

# Department of Work Environment Alumni Newsletter

Volume II

March 2009

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## Congratulations December 2008 Graduates

Chunfu Liu, ScD  
Occupational Epidemiology

Gregory Morose, ScD  
Cleaner Production / Pollution  
Prevention

John Martin, MSc  
Occupational & Environmental  
Hygiene

## Continuing Education

Are you considering earning another  
certificate or graduate degree?

Do you know someone interested in a  
Work Environment certificate or  
degree?

Get in touch with us! The Department  
of is expanding both its on-campus and  
distance learning programs. This is an  
opportunity to expand your skills and  
make yourself more valuable in the  
marketplace.

For more information, contact our  
administrator Ms. Sokny Long,  
[Sokny\\_Long@uml.edu](mailto:Sokny_Long@uml.edu)

## Professor Laura Punnett recognized in Denmark

Laura Punnett was the honored guest of

Dear Alumni,

The beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year brought many milestones and honors for our department and its faculty, graduates and students. Most notably, the Department of Work Environment is in its 21st year of contributing to the field of occupational safety and health.

As you will see, there is additional good news to report. The department graduated 3 students in December and new enrollment is up. David Wegman's vision and leadership were recognized back in December, which many of you helped celebrate. Professor Laura Punnett's work was recognized by the National Research Centre for the Working Environment, in Denmark.

Sometimes the most important milestones are invisible ones. I hope you will take a moment to reflect on the things in your own life that have brought you satisfaction and the ways in which your contributions have made the world a better place.

We will continue to stay in touch and I sincerely hope you will be able to participate in alumni events or share news of your lives. Please send us your thoughts through our department administrator Ms. Sokny Long ([Sokny\\_Long@uml.edu](mailto:Sokny_Long@uml.edu)).

Best wishes,

**Margaret Quinn**

Chair, Alumni Outreach



## Alumni Spotlight: John Pentikis, MSc 1991

(seated far right in photo)

the National Research Centre for the Working Environment (Copenhagen, Denmark) in January 2009. Of great interest to the Centre was Laura's findings that it is important to focus on the connection between health issues like smoking, unhealthy diet and low exercise and people's experiences of stress at their workplace.

Laura visited as a member of the international advisory board for the research project "The FINALE project - Frame for interventions for preserved work ability, long term effect." The FINALE project addresses similar issues to those being explored here in Lowell, but using different methods. Laura notes "It is interesting for me to compare the different approaches close up. At the same time I get a chance to learn more about health promotion."

## Be in touch!

We are hoping you will have news to share with your classmates and colleagues. **Please tell us your professional & academic accomplishments, marriage, births, retirement, etc.**

Please be sure to send us your most recent contact information so you will continue to receive the newsletter and event invitations! *Email Ms. Sokny Long ([sokny\\_long@uml.edu](mailto:sokny_long@uml.edu)) and include:*

- Name
- Email address
- Mailing address
- Phone number
- Current employer
- Current title

**Your private contact information will never be published.**

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One of the Department of Work Environment's earliest graduates, John is now an ergonomist for the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. A recent project of his was conducting ergonomic evaluations at Red River Army Depot (RRAD) of production lines that repair large tracked vehicles such as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle (pictured) and the Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles coming back from Iraq. Although RRAD had embarked on an aggressive lean six sigma initiative to improve production rates there were still deficiencies at workstations. The ergonomic assessments have resulted in workstation improvement and a significant reduction in risk to a repetitive motion injury.

John writes:

My WED education has allowed me to conduct field work and training courses in over 30 states and six countries to not only Army Soldiers and civilians but to the other Department of Defense agencies, and government organizations such as the Transportation Security Administration, Defense Commissary Agency, General Services Administration, Government Printing Office, and the Armed Forces Network to name a few. The excellent foundation that the Department of Work Environment provided has resulted in both personal and professional satisfaction. It is very rewarding to be able to creatively apply my skills to make workplaces safer and more satisfying for Soldiers and civilian workers who support the Soldier.

The memory that sticks out the most during my WED days was I had a class where it was just Dr. Wegman and me. It was a great day and while reading the Boston Globe I decided to play hooky and drive to the Cape. No sooner than I make my decision I turned over the page of the paper to finish the article and there is a picture of Dr. Wegman staring me right in the eyes somehow knowing I was getting ready to blow off his class. Needless to say the Cape had to wait for another day.

## Reception for David Wegman

Stay tuned for a late spring reception!

Mother Nature and Murphy's Law prevailed with an ice storm on December 12, the day of the celebration for David Wegman. Fallen trees and electrical lines, power failures, and the closing of the University resulted in cancellation of the reception honoring David and his leadership of the School of Health and Environment (SHE). The good news is that more than \$27,000 was raised for the Wegman SHE Scholarship Fund. Thank you to all who contributed to the scholarship and to the scrapbook of memories we prepared for David.

A smaller event for family and close friends scheduled for that same evening went on as planned. Many colleagues from the different facets of David Wegman's career were on hand telling stories that were very funny, often poignant, and a testament to the wide ranging impact that he has had on public health throughout his career.

Later this spring another reception will be held for David and Peggy Wegman so friends can drop in and say hello. We hope that many alumni will be able to visit campus for this event. In the meantime, you can still send your wishes to be added to the scrapbook or address any questions about the scrapbook or scholarship to [Catherine\\_Galligan@uml.edu](mailto:Catherine_Galligan@uml.edu).

## *Congratulations to the recipients of the Department's recognition:* **Publication of the Month**

**Jan 2009:** Bello D, Redlich CA, Stowe, MH, Sparer J, Woskie SR, Streicher RP, Hosgood HD and Liu Y. Skin Exposure to Aliphatic Polyisocyanates in the Auto Body Repair and Refinishing Industry: A Quantitative Assessment. *Annals of Occupational Hygiene* 2008 52(2):117-124

**Feb 2009:** Cifuentes M, Sembajwe G, Tak SW, Gore R, Kriebel D, Punnett L. The association of major depressive episodes with income inequality and the human development index. *Social Science and Medicine*. 2008 Aug; 67(4):529-39.

**Mar 2009:** Fabian P, McDevitt JJ, DeHaan WH, Fung ROP, Cowling BJ, Chan KH, Leung GM, Milton DK. (2008) Influenza Virus in Human Exhaled Breath: An Observational Study. *PLoS ONE*. 2008; 3(7): e2691. Published online 2008 July 16.