



## Dr. Gifford's final curtain call

At the conclusion of the Fall semester, the College will lose an icon of the MVCC Drama Club with the retirement of Dr. James Gifford. For 36½ years, Dr. Gifford has been the driving force behind many of the theater productions hosted by the College. Along with his hard work, he has left a permanent imprint on the College as a member of the advisory committee during the planning of the College Theater.

"I was in plays in high school, but it wasn't until I came here that I really stuck my nose in," said Dr. Gifford. "The first play I was involved in at the College had Art Friedberg in it. From there, things kind of snowballed and I found myself more and more involved."

Despite the many frustrating issues that pop up during any stage production, Dr. Gifford says he wouldn't trade the experiences and memories for anything.

One of his more memorable productions was "Titanic" which was performed in the College's pool. With limited seating, the audience had to endure the substantial humidity while a replica of the Titanic floated around the pool throughout the performance. Another fond memory was "Alice in Wonderland," where the audience had to enter through a series of doors – the last being just three feet high forcing the audience to crawl.

"In the beginning we did not have a proper theater. We had a lecture hall in Payne Hall. There was no proper lighting, so we had to string up lights. The floor was uneven. There was no back stage. Every play had its difficulties, but that's what made all of the performances memorable," said Dr. Gifford.



**FROM THE SEATS** - Dr. James Gifford watches during rehearsal of "Loot" from the seats in the College Theater. This will be his final play as director at the college.

When it was decided to build a proper theater on the Utica Campus, Dr. Michael Schafer contacted the theater staff during the planning phases in order to make sure "things were done right." "I was flattered to be in on that. Dr. Schafer really wanted our input and he listened to our recommendations. Now, putting on a play is a snap."

Dr. Gifford's final production as a Professor of English and Theater will be "Loot," which runs over three nights from Thursday, December 4 through Saturday, December 6, at 8:00 p.m. He says this is the play he has always wanted to do. It is about disrespect in dealing with the coffin and the corpse while challenging the morality of mankind. He also jests that the coffin in the play is symbolism for the end of his time at MVCC as a full-time faculty

member. "There's a lot of dry wit, almost to the point of being scabrous."

"What has really made our performances come alive in the new theater is when they hired Mike Diederich. He makes the lighting and sound bring out the best of what is happening on stage," said Dr. Gifford, who is planning on working as an adjunct teaching theater in the Spring.

Another of his fond memories occurred during "Our Town" when one of the student-actors developed stage freight and wouldn't go on stage. His character's dialog laid the foundation for the opening of the third act. "Oh, I could have killed him right there. But the person playing opposite him did a fabulous job of turning a dialog into a monologue and saved the show," said Dr. Gifford. "I have been lucky to have the students behind me 100 percent."

# Visalli, Judycki & CCED honored by Genesis Group

On Thursday, November 20, Janet Visalli and Brian Judycki were among 57 top educators and education programs in the Mohawk Valley honored at the Genesis Group's annual Celebration of Education during a reception at the Hotel Utica.



Visalli

The College's Center for Community and Economic Development was also honored by the Genesis Group for its work in training and life-enrichment programs.

"It is quite an honor to receive the recognition," said Judycki, who is an Assistant Professor in the Engineering Technologies and the Trades. Judycki's work with MVCC's Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has kept the College on the forefront. Visalli was recognized for her work with returning adult students, who are classified as non-traditional. As the College's Adult Services Coordinator under the First Year Experience Program, Visalli provides



Judycki

hands-on solutions to issues adults students face, such as setting up academic advisement, tutors, registration assistance and transition problems.

Genesis Group Executive Director Raymond Durso said he was "overwhelmed with pleasure" at the showing of support from the community for educators with over 400 people in attendance of the ceremony. This was the third year of the awards, and the ceremony doubled in size since last year.

"Any time the community can be the agenda, it's a win,"

## Message from the President

Greetings,

Congratulations to Brian Judycki, assistant professor in the Electronic Technology and the Trades Department and Janet Visalli, Coordinator of Adult Student Services for receiving the individual Educator of the Year Awards from the Genesis Group. And congratulations to the Corporate and Community Education (CCED) Department for winning the program/department Educator of the Year Award. They all represent MVCC so very well and we're proud of their service to our students and our community. They were recognized last evening at the Genesis Annual Education Awards Dinner at the Hotel Utica.

Thank you all for your hard work in making MVCC the best we can be and supporting student success.

Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D.

President, Mohawk Valley Community College

Durso said. "These people have made a positive impact on the community in education."

Visalli, Judycki and CCED were all nominated for the Genesis Group's award through the MVCC President's Office.

"It is a wonderful experience working with the students," said Judycki, who also works with junior high and high school students interested in engineering during the summer. "To witness them learning and experiencing new things for the first time is a great feeling. I think the awareness and exposure to engineering triggers them to bring out their own creativity."



## Ready for take off?

This is a photograph of one of the Airframe and Powerplant Technology's soon to be four engine run test stands.

This particular unit is a six-cylinder Continental IO-420 aircraft piston engine. This is the same type of engine in the A&P's Cessna 310, and is very commonly in use on small chartered aircraft used all over the country.

The students remove the engine from the test stand, disassemble the engine, inspect it for airworthiness condition, then they reassemble it and remount it to the stand. After reinstalling the propeller, the whole unit is taken outside to operationally check (run) the engine after final assembly.