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“Making a World of Difference” for 50 Years

The side dining room of Alliot Hall was buzzing with chatter on Friday, October 22, as guests arrived at the luncheon celebrating the School of International Studies' 50th Anniversary. Longtime Saint Michael's education partners had traveled from the Hellenic American Union in Athens, Greece, from Gimnasio Vermont in Bogota, Colombia, and from Kanazawa Technical College in Japan. A newer friend had come in honor of the College's centennial celebration from Saint Edmund's Hall at the University of Oxford in England. Other important attendees from far away included family of President Marc A. vanderHeyden; Thomas Scovel



Michael Cansdale of St Edmund's Hall, Oxford University, joined Jim Wall '74, chair of the Board of Trustees and President Marc vanderHeyden in celebrating Saint Michael's Centennial and the 50th Anniversary of SIS.

of San Francisco State University, who delivered the keynote address entitled, “Making a world of difference in teaching English as a second language;” and trustees of the College. Guests from closer to home included Vermont Secretary of State, Deborah Markowitz, along with the faculty and staff who

continued inside....



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have made SIS what it is today. Surveying the gathering of friends from near and far, Bonnie Tangalos, SIS faculty member and chair of the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, said, "It's a wonderful reward for our committee and an honor for SIS to see everyone gathered here in celebration."

Speaking informally before the luncheon, President vanderHeyden observed that SIS has truly enriched the Saint Michael's community over the last 50 years. It "has created a diversity on our campus," he said, "which in Vermont is pretty hard to achieve." More than 15,000 SIS alumni, vanderHeyden emphasized, "have left a footprint on this campus."

It is clear that Saint Michael's has also left a footprint on many of its SIS students. Clara Galvis, now vice-rector of Gimnasio Vermont in Bogota, Colombia, came to Saint Michael's over 20 years ago for an Intensive English Program and went on to earn her MATESL in 1997. Galvis now returns every year with a group of Colombian students. "I loved it so much," she said, "that I thought about giving the same opportunity to young people from my country. We started [our association with Saint Michael's] 10 years ago and we've been connected since that time." The Saint Michael's partnership, agreed the school's principal, Raquel Rojas, is an "excellent program and very, very important to us."

As the diverse guests took seats around beautifully set tables, each topped with the flag of a different nation, 50 years of smiling faces flashed by in a slide show. "It's good for the College to have this here," noted John Neuhauser, a trustee of Saint Michael's and provost of Boston College.

When he rose to address the group, President vanderHeyden reiterated the theme of the keynote speech. "The School of International Studies can make a world of difference," he said. "We are really celebrating today the richness of Saint Michael's. It is always great to find a piece of our college in Japan, Greece, in Bogota, in Africa," he continued. "For all of you who have made it happen, thank you and happy birthday."

Congratulations also came from Michael Cansdale, the distinguished guest from Oxford, a fellow of Saint Edmund's Hall, who brought his best wishes "from us in the Old World to our younger colleagues." Those from the St. Edmund across the ocean, he said, hoped to "build on the bond built on our common saint."

After recognition of the SIS international partners, Vermont's Secretary of State, Deborah Markowitz, reiterated the impact the College has had close to home as she presented one of the state's first centennial nonprofit awards to President vanderHeyden. "For 100 years," Markowitz said, "Saint Michael's has enriched the community — both the spiritual and the intellectual life."

The keynote address by San Francisco State University's Thomas Scovel, touched on issues both global and local that impact those who devote their careers to teaching English as a second language. He grew up in a small rural Chinese village with medical missionary parents, where Scovel explained, "The world was basically our village." Today, he said, almost no village is a world unto itself: "Everything is global at the local level, and everything is local at a global level."

Contrasting the methods by which his parents learned Chinese against those which he experienced later when learning Thai, as well as those he has observed throughout his years teaching, Scovel concluded, “Methods are too confining. ‘One size fits all’ is really useless.” It is the principles that are important, he stressed. “The teacher has to translate those principles into classroom practice.”

As the role of English language changes in the world, he added, the way it is taught will also change. There are more people in China learning English now, he explained, than there are native

speakers of English in North America. “English is the world language; it is an international language,” he said. “We have to change our models and be sensitive to the fact that the language is changing—that, for example, virtually no-one uses the past-perfect tense.”

Something that has not changed however, Scovel emphasized, is that “in the spirit of language teaching, the spirit of peace pervades.” As the Very Reverend Richard Myhalyk, SSE had said so eloquently in his opening blessing to the luncheon, repeating the SIS motto: “There are many languages, but one humanity.” ●

Sheena Blodgett Named Interim ELP Director

Sheena Blodgett, who has served as Associate Director of English Language Programs (ELP) for the past 10 years, became Interim Director of ELP when Carolyn Duffy, formerly the director, decided to return to full-time teaching in SIS. “I’m looking forward to the challenges of directorship,” Blodgett said recently during a few spare minutes between a collegial chat with a fellow SIS faculty member and a meeting with the College provost.



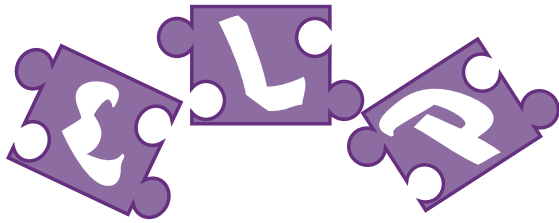
*Sheena Blodgett,
interim director of ELP*

Her recent administrative focus has been on completion of a comprehensive self-study of the Intensive English Program (IEP) as part of the Commission for English Language Program Accreditation

process. “The accreditation process has been a big thing,” Blodgett said. “We learned a lot and I am working with the faculty and staff to continue to bring many of our functions into the 21st century.” There are great opportunities and plans, she noted, to leverage technology to improve systems, such as registering students in a computerized database, placement testing via the World Wide Web, and also performing program evaluation on the web.

In addition to Blodgett’s directorship duties, she has continued to teach the advanced college writing class for the Academic English Program and will teach the MATESL practicum

this spring. Blodgett is herself a 1988 MATESL graduate of Saint Michael's, after which she immediately started working as an adjunct for SIS. In 2001, she took a year's leave to complete a Ph.D. program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, which she has finished, other than her dissertation.



Blodgett was originally drawn to Saint Michael's to study ESL because she was "looking for a place where I could meet more people from different places," she said. "I come from a traveling family. My father was with the United Nations," she explained, so she grew up exposed to many different parts of world and many types of people. She loves the diversity of SIS. "It's why I'm here," she said, adding that the mission of SIS is "more and more important today because of the need for understanding other cultures." ●

Lending an Ear, a Hand, and a Heart: Student Assistants at SIS

At a recent weekly meeting of the SIS Student Assistants (SAs), the talk ranged from how a trip to a local apple orchard went, to who would meet new students coming in from the Ukraine, Mexico, and Japan, to a needed shopping trip for coffee-hour supplies. There was a campus tour of important VIPs to lead, a van of students to take to a contra dance in Burlington, and linens to be picked up for the new students. And that was just the beginning of the list.

"Rick Gamache and I have often commented to the SAs, 'We couldn't do our jobs without your help,'" says Jacqui Samale Roden, special assistant for International Student Services and Marketing for SIS. "They are undoubtedly instrumental in much of what we do for and provide to SIS students."



SIS Student Assistants help new students transition into life at Saint Michael's

As Associate Dean for SIS, Gamache led the evolution of the Student Assistant program "in response to what we see as a need: to help the new students make a healthy transition." For the last decade, the program has worked essentially in the same configuration, he explains, in which a team of about 10 students per year works with incoming students — from meeting them at the airport, to taking them on shopping trips for basic necessities, to escorting weekend excursions to Boston or Montreal.

The program, Gamache points out, is not just of value to the new SIS students. “It’s wonderful for the Student Assistant,” he says, “to be part of an intercultural, international team and to learn how Saint Michael’s operates.” Gamache is particularly pleased that one of the current SAs, Hayato Coutu, is a second-generation SA whose parents met when his mother came to Vermont from her native Japan to study English and was introduced to his father, who was an undergraduate working as an SA for SIS.

The SAs come from many different backgrounds — the current group includes both undergraduate and graduate students from Vermont, Texas, Japan, Korea, and Russia — and so bring a diversity of perspectives to their work.

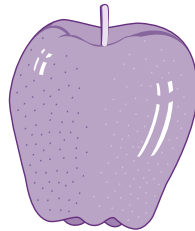
On a recent shopping trip to Wal-Mart, Amanda Tinnin, an SA-in-training who is a MATESL student from Texas, pushed the cart she was sharing with Kumiko Nakagawa of Japan, an IEP student. Together they considered brands of shampoo and soap and Tinnin gave Nakagawa advice on how to pick out a phone. A few aisles down, another SA-in-training, Takashi Yamaji, was trying to pick out cologne for his roommate who is from Mexico. Yamaji, an undergraduate in his third year at Saint Michael’s, grew up in China but his family now lives in Japan. “Rick Gamache asked me to be an SA so I want to be one,” he said, “and it’s kind of like a practicum for me.”

Like other SAs, Yamaji seems to have a natural inclination to help. “I cannot stand if I see a person in trouble. I want to help them. It’s also a good way to know other people and it’s a way to learn to communicate better.”

Masanori Kayoi, one of the two SAs leading the shopping expedition, was settled in the Wal-Mart coffee shop doing some reading for one of his classes, but remained within easy calling distance if anyone needed help. He has been an SA since May of 2003 and will be graduating this spring with an undergraduate degree in English literature. He is a little shy, he explained, and thought that being an SA would help him become more comfortable

speaking with people. It is good to have fellow students working as SAs, he said, because “students are more comfortable talking with us. Sometimes I can give advice, like a brother. I’ve been here for a long time now, but I also have the same experience.”

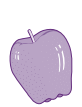
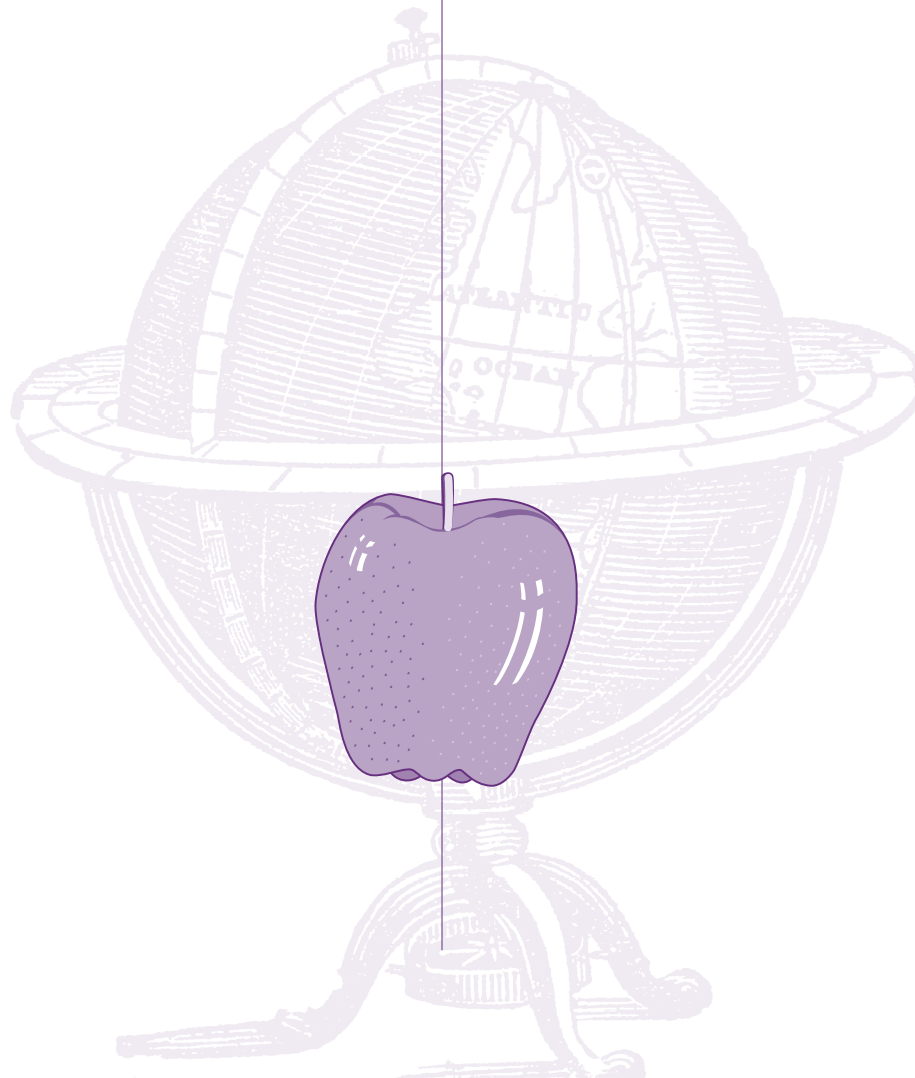
Back in the store’s aisles, Teo Perez, a new student who had just arrived from his hometown of Mexico City for a month of intensive English training to help with his work as a pharmacist, was shopping for basics like skin cream to ease the dryness from the cold weather. When he finished his shopping before the others, Azar Sharipov, the second SA in charge of the trip, arranged to take him over to the grocery store to get fresh fruit.



Later, Sharipov, who is originally from Saint Petersburg, Russia, and will graduate this winter with a triple undergraduate major in business, economics, and political science, shared why he has enjoyed being an SA. He remembers his first encounter with an SA when he arrived as an AEP student in the fall of 2000. "They helped me get around and get to know people, to get comfortable," he said. After three and a half years working as an SA, Sharipov says that he has learned a lot. He has a great time playing soccer with an international

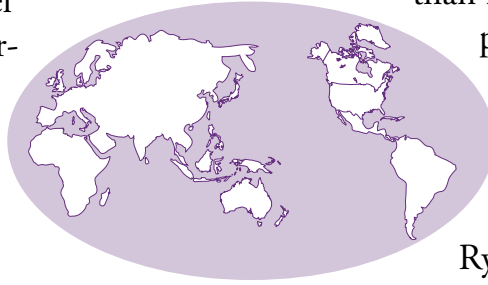
clan, taking trips to Montreal and Boston and around Vermont, and helping fellow students in lots of little ways. "What I like about the job," he says, "is that I'm not just sitting in an office. You get to actually do things."

"It's taught me a lot about interactions with people of different cultures," Sharipov adds. "In many ways it's made my experience here a lot more fun. I've met some of the best friends of my life here. It was like a gift from Saint Mike's to me." ●



It's a Small World

Ask any SIS alumnus, staff, or faculty member and he or she will probably have a “small-world” story about making Saint Michael’s connections in the most unlikely places. Michael Maine, director of international marketing and enrollment for SIS, experienced such a, “SIS Small-World Coincidence,” recently.



After a meeting this past fall in a Toyko hotel, Maine, who was wearing a Saint Michael’s nametag, was asked by a young hotel employee if he was associated with Saint Michael’s in Vermont, from which his father had graduated. The young man was Anri Uechi, whose father, Yasusada, had earned a MATESL from SIS in 1972. “I was so surprised to meet Uechi and hear about his father’s connection to Saint Michael’s,” Maine said. “It’s always great to see firsthand the far-reaching influence and reputation of SIS.”

In a subsequent e-mail exchange to Maine, Yasusada Uechi wrote, “I was thrilled to hear from my son that you and Anri met by chance at his hotel in Tokyo and found you two had something in common. What a coincidence!” Uechi went on to write that his experience at Saint Michael’s has had an enduring effect on his life

and career over the years since he was first sponsored by the U.S. government to study at “one of the oldest and top-ranked institutions for TESL programs in the country.” After working for more than 25 years as an English professor and linguist throughout Japan, Uechi is currently a tenured professor on the faculty at the University of Ryukus, the only national

university in Okinawa. He also fondly recalled a return trip to Saint Michael’s in 2000 when he was delighted to visit with Alice Thayer and Brenda Rousselle who “gave me a whole-hearted welcome in the same friendly way they did 34 years ago when I first arrived on campus.”

Uechi’s son, Anri, studied on the West Coast of the United States for four years but did not have the opportunity to travel east. Although he enjoys his work at the hotel, he hopes to become a journalist. “The best part,” of working in the hotel, he explained in a follow-up e-mail to Maine, “is definitely meeting people. A hotel is like a society in miniature. There are many kinds of people from different kinds of places and it is fun to meet them and talk with them.” He has met TV stars, famous athletes, politicians...and now distinguished staff from his father’s U.S. alma mater. ●

If you have your own “SIS Small-World Coincidence” to share, please e-mail us at:

sis@smcvt.edu

Giving Back to Saint Michael's College

Saint Michael's will wrap up its successful Visions Capital Campaign in June of 2005, but with just over \$5 million more to go, there's still time to take part in the ambitious goal of raising \$52 million. The campaign was launched to assist the College in meeting the financial needs of more students, although some of the funds raised can also go to special projects either as defined by the Visions Campaign or as requested by the donor. Two gifts have already been specifically linked with the School of International Studies: a generous gift from the Kanazawa Technical Institute to help students from Kanazawa or elsewhere

in Japan attend Saint Michael's, and the endowment by family and friends of the late and beloved SIS professor Richard C. Yorkey to establish a scholarship in his name to be awarded annually to a TESL graduate.

"One of the best aspects of the campaign," says Anne Whitmore Hansen, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, "has been the opportunity to tell the history of the College. During that process, it has been so clear that our undergraduate alumni really treasure the interaction with the students in SIS. It has reaffirmed that important part of our identity — and that it should be celebrated." ●

If you are interested in finding out more about the
Visions Campaign, please visit the Web site

www.smcvt.edu/visions

—or—

e-mail: *Cynthia Cheney* or *Brendan Kinney* in
Advancement Services at

ccheney@smcvt.edu or **bkinney@smcvt.edu**

Alumni Corner / SIS Staff Faculty News

Pauline Baird, M'01, and many other SMC TESL graduates who teach at Kanazawa Institute of Technology, enjoyed a traditional U.S.-American Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and all the fixings in Kanazawa, Japan. Delicious food and great fun were had by all!

We welcome greetings and news from alumni. Please send them to: sis@smcvt.edu

Pass it on! Do you know someone who could benefit from learning at Saint Michael's? Send us the person's name, address, e-mail address, and, if possible, what type of program might be right for him or her. Please contact....

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Reconnect with Saint Michael's

In the last 50 years, over 15,000 students have experienced Saint Michael's College through the School of International Studies. In an effort to build stronger alumni relations, the SIS office encourages you to register online with our new International Alumni Network Program. The registration form can be found within the alumni section of the SIS web page:



www.smcvt.edu/sis



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~Written by Melissa Pasanen



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