Brothers Bryan and Patrick Verdeur received Carnegie Medals in September for their heroic lifesaving actions of a year earlier: The West Chester, Pa., men teamed up with a family friend to save two swimmers from drowning in the Atlantic Ocean off Avon, N.C.

It’s not the first time that a Verdeur received significant recognition for a swimming feat, as the men’s paternal grandfather was an Olympic gold medalist.

Joseph Verdeur, who died in 1991 at age 65, was awarded his medal for the men’s 200-meter breaststroke at the 1948 Olympics, which were held that year in London after a 12-year hiatus caused by the outbreak of World War II. Verdeur was four years out of high school, and his gold medal, at that time only the second won by an American in the event, was for his finish of 2:39.3, bettering the time of the previous gold medalist in 1924 at 2:56.6. Since 1948, only three other Americans have won the gold in the event.

Verdeur was a competitive swimmer while attending Northeast Catholic High School, and he was an All-American swimmer at LaSalle University, both in Philadelphia. Undoubtedly he would have been proud of his grandsons, who in his wake and probably with his genes have likewise excelled in the sport. Both swam competitively at West Chester East High School, and Patrick was a lifeguard for four years.

The brothers’ mettle was surely tested on August 8, 2004, while they were on vacation in North Carolina with Michael J. Kane, also of West Chester. The Atlantic was rough that day, as Hurricane Alex with its sustained winds of 100 m.p.h. had skirted the coast five days earlier. Remaining effects of the storm included very rough water, with waves breaking at about eight feet.

Their ability notwithstanding, the brothers knew to stay out of the ocean that day. Patrick, (continued on page 5)
What you keep you lose; what you give you have

Representatives of the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission joined 400 other guests from around the globe at the third bi-annual presentation of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy, held Oct. 4 in Edinburgh, Scotland’s ancient capital city.

Regarded as the “Nobel Prize” of philanthropy, the award is given by Andrew Carnegie’s 22 endowed foundations to individuals and families who dedicate their private wealth to the public good. “In the four years since its inauguration,” said William Thomson, chair of the 2005 organizing and selection committees, the award “has become the premier international award for philanthropists. Its recipients share Carnegie’s vision that redistributing one’s wealth for the common good is just as important as building up that wealth in the first place.” Previous awardees include Microsoft’s Bill Gates, the Rockefeller Family, and media tycoon Ted Turner.

Thomson, Carnegie’s great-grandson, said it was “not only a tremendous honor but extremely fitting that such a prestigious event was ‘coming home’ to Scotland.” Carnegie, born to humble circumstances in the nearby city of Dunfermline, is regarded as the father of modern philanthropy, having devoted the latter part of his life to giving away his fortune. The equivalent of $15 billion today, the fortune was amassed through Carnegie’s successes as entrepreneur and steel manufacturer, his Pittsburgh-based steel company selling for $480 million in 1901. Beneficiaries of Carnegie’s giving included 2,500 libraries and the Hero Fund, which was established with a $5 million gift in 1904.

Organizers of the award ceremony included four Carnegie-endowed institutions in the United Kingdom: the U.K. Trust, the Trust for the Universities of Scotland, the Dunfermline Trust, and the Hero Fund Trust, which, like the U.S.-based Commission, recognizes civilians who perform heroic acts. The four trusts are to be housed in a new building in Dunfermline, and the visitors attended the site dedication.

Also on the packed three-day agenda was the dedication of the Carnegie School of Business, an adjunct of Lauder College in Dunfermline. The college was founded in 1899 by Carnegie’s uncle, George Lauder, with a grant from Carnegie.

Other events included tours of Carnegie’s birthplace, a stone cottage in Dunfermline where Carnegie’s father William ran a handloom-weaving business, and “Broomhall,” the estate of Lord Elgin on the outskirts of town. Lord Elgin explained that a “right of turf” on the

Recipient of the Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy are shown with William Thomson, left, chair of the award’s 2005 selection and organizing committees, and George Reid, right, presiding officer of the Scottish Parliament. The awardees are, from left, Agnes Gund (in stripes), Eleanor Hewlett Gimon, His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir Tom Farmer, Anna Southall, and Susan Packard Orr.
The first floor was given over to his father's handloom business, where weaving demonstrations are now done as a part of the house's function as a museum.

Andrew Carnegie was born in the second-floor family quarters of this stone cottage in Dunfermline. The first floor was given over to his father's handloom business, where weaving demonstrations are now done as a part of the house's function as a museum.

That spirit was abundantly evident in the lives of the recipients of the 2005 prize, including the first Scot to win it, Sir Tom Farmer. He was praised for the aid he provided to war-torn Kosovo and for his projects for young people in Scotland. Farmer said he identified with the saw, “What you spend, you had; what you keep, you lose, and what you give you have.”

The awards were presented in the debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament Building, a magnificent structure newly completed to house Parliament, itself newly re-established, in 1998. Presenters—who included Lord Robertson, former secretary General of NATO; Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland; and Jack McConnell, First Minister of Scotland—gave an overview of the generosity of the recipients and their families.

Each awardee was given a nine-pound, bronze bust of Carnegie and a medallion, which editorialized, “Can we make more Carnegies? In an age when billionaires usually indulge in conspicuous consumption, the spirit of Andrew Carnegie is fortunately still far from dead.”

The culminating event, and the most memorable, was the recognition of six internationally renowned philanthropists and their families, each of whom was awarded the medal, known as the “Nobel prize of philanthropy.”

The three-day gathering was steeped in ceremony and rich in the history of Carnegie’s Scottish heritage. The lovely town of Dunfermline, Carnegie’s birthplace, was the setting for the opening proceedings and dedication of the new Centre for the U.K. Carnegie Trusts. Carnegie’s great-granddaughter and some of his great-great-grandchildren represented the family at this historic event. A town resplendent with ancient abbeys, it is the home of the still functional, original Carnegie Hall and the humble home where Carnegie was born and lived for his first 13 years.

The architecturally impressive Scottish Parliament Building was the venue for the second day of the program. Several renowned civic and business leaders addressed philanthropic issues ranging from education, poverty, and health to international peace, the environment, and sustainable development. These sessions were followed by the medal-award ceremony in the building’s splendid main chamber.

Carnegie’s great-grandson, William Thomson, gave a heartfelt and moving welcome in which he congratulated the award recipients for sharing his great-grandfather’s vision of redistributing personal wealth to benefit important human and environmental needs. It was a showcase of pomp and ceremony in a magical setting but, in the end, the spotlight was on the recipients who were humble and gracious as they accepted the world’s most prestigious award for philanthropy. (continued on page 4)
He ‘lit a candle’ to recognize the heroism of his countrymen

Fifteen years ago, Sri Lankan attorney Kasun P. Chandraratne was reading an article in the Reader’s Digest about a 9-year-old girl from Idaho who saved her father’s life after a horse-riding accident. The description of the awards bestowed on the young heroine started to turn wheels in his own mind: Why don’t we recognize heroes in Sri Lanka?

Chandraratne, who has argued cases before his country’s supreme court, saw the need for reaffirming selfless behavior. His island nation (formerly known as Ceylon) was, and is, dealing with armed extremists seeking secession of two of its provinces, and he saw further polarization in the social, ethnic, and religious make-up of the country’s population of 19 million.

Of the opinion that human life is of utmost value and worthy of preservation, even if life-saving involves life-risking, Chandraratne concluded that recognizing those of the same conviction would be a means of strengthening his country’s social fabric. As a lawyer, he knew that the law alone could not enforce selfless behavior, as he recognized the ethic to be within the code of moral law, which, he says, “operates on a higher plateau.”

The Digest article spurred him into acting, first by asking the magazine for contacts. He was directed to the Hero Fund, which he addressed in a letter of July 11, 1990: “I shall be thankful if you will let us have information and any other help in the formation of such an Association in our country.”

The request was accommodated by the Commission’s executive director, Walter F. Rutkowski, who forwarded copies of the Hero Fund’s Deed of Trust, bylaws, annual reports, news releases, and other printed materials. Before long, the “Foundation for Civilian Bravery” made its debut in Sri Lanka, headed by Chandraratne, its first president. “I lit a candle,” Chandraratne says of his initiative, “rather than curse the darkness.”

The association of the two awarding agencies has continued over the intervening years. Much like the Hero Fund, the Foundation for Civilian Bravery recognizes civilians who voluntarily save others from peril. The foundation “knows no ethnic, social, or religious barriers,” Chandraratne says. “The award recipients are generally the ordinary citizens of this country whose only qualification is their readiness to risk their own lives to save other human beings.”

Unlike the Hero Fund, which announces awards five times annually, the Sri Lankan foundation holds an annual presentation. Recipients gather in the capital city of Colombo for an impressive program rich in ceremony. To acknowledge the role of the Hero Fund in helping to establish the foundation, Rutkowski was invited as “special guest” to address the 2005 ceremony, held Sept. 15.

“There are several traits that distinguish civilized peoples: courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love,” Rutkowski

PITTSBURGH’S TWO ANDYS
Testament to Andrew Carnegie’s enduring popularity at various levels of culture is this tongue-in-cheek mural on the side of an old Downtown Pittsburgh building just a stone’s throw from the Commission’s offices. Carnegie, right, is shown with artist and Pittsburgh native Andy Warhol, whose portraits also rendered Carnegie in pop style. The mural, sponsored by Sprout Public Art, a local nonprofit group, is the work of artists Tom Mosser and Sarah Zeffiro.

BOARD NOTES (continued)
I was touched by the fact that despite the diversity of backgrounds of the recipients, they all shared a powerfully congruent vision of the definitive role of philanthropy, and that vision was the one modeled by Carnegie’s creative genius and unprecedented generosity. Each recipient has chosen a unique path to effect social change. Some reach out to the poor in developing nations. All work prodigiously to improve conditions in critically needy communities and to give the less fortunate opportunities to help restore hope and dignity. Each medal recipient has become, in Carnegie’s words, a “distributor of wealth for the benefit of mankind.”

At the conclusion of the event, I felt, as did other colleagues, uplifted and enormously inspired by the leadership of these extraordinary philanthropists. I was proud to be a member of the Carnegie family and to play a small part in furthering his legacy through my service with the Hero Fund.

(Note: Ms. Word, formerly with the World Bank, Washington, D.C., was elected to the Hero Fund board in 2003.)
told the assembly. “These universal attributes need to be taught to our children, and they need to be nurtured in the lives of our fellow citizens so that our cultures may thrive and blossom. That is the value of the hero. We set them apart so that their deeds become known, and in becoming known, they inspire others. It’s a worthy purpose that your foundation and the Commission have chosen to pursue.”

The foundation’s 2005 awardees included those who acted during the tsunami on Dec. 26, 2004, a catastrophe that claimed nearly 30,000 lives within minutes in Sri Lanka alone. “Sri Lankans are learning from war—a man-made disaster—and from the tsunami, a natural disaster,” Chandraratne says. “We are learning that divided we perish, together we survive.”

ANCIENT COPPER PLATES ARE PROTOTYPE HERO’S MEDAL

In a glass case in a corner of the Sri Lankan National Museum in the capital city of Colombo rest three small copper plates, each perhaps three inches by 15. They are engraved in the graceful swirls that is the written language of Sinhala— the native tongue spoken by the majority of Sri Lankans—and record an old tale that is of timely significance.

For the message they bear, the plates can be viewed as a prototype life-saving medal. Dating to the 11th century, they record a grant by a Sri Lankan king and are the oldest examples of such a grant. The plates were unearthed in recent times by a farmer in a rice paddy.

Known as the “Panakadura Grant,” the plates confer privileges to one of the king’s officers, Sitnaruim Budelnavan. The king, Vijayabahu I, had received protection over a 20-year period from Budelnavan while he was in hiding during an incursion. Disregarding the threat of invaders, according to the plates, Budelnavan took effort to safeguard the king and his family, securing provisions “at risk to his life” as he maintained the family in the jungles and caves in the southern part of the island kingdom.

Once re-established, the king did not forget his officer’s mercies. The plates record the favors he conferred: The officer’s life was to be safeguarded during the king’s reign, his lands and properties were not to be confiscated, his reputation was not to be degraded, certain of his mistakes were to be excused, and future kings were bound to protect the officer’s family and their successors.

Using the tradition of the plates, Sri Lanka’s Foundation for Civilian Bravery last year named its highest lifesaving award the “Budal Na Gold Medal.” It was most recently given to the mother of 23-year-old Kenneth Randima Hewa Jayasingha, who served as role model for a school curriculum on heroism assembled by his wife Paula, a sixth-grade teacher.

Verdeur Family holds Olympic gold, Carnegie medals for swimming prowess (continued from cover)

then 21, had tested the waters with his surfboard in the morning but after three waves knew that conditions were bad. Bryan, 20, did not intend even to get wet. Rather, they and Kane lounged on the unguarded beach, much to the fortune of James P. Lawver, 43, a construction worker from Ohio, and his 14-year-old son.

The Lawvers were in waist-deep water when a series of waves took them farther out and with a strong current prevented any attempt at returning on their own. They called for help, and Bryan, Patrick, and Kane responded. The men combined strengths to effect the rescue of Lawver and his son, who were then about 300 feet from shore with the elder Lawver having submerged as he supported the younger.

The victims were as dead weight to their rescuers. “It was like swimming with a sack of potatoes,” Bryan later said. All reached shore safely, albeit considerably farther down the beach from where they had entered. Lawver and his son required hospital treatment, but they recovered. They have since remained in contact with their rescuers, once calling to say that they were on vacation but were going to swim only at beaches protected by lifeguards.
In two instances, their families’ lives were touched by flames over the past two years, but surviving members had the opportunity during the summer of 2005 to reunite with those who came to their aid.

In the top photo, 2004 Carnegie Medal awardees Robert K. Barth (standing, center) and Terry R. Pease (standing, right) flank Melissa M. Bauer. While pregnant with her daughter Cameron, held here by father Pete Bauer, the Cambria, Wis., woman was trapped and semi-conscious in the driver’s seat of her burning car following a highway accident on August 25, 2003. Daughter Lindsay (front left), then 3, was strapped into the back seat. Friends Barth, then 43, of Pardeeville, Wis., and Pease, then 40, also of Cambria, came upon the scene and immediately effected their rescue, despite flames issuing into the car through the missing windshield. Both Ms. Bauer and Lindsay required hospital treatment for their injuries, but they recovered, and Cameron was born seven months later. The three families, pictured at a cookout at Pease’s property in July, share a stake in the Bauer girls’ education, as both Barth and Pease have made contributions from their award funds. Also pictured is Ethan Pease.

In the bottom photo, 2005 Carnegie Medal awardees Delmar R. Burkholder (right) and Terry E. George (third from right), both of New Bethlehem, Pa., are shown at the New Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department, where their medals were presented on August 9 by Douglas R. Chambers, the Commission’s director of external affairs, and Melissa A. Spangler, case investigator. Between the men is Alexandria D. Hopper, whom they rescued from a burning house in New Bethlehem on October 7, 2004. Alexandria, then 8, and her sister Hannah, 4, also pictured, were in bed early that morning when a natural gas

(continued on page 7)
I confess: I’m bored easily. And I’ll admit something else: I get chills at the thought of a society in which everyone looks the same, thinks the same, acts the same... I suspect that living in such a homogenous society would cause me “cultural claustrophobia.”

Fortunately, my work as a Carnegie Hero Fund Commission case investigator not only permits but requires me to learn constantly about new subjects and to connect with people of every possible ethnic and cultural identification.

Anyone doing this work for 22 years, as I have, would have learned early on that there’s always something new to learn. Some examples: a “wash” in west Texas means something different from “the wash” in western Pennsylvania; that a fire really can “flashover” a ceiling of a burning room but that burning motor vehicles do not explode and fly 15 feet into the air as Hollywood portrays them; that a stock pond is not one in which fish are stocked; that all revolvers are handguns but not all handguns are revolvers; that the temperature of the water at the surface of a pond or lake is usually not the same as it is in its depths; that a “peastone” is not a vegetable; that the “rolling boil” at the base of a “low-head dam” is not a place to go swimming... call it lessons in Our World 101.

Similarly, this work would soon cause any case investigator to abandon belief in such a creature as a typical American or Canadian. Casework has involved me with members of a Cree community in Saskatchewan, a political refugee from Saddam Hussein’s Iraq now living in Nebraska, and Vietnamese immigrants in Hawaii as well as Caucasians, Latinos, and African-Americans.

An interest in, and appreciation of, language would also add to a case investigator’s enjoyment of this position. Since I am bilingual (English-French), Canadian cases in which the principals are francophone normally end up on my desk. Regional accents – the Celtic singsong of Newfoundland, the French of the Sudbury district, the liquid English of the Mississippi Delta – can be fascinating. Of course, in both languages different words can have different meanings in different places and learning which words to use or not to use with people from a certain region is part of the on-the-job training: I may refer to a highway berm when speaking to someone from Georgia but I would probably call it “the shoulder” if speaking to a Manitoban.

Being a case investigator is not, however, primarily about multiculturalism. At its core, the work is to establish as best as possible the basic points of a reported act of rescue. Possessing a strong sense of curiosity aids the task. (Investigations Manager Jeffrey A. Dooley made that point in his article in the first issue of imPULSE, which appeared in January of this year.) That I can carry out that work on the professional level while deriving satisfaction from it on the personal level is a great fortune.

explosion destroyed their family’s one-story house. Hannah was thrown from danger, but Alexandria remained pinned in her bed as flames approached that end of the structure. Traveling separately, neighbors Burkholder, then 22, and George, then 59, came upon the scene and, learning that Alexandria was unaccounted for, entered the bedroom for her. After several determined pulls, they freed her before the house was engulfed by flame. Shown with the girls is their father, Michael Hopper. Sadly, their mother did not survive effects of the fire.
Eighty-five years ago, 16-year-old Charles R. Pasho became a hero when he grappled one of two runaway horses that threatened to crush a crowd of fellow students.

It was a Wednesday on that 20th day of October, 1920, and the end of morning recess at the Seymour School in Syracuse, N.Y. Although the school educated both girls and boys, the boys used the west door to the building and the girls, the east. The schoolyard was south of the building and bordering it was a street.

As both groups of students formed separate lines to return to their classrooms, a 35-year-old man was driving a team of two horses on the street, the team pulling an empty coal wagon. The team and driver passed a house next to the schoolyard, at which point the driver reigned in the team. Instead of halting, the horses bolted and ran into the schoolyard. The driver tried desperately to control them but then jumped from the wagon.

The team continued at a gallop, heading toward the group of about 180 girls. A teacher, seeing the approaching horses, yelled to the girls to run to the school building. At about that moment, most of the students perceived the threat, and what had been two orderly groups of students became a disorderly crowd running helter-skelter.

An exception to that was Charles. Although athletic and a good runner, at 5 feet 3 inches in height he was no apparent match for the horses, which stood 5 feet 4 inches. Charles ran about 100 feet along the school building to a point where the horses appeared to be heading. A moment later, the team, having run more than 200 feet, reached him. He grasped the line tethering the closer horse and held as the team continued forward for 42 feet. More than once the closer horse reared its head, causing Charles to rise off the ground. Finally the horse fell – from bearing Charles’s weight or stumbling. Charles pounced on its head and neck, and the team came to a halt. The driver approached and took control.

Three girls had serious injuries from being struck by the wagon or horses, and at least four others received minor injuries. They were taken to a hospital and treated; one girl remained there five days, another three months. All recovered.

Charles was not injured but remained anxious for a few days. In 1923 he was awarded the Carnegie Medal and a maximum of $1,600 to meet educational expenses. He became a cabinetmaker for a furniture company in central New York and was a resident of Syracuse when he died at the age of 86 in 1990. His son, Harold, retains proud possession of the award as well as a scrapbook of clippings on the incident.

Martin Ross, Case Investigator