

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
**Chapter NEWS**

"Published as a benefit to members of the Penn State Montgomery County Alumni Chapter."

PENN STATE Montgomery County Alumni Chapter P.O. Box 1031 Blue Bell, PA 19422

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

I hope you all are enjoying the recent spurts of warm weather as the spring months approach us! A full quarter has already passed in this new year and our chapter is continuing to see positive growth in membership. To put a figure to my words, membership has grown approximately 36% since the beginning of the year! This steady growth rate puts us on track to meet and potentially exceed our membership goals by the end of 2007. I would like to personally welcome all of our new members to the Chapter

and thank you for your support!

You may ask, "How does membership growth benefit me?"

For starters, increasing our membership allows us to increase our operating funds that, in return, help defray the costs of our events. With all of our events aimed at providing you with access to a large network of Penn State Grads in Montgomery County, we try our best to minimize our event costs in order to better our attendance. In addition, increases in mem-

bership help our Chapter diversify our resources and contacts in our "Member Directory" located on our website, [psumontco.com](http://psumontco.com). As this direc-

**"I look forward to your distinctive thoughts and to the exciting spring and summer months filled with good times and great memories."**








tory grows, you will have  
*(continued on page 4)*

**RECONNECT WITH A WHOLE NEW WEBSITE**

If [www.psumontco.com](http://www.psumontco.com) is at the top of your favorite places list, or if you don't know what a favorite places list means, its still always important to check out the Penn State MontCo Web site. Not only

are important updates like new events and cancellations posted, but other features are constantly growing. The job postings, message boards, and a news feed can give you new leads and in-

formation every day. Take a few minutes to check out what its got to offer, you may find exactly what you are looking for. See below for a few ideas:

-  **3 Year Memberships**— This discounted deal can only be offered through the Web site.
-  **Advertise**—Give your business a simple boost while reaching out to your fellow alumni.
-  **Pictures of Events**—Browsing through these can pump up some excitement for the next MontCo activity or celebration.
-  **Order T-Shirts**—you will be the envy of your Penn State friends in this stylin' tee!
-  **Ticket Exchange**—Football games, theater tickets and more!
-  **Donate to the Scholarship**—You can help a Penn State student from Montgomery County, and its tax deductible.
-  **Discounts**—Alumni are offering these great deals to their businesses just for you!



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# EAT AND RUN: COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATES

## Upcoming Dates for Manna\*:

April 14

June 23

August 18

\*All events on Saturdays at 3:30 p.m.

What is essentially a small soup kitchen located in Lansdale, Pa., Manna on Main Street has become a meaningful experience for both the Penn State Alumni and the guests invited to dinner.

At this event, members of the PSU MontCo chapter cook a meal for people in need.

Then Penn Staters and guests sit down to enjoy the food and have a pleasant time dining together. The most recent Mannas were so successful that additional dates have been reserved! (See list of dates to the left.)

Manna does not require much time out of your schedule, and this

small commitment yields huge rewards for yourself and the community.

Sign up as soon as possible at [www.psumontco.com](http://www.psumontco.com) because space is very limited. If you have a recipe idea or menu suggestion, e-mail Doug at [community@psumontco.com](mailto:community@psumontco.com).

## MANNA ON MAIN STREET



After getting a "taste" of Manna on Main Street in January...



... MontCo Alumni just could not stay away in February!



## RELAY FOR LIFE

Summer is quickly approaching, and that means longer days and more outdoor activities. A great way to take advantage of that while giving back to the community is by joining the Penn State Montgomery County Alumni Association in the fight against cancer at this year's Relay for Life.

The event is hosted by the American Cancer

Society at the Upper Merion High School on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Participation can range from donating money or involving yourself in fundraising events, to helping the Penn State team complete their laps around the track.

Your support is needed no matter how you choose to pitch in.

Visit the Web site

at [www.psumontco.com](http://www.psumontco.com) for articles about Relay for Life. In the Community Service section there is more information about the event background and volunteer experience, as well as links to donation and progress tracking Web sites. You can also e-mail Doug at [community@psumontco.com](mailto:community@psumontco.com) or Sandy at [pastpresident@psumontco.com](mailto:pastpresident@psumontco.com).

**HEART OF THE LION**

Graduations are a time to honor one's accomplishments and academic success. But for Earl Catagnus, Jr. the ceremony this past winter at Penn State Abington was so much more.

Catagnus, a 28-year-old veteran of the Marine Corps, was presented the Purple Heart and a service award from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives at graduation. In September, the Marine Corps notified him that he was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds he received in November of 2004 during combat in Fallujah, Iraq.

Unfortunately, the Marine Corps could not send it to him in the mail because the Purple Heart had to be given in a formal ceremony. His wife, Rebecca, knew that there is no crowd like a room full of Penn State fans. She suggested that he request Chancellor Karen Sandler of Penn State Abington to conduct the ceremony when he graduated. Sandler gladly accepted the offer, and also nominated Catagnus for a citation from the state's legislature.

When the awards were presented at graduation the crowd gave a standing ovation. "That moment was my favorite Penn State memory," Catagnus said. "I was completely humbled by the experience."

The applause was well deserved. The recent graduate earned two degrees, a bachelor's in History and in Life Science. In order to graduate early, he persevered through 25 credits a semester and death with four family deaths; all within the year he came back to school after Iraq. The academics were no sweat for him compared to the training he received as a Marine. "A couple of hours of class per day were not a problem," he said. "I had spent 8 to 10 hours in class [while in the Marine Corps], and was tested on that information verbatim the next day."

Catagnus has high praises for the university, especially the History division at Abington. "Penn State gave me the knowledge and writing skills needed to excel, while the faculty supported me every step of

the way," he said.

His successes are achieved in many forms. Catagnus' positive attitude was molded long before his classes at the university, and even before the Marine Corps. When he was a child, his grandfather, a retired Navy Corpsman, taught

**"It is like a family. I was their mom, dad, priest and brother."**

**-Earl Catagnus Jr.**

him duty, self-sacrifice, and patriotism. During school he applied his Penn State education to publish a comprehensive analysis of infantry squad tactics used during the Battle of Fallujah. That analysis changed Marine Corps doctrine and "made it around the world." While in combat in Iraq, Catagnus provided stability for his troops. "It is like a family. I was their mom, dad, priest and brother. Seeing them



Earl Catagnus Jr.

perform so well was enormously satisfying," he said.

Recently, Catagnus was accepted to Temple University's PhD program for History. He is currently writing a combat memoir called *Banshee One*. The story chronicles his Marines experiences in combat, and the brotherhood that was forged under fire.

One of Catagnus' life mottos is, "Always step forward, never stand

**NEW BOARD MEMBERS: GEORGE CONWAY AND REBECCA CATAGNUS**

**George Conway**

**Social/Athletic Chair**

George graduated in May 2006 with a degree in Supply Chain Management. During his time at Penn State he was involved with Student Government, as well as a business fraternity. He recently moved to Lansdale for his new job. He'd like to find new and different ways to get people involved in PSU MontCo. His favorite sandwich is "of course Peanut Butter and Jelly".



**Rebecca Catagnus**

**Public Relations Chair**

Rebecca graduated from high school in Kailua, Hawaii in 1996. During her time in the Marine Corps she worked her way up from a combat correspondent to the editor of the nationally circulated *Continental Marine* magazine. She graduated from Penn State Abington with a bachelor's in Communications in December 2005. Rebecca enjoys hiking, reading and playing with her two golden retrievers Jody and Dave.





**Penn State Alumni  
Association  
Montgomery County  
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**P.O. Box 1031  
Blue Bell, PA 19422**

**president@psumontco.com**

**Are you connected?  
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**Montgomery County Chapter**

**Penn State  
Alumni Association**

## **Upcoming Events**

**2007**

### **April**

14—Manna on Main Street

17—Chapter Meeting

### **May**

### **June**

8—Relay for Life

23—Manna on Main Street

*Do you have an idea for an event? E-mail  
Martin at [president@psumontco.com](mailto:president@psumontco.com)!*

*Check [www.psumontco.com](http://www.psumontco.com) for up to the  
minute updates!*

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access to a valuable number of Alumni contacts that you can network with for various personal and professional reasons. Lastly, a portion of the funds that we receive from membership dues are allocated to our Endowed Scholarship Fund in which we help qualified Montgomery County Penn State Students pay for the rising costs of their tuition. To sum it all up, increases in membership allow us to increase the quality of offerings that we provide to you and our community!

Based on your feedback, we have actively been planning a number of upcoming events. Feel free to browse our website's "Events" page for up to the minute details of these offerings. A brief portion of our upcoming events can also be

found to the left.

If there is anything that you would like to address in person concerning our Chapter, please feel free to contact me at 201-981-7133 or by email at [president@psumontco.com](mailto:president@psumontco.com). I look forward to your distinctive thoughts and to the exciting spring and summer months filled with good times and great memories.

"We Are... Penn State"

**Martin R. Cepeda, Jr. '05,  
President  
PSU Montgomery County  
Alumni Association**