VISIONS

IOWA STATE [illegible] MAGAZINE

CORED CURRICULUM

▲ ET EXPOSED ▲ CARNEGIE CALL ▲

▲ JOHNNY BE GOOD ▲ FORGET ME NOT ▲ WINTER 1990 ▲

THIS IS THE FIFTH IN A SERIES OF MESSAGES EXPLAINING THE MANY PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ISU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION.

(SEATED) JAMIE ADAIR, EIGHTH-GRADER, AMES MIDDLE SCHOOL.

(STANDING) STUDENT AMBASSADORS GARY HATFIELD, A SOPHOMORE FROM CEDAR RAPIDS, AND JULIE HUGHES, A SOPHOMORE FROM EMMETSBURG.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

"You know that show where Kevin Arnold always talks about what it's like to be in junior high? Well, I think I know why they call it *The Wonder Years*—'cuz when you're in seventh or eighth grade, you spend a lot of time wondering. Am I ever going to catch on to algebra? Will my mother forgive me in this lifetime for taking a razor to those $60 jeans? What if I don't ever grow tall enough to make the basketball team? And why *can't* I go see the New Kids on the Block?

"On top of all that, I'm already starting to wonder about college. Good thing Iowa State has those Student Ambassadors who come to my school, or I'd really be confused. They're real-life college students who come into our classrooms and talk to us about what it's like to pick a major, how to decide where to live and the best ways to get involved in all kinds of neat activities.

"My teacher says they're part of the Student Alumni Association, and they travel to junior highs and high schools throughout Iowa and adjacent states just to help kids like me figure out what to plan for, and expect, when it comes to college.

"You can tell they still remember what it was like for them when they were in junior high. It's nice to know that there really is life after The Wonder Years."

The ISU Student Ambassadors program: Just one of dozens of programs made possible by your Alumni Association membership.

WINTER 1990

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LOST WEEKEND

A glamorous getaway to Gotham, this wasn't

Ah, the life of a magazine editor. Such glamour, such luxury. Jetting off to New York for a weekend to cover a story—well, it just can't get any more indulgent than that.

Right.

Phase One of the pampered princess weekend began in the resplendent United terminal of O'Hare International Airport. A smattering of snow gridlocked most flights that afternoon, resulting in my extended lounging on a concrete settee pretending to be vinyl.

The eventual flight to New York's LaGuardia began smoothly enough, and even the preservative-laden snack wasn't half bad. Alas, such comfort was short-lived.

Flashbacks of the Emmet County Fair began consuming my every thought as the plane bounced and lurched on the last leg of the journey. My mind was flooded, in vivid detail, with memories of that ol' "I've had one too many rides on the tilt-a-whirl" malady as I fought to keep that snack preserved.

At last, that coddled leg of the trip behind me, I found my bags, regained my inner-ear capacities and padded out to hail the wheels that would carry me to my hotel. One hour later, hair frizzed beyond recognition thanks to the steady drizzle that doused me and my belongings, I piled into an old yellow taxi with my traveling companions and said with as much sophistication as I could muster at this point, "The Hotel Inter-Continental, please."

Thus began the cab ride from hell.

An early signal presented itself in the form of a question posed by the driver. Upon informing us that the rain had closed the major expressway into Manhattan, he turned to the back seat and said, "Which way do you think I should go?"

This scenario was not included in the luxury package brochure.

We cruised down darkened, nearly deserted streets until we found the most congested, confused traffic jam imaginable. And then we drove right smack into the middle of it. Muttering in a language that I didn't understand, the driver periodically asked our advice as he dodged oncoming city buses and Friday-night gearheads out for a good time. At last he squeezed through a slight opening in the sea of vehicles, and with a flash of false bravado, careened down streets until he found yet another mass traffic jam. Which he again promptly joined.

This time, we sat for long, long stretches without moving. Reminding myself that this was a trip any editor would kill for, I chose to appreciate the opportunity to observe firsthand the mélange that is NYC. Since we were surrounded primarily by an array of the city's "Most likely to commit a crime yet tonight," that little exercise soon was replaced with a renewed battle to fight the effect that eating exhaust fumes can have on a body.

At last, we reached our destination. Three full hours after leaving LaGuardia, we stepped out of that old yellow taxi, stood on wobbly legs and gratefully allowed the bell captain to take over. Covered with that invisible travel grime, we limped to the elevator and prayed for real beds in rooms that at least smelled luxurious. Too weary to tackle the New York restaurant scene, a call to room service brought a cheeseburger and a diet Coke—all for only $23.

Fortunately, the rest of the weekend, though hectic, was a success. The results of that trip can be found in "The Phantom Opera" *(page 26)*, the account of faculty member Julie Simson's Carnegie Hall debut.

Since this also seems to be the issue for debunking myths *(see "Close Encounters of the Absurd Kind," page 32)*, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to dispel any rumors that mine is the life of Riley… although by the looks of my American Express bill from that weekend, I'm going to have a tough time convincing my boss of that one.

—Debra Gibson

If you're even casually interested in retirement living at Green Hills, now's the time to make your move.

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SOLDIERS WITH SUBSTANCE

Prominent figures implore Ames, ISU: You must join drug battle

Anyone who says the drug epidemic can't infest small, midwestern communities could have learned plenty last October. In a 13-day span, two of the most visible leaders of the fight against drugs visited Ames to elicit support in their battles.

And the messages issued by William Bennett, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and Lonise Bias, mother of cocaine victim Len Bias, were simple: Drugs can rip the heart out of rural areas as surely as they can the inner cities.

"We have a lifestyle that we prize," said Charles Cychosz, coordinator of ISU's alcohol and substance abuse programs. "On the surface, everything looks placid. But I get cornered in halls and on sidewalks by students, faculty and administrators who in some way are being hurt by drugs or alcohol. It's affecting a remarkable number of people, yet it doesn't get to the surface."

Cychosz, who began his duties at ISU last June, said it's no coincidence that two such prominent public figures came to a relatively small university community in a two-week period. "People come here with goals and aspirations to do something with their future," he said. "There's not much that takes all of that away any quicker than drugs. And the entire country is beginning to realize that."

While in central Iowa, Bennett spoke to Ogden High School students, toured the Youth Recovery House in Ames and addressed the Iowa State Policemen's Association annual meeting in Ames. He said he's encouraged by what he saw in the heartland, but warned that no community is beyond drugs' deadly reach.

"There's a palpability to the sense of values here," Bennett said. "It's a feeling of rock-solid values, rock-solid convictions. But I hear some of the same things at a high school in Ogden as I do at a high school in Washington, D.C. Iowa may not be experi-

Lonise Bias, mother of the late Len Bias: "God took one man to save millions...."

encing the state of anarchy that some urban areas are, but the potential does exist."

Cychosz, who said ISU's two new full-time substance abuse specialists see an average of four to five students a week, said appearances by such notable figures can help him accomplish his No. 1 goal: Increase student involvement in addressing the drug problem. He stressed that alcohol abuse is a more pressing concern, one that became even more urgent when the drinking age was raised to 21. "But whether it's alcohol or an illicit drug, the issues are basically the same," he said. "For the person who's chemically dependent, a drug is a drug is a drug.

"At some point, this whole campus is going to rise up and say, 'Enough.' That's when we're going to start seeing some progress."

That, in essence, is what Lonise Bias began saying more than three years ago, after her son's fatal cocaine overdose. His death came just days after the Boston Celtics had selected him in the first round of the National Basketball Association draft. His mother now says, "God took one man to save millions. Len Bias has done more in death to save this nation than he could have done in life." Bias' speech at C.Y. Stephens Auditorium kicked off Alcohol Awareness Week at Iowa State. She also spoke to Ames High School students as part of the Ames Area Substance Abuse Awareness Week.

"Somebody like [Lonise Bias] can get people talking about what she said the next day and the next day and the next," Cychosz said. "She sparks discussion, awareness, and that's exactly what we needed to happen."

While education and awareness are crucial parts of Iowa State's substance abuse program, Cychosz said quality assessment and referral services are at the foundation of the 10-year-old program. "Without that deep involvement, the rhetoric is just hollow," he said.

Just as Bennett employed each Iowa law officer to be "unflinching, clear, firm and strong in our views that people passing out poison get the censure of society," Cychosz said battling substance abuse on campus must also be founded at the individual level. "We can have institutional policy, rules, regulations and enforcement strategies, but that doesn't solve the problem. We're about the business of getting people engaged, empowered and involved here."

TOM WALLACE

William Bennett: Drug fighters must be "unflinching, clear, firm and strong..."

Regents hike tuition, add $10 health fee

Iowa State's undergraduate tuition will increase by just 3 percent in the 1990-91 school year, but the State Board of Regents also approved a new mandatory $10 per semester health services fee.

This marks the 10th consecutive tuition increase. Students had protested vehemently much larger increases in recent years, but many were equally adamant about not being forced to pay the health fee. Students instead proposed a 4 percent tuition hike with no required health fee.

The 3 percent increase, approved at the regents' October meeting in Ames, will bump resident undergraduate tuition from $1,826 to $1,880. In addition to the $10 per semester health fee, students will have the option of paying an additional $20 per semester to avoid having to pay a $20 deductible each time they see a university doctor.

The new fees will take effect this summer. Regents Executive Director R. Wayne Richey said the additional tuition revenue of nearly $4.1 million from the three state universities will be used for computer and library services.

Is Hilton Coliseum ready for suites?

Hilton Coliseum's manager and its most popular tenant have been involved in a controversy that will be decided by the State Board of Regents.

Since last fall, officials of the Iowa State Center, managed by the outside firm Ogden Allied, have promoted the installation of 22 private suites and club rooms at Hilton, the home of ISU basketball and numerous entertainment events. They say revenue created by the sale of such suites is needed to facilitate $3.3 million in improvements to meet building and fire codes. The suites, costing $1.1 million to construct, would generate about $550,000 ($25,000 each) per year. Center Director Steve Peters stressed that neither handicapped access nor existing seating would suffer.

But the controversy lies in the potential change of ambiance. "We don't want fans saying, "They're doing something for the fat cats again,'" said assistant athletic Dave Cox. "That's not Iowa State."

But the athletic department reluctantly has switched sides, fearing that, without suites, the bulk of needed improvements could fall on its shoulders. Other potential funding sources include higher ticket prices, redirected university resources and increased state support.

The regents will discuss the issue in January and rule at a later meeting.

Readers wishing to voice their opinions should address comments to: Office of the Vice President of Business and Finance, Beardshear Hall, ISU, Ames, Iowa 50011.

CREATIVITY BOON

Prof proves there's no rhyme or reason to teaching ingenuity

Growing up in Topeka, Kan., little Bill Boon could ham it up with the best of them. He'd sing and perform for every school and church event around. Until that day in junior high.

During a school assembly, a group of girls stood up and began swooning mockingly during his rendition of Frank Sinatra's "It Happens Every Spring." And young Bill froze. "I remember seeing Mrs. Deeger over in the corner, mouthing the words, and I couldn't do a thing," Boon, now 56, recalls today. "I didn't solo again until 1971."

But failure is the key to creativity, Boon says now, and it's that very philosophy that drives him to perform for, outwit and motivate his design students each semester. While his profession is landscape architecture, Boon is best known for his antics teaching "Design and Society," a 400-plus student lecture course boasting rather novel class projects that test students' innovation—even if the projects fall apart.

Take the "Rolling Stones" project, for instance. In honor of Mick and the gang coming to Ames in October, Boon assigned his students this challenge: From sheets of lightweight cardboard, construct an object that, while rolling down a hill, will change shape but continue moving—with at least one student inside the structure at all times. By project's end, a larger-than-life beer bottle lost its top and evolved into a can, a 10-foot roll of Lifesavers unraveled to spill out its candy and a Rolling Stones-mobile careened precariously close to the edge of a ravine as more than 100 different structures wobbled, bumped or veered down a wet grassy hill during show and tell time. ("I like to tell my students this gives new meaning to grading on the curve," Boon quips.)

Then there was the time that Design 129 students were instructed to create an apparatus that could launch a water balloon at least 25 feet to hit a stationary target—that target being Boon. Veishea '89 featured another of his brainstorms, a cardboard boat race on Lake LaVerne. The lake also was the sight a few years back of the "Jesus shoes" project, where students were encouraged to discover a way to walk on water.

But not all projects are assigned with such levity. Last spring, Boon instructed his class members to erect a "cardboard campground" on central campus, where they would spend a cold, blustery night shivering inside their flimsy structures in recognition of the plight of the homeless. "There's bound to be a little suffering tonight," Boon said as students were fighting the wind on that April evening.

JIM HEEMSTRA

"Everyone is creative. It just takes some crazy man to pull it out of you sometimes," says Bill Boon.

"I want my students to learn that creativity is the ability to see life as an experience from which they can learn and grow," he explains several months later. "You need to saturate students with experience, but also make them understand that learning to fail is a crucial part of that process."

Boon talks openly during his lectures of his own failures. Like when he almost didn't graduate from Kansas State because he failed a physics course his last semester. Or how he got fired from his first job out of college because he wasn't cut out to be an agronomist. And that during his two and one-half years in the Army, he managed to blow up a jeep, wreck a bus, burn up a gun generator, smash into a colonel's car (twice in one day) and lose a machine gun. ("Actually, I seriously considered staying in the Army just because it was so exciting.")

The former lay minister manufactures excitement in the classroom on a routine basis. For his lecture on tradition in design, he dresses as Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof* and sings—what else—"Tradition." To stress the complications that occur while incorporating space into urban design, Boon becomes *The Music Man,* belting out "Trouble in River City" while dressed in full Harold Hill regalia.

But above all else, it is his mission to teach originality. The first day of each semester finds Boon, decked in an all-white suit, standing atop a table in the front of the auditorium. He instructs the students to remove their shoes, then put them back on the wrong feet. They snicker and snort, and eventually agree with Boon that yes, they do feel differently about themselves. "But if you're going to be a designer, you have to be different," says the man who grew up wanting to be a cowboy. "You just have to feel as though you're not a part of this world."

Here's a story of a man named Andy...

When is Brady Bunch trivia a prerequisite? And the ability to discern between dead people and Indian food crucial? When you're playing MTV's ***Remote Control***, natch. The irreverent game show came to ISU last October on its "Out of the Basement Tour." (It was billed as "not fit for TV"; most of the good stuff wound up on VISIONS' cutting room floor, as well.) A lack of cameras didn't stop nearly 100 MTV'ers from trying out for the four contestant spots. (Including sophomore Dana Johnson, whose successful audition consisted of shoving her entire fist into her mouth. And they say TV isn't intellectual ...)

Competing before a sparse but rowdy C.Y. Stephens Auditorium crowd, ISU English major Andy Levy deftly picked his way through categories like Brady Physics, the Elvis Network and Celebrity Flesh to win a trip to New York and a spot on the real ***Remote Control.*** "TV," Andy proclaimed, "is my religion." Then who, pray tell, is his god? Mike Brady?

Elliott, Gary benched as Michael finds new blood for his endless, juvenile pickup games

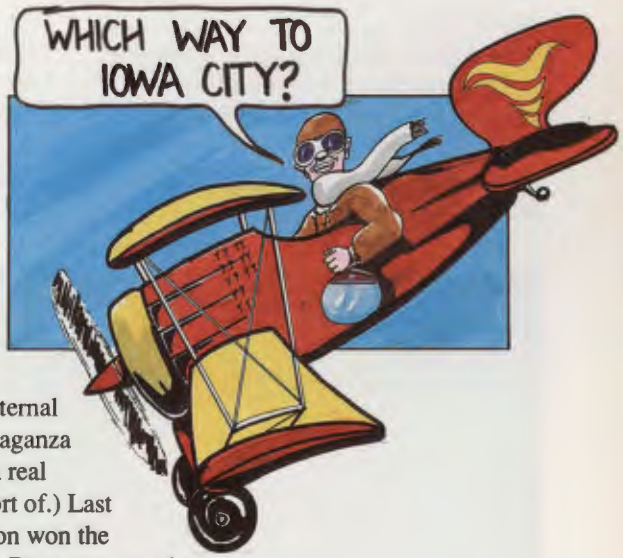
Imagine a women's basketball coach using this recruiting spiel: "Come here and you'll play the best teams in the country in a fantastic arena, and you'll have a chance for postseason tournaments. Oh, and did I mention you'll meet Ken Olin?"

Where do I sign?

During a break from a holiday tournament in the L.A. area, ISU coach Pam Wettig took her team to a filming session of the hit TV series *thirtysomething*. Pam's sister, Patricia Wettig, happens to star in the ABC smash (she plays Nancy Krieger), and it further happens that Patty is married to fellow star and major swoon-machine Ken Olin (Michael Steadman).

So, Pam: How ya gonna get 'em back on the court?

Baron von Eaton Strikes Again!



We hate to say it, but it looks like the Gordon Eaton presidency has been a bomb. No, we're not talking about the tension-fest brought on by a two-year internal/external planning extravaganza *(page 12)*, but a real bomb. (Well, sort of.) Last September, Eaton won the Celebrity Bomb Drop sponsored by the ISU Flying Club. Competing against hockey coach Al Murdoch and a Des Moines deejay, Eaton climbed into an open cockpit plane and dropped flour bags at a target 300 feet below. His winning margin of error on two bombs: 234 feet. You know what they say: Close only counts in bombs and strategic plans.

Illustrations by G. Michael Maddock

MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Don't feel bad," Philip Haydon says, reminding a visitor not to forget his jacket before leaving. "I'm the same way. Sometimes I think I'd forget my head if it weren't attached."

We humans certainly are a forgetful lot. We drive to the grocery store only to forget what we wanted for dinner. We search frantically for our keys only to find them in our pockets. We chat with a new co-worker for 15 minutes only to forget her name five minutes later.

And Philip Haydon wants to know why.

The Iowa State zoology professor has other questions on his mind, all related to the central nervous system: Why can one student learn more quickly than another? What causes neuromuscular disorders? How can Alzheimer's Disease be prevented?

For answers, he's turning to the body's billions of message transmitters: synapses. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is so interested in finding those answers that it has awarded him two grants totaling more than $1.7 million. One study focuses on the formation of chemical synapses, the other on the molecular mechanisms involved in synapse transmission. Haydon also recently received a $25,000 fellowship from the Sloan Foundation.

Zoologist nets $1.7 million to learn how we remember

"You cannot function without providing an example of chemical synapses at work," says Haydon, a native of England. "When you write, the synapses are going crazy. They release the chemicals that make muscles contract. From there you take it a step further concerning memory and learning."

Haydon describes them as "junctions" that promote passage of chemicals between cell neurons. Touch a hot iron and a chemical message is electrically relayed—via neurons—from your finger to your brain. The cortex receives the emergency signal, recognizes it and sends a return message back to the muscles: Get that finger off of there!

When a person is inflicted by a neuromuscular disease like Eaton-Lambert's syndrome, malfunctioning synapses create a communication gap. People lose the ability to fully use their muscles because messages aren't relayed.

Learning and remembering are simply extensions of such principles. Both processes are results of changes in the amount of chemical released in the synapses. Breakdowns in this process can result in learning disorders and memory losses in inflictions like Alzheimer's.

Haydon concedes, though, that applications for such research are years away. "If my car isn't working right, I take it to a mechanic, somebody who knows how it works," he says. "We don't know how this system works. If, before I die, I can learn how the nervous system and its communication develops, how it functions and how the amount of chemical released [at the synapse] is controlled, I'll be a happy man."

Hardly small goals. To help achieve them, Haydon has called on some rather small helpers: snails. Neurons in snails are the same basic unit of the nervous system as those in humans. Snails learn, snails remember. But there are only about 500 neurons in the snail brain opposed to millions in humans. Haydon has developed a method of isolating neurons and forcing them to form unusually large synapses—60 times their normal size. Since normal synapses are only about two micrometers in size—smaller than the point of a pin—enlarging them lets Haydon more easily study their chemical reactions.

"I want to know what makes me work, not a snail," says Haydon. "But snails make this basic research easier.

Haydon and collaborators in Dallas and West Germany currently are the only scientists taking this enlarge-the-synapse road. But they're hardly alone in their travel. "Obviously, [the NIH] sees the importance of this study," Haydon says. "There are many people involved because it is absolutely crucial to understanding how cells communicate—how we function."

And that's a fact Philip Haydon won't soon forget.

JIM HEEMSTRA

Philip Haydon harbors two burning questions: How do I learn? How do I remember?

Patrick Patterson's research will take him to the World Figure Skating Championships in Calgary in February.

JIM HEEMSTRA

Prof's research on stiffness aids skaters, burn victims alike

What do burn victims and figure skaters have in common? In a word, stiffness. In a name, Patrick Patterson.

The Iowa State professor of industrial and biomedical engineering has developed a device to quantify knuckle joint stiffness in burn patients, and he also works with the United States Olympic Foundation to improve figure skates.

"With the [burn victim's] hand, I'm trying to eliminate stiffness," said Patterson, whose background includes study in exercise physiology, biomechanics and ergonomics (biotechnology). "With the skate, I'm trying to provide stiffness that helps skaters perform at their best."

Patterson was the first to develop a method of documenting stiffness in a burned hand. Previously, there was no accurate way to prescribe treatment for each particular victim—even each hand—but Patterson has helped quantify the severity of the burn. This should result in more accurate treatment, he said, and thus return more function to the hands.

Patterson hopes his research into skate stiffness will pay dividends for the U.S. in the 1992 Winter Olympics. "The skating world is very traditional," Patterson said. "The Olympic Foundation is trying to break out of that tradition and improve skate technology." Like improvements in running shoes, Patterson said advanced skates could give U.S. athletes an edge—particularly in jumping, where stiffness is crucial.

Patterson employs computers in both research areas. He uses a portable device to collect data on hand characteristics, and a foot model subjected to static loads to test skate stiffness.

ISU researcher tries to beef up snack foods

Where's the beef? Ricardo Molins would like to see it in your snack chip one day.

The researcher for Iowa State's Meat Export Research Center has developed a beef-corn snack chip made from up to 20 percent beef but possessing the flavor, texture and storage characteristics of the Doritos and Ruffles of the world. Campus taste tests proved successful—by adding spices, Molins has made pizza and jerky flavors, as well—but he still is looking for commercial firms to market the product.

Although the snack would be more expensive than traditional chips because of the beef content, Molins says his creation has definite nutritional advantages. His snack has 15 percent protein and less than half of 1 percent fat. "People eat snacks all the time," he says. "I think they'd like to have the opportunity to make them a little more nutritious."

BRIEF INQUIRIES

BETTER BEEF Beef magazine recently named scientists with ISU connections as two of "The 25 Who Made a Difference" in the beef cattle industry during the past quarter-century.

Honored animal scientists included Richard L. Willham, a Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor of Animal Science at Iowa State, and ISU graduate Arthur P. Raun, director of animal science development at Lilly Research Laboratories in Greenfield, Ind. Both were featured in the September issue of Beef.

Willham is a national leader in beef sire evaluation, recognized for introducing breeding values for calving ease, growth traits and maternal performance. Willham, who joined the ISU faculty in 1959, received his master's degree in 1955 and Ph.D. in 1960 from Iowa State.

Raun, who received his master's (1956) and doctoral (1958) degrees from Iowa State, has been recognized for his role in discoveries that greatly improved feed conversions and helped revolutionize beef cattle nutrition.

SUPER SURGEON Former veterinary graduate faculty member Robert W. Dougherty was the 1989 recipient of the Jacob Markowitz Award. The award honors contributions to medicine through the art, science and technology of experimental surgery.

Dougherty was head of the Physiopathological Laboratory at the National Animal Disease Center in Ames and a member of the ISU graduate faculty from 1961-74. He retired in 1974, but continued as a collaborator with the NADC and the College of Veterinary Medicine until 1988. Dougherty, who earned his bachelor's degree from Iowa State in 1927, lives in rural Ames.

The 1988 recipient of the Markowitz Award was noted heart transplant surgeon Dr. Michael DeBakey.

HISTORY LESSON ISU's Center for Historical Studies of Technology and Science has been awarded a $150,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant will be used to conduct the Institute for College and University Faculty next summer. The six-week institute will bring 25 scholars from across the country to focus on the history of technology and science in American culture from 1607-1955.

A STITCH IN TIME

After months of turmoil, the search for excess layers at Iowa State has produced a healthy diagnosis. But the process left scars that only now are beginning to heal.

Gordon Eaton talks like a man who's just been pulled off the electric chair by the proverbial call from the governor. But in his case the reprieve came from the State Board of Regents.

"There were times that I didn't think we'd make it," Iowa State University's president says. "But we survived. Now if we can just return to business...."

For months, the only business concerning several programs at ISU—as well as the Universities of Iowa and Northern Iowa—was getting off death row. Back in June, they had been recommended for elimination by a $1.25 million, regents-commissioned private audit. Not all of the programs were spared by that phone call, but Eaton and other ISU officials who fought fiercely for their academic survival nonetheless had to be tickled with the final result.

"This sigh of relief has been a long, long time in coming," Eaton said in October, after the regents' vote spared all but one ISU program. "I see a light at the end of the tunnel now. A nice, bright light, just ahead."

Des Moines businessman Marvin Pomerantz has been seeing that light since assuming the regents presidency in 1987 *(page 15)*. In conducting what many say is the most exhaustive public higher education audit in Iowa history, he led the regents on a fervent mission to obtain and ensure quality. As difficult as it may be to believe in this time of dwindling college-aged population and rocketing education costs, the quest for quality drove the regents to shell out state funds to hire the New York-based firm Peat Marwick Main and Co. to conduct an exhaustive study of the three public universities. Regents speculate the study could reclaim $20 million during the next four years in savings and increased revenue, but it was only a thirst for quality that prompted them to give universities three months to respond to the consultants' controversial findings. And quality was why they spent countless hours with each institution before finishing their road map for public higher education.

"Almost without exception, [similar] studies in other states are driven by economics," Eaton says. "But none of us could argue the fact that our regents endured all of this for much more than money."

And just what is "all of this?" What's behind one of the more tumultuous periods in Iowa State history?

Duplication. Program duplication.

Although potentially unnecessary duplica-

BY DAN DAVENPORT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KENT SCHMIDT

tion at Iowa State, Iowa and UNI was one of just 35 academic areas investigated by Peat Marwick, to the dismay of regents and administrators it received most of the media attention. Eaton says valuable recommendations including changes in administrative reorganization, faculty workloads, research productivity, financial management and facilities management and usage already have been put to use. But no matter how loudly administrators praised other areas of the audit, the duplication segment—estimated by one regent to cost $180,000—grabbed headlines by jeopardizing programs, academic careers and more than 1,800 students' very existence on campus. Toss in the puzzling, at best, nature of some of the recommendations—the always-candid Eaton wondered if Peat Marwick had made them using an Ouija board—and the state's three public universities were in for a tension-filled summer.

And nowhere was it more tense than in Ames. Not only did members of four death-row departments—journalism, industrial engineering, part of industrial education and technology and three doctoral programs in education—fret about their professional futures, but some did so for the second time in less than a year. In February 1989, Iowa State's own Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee had released its recommendations, some of which called for elimination of entire programs. "These people already had gone through an intense level of anxiety," says Jean Adams, associate provost and chair of the LRSPC. "For somebody to come along and put them through it again, well, it really got to be a strain."

But the LRSPC is no more, disbanding after making its final recommendations early last year. Many of the committee's recommendations are being heralded as visionary: merging departments of food technology and food science and nutrition, reorganizing all of the biological sciences, refocusing the thrust of the College of Engineering. None of those changes were made without controversy; students, faculty and alumni flooded administrators and local media with emotional arguments, in most cases, against change.

Eaton's predecessor, W. Robert Parks, had been in office for 22 years, but Eaton made it clear from his August 1986 arrival that an Iowa State president now wakes to a different day. The campus was beginning to rebound from Eaton's efforts toward change and was showing signs of regrouping when the Peat Marwick recommendations hit the fan. If, as Woodrow Wilson said, "The only thing harder than changing a university is moving a cemetery," even relocating the dead might take a back seat to *twice* putting an institution through the rigors of reformation.

Many of the people who voiced opposition to the LRSPC's recommendations blasted the regents' study, as well. If supporters of some programs—like industrial engineering—felt they'd had their death sentences commuted once, imagine the relief of leaders in a department like journalism, which twice had been sentenced to the chair. "But I'll say this," says Tom Emmerson, head of the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, "I'm not sure if we have a third one in us." *(Emmerson intimates the roller-coaster of emotions that dominated his 1989 in "Frame of Reference," page 46.)*

In trying to analyze the final fallout of this studying and planning spree (the Iowa legislature, Governor Terry Branstad and the Iowa Department of Education also conducted studies), one must start at the end. Who won? Who lost? Who is less than thrilled about their victories?

Following are the ISU-related results from the regents' Oct. 19 vote in Iowa State's Memorial Union—the Big Four, as it were:

The department of journalism's woes, perhaps because of a large number of alumni in the state's media, received the greatest coverage. ISU's own planning committee had recommended dropping the program, but after hearing proposals from journalism officials, Eaton decided to retain the program with some changes. Within weeks, though, Peat Marwick advised axing the 696-student program and concentrating the state's journalism studies at the University of Iowa. But in the end, regents opted to merge ISU's journalism program with telecommunicative arts, and require majors to have a second major or a second area of study.

ISU's 650-student industrial engineering program also had been slated for elimination, but the regents decided to continue the program while refocusing its emphasis toward manufacturing systems and away from business management.

Peat Marwick recommended dropping ISU's industrial education and technology program's teacher-certification track (302 students), and the regents obliged. Now, the program will focus on technology study.

The regents ruled that three of ISU's doctorate of education programs be dropped: research and evaluation, counselor education and personnel services and historical, philosophical and comparative studies. Peat Marwick originally had given five of the department's Ph.D. programs (168 total students) the death penalty.

Although the consultants' recommendations originally left Iowa State with the most to lose, Eaton says the completion of its own study actually helped it sustain the least damage. Iowa lost its home economics and materials engineering programs, while UNI's home economics graduate program and three doctoral programs in education were eliminated.

"As [the regents] were debating all this," Adams says, "I was amazed to see board members pulling out copies of our long-range report during discussions. We're thrilled they relied on it."

To the satisfaction of Eaton and his counterparts—Hunter Rawlings III at Iowa and Constantine Curris at UNI—the regents sought input from all three universities. In a June interview, Eaton had expressed concerns that, with the recommendations in hand, the regents might look no further than their own consultants' opinions. He particularly wondered aloud about Pomerantz's perceived loyalty to Peat Marwick. But, in that three-month response period, Eaton and Provost Milton Glick traveled around Iowa visiting each of the nine regents.

"This decision went through a funnel," says regent Marvin Berenstein, "through university administrators, the regents, the regents office. By the time it got through, there had been tremendous hashing and rehashing."

"I disagreed with some of those recommendations," says regents Executive

Director R. Wayne Richey. "I'm sure we all did. We knew there were mistakes, and that we needed to evaluate all the recommendations closely."

Another factor involved in the regents eschewing much of the Peat Marwick recommendations was the puzzling reports from the firm's own external consultants. Academic professionals hired by Peat Marwick to examine programs say they found little duplication, which, in trying to explain the firm's findings, lends some credence to Eaton's Ouija board hypotheses. "I was absolutely flabbergasted to see [Peat Marwick's] recommendations," says MaryAnn Yodelis Smith, vice chancellor for the University of Wisconsin Center System and one of two consultants hired to evaluate ISU's journalism department. "There wasn't a shred of evidence to lead to that. Iowa State has always had a strong program in journalism. I would've been very upset if it wouldn't still be there." Consultants in other departments voiced similar dismay.

JIM HEEMSTRA

MARVIN POMERANTZ

It's no wonder, then, that university administrators reacted to the Peat Marwick recommendations with such astonishment. "The state is already essentially lean and mean with respect to program offerings," Eaton said at the June regents meeting. "The question is, are we going to become anorexic?"

UNI's Curris quipped, "I feel like the proverbial mosquito at the nudist colony—I don't know where to start."

Continued...

REGENTS' MARVIN POMERANTZ: IOWA'S EDUCATION ENIGMA

Marvin Pomerantz is a hard guy to figure. And that seems to be just the way he wants it.

In leading State Board of Regents meetings, Pomerantz ostensibly seizes every opportunity to remind regents, university administrators and assorted onlookers just who's calling the shots.

The regents' September meeting in Cedar Falls offered a prime example. To illustrate a magnet-manufacturing technology developed by the Ames Laboratory, an ISU official asked the regents to try to separate two sample magnets. "I did it," Pomerantz announced. How? "I pushed it out to the edge where I could provide a little leverage."

"That wouldn't be the first time you've done that," cracked ISU Provost Milton Glick, ensuring that not an ounce of double entendre was lost on the packed house gathered to hear Iowa's public universities debate program changes spearheaded by Pomerantz.

"For me, [Pomerantz] captures sort of puzzling roles," says Iowa State President Gordon Eaton, who's been known to call his boss "Marvelous Marvin" on more than one occasion. "Like that comment in Cedar Falls—he wants people to know he's in charge, but he's slightly facetious. He's an interesting case."

Eaton himself struggled with Pomerantz's roles back in June, after the regents announced private consultants' recommendations for eliminating programs at the state universities. Although Eaton vehemently disagreed with most of those recommendations, he was worried that Pomerantz would have the power to get them approved.

"We hope pushing all these recommendations through won't be as easy as Mr. Pomerantz might think," Eaton had said in June. "It seems obvious how Mr. Pomerantz feels. We just have to hope [the other regents] aren't ready to give it all to him."

Continued...

In October, Eaton learned his concerns had been unfounded. The regents gave the universities three months to respond to the recommendations, carefully considered their input and wound up practically discounting the consultants' views on program duplication.

"After all the talk, all the distress, I don't think there was any doubt what [Pomerantz] was after," Eaton says. "Maybe I got caught up in that reputation earlier. But I wish we wouldn't do that, that we would see just where he's trying to lead us. Underneath it all, the man takes higher education to heart."

But Pomerantz's reputation—many see a wealthy, Republican power monger—can be difficult not to get caught up in. At a rotund 5-foot-8, he's intimidating enough physically. He doesn't often smile, doing so usually, it seems, when reveling in his own position of strength. "I know this [higher education study] has put the campuses through a certain amount of tension," he said during the debate. "But frankly, I don't easily feel tension."

His professional status can be equally awing. The 59-year-old son of Polish Jews has made a fortune in paper bags and real estate. The Des Moines-based Mid-American Corp. now is the holding company for his various financial interests. The University of Iowa graduate has been a key Republican fund raiser, and a close adviser to Governors Robert Ray and Terry Branstad. Though the regents presidency normally goes to a board veteran, Pomerantz walked right into the top spot in May 1987. "I had certain things in mind and knew [being president] was the way to get them accomplished," says Pomerantz, who had the $1.25 million higher education study off the ground in just months. "When you take on this responsibility, it's important to do everything you can."

State Democrats were quick to criticize his efforts to streamline higher education. Now, he says, the results of this two-year-long audit should quiet those naysayers.

"For whatever reason, people want to read more into my interests," says Pomerantz. "I took on this position to improve education. My own interests were not a factor. Contrary to what many people think, my personality, my role, doesn't matter. What matters is where this will put higher education."

—D.D.

PRESENTING THE CASE FOR IOWA STATE DURING THE OCTOBER REGENTS MEETING WERE GLICK, EATON AND WARREN MADDEN, ISU VICE PRESIDENT FOR BUSINESS AND FINANCE.

But when Pomerantz's gavel dropped on that pivotal October meeting, nearly everyone involved had to admit: OK, it could've been a little better. But it could've been much, much worse.

"From the beginning, you knew [Peat Marwick] was way off base," Adams says. "I don't think they served themselves well in taking on the unnecessary duplication study. It's an accounting firm, a management consultant firm. Around here, Peat Marwick and unnecessary duplication have become almost dirty words."

Says 1967 ISU graduate Sue Mullins, a former state representative and member of the House Appropriations and Education Subcommittee: "I think it's clear [Peat Marwick] felt its mandate was to save money. But they're number crunchers, and I don't know the value of number crunchers in evaluating higher education. They cost a lot of money and created a lot of anxiety for no more than they found out."

Alceste Pappas and James D. Carney, both principals with Peat Marwick, oversaw the study. Both failed to return repeated telephone calls from VISIONS.

Whatever the consensus, most ISU administrators say there are two reasons why the university will be better for what Adams called the firm's "off the wall" analysis:

The state now should know that it has no unnecessary duplication problem. In response to Peat Marwick's recommendations, Iowa State officials compiled a listing of program duplication—not necessarily unnecessary—in six Midwest states other than Iowa. In only one area—home economics—did Iowa have more than average duplication. "There's been great value in being able to put that myth behind us," says Glick. "Iowa has one of the nation's most intelligently conceived structures for higher education, and this study showed that."

Says 1969 ISU graduate Norman Skadburg, president of the First State Bank of Webster City: "I'm sure the regents meant well. And now the public can see there's no waste. But it seems like a lot of money to spend to find that out."

The regents' study shed new light on Iowa State's oft-criticized LRSPC. Eaton and the committee were ripped campus-wide throughout the planning process; but in the wake of Peat Marwick's recommendations, many detractors suddenly viewed the LRSPC from a new vantage point. "We look like pussycats compared to Peat Marwick," Adams says.

Says Eaton, "I literally had people say to me, 'Gosh, maybe your way wasn't such a bad way to do it after all.'"

Before the regents' telling vote, Curris made a statement that perhaps spoke for all parties: "We're anxious to put this period of Northern Iowa history behind us."

With all the talk of long-range planning, it seems appropriate to ask just where this period of history will rank in 10 or 20 or 50 years. "I'd love to jump into the future and take a little peek at where this all lands," Adams says. Strategic planning has run rampant in higher education during the past 15 years, but those who sweated through what Curris calls "an extended period of high anxiety" probably won't want to learn this: Its record has been less than sterling.

George Keller, a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education and perhaps the nation's leading expert in this area, says a majority of such plans are ineffective because of poor follow-through. Keller, author of the higher education planning bible, *Academic Strategy—The Management Revolution in American Higher Education,* was brought to Iowa State in fall 1988 to help Eaton, Glick and Adams begin organizing their strategies. He says while an estimated 1,000 college campuses are either planning to plan, actually planning or finishing up a plan, hundreds will fail.

"We realize that there are relatively few success stories in this area," Glick says. "It's crucial to know we're faced with a tough job."

Glick, who says "we won't actually have a plan with a capital P," lists several key ingredients to effective ongoing planning: the realization that it must be continuing; the existence of top-down and bottom-up responsibility; a sense of trust within the university that allows for dialogue and a tie-in with budget and expectations against which to measure effectiveness.

Glick and Eaton feel they have or will have all those ingredients in place soon. They also point to a bonus factor that could further enhance their chances: A new set of deans poised to tackle the challenge. Ten of ISU's 12 deans have assumed their positions during the Eaton Era, and, in all of the hirings, commitment to future planning was a major consideration. Eaton says much of the work in monitoring the plan will be handled "out in the trenches" led by the deans.

"It was difficult for people who had been here so long to let go of the old values and embrace the new ones," says Eaton, adding he'd now be more than happy to sit back and seek maximum obscurity after being in the spotlight practically from inauguration day. "The timing with this new set of deans couldn't have been better."

"IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN HERE SO LONG TO LET GO OF THE OLD VALUES AND EMBRACE THE NEW ONES. THE TIMING WITH THIS NEW SET OF DEANS COULDN'T HAVE BEEN BETTER."

—Gordon Eaton

Slowly, the campus seems to be settling in to a new state of normalcy. Administrators are gushing at length about "being poised to leap into the 21st century," and regents appear to be trusting them to watch where they leap. Pomerantz stresses that he sees completing this barrage of studies as "a beginning, not an end."

Nonetheless, sitting in his Beardshear Hall office late one bright fall afternoon, Eaton reflects on ending this chapter of his Iowa State administration:

"There was a period of time when I didn't think I would survive politically. There were people hoping I wouldn't, but those are things you have fight, to ride out. I've grown as an individual and a president, just as I think this whole trying period has forced our faculty and our university to grow, get stronger. Now, finally, we can see just how strong we can be."

TIME PASSAGES

APRIL 1987
Iowa State University's Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee officially formed

SEPTEMBER 1987
State Board of Regents hires Peat Marwick Main and Co. to conduct study of three public universities

SEPTEMBER 1988
Iowa Department of Education and Governor Terry Branstad begin state higher education studies

NOVEMBER 1988
LRSPC releases preliminary results of committee work

JANUARY 1989
Department of Education and governor's office release findings of higher education studies

FEBRUARY 1989
Academic Program Review Subcommittee of LRSPC releases recommendations for alternative organization

MAY 1989
President Gordon Eaton and Provost Milton Glick release revisions to LRSPC recommendations

JUNE 1989
Regents release Peat Marwick recommendations on unnecessary duplication in five program areas

OCTOBER 1989
Regents make final decisions on five selected program areas

NOVEMBER 1989
Regents make final decisions on 10 other program areas

'Whoo, Coach!'

Johnny Orr is hunched over the edge of his desk, staring at the floor as if looking for a lost button. One hand rubs his bristly scalp, the other holds a telephone receiver. "I can believe that, coach," he squeals into the mouthpiece. "Whoo, I can believe that." He tugs at his ear. The conversation lasts 10 minutes, Orr carrying it with his leaf-rustling rasp.

"I hope we can do it, man. Gonna be a hell of a time. Hell of a time, coach." He softly places the phone in its cradle, strokes the stubble again and slumps back in his chair. He looks up with a puzzled grin. He turns to the left, squinting his blue eyes into the harsh, mid-morning autumn sunlight that pours into his Hilton Coliseum office. You swear the man looks every one of his 62 years until you get to the eyes—they still glisten like those of "the perennial sophomore" one Iowa State official likes to call him. He snorts, then shakes his head. "You hear that? Sounded like we were old buddies? Never met the guy. No idea who he is, man. Is that nutty, coach?"

There's undoubtedly a different scene on the other end of the line: *Sam Stater bangs down the receiver and dashes out of his office in a frenzied search for anything with ears. "Yep, just had Johnny on the phone. Says he might come up for the winter banquet. What a great guy. 'Johnny,' I said, 'you are a great guy.' Maybe I'll introduce you sometime."* Before the noon whistle blows, it'll be all over town like a January snowstorm: Sam knows Johnny.

The man ISU President Gordon Eaton calls "a true cult/folk hero" has more of these I Know Johnny stories than college basketball coaching victories—and he has almost 400 of the latter. Even the wife of one of the state's few legitimate icons is loaded with brush-with-Johnny anecdotes.

Romie Orr—short for Romala—was showing some of her hand-stitched rugs at a local art festival last summer when a woman asked about enrolling in one of Romie's classes at Ames' Octagon Center for the Arts. When she learned that the woman lived in a small, northern Iowa community, Romie mentioned college friends from the same town. "We know them," the woman answered, her voice beginning to crescendo. "And did you know that THEY KNOW JOHNNY ORR?"

So who *doesn't?* At least, who doesn't *think* they do? With his 10th anniversary as Iowa State's basketball coach coming up March 25, John Michael Orr says he's visited more towns and more people than anybody else in the state, politicians included. While he's a bit of a braggadocio ("What do you think of my house, coach?"), he says this matter-of-factly, as if he were saying, One point for a free throw. Though he scoots into most Iowa homes via TV, it's through public appearances that he's most developed his constituency. "The biggest demand on 'O' is the public," says assistant coach Ric Wesley, using the nickname favored by many of Orr's friends. "With that and golf, I honestly think he gets more run-down in the off-season."

Orr headlines more than 100 annual meetings, banquets and golf outings each year. If you're an Iowa business or charity and you want an event to be a success, put Orr's droopy, bloodhound mug on it. The Iowa Department of Economic Development did. So do charitable organizations like Variety Club and the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Of course there are two sides to this gold coin: Orr regularly makes $1,000 a pop for the non-charity gigs, and doesn't for a second try to hide his devotion to the dollar. Without enough of them ($45,000 a year to start, now $96,000 annually, plus a Reebok shoe contract, radio and TV shows, a basketball camp and speaking engagements to bring his earnings to several times that), he never would have left the University of Michigan in 1980.

"Orr strikes it rich in Iowa," the Ann

Ten years ago, Johnny Orr came to Ames to build a winning basketball program. Somehow along the way, he's also managed to build a zealous following that baffles even him.

By Dan Davenport

Arbor News headline blared on March 25, 1980, the day Orr spurned Michigan for cardinal and gold pastures. A Detroit Free Press headline grumbled, "Coach Orr quits U-M for Iowa's big money."

"People here saw a guy who was too thin-skinned," says former Detroit Free Press sportswriter Lynn Henning. "He felt the world was against him, when it was just a case of there being so much competition for the entertainment dollar. When he left, he wanted everyone back here to know everything he got. That's all a lot of people remember him for."

One ISU official says he's "yet to see even a tiny step back in Johnny's intensity. His pride won't let it happen."

JIM HEEMSTRA

"He knows he's good, people know he's good and he proves it. They love him for it."

But Iowans never drew that picture of Orr—even after he publicly crowed about his fat contract. "When I was a kid and started coaching, I wanted to be the best paid someday," he said at his first press conference. No state—much less one like Iowa, with its abundance of folksy, down-home values—goes nutty over money-hungry coaches. But Iowans also have shown that it takes more than victories to fully capture their reverence. Earle Bruce, Hayden Fry, Maury John, Lute Olson and Tom Davis all have won more often (in nine seasons Orr had a .528 winning percentage), yet none developed a following that so cleanly slices through every imaginable demographic sect.

"I don't care if I'm the opposing coach," says Davis, who leads the University of Iowa team. "The appreciation John gets makes me feel good to be here."

"We go to dinner in Iowa City," says Ames businessman Jan Severson, a friend of Orr's, "and even Iowa fans want to meet him, to say they know Johnny Orr."

To make a state yours, as Orr has done as thoroughly as anyone—in sports, politics, business, you name it—it takes something more. But the man has no idea what it is.

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The 1989 Buick LeSabre cruises down Interstate 35, with its owner's solid, 6-foot-3 frame at home behind the steering wheel. Johnny Orr's right hand guides the sky-blue luxury sedan in the right southbound lane, his left hand on bristle-rubbing detail. The pale red of his sport coat almost seems to creep into his neck and his lined, ruddy crown like spilled cranberry juice. If travelers look his way as they pass, almost invariably they turn away, swivel back, then point and wave. They've met Johnny Orr. "Nutty, huh, man?" he chortles, flattening his clover-green, paisley tie against his sturdy chest.

This late September afternoon finds Orr en route to Des Moines and his third speaking engagement in two days. He'll schmooze, down a couple of light beers, eat a steak (medium rare) and scratch out some autographs *(Adam, I hope you will grow up to be a Cyclone. Johnny Orr)*. After dinner he'll pull out several creased note cards and sit on the edge of his chair, fidgeting like a 9 year old as he waits for his crowd to finish eating. Prep time amounts to shuffling cards until he finds one that starts, *"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen..."* He's learned that the details—jokes, some zings at the Hawks, bragging (somewhat) facetiously about his income, warning about drugs—will take care of themselves. (So, too, will his southern Illinois accent. Like instant pudding, it seems to thicken with time: "It's gonna be a great *yeeah,* OK?") After a 36-minute improv and a raucous standing ovation, he'll be home, $1,000 in hand, before the 10 o'clock news. Easiest grand ever made? Not so fast. "We just knew Coach Orr would be a guy you could walk up to, shake his hand, buy him a beer and just shoot the breeze," says one Johnny loyalist from Marshalltown. Gushes a Des Moines fan captured by the Orr-a: "What other celebrity would come here and hang out with us before dinner? There's nobody we'd rather have than Johnny."

Usually, there's no place Johnny would rather be. "But sometimes," he says, driving back to Ames under a chalk-white sliver of a moon, "you don't know if you're up for it. You know it's *their night,* but they don't know it might be your 70th night. But you see 'em out there, you've got to get jacked up." He takes both hands from the steering wheel and shoves his fists up into the air. Along with starting sentences with "whoo!", ending them with "coach" and lacing the middle with color (read: profanity), the fist waving is an Orr trademark. "When you stand up, they love it. Then you love it, coach."

Maybe that's it: Maybe Iowans fell for him because, like a soft, old sponge, he soaked in their affection, and, with just a squeeze of appreciation, gave it right back. "When he comes back from these places, he's beaming," Romie Orr says a few days later from a sitting room in the Orr's stylish west Ames home. "He says, 'Do you know how many people live there? Do you know how many more people were at that banquet than live there?'"

Romie, whose close-cropped, salt-and-pepper hair is a perfect companion coif to what she calls Johnny's "brush cut," further analyzes the Orr Phenomenon: "You had this successful coach saying he loves Iowa. That made people feel good. People like feeling good about themselves."

Orr included. Nobody shuns approval, of course, but after his perceived second-class treatment at Michigan, he places a high premium on appreciation. "John's got an ego second to none," says former athletic director Lou McCullough, the matchmaker in the Orr-ISU marriage. "But it works. He knows he's good, people know he's good and he proves it. They love him for it."

Romie can go on at length about what she's termed "the total magic of the fandom." Johnny, though, can only scratch his head and blink into the sun when pressed about what Severson calls a "a phenomenal

marriage, a one in a million."

"You can't figure it," Orr says. *Snort. Rub.* "Hell, I'm no saint. You can't figure why they're so amazing, why they make this the best job in America."

Others can at least try:

▲ "He didn't approach it like he had something to gain," says assistant athletic director Dave Cox, also a close friend of Orr's. "He showed people he wanted to give them something."

▲ "It's the personality," says Big Eight Conference supervisor John Erickson, a teammate of Orr's at Beloit (Wis.) College in the 1940s and still a good friend. "The magnetism. Even in college, people always flocked to John."

▲ "John came back to Iowa (he coached at Dubuque Senior High from 1951-59) and just acted like John," says longtime Des Moines Register sportswriter Maury White. "Even as his popularity increased and his teams got better, he never got too big."

▲ "It's really pretty simple," says Robin Orr, a doctoral nutrition student at ISU and one of Johnny's four daughters. "My dad's a cool old guy."

Whatever the reason, Henning couldn't put it better: "John's got the world by the tail now. If ever there was a place for him, he's found it."

○

Through a door in right field in Minneapolis' cavernous Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome is a long, splotchy gray cement ramp. At the top, surrounded by reporters on the evening of March 16, 1986, Johnny Orr is gripped by two equally powerful sensations: 1) The elation of an upset victory, and 2) The urge to vomit. Zapped by the flu, Orr's voice barely scratches above a whisper in reliving ISU's stunning 72-69 win over fifth-rated Michigan in the second round of the NCAA tournament. Tears sparkle in his tired eyes as he calls it the highlight of a career that includes a second-place NCAA finish and a national coach of the year award at UM in 1976.

Today, after two more NCAA berths, Orr maintains that that Sunday-afternoon shocker before more than 30,000 fans was his greatest day. It was also a watershed victory for ISU, and may well be its benchmark win for years.

"For the first time," Orr says, "our people could be proud. Before, they were afraid to be. 'Where in the hell is Iowa State?' Now, everybody knows where it is, man. I don't think anything I do will make me feel better for them."

Six years earlier he had come to Ames to step out of the shadow of Michigan football, to secure his future and to attack the challenge of winning games where few had been won before. "Not many people would leave a job at 52, already famous, to find out if they can do something," says Robin Orr, who's every bit as blunt as her parents. "When he took [the job], I said, 'Dad, now you're going to find out if you're worth a damn.'" And quickly. ISU's previous coach, Lynn Nance, had left amid a turbulent 11-16 season. The Cyclones won just 35 percent of their games from 1974-80, and in the 17 seasons preceding the Brush Cut Era, they were 186-256. Orr could've parted his hair the last time Iowa State went to an NCAA tournament: 1944.

With such an absence of winning convention, it's no wonder Orr's taking the job is still regarded as one of college basketball's more befuddling moves. "Whoo, that floored everybody," says Orr, who first looked at Iowa State after being asked to help the university find a "name" coach. Soon, though, ISU officials realized they'd found their name. But convincing its owner to sign it on a contract was another matter.

While he didn't feel respected at Michigan—then the dean of Big Ten Conference coaches, Orr was ninth on the salary ladder—at 52 he wasn't ready to snap up the first available job. He, Romie and the girls had spent 13 years in Ann Arbor. Romie taught physical education at a local middle school. Orr owned a restaurant and condominiums, and planned to retire in three years. But Iowa State came up with the money—nearly $12,000 more than Orr was making at Michigan—and, after lengthy negotiation, offered him a six-year, renewable contract. But the deal wasn't settled until the Orrs visited then-President W. Robert Parks and his wife, Ellen Sorge Parks, at the Knoll.

"I think I had something to do with getting John," says Parks, who says Orr's greatest contribution has been "the humanity" he brought to the program. "I'll never forget him walking away and saying [to Romie], 'Should we?' She looked up and said yes. Thank goodness."

Although hiring football coach Earle Bruce resulted in two rare bowl appearances, McCullough doesn't hesitate to call wooing Orr "the biggest coup I've had." After the Tuesday-afternoon press conference announcing Orr's hiring, ISU player Malvin Warrick sought out McCullough to pay thanks. Tears streamed down his face. "We couldn't believe we were going to be coached by Johnny Orr," says Jon Kunnert, also a Cyclone player then. "Johnny Orr! It was incredible."

Says athletic direc-

"It's the personality... the magnetism. Even in college, people always flocked to John."

JIM HEEMSTRA

Everywhere he speaks, Orr says he finds the same thing: People in Iowa have gone "basketball nutty."

tor Max Urick, then an assistant AD, "People felt like they were being brought back from the dead."

Six months later, Orr had to wonder if that resurrection wasn't going to cost him his career. He says he "damn near had a heart attack" at his first practice. "I came for a challenge," he says, "and when I saw those guys, I said, 'This'll be a challenge, all right.' Whoo!"

When Jim Hallihan, now ISU's top assistant, came in 1982, Orr sugarcoated nothing: "John said, 'I didn't think it'd be this tough. I just might be retiring earlier than I thought.'"

"Every day, Coach Orr would say the same thing," says former Cyclone Barry Stevens, who came in Orr's second season. "'It can't get any worse, guys.'"

But from the Orr-ISU wedding day, one great intangible—"fan-dom"—couldn't have been more promising. At an early-season home game, Iowa State's pep band welcomed Orr with the theme from Johnny Carson's *The Tonight Show*. He wasn't sure how to react, but his fist-punching stroll down the north edge of the court has since become one of college basketball's most treasured scenes. "Nobody else gets that reception," says former assistant Steve Antrim, now head coach at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. "It's the greatest compliment in basketball."

But it wasn't always music to Orr's ears. On Feb. 21, 1981, ISU brought an eight-game losing streak into its home game with Oklahoma State. On that cold Saturday, the NCAA tournament might as well have been played on Jupiter—the Cyclones could not have felt further from success. But the band did its thing, and several thousand fans began customarily craning their necks toward the northeast corner of Hilton. No Orr. More craning. Still no Orr. Cox, by now worried, finally walked back toward the Cyclones' locker room. He found Orr leaning against the brick wall, his face buried in his arm. "I said, 'Are you all right,?'" Cox remembers. "He said, 'Whoo, Coxy, you don't know how hard it is to lose and hear that song.' I said, 'John, they love you.' He just looked at me. Then he sucked it up and walked out there with his fist in the air."

A storybook ending to the streak? Nope. The Cyclones lost, 76-69. They finished the year 9-18.

Former Iowa State guard Jeff Hornacek, now with the NBA's Phoenix Suns, remembers the first time he was on the court for "Here's Johnny." The first-year Cyclone players stopped their warm-ups to watch. The *opposing team* stopped to watch. "They had the weirdest looks," Hornacek says, "like they should cheer, too."

Soon, coming to Hilton was nothing for opposing teams to cheer about. Stevens helped ISU win 10 games his freshman year, but more important, he helped instill the thrilling, fast-paced style that had been Orr's trademark since his own high school days in Taylorville, Ill. From then on it was a burgeoning circle of success: The more ISU won, the greater the fan support, the better it played, the better players Orr could recruit, the more it won. And always there was the 'O' Factor. "With 'O,' we immediately had basketball tradition," says Wesley.

Stevens left in 1985 as perhaps the best player in 77 years of ISU basketball. In the succeeding five years there already have been three better—Hornacek, Jeff Grayer and current Cyclone Victor Alexander. Stevens' 1984-85 team had been the school's winningest, advancing to the NCAA tournament and finishing with 21 victories. That mark fell with 22 the next season, and the Cyclones hit 20 again in 1988.

Attendance also rose as regularly as the sun. From an average of 6,470 fans per game in Nance's last year, it climbed steadily until 1987-88, when Hilton's 14,200 seats were filled for every game. Says Cox: "When 'O' came, we told people, 'Get your tickets now. Before you know it, Hilton will be the place to be.'" Orr tells crowds the basketball program was losing $350,000 a year when he came. Now, at $11 a ticket, he says it makes $2 million a year. (This may be a prime example of an Orr embellishment. There's no doubt that the program was in the red Before Johnny, but Cox says it now operates on about an $850,000 annual budget.) "If I'd known that, I'd have it in my contract that I'd get a percentage. Whoo!" he yelps, clenching a fist.

Summing up Johnny Orr in one sentence is like saying Jesse Jackson is a preacher.

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Romie Orr avoids public attention, but friends say she's the one who's kept 'O' on an even keel for 40 years.

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It seems like a brutally obvious question: *Who is Johnny Orr?* Cinch: A fun, likeable old guy who believes in honesty, hard work and treating others with respect. He's Every Man, right?

Well, yes. And no. Summing up Johnny Orr in one sentence is like saying Jesse Jackson is a preacher. Orr can spend a quiet evening in his $250,000 home watching his big-screen TV under his living room's 32-foot ceiling, yet be in awe of a $100 hotel room the next night. He can go soft as a marshmallow with four-month-old John Henry Boylan, daughter Leslie's son and his only grandchild, but nearly come to blows with an opposing assistant (as he did after the 1987 Iowa game) or chase an offi-

cial over a questionable call. He can gloat for hours about winning the customary double-or-nothing coin flip for his semi-weekly haircut at Buck's Barber Shop in Campustown, but readily throw down $1,700 for golf clubs at a charity auction.

"People look at John and see just a good-timer," Urick says. "They don't see it all. He might be the most multi-dimensional person I know."

Says Robin Orr: "Since I was a kid, my friends always have been almost disappointed when they finally met him. They'd say, 'That guy snoring on the couch? That's Johnny Orr?'"

That reaction is reflective of Orr's schizophrenic nature. He and the family have an understanding: He takes the stage, they stay behind the curtain. That philosophy was born during the early years in Ann Arbor, and, to the Orrs' credit, it's been maintained amid waves of appreciation in Ames. But while Orr has become a beloved public figure, his private side has changed little. Robin Orr says she was amazed the first time she heard one of her dad's speeches. "I thought, 'Who's the guy up there swearing and making people laugh?'" she recalls. "At home, at least before his grandson came along, he wouldn't usually say three words. But one thing about him, you always knew he supported you and he wanted you to be happy."

In conversations with more than 30 people who've crossed Orr's path during the past 40 years, the same adjectives crop up again and again: Honest. Genuine. Patient. Perceptive. Defensive. Loyal. Charismatic. Competitive. Spontaneous. Confident. Appreciation-hungry. Positive. Stubborn. Opinionated. Compassionate. Respectful. Intense. Laid-back. Intimidating. Generous.

Urick points out that arrogant is absent from that list—which could put Orr in the minority among coaching circles. "We go recruiting, and he just acts like a kid's buddy," Wesley says. "We walk up to the door, and sometimes I have to say, 'Come on, O, go in there and be a big-timer.'"

Loyalty is another oft-mentioned attribute. Hallihan and Wesley are in their eighth and ninth seasons, respectively—relative lifetimes in their business. When forward Sam Mack was shot by police during a robbery attempt at an Ames' Burger King last March, Orr's support was unfailing. He even testified at the trial—a move which, because of Mack's perceived guilt, may have evoked more criticism than anything Orr has done at ISU. He now says the ordeal "almost devastated me." Mack was found innocent, but, on Orr's insistence, transferred to Arizona State. "If I'd been younger, I would've had Sam come back," Orr says. "But that would have been thinking only of Johnny Orr. I've learned that there's more than basketball. Before, it was basketball, basketball. No more. I'm a better individual now."

During a 1984 Christmas break road trip, Grayer, a homesick freshman, insisted on going back to his family in Flint, Mich. Orr knew that would be breaking team rules, and that he'd have to suspend Grayer for one game. He told Grayer to go. "He was there when I didn't know if anyone would be," Grayer says now. "He said it was OK to miss my family, and that I could be a part of his family." Grayer returned, scored more points than any player in school history and now earns more than $750,000 a year playing for the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks.

Says ISU forward Paul Doerrfeld: "Some coaches think they're the big part of the game, but Coach makes us feel we're important. You know you're taken care of."

Rightly so. Young Johnny Orr always felt taken care of. If growing up in Depression-era southern Illinois was difficult, he hardly noticed. His father, Bert Orr, a former prizefighter, was a coal miner who, after suffering a heart attack, later worked as a security guard. His mother, Ann, was a nurse. Both parents worked at a state mental hospital in Jacksonville, Ill.; since children weren't allowed to live on the grounds, their only child moved in with Ann's Yugoslavian mother in Taylorville. He remained in contact with his parents, but was an unusually independent, mature adolescent.

With four daughters, Orr kids that he had to wait 40 years for a boy: grandson John Henry Boylan.

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"I've learned that there's more than basketball... I'm a better individual now."

While Orr's parents were influential— "Bert was the fairest man I knew, and that's why John's so fair," Romie Orr says—it was a Taylorville coach named Dolph Stanley who most shaped Orr's life. In Illinois, the 85-year-old Stanley still is regarded as a sort of Vince Lombardi of high school basketball. By the time Stanley got to Orr, in the fifth grade, Orr already was a promising young athlete with an intense competitive desire. "Always full of vinegar," Stanley says. He kept a close eye on Orr, and when Orr reached high school, Stanley knew this was a player around which to build a team. Good eye, coach: Orr led Taylorville to a still-existing state record with a 45-0 season in 1944.

"People always recognized his bearing, his calmness," says Stanley, who now lives in Rockford, Ill., and hosted Orr and Erickson on a golfing visit late last summer. "It wasn't egotism, just confidence. That boy was a born coach."

Orr was all-Big Ten in football and basketball his freshman year at the University of Illinois, but at 17 he left school to enlist in the Navy during World War II. After being discharged he enrolled at Beloit, where Stanley had taken the coaching job. Basketball at the southern Wisconsin college was much the same as at Taylorville—Orr commanding respect, Orr carrying out Stanley's plans, Beloit winning. Twice he was voted All-American. "Just

look at his old pictures," Wesley says. "He was an incredible athlete."

A better golfer now than ever, Orr revels in his athleticism. Cox remembers a time when Orr slipped on ice leaving Cox's home. As Cox knelt down and held Orr's head in his arms, Orr fought to regain his breath. "I'm OK," he finally gasped. "Because I'm an athlete."

Ann Orr died of cancer in Johnny's first year at Beloit; Bert Orr's heart ailment gradually worsened, and he died 14 years later. Stanley and Orr grew closer. Stanley groomed him to coach, taking him to speaking engagements, stressing the running game, teaching him to be a showman on the bench. Stanley golfed, so Orr learned. Even the brush cut was a Stanley directive. "It's like I'm still his clone," Orr says.

Romie and Johnny were married June 18, 1949, shortly before Johnny was chosen by the Waterloo Hawks in the first round of the NBA draft. The infant league was anything but glamorous then: Orr received a $1,000 signing bonus and a $6,000 salary, and tells a nasty little story about a teammate being bitten by a rat in a locker room. One season was plenty. Orr got a coaching job in Milton, Wis., then moved to Dubuque a year later. In 1959, he couldn't pass up Erickson's offer to be his assistant at the University of Wisconsin. The two had made a pact at Beloit: Whoever hit the big-time first would hire the other. After four years in Madison (during which time he applied for the Iowa State job but was turned down by Parks; Orr still has the flush letter) he landed the top job at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The same reasons Orr plays well in Ames made three years at U-Mass torturous. "It's like they were always saying, 'Who do you think you are?'" Romie Orr says.

Frustrated, Orr returned to Illinois in 1966 and said he was done coaching. Wrong. Later that year he was hired as a Michigan assistant, and when head coach Dave Strack was moved into administration in 1968, Orr took over. After a slow start—the winning candidate for student body president ran on a Dump Orr platform in 1973—his Wolverine teams made six post-season appearances and were 209-113 in his 12 years. Still, he never approached the respect reserved for football coach Bo Schembechler. Orr swears he holds no grudges, but there is one microcosmic episode he's yet to forget: Wanting to discuss a raise after a 17-13 season that ended in the third round of the NIT, Orr scheduled an appointment with then-athletic director Don Canham. Canham was 45 minutes late, then laughed when Orr asked for money. Orr's pride was hurt. Ironically, ISU called only days later, and Canham was left pleading for Orr to reconsider. "But I was gone, man," Orr says.

"A lot of them would like me to stay until I die....

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When he introduced himself to the state of Iowa in 1980, Johnny Orr made it clear he was staying put. "When I leave, I'm going to retire, and I don't plan on doing that until I'm 60," he said. "That's a long damn time."

Where do 10 years go?

Orr doesn't like to dwell on retirement; he says he'll coach as long as he feels good and thinks nobody can do it better. (The latter, of course, may never come to pass.) Last season, fans worried that his coaching days were numbered when Orr missed a game because of illness. He looked haggard, his face puffy and drained of color. His courtside tirades were curtailed. Perceived bad calls by officials went unprotested. Rumors spread that his ail-

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They know they're not going to see another Johnny Orr."

ment was worse than the reported ear infection.

Rest easy, Sam Stater: Though doctors say a recurrence of the ear infection is likely, Orr hasn't felt better in years. He certainly looks like his old self, and, to steal from Romie's vocabulary, is opprobrious as ever. "We hope he stays 30 more years," Wesley says.

At several hundred thousand per, Orr likes the sound of that. "If you think I'm going to retire now, when they're paying me so much money," he said in an October speech, "you're full of ——!"

Financially, he's set. But there is some unfinished business. While he entered this season with high expectations, he's most excited about 1990-91. Only guard Terry Woods will be lost this year; Alexander will return to lead what Orr thinks could be his best team ever. "Before we leave," he says, perhaps referring to himself and his aura, "we want to give people some great things, some things they've never had."

He has selfish wants, too. He's close to 400 wins, but dreams aloud about No. 500. "There's no mandatory retirement age, but I don't know if I could make it," he says in a tone that leads one to think he's given it serious thought. He would, at least, like to leave ISU as he left Michigan—the winningest coach in school history. He opened this season at 141-126; Louis Menze won 166 games from 1929-47.

But Cox, for one, balks at the R-word: "The first time I hear a basketball dropped and 'O' isn't with us...whoo, that's gonna get me."

Orr's ego tells him that while the spotlight will dim, there's too much love to let a little thing like retirement end this marriage. "A lot of them would like me to stay until I die," he says. "Because they know they're not going to see another Johnny Orr."

Cox predicts Orr will "attack retirement." It's a given he'll practically live on a golf course—he and Romie bought a home on the course at Lake Panorama last year. With three of his girls—and little John Henry—in Ames, his family will see more of him. Becky is in sales at the Prairie Meadows race track in Des Moines, Leslie teaches in the Saydel school district and Jenny is a school administrator and swimming coach in suburban Chicago.

Orr will keep his hand in basketball through consulting and clinics, and will attend ISU games. (He all but guarantees that Hallihan, who's passed up several jobs in recent years, will be his successor: "I'd hope after all this I'd have the power to pick the next guy.")

He ponders TV commentary, but one pursuit grabs his interest like no other: politics. God knows he'd have support—financial and electoral. Typically, he's not talking local school board or city council. No, his political career would start where his coaching career will finish—at the top. "What I'd like to do more than anything," he says, "is run for governor." He's looking his visitor straight in the eye—no snort, no snicker. "Hell, I'd be a good governor. I'd be for Iowa, man. Look at what Iowa has done for me."

Whoo! *Governor Johnny Orr.* Nutty, huh, coach?

- THE - phantom OPERA

Fresh from her Carnegie debut, Julie Simson anxiously awaits the elusive spotlight that could transform her into one of the art's leading mezzo-sopranos

they lean against the gleaming black Steinway, their only prop on this unadorned wooden stage. The two of them appear relaxed, and they laugh often. "What do you want to sing?" the accompanist/coach asks, his shirt unbuttoned at the collar, his tie long gone. She shrugs, and a few seconds later, he sits down on the piano bench, reaches for the keys and plays an introduction that prompts her to nod, smile and enter precisely on cue. She sings several bars, he cuts in with a quiet, "That sounds great," and for several minutes more they rehearse bits and pieces of her repertoire.

Between selections, she paces back and forth along the length of the piano, shaking out her hands and shrugging her shoulders. At one point she stops, looks out at her boyfriend, the lone audience member, and reminds him to pick up programs before they leave. He smiles knowingly, having heard this request before, and gives her the nod she's expecting. She continues to pace, flapping the skirt of her royal blue knit dress in a vain attempt to fight off the heat from the lights.

"Wonder what time they start serving drinks in the lobby?" the accompanist cracks as he practices an arpeggio here, a glissando there. Soon he stands up, turns his bench in a 180-degree arc, and sits back down. "I want a good seat for this concert," he teases, making her laugh once again. Finally she announces that she's rehearsed enough, and she heads to the dressing room to change into her gown. The clicking of her heels echoes

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Looking diva-like: Simson with pianist/coach Gary Arvin.

across the stage several seconds after she exits stage right. He continues to play softly, absorbed in his thoughts. Less than five minutes later, the door swings back open and she steps onto the stage, pulling a trench coat around her with a frantic look. It seems that in all the pandemonium of preparing for her Carnegie Hall debut, she's forgotten to pack her belt.

BY DEBRA GIBSON

Many a musician has stared longingly at that landmark performing arts center on New York's West 57th Street, musing over the day when he or she will stand in the flood of the footlights, enveloped in applause. For Julie Simson, assistant professor of voice at Iowa State, that day came on Oct. 22 when she made her debut at Carnegie Hall. As that crisp autumn Sunday began creeping into dusk, the mezzo-soprano stood on the stage of the Weill Recital Hall and reaped her rewards: literally, a first-place finish in an international competition sponsored by East and West Artists; figuratively, a payoff for years of living out of suitcases, working 80-90 hour weeks to pay for groceries and voice lessons, and realizing, time after time, that even a stage full of talent and endless rehearsals doesn't guarantee the Big Break.

It's 5:10 p.m. Concertgoers walk softly down the aisles of the recital hall, its floors covered with thick wedgewood blue carpet. Soft murmurs emanate from the 200-seat auditorium, sounds reminiscent of a congregation settling in for a Sunday morning church service. Heavy blue drapes, tied back with rust-hued cords, hang in rich folds that grace walls the color of thick cream. The soft light glistening from the ceiling's three chandeliers lends a warmth and an elegance to the room that inspires one to leave behind, for just awhile, the honking and shouting and pushing that is a constant occurrence just outside those heavy wooden doors.

While the rows of empty seats slowly

begin to fill, Simson, 33, is backstage, studying her reflection in the lighted mirror. Tim Berry, her companion the past two years, has dashed back to her hotel room to retrieve the missing belt. Several months ago, Simson hired a seamstress to construct a deep purple evening gown for this night. She wore the gown when she previewed the recital at the University of Houston on Oct. 1, only to have "at least six people" whisper to her afterwards that "that gorgeous purple dress just doesn't work." So instead she wears a floor-length black skirt, a black satin camisole and a blue and black lace jacket. Her short, wavy blond hair is sprayed into place, and she reapplies lipstick and blush to prevent a washed-out look from the lights. "I really don't like these mirrors," she murmurs as she tugs at the seams of her skirt. Meanwhile, her accompanist and coach, Gary Arvin, has entered the dressing room (having been bumped off the stage by a tardy piano tuner), changed into a black tuxedo, and now stands in one corner of the gray-tiled room, silently reading over his scores.

While searching for a safety pin, Simson laughs as she recounts her trip from her hotel to the hall. "Tim and I climbed into the cab, I leaned toward the driver and I said emphatically, 'Take me to Carnegie Hall.' The driver turned around, looked at me and in all seriousness said, 'How do you get to Carnegie Hall?' And then Tim says, without missing a beat, 'Lots and lots of practice.' Only *I* would pick that cab."

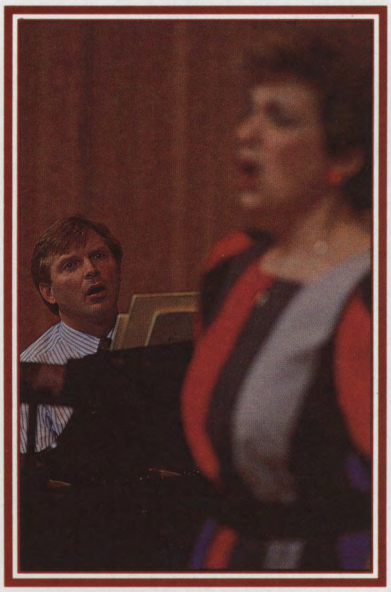
The house manager enters, carrying a congratulatory phone message that just arrived from one of Simson's college roommates. Following closely on the house manager's heels is Berry, carrying a plastic bag filled with belts ("Just to be on the safe side") and a newly purchased white handkerchief for Arvin, who'd forgotten to bring one. As Simson begins singing warm-ups, Berry gives her a quick kiss, tells her to "knock 'em dead," and heads for his seat in the auditorium.

Sipping water and pacing the tiled floor, Simson starts muttering. "This is when I start feeling sick. Why do I put myself through this?" She walks over to the wall and snaps off the lights surrounding the large mirror. "God, these are hot." She adjusts Arvin's bow tie and brushes away imaginary flecks on his jacket. She sips more water and smacks her mouth, then smooths out her skirt one more time.

The first time John Wustman heard Julie Simson perform, he burst into laughter and exclaimed, "You're awful! You have no business in this profession!" And Simson, who had just begun graduate studies at the University of Illinois, took his word as gospel.

"Here I was, still uncertain about the career choice I'd made, and this guy who was, in my mind, the most famous man in the music world, tells me how incredibly bad I am," Simson remembers on a cool September afternoon in her ISU studio. "I thought he was the rudest, most awful person I'd ever met, but even so, I wrote to my undergrad choir director (at Western Michigan University) and said, 'I think I've made a terrible mistake. I should have become a music teacher instead of trying to be a performer.' And even *he* responded, 'I think you're right.'"

While music had played an integral role in Simson's life from the beginning ("When she was tiny, she used to crawl up on the mantel and perform for us," remembers Mary Hunting Simson, Julie's mother.), hers was never considered an exemplary talent while growing up in Milwaukee and Fenton, Mich. "Back in high school, I was as much into playing the saxophone as I was singing," Simson recalls. She performed for her church choir and in high school musicals, but it wasn't until she attended Michigan's Interlochen music camp near the end of her high school career that she fell in love with vocal music.



Arvin and Simson spent more than a year preparing the Carnegie program.

She remembers herself as an "average" music student at Western Michigan, one who didn't discover opera until midway through her junior year. She landed the lead role in "The Medium," and from there, "I was hooked." Voice instructors encouraged her to postpone her plans to teach and instead pursue a graduate performance degree. It was upon that urging that Simson enrolled at Illinois in 1978, where she encountered the infamous Wustman.

"Well, I really don't remember saying all that to Julie," Wustman says today with a short laugh, clearly taken aback, "but who knows, it may have been true. I know that when she came here, she truly wanted to be better, and she worked very hard at her singing." Still a professor of music at Illinois and formerly principal coach for Luciano Pavarotti, Wustman expresses no surprise at news of Simson's Carnegie opportunity. "I never think about what my students can't do; I refuse to think about only the end results," he replies in his clipped voice. "I tell Julie and all my students that if they keep their eye only on the goal, a lot can get in the way of the actual process."

It was during one of Simson's coaching sessions with Wustman that Arvin first spotted her. He had just begun graduate studies and was observing her voice lesson. He liked what he heard, and soon the two were working together. It was Arvin who convinced Simson to continue voice training in Houston after graduating from Illinois, and he knew the perfect instructor for her.

Elena Nikolaidi made her debut as a mezzo-soprano with the Metropolitan Opera in the 1940s, and is best known for her role as Eboli in Verdi's "Don Carlo." Internationally known and respected, she has coached the past several years at the University of Houston and for the Houston Grand Opera. Demanding and tough as she is talented and revered, she played a crucial and exacting role in the development of Simson's voice.

"Well, Julie is an excellent artist and a talented vocalist," says Nikolaidi in her thick Greek accent, her usually gruff voice softening at the mention of Simson. "She is a very intelligent girl and a gifted one. She has grown very much, and she is still very human. Was I surprised she made it to Carnegie? Why not? She has the gift."

Gift or not, often during Simson's five years in Houston she experienced frustration and uncertainty. To support herself, she worked fulltime as a secretary. In

order to pay Nikolaidi for voice lessons, Simson taught voice herself at the Houston Conservatory of Music and led a section of a church choir every Sunday. And always she auditioned, mostly for regional opera companies. When she would win a role, it would mean taking temporary leave from her Houston jobs, throwing minimal belongings in a suitcase and flying off to the next assignment with companies like the Santa Fe Opera, Opera Memphis or the Dallas Civic Opera. It was a lifestyle that Simson recalls, without fondness, as "absolutely nuts—I almost lost my sanity. I was in way over my head."

And then in 1985, the unbelievable happened. An anonymous benefactor, who admired Simson's work, awarded the Houston Conservatory $10,000 for her to attend the prestigious American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. Calling the grant "my gift from God," Simson threw herself into the six-week program that prepares singers for breaking into European opera. Upon completion of the program, she remained in Austria for auditions, and soon realized yet another dream. From a field of 700 competitors, Simson was chosen as one of seven winners of the eminent International Belvedere Mozart Prize, receiving as her reward a vocal debut on Austrian television. The competition was considered by many to be the springboard for success in European opera, and Simson viewed her win as a sign that she'd finally made it.

"I thought that this was it—the Europeans love me, and since they think I'm singing well, then I must be able to get a good job here. I was ready to go," Simson remembers.

But nothing happened. After an onslaught of American singers had landed the best jobs with European opera companies ("American singers are better trained"), those companies, Simson says, started seeking out more Europeans and fewer Americans to secure continued government subsidies. Thus, in six months, Simson landed only three auditions. By Christmas of 1985, she had exhausted the grant money, she was homesick and there were no job opportunities in sight. She returned to her parents' home in Cedarburg, Wis., for the holidays, depressed and determined to give up singing. Her former employer in Houston said she could return to her secretarial position, and so once again, she headed south. On a lark, while passing

through Dallas she auditioned for—and received—a role with the Dallas Civic Opera for later that spring.

"I'm in the absolute dredges as far as my singing career is going, and then I get this Dallas role, and all I can think of is 'OK, Lord, what are you trying to tell me here? Shouldn't I be giving it up?' I think that summarizes my entire career as far as available jobs are concerned—one minute it's destitution, the next minute it's wealth."

Unfortunately, there wasn't much wealth waiting for Simson back in the Lone Star State. One month after returning to Houston in early 1986, Simson was laid off from her secretarial job, yet another casualty of the oil crisis. That news was followed rapidly by a notice that she was being audited by the IRS ("How can you audit someone who doesn't have any money?"), a fight that she didn't win. By this point, there wasn't much fight left in Julie Simson, period.

Simson is now 40 minutes into her program, and following an opening that briefly hinted at tentativeness, she has dazzled her audience. One moment she is an angry jilted lover, her face etched in pain. Several minutes later she is lighthearted and frisky, her eyes twinkling, her brows raised. She is a seductive chanteuse tucked into the curve of the Steinway; she is a petulant schoolgirl with pleading in her voice and hazel eyes the size of half-dollars. For these 90 minutes, Carnegie Hall is hers.

On the heels of unemployment, Simson decided in 1986 to shelve her dream of singing opera professionally and instead become a full-time teacher. "I was really burned out," Simson remembers with a shake of her head. "I was so upset about having 'blown' all this money that someone had given me because he or she believed in me and in my talent. I was so broke that I was living with Gary [Arvin] and his roommate because I had nowhere else to go. Gary has this great picture of me from that time—it's very ugly, and he's titled it 'Julie In Depression.' He still brings it out when he wants to blackmail me."

No longer feeling good about singing, Simson began applying for teaching jobs. "I like to say I applied nowhere—Nowhere, North Carolina; Nowhere, Georgia; Nowhere, Mississippi. And then I heard about the job at Iowa State, and a few months later, I was here."

Much to the delight of her parents, who are both graduates of Iowa State (Mary in 1947; Verne in 1948). "My life in Houston was really a rough road for Mom and Dad," Simson recalls. "They were very supportive, and they knew I could stand on my own two feet, but I had to do a lot of educating on what the lifestyle is like, and what it requires. There was often nothing tangible to show them, and they, like many others, were wanting to know 'When's it going to happen?' They were thrilled when I took the job at Iowa State and 'settled down.'"

Settled down, maybe, but not settled. This was Simson's first college teaching position, and one that would require working with all voice types, not just mezzo-sopranos. "These weren't just people coming in off the street for a fun lesson—these were real music majors," Simson says now, cutting loose her deep-throated laugh. "I kinda went off the deep end—I called Gary and said, 'I have to know everything you know, and I have to know it in a month.' He basically told me to chill out, and he was right. Once I got here, I realized I really did know more than the students did."

The majority of Simson's workload involves studio teaching, although she also directs the University Chorus. Arthur Swift, chairperson of the Department of Music, lauds Simson for her effect on Iowa State students.

"Julie is a master at bringing about change in her studio," Swift says. "For young students, that change is extremely important. She is able to go right to the heart of the problem for each student and find an effective solution. And there's no doubt that her performance experience contributes in a very positive manner to her job—it's the backbone of any good studio teacher."

"She has grown very much, and she is very human. Was I surprised she made it to Carnegie? Why not? She has the gift."

—Elena Nikolaidi

6 p.m. The soft, soothing sounds of a mother singing to her child complement the quiet of the recital hall. The rich, vibrant notes linger in the stillness as Simson performs Strauss's "Ständchen," a gentle lullaby. Her face radiates compassion, then tranquility, while her clasped hands remain in position in front of her waist. When the final notes of the piece have been sung, there is a slight pause, and then a barely audible sigh of appreciation escapes the throat of her father, Verne, from his seat several rows back. ("He always cries when Julie sings," says wife Mary.)

7:05 p.m. Fighting tears, Simson stands at the front of the stage and leans down to accept bouquets of roses from the ushers. Her program, complete with encore, is met with rounds of applause and smiling, approving faces.

She and Arvin leave the stage for the last time, and Simson scurries down the hallway, clutching the flowers and trembling with excitement. Her tongue hanging out the corner of her mouth, she shakes her head from side to side like a puppy being sprayed with a water hose, laughing and squealing as she enters the dressing room.

"Let's go out and buy a paper," Arvin jokes as he grabs Simson in a hug. When she notices that the long table running down the side of one wall is covered with more flowers, she squeals again and starts pulling out the tiny cards. The house manager enters and tells them to clear out so the next performer, scheduled to go on stage at 8 p.m., can use the room. Simson and Arvin grab clothes bags, scores, flowers and briefcases and head upstairs to the Blue Room, where they will be honored at a reception.

They enter the small, crowded room to yet more cheers and applause. "You were amazing," "My friend here from Germany thought you were wonderful," "I'm a chiropractor from New Jersey, and I thought you did a beautiful job," fill the air, mingled with hugs, kisses and laughter. Berry greets her with a "You're my favorite opera singer" and a kiss. Recitalgoers inch around the buffet table, waiting for an opportunity to congratulate the performers.

While Verne Simson circulates through the room with his Instamatic, wife Mary, son Jim and his wife Karen from Colorado stand off to one side. "This is the first I've heard Julie sing in about five years, I guess since my wedding," Jim, a clinical social worker, says while balancing a plate and a glass of wine. "It was very emotional for me to listen to her. And it's remarkable how much her voice has changed during that time."

"At the moment, I don't know another lieder singer [art song singer] who excels her," says Elizabeth Thode, a board member with East and West Artists. "Her diction is beautiful. She's absolutely capital."

Betsy Knapp, herself a professional singer, praises Simson's repertoire, a mixture of German art songs. "Hers was a marvelous program—there wasn't a moment to get bored. I usually fall asleep during these performances, actually. Even though this is the first I've heard her, I predict we'll be hearing a lot more."

Julie Simson has three days left to help 14 vocal students prepare three solos each for a major off-campus competition. She returned to Ames six days ago after spending two weeks in New York City prior to her Carnegie debut, and she's just now returning to reality.

Competitions like the one that took Simson to 154 West 57th St. have provided her performance "fix" these past few years. And standing on that stage in Weill Recital Hall only reaffirmed what she's known for years—she wants to stay on stage.

During her two-week stint in New York, Simson wedged various auditions into an already demanding rehearsal schedule. "Did I tell you that I tried out for the New York City Opera?" she asks excitedly. "I auditioned on the stage at the Lincoln Center. And guess what they said when I was all through?" Slight pause. "Thank you very much," she answers in a curt, mocking voice. And then she laughs.

"I didn't even think about crying until I was handed the flowers."

But she also performed live on "The Listening Room" program of WQXR, the radio station of the New York Times. She's hopeful that prospective agents were in attendance that night at Carnegie. And a week after the performance, she still hopes for a review—preferably one that raves—in the Times.

The best of all worlds for this self-professed late bloomer would be to continue teaching at Iowa State, perhaps in an "artist in residence" capacity, while performing with regional and touring opera companies. Even though agents tell Simson "you gotta get out of Iowa if you want to make it," she's convinced that she has other options—like keeping central Iowa her home base and commuting to New York "for every audition an agent gets for me," as well as to any other geographic location that offers her the chance to sing opera.

Finding room for a personal life in this milieu of opportunities is providing equal challenge. Simson and Berry, 39, who met during a community theatre production that Simson directed, agree that their relationship's future is "on hold" until Simson's career path becomes more clearly defined.

"I don't know of any sure-fire success formula for us at this point, but I do know that we're both committed to Julie giving her opera career the ol' college try," says Berry, advertising manager for the Iowa State Center. "I know that she will be just as successful as the fates will allow her, but when the curtain goes down at night, I wanna be the one to drive her home."

Simson will be the first to admit that spending 200-280 days a year on the road "isn't my idea of the perfect life, but the lifespan of the human voice is like the strength of an athlete—the muscles grow and then they peak. If I'm going to do it, I've gotta do it now."

8:30 p.m. The honking and the shouting and the pushing continues on West 57th. A small entourage of Simson's family and friends moves down the sidewalk in front of Carnegie Hall, dwarfed by the ever-present steel scaffolding. Arms filled with flowers, duffel bags and recital programs, they stop and stamp their feet in the chilly night air as they wait for her to catch up.

With her black gown swishing across the concrete, she rushes to meet her group. She hastens past concertgoers now late for the 8 p.m. performance. She bustles past the corner hot dog stand. She flies by the recital hall entrance, not even noticing the poster: *Julie Simson, mezzo-soprano ... New York Debut.*

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE ABSURD KIND

BY STEVEN SULLIVAN

A SPACESHIP LANDS IN VORONEZH, Russia, carrying 10-foot tall alien creatures, creatures that sprout three-eyed heads. When the fantastic tale hits the international press, the world's UFO believers are, well, euphoric.

So where's a skeptic when you need one?

He's in Washington, D.C.—maybe writing a story on the latest breakthrough in avionics, or possibly out walking along the Potomac River with his Lhasa Apso, Shishi.

He's Philip Klass, a man who has been called "the Sherlock Holmes of UFOlogy." For more than 23 years, Klass, a 1941 Iowa State graduate, has investigated and debunked reported UFO sightings, landings and alleged abductions by space creatures. While some people gaze at the sky and see flying saucers or bright balls of light, Klass sees atmospheric phenomena, celestial bodies and airplanes trailing advertising banners. While some people swear by a reported spaceship landing or an abduction by alien creatures, Klass swears it's a potential hoax. While some people watch the skies, Klass watches for lies.

A respected avionics writer, Klass has a galaxy of experience from which to draw his conclusions. He has published four books on UFOs, and has appeared on numerous radio and television talk shows. "His vocation for years has been avionics, his avocation has been debunking UFOs," explains Bruce Nordwall, avionics editor for Aviation Week and Science Technology, the magazine that hired Klass in 1952 and from which he has been semi-retired since 1986.

But his dismissals of UFO incidents have not endeared him to the legions who treat reports of spaceship sightings, UFO landings and abductions by aliens with the utmost seriousness. Mentioning the 70-year-old skeptic's

PHILIP KLASS, THE NATION'S LEADING UFO-DEBUNKER, SAYS THERE'S NO E.T. *TO* PHONE HOME

name to a staunch believer can elicit disgust, hard-boiled name-calling and probably a facial tic or two.

"He twists the truth considerably, or adds his own philosophy. Every UFO case to him has a prosaic explanation, so there aren't any UFOs. He endeavors to prove this to himself and the rest of the world," says Walter H. Andrus Jr., international director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), one of the world's leading pro-UFO organizations. "He's locked himself into a corner. He has taken this stand over the years and now it's impossible for him to come back and admit his work is wrong. He just continues the charade. If it wasn't for debunking, he wouldn't even be known."

How Klass did become known as a UFO debunker nearly defies the logic that is his trademark. In the spring of 1966, Klass learned that the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers planned to include a seminar on unidentified flying objects at its fall conference.

"I was shocked," he remembers. "I had generally been skeptical, but I had done no reading or study on the subject of UFOs. If the Washington chapter of IEEE was planning to organize a group to investigate UFOs, fine, I had no objections. But, in effect, they were using it as a come-on, much as if they might have advertised a striptease dancer."

After learning of Klass' concerns, the D.C. chapter changed the topic of the seminar to identifying flying objects. They asked Klass to serve on the seminar panel. He accepted, never realizing how that decision would reshape his life.

A French journalist Klass was dating at the time scanned American and French newspapers for information on UFOs, and found a favorable review of *Incident at Exeter,* a book by John D. Fuller. The Exeter, N.H., incident began in September 1965, when sightings of glowing balls of fire hovering over high-tension power lines were reported by the town's citizens, including two Exeter policemen.

Fuller, who has written several books on the paranormal, theorized the bright glowing objects were spaceships that were either drawing free power to recharge batteries or trying to sabotage the power companies. According to Klass, Fuller stated he spoke to two engineers at the Exeter power company who said power lines create an electromagnetic field that would be an attraction for any object with such an affinity. Klass' investigation found that the power company employed only two engineers, and neither of them had spoken to Fuller.

"IF THIS WAS AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS EXTRATERRESTRIAL CRAFT, IT COULD NOT HAVE SELECTED A CITY MORE IN NEED OF A TOURIST ATTRACTION."

—PHILLIP J. KLASS

"This was my first illumination that you cannot trust what you read, at least in the UFO field," Klass says. He theorized the bright glowing objects were a freak atmospheric phenomena, a theory deducted from his Iowa State training in electrical engineering.

"We briefly had studied coronas, or plasmas (ionized air). I knew coronas sometimes take the form of a glowing ball of fire and sometimes form on high-tension power lines," he remembers. In talking to corona experts with General Electric and Westinghouse, Klass discovered the conditions that can create coronas: salt water and a dry summer. Sea air can build up salt water on power lines, and a dry summer means a lack of rain to remove it. Exeter is 10 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, and the summer of 1965 was one of the driest in the town's history.

Some of the glowing objects, however, were reported to be a distance from power lines. Klass theorized these objects were kugelblitz, the German word for ball lightning. Yet another freak atmospheric phenomena, ball lightning is a bit more mysterious than coronas because nobody is sure how it forms and sustains itself.

Fuller, who now lives in Weston, Conn., sternly discounts Klass' rebuttal, saying that neither atmospheric phenomena can sustain themselves long enough to be confused for an object. "He couldn't think of anything to explain it, so he came up with this little idea of ball lightning and plasma," Fuller says. "I was shocked by such lightweight thinking. It's totally laughable."

Nonetheless, Klass' review was published in August 1966, and since that day, people have been seeking his explanations of UFO incidents. Believers, though, accused Klass of investigating an "easy one," which challenged him to tackle his second attempt.

It involved the alleged landing of an egg-shaped spaceship on the outskirts of Socorro, N.M., in April 1964. The landing was reported by the town's police officer, considered an honest man. Two years later, after covering a NASA briefing in Houston, Klass drove to Socorro to investigate the supposed spaceship landing.

"The case had been investigated by the late Dr. J. Allen Hynek, an astronomer who was a UFO consultant for the Air Force," Klass recalls. "He had found no factual explanation and said it could not be a hoax. I had just come from NASA's briefing in preparation for the Apollo lunar landing, and I was thinking 'Gee, am I going to find

that somebody else was coming here?'"

He didn't. What he did discover was an economically depressed town that was in dire need of a particular financial boost: Enter tourism.

"If this was an honest-to-goodness extraterrestrial craft, it could not have selected a city more in need of a tourist attraction," Klass says. "If it had landed five miles to the east or to the west, it would have landed in the mountains. Wisely, it selected to land in a spot halfway between two major highways going through town." In another convenient move, the alleged spacecraft dropped anchor on land that was owned by the mayor of Socorro, a man who also owned the town's only bank.

LEN RIZZI

The mayor since has died, but Lonnie Zamora, the policeman who reported the landing, still lives in Socorro. He continues to believe he saw a UFO, and says he does not remember Klass coming to investigate. Zamora says the people of Socorro occasionally still talk about the sighting, but it had no significant impact on the New Mexico town.

For MUFON members, the alleged spaceship landing in the Soviet Union in October is the most exciting thing to happen in the UFO field in 20 years. Klass, naturally, is not as impressed.

"I suspect there has been so much bad news Tass has had to report, or should have reported—the East Germans escaping through Hungary, the Hungarian Communist Party changing its name to Socialist, the economic ills within the Communist Bloc—that it may have been an intentional means to lighten up the news," he explains.

"There was somewhat of a parallel in this country in 1972. Before the Watergate scandal, there were a few UFO reports out of Kansas and the Middle West that achieved almost no national notoriety. The following summer, in August of 1973, after all the reports of the Watergate scandal and the congressional hearings that brought out all these disgusting accounts of coverup and malfeasance, there were some UFO reports from Georgia and Alabama. They were no more impressive than those a year earlier, and yet the news media picked up on them and gave them national exposure," Klass explains.

He is not sure how many UFO cases he has investigated, but estimates 50 to 100. "One hundred fulltime investigators with unlimited travel and expense accounts could not keep up with every UFO report in the world," he says. These days, abduction cases have become his major concern. He labels the organizations that have sprung up during the past few years to help alleged victims of alien abductions as "dangerous cults."

"According to the dogma of the cult, if you have been abducted by aliens you have been selected to be part of an extraterrestrial genetic experiment. The chances are very good they'll come back and abduct you again, no matter how many burglar alarms you put in your house, no matter how many watchdogs you get," Klass says.

His vehement opinions about UFO abductions have made him all the more unpopular among UFO believers.

Dear Phillip J. Klass,

Since you are the mouthpiece of disinformation for the Pentagon, the CIA and the FBI, your books are a waste of time to write and a waste of time to read. There were reports of UFO sightings and abductions long before Budd Hopkins [an artist involved with the UFO abduction movement] started to investigate them. You state abductees are duplicitous, deceitful victims of mental disturbances, liars and fools. Ah, well, it takes on (sic) to know one. I wonder how many of my tax dollars are being paid to you under the table by the various government agencies to refute the UFO reports. Personally, I think you are a scurrilous, untruthful, un-American, cheating ignoramus.

Klass does not take much of this flak seriously. As a matter of fact, he plans to frame the letter and hang it in his office. He may hang it next to the dartboard he bought at the 1989 MUFON conference in Las Vegas. The dartboard is illustrated with a sketch of Klass wearing an "I Love UFOs" button. Klass's face is the bull's eye.

He often attends the annual conferences of MUFON, whose worldwide membership tops 2,000. "I know I'm playing the role of the skunk at the garden party when I go there, but I'm not disruptive and, ironically, it sounds immodest to say, I would guess that more people take my picture and more people ask to have their picture taken posing with me than take pictures of Walt Andrus," Klass says.

Andrus says he and Klass are "sort of friends," but he does not agree with anything Klass has to say on the subject of UFOs. Andrus and Hopkins, who recently launched the Intruders Foundation for people who believe they have been kidnapped by aliens, also have harsh words for Klass' behavior. They accuse him of not conducting thorough investigations of UFO cases, of not talking to people involved in the cases (even when he is in the same room with them) and of slander-

ing people who have been traumatized by contact with UFOs and aliens.

"I have called him a despicable human being, and I consider him such not because of his opinions, but because of his methods and because of his cruelty to people he refuses to talk to," Hopkins says. "He is to UFO phenomena research what Lyndon LaRouche is to political discourse."

Andrus says that when he and Klass have been on talk shows together, the debunker always speaks loudly and will not let anyone else talk, not even the host.

"He's so obnoxious. He has a chesire cat grin on his face while he's acting very sincere. Anybody who doesn't know anything about UFOs is going to believe him," Andrus says. "The approach he uses is to take words and twist them around. I wouldn't say he lies, he just doesn't tell the truth."

Though he has irked many a UFO believer, Klass has never been threatened with physical harm or sued. To rally some support for the skeptical point of view, Klass helped establish the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP).

Barry Karr, the organization's executive director, say CSICOP grew out of a time when many cases of the paranormal were being reported as factual, without any scientific investigation or criticism. Klass says CSICOP provides "an alternative voice."

There aren't many alternative voices when it comes to UFOs. Project Blue Book, the U.S. government's UFO investigation, lasted for 22 years, closing shop in 1969. U.S. Air Force Capt. Sigmund Adams says that of the 12,500 reported UFO sightings Blue Book investigated, 95 percent were explainable, while the remaining indicated no technology beyond existing scientific knowledge nor posed any threat to national security. (Many UFO believers, however, often accuse the government of covering up information on UFO cases, and even of hiding crashed spaceships and the bodies of aliens.)

"When the government decided to get out of the UFO investigating field in 1969, it left a void," Klass explains. "While there were pro-UFO groups that would report an impressive UFO sighting, there was nobody to respond otherwise. I fear I was sucked into that void."

The void does not pay well. When he weighs the time and money spent investigating UFO cases against his book royalties and the occasional lecture fee, Klass figures UFO debunking has earned him 25 to 50 cents an hour these past 23 years.

"If you want to apply for this job, you'll have to work 30 to 40 hours a week, for almost no pay, and in return you will be cursed and criticized. You'll be accused of being a CIA agent or a government agent," Klass says, though his voice lacks any sincere disgruntlement. "As a debunker, you're a lot like the man who says there ain't no Santa Claus."

St. Nick aside, Klass' intent is promoting healthy skepticism. "If you see a light in the sky that seems to you to be mysterious, and that you can't explain, and you want to think that it was a spaceship from some other world with strange-looking creatures on board, that's fine. But, I seek in my own small way to keep the public informed."

Klass and his wife, Nadya, spend their rare free time sailing on Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River, or skiing in Colorado. Klass was a bachelor until 1980—a biographical fact UFO proponents sometimes hint at as evidence of Klass' unpleasant nature. He met Nadya, a news editor with the Voice of America's Bulgarian services, in 1979. She had come to Washington, D.C., from Communist Bulgaria in 1973.

Though at an age when many people slow down, these days Klass continues to write—and watch.

"There is no way to prove ghosts, Santa Claus and leprechauns don't exist," Klass says. "As long as that is true, there are some people who'll want to believe. But, in my fondest dreams, I never imagined I could ever eliminate all belief in UFOs."

Did he ever really want to? "That's a tough question. If I could, there would be no more interesting, challenging cases to take my time. No one would call me for interviews," he admits. "But, consider the alternative. What if an extraterrestrial spacecraft lands on the Ames campus, or, better yet, crashes on the White House lawn, proving beyond all doubt that we have alien visitors and that I'm wrong? Yes, it would be embarrassing. But I live two miles from the White House, and I would rush over there with my camera and tape recorder, rush back to my word processor and write the most exciting story I have ever written."

"DEAR PHILIP J. KLASS, SINCE YOU ARE THE MOUTHPIECE OF DISINFORMATION FOR THE PENTAGON, THE CIA AND THE FBI, YOUR BOOKS ARE A WASTE OF TIME TO WRITE AND A WASTE OF TIME TO READ."

Steven Sullivan, who received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University in 1983, is a writer for the ISU Office of Public Information.

IS ANYBODY OUT THERE?

MICHAEL KLEIN IS ONE ALUMNUS WHO THINKS THERE MIGHT BE—AND HE'S USING HIGH TECH TO FIND OUT

THOUGH HE RECEIVED AN ELECTRICAL engineering degree from Iowa State in 1962, the path Michael Klein's life would follow was established many years before—thanks, in part, to his paper route.

"I used to get out and walk around at night and early morning. There are some clear skies back there in Iowa, and I just got interested looking up into them while on my paper routes," says Klein, who delivered the Des Moines Register while growing up in Ames.

The former paperboy is now a NASA astronomer who is about to embark on a project aimed at catching any signals extraterrestrial intelligence might be throwing our way. The project is called SETI—Search of Extraterrestrial Intelligence, a program under the auspices of the Ames Research Center in Moffet Field, Calif., and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. The project's goal is to determine whether those life forms are sending radio signals to earth.

Klein, the project's manager at JPL, is skeptical about the possibility that earth already has been visited by extraterrestrials. He stresses that SETI is a full-fledged, highly technical scientific investigation. He is confident SETI is the most efficient way of discovering whether we are alone in the cosmos—more realistic than interstellar travel, and less costly than sending signals out into space.

LEIGH CHAMPLION

MICHAEL KLEIN

SETI was classified as an official project a year ago by NASA. SETI engineers and scientists are developing the complicated equipment that will be used to search for radio signals in the microwave section of what staffers like to call the "giant cosmic haystack."

There are several factors that have to be determined before the search for signals begins: where to look, what radio frequencies should be investigated, the range of signal sensitivities. SETI will conduct two types of searches. A targeted search will look for artificially generated radio signals originating from specific stars within 100 light years (588 trillion miles) of earth. A sky survey will provide a much broader search for evidence of such signals. Scientists will be searching for radio signals at millions of different frequencies at the same time.

"There is a whole cacophony of broadband noise coming at us," Klein explains. "Absent from anything we've ever detected so far is anything that is narrow in frequency. It's sort of like playing all the piano keys at once. What we're looking for is someone over there in the corner plunking only on middle C."

The SETI project is slated to begin its planned 10-year search for signals from space in 1992, which coincides with International Space Year. Whether through SETI or other future projects, the astronomer is confident something will be found out there.

"The circumstantial evidence is so overwhelming it would be incredible to me that we really are virtually alone; it just doesn't make any sense when you see a galaxy teaming with 300 billion stars," he says. "In my lifetime, I'm betting we're going to detect Jupiter-type planets we were unaware of. Whether we get so far as to detect earth-type planets in the next decade will depend on funding and a few lucky breaks."

—*S.S.*

Mapping out strategy for the '90s

Thoughts on the future of the Alumni Association

Last year at this time, I shared with you initial steps being taken then to develop a three- to five-year plan for your Alumni Association. One year and many planning sessions later, a well-conceived and all-encompassing report has been compiled.

Under the capable leadership of long-range planning committee chair and immediate past board president, Roxanne Amendt, more than 100 ideas were recorded. Subsequently those thoughts were organized into objectives to include rationales, plans of action and benefits to the university and the Alumni Association. Out of those ideas came a revised mission statement, developed and approved by the board:

The purpose of the Iowa State University Alumni Association shall be to promote the general welfare of Iowa State University by fostering a spirit of loyalty and commitment among students, former students, alumni, faculty, staff, parents, friends and other interested groups.

This purpose shall be accomplished by the following objectives:

1. Serving as a public relations arm of the university by promoting a deep loyalty and commitment among its constituents.

2. Communicating with constituents via publications, periodicals and other appropriate means in an effort to inform, as well as solicit involvement and input through the Association for the university.

3. Providing constituents with services and programs which foster social, educational and cultural interaction and support the teaching, research and service functions of the university.

4. Providing responsible stewardship of the Association's resources.

5. Assisting the university in any appropriate manner that would help achieve its mission.

JIM HEEMSTRA

Jim Hopson

Members of the long-range planning committee, which included board members (Amendt, Dan Krieger, Joanne Kuster, Adrienne Herbert, Steve Mores and Don Greiman), university vice presidents (Charles McCandless and Warren Madden), Foundation associate director Phyllis Lepke and members of the Alumni Association staff, ultimately organized data received from you through President Gordon Eaton's alumni survey, data from the university's long-range strategic plan and committee member input into five specific objectives. They include:

1. Enhancing the image and increasing awareness of the ISU Alumni Association among its constituents through increased marketing.

2. Developing policies and procedures to insure continued sound fiscal responsibility for Association assets.

3. Developing a five-year plan to address needs for office space and constituent activities.

4. Maintaining close and constructive relationships with college constituencies, university administration and ISU Foundation.

5. Increasing the effectiveness of Alumni Association board of directors' involvement in Association activities and programs.

You'll read a great deal in this issue of VISIONS regarding the future of Iowa State University, and as director of your Alumni Association, I'm very pleased that accompanying and supporting documents have been developed for our organization. Through the leadership of current board president Dan Krieger, long-range plan recommendations will begin to be implemented during the spring and throughout the 1990-91 academic year.

Key to the continued success of your Alumni Association is increased involvement of alumni and friends through membership in our organization. Your help in recruiting new members will be greatly appreciated as we move into the 1990s. We'll be reporting to you at a later date more specifically how you can help us accomplish that. In the meantime, thank you for all that you continue to do for Iowa State University and your Alumni Association.

Jim Hopson

Jim Hopson, '69
Alumni Association Executive Director

Membership in the ISU Alumni Association is your ticket to membership in the ISU Credit Union! For more details, contact the ISU Credit Union at 801 Lincoln Way, Box 665, Ames, Iowa 50010; (515)232-6310.

GARY CLARKE

MIKE DOOLEN '72

There actually were two fall classics on the Iowa State campus in 1989. Parents Weekend was held in September, with David and Sally Van Wert being honored as Parents of the Year. They were recognized before the Minnesota-ISU football game, along with their children, Pat and Cathie, both Iowa State students. A month later it was Homecoming's turn to shine. Two grads rekindled some old memories from the Daily, while beautiful weather graced the annual pregame tailgate.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

The ISU Alumni Association welcomes the following new lifetime members who joined during the months of July, August and September. A list of new members will be published each quarter.

Teresa J. Anderson
Gregory A. Baustian
Craig A. Bergstrom
Timothy G. Carlson
Theodore J. Donner
Evelyn M. Drummond
Keith D. Egger
Daniel L. Essig
Byron W. Follensbee
Loren H. Forehlich
Carolyn B. and John A. Grant
John W. and Lois C. Hallberg
Alva A. and Carol Hayes
Barbara S. Hill
Daniel M. Iversen
James A. Jacobs
Ronald D. and Barbara H. Johnson
Douglas J. Jones
Richard O. Joslyn
Robert R. Kalton, Jr.
Kwok H. Karmana and June Teh Chin Mee
Virginia A. Kern
Mark S. and Kristin L. Kooiker
Lori J. Kraus
Michelle A. Lafrenz
Debra J. Leach
James E. Lowndes
De Ada Mally
Scott D. Monson
Calvin A. and Christina R. Moore
Nader A. Najm-Mohammed
Diane M. Ohms
Douglas R. Olsen
Scott E. Olson
Mark S. Peterson
Joel H. and Christina K. Powers
James A. Reynolds
Lori T. Richardson
Judy Marie Robertson
A. Barde and Ruth Bell Rogers
Robert F. Terfruchte, Jr.
David L. Trauger
Theresa R. Wolter
Donald W. and Marian E. Zierath

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The ISU Student Alumni Association program has spawned some of the university's most innovative and productive young alumni. VISIONS catches up with an SAA alum in each issue.

LEN PIZZI

Mary Kay Thatcher

Student Ambassador, 1976-77

Age: 33

ISU degrees: Animal science and ag business with a minor in ag journalism, 1979.

Occupation: Lobbyist, American Farm Bureau.

Lobbying accomplishment most proud of: Playing a very key role in the bailing out of the Farm Credit System in 1987.

Biggest issue ag/farming faces today: Conservation and environmental issues in the 1990 Farm Bill.

Toughest part of job: Recognizing that we can't win on all the issues.

Top ISU accomplishment: Serving as Veishea co-chair in 1979.

Advice to new students: To take advantage of the variety of classes and the extracurricular activities offered.

If I had it to do over at ISU: I'd take a lot more electives.

Last book read: *Hardball: How Politics Is Played—Told By One Who Knows the Game*, by Christopher Matthews.

In my next life, I'd like to be... Secretary of Agriculture.

In 10 years, I hope to be... Managing a trade association in Washington.

Persons I admire most: My parents, Kenneth, '37, and Marian Thatcher.

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Linda Dial Glantz, '69, is one of 40 alumni who provide on-the-job exposure to students like Cindy Shelton.

JIM HEEMSTRA

Giving students a sneak peek at the real world

A potted plant graces the windowsill of Linda Vandermeider Steensland's office at Des Moines' Iowa Lutheran Hospital. It serves as a constant reminder of a sharp, bright ISU student she met several years ago. Even if names long have been forgotten, this departing gift is remembrance enough for Steensland. In fact, it provides her with encouragement to continue volunteering her time and professional expertise to ISU's Career Preview Days, or as it was formerly known, Pre-Occupational Days.

Sponsored by the Student Alumni Association, the program depends on the spirit of volunteerism. Graduates within a 90-mile radius of Ames, representing all walks of life, share their accumulated professional knowledge with Iowa State students just as eager to soak it up. Future entrepreneurs of the world are paired with graduates for a full day of on-the-job observation.

Providing such guidance are alumni like Dean Biechler, '73, of Chichaqua Bend Studios in Ames. "I believe that the more a person knows, the more exposure they have to things, and the more apt they are to make good decisions in life," says Biechler, owner of the graphic design firm.

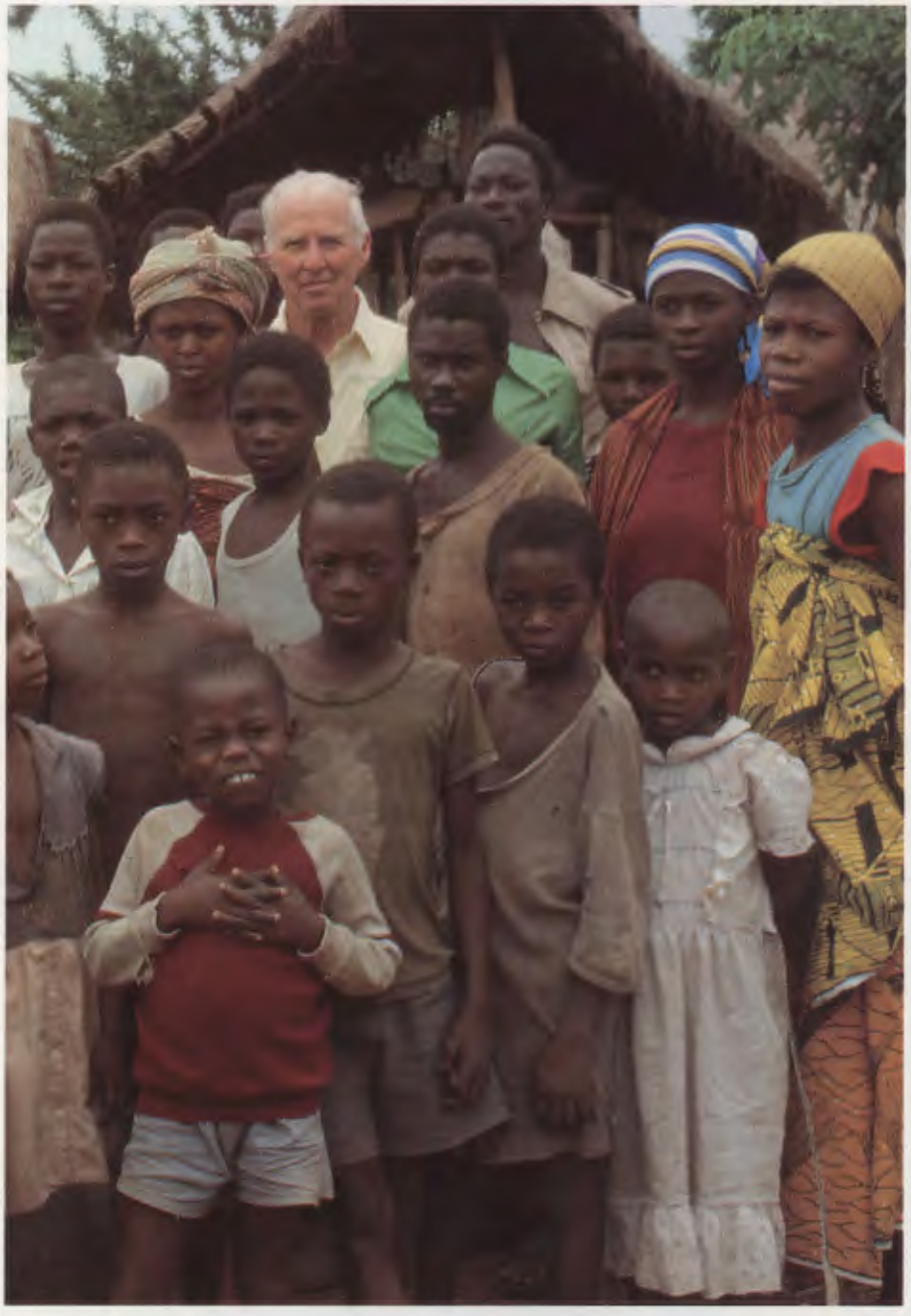
Students with pre-graduation jitters are able to visit with alumni like John Timmons, '68, a lawyer with Singer Paisley Holm Timmons Mathison & Curtis in Ames, who gets a sense of satisfaction offering students different perspectives on legal careers. But he also gets a kick out of students asking him what major they should pursue in order to get accepted into law school. (His major was economics, if that helps.)

So what compels these alumni to volunteer their time to their alma mater? "I like to keep a close relationship to Iowa State," says Steensland, '75, MS '79, Lutheran's director of human resources. "It's good for me and it's good for students to see what it's like in the real world."

Michele Carlin, '89, was one of those students last year who spent a day observing a local banker. "That day helped me decide what area of banking I wanted to pursue," says Carlin. "It was helpful seeing the different divisions, and it reiterated the fact that I wanted to go into banking."

More than 40 alumni currently participate in the program, according to its adviser, Julie Larson. Others interested in learning more about Career Preview Days should contact the Student Alumni Association, Alumni Suite, Memorial Union, Iowa State University, 2229 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa, 50010-7164.

—Melinda Taschetta



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Exclusive!

Oprah lures producer from tractor tapes to tabloid TV!

Michael Shetter may be a first in television: First producer to jump from farm implements to talk shows. The 1967 ISU graduate recently left one of the biggest names in tractors—John Deere—for one of the biggest names in entertainment—Oprah Winfrey.

"I know it sounds pretty strange, because the core business [at John Deere] is making tractors and the core business at *The Oprah Winfrey Show* is making TV shows," says Shetter, who switched from tillage to talk last September. "But all my training, background and experience is in TV production. That made this move logical."

Michael Shetter and Oprah Winfrey

In his Deere years, Shetter directed all aspects of TV production, including advertising, internal communications and product information. As a senior vice president at Harpo—Winfrey's production company—he'll oversee operations of Oprah's soon-to-be-opened Chicago studio. Shetter bills the 88,000-foot facility as "the largest full-scale production facility between New York and L.A. This facility presents great opportunities for Harpo, the city and me personally. Its uses are limitless, from major films to television shows to game shows and almost anything else."

OK, OK, so it'll be an impressive joint. But let's get down to the good stuff: What's Oprah really like? What's it like seeing your boss' (alleged) personal exploits splashed on the checkout tabloids? Will she and Stedman tie the knot? Any wee Winfreys on the way? And the real biggy, of course: *Will O.W. keep the weight off, Mike?*

"She's incredible to work for," he says after a long, diplomacy-laden pause. "She's an impressive lady who cares about her employees. But all I can say about that other stuff is that seeing her in the tabloids is, well, a new experience."

Sorry, inquiring minds. Looks like it's back to the checkout stand.

Navy pilots cruise through testing ground to teach the right stuff

In the movie *Top Gun,* fighter pilot/hunk Tom Cruise (a.k.a. "Maverick") is so impressive in blasting Soviet MiGs that he's asked to return to flight school as an instructor. But let's shift into reality. U.S. pilots aren't zapping many enemy fighters into MiGNuggets these days. So just how does one become an instructor at one of the country's few military flight schools?

Just ask Iowa Stater Tom Cropper. And ISU grad Dennis Sorensen. And alum Robert Stoney. All three engineering graduates have earned teaching positions at the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in Patuxent River, Md., one of only five such institutions in the world.

"When I showed up, we just looked at each other and shook our heads," says Cropper, a 1980 ISU grad who was the last to join the TPS faculty, in 1988.

Most of Cropper's fleet experience came in an A-6; although he didn't fly the mission, his squadron took part in the well-chronicled 1986 bombing of Tripoli. Stoney, an '80 graduate, flew maritime patrol planes, and Sorensen was a backseater in an F-14—the Navy's equivalent to *Top Gun's* "Goose." After impressive fleet stints, they earned positions to study at Patuxent River. Within a year after graduation they were assigned to teaching posts.

(L-R) Dennis Sorensen, Robert Stoney, Tom Cropper

They admit the term "test pilot" probably conjures up incorrect images to Joe Civilian. While many picture a fearless, clenched-jawed Chuck Yeager, that stereotype is sorely outdated. In the '60s, test pilots practically climbed into new aircraft every other week. Today they're more likely to test new developments like radar systems, weaponry and aircraft carrier suitability. "For Navy pilots," says '81 grad Sorensen, "this is the place to be."

Patuxent produces about 60 graduates a year, of which two or three might return as instructors. "With those odds, it's amazing that we're here," Cropper says. "And when you consider we were friends at ISU, it's really incredible we'd end up like this."

But did she get him to say 'Well...cheese'?

When Leigh Charlton photographed former President Ronald Reagan last summer, it wasn't light readings and f-stops that concerned her. She's been shooting in Southern California long enough to be confident in her abilities. But this job presented a new dilemma: What do I say?

To solve her quandary, she went straight to her father. In no time, James Charlton came up with a can't-miss ice-breaker: As an announcer at WHO Radio in Des Moines in the 1930s, Reagan often broadcast Chicago Cubs games using wire service feeds into the studio. One day, the wire malfunctioned during a game. Undaunted, "Dutch" forged on—fabricating the game as he went along.

"My dad was a kid then, and he was watching in the [WHO] studio that day. He never forgot it," says Charlton, whose photographs of Reagan were used as public relations material for his book, *In My Own Words,* a compilation of his White House speeches. "He later worked for WHO himself, so he told me to bring up that story. That got [Reagan] talking, and pretty soon we were relaxed, acting like old friends."

Leigh Charlton

Charlton, a 1972 ISU graduate, has been a freelance photographer in L.A. since 1976. She's shot photos for other books—including three she's also co-authored—but none come close to this executive-level assignment.

"It's not every day," she says, "that you get the opportunity to photograph an author like this."

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WRESTLING'S WONDER KID

Gibbons no longer grapples with skeptical traditionalists

Now in his fifth year as coach, Jim Gibbons casts a respectable shadow of his own.

It was nothing more than a crumpled piece of newspaper. But as Jim Gibbons set about replacing a legend, it was that collection of less-than-flattering words that provided both perspective and inspiration.

On April 1, 1985, Gibbons celebrated his 26th birthday by becoming the youngest NCAA Division I head wrestling coach in the country. He replaced Harold Nichols, his former coach and the man deified in wrestling circles for leading Iowa State's program to national prominence for three decades. Upon Gibbons' hiring, a newspaper columnist wrote that the ISU wrestling program was dead, that a fatal error was made in replacing a bona fide legend with a punk who didn't have as much as a cauliflower ear when Nichols was winning NCAA championships. That writer hardly spoke for the entire wrestling community; nor, though, did he speak alone.

Gibbons, a 134-pound national champ at ISU in 1981, didn't feel the need to defend himself or athletic director Max Urick's decision. But neither could he ignore the skeptics. So he clipped out that column, folded it up and stuffed it in his wallet.

Twenty-three months later he stuffed an NCAA championship in ISU's trophy case for the first time in 10 years.

"I knew those negative feelings would be there," says Gibbons, who at 30 still looks as much like a fifth-year senior as a fifth-year coach. He no longer weighs 134 pounds, but the Ames native still has the blond, often-unkempt hair and the unassuming, almost naive, demeanor. His words, however, reflect a burgeoning confidence and maturity.

"When you follow a guy like Nick, you expect some negative people," he continues. "I'm no approval seeker. I had a job to do. But that column was bogus journalism. I looked at it hard, and then decided to keep it and make a positive out of it."

After a national title, four top-four finishes and six individual NCAA champs, it's clear he's done just that. Today the antagonists are as scarce as a hot fudge sundae in a 126-pounder's diet.

"We didn't look for another Nick, because there isn't one," Urick says. "[Gibbons] had the ability to handle the magnitude of being our wrestling coach."

Still, Gibbons' own brother, Joe, a former ISU national champ and now a graduate assistant coach, calls Jim's hire "a real gamble." Urick himself calls it "a gutsy hire," not only because of Gibbons' age but because it was Urick who sought out Gibbons—then an ISU assistant—for the job. Gibbons hadn't considered himself a candidate.

"It can be hard enough for a young coach to feel worthy at first," Urick says. "But when you consider who he had to follow, well..."

With a vivid reminder never further than his back pocket, Gibbons focused on his role in the future of ISU wrestling, not Nichols' place in its vaunted past. He respected Nichols as one of the country's top wrestling coaches; it was Nichols who convinced Gibbons to get into coaching in

the first place. But this wasn't a question of loyalties. Gibbons knew standing in Nichols' shadow wouldn't bring the national title back to Ames. So with all deference, he promoted his program as "invigorated, youthful, fresh." He pushed his age as a benefit in relating to his wrestlers. He hired former University of Iowa national champion Ed Banach, also not yet 30 years old, as his No. 1 assistant.

"I still miss sitting here talking to Nick," Gibbons says from his State Gym office. "And I rely on a lot I learned from him. But I have my own perspective. Nick knows that. But this hasn't been a drastic change, just maybe a spark."

Says Nichols: "Too many times, people get scared and think they have to keep things the way they were. Jim knew he had to make his own way."

Gibbons earned Rookie Coach of the Year honors in guiding his first team to a fourth-place NCAA finish. In 1987, with what some felt was a less talented team, he was just plain Coach of the Year after the Cyclones won the NCAA crown. Two third-place finishes followed. This season, Gibbons has one of the youngest ISU teams in years.

"We have a lot of untested people," Gibbons says. "But I see some guys who are excited to prove themselves. That's a good position to be in."

And certainly a most familiar one for Jim Gibbons.

ISU runs away with NCAA championship

Bill Bergan had accomplished just about everything else as the Iowa State men's track and cross country coach. Last fall he reached the pinnacle. ISU's top-ranked cross country team stormed to the NCAA title last November, dominating the meet in Annapolis, Md., with 54 points to runner-up Oregon's 72. Cyclone senior John Nuttall was the overall winner, while Jonah Koech was second, Darrell Smith seventh, Roland Pauwels 21st and Andrew Hollens 23rd.

The '80s were a decade of Cyclone dominance, as ISU finished among the NCAA's top 10 six times.

Bryant rushes into Cyclone record book

The Iowa State football team exited the '80s with a Blaise.

Led by junior running back Blaise Bryant's record-setting heroics, the Cyclones finished with a 6-5 mark, just their second winning record in the decade. They earned a spot in the Big Eight Conference's first division for the first time since 1978.

Bryant, a junior college transfer, established five school season records: Rushing

Blaise Bryant

yards (1,516), points (120), touchdowns (19), all-purpose yards (1,718) and most 100-yard games (seven). He opened and closed the season with 200-plus performances.

Senior quarterback Bret Oberg did some record-breaking of his own, setting a Big Eight career mark by completing 59.2 percent of his passes. Oberg, whose 1989 total of 2,242 passing yards is second-best in school history, set an ISU season mark with a 62 percent completion rate.

Oberg and Bryant helped ISU set a school season record by averaging 6.1 yards per play.

Bryant was one of three Cyclones receiving first-team all-Big Eight honors; tight end Mike Busch and cornerback Marcus Robertson were the others.

SPORTS BRIEFS

ALL-EIGHTIES

Jeff Grayer

Former Cyclone basketball player Jeff Grayer was named to the first unit on the Big Eight Conference all-decade team. Grayer, ISU's all-time leading scorer and now a member of the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks, was joined by Kansas' Danny Manning, Oklahoma's Wayman Tisdale, Kansas State's Rolando Blackman and Missouri's Steve Stipanovich. The team was chosen by a group of sports writers and broadcasters, who named Manning their Player of the Decade. Iowa State didn't have any second-team selections, but former Cyclone standouts Jeff Hornacek and Barry Stevens received honorable mention.

SIGN HERE Iowa State basketball coach Johnny Orr signed two players to national letters of intent last November: Skip McCoy, a 5-foot-11 guard from Gary, Ind., and Mark Chappell, a 6-foot-3 guard from Lincoln (Ill.) Junior College. ... Women's basketball coach Pam Wettig received four commitments: Casey Covington, 6-foot-1 forward/center from St. Louis; Barb Gordon, 6-foot forward from St. Louis Park, Minn.; Melanie Young, 5-foot-11 forward from Mariba, Ky. and Ellen Blackmun, 5-foot-10 guard from Munster, Ind.

DEDICATED Before the Oct. 28 Big Eight Conference Cross Country Championships in Ames, a living memorial of seven red maple trees was dedicated in honor of the two ISU coaches, three runners, student trainer and pilot killed in an airplane crash in Des Moines in November 1985. The trees and a plaque are near the starting line of the Cyclones' cross country course at Veenker Golf Course. The university's new athletic/recreation facility, scheduled to open this spring, also has been dedicated to the memory of those who died on the return flight from the 1985 NCAA Cross Country Championships in Milwaukee.

HE'LL TAKE MANHATTAN After three years as an assistant athletic director at Iowa State, Dick Towers retired in December. The former Kansas State athletic director plans to return to Manhattan, Kan., and pursue interests other than collegiate athletics. ISU athletic director Max Urick had yet to replace Towers, 58, when VISIONS went to press.

He who laughs, lasts

Your final exam in Survival 401 consists of one question: Describe, from the human perspective, what it was like to have external consultants issue a warrant for your department's demise.

The short answer comes from that Pace picante sauce television commercial, where the cowpokes discover that Cookie has slipped them a substitute that was MADE IN NEW YORK CITY.

"Get a rope."

The rope, of course, was in response to the recommendation in June 1989 by Peat Marwick Main that the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication be eliminated, primarily on the grounds that the state could not afford to support two programs and that journalism was more a part of the liberal arts tradition than the land-grant mission. (An example of the kind of thinking that came to be known within the department as "Peat Marwickian logic.")

The story starts much earlier—perhaps two years before that. In fact, since I became department chairperson in July 1986, the questions of long-range planning and unnecessarily duplicative programs have permeated the university in general, and this department in particular. Add to this the tendency of editorial writers, columnists and some politicians to cite journalism as the example when asking about unnecessary duplication and you can understand why local clinics have done a brisk business with our faculty alone.

The anguish and tension that affected entire families cannot be gainsaid. But this essay is more about working together and trying to maintain a sense of humor in a not very funny situation.

We made it a point to be candid with existing, incoming and prospective students—and, of course, their parents. It wasn't always easy to be upbeat with all of the uncertainties, but we spelled out both the worst- and best-case scenarios. I usually ended by asking them to mark their calendars for October 2005, when we plan to celebrate the department's 100th birthday.

And, whenever possible, I slipped in a line by alum Jonathan Engel, who wrote: *Be grateful that no consultants were around to tell Noah that he was being 'unnecessarily duplicative.'*

At the same time, we made every effort to keep a positive attitude, on the grounds that being pessimistic could only compound our problems. The basic theme was: We are going to prevail because we do have an excellent department (as evidenced by the report of the external outside consultants who evaluated us in April 1989).

On the other hand, just being optimistic wasn't going to get us anywhere. We decided at the outset to take the initiative to ensure that Peat Marwick's advice was not the only factor in the equation.

Thus began a four-month-long campaign. It was almost impossible to think about anything else; every spare hour afforded an opportunity to write two or three more letters to people who might be able to help the regents more fully understand that this was a quality program with an illustrious past (including three Pulitzer prize winners) and a successful present. Once those points were established, then we could argue more effectively about the future.

Enlisting the support of our alumni and media professionals, as well as academic colleagues and students, gave us direction and a sense of purpose. It also provided some successes that we could share—such as when Ed Sidey's Adair County Free Press carried one of the first editorials in support of the department shortly after Peat Marwick has spoken. (At least a dozen community newspapers and the Des Moines Register followed suit.)

State media organizations were also a major factor. The Iowa Broadcasters Association started things rolling in early July, with a unanimously approved resolution of support. The Iowa Newspaper Association did the same a few weeks later and the Iowa High School Press Association followed suit in early October. Another major endorsement came from the Association for Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Fortunately, there were also some moments of relief.

A man from Des Moines wrote me (twice), hurling a litany of charges against the department. For example, did you know that JLMC:

▲ has become part of a dangerously powerful government-controlled media apparatus and is "sabotaging the careers of others" because it requires internships—a form of licensing?

▲ is responsible for the ugliness of Lincoln Way in Ames because "your j-school students assume ISU and Ames can do no wrong?"

▲ is to blame for the "Mussolini-like architecture of the huge huge stadium, coliseum and arts center" because it only provides "empire-building publicity, rather than needed, independent criticism?"

I thought Register columnist Donald Kaul ought to know about these letters. His reply:

Dear Tom—

I recently got a 15-page letter (7 words to a page), telling me that God was going to get me. It's probably right.

Keep duplicating.

Another bright spot was provided by Carol Oukrop, chairperson of journalism at Kansas State, for alerting us to the Poggy defense as a solution to our problems. Poggies, as readers of the Weekly World News already know, are small animals on the planet Zenda which, if not properly cooked, produce a fatal ailment known as Poggy poisoning (at least that's according to a space alien newspaper discovered in Bolivia). Although there were days when the Poggy gambit seemed tempting, it served us well as a form of comic relief.

Now that the dust has settled, we have a lot of work to do. Many high school students and their teachers will need to be re-convinced that this department is one of the top 30 programs in the nation (as cited by the Gourman Report). On the other hand, Peat Marwick and the duplication discussion generated a great deal of strong support for the department—in Iowa and beyond. It's now up to us to demonstrate that the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication is, to paraphrase the Des Moines Register, already a center of excellence at Iowa State.

Meanwhile, pass the picante sauce.

Tom Emmerson, who received degrees from Iowa State in 1960 and 1963, is chairperson and professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at ISU.

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