“Fun Run” for World Health Day
Street Race Through Old Town Delights Locals, Tourists

By Andrej Bratun

April 4th, 2009. 9:18 AM Dubrovnik. Stradun. A couple of middle-age Italian tourists enter the old town through Pile gate. Suddenly, they notice 50 young girls, wearing identical ACMT t-shirts running full speed towards them from the other end of Stradun. The Italians freeze. Are these Croatian girls crazy?

No, they are not. They are participating in the “ACMT Fun Run”, a street race through Old Town Dubrovnik, organized by ACMT in association with World Health Day in April. Several hundred elementary and high school students from Dubrovnik signed up for the competition.

In total, six races were organized for female and male students, in several age groups. Lukrecija Dragić and Tim Kuculo, the winners of the 7-8 grades races, said it was a big pleasure for them to win their races. They were grateful to the organizers for the opportunity to show their athletic abilities in front of the whole town.

While prizes were awarded to the top three winners in each category, the spirit of the race was community fun.

Friends, family, ACMT student volunteers and faculty lined both sides of the Stradun to cheer the runners on. Even groups of surprised tourists joined in the applause.

In addition, ACMT’s own student rock band, USB, livened up the crowd between races. “The Fun Run was a hit with everyone. The participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves (some of them arrived at 8 AM for a 9 AM race!), the volunteers were extremely enthusiastic and the local residents were able to witness a never before seen spectacle,” said Professor Kevin Walker, an avid runner.

ALUMNI WEEK
Career advice for the real world from ACMT graduates

By Rebecca Charry

What is the difference between a manager and a leader? Which one is more important? How can I put my foreign language skills to use in an interesting career? How can I motivate my employees to do their best? How can I get EU funding for my business idea?

ACMT students are thinking about their future careers and already asking these and other similar questions. And who better to ask for advice and support than the people who were sitting in these very seats just a few years ago? – ACMT alumni – students who have graduated and are now pursuing successful careers around the region and the world.

Some 11 graduates came back to ACMT in April to share their career experiences with current students, answer questions and offer practical advice. Students in the Small Business Management class heard from Andrea (Ursić) Novaković, who graduated from ACMT in 2003 and is now a professional associate for the Dunea regional development agency of Dubrovnik-Neretva county. Mrs. Novaković introduced students to some of the funding opportunities that the European Union offers to small and medium sized businesses. She added that currently many small businesses in Croatia today are facing financial difficulties, and could benefit from some of the funds available from the EU.

(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

Events 2
Alumni 4-5
Academics 6
Awards and Honors 6-7
The Cisco Expo Conference, one of the biggest and most visited regional conferences for network technologies, was held in April in Cavtat, and ACMT student volunteers were there, busy making sure the conference ran smoothly and gaining insight into the business world.

Under the slogan “Experience Today the Network of Tomorrow” more than 500 business leaders from all fields of industry gathered to discuss some of the major trends in information technologies.

“The focus of the conference is on new developments in technologies in telecommunications and in solutions for improving business for small and large companies,” said Igor Meleš, Croatian Cisco General Director.

ACMT students worked in groups, assisting with registration, answering questions and providing information and technical assistance.

“All of us learned a lot from this conference just by being there,” said student volunteer Mirela Raič. “We were able to observe the whole process of preparation for the conference, and to see the final outcome. We could see all the things that were done properly, while noticing some pitfalls. Hopefully one day we will be able to apply what we’ve learned here.”

“We are very satisfied with our cooperation with the volunteers, as this was a first time we arranged volunteers to help us with the conference,” explained Martina Ćurić, Marketing Manager at Cisco.

“This was a mutual learning experience – volunteers got insight into the real business world, while we were able to learn from their comments and suggestions about how we can improve ourselves.”

During the Conference students actively interacted with attendees and got an opportunity to present themselves to some of the most powerful people behind the names of respected international companies. “You never know, maybe some of those people will be to be interviewing me for a job in next few years, and the fact that I participated in the organization of this conference can be nothing but helpful,” said student volunteer Mario Šunjić. “The slogan of this conference can easily be applied to us – we should really set up today the basis for our own business network of tomorrow.”

“Fun Run” for World Health Day
Street Race Through Old Town Delights Locals, Tourists

Professor Kevin Walker created the event with help from the ACMT student council, many student volunteers and sponsorship support from the City of Dubrovnik, the Dubrovnik Tourist Board and the Dubrovnik Athletic Club.

Members of the local Dubrovnik community appreciated the support that ACMT gives to the town and its residents. Mrs. Ruzica Marković from the Cultural and Social Services department of the Dubrovnik city government said that “Fun Run” is a very good promotion of physical activities, especially when our modern way of life can often be unhealthy.

“The overall success has encouraged us to change the name to the First Annual Fun Run, as we now envision transforming this event into an annual spectacular,” said Prof. Walker.

“Look for us next year - we’ll be the ones in white ACMT t-shirts running and screaming along the Stradun.”
RIT Film Student Documents Local History

ACMT students of Spanish, French, Italian and German showed off their cooking (and eating) skills at the 8th annual International Dinner in April, at the magnificent home of Professor Tane Dušilo-Cavich in Old Town.

"There is much more to learning a foreign language than constant struggling with grammar. Learning foreign languages should also be fun. That’s why we created this event," explained Foreign Language Coordinator Prof. Zrinka Friganović Sain. "The students like the event because it gives them a chance to interact with their professors in an informal atmosphere, and still it is their event. They do the organizing and planning. I sincerely believe it helps them stay motivated in their language courses and learn something about the culture of the countries they are studying."

At least ninety students joined the event to show off the dishes they had prepared, and of course, to eat - paella and sangria from the Spanish students, mousse au chocolate and coq au vin from the French students, sauerkraut from Germans and plenty of pasta, of course, from the Italians. Visiting American students from RIT joined in, preparing cheese steak sandwiches, a famous tradition from the city of Philadelphia, and Asia was represented with traditional lo mein noodles.

Some 27 different dishes filled Prof. Tane’s elegant living room with delicious smells and colors surrounded by praises and smiles. Then, as if in a race, somebody gave the expected signal, and the eating began. Thirty minutes later, the food had vanished. Students voted for their favorite dishes, and the creators of the winning dish – chimichangas de pollo – received prizes. The evening was a perfect combination of words, flavors, and fun, with plenty of ambrosia, as the ancient Greeks said, the food of the gods.

RIT graduate film student Surbhi Dewan spent spring quarter in Dubrovnik as a kind of double study abroad. Born and raised in India, where she earned a college degree in political science, she came to the US two years ago, to study film at RIT. Then, looking to experience yet another culture, she came to Dubrovnik.

“I knew a little about the war here and wanted to investigate it further,” she said. "I have always been interested in why people fight, and the loss that people experience during war. When I arrived here, I visited the memorial to the defenders of Dubrovnik who were killed in the war, and I was interested in how proud people are of them. I was interested in the fact that civilians were forced to fight -- almost every man who was here had to participate." Soon after she arrived, Surbhi noticed a little restaurant called Taj Mahal, which turned out not to be Indian, but Bosnian. Talking with the owner, she found out that he was a war veteran, and became interested in finding out how Bosnians here experienced the war. Working through a translator, relying on gestures and facial expressions, Surbhi learned his story.

Surbhi said she was particularly interested in the experience of the minority Muslim population in Dubrovnik.

“I come from India, where there is a lot of tension between Hindus and Muslims,” she explained. “Here minorities are accepted; they have lived here for generations and are part of the town, although it is not always easy for them living in a Catholic society.

“People here have a very strong sense of ethnic identity, particularly the first generation after the war. Even though many young people did not personally experience it, the feeling is still very strong. That is how it is in India also. My grandparents experienced the partition of India in 1947, and even two generations later, we are still aware of those differences.”

By Rebecca Charry
"You, students, are young entrepreneurs and the EU offers you a special program to test your business knowledge," Mrs. Novaković said. One program that she described enables students to access funding from the European Union to start their own virtual businesses.

A lively question and answer session followed the presentation and several students stayed afterwards to continue the discussion.

Connecting with alumni is particularly useful since ACMT graduates often hire other ACMT graduates. Alumni are a network, helping each other find jobs and employees, sharing information, business strategies and the latest news.

ACMT Graduate Jernej Masnec, who started his own business, Dubrovnik Premier Services, several years ago has already hired several of his fellow alumni. He said he looks for progressive people who are not afraid of hands on work and know how to think out of the box.

Mr. Masnec, president of the ACMT Alumni Association, told senior students in the Leadership class about the difference between a manager and a leader.

A true leader, he said, leads by example. He knows how to delegate responsibility to others and how to listen to them. He has passion for his work, takes risks, and is prepared to be a follower, when necessary, and let his employees lead.

Motivating Employees

Students specializing in Human Resources heard from alumna Kinda Labidi, who graduated from ACMT in 2001 and now works in the HR department of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company in Zagreb.

“Our corporate vision can only be achieved through developing excellent employees,” she said, explaining her role in developing new ways to motivate and assist employees to do their best, through innovations such as an electronic employee handbook, and information tools and reward systems.

“My job is to help our company reward employees’ innovation, creativity and performance, and promote fun in the workplace” she said. “The leadership team elects employees of quarter and year, and employees nominate their colleagues for awards like “always being there,” “my hero” and “brilliant mind.” The winners get financial prizes, but managers also have small incentives to reward their team members with movie tickets or dinner out.”

Students were interested to hear that more than 50% of the company’s senior management is female, and most of them started out as college trainees and worked their way up in the company. “It was fascinating to connect the things we learned during our HR classes to the real business world,” said student Anita Drvar. “Ms. Labidi made this presentation interesting by using the word “our.” It was clear that she felt a sense of belonging to the company.”

“Coca-Cola Hellenic is a great example of how HR should be done,” said Professor Jennifer Matić. “They incorporate so many of the principles and ideas that we talk about in class into their HR practices. It was interesting hearing more about this from one of our alumni.”

Foreign Languages: Not Just for Tourism

All ACMT students study a foreign language in addition to English, but not all of them expect to put those language skills to practice use in a career.

Alumna Maris Cosmai encouraged students to consider a wide variety of careers which depend on language skills.

Maris said she felt unfulfilled in tourism, and put her language skills to use elsewhere. Now she is studying for a Masters Degree in Interpreting in Zagreb, which will soon be completed.

“Interpreters simultaneously interpret and translate from one language to another at conferences or business meetings,” Ms. Cosmai said. “I have to be informed about any possible topic, to be able to interpret and link the ideas for my client.”

“It is an adrenaline rush if you go out there, not knowing what topic you will have to deal with or whom you are going to listen to. Sometimes people have a funny accent and they think their English is good, but it’s not.”

-- Martina Brzić, Ivona Novak, and Anita Drvar contributed to this article.
Alumnus Stipe Milišić discusses the business of boutique hotels

By Rebecca Charry

Being a pioneer is never easy, especially when everyone around you is skeptical of a new idea. But with patience, wisdom, and a good plan, risks can bring great results. That’s the story of the Milišić family, who returned to Croatia in 1994 after many years in Sweden, with the idea of opening a small, private luxury hotel. At times it looked impossible.

Stipe Milišić, who graduated from ACMT in 2004, returned to the college in February to tell his family’s business story to freshman students in Prof. Besim Agusaj’s Hotel Operations class. He offered them an inside look at the boutique hotel business from his own experience.

“We were pioneers at a time when boutique hotels were unheard of,” he said. “We faced and overcame many obstacles; everyone was skeptical, no one wanted to give us a loan. There was a different attitude about private tourism then, and an amazing amount of bureaucracy, not all of which was honest.”

Today, the Marco Polo hotel in Gradac, one of Croatia’s first privately owned boutique hotels, is thriving, drawing a steady flow of guests from Germany, Scandinavia, Ireland, and the United States. In 2009 it was named the Best Boutique Hotel in Croatia. The management team also includes three other ACMT alumni.

Mr. Milišić, who co-founded the Croatian Association of Small Family Hotels, is now the hotel’s general manager, and was recognized for his outstanding accomplishments with the RIT International Award for Alumni Excellence for 2007.

Today, he told students, there are approximately 200 small family hotels in Croatia. It is predicted that by 2010, there will be 600.

“The boutique hotel concept emphasizes luxury and personalized service,” he explained. “A boutique hotel offers some unique detail, like furnishings or architecture or location, along with all the amenities of a large hotel like a wellness and fitness center and conference facilities.”

Mr. Milišić looked back on his days as an ACMT student with warmth and appreciation for what he learned, especially during his co-op employment at Disney World. He offered honest advice to students about their future careers.

“You cannot expect to start your career as a general manager,” he told students. “You need experience. It’s even worth volunteering in an unpaid position for six months just to learn the business.”

For those interested in starting a boutique hotel, he said: “All you need is a good idea and a good loan. But remember, this is not a short term money making scheme. It’s a long-term investment that takes generations to pay off.”

His advice: be professional, hire a lawyer. “We thought we could be our own lawyers but we were wrong.” Check contractors carefully – some are unscrupulous. Get all the necessary permits and stick to them. Today hotels can be shut down or even torn down if they violate the terms of their permits. And, of course, choose your employees carefully.

“You can have a hotel made of gold but if you don’t have a loyal, qualified team of people who are ready to work, you will never succeed.”

To submit a career update for our next issue, email Rebecca@acmt.hr.
Prof. Tane Dusilo Cavich attended the 17th annual conference of the Croatian Association of Teachers of English (HUPE) in Opatija and distributed a presentation on “The Most Common English Errors Made by Speakers of Croatian” to the members.

Prof. Dr. Staša Puškarić was recently elected to the Executive Committee (Matično povjerenstvo) for natural sciences in the Croatian Council of Colleges and Polytechnics (Vijeće veleučilišta i visokih škola).

He also gave a lecture titled, “Let’s Save the World: interactions between humans and the environment… problems, challenges and proposed solutions” at the ‘The Center for Postgraduate and Interdisciplinary Studies in Sarajevo.

Professor Jennifer Matić recently published a paper entitled “Cultural Values in Employee Work Values and Their Implications for Management” in Management: The Journal of Contemporary Management Issues. The paper was part of a special issue on Values, Trust, Social Norms and (National) Culture in Managing Organizations in Southern & Eastern Europe.

Professor of Mathematics Dr. Ambroz Ćivljak presented a joint paper titled “Euler Harmonic Identities and Moments of Real Borel Measures” at the Mathematical Inequalities and Applications conference (MIA) in Trogir. A co-authored paper of the same title has been accepted and will be published in the Journal of Mathematical Inequalities in October 2009.

Prof. Dr. Davor Ljubimir presented a paper titled “The Turn of the Soul” at a philosophy conference on Plato’s Teachings on the Soul, in Orebić in May.

Four ACMT students were recently selected for high honors from Rochester Institute of Technology. Seniors Ana Mutnjaković, Igor Kovač and Mia Dragović were named Outstanding Undergraduate Scholars, a prestigious honor given to only a few students from each of RIT’s undergraduate colleges, based on academic achievement, community service, and contributions to the overall community life of the college.

Ana, Igor, and Mia received engraved medallions from RIT, and were honored with a special dinner in May to which they invited their favorite professors: Dr. Davor Ljubimir, Rebecca Charry, and Milena Kuznin.

In addition, sophomore Angelina Vojinović won first place in the essay category of RIT’s annual Institute Writing Contest, for her essay, “Matching the Words.” She described her personal experience living and working with people from many different cultures and nationalities, both while employed on cruise ships and as a student working on a team project in her ACMT Travel Distributions Systems Class.

“The exchange of ideas, opinions and knowledge counts a lot in college, especially when students get stuck on the very first thesis statement of their very first research paper. Many of them get frustrated -- their thoughts seem locked like money in a vault. Interaction and peer collaboration are the only ways to unlock the unconscious ideas that dwell in our brains,” she wrote.

“After one week of interaction (on a group project) with three girls from geographically close countries, but with different philosophies and attitudes, my mind has been broadened in a positive way. I learned to accept criticism and to develop my own opinion. Our team discussion helped me to discover my own ability for clear and creative thinking, which I was not even aware of. Overall, I learned that in a healthy and fun social environment, whether at this college or on a “floating city,” ideas become unlimited and goals achievable when we work together.”

Angelina was awarded a prize of $300 US and participated in the awards ceremony in Rochester, New York, by reading an excerpt from her essay through a live video connection.

Winners!

RIT recognizes ACMT’s outstanding scholars and writers
They soon learned that the sea is an essential part of Dubrovnik life, and student Dan Sullivan decided to focus his film on the city’s fishermen. “My film is about comparing the lives of younger fishermen to older fishermen. Basically, the difference between fishing for a livelihood and fishing for recreation or pocket money. I want to see how the lives of these fishermen have changed over the generations.”

Dan interviewed local fishermen and sea captains, and got instruction from ACMT Prof. Staša Puškarić.

Visiting students were impressed with the friendly reception they received from locals, most of whom spoke good English, and the experience of living in a culture that has been preserved for centuries.

“T’m 10 minutes from a mountain,” exclaimed Donny in amazement. “And I’m living right next to this huge castle fort thing. That’s just not something you see in Rochester, New York.” Their completed films will be shown publicly on the RIT campus this fall.
What is life in Dubrovnik really about? Watching the sea from your balcony in the early morning quiet? Or learning to fish the old-fashioned way, with just a wooden boat, two hands and a net? Or maybe it means getting lost on purpose in the endless streets of the old city, slinking around the corners like one of those sly street cats.

These mysterious, fleeting moments of daily life in Dubrovnik were captured this quarter on film by a group of 11 students from RIT, who decided to study abroad at ACMT. Eager to experience a new culture outside the United States, these students jumped into the life of the city, getting to know the locals, adapting, surviving, enjoying, studying and recording what they saw and heard.

“Coming here is a great opportunity for my students,” said RIT film professor Kathleen Ashworth. “The culture is foreign, but still familiar. In this enchanting and beautiful environment, filled with light, it’s easy to get inspired.”

In the past few years ACMT has become a popular destination for RIT students, who are attracted by the beautiful surroundings, the proximity to the rest of Europe, and the chance to live and study in a new place.

“Croatia is a place that not everyone has heard of, and every time I show someone a picture from here, they are surprised at how beautiful it is,” said student Ellen Graser. “Life here is much more relaxed. Things work slower. People move slower. I move slower.”

“I love the old town,” said student Surbhi Dewan. “Even after six weeks, it is as charming and breathtaking as the first time I saw it. Every morning I go out onto our patio to look at the sea and the old town. It has become my morning ritual.”

“Even the cats here are amazing,” said student Donny O’Brien, who decided to focus his film on these animals. “They really have their own world, their own lives, their own jobs. I love the way they slink around. Cats at home are pretty boring.”

“I saw this trip as a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet great people and experience a traditional culture for myself,” said student Timothy Sikora. “I got to learn about Croatian culture from the best teachers of all, those who live it. My life here is so much more relaxed here than at RIT. I am no longer concerned with what to do tomorrow, but rather open to where today will take me. I’ve learned there is no need to get stressed out about everything, especially things in which I cannot control.”

The RIT students enrolled in ACMT classes, including Environmental Science of the Dalmatian Coast and Adriatic Art History, in which they learned more about local history, culture and the environment, and got to know their fellow-students from the region. They enjoyed hands-on experiential learning through field trips and sightseeing excursions to Zagreb, Sarajevo, Mostar, and Budva. They ate fresh mussels in Ston, and watched the traditional Easter procession on the island of Korčula.