One Entrepreneur finds his home

Computer Science alumnus, Sandy Ward BSCS'96
One of the things I like best about Computer Science is the rapid rate with which it advances. However, it is challenging to keep the curriculum up to date so in response we now have two new courses in Animated Computing and Social Computing as first year electives and three new specializations at the senior level; Graphics, Gaming, and Media; Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Systems; and Communication Technologies and Cyber Security – designed to appeal to both students and industry. From the perspective of industry, a student with a Bachelor of Computer Science degree with a specialization has taken a package of courses that gives them both breadth and depth.

In addition to changes to our curriculum, our research is evolving just as quickly. We now have new research space in the Mona Campbell building and new research initiatives in visual text analytics, visualization and gaming, and in business intelligence. These keep our faculty and students busy. I am pleased to report that many of the projects are being carried out in collaboration with industry: local, national and international.

We are also reaching out more to connect industry to our students through our alumni. Rosemary Bulley is our Alumni & Development Officer and is designing programs to make those connections happen. In October we will be launching “Career Conversations” and “Friends Away From Home”. Two programs that I hope you will consider. I also want personally to invite you to attend our Homecoming Reception on Friday October 21. I look forward to seeing a number of you again on campus. The details of these events are outlined in this magazine.

Michael Shepherd
Dean

HomeZilla’s Sandy Ward

“It took me six hours of searching online to find the closest dog park to the homes I was considering.”

When a friend of Sandy Ward’s told him of this experience, he thought that was crazy. Simultaneously, Mr. Ward, BSCS 96, knew he was ready to start his own business.

Despite investing years after graduation into building his skills, business experience and networking, he still hesitated with which business opportunity to pursue. It wasn’t until having brunch with his friend, who lamented his online search for a dog park, that Mr. Ward knew what he wanted to do. Mr. Ward recognized that people value time and that was the catalyst for launching HomeZilla, one of top Canada’s next-generation real estate website.

However, his path to HomeZilla was not without its peaks and valleys. His inaugural business was selling hockey card protectors to friends at elementary school and Mr. Ward credits his mother for encouraging his entrepreneurial spirit at a very early age. His interest in programming began in grade five, and would eventually lead him to study computer science in university. He used his co-op work-terms to learn how different companies operated and to seek advice from long-term employees. “You have to take control of your own career”, Mr. Ward recalls hearing one pearl of wisdom, which he took to heart.

After graduation he was hired by Nortel, his co-op employer, and became part of a small team of 16 that worked 70-80 hours per week on one of Nortel’s top projects, the Nortel Java phone. “Our group bonded like a family,” he says. “There was all the drama, fighting and fun that went with it.” He calls the experience his first exposure to startup culture.

Over the next number of years, he was part of a few startups. One began with two employees and grew to 90 in an 18-month span and then reverted back from 90 to five in just six short months. This experience that taught him about dealing with employees. “You just never know how people will react, people will tell you they are fine with a layoff, then walk out to their car forgetting their purse or coat. Most people need a lot of support during layoffs.”

He then moved on to another new business that developed a customizable online streaming media application. “It was great technology, just five years too soon. It would have been a perfect iPod application,” explains Mr. Ward. But despite the setbacks, this venture impressed upon him the value of timing. “I have learned not to be afraid to cut losses and move on, many people get stuck trying to make a good idea work when the time is not right,” he says.

In 2003, he arrived in Toronto as Senior Engineering Manager for Yahoo Canada, responsible for the Front Pages for Canada, Brazil, Argentina and Mexico. In four years the staff grew from 12 to 120 and as part of the senior management group Mr. Ward had a role in hiring, training and developing new employees.

In October 2008, Mr. Ward finally launched his own business, HomeZilla. Described as a one-stop shop for
neighbourhood information for Canadian homebuyers and real estate agents, users simply enter an address and locate the nearest amenities, including schools, shops, restaurants, parks and coffee shops of prospective neighbourhoods. According to the 2007 National (US) Association of Realtors Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, 84 per cent of all homebuyers used the Internet as an information source in their home search.

Using his wealth of skills, Mr. Ward’s company is well positioned to support the current and the next generation of homebuyers.

Based in Toronto, HomeZilla even employs software developers residing in Cape Breton. “If you are willing to have a remote team, you can have happier employees because they are living where they want and that makes a happy employee,” says Mr. Ward.

All of his experiences prepared him for HomeZilla. He built his network every day by working hard and connecting with people. It set the groundwork for opening HomeZilla with the assistance of partners who helped to finance his company. “I was building those networks for years before I actually opened my business,” he says.

So how would he describe the traits that got him here? “Adventurous spirit, a willingness to listen to others and hard work,” he says. “Those are the keys to success.” HomeZilla is free — to get started go to www.HomeZilla.ca

Carolyn Watters
Acting VP Academic & Provost

Carolyn Watters, a Professor in Computer Science, has been appointed Acting Vice President Academic & Provost of Dalhousie for the year (2010-2011). At the time of this appointment, Carolyn was the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The previous VP, Alan Shaver, has been appointed President of Thompson River University in BC.

Although taking on this senior administrative position, Carolyn is still very much involved in the Faculty of CS. In addition to supervising a number of graduate students, she is heavily involved in her research in Information Retrieval and HCI (small screen devices) and maintains her NSERC research funding. Along with Jack Duffy and Mike Shepherd, she is a co-director of the Web Information Filtering Lab (WIFL). WIFL’s bi-weekly meetings draw students and faculty from not just our own Faculty of CS, but from Management and Medicine and even the occasional student from a sister university.

Carolyn is still in the Goldberg Computer Science Building several times a week and can usually be found on the stairs, talking with students and faculty.
In January of 2009, the New Scientist magazine threw the headline “Darwin was Wrong” onto the cover of what has become its most controversial and best-selling issue ever. New Scientist is in the habit of putting up flashy titles for new theories and ideas (often in physics and astronomy), but this one cut to the core of the raging battle of creationism versus evolution in the US and elsewhere. Reading just the title, one might (and many did) assume that the article’s purpose was to challenge Darwin’s theory of evolution by natural selection acting on inherited characteristics. But in fact the article did no such thing.

What was the article actually about? A key implication of the evolution of species and more-diverse groups (animals, bacteria, etc.) is that we are all related, with a tree (or The Tree of Life) as the most familiar way to show this relatedness. A tree implies that some ancestral life form gave rise to many descendants, who in turn gave rise to more descendants, with distinct lineages (species and other groups) splitting off at various times to give rise to the tree structure. But the principal argument implicit in the tree — that lineages split, never to meet again — is false, and the main purpose of the article is to show that life isn’t a tree, it’s a complicated network where organisms can merge (think sexual reproduction) and swap genes via the process of lateral genetic transfer. CS faculty member Rob Beiko is a member of the Leverhulme Trust “Questioning the Tree of Life” network, a collection of philosophers, historians and scientists who are trying to understand how these processes should feed into our understanding of evolution and biodiversity.

So where does CS come in? Lateral gene transfer can be a tough nut to crack, and its identification often rests on finding genes with unusual histories — for instance, finding a penicillin resistance gene in distant relatives such as Streptococcus and Staphylococcus would suggest that one had picked up the gene from the other. PhD student Chris Whidden, who is jointly supervised by Dr. Beiko and Norbert Zeh, is developing new algorithms to compare the relationships among different genes and find out not only what genes have been transferred, but also who has shared them. Chris’s work relies on efficiently comparing the trees we get from different genes, a complex task that is nonetheless amenable to the application of approximation and branch-and-bound approaches. This work has already been published and won a best paper award. The next step is to apply his methods to the over 1000 genomes that are now publicly available, which will give us a concrete answer about which parts of evolutionary history are more tree-like, and which parts have involved massive swapping of important genes.

*Pictured above, l to r: Dr. Beiko, Dr Zeh and PhD student Chris Whidden*
Machine Learning with Lego Robots

Our research group is primarily interested in how the brain works, to investigate this with computer simulations, and to apply the learned mechanisms to data analysis. While intelligent systems and neural networks have a long history in computer science, recent progress in our understanding of statistical learning system and important advancements in our understanding of brain mechanisms have opened exciting new possibilities. Central to our understanding of ‘how the brain works’ is the importance of two fundamental system abilities, that the brain is able to learn from experience, and that the brain is able to generate predictions about the world.

Learning machines and generative models are also areas in computer science that have developed rapidly in recent years, and after years of diverging progress in computational neuroscience and engineering, there is now converging progress. For example, there have been major advancements made in a learning machine that is called Boltzmann machine after the Austrian physicist Ludwig Boltzmann who invented Thermodynamics. Although this machine has already been invented by Geoffrey Hinton and Terrance Sejnowski in the early 1980s, training such machines have been very difficult until Hinton and colleagues at the University of Toronto made modifications that make this machines applicable to practical applications. Converging understanding of brain functions also hint that these machines capture important aspects of brain-style information processing.

We have considerable expertise in the areas of intelligent systems, AI and machine learning in our faculty, and we have recently made changes to several related courses and are now able to offer an specialization in this area. As part of these changes, there will be a new offering of a course in machine learning, CSCI 4155, that uses Lego robots to demonstrate some of the abilities of learning machines discussed in the course. Two computer science students, Leah Brown and Ian Graven, worked in our group this summer to develop some of the robot demonstrations. This work has shown how valuable robots are, in contrast to pure computer simulations, to demonstrate some of the challenges in this area. Our group will now start to use such work to help with the investigations of Neuroscience-inspired learning system.

New Research Space for Computer Science

Over the month of August, some of our faculty and graduate students had the pleasure of moving into an impressive new research space on the fourth floor of the brand new Mona Campbell Building on the corner of Coburg and LeMarchant. The new space provides a dedicated research environment, allowing groups to work together. And it provides much needed space as our research activities continue to grow.

Located in the new building are a variety of research groups, two of which are featured in these pages (Rob Beiko’s research on the Tree of Life, and Thomas Trappenberg’s Machine Learning Group). The new facility consists of four labs, open plan research areas for student desks, smaller individual workspaces, and a selection of meeting rooms and breakout rooms.

As well as an excellent work environment we are also pleased that the new space has been designed with green issues in mind, targeting Gold certification under the LEED program. Some of these features include reduced concrete usage in construction, smart lighting systems, rainwater capture, solar panels, a green roof and sophisticated indoor air quality systems.
Artificial Intelligence for Financial Forecasting

Financial markets are considered to be one of the leading indicators of the economy. When markets begin to contract, the society braces for a slowdown in the economy or a possible recession; when markets expand, the economy builds a forward momentum. There are many factors and forces that influence market movement. They are complex, highly correlated, and sometimes difficult to measure. A challenging problem is how to make accurate financial predictions using this complex set of inputs under tight time constraints.

Matthew Butler, Master of E-Commerce, and Dr. Vlado Keselj, have developed Artificial Intelligence techniques that use machine learning to automatically learn patterns in the numerous financial inputs to predict performance of stock prices in a month to year term range. The experiments run on the stock market data have shown that their model outperforms the benchmark portfolio based on a stock market index, on investment return.

An interesting novelty is the use of text analytics methods to interpret non-numeric information provided in the annual reports submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of the publicly-traded companies. Beside the numerical data in the reports, they exploited the narrative, textual components, which give insight into the opinions of the senior management team and provide direction of where they feel the company is going. This information is not to be overlooked, but direct interpretation by analysts is very time-consuming, error-prone, and possibly subjective. Character n-gram based profiling, used by Dalhousie researchers, provided a way to capture this intangible information in an automatic and efficient way. The field expertise is provided by the external collaborator Dr. Vladimir Lucic from Barclays Capital, UK.

More information about this research, and about other uses of Text Analytics in Authorship Attribution, Text Clustering, Spam Detection, Sentiment Analysis, Automatic Essay Grading, and Detection of Dementia of Alzheimer Type from Spontaneous Speech, can be found at the site of Dalhousie group for Natural Language Processing and Data Mining (DNLP, http://dnlp.ca).
H.A.I.K.U.
(Hypertext Augmenting Intelligent Knowledge Use)

H.A.I.K.U. is all about harnessing the potential of hypertext to help individuals find and use information. Some of the projects are about fundamental issues but others are about doing something soon since technology and people co-develop so rapidly if you don’t do something early you cannot have any influence, and there are many bad influences already.

One project about fundamental principles which has reached an important point is about the basis of people’s use of hypertext. Many researchers have noted that people who score highly on certain tests of spatial reasoning tend to use hypertext successfully (that is quickly and accurately) and vice versa. However when hypertext interfaces are redesigned to the benefit of people with lower scores on spatial ability tests, there is an inversion in success. It is not clear if the two groups completely swap positions however.

H.A.I.K.U.’s research in this area has been to explore the role of domain expertise in comprehending hypertext versions of scholarly publications. The particular importance of this work is that it could lead to new interfaces for presenting the WWW and to new ways of teaching people to use the WWW.

One of the other project within H.A.I.K.U. which is being conducted as time and research assistants are available, is an automated tool to check colours on webpages to ensure they meet some profile (e.g. suitable for red-green colour blind readers or not a problem for people with ADD) and suggest changes to the author of the webpage. The work has progressed a lot in the past two years. Some of the tool’s features are unmatched. Combining it with another teams’ work could have a big impact on the WWW.

A major project within H.A.I.K.U. is the development of tools for researchers (including students) to use electronic texts. Work continues on note-taking, sense-making and annotation. Stay tuned for future developments.

— by Dr. Jamie Blustein

Promoting partnerships between industry and academia

What is Dalhousie/NRC-IRAP?
National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP) has been assisting Canadian small- and medium-sized businesses for over 50 years. The Dalhousie/NRC-IRAP program helps Atlantic Canadian companies by providing consultancy for science and technology problems.

The main objectives are:

- To help small- and medium-sized companies in Atlantic Canada in competitiveness, growth and innovation.
- To develop relationships between the academic community and industry.

How does Dalhousie/NRC-IRAP work?
Dalhousie/NRC-IRAP is managed by the Industry Liaison and Innovation office at Dalhousie University. Requests for science and technology assistance are received by the Dalhousie Industry Liaison and Innovation office who find a Dalhousie researcher who may work on the request for 3-5 working days. After completion of the project, the researcher completes a report for the industry partner.

Benefits for the Companies
The program provides the company an opportunity to get science and technology assistance from leading researchers at Dalhousie University. It also helps industry to develop important relationships with the academic community at Dalhousie University.

Benefits for the Dalhousie Researcher
The program provides the researcher an opportunity to work on industry problems, earn a consultancy fee and develop relationships with Industry.

The program also develops a platform for future sponsored research, or the possibility of NRC-IRAP projects.

The Industry Liaison and Innovation office provides a liaison service through this program with minimum paperwork. Companies benefiting from the program in the past have found it very effective and useful.

If you would like to know more about Dalhousie/NRC-IRAP, please contact:
Program Manager
1379 Seymour Street,
Halifax, NS B3H 3M6 Canada
Tel: 902.494.3509
Email: innovation@dal.ca
Passion and accomplishment

‘Money is like manure, it should be spread around, encouraging young things to grow’.

After quoting from the movie Hello Dolly, 2009 Schulich Scholarship recipient Sally Dickson concluded her tribute to Seymour Schulich and Tanna Goldberg Schulich: “Your generosity has certainly helped us all grow this past year and for this we thank you.”

On behalf of the twenty-four 2009 Schulich scholars from the Faculties of Computer Science and Science, she expressed sincere appreciation at this year’s Schulich reception. Here are the stories of four Computer Science scholarship recipients.

Pierre Almeida
Bachelor of Computer Science
Home Town: Dartmouth, NS
What drives me to succeed: “I believe in family and I’ve been taught the value of money and hard work from a young age. My parents have been the best role models.”

When you ask Pierre Almeida what truly matters in life, he has a one-word answer: “Family.”

As the first-born son of Portuguese immigrants (his grandparents landed at Pier 21 in Halifax 40 years ago), Pierre has a big extended family around which everything revolves. “We do everything as a family, we’re really close.”

Pierre’s other passion is cars – expensive vehicles with lots of computerized systems – an interest that dovetails nicely with his interest in computer science. And now that he is the recipient of a coveted renewable Schulich scholarship, Pierre is that much closer to his dream of working in the high-tech sector of the auto industry.

“Receiving this scholarship has provided me with an awesome opportunity,” says Pierre, who thoroughly enjoyed his first year at Dal. “I have made so many friends and have such happy memories that will accompany me for the rest of my life.”

Not that the work hasn’t been challenging, he’s quick to add. “I’ve really enjoyed my classes and professors, but it sure isn’t easy. I’ve never applied myself as hard as I have these past few months.”

Being a Schulich Scholar brings a great sense of accomplishment. “It was truly the first time I really felt like I had achieved something important,” he says. “I’ve always helped my parents with bills, but this is really amazing. With my education paid for, I feel like I’m really making a contribution.”

Leah Brown
Bachelor of Computer Science
Hometown: Bedford, NS
What drives me to succeed: “I’ve always been interested in finding out how things work. That’s why I already know I’m going to grad school even though I just completed the first year of my undergraduate degree.”

Eighteen-year-old Leah Brown may be shy and reticent in conversation, but that doesn’t mean the young Schulich Scholar is short on big ideas.

In fact, after some gentle probing, she shyly admits to scoring an NSERC award to do research in neuro-computing this summer – an almost unprecedented honour for a first-year student.

“I love anything to do with logic,” says Leah of her accomplishments, as she attempts to explain the esoteric nature of her research, which basically revolves around teaching computers how to think. “I love the satisfaction of figuring things out, so I’m researching machine-learning algorithms and using robotics to implement them.”
An accomplished musician — she is trained in both piano and flute — Leah immerses herself in her music when she has down time. But don’t ask her to perform in public — that takes away the joy of playing for herself.

As to the entrance scholarship, Leah says it made a huge difference to her first year at Dalhousie. “I almost cried when I received word,” she says. “It really helps take the pressure off, so I can concentrate on my studies and not have to hold down a part-time job.”

Driving to work at the time. She had to pull off the road with the shock!”

Nathan has thoroughly enjoyed his first year at Dalhousie – especially living in residence and hanging out with friends in the common areas of the Goldberg Computer Science Building. “Despite being an only child, I’ve really adjusted well to living in residence and I love all my courses,” he says. “I love the Goldberg Computer Science Building. I’m there ‘til late at night.”

Receiving the scholarship has been a transformational experience, according to Nathan. “It’s been a life-altering experience for me. I’ve made friends I’d never have had the opportunity to make and I’m not burdened financially. I’m so fortunate to be the beneficiary of Mr. Schulich’s generosity.”

So imagine his surprise when he read the bottom line: a $39,000 renewable Schulich scholarship to pursue his dream education at Dalhousie’s Faculty of Computer Science.

“My jaw just dropped — I was characteristically speechless,” says Michael, who until that moment had resigned himself to registering in his program of second choice at a university in his home province of New Brunswick. “My dad is on permanent disability and my mother back at school having been laid off from her 21-year job at a paintbrush factory,” he says. “The money just wasn’t there to support my post-secondary education as well.”

Today, having just completed the first year of the Bachelor of Computer Science, Michael is on fire. “Computer science is a fascinating field,” he says. “I love the idea that a few years down the road I’ll be applying for jobs that don’t yet exist. It’s so exciting.”

Possessed of an inquiring mind, Michael recalls evenings spent looking over his older sister’s shoulder while she struggled with her math homework. “I learned grade 5 math concepts this way when I was in grade 2,” he says. “I was a lot more interested in academics than my sister; always asking the question, ‘how does it work and how can it do this? What else can I do with this?’”

An able student, Michael is working diligently and tirelessly to achieve the high marks necessary to keeping the scholarship. “This scholarship means an education to me,” he says. “I want to make sure that the money Mr. Schulich so kindly put forth is not going to waste. There are not many people in the world as generous as he is and I hope to make him proud with what I achieve.”

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**Nathan LaPierre**

**Bachelor of Computer Science**

**Hometown:** Head of Chezzetcook, NS

(Population: 2000)

**What drives me to succeed:** “I’m fascinated by networking and the Internet – I just can’t wait to get some insight into the industry.”

Growing up in the small community of Head of Chezzetcook, Nathan LaPierre had his eye on the prize from the get-go.

“I’ve always been fascinated with computers,” says the programming phenom. “I’ve built a lot of websites and played around with technology all my life. I’m in this for the long term.”

Receiving a $39,000 Schulich scholarship to pursue his dreams was just the icing on the cake.

“It came in a large, important-looking envelope,” says Nathan of the day he received word of the scholarship. “I immediately called my mother, who was

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**Michael Levesque**

**Bachelor of Computer Science**

**Home Town:** Grand Bay, New Brunswick

(Population: 6000)

**What drives me to succeed:** “There is nothing in this world that is more secure than computer science because pretty much everything we do is about advancing technology.”

When Michael Levesque spied the manila envelope bearing the Dalhousie logo in the family mailbox, he figured it might contain a minor scholarship offer. After all, he mused, Dal likely doesn’t offer the big bucks to out-of-province students.
Not at our WITS end

The Dalhousie Women in Technology Society (WiTS) works towards the promotion and support of women in computer science and technology related disciplines. We are a group of female and male students that meet, host events, organize lectures, and reach out to groups in the community for technology related projects. You can find us having our breakfast meetings every other week in the Atrium or in a designated room in the CS building. We welcome anybody who passes by or hears about them to come have tea and snacks and talk about plans and ideas about women, technology, and networking.

In the past years we have carried out activities like ice cream socials, lecture series, bake sales, geek beer gatherings in affiliation with the Computer Science Society, curling night, and assisted

SuperNova with their Industry, Technology and Science for Girls program. This year we are focusing our plans towards the following goals: broadening the network connections that WiTS has with other technology related groups in the community, incorporating women of different technology related disciplines in our society and creating closer connections between students and women in the workforce.

Following this last goal we have decided to start a series of events in which students and women in the workforce will exchange information and ideas. What has driven us to start these events is the common interest expressed by students in becoming acquainted with the opportunities and options that are available after graduation. Through this event, students will be able to get a general sense of what kind of jobs women are currently holding, as well as the different companies and employers that are in the job market. In turn, women in the workforce will be able to learn about the emerging technology disciplines, the latest research in their area, and build connections for potential collaboration.

The first event of the series will be a very informal gathering. It will be held in the computer science building in the fall. For further information, write to wits@cs.dal.ca to be added to our mailing list, join our Facebook Group (Dalhousie WiTS), follow our Twitter feed (DalWiTS), or check out our website (wits.cs.dal.ca).

We look forward to recruiting many more members to our society this year and together keep promoting women in technology.

Submitted by Connie Jess and Sara Maldonado
New Alumni/Student Programs

Initiated for Fall 2010

Career Conversations: “What Can’t You Do With a CS Degree?”

The FCS Career Conversations program is being initiated this fall to respond to requests from our CS alumni to be more connected with our students. We are inviting alumni to talk about your personal work experience with our students, answering the question, “What Can’t You Do With a CS Degree?”

Many students decide to study Computer Science because they love computers, math and sciences. Throughout their academic program, students can participate in the co-operative education program and other job opportunities, which expose them to a variety of employment applications for their education. In the continually growing field of Information Technology, FCS wants to provide more information to students about potential career options and who better than our alumni to talk about careers.

Alumni are asked to simply come and share your employment journey with the CS students. The setting is informal, over the noon-hour throughout the academic calendar. It is expected that some individual mentoring may develop between you and our students as a result of this program. You can invite the students to contact you for further discussion by providing your contact information during your conversation.

Alumni Connections: “A friend away from home”

Can you remember your first new job in a new city where you didn’t know anyone or anything? Well, the FCS students are still facing the same issues that you did through co-op placements, summer jobs and first full-time jobs. Most of the students make great adjustments, just like you did, however it would be nice to have some friendly alumni to contact just to ask where to live, what is the transportation like, where are the grocery stores, and a thousand other questions that need answers.

Our alumni live everywhere in the world and we would like to make that world more accessible for our students by providing connections to our alumni based in various cities, towns and countries worldwide.

If you are interested in being a friend to students who are away from home, let us know. They will appreciate being able to call you.

If you are interested in participating in either or both of these new programs please contact: Rosemary.Bulley@dal.ca or call 902.494.3446.

Einstein’s theory of relativity has nothing to do with leaving your entire estate to relatives.

Bequests to Dal make all the difference, in theory and reality.

Legacy gifts speak to your experience at Dalhousie and all it has meant to you an education and a lifetime of memories. Your gift could establish a scholarship or bursary fund, providing much needed financial support for our students. Giving back to Dal through a bequest, large or small, helps to ensure lifelong success for the generations that follow.

For information, contact:
wendy.mcguinness@dal.ca (902.494.6981) or
ann.vessey@dal.ca (902.494.6565)
Final word — first edition

Many alumni, faculty and friends have helped with the creation of this magazine. It was created after a few conversations with alumni, lots of reading of current magazines, and one not so memorable “newsletter” that was published and emailed last year. We encourage you to provide us with lots more advice and direction on what you are interested in knowing and reading.

This magazine is simply called “Computer Science”. It is the first endeavour by FCS to provide a magazine for our Alumni & Friends. We plan to produce the magazine on a bi-annual basis in spring and fall. Our alumni have helped to shape the magazine by telling us what was of interest to them.

Those current areas of interest include: Alumni Profiles, General Announcements, Student News, Research News and Alumni Programs. You are invited to send along your ideas to contribute to the progress and overall development of this magazine to me, rbulley@cs.dal.ca.

Why mail the magazine when everything is online now? Through conversations with alumni and friends, people identified that they are somewhat inundated with on-line publications and still like to read an occasional magazine. We decided to try the hard copy for the first few editions. It will be mailed to all alumni and friends that have a valid address on the Dalhousie mailing system. You are welcome to receive future editions of this magazine via email, just let me know.

Most alumni newsletters and magazines have an area for “Class Notes”. This section provides space for alumni to reach out to each other with news about themselves. General announcements can include marriages, family additions, new work situations, promotions and even memorial notices appear in this section. Lots of people tend to look at this area first to get the up-to-date news on classmates, professors, and staff. I invite you to help populate this area of the magazine by sending me your news.

Our alumni base encompasses graduates of various faculties of Dalhousie University who prior to 1997, majored in computer or computing science, the TUNS School of Computer Science graduates and the Faculty of Computer Science graduates. You are approximately 3500 and adding to your number each year. Communicating is the first step in strengthening our connections.

For submissions contact
Rosemary Bulley
902.494.3446 or email rbulley@cs.dal.ca

Contributors
Rob Beiko, Jamie Blustein, Vlado Keselj, David Langstroth, Thomas Trappenburg with Rosemary Bulley and Billy Comeau
Principle Photography: Danny Abriel
Design: Design Services

Class Notes
We would love to hear from you! Please send along your class notes (notes include special achievements, promotions, new business ventures, marriage, births, whatever your news)