

# Alumni Connection

SUMMER 2008

A PUBLICATION FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF SC4



Tyrone Burrell, Port Huron  
Class of 1993

## Alumnus profile: Rob Thomson

### Enjoys Yankees leadership role

Rob Thomson's dedication to hard work has taken him from the halls of St. Clair County Community College to the ballpark of Yankee Stadium.

Thomson is bench coach for the New York Yankees, continuing a career influenced by SC4's professors and coaches.

"It was very instrumental in me moving forward," he said.

Thomson of Tampa, Fla., grew up in Sarnia and attended SC4 for a year before transferring to the University of Kansas. He was drafted by the Detroit Tigers in 1985 and played in the Tigers system for more than two years before moving into coaching. He joined the Yankees in 1990.

Former SC4 baseball coach Dick Groch had a



Rob Thomson

positive impact on Thomson. "He was one of the best baseball people I've ever been around," Thomson said. "We still keep in touch."

Through people such as Groch and others he's met in his career, Thomson said he learned how to build strong relationships with his colleagues and teammates.

It's about respecting people, and you'll get respect in return. In anything in life, it's dealing with people who make the product."

His advice to SC4 graduates is that working hard will bring its rewards.

"Nothing is given away. You have to earn it."

For a longer version of this story, visit [www.sc4.edu/alumniprofiles](http://www.sc4.edu/alumniprofiles).

## Alumna profile: Debra Ladensack

### Prepares local students for success

Debra Ladensack has satisfied her need to benefit others as principal at Fort Gratiot Middle School, where she prepares students for life in and out of the classroom.

"Making plans for the success of our students is what I enjoy most," said Ladensack, who lives in Burtchville Township.

She earned an associate of arts degree from SC4 and bachelor of arts in communication study from the University of Windsor before spending several years locally in advertising for the banking industry.

She then earned her teaching certification from the University of Michigan-Flint and a master's degree in American culture from the



Debra Ladensack

University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School.

She first taught English at Port Huron High School. She served as assistant principal or principal at several Port Huron area elementary schools and has been at Fort Gratiot Middle School for three years.

Starting at SC4 was a perfect fit for her and her family. "It helped me mature," she said.

Ladensack every day sees the importance of higher education.

Attending college is crucial in today's world, she said. "We live in a global economy, and that's not going to stop."

For a longer version of this story, visit [www.sc4.edu/alumniprofiles](http://www.sc4.edu/alumniprofiles).

## Message from the alumni president

St. Clair County Community College and the SC4 Alumni Association in July celebrated special Homecoming events for SC4 alumni, family and friends.

As this newsletter was going to press, the final details were being



Robert Carson

completed for a celebration July 9 and 10. The Homecoming events were in honor of the college's 85th anniversary and coincided with the annual Boat Week celebrations for the Port Huron-

to-Mackinac Island Sailboat Race.

The college and alumni association participated in the annual Rotary International Day Parade on July 9 in downtown Port Huron. A special parade float honored the 85th anniversary and alumni through the years.

On July 10, a Homecoming tent on campus gave alumni a chance to socialize with faculty and staff and to tour campus. The event was during Family Night of Boat Week, so guests also enjoyed festivities along the Black River in downtown Port Huron.

We at the SC4 Alumni Association know that many of you formed great friendships at SC4. We are proud to connect alumni with each other and give alumni a chance to speak with faculty and staff who helped in their education.

Please update us on how you are doing by completing the card on Page 4 of this newsletter or at [www.sc4.edu/alumni](http://www.sc4.edu/alumni).

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# News from SC4

## Message from the college president

As St. Clair County Community College celebrates its 85th anniversary, we've taken opportunities to tell stories of success from 1923 through 2008. These examples just highlight stories our alumni create every day.

Our alumni play an important role in SC4's past, present and future. You've guided new students either personally or through example. Your experiences at SC4 serve as effective and powerful testaments to what a college education can provide.



Dr. Rose Bellanca

Several alumni played an important role in the 84th annual Commencement ceremony May 9. Alumni from nearly every decade were represented by a member of an SC4 graduating class:

- **Erik Woods** of Warren, Class of 2006, is a Web site interface developer for ePrize.
- **Tyson Connolly** of Port Huron, Class of 1994, earned a bachelor of science degree in economics and is an outside sales representative for Marshall E. Campbell Co.
- **Robin Frontiero** of Port Huron, Class of 1987, earned a master of science in career and technical education, owns a software consulting company and teaches at St. Clair County Technical Education Center.
- **Robert Cook** of Wales Township, Class of 1977, earned a master's degree in business administration and is plant manager for TI Automotive.
- **Judge Daniel Kelly** of Fort Gratiot, Class of 1967, earned a law degree and is a St. Clair County circuit judge.
- **Eugene Jakubiak** of Marysville, Class of 1955, earned a master of education degree and is a retired administrator from Richmond Community Schools.
- **Dr. Emil Touma** of Fort Gratiot, Class of 1941, earned a doctor of dental surgery degree and is a retired dentist. He was escorted at Commencement by his daughter, **Sharon Adams** of Fort Gratiot, Class of 1969, a registered nurse working at Port Huron Hospital.
- **Dr. Robert Coulter** of Port Huron, Class of 1938, earned a doctorate degree in education and is a retired Port Huron Area School District superintendent.

I thank all of our alumni for serving as role models to our students.

## SC4 gets federal funding for 2 high-growth fields

St. Clair County Community College has received more than \$2.1 million in federal funding to develop programs in two high-growth job fields. A \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor will develop the program and buy the equipment to train more than 400 local workers in the tracking and movement of goods — jobs in high demand in southeast Michigan. Announced in March, the three-year, Community-Based Job Training Grant is the largest federal grant ever awarded to SC4. For this program, SC4's Workforce Training Institute formed a collaboration with more than a dozen business, education and industry partners. SC4 also received \$143,450 for the college's water-quality technology program. U.S. Rep. Candice Miller, R-Harrison Township, presented SC4 with a check April 28 on campus. The money will allow SC4 credit and non-credit students to develop and implement a model laboratory to duplicate the equipment and processes used in St. Clair County water-monitoring stations.

## Ferris bringing bachelor's in criminal justice to SC4

Ferris State University beginning this fall will offer a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice on SC4's Port Huron campus. The degree will prepare students for careers at federal, state and local levels. Students with the degree also will be prepared for admission to law school or graduate school. Students can take up to 85 credits through SC4 and then take the remaining 35 credits through Ferris State at the SC4 University Center.



## Delegation visits SC4

**Bethany Belanger of Port Huron, SC4's 2006-07 Distinguished Alumna of the Year, greets visiting members of the Chinese Education Association for International Exchange on May 5 at SC4. The college hopes to establish partnerships with educational institutions in China to provide SC4 students with experience, knowledge and training to stay competitive in today's global economy.**



## Class of '08 graduates

Students wait for the procession to start for SC4's 84th annual Commencement ceremony May 9 at McMorran Place Arena in Port Huron. More than 650 students were eligible to graduate. **Cassandra Ulbrich, an SC4 alumna and member of the Michigan Board of Education, was the keynote speaker. To view photos, awards, speeches and graduates' names, visit [www.sc4.edu/commencement2008](http://www.sc4.edu/commencement2008).**

## Alternative energy program receives equipment, honors

SC4 in February installed a wind turbine and solar panels, which allow alternative energy technology students to become familiar with the technology. Also, six professors and administrators were honored with the 2008 Innovation of the Year Award from the League for Innovation in the Community College for their collaboration on SC4's alternative energy technology certificate program. The program gives students a working knowledge of alternative energy power generation and delivery systems.

## SC4 celebrates release of 'Patterns' 50th edition

SC4 hosted a celebratory weekend in April to commemorate the release of the 50th edition of *Patterns*, the longest continually published community college literary and arts magazine in the state. On April 26, *Patterns* judges and visiting novelists Mike Magnuson and Michael Perry met students and the community for an informal writing discussion at Studio 1219 in Port Huron. A reception April 27 in the SC4 Fine Arts Theatre honored the SC4 student writers and artists. Later, visiting authors Magnuson, Perry and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Franz Wright read from their works at a reception in the College Center Atrium. SC4 released two volumes for the 50th anniversary; the first included selected work from the past 49 years, and the second featured new work by current SC4 students.

# SC4 Alumni Association News

## Nominees sought for alumni award

SC4 Alumni Association members are encouraged to submit nominees for the annual Distinguished Alumni of the Year award. The nominee must be an alumnus/alumna of Port Huron Junior College/St. Clair County Community College with the completion of at least 30 credits at the college. A nomination form is available at [www.sc4.edu/alumni](http://www.sc4.edu/alumni). Nominees also can be submitted by contacting Donna Blay at [dblay@sc4.edu](mailto:dblay@sc4.edu) or (810) 989-5761.

## Alumni association expands scholarships

The SC4 Alumni Association Board voted to increase the amount in scholarships it awards each year. The association will award up to \$10,000 in scholarships each year if funds are available. The \$1,000 scholarships are renewable for a second year if the student maintains at least a 3.0 grade-point average. Previously, the association awarded two \$1,000 scholarships. The scholarships are given to incoming freshman who meet certain criteria, which include being a full-time student with a minimum 3.0 high school grade-point average. Selection is based on academic excellence, financial need, and community involvement or extracurricular activities.

## Alumni staff builds involvement, events

The Office of College Advancement and Alumni Relations worked throughout the winter and spring to further alumni involvement at SC4



## Golf Classic raises record amount

Ann Durand of Port Huron attempts a putt at the 20th annual SC4 Alumni Association Golf Classic on June 6. Looking on are Sharon Adams of Fort Gratiot, left, Carol Bellow of Port Huron and Betty Mericka of Port Huron. The event raised about \$24,000, which bested last year's outing by about 20%. Thirty teams completed the 18-hole scramble, which was presented by Citizens First at Port Huron Golf Club in Fort Gratiot. Proceeds from the outing will be used for programs including scholarships. For more photos of the event, visit [www.sc4.edu/golfclassic](http://www.sc4.edu/golfclassic).

and alumni events. This spring, Debbie Sta Cruz joined the office as advancement and alumni coordinator, working with Donna Blay, director of college advancement and alumni relations, and Gigi Mericka, development and alumni coordinator.

## Alumni association sets annual meeting

The SC4 Alumni Association annual meeting is planned for Monday, Nov. 10, at Quay Street Brewing Co., 330 Quay St., Port Huron. During the meeting, attendees will have a chance to

network with other alumni and community members. The winner of the 2008-09 Distinguished Alumni of the Year award will be announced. Complimentary hors d'oeuvres will be served. No reservations are required for this free event. For details, contact Donna Blay at (810) 989-5761 or [dblay@sc4.edu](mailto:dblay@sc4.edu).

## Tickets available for bus trip to Stratford

Seats are available for the annual SC4 Alumni Association bus trip to Stratford, Ontario, on Saturday, Sept. 20. A bus will

depart SC4 at 9 a.m. The group will explore downtown Stratford at 11 a.m. and attend the 2 p.m. performance of *Cabaret* at the Avon Theatre. Dinner will be at 5:15 p.m. at Trattoria Fabrizio Ristorante. The bus returns to SC4 about 9 p.m. Cost is \$110 per person. Those on the trip will need to bring a passport; or, if they don't have a passport, then bring both a birth certificate and driver's license. Payment is due by Monday, Sept. 8, and cancellation deadline is Wednesday, Sept. 10. For tickets, contact Debbie Sta Cruz at (810) 989-5760 or [dstacruz@sc4.edu](mailto:dstacruz@sc4.edu).

## SC4 Foundation update

### Foundation scholarships awarded to 23 students

The SC4 Foundation awarded scholarships totaling \$34,700 for winter semester 2008. The scholarships are:

- Irish-American Club of St. Clair County Scholarship — \$500 award to one student.
- Thomas A. Treleven Communication Scholarship Fund — Total of \$24,200 awarded

to six students.

- Whiting Foundation Scholarship — Total of \$10,000 awarded to 16 students.

### SC4 Foundation announces Red Carpet Affair for Oct. 25

The SC4 Foundation will have its fifth Red Carpet Affair at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25, in the Citizens First Michigan Technical

Education Center on SC4's Port Huron campus. The event, which raises money to support the college, features local restaurants donating their specialty menu items. The event also includes live entertainment, dancing and a drawing for fine jewelry donated by Lawrence Jewelers, which cosponsors the event with Citizens First. For ticket or sponsorship information, contact Donna Blay at (810) 989-5761 or [dblay@sc4.edu](mailto:dblay@sc4.edu).

## Tell us how you're doing

We'd love to hear about new appointments, degrees earned, job promotions and other events in your life. You also can complete this form, and attach digital photographs, at [www.sc4.edu/alumni](http://www.sc4.edu/alumni).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name while at SC4 (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

City, state, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

What's new? (use a separate sheet if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to (check as many you wish):

- Help with alumni mailings.
- Help out at alumni events.
- Get information about becoming a mentor for an SC4 student.
- Financially support the alumni association.

**Mail to:**

Donna Blay  
Director of College Advancement  
and Alumni Relations  
St. Clair County Community College  
P.O. Box 5015  
Port Huron, MI 48061-5015

## Alumni association membership benefits

**Membership is open to:**

- Current and former students of SC4.
- Graduates of SC4.
- Friends of SC4.

**The mission of the SC4 Alumni Association is to:**

- Foster a lifelong relationship between St. Clair County Community College and its alumni.
- Support St. Clair County Community College in advancing its mission.
- Help serve the needs of the alumni community.

**There are no membership dues or fees.** We may ask for voluntary donations from time to time to help maintain alumni activities, mailings and student-centered events.

**Benefits of membership include:**

- Free lifelong employment services.
- Free SC4 library card.
- Free admission to SC4 athletic home games.
- Free admission to SC4 Symphonic Band concerts.
- Free admission to SC4 Theatre Discipline productions.

*For dates of upcoming college or alumni events, visit [www.sc4.edu/events](http://www.sc4.edu/events) or [www.sc4.edu/alumni](http://www.sc4.edu/alumni).*

# Alumni Connection

Summer 2008

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*Alumni Connection* is a publication of the SC4 Alumni Association and SC4's Office of College Advancement and Alumni Relations. For details, call Donna Blay at (810) 989-5761.



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