sauce. Refrigerate several hours before serving.

At serving time, taste soup for seasoning. Ladle into individual bowls and have guests garnish their portions with cucumber and sour cream. Pass hot pepper sauce around to add more piquancy.

— Ina Dorman, social work consultant, Boyd Law School

African Tomato-Avocado-Buttermilk Soup
3 lbs Tomatoes, peeled and seeded
2 Tbl Tomatoes paste
1 c Butternick
1 Tbl Olive oil
1 Avocado, mashed to a puree
2 Tbl Lemon juice
Salt & pepper

Garnish: 1 Cucumber, seeded, peeled, and diced, sour cream, plain yogurt, or creme fraiche

Buttermilk Soup
African Tomato-Avocado-

Hot pepper sauce
Garnish: 1 Cucumber, seeded, peeled, and diced, sour cream, plain yogurt, or creme fraiche

Buttermilk Soup
African Tomato-Avocado-

Spit and Polish
by Alex Herzog
director of RebelCard Services (pictured here with son, Prescot 3)

St. Nicholas Day is a German tradition I have celebrated every Dec. 6 since I was a kid. On Dec. 5 my brother and I would leave a list of our wanted goodies by the front door with a pair of shoes that we would spend at least two hours polishing to a gleam — the shinier your shoes the better. The next morning we would wake up to see that our letter was gone (presumably picked up by St. Nicholas) and that our shoes were filled with nuts, candy, chocolate, and fruit. There would be a present, too — usually a game the whole family could play. We always used my winter boots because they were bigger and that meant you got more stuff in them.

My wife and I still practice this tradition today with our son. It really enhances the excitement of the holiday spirit and the anticipation of Christmas.

— My husband’s mother was a wonderful cook, and always made hers perfectly, froze them perfectly, and had just the right amount for every one to eat. Unfortunately, I’m not the best in the kitchen, but I try every year. Now the tradition involves me burning the latkes and trying to cover up my mistakes with plenty of sour cream and sweet applesauce!

— from A Happy Holiday Home magazine

All Wrapped Up
by Schyly Richards
associate vice president, university and community relations

My husband and I have many traditions that we share with his five children from his first marriage and with our 11-year-old daughter, Danica, but this is my favorite. Santa and his elves swap every single gift in the stockings with bright red paper — everything from a Chapstick or chewing gum to earings, CDs, or DVDs. And Santa’s presents never seem to fit all inside the stockings so there are piles of red paper-wrapped gifts on the sofa, chairs, and floor.

Then, on Christmas morning our family wakes up (my husband and I never seem to actually go to sleep) before it is light outside — typically around 4:30 a.m. — so we are the first to be in the neighborhood opening presents. By 7 a.m., all the gift opening is finished and we enjoy breakfast before going back to sleep for a few hours.

Our children tell us that opening Santa’s stocking gifts is their favorite part of Christmas morning. And now that many of our kids are grown and have children of their own, we are excited to see that Santa has kept this tradition going.