Cast Reunion 2005 - 40 Years and Counting

by Colleen Kelly (95C), Woodridge, Illinois

Back in Style Reception
July 28, 2005

The first sounds of a celebration could be heard from down the hall, with "Play That Funky Music, Pretty Woman" and "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" being performed by the Smith-Wade Band. Alumni from the past 40 years made their way into the ballroom to begin the reunion festivities.

The opening slide show was a definite highlight, thanks to the hard work of Eduardo "Edú" Aguirre (84E), as reunion attendees gathered together to share old times, some not having seen each other since they left the road.

The room quieted down as the lights dimmed, and the big screens lit up to the right and left of the stage. The images brought vivid memories, smiles, clapping and shouts: buses, vamps, Super Bowl shows, staging, the Special Olympics, Sankta Lucia Day, Sing Out, Viva la Gente, bus dates and host families waving. This was just the beginning, and there was more to come.

Opening Ceremony
July 29, 2005

Up with People energy at its best describes the performances that took place at the reunion, and the opening ceremony was no exception. Another slideshow created by Edú had people laughing and crying as they reminisced about their year(s) in UWP. A rousing rendition of the UWP theme song had everyone doing swing claps, and there wasn’t one person rolling their eyes in the whole house.

Alumni from the 2000 casts performing "A Common Beat"

Dana Cooper (72A), the emcee for the opening session, said it well when he defined what a reunion means: “A union is a coming together of different nations for a specific purpose, and therefore a ‘re-union’ is coming together all over again for the same thing.” Our purposes – learning, understanding, service, communication, building understanding and hope about the future – remain unchanged in 40 years. Even better, Cooper concluded that a reunion is also about celebrating and having fun, friendships, memories and looking to the future. We have a lot to be proud of with our 40 years of significance.

In the worldwide “pivotal” year 1965, somewhere on Mackinac Island, Michigan, J. Blanton Belk and the Colwell brothers gave birth to UWP, with a vision for peace and intercultural understanding, brought about through the universal language of music.

Sary Garcia (77A), president of the Up with People International Alumni Association (UWPIAA), spoke as well. The UWPIAA, she noted, reminds us...
President’s Message
News and views from UWPIAA President, Sary Garcia (77A)

It is a great honor to begin my term as president of the UWPIAA at a time when so many exciting things are taking place. If you attended Reunion 2005, the 40th Anniversary of UWPIAA in Tucson this summer, you heard us talk about the recent launch of the Community Action Program (CAP) as well as saw the cast perform on stage. We also discussed the leadership changes in UWPIA/WorldSmart and how excited we all are to continue to support the program and to strengthen the partnership between the UWPIAA and UW.

On behalf of the UWPIAA, I want to again express my sincere gratitude to the many alumni, friends, families and corporations who volunteer their time, services, talents, money, etc. Your contributions enable the UWPIAA to continue to fulfill its mission of, “providing quality programs and services to the alumni, while supporting and strengthening the UWPIAA and UWP.”

I encourage you to become involved as much as you can in supporting the UWPIAA. There are many ways that you can contribute other than financially. You can help us find lost alumni, form a local chapter, host a reunion, provide ideas on new programs, engage your community in the support of UW/WorldSmart, keep your address information updated or submit an article to UpBeat.

Speaking of UpBeat, our newsletter will soon have a brand-new look, as will our website, uwperia.org. Once complete, our new website will have a page dedicated to how YOU can help, whether you have a couple hours, a couple days or a year or two to give. In the meantime, just go to uwperia.org/bog.html and email the person whose area you’d like to help in.

Thank you again for your incredible support!

Sary Garcia
President

In This Issue ...
First of all The UpBeat staff wants to recognize and thank our fill-in layout team Elisheva “Liz” Bassert (98E) and Stefan Heymanns (97C, 98E, 98A). Their willingness to jump in allowed Dave Martin (68C) - our regular layout designer - the opportunity to travel in the first Community Action Program (CAP). Elisheva and Stefan spent many hours to make this happen, and they did a great job. From all of us all, thank you both!

The theme for this issue is bridging the gap between the UW present and past. Many attended the 40th Reunion in Tucson, and we have many stories of celebrating and reminiscing on the good old days.

But we also have a call to mobilize again! The CAP cast’s performance at the reunion solidified the fact that alumni do have another chance to pack our bags and make a difference. (Look for more exciting CAP news in the winter issue.)

The future of an active and growing UW is now very real. UWP’s new president Tommy Spaulding (87D) sat with UpBeat and answered some questions on his dynamic vision for UW.

In addition, the Los Angeles alumni chapter sends news on their activities and growth in the southern California area. Many alumni live in that region and they are taking time to get together and get involved with WorldSmart and other alumni activities.

Many positive changes and events over the last few months fill the pages of this issue! As always we need your input to keep alumni around the world in touch.

If you have any news or stories, send them our way: UpBeat@uwperia.org.
— The UpBeat Staff
Alumni Awarded at the 40th Reunion

J. Blanton Belk Outstanding Alumnus Award Winner

Editor’s note: The following is from the letter nominating Ben Dejonge (93C) for the J. Blanton Belk Award.

Ben was living on the coast of Thailand when the devastating tsunami hit last December. Ben’s village was mostly destroyed. Although Ben’s house was not flattened like many of his neighbors, the waves swept through, destroying almost all of his belongings. Yet, instead of focusing on what he lost, Ben remained mindful of how “we are all very lucky.” He immediately focused on what he could do to help others.

Ben is not from Thailand; he is from Belgium. He could have arranged to take the next available flight back home to his parents, where there was no earthquake, no tsunami and no devastation. Instead, Ben joined forces with some of his friends and neighbors on search and recovery missions, stating, “Sometimes you wished you weren’t here, but at the end there would be no place you would rather be.” Together, they created a local aid fund, called the “Lanta Fund,” collecting donations and organizing relief work. They helped their neighbors rebuild their lives, from clean-up efforts, to purchasing wood and other materials for boat repairs, to buying a generator for a nearby school, even helping to cook a meal for the people staying in the temporary tent camps.

These are just a few examples of the many ways in which Ben personified the UWP spirit by putting others’ needs ahead of his own. For five entire months, Ben focused his efforts on giving of himself to help his community. Never mind that it had been “his” community for only a short while. All in all, Ben helped to raise and distribute about 10,400 Euros, which is roughly $12,900 US. They helped a minimum of 53 families and groups, many of whom had lost their homes, sources of income, possessions, and family members in the devastation.

Summing up his experiences, Ben titled his latest online journal entry, dated May 25, “Tired, but happy and feeling alive (life=suffering, says Buddha).” There is no one that I can think of that deserves the Outstanding Alumnus Award more than Ben Dejonge. His sacrifice, generosity, and leadership truly give UWP something to be proud of. I am honored to call him a friend.

James MacLennan Everyday Hero Award Winners

Anne Livaudais Knudsen (85E) was nominated because for twenty years now her tireless effort and dedication has kept her cast connected. She has even maintained this dedication to her cast in difficult times of her family. And she has been behind “the fund,” an account used to support cast members in need. Without her effort, cast 85E would not be as closely connected as it is today. For her hours of loving labor, her unimpeachable integrity, and her enduring solidarity to all cast members, Anne Livaudais Knudsen is truly an everyday hero.

Jack Ravenscroft (MRA, PACE, 65A) was nominated by his wife. Having experienced World War II and seen the devastation it caused, he wanted to get involved towards making the world a better place. He found a way for that in Moral Rearmament, for which he worked many years. He then helped with the incorporation of UWP and worked with it until retirement in 1981. And since then, he has been involved in his local city of Tucson, in efforts to make the area more family-friendly and safer from crime and gang-related violence.

Lonnie D. Alexander (65A) was one of the youngest people ever to travel in UWP. As he could not find it in his heart to fire his weapon when he was drafted into the U.S. Army, he was trained as a medic and still served in Vietnam. Since then, and even more after completing his medical studies, he has always been helping people wherever he could. One of his biggest successes was convincing the city council to build a new hospital so the citizens would not need to drive 45 miles for medical services.

Sam Caster (68A) is the founder of Manna Relief Ministries, together with his wife Linda. This organization supplies nutritional supplements to children with a very fragile health throughout the U.S. and other countries on all continents. Part of the effort of Sam and Manna Relief is to support global AIDS awareness concerts.

Donna Lee Davis (70A) overcame the tragedy of her children suffering from a bad form of muscular dystrophy. Instead she channeled the worries for her own children into becoming an advocate for parents of other children affected by disabilities. She has always supported her children in many different ways, and encouraged them as well to lead as active lives as possible. She also supported her family through the open-heart surgery of her youngest son Tyler.
Ten Questions for Tommy Spaulding

Tommy Spaulding (87D, 93E, 94E) became Up with People’s youngest ever CEO & President on July 26. His leadership is creating a buzz in the UWP world that hasn’t been heard for years. In his first 30 days Tommy visited the entire worldwide staff in the United States, Japan and Europe. His vision is enormous — and he hopes it will also be contagious. UpBeat asked Tommy 10 questions on behalf of the alumni:

What are your specific goals and measures for success for Up with People in 2006?

It is critical to re-inspire, reinvigorate and earn the trust of 20,000 alumni, staff, past donors, board members and friends of UWP. Having a worthwhile vision and mission are, of course, incredibly important, but it will be relationships that are crucial to our success. I don’t think there is any doubt about the value of our 40-year history or the ongoing and urgent need for global leaders. However, our organization needs a sound business plan and financial model to support its great mission. My primary goal is to build a sustainable organization of great global impact, and the measure of that success will not just be seen in 2006, but in 2016, 2026 and beyond.

How do you envision the interaction between UWP and the UWPIAA?

UWP and UWPIAA are interdependent. Period. The UWPIAA exists only because of UWP, and UWP needs the UWPIAA to help in the building of our future. My goal is to re-establish a genuine, professional bridge between these two organizations. We are lucky to have Sary Garcia (77A) as the UWPIAA president. She gets it. She understands we are not two entities; we are one — one spirit, one purpose.

I really believe UWPIAA should be more than newsletters and reunions, important and wonderful as they are. As an alum I want to be part of something greater, something relevant to the world, not just me and my castmates. The UWPIAA project in Japan and Thailand this summer — that gets me excited! Let’s use that as an example of what our organizations can achieve together in the years ahead.

Why and how should the alumni support UWP’s WorldSmart Leadership Program?

I want to make it clear I work for UWP, not WorldSmart. I think a huge misconception exists in the alumni community that UWP’s WorldSmart Leadership Program is vastly different to our experience. That assumption is dead wrong. UWP’s WorldSmart program has the exact same vision and mission statement UWP has had for 40 years — to train young people in global leadership and build bridges of understanding as a foundation for peace.

Is the program different? Yes. However, the program in the 60s and 70s was different to the program of the 80s and 90s. We will always change and grow to meet current needs. In sum, alumni should support UWP if they want to give young people today the opportunity to have a life-transforming experience, just as they did.

Before I accepted this position I did hundreds of hours of research, interviews, and financial due diligence. A common statement I heard during that process is that our alumni aren’t financial supporters. During my speech in Tucson, 1000 alumni gave a standing ovation for the vision I articulated. Hundreds approached me personally to share their support. However, in the weeks since I received only one check, for $100, from an alum in South Dakota who did not even attend the reunion. One.

For 40 years UWP relied on the deep pockets of its board members, select donors and corporations to fund its program. This model is doomed to fail because it is too reliant on economic tides and the whims of a few key individuals. Until we have broad support of people around the world, we will be constantly in danger of repeating history and closing operations.

Here is the call to action. If you are reading this interview and believe in what is being said, put down the newsletter, get your checkbook, write a check and send it to Up with People, 1600 Broadway, Suite 1460, Denver CO 80202, attention Tommy Spaulding. I will personally respond to you. It should not be difficult to do, and the amount is less important than the action you are taking to express your genuine commitment and support. Of course we want the alumni’s help with recruitment and programmatic support, but without financial support there will be no need for those other activities.

It is going to be far better to have 20,000 alumni give $100 each than one person give US$2 million. Quite frankly, I want to prove that what I have heard about alumni support in the past is wrong. I hope you do too.

How will you ensure the future of UWP?

UWP has suffered from “Founder’s Syndrome.” Many organizations with charismatic and visionary founders like Blanton Belk struggle after the leader moves on. While this is a compliment to Mr. Belk and his leadership, it has been detrimental to the long-term viability and sustainability of UWP. We need a mission and business plan around a purpose, not a person. In my speech at the 40th Reunion, I said that my goal is to inspire the alumni, staff, board members and friends of UWP to all share in our future. Our bottom line cannot be about Blanton Belk or Tommy Spaulding, it has to be about our students and the communities we impact. I know we can become the greatest leadership program in the world, and we can secure our future with unity of purpose.

In terms of our program, in the future we will not just take students to Europe, Japan and North America. To be a relevant program we must return to China. We have to go to the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. Every student who participates in the program will visit highly developed countries like Australia and Singapore, emerging nations such as South Africa and Brazil, and economically disadvantaged nations like Ethiopia and Cambodia. To truly teach global leadership young people need firsthand experience of the cultural diversity, social differences and economic disparity of our world.

You are the founder and CEO of Leader’s Challenge, a high school leadership program in Denver. Can you say a little about this organization and the relationship you envision between Leader’s Challenge and UWP now that you are the head of both organizations?

As we all know UWP’s mission is to equip young people with leadership skills and spark them to action in their communities. Leader’s Challenge is a product of that mission. I founded it five years ago because of the lessons and life experiences I had as a 17-year-old student in UWP. It hasn’t been an easy journey. Starting a nonprofit, fundraising, and developing quality curriculum is hard — very hard! But I had the “smarts” to hire smart people with skills I don’t have.

Leader’s Challenge is now the largest high school leadership program in Colorado, and it is positioned to become a national, and perhaps even international, program in the future. Being given the opportunity to lead UWP at this time is truly a perfect fit.

My vision is to develop the world’s greatest global leadership organization. In this vision UWP will have many programs, or “products.” WorldSmart is our college-aged global leadership program. In the future, Leader’s Challenge could be our high school program. These are just two programs in our short-term future, but I took this job as CEO and president intending it to be my last job. In the years to come I plan for many relevant programs to be developed under the UWP umbrella. The future is bright and I am confident in our success.

Is the current Board of Directors prepared to take UWP to the future?

We are in a rebuilding stage with the Board of Directors. One of my requests before accepting this job was to be given the opportunity to
work with Mr. Belk and the remaining board in shaping the future board. This is one of my critical objectives in the next 12-24 months.

Hideaki Otaka, Naoko Shirane, Brian Gast and Sary Garcia were the board members who weathered the storm of recent months and got us to shore safely. I wish all alumni could thank them for what they have done for UWP. Simply put, I would not be doing this interview if not for their leadership. I would like to also recognize previous board member, Hiro Nishimura (87B), UWP’s current chief operating officer, who has been instrumental in launching the WorldSmart program. Too little credit has gone his way.

Do music and performance have a role in UWP’s future? Absolutely. Music has always been the vehicle to spread our message. While recent leadership did not always see the value of music, I believe music is an integral part of UWP. However, the days of producing a US$25 million annual show-based program are over. That financial model did not allow for long-term sustainability. In any case, if you study our history it is clear that in the beginning the Colwells, Herb Allen and the Belks didn’t set out to produce a traveling musical “show.” They had a message and used music to share it. UWP has always been in the business of touching people, sparking people to action, and thereby developing global leaders, and that remains true.

What is your favorite UWP song? As far as my favorite song, it is easy to love the big songs like We’ll Be There, Room for Everyone, Moon Rider, Roads and Unfinished World, but I have always been partial to the underdog. I prefer the “B” sides of albums rather than overplayed Top 40 songs, so my favorite UWP song is Save the Dancer. Of course, I like any song Ken Ashby writes.

What will Blanton Belk’s role be in this new era of UWP? I am forever indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Belk. UWP changed my life. I would still be selling widgets for IBM if I was not touched by the vision and mission of UWP’s spirit nearly 20 years ago. Blanton has been my mentor for the past 10 years, and I have learned so much from him. His return to the role of chairman is not because of ego but out of hope for the future. We need that hope and to build trust in the UWP community.

Mr. Belk’s role will be to ensure that UWP has a solid board, outstanding senior leadership, strategic plan and renewed vision. He may be 80, but he continues to run circles around me!

Why did you take this position? Two months ago my wife, Jill, and I had our first child together, Caroline Faith. When she was born I was still in the decision-making process about this job. The moment I saw her I realized I wanted her to have the UWP experience I did. More importantly, I wanted her to have the UWP spirit in her heart that has been in my heart and has changed me as a person. It wasn’t until Caroline was born that it became really clear to me that I want to do everything I can to ensure the world has UWP for years to come. I want it to be there for Caroline and for Caroline’s children to experience.

Greater Los Angeles Alumni Chapter Gets a Facelift!

by Grant Axton (87A), Los Angeles, California

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LACUWPIA: So many letters! What does it all mean? It stands for the Greater Los Angeles Alumni Chapter of Up With People International Alumni Association. Whew! What were we thinking?

Well, for such a big city we needed a big name to make sure everyone is included. But now we need to find you. If you live in Southern California, from Ventura to San Diego and South Bay to Bakersfield or anywhere in between, and would like to be part of our mailing list, please send us an email with your address and phone number and we will add you to our database.

Currently we are trying to organize at least one social gathering every six to eight weeks in different parts of the city. So far we have had five gatherings in different parts of LA, and each time we have had many different faces. We realize LA presents a unique challenge to getting alumni together, so our goal is to have an event close enough to you that you will be inspired to come out and meet the alumni in your area. If you would like to be notified of upcoming alumni events, please contact Paul Wirtz at uwprozac@hotmail.com. We Are Many and We Are One, but there is not Too Many People for us all to Stand Together. So send us a note today and come out to a party in your neighborhood!

What’s Going on with the LA Chapter

A Universal Party in Los Angeles

by Paul Wirtz (97A), Los Angeles, California

The Greater LA Alumni Chapter had its first event of the spring at Universal City Walk in Hollywood, California, on April 23. The event was arranged by the group’s co-chairs, Allison Collins (97C) and Paul Wirtz (97A), with help from Erick Long (91B), who works for Universal as the manager of City Walk Special Events.

The evening included dinner and drinks at Café Tu Tu Tango and the after party was held at Howl at the Moon, a dueling piano bar.

About 30 alumni were in attendance at City Walk representing eras from the early 70s up through the 90s. There were some familiar faces from past gatherings as well as alumni who are new to the area or haven’t had a chance to gather with other alumni in a long time.

The event began at 6:00 p.m. and the party went well into the evening until almost midnight. This was the fifth gathering of the alumni group since November of 2004, when the group began to reconvene after several years on hiatus. This event, like the others, was a casual affair and a fun chance to mingle.

The goal of these gatherings is to create a laid back and easy atmosphere where local alumni have an opportunity to let off some steam, tell some classic stories of travels, and drop names to find out what some of the other 20,000 alumni are doing.

Being a part of the reorganization team for the LA Alumni Chapter has been beneficial in so many ways. Offering fellow alumni a chance to reconnect has kept the UWP spirit rolling, provided an opportunity for networking and a given us all a chance to find some people with a common bond in a big city. Not such an easy task in this day and age.

The resurgence of the local chapter has not only been a fun way to meet new people, but it has caught the ear of the WorldSmart program which brought a group of young travelers to Los Angeles this September. The Greater LA Alumni Chapter was asked to be part of the Local Organizing Committee. We helped make arrangements for their arrival.

“We hope to see WorldSmart students again in this area. If you are interested in helping with those logistics, please contact Paul Wirtz at uwprozac@hotmail.com. We will need your ideas, educational opportunities and desire to get involved.

The whole gang at Universal City Walk

Heidi Schinke (92E), Amanda Andrews (92E) and Erick Long (91B)
40th Reunion. He stated that we all should be proud beyond words to have “reached out and participated; touched in the historical events of the last one-third of the century: the Civil Rights struggle, the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain, the Bamboo Curtain. We were there.”

“Today,” Belk continued “there is a terrorist war, and the mission of UWP is needed more today than ever. We must build bridges of understanding, and train the leaders of tomorrow.” Belk emphasized that the UWP alumni are “catalysts” for change, and we have to bring others in too.

According to Belk, the next problem to address is the communication barrier between the Western and Islamic worlds. Mr. Belk asked the question, “Can the youth communicate and find common ground?”

One major highlight of the opening ceremony was the introduction of the new president and CEO for UWP. Congratulations and welcome to Thomas (Tommy) Spaulding (87D). Mr. Spaulding said that he sees UWP becoming an “umbrella corporation, with many projects underneath it, building leaders for the future.” His vision for UWP is to be the premiere global leadership program — something “more than just a corporation, but a spirit.” Spaulding asked that alumni not focus on his speech but rather discuss and hold onto the vision and the spirit of UWP.

Maris Segal (80C), president of CAP and a former president of the UWPIAA, also spoke at the opening ceremony with information on the new program. She said, “CAP is designed to mobilize UWP alumni around the globe in an annual international service and community-impact project, sparking alumni, their family and friends to take action in their global community.” The first CAP cast ranges in age from 22 to 62, and performed a show, “The Tree of Nations,” at the World Expo Japan, in August. They then traveled to Thailand as well to contribute in music and community service to the country devastated by the tsunami in December 2004. A preview of this show was performed during the Opening Session.

As Maris put it, “vision is nothing without action,” and these alumni prove that the UWP vision is as fresh as ever. “The Tree of Nations” included mesmerizing Japanese drumming and a beautiful rendition of Island Song.

An appearance by Dr. Toyotane Sohma, long-time friend of J. Blanton Belk, ended the opening ceremony. Dr. Sohma first saw UWP in 1965, and even seeing it now in 2005, he said, “the things which hit your heart are exactly the same.”

Dr. Sohma’s story about the beginning of the CAP cast speaks to the amazing reach of Blanton Belk and UWP: “He only calls me by my first name, almost like a grandpa. He is a true! You can read more about CAP on the UWPIAA website at uwpiaa.org, in the CAP blog at uwpiaacap05.blogspot.com or in the next issue of UpBeat.

President’s Luncheon
July 29, 2005

The highlight of this year’s President’s Luncheon was watching Cast T (for Teens) and Cast K (for Kids) perform. They truly are the future of UWP, and it
Ben Dejonghe (95C) shows emotion while graciously accepting the J. Blanton Belk Outstanding Alumnus Award. See page 3 for more of this story.

is evident that much talent has been passed on from our alumni to the next generation. It was also very amusing to see grown adults participate in a silly dance that had them going in circles around the tables touching each other’s noses and knees. What a sight! Attendees were also treated to the former dance craze Macarena, and Cuando un amigo baila, which, by the way, has no swing claps.

We also enjoyed a beautiful performance of The Sound of Peace.

The immediate past president of the UWPIAA, Stu Shepherd (78E), reminded us of the other ways the UWPIAA serves the 20,000-plus alumni of UWP. This includes not only the reunions, but also the website, UpBeat, award presentations, maintaining chapters and clubs and launching the CAP initiative.

Dr. Carolyn Lee (1971) – famously known for her “Keep Your Eye on the Ball” speech – along with Robert Dixon (77A), honored us with a rendition of the original song, Moments to Remember about the “good old days” of buses breaking down, talkative host families and parking-lot picnics with “one meat, one cheese.” Through the humor she reminded us that, “we’re so lucky, we’re so blessed, because we have these moments to remember.”

Next up was Brenda Moran (77C), former president of the UWPIAA, to present the James E. MacLennan Everyday Hero Awards to Anne Livaudais Knudsen (85E), Jack Ravenscroft (65A), Lonnie D. Alexander (65A), Sam Caster (68A) and Donna Lee Davis (70A), and the J. Blanton Belk Outstanding Alumnus Award.

The J. Blanton Belk Outstanding Alumnus Award is designed to recognize one outstanding individual, and is presented annually to one alum who has made an exceptional contribution to humankind. Ben Dejonghe (95C) was presented with this honor. As Moran said to Ben, “You embody the spirit, unaware that his presence was required for this moment. In Ben’s own words after the reunion: “At some point, there was an award ceremony for the alumni who had distinguished themselves. It then fell upon me that this might have been the reason why I was invited here, and I started to feel a bit nervous. I don’t like being in a direct spotlight that much. (Didn’t I do the spotlight in our shows?) As my name didn’t appear amongst the nominated, I felt calmness return. I was just here at this reunion to enjoy a nice time. “Only when a picture of the Phi-Phi islands appeared on the big video screen, did something click in my brain. This was the place where I was when the tsunami hit, and that was why they wanted me here. I had too many tears in my eyes to see any of the other images on the video. All I felt was shock and a whole lot of pain/fear/relief or whatever pouring either in or out of my body.

“Can I just finish this part with saying thank you again to everybody: friends, family, Uppies and donators. It’s been a powerful life experience. And thank you to the UWPIAA for recognizing our work and offering me such a great opportunity to have a fantastic break with old and new friends.”

For more of Ben’s response go to uwpiia.org/dejonghe.html and read a letter of appreciation he composed for all alumni.

Congratulations, Ben! People like you prove that UWP lives on in ways we can only dream about.

Reliving the Dream: The Era Shows
July 30, 2005
Representing more than 500, a group of Mexican alumni had a special opening for our last “hoorah” at Reunion. They presented Blanton and Betty Belk with a personal letter from Vicente Fox, the President of Mexico. The letter spoke of the way UWP represents communication through music, family values, honesty, building better understanding and the preservation of world peace. President Fox relayed his personal congratulations to the Belks on the 40th anniversary of UWP.

Then it was time for our own alumni to reclaim the stage in true UWP fashion, with the reunion casts each performing a selection of songs from their travel year. It was amazing to watch, because it continued on page 8...
Editor’s Note: The “40 Years and Counting” show at Reunion 2005 was a special event that brought together the people and music from “Sing Out!,” the beginning of UWP, with the people and music from the final show, “A Common Beat.”

He hall was charged with the energy of over a thousand people who had given some portion of their lives to UWP and its spirit. Into the spotlight stepped Peter Sullivan, an emcee from the 60s, Pat Berry Glassner, former UWP alumni director, and Matthew Samler (00E). They spoke of the world in which “Sing Out!” came into being. The accompanying video showed old performances, girls in jumpers and boys in their shirts and ties, the Colwell Brothers ... the show that changed so many lives.

As the video ended, onto the stage stepped a dozen silhouettes as Jen Moody (97E and CAP) sang, “I know that I’m not dreaming...” She was joined by John Curry (89D and CAP), and they continued the musical question. As the lights came up, Jackie Taylor (68B), in a voice that moved everyone to the edge of their seats, embraced the reality that “there is a common beat that connects us all.”

As the song reached a crescendo, the Colwell Brothers (Paul, Ralph, Steve and Ted) stepped onto the stage, and from everywhere in the house poured the cast. In an instant, on stage was the same picture that only moments before had been on the screen. They sang Don’t Stand Still and Showboat — rocking the house as they “sang out.” Then the men started into the Paul Revere “V” that was captured in so many old photos; the masculine force shook the crowd, and when you thought you might be able to breathe again the women moved back in to the opening strains of Freedom Isn’t Free. From there the show moved forward ... and the “wonder of it all” was that every solo voice from the 60s was better than ever.

The beat kept going as onto the stage danced the exuberance of youth in a confirmation that they would “keep the beat” — and they did. Dozens of cast members from the year 2000 celebrated the many nations we have touched and from which we come in the world’s cultural mosaic. Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas! All came together to sing a song of peace.

Cyddia Rodrigo (65A) led everyone back on with the affirmation that there is a “common beat”!

Pat Ector (66A) spoke the words to a poem heard by thousands years ago and still as poignant as ever. After much applause, the house was silenced by the gentle lyrics of God’s Skin as a video showed the many faces of the future. A rousing updated rendition of Up with People rocked the house as everyone joined in the singing.

The show was not perfect; it was instead filled with a spirit that was so real you could feel it touch your heart!

Margaret Inge (67A) was an UWP choreographer during the 60s and worked for UWP from 1967-1971 in many casts. She also had a very large role in the era choreography for “40 Years and Counting.”

The 1980 era

Remembering the beginnings of UWP: The Colwell Brothers and Herb Allen
Planning Your Legacy
by Stuart Shepherd (78E), Immediate Past President, North Platte, Nebraska

A personal legacy is a beautiful way to inspire in others the qualities that mean the most to us as individuals: dependability, dedication to values, a belief in neighbor helping neighbor and devotion to family. Not only do we leave our values, but when we pass on we also leave behind our assets and possession. Though material items are not as valuable as our legacy, they need to be dealt with in the form of a will.

Unfortunately, many people have misinformed ideas of what becomes of their estate after death. In the US, each state’s rules and regulations for those who die intestate (without a will) are inflexible and rigid, often causing needless anxiety among family members, exaggerated costs and red tape. The courts determine everything from property settlement to child custody, and this pre-made plan may not match an individual’s desires at all.

The sad fact is that some 70 percent of US citizens over 65 die without having a will. If you have no estate plans, now is the best time to compile a thorough fundraising database that is country specific. The goal here is to empower future students with a list of fundraising ideas created by alumni that will actually generate funds. I encourage any and all fundraising ideas to be included in this database.

Please email me your fundraising ideas at stuart.shepherd@upwithpeople.org.

Ten Easy Questions that will tell you if you need a will:

• Do you own assets such as life insurance, a residence, retirement accounts or stock?
• Are any of the assets owned jointly?
• Do you own a business?
• Are you now married?
• Have you been married more than once?
• Are your parents now living?
• Do you have children or grandchildren?
• Do you have sisters or brothers?
• Do any of your dependants have special medical needs?
• Are you interested in helping UWPIAA?

If you answered “yes” to the first question or any of the other questions, an estate plan might help ensure that your assets benefit the people and charities you support. If you do have a will, one way to extend your memory and influence beyond your lifetime is to include charitable organizations, like the UWPIAA, in your will.

Giving through one’s will is a popular means of charitable support. Organizations you’ve supported during your lifetime can benefit from a bequest in your will when you leave them money or property to help finance their work. Many people find they can be more generous by giving through their will than during their lifetimes.

Regardless of whether you pursue any additional estate planning, you should definitely draft a will and review it at least every two years. If you are interested in honoring the UWPIAA with a contribution in your will, the following is suggested wording for different types of bequests. You and your attorney may find these helpful.

• For the residue of the estate (the amount remaining after you have provided for your heirs):
  “All the residue of my estate, including real and personal property, I give, devise, and bequeath to the UWPIAA.”
• For a specific piece of property:
  “I give, devise, and bequeath to the UWPIAA, (description of property, including location).”

The UWPIAA can help you accomplish your goals through proper planning. If you have questions on wills – or other forms of estate planning such as trusts and annuities and how you can continue your legacy through UWPIAA, please don’t hesitate to contact:

Up With People International Alumni Association
PMB 466
17011 Lincoln Ave.
Parker, CO 80134
U.S.A.
+1 917-553-9564

How Did You Fundraise for the Program?
by Scott Reeder (WS 2005 Spring), Denver, Colorado

Greetings fellow alumni! I am one of the newest additions to the Up with People alumni network. After traveling with the WorldSmart Leadership Program in February of 2005, I am still fostering new friendships within the alumni base and continuing the priceless friendships that I made within my own crew.

Recently I accepted a position with WorldSmart and now work in the Denver office. I look forward to continuing our UWP legacy with projects that connect the alumni with future students.

I am sending out a request to all alumni. I am looking to update its progress. Best wishes to all!

UWPIAA Supporting Member's Ad
Editor’s Note: Between February 11–20, 2005, Christopher Miller (00A) traveled to Norway for the International Student Festival. This experience was very much like his UWP travels, and he sent UpBeat a journal entry from his trip back home.

As I fly over the ocean thinking about the whirlwind of emotions I just left behind, the only thing keeping my attention is the screen a few seats ahead of me showing the airspeed, the distance to my destination and the time remaining until I get home. I’m sitting next to a middle-aged woman wearing a French perfume, while listening to the German announcements over the speaker, chewing on some Norwegian candy and overhearing the Russian conversation taking place in a nearby seat.

The only thing I dread now is that in eight hours I will be home and one of the first things I will be asked is, “How was it?”

I know it is going to happen. As soon as I stepped off the plane from my UWP year that is what my mom asked. It’s a genuine question, but why does it feel so overwhelming? I can imagine no possible way to articulate exactly how it was. Certainly if I dismiss the question with something cordial like, “It was great!” they’ll ask for more. I don’t have more though. I don’t even pretend to know the words I should use to describe this experience.

I just spent the last 10 days at the International Student Festival in Trondheim, Norway. I can’t help but compare the experience to my UWP cast year. Put a lot of young, international students together with a common interest, let them loose to discuss, debate and solve issues that affect their lives, and watch the magic exude.

This year’s festival focused on education and how it shapes the future of so many people. This was the eighth festival put on entirely by students for more than 400 people. I met students from all over the world: Indonesia, Germany, The Philippines, Italy, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Lithuania, Columbia, Malaysia, Iran, Poland, Canada, Ethiopia and China. Over 150 countries represented themselves. Unlike UWP though, I was one of only a few Americans.

It’s hard to pinpoint the most outstanding experiences. I remember being honored to attend a discussion by Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Laureate from Kenya. Her compassion and desire for revolution was contagious. I spent a lot of my time studying other cultures as well. As I learned in UWP, it’s one thing to read about different cultures in books or hear about them in school, but when getting to know first hand what that culture is like, that is a sight to be seen.

I relate to what a fellow participant of the festival said to me. While I was leaving he shared, “When I look at a map from now on, I won’t just see other countries. I’ll see the faces of everyone I’ve met here. America won’t just look like America anymore; it will have your face in its borders.” For someone who didn’t always articulate himself well in my language, he hit that nail on the head precisely.

Just like in UWP, I could not have attended this trip without the support of others, some of which were alumni. And, just like in UWP, I can’t thank those supporters enough.

An experience that reignites the fire of concern and excitement, empathy and passion — that is priceless, indeed.

I suppose it’s not a bad thing to be speechless when asked, “How was it?” To even have the experience at all is a blessing. I still feel overwhelmed at times to think that I won’t be able to articulate exactly what it meant to me. Maybe relying on words is where I fall short. Soon this plane will land, and I will try my best.
1960s

John G. Pribram (66B) is chairman of a project in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to make sure that pictures of the “Father of our Country” (the first US President, George Washington) were given to class rooms all over the city. This project is sponsored by the Military Order of the Purple Heart, chapter 589.

Approximately $8,000 was raised and 149 schools were visited. Because this program was so successful, other chapters are initiating similar programs in other areas of the state and nation. Pribram received an award from the organization’s national commander, Robert Lichtenberger, for his Americanism Service to the Community. Also the Oklahoma superintendent of Public Instruction, Sandy Garrett, expressed her appreciation for Pribram’s dedication, patriotism and positive influence on the children in Oklahoma.

Marilyn “Heen” McCord (67A) writes: “I don’t know where the years have gone. I have been an RN since 1973, but I retired a few years ago thinking I would have a lot more time to get things done. Boy, was I wrong. I have been married for 29 years and have two sons, ages 25 and 27. I am still in contact with Marti “Snyder” Gray (67A) after all these years and she just moved within an hour from me. We both attended the 40th reunion this summer in Tucson. I would love to hear from alumni. My email address is marilynmcord@hotmail.com.”

1970s

Eva Dahlquists, (79B) writes:
“I live in Höllviken in the southwest corner of Sweden. My two sons, Björn (15) and David (13), and I live in a beautiful house. I work as a general manager for a company in the stock business. In my free time I take dance lessons, play the piano and meet with friends. I would love to hear from all of you. Send me an email sometime at edoplanet@telia.com.”

1980s

Rochelle Luety Browne (A82) writes: “I recently joined the Prudential Aegis realty team as a realtor in Tucson. Prior to this career change in November 2004, I was working in the mortgage business as a loan processor. I enjoyed the business and became familiar with the real estate market by processing loans and helping people find their home. However, I knew I should be on the other end of the process and dealing one-on-one with people (I wonder where I got that from). My husband, Neal, has now joined my team and we are excited. If you are ever in Tucson and want to meet up or are needing an agent please contact me at rbrowne@prudentialaegisrealty.com”

1990s

Michael Geoghegan (92A) has settled down in Southwest France where he is running an Irish Celtic bed & breakfast located in a 17th-century building on foundations dating from the 13th century. If you would like to learn more about this cross-cultural B&B, you can check out his web site: lesceltesdegascogne.com or contact Michael at ryanpierresdad@yahoo.co.uk.

In addition, Michael’s family has recently expanded. On July 22, 2005, Liam Antoine joined his four-year-old brother Ryan Pierre. Liam was so big at birth that the hospital staff told Michael to put away all the baby clothes that are made for 0 to 3 months. Michael, his wife, Isabelle, and the two boys hope to see all their friends and fellow alumni in France soon!

Tom Koenen-Meijer (92C) and his husband Martin report that they have opened an English tearoom “Kings & Queens” in October 2004 in the south part of the Netherlands. Guests’ reactions have been very positive. People enjoy the concept, food, service and establishment. Visit their website at kings-queens.nl. If you have pictures or other memorabilia from royal families, let them know, as they are looking for more items to decorate their tearoom.

Niels Klaversjtin (92C) and his wife Linda announce the birth of a new baby girl, Maarit, who was born on April 20. When she is a little older she can play with her brother Swen, who is now three years old.

Andreas Ekström (93B, 94E) and wife Lisa Kirsebon (94B) had a baby girl named Judit on July 31, 2005. They live in Lund located in the south-
the very south of Sweden, where they also got married in 2001. They can be reached at andreas.ekstrom@sydsvenskan.se or lisakirsebom@hotmail.com.

Yasmin Abidi (94A) has been living in Hollywood, California for several months now. Recently she was given the opportunity from another alum to work for a catering company that served at a Screen Actors’ Guild party. While serving, she met a number of celebrities such as Camryn Manheim, Tom Bosley and Elliott Gould. She is enjoying all her experiences in her new town and hopes to hear from fellow alumni. Her email is yahidi@hotmail.com.

Tiffany (Gilchrist) Rutledge (96E) writes: “Hello to everyone from my student year 96E and my EC year 97B&E! I live just an hour north of Toronto in our little house on Chemong Lake overlooking our dock, boat, canoe and a gorgeous sunset. My husband, Andy, and I just had a new baby girl on August 25th (our third-year wedding anniversary). Julianna Lynne is an absolute joy, and we can’t imagine how we ever lived without her. I will go back to teaching in September. I have been completely out of touch with the UWP world for a long time now, so I’d love to hear from you: tiffanyrutledge@hotmail.com or 908 Kelly Blvd., Bridgenorth, ON K0L 1H0, Canada.”

Jessica Heuchert Fletcher (97A) and TJ, were married June 1, 2002. They are celebrating the birth of their daughter, Isabelle Evelyn, born June 19, 2005. Isabelle arrived four weeks early, weighing only 4lbs. 6oz. Because Isabelle was premature, she stayed in the hospital for her first two weeks, but is now home with her parents and is doing very well. They currently reside in Eagan, Minnesota. Email her at jlfletcher02@yahoo.com.

Natasha (Nieratko) Parsons (98A) writes: “I am pleased to announce that I have had a positive career change. I am now a realtor with Baird & Warner. I work in Chicago, but I can work with any homebuyer or seller in the US. I hope to hear from you at (847) 367-1855 or email me: natashaparsons@bairdwarner.com.”

Ria Bernaerts (98E) writes: “Tom Demeersman and I got married on June 4, 2005. We had a marvelous day with a few host families at our wedding party and some of my cast friends: Anne Loefs, Igna Beckers and Ulrike Staps (all 98E). I started a new job at Europabank last March. We are now living in Merksem (close to Antwerp), but we will be moving to a house in my home town, Nijlen, in September 2006. Contact us at riabernaerts@skynet.be, Bredabaan 876 Bus 7, 2170 Merksem, Belgium.”

Desirée (Villareal) Figarino (98E) was married on March 5, 2004 to Ryan Figarino and had their first child, Madelina Rosita, on October 9, 2004. Desirée is currently an orthodontic assistant and nursing assistant. She will complete her nursing degree by fall 2006. Her new address is 3312 N 86th St. Milwaukee, WI, 53333, and she would love to hear from her UWP friends.

2000s

Lindsay Jenkins (00B) has recently started a 27-month commitment to the Peace Corps in Niger, West Africa. As a health care worker in the desert area, some of her responsibilities include providing education on HIV/AIDS and teaching nutrition for pre/post-natal women, babies and families. She will also run workshops about clean water and cleanliness, assist in the health care centers in rural villages, give demonstrations, gardening hints, general health care and whatever else is needed. If you would like to send a letter, she would love to hear from you. Her address is Lindsay Jenkins, PCV Corps de la Paix, B.P., 10537 Niamey, Niger, West Africa.

Remembering Andreas

by Heidi Fässler (98B), Altendorf, Switzerland, Vice President, Swiss Alumni Association

Recently Andreas Lüdi’s (89C) parents contacted me with the very sad news that Andreas had died at the age of 37 in a tragic accident on February 24 in Cabarete, Dominican Republic. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Yelaine Betancourt Lüdi and his daughter Celine.