VISIONS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION : SUMMER 2006

GO THE DISTANCE

ISU alumni push themselves to the extreme

By Carole Gieseke

Confessions of a solo hiker

OK, my first confession is that I'm not much of an athlete. Working on the cover story for this issue really confirmed this for me. I mean, I am in awe of these people. I can't even imagine doing what they do.

I don't know about you, but my athletic prowess is more along the lines of "let's go for a walk and I'll try not to fall down and hurt myself."

I do enjoy a good walk, though. I started walking for health reasons back in 1998 and enjoyed it so much I made it a point to walk every day. I began to explore new places on foot, especially when I traveled. So I've taken long solo walks in places like New York, Rome, Paris, New Orleans, and San Francisco. I've even hiked a bit in the Swiss Alps.

Confession No. 2 is that my favorite place to hike is in Minnesota. I "discovered" the Superior Hiking Trail in 2000, and I've tried to get up there twice a year ever since. I've had amazing experiences on the trail, not unlike Megan Sweeney's experiences on the Appalachian Trail, only on a much smaller scale.

One of my goofier moments came about because my watch had stopped while I was hiking a few years ago. This totally threw me off, because I'm very careful to hike a specific number of hours and then turn around so I can get back to my car before dark. I always carry my cell phone with me when I hike alone, even though there generally isn't a cell tower anywhere near the trail. Every once in awhile you'll get a signal, which is sort of comforting. Anyway, on this particular day I had hiked all afternoon not knowing the time, not seeing another hiker, and feeling completely out of sorts.

Late in the afternoon, as I tromped along, panting, sweaty, and tired, my cell phone rang. Great! I thought. I'll ask whoever is calling me what time it is. I flung off my backpack, fumbled for my phone, and answered breathlessly. "Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?" Nothing. Just as I was begging pathetically into my dead phone, along came this perky hiker couple, roughly half my age, who looked as if they'd been hiking about five minutes, because they weren't sweating and they were positively ***bouncing*** down the trail.

"Hey!" I called to them. "Do you know what time it is?" They looked at me, cell phone in my hand, backpack and hiking stick abandoned at my feet, and answered cautiously, "Sure... it's 4:27."

By the time I realized they were coming toward me down the trail, it was too late to stand up and preserve what was left of my dignity.

"Great!" I said. "My watch stopped!"

And then the couple bounced on down the trail, probably whispering to one another, "What's up with her? Is she late for a meeting or what?"

Half an hour later, I somehow managed to get in front of the perky couple (a wrong turn on my part, no doubt) and encountered them a second time. This time I was crouched on the trail, examining a toad. By the time I realized they were coming toward me down the trail, it was too late to stand up and preserve what was left of my dignity. So I let them approach me in full crouch.

"What you got there?" asked the young man.

"A really cool toad," I said.

"Uh huh, that's a nice one," he responded, suspiciously.

"You got a good eye, spotting it," the young woman said, going for the positive spin.

And then, off they bounced, thinking, I'm sure, that I had better get back to the parking lot pretty soon, because the bus would be there to pick me up and take me back to the state mental institution.

Confession No. 3 is that I really love hiking alone. I've hiked with other people, and that's fun, but there's just something empowering about finding the trailhead all by yourself and making it to the end without anyone pulling you up a steep incline or giving your rear end a shove to get you over a boulder. I also like not being on anyone else's clock; I like to get going early, go where I want, take my time, hike as long as I want, eat what I want, and go to bed at 8 o'clock if I want.

I don't see many women hiking solo on the Superior Hiking Trail. In fact, I don't see that many people hiking, period. I like that. I like the solitude of the trail, just me, alone with nature and my own thoughts.

People ask me if it's safe to hike alone, and I'm sure there are dangers. I'm a klutz, so I could easily fall over a cliff and break my leg... but I haven't. I don't think the trail is dangerous in any other way. People are very respectful, and I've never seen any wild animals or anything like that. I once got "attacked" by a very muddy, very enthusiastic black lab, but the only casualty was my white T-shirt.

I savor my twice-a-year hikes in the woods, and I always end up tired and happy at the end of the day. Once I hiked so hard that I actually fell asleep on the couch before I got my boots off!

VISIONS IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Summer 2006 Volume 19 No.2

THE MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS OF THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Features

COVER STORY

Go the distance 10

What motivates Joan Hellman to run one 50-mile ultramarathon after another? What made Tyler Weig bike across the country, or Megan Sweeney hike the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail? Why does Eric VanDenBerg get up at 4 a.m. every day to train for triathlons? Find out why these and other Iowa State alumni push themselves to the extreme.

By Carole Gieseke

PHOTO GALLERY

Viva la VEISHEA! 28

VEISHEA 2006 was a triumphant return to tradition.

By Jim Heemstra

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The ISU Alumni Association mission:
To engage the talents and resources of alumni, students, and friends in the life, work, and aspiration of Iowa State University.

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On the cover:
Ultrarunner Joan Hellman trains in McDowell Mountain Regional Park near her home in Scottsdale, Ariz. Photo by Jim Heemstra

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VISIONS magazine encourages you, the readers, to express your opinions by writing letters to the editor. Please include your name, class year, address, and daytime phone number. Letters chosen for publication may be edited for length and clarity. Complete letters, as well as additional letters, may be viewed on the Alumni Association Web site: www.isualum.org/news/visions. Send letters to: VISIONS Editor, ISU Alumni Association, Fisher-Nickell Hall, 214 Richardson Court, Ames, IA 50011-1370; or e-mail cgjeseke@alumni.iastate.edu.

Intriguing people

I ENJOYED THE EDITORIAL AND THE article about the 20 most intriguing people on the ISU campus (*spring 2006*). I was curious about someone just mentioned in the editorial, without a name. He (or she!) was described as the "world's foremost authority on starch." A couple of people there come to mind, so I would appreciate knowing just who you had "crowned" so I can congratulate them.

I am a chemist with the USDA in New Orleans who studies polysaccharides, including starch. My father was Dexter French, a professor of chemistry and, at one time, chairman of the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at ISU.

Al French*
'65 chemistry
Metairie, La.

Editor's Note: *Jay-lin Jane, professor of food science and human nutrition, is said to be the world's foremost authority on starch and how to manipulate it.*

Ask the Expert

PLEASE TELL RON WERNER-WILSON that his answers to your questions about "happily married" are "right on" (Around Campus, *spring 2006*). Respect, friendship, common interest, consideration, and affection all match our experience, and we must be doing something right since we have our 66th wedding anniversary coming up in June. It gets better every year.

Roger Haines*
'53 Mechanical Engineering
Laguna Woods, Calif.

> "We must be doing something right since we have our 66th wedding anniversary coming up in June. It gets better every year."

An Iraqi hero

I FOUND THE ARTICLE ABOUT Dr. Sawsan Al-Sharifi most interesting, but also scary. I've been reading news for some time about how our government has forced Iraq's law to now require farmers to not save their own seed, which has been the practice for hundreds of year and which has been a successful, economic way for farmers to operate. Now, as I understand it, they are required, by law, to purchase genetically engineered seed each year. I can't imagine this is profitable for the poor farmers. It's only helping large American corporations and is destroying a many-centuries-old method of successfully farming in a situation entirely different from farming in the USA. The article states that Dr. Sharifi is involved with developing crop and seed technologies for Iraq. I devoutly hope that the farmers have some say in this and just don't get this American technology shoved down their unwilling throats!

Barbara Short Marseille**
'52 Journalism
Port Townsend, Wash.

Coastal connection

ON OUR ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF Maine, we get lots of magazines, from *Montana* to *Chili Pepper* to *The New Yorker*, but yours is my favorite. I feel that I have an ISU outpost here on the island. Born when my parents were ISC students and with a couple of degrees myself from the college where I was on the faculty briefly about 40 years ago, I have fond memories of Ames; your magazine helps keep those memories burnished and active as I stumble into senescence. Thanks.

Dave Mills**
'55 Indust. Admin., '57 M.S. Psych.
Little Deer Isle, Maine

Seeking thrill seekers

Last fall, we put a small query in VISIONS magazine seeking the names of Iowa State alumni who might be considered extreme athletes.

It didn't take long before letters began flooding in. Here is just a sample of what we received:

"I read your call for thrill seekers in the recent VISIONS. I spent much of my 20s and 30s mountain climbing, both vertical rock and high altitude expeditions.... If you're looking for 'harrowing stories,' I have a few..."

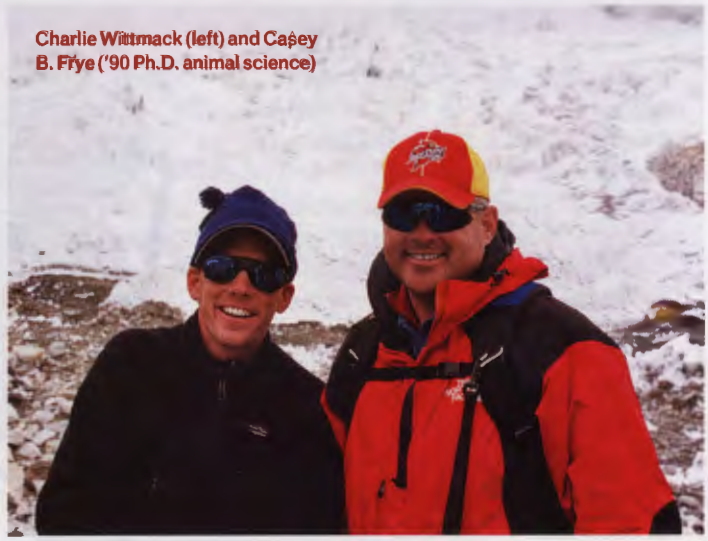
"I'm writing to tell you about my husband's greatest athletic accomplishment...."

"I ran a marathon last year at Storm Lake, Iowa. I had my bike at the finish line and biked 500 miles north to Duluth, Minn. I ran [another] marathon the next weekend...."

"Attached is a picture of Charlie Wittmack and me at Mount Everest Base Camp (elevation 17,600 feet). Charlie attended ISU...and is the only Iowan ever to summit Mt. Everest (May 2003). He led this three-week Mt. Everest Base Camp trek in May 2004."

"My father, a hog producer, recently initiated and completed a 55-mile run/walk as a fund-raiser for Farm Safety 4 Just Kids... He started running the hills and gravel roads in the last three years as a result of a bet from a friend...."

"I have just returned from my third summer trip to Iceland where I hiked and camped outside. .. I have also hiked nine of the 3,000 peaks in Japan. I am presently hiking the Appalachian Trail, and I also ski every December in the Italian Alps. I am getting



Charlie Wittmack (left) and Casey B. Frye ('90 Ph.D. animal science)

ready to celebrate my 63rd birthday...."

"I started running ultramarathons about two years back, including one attempt so far at a 100-mile race...."

"My brother went on a six-week expedition canoeing down the Seal River inside the Arctic Circle...."

"I saw your request in the latest VISIONS for alumni who push their endurance limits. I may fit the bill...."

"During a semester studying abroad in Australia, I fell in love with Scuba diving. Over my 20 dives, I've watched Fijians hand-feed sharks, dove 60 feet underwater at night with only a flashlight in the Great Barrier Reef, and swam with sting rays in Grand Cayman...."

"I have a sister-in-law who has run 10 Ironman Triathlons and many more marathons...."

"Shortly after moving to Las Vegas 16 years ago, I experienced the thrill of hiking down the Grand Canyon ... along a steep and difficult route marked only by rock cairns...."

"I rode from Venice, La., to International Falls, Minn., five weeks and 2,200 miles. Ten years ago I went from Long Beach, Calif., to Washington, D.C., 10 weeks and 5,200 miles...."

"May I recommend my friend, Kirk, who has an extensive background in mountain climbing...."

"I've done endurance snow-bike racing, 24-hour adventure races, and I am currently training for a 100-mile mountain race...."

"I am a long-distance endurance motorcycle rider and a member of the Iron Butt Association...."

"... at age 65! tied a bungee cord to my ankles and jumped out of a hot air balloon. In subsequent years, I made my first parachute jump, climbed a fourteener, surf kayaked, sailed a boat, solo trekked into the desert, and when I was 69! trained for and ran my first marathon."

"Since college, I have been competing in mountain bike races as a way to stay in shape and enjoy the outdoors. For me, the sport has been rather addictive...."

It was no easy task choosing just a few athletes to feature in this issue of VISIONS. We thank all of the alumni – and their friends and family – who wrote to us. See the finished feature, "Go the distance," beginning on page 10.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
SALC

IOWA STATE HOMECOMING · OCTOBER 15 - 21, 2006

Mark your calendar **NOW** *for Homecoming2006*
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CAPTURE THE MEMORIES

Ask the expert

Fast on your feet:

Choosing the right footwear for sports and exercise

Do you get blisters on your heels when you play tennis? Do your hiking boots cause your toes to cramp? Do you experience shin splints after a short run? You need new shoes! Our expert is Chad Ward, assistant coordinator for ISU's Outdoor Recreation Program.

Q: There are a lot of shoes out on the market. It's confusing! How do I know which brand is best?

There is no one brand that is best. Each brand makes a variety of styles, and the brands tend to have similarities across their product lines. We tend to be swayed by friends and celebrities that say, "This shoe is great!" and it may be – for their feet. Experiment to find a brand that works for your feet and then you can choose the model to suit your sport.

Q: Also, there seem to be special shoes for every sport. How important is it, for instance, that I buy a walking shoe for walking? Can I wear cross-trainers or running shoes instead?

It depends on how different the sports are from each other. For example, walking and running, while generating different forces, both occur mostly on the same type of surface and in a straight line. So it would be acceptable to wear a running shoe for walking, but not the other way around, as a walking shoe would not be able to tolerate the higher forces generated in running. Personally, I avoid cross-trainers – I'd rather have multiple shoes that each perform well, than one shoe that does a mediocre job for all sports.

Q: What are the most important criteria for ensuring that a shoe will fit?

Most people tend to buy their shoes too small. This is why you always hear that you should buy your shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are swollen. Some folks' feet swell more than others, especially when exercising, up to a full size. Length is always what you see everyone measuring in the store, testing to see where their big toe ends up in the toe box. The length is important, because you don't want your toes to hit the front of the shoe or boot when traveling downhill. The width is just as important – you want to make sure that your foot isn't hanging over the sides of the insole, or if your foot is too narrow, your foot will slide around in the shoe. Perhaps most important is the heel cup. Heels are where most of us have had blisters, and it's due to too much movement in the heel cup. The fit recommendations for heels vary from sport to sport though, so make sure that you speak to a knowledgeable salesperson that participates in your activity. Once you have the general fit (that's all you'll get in the store), don't be afraid to experiment with the lacing. I hear a lot of complaints about shoes that are too tight in the toes – most times it's easy to fix just by loosening the laces. The best thing to do is to go to a store that specializes in the type of sport that you are purchasing the shoe for. Go when you have plenty of time to try on all the shoes that you can.

Chad Ward in Chile's Torre Del Paine National Park.

Q: And speaking of good fit, what's the key to finding a salesperson who knows his/her stuff when it comes to helping me try on shoes?

Going to a specialty store exponentially increases your chances that you'll find someone that knows what they're talking about. Some of the major sport store retailers might have a good selection, but chances are good that your salesperson knows a lot about hunting and guns and very little about cross-training shoes. The smaller stores are usually adequately staffed, and salespeople are able to spend a lot of time with you making sure that you get a good fit. Even more importantly, educate yourself. Read about different products and brands, talk to other people who participate in your activity, and get to know your own feet. It may be helpful to make a list of the characteristics of your relevant body parts: High arches, past problems with Achilles tendonitis, knee pain when walking up hills, etc. What shoes have worked for you in the past? It's not a bad idea to bring your old shoes to the store – a knowledgeable salesperson can tell a lot from the wear on your shoes.

Q: Is it necessary to wear hiking boots when I go hiking?

It all depends on the load you are carrying. If I am carrying a 70 lb. pack, I'll definitely have heavy duty hiking boots on. The tendency these days is to go "light and fast," where you carry very light gear and no extra amenities. You would most likely wear trail running shoes. The only real problem I see with this is that people wearing running shoes are unwilling to walk through puddles and get their shoes dirty or their feet wet. I encourage wet feet when I take a group out hiking. Wet feet (as long as you keep your socks from bunching up) can actually help prevent blisters because it keeps your feet cooler – less swelling equals less pressure which means less friction.

Q: Do I have to spend a lot of money to get a good shoe?

As with any product, you get what you pay for. You certainly don't need to spend $200 for every pair of shoes that you buy, but for a quality pair of running shoes, you could expect to pay at least $80. I always look for sales and in outlet stores.

"In the 1870s and 1880s, women attending the Iowa State College were expected to take classes in home furnishings, ventilation, water supply, cooking, sewing, management of help, care of the sick, training of children, and how to dress. It is apparent that things have changed a lot since our institution was in its early days. Yet there are a few things that have remained the same. I am struck again and again when I see the consistency of the values, traditions, and excellence that weave a common thread not only through the history but the future of our campus."

Angela Groh, 2005-06 Government of the Student Body president, from her speech on campus traditions during the Scholars and Leaders Ceremony, April 2, 2006

More **bang** for your shuck

Iowa State biological engineering professor Brent Shanks is digging deep to find chemical catalysts that will allow ethanol producers to use all the sugars in corn – not just 80 percent of them. And it's a sweet idea: If successful, Shanks' work could boost ethanol production by 10 to 15 percent. According to Shanks, the current process for producing ethanol involves using enzymes to convert the starch in corn kernels into simple sugars – but 20 percent of each kernel contains sugar chains that can't be fermented. That's where Shanks and his team of researchers come in. "This research makes a lot of sense in an area that makes a lot of sense for Iowa," Shanks said.

UNEARTHING THE PAST

DAVE GIESEKE

Generations of Iowa State University students walked by the area without even knowing what was there.

It took a construction crew excavating the hillside south of the Memorial Union to make the discovery – one that quickly got the attention of the Department of Anthropology.

On March 23, contractors working on the MU renovation and expansion discovered hundreds of bones more than a century old. Historical records indicated that the College of Veterinary Medicine was located on the site from 1885-1891. Photographs from that time period showed a ravine next to the building, and in those times it was common practice to bury the animal remains used in anatomy class in such an area.

For nine days, a student archaeology team headed by anthropology faculty members Matt Hill and David Rapson mapped and collected nearly 1,500 bones at the site.

"The bulk of the remains belong to very old horses, but we also recovered several young pigs, a least three dogs, and a handful of cows," Hill said.

The team also collected glass bottles, a bone button, an English china plate, and a glass candy jar, among other items. A complete report of the findings is tentatively scheduled to be released this summer, and discussions are being held to determine whether some of the findings might be exhibited during Iowa State's 150th anniversary celebration.

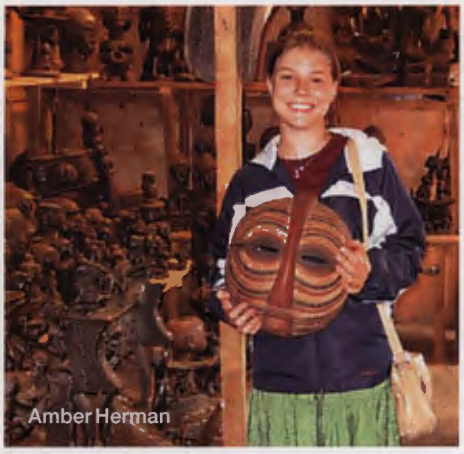
On the Web: A detailed look at the dig is available online at www.las.iastate.edu/newnews/uniondig.shtml

'WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY, YOU CAN'T LEARN'

During her freshman year at Iowa State, Amber Herman realized what her passion was: ensuring that people have access to healthy, quality food.

And now her passion has been rewarded. On March 27, Herman was named a Truman Scholar by the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

Herman, a senior in public service and administration in agriculture from Davenport, Iowa, is currently studying in Uganda. She received e-mail notification of the award from ISU President Gregory Geoffroy.



Amber Herman

"I am honored to represent our university as a Truman Scholar," responded Herman via e-mail. "Winning Truman is validating in that I know that someone is willing to invest in my future so I can continue to passionately address the issues of rural poverty and youth empowerment, without worrying about how to pay for my education. Now, I feel like my options are limitless."

The Truman Scholarship is awarded to students who have exceptional leadership potential and are committed to careers in government, the nonprofit or advocacy sectors, education, or elsewhere in public service. Truman Scholars are awarded $30,000 for graduate school. Scholars also receive priority admission and supplemental financial aid at some premier graduate institutions, leadership training, career and graduate school counseling, and special internship opportunities within the federal government.

Herman is in Uganda to study and pursue research on the support networks of young farmers. This is Herman's third international experience since coming to Iowa State. In 2003 she taught in Kenya. Last July, she addressed agriculture issues and food aid at the G8 Summit in Scotland.

Iowa State University's Sesquicentennial Celebration:

The 150-year adventure

Get ready for one giant birthday party! Iowa State officials announced this spring that the university will celebrate its 150th anniversary from April 2007 through April 2008, with a sesquicentennial kick-off during VEISHEA weekend, April 21, 2007. Next summer, ISU Extension will coordinate service projects in each Iowa county, a traveling display will be showcased throughout Iowa from May through August 2007, and a sesquicentennial exhibit will be on display at the Iowa State Fair Aug. 9-19, 2007. Iowa State's actual 150th "birthday" is March 22, 2008. Look for more information in future issues of VISIONS.

Provost Ben Allen leaves ISU to lead UNI

Longtime Iowa State administrator Benjamin J. Allen was named the ninth president of the University of Northern Iowa April 28 by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.

Allen came to Iowa State in 1979 as a faculty member in the College of Business, and he became chair of the Department of Transportation and Logistics in 1984. He was named the first university distinguished professor in business at Iowa State in 1988, and from 1988 to 1990 he served as director of the Midwest Transportation Center.

In 1994, Allen was named dean of the College of Business. He served as interim vice president for external affairs from 2001 to 2002 and was named vice president for academic affairs and provost in 2002.

Allen recently led Iowa State's strategic planning and accreditation processes, and he coordinated the merger of the College of Education and the College of Family and Consumer Sciences to become the College of Human Sciences.

ISU President Gregory Geoffroy said of Allen's departure, "While I look forward to working with Ben in his new capacity as president of UNI, all of us at Iowa State and in Ames will miss Ben and his wife, Pat, very much."

Geoffroy has appointed Susan Carlson, associate provost for faculty advancement and diversity, as interim provost. A national search for a permanent executive vice president and provost will be conducted.

Honoring Iowa State's fallen soldiers

The Memorial Union recently restated its commitment to commemorating lives lost in battle.

"Iowa State's monument to its fallen soldiers is an active memorial," said Kathy Svec, marketing coordinator for the Memorial Union. "Since the first inscriptions for World War I in 1928, the Memorial Union's Gold Star Hall has seen additions for World War II, Korea, and Vietnam and will continue to see additions as names that meet the criteria are submitted to Memorial Union staff."

Recently, an overlooked casualty from World War II was brought to the Memorial Union's attention – as well as two deaths in Iraq. These are the criteria for inclusion in the Gold Star Hall:

- Must be a current or former ISU student who was enrolled and attended classes on a full-time basis.
- Must have died during or as a direct result of government-sponsored military operation. The cause of death was directly related to the military operation and occurred in the theater of operation.
- Must have served in the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marines, or Merchant Marine in an active or active reserve capacity.
- The military operation must have occurred during the official dates of a war or conflict as defined by the US Department of Defense.

To make inquiries about the process for additions to Gold Star Hall, contact the Memorial Union at 515-294-2300 or e-mail through the "Contact Memorial Union" link at www.mu.iastate.edu.

PASSAGES

STEVE GLEASON

Dr. Stephen Gleason, a prominent Iowa physician and Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack's former chief of staff, died March 25. Gleason, who served on the Iowa State University Alumni Association's board of directors from 1996 to 2000, had also been chief of family practice at Des Moines' Mercy Medical Center, director of the Iowa Department of Public Health, and senior health care adviser to President Bill Clinton. He was the president's representative to the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. He graduated from Iowa State in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in zoology.

ISU launches unique partnership with DMACC

In February, Iowa State joined forces with Des Moines Area Community College to offer DMACC's students a transition plan that makes it easier for them to transfer to ISU to earn bachelor's degrees. The new Admissions Partnership Program features special benefits for DMACC students before they even enroll at Iowa State, including mentoring, housing, career resources, student pricing on athletics and cultural events, participation in early orientation and registration, and guaranteed acceptance into an ISU bachelor's program.

Iowa State enrolls more Iowa community college transfer students than any other university in Iowa, so leaders at both schools say the partnership is a win-win situation ... and a huge victory for students in the state. "It is a big plus for Iowa State, for DMACC, and most especially for students," ISU president Gregory Geoffroy said.

ISU admissions director Marc Harding agrees. "The program is convenient and will smooth the transition for DMACC students who want to continue their education at Iowa State. Ultimately, we hope to work with other community colleges in the state to develop similar opportunities for their students," he said.

On the Web: More about the program can be found online at http://www.admissions.iastate.edu/partnership

GO THE DISTANCE

BY CAROLE GIESEKE
PHOTOS BY JIM HEEMSTRA

For many of us mere mortals, the idea of running a 100-mile race or riding a mountain bike for 24 straight hours makes us wonder, not so much "how" but "why" people would do that to themselves.

Sure, a lot of us compete in sports. We run 10Ks and ride RAGBRAI. We enjoy keeping fit, spending time outdoors, participating on a team. Some of us even run marathons.

But there is a culture of extreme athletics out there, too, and many of the athletes are Iowa State alumni. They go far beyond the limits of what most of us would consider normal physical endurance. Their treks are long, difficult, and often life-changing.

Why do they do it? What pushes them to compete? And who are they competing against – themselves or others?

Marty Martinez, a psychologist for ISU Student Counseling Service and a sport psychologist for the U.S. track and field team, says we all push ourselves to do things beyond our limits from time to time.

"There's something that drives us to move into areas of uncertainty," he said. "There's an internal need for that, so people find different ways to meet that need. Competition is one of them."

Martinez says that sports, especially endurance sports, require a combination of psychological, physiological, and spiritual strength. It's a higher calling, he says.

"When you see competition as a way to learn to help you in the higher values in your life, then that's to me the ultimate in sports," he said.

Martinez says he enjoys working with athletes. "There's tremendous importance in helping athletes to recognize the greater value, the deeper foundation of themselves as an individual, so that sport or competition is not a place to earn your self worth but is a place to express your gifts and your talents."

PHOTO: VISH

MEGAN SWEENEY: APPALACHIAN TRAIL THRU-HIKER

'EVERY DAY WAS A GOOD DAY'

Megan Sweeney walked two thousand one hundred and seventy-four miles. She traveled through fourteen states. It took her four months.

And she did it all with only two pairs of socks.

She walked from Maine to Georgia – one of approximately 400 people who annually thru-hike the Appalachian Trail – beginning on June 14, 2004, right after she graduated from Iowa State, and finishing four months later on Oct. 15.

"People always ask, 'Why did you do it?' and I always want to say, 'Well, let me sit down and tell you the 40 reasons why I did it," Sweeney said.

Her Web site (www.megswalk.net) lists the official reason for hiking the Appalachian Trail: "Because I can!" And that pretty much sums up Sweeney's attitude.

"I graduated from college," she said. "I wanted this vacation. I wanted to do it in one big swoop. I loved being in the woods. Every day was a good day."

Sweeney started her hike in Maine during the summer and hiked south into the fall, bucking the trend to begin in Georgia in early April and finish in Maine before the snow falls. Each year, several thousand hikers attempt a thru-hike, but only about three in 20 make it all the way. The average thru-hiker takes five to seven months to complete the trail. Sweeney, who had little previous long-distance hiking experience, did it in just four months.

She carried a light load. Essentials included her camera, Ziploc bags, toilet paper, a titanium "spork," one titanium pot, a small stove, ceramic water filter, headlamp, rain gear, and a sleeping bag. Besides the T-shirt and shorts she hiked in every day, she didn't bring many clothes,

Crazy Meg's Appalachian Adventure

Walking It.... Because I Can!

Megan's Appalachian Trail Journal

While she was hiking the Appalachian Trail in 2004, Megan Sweeney kept a journal on her Web site (www.megswalk.net). Here are a few excerpts, with photos she took on the trail:

Welcome to my site!

Hiking is fun, camping is fun, so why not spend the next five months having the absolute time of my life? Ever since reading Bill Bryson's *A Walk in the Woods* and working for the Green Mountain Club in Vermont last summer, I've just had a pesky little bug in the ol' fun belly screaming, "Megan, damn you! I wanna live in the woods, eat loads of oatmeal, and spend some quality time with Mama Nature!"

NAME: Megan Elizabeth Sweeney
TRAIL NAME: OatmealStout
BIRTHPLACE: Ames, Iowa
HOBBIES: Running, reading, ranting, raving, oh yeah, and hiking
FAV BASEBALL TEAM: Cubbies
FAVORITE FOOD: Any peanutbutter and chocolate combination, with a side of cookie dough
WHAT MEGAN WANTS TO BE WHEN SHE GROWS UP: Nope, not growin' up, next question please
WHAT MEGAN WANTS TO BE WHEN SHE'S DONE HIKING THE AT: Girl who lives in the woods and smiles a lot
HALF-GALLON CHALLENGE ICE CREAM FLAVOR: Cookie Dough
HALF-GALLON CHALLENGE TIME: 57 minutes

JUNE 21, 2004

Howdy doody all, just thought I'd let you folks know that I have survived the first 100+ miles of the AT and I'm doin' mighty fine. My feet don't like me so much, but they haven't blistered so that's a plus. The weather has been a dream, sunny and warm...

JUNE 29

Made it into Stratton yesterday, and me and some homeboys from Connecticut are taking a "zero day" today, just eating like crazy and getting ready to hit the trail again tomorrow. Saw another moose a couple of days ago, climbed some more mountains, and met some damn fine folks. Shower tally is up to a whopping 2 since the 14th of June and I'm lovin' it.

JULY 19

Greetings from Hanover, NH! Tomorrow, I cross into sweet Vermont, home to everything maple. Things are going fan-diddlytastic! The White Mountains in New Hampshire were amazing... only had one mountain to go over in the sleet/freezing cold rain and wind, but other than that, things were just dreamy. A hiking buddy of mine just ate a whole half gallon of ice cream in about 30 minutes, while we were cruising the city of Hanover, home to Dartmouth College. So far, I've hiked close to 430 miles, and I've got 1700ish to go. I've got to get some food and jump back 1 mile into the woods to the shelter. ON TO VERMONT!!!

AUGUST 2

Today I will walk on into New York! Things are going mighty fine. Life is good here on the trail, many fine views in the last couple of states. Scary view was that of a large rattlesnake crossing the trail. Yikes!

Continued >>

just a long-sleeved shirt, light jacket, and a change of socks and underwear. Her pack averaged about 35 pounds.

At first, she said, "I had a lot more stuff. I ended up scaling back anytime I could, like, 'I don't really need this.' I carried my hammock at first and realized that it was going to be ridiculous."

Sweeney stayed in shelters along the trail each night, a luxury not found on most footpaths.

She started her hike wearing heavy-duty boots like she'd worn doing trail work in Vermont the previous summer. But she quickly learned that once the boots got wet, "they stay wet for weeks, so I got rid of 'em in New Hampshire. Threw away the boots and went to shoes." She hiked the rest of the trail in lightweight athletic shoes.

Sweeney averaged 20 miles a day, and took just six "zero days" – days to rest and do laundry. She hiked without maps, insisting that the Appalachian Trail is "tough to screw up. It's the long-distance trail for beginners."

Food, of course, was a constant obsession on the trail. Many hikers find that it's difficult to carry as much food as they require to keep their energy up. Sweeney's mother sent a dozen packages for her to pick up at post offices along the trail, and she often hiked into towns near the trail to buy food at the grocery stores. She also hit the restaurants.

"In town, I'd immediately find a place with burgers, fries, beer, anything fatty, pizza, definitely ice cream. I'd always go for a pint of Ben & Jerry's," she said.

On the trail, she ate packets of dry oatmeal, which she "hoarded from her food plan the semester before," Pop-Tarts, Lipton side dishes, ramen noodles, tuna, candy bars, peanut butter. "Basically crap food, anything with a lot of sugar and a lot of fat. I ate everything bad for me. I ate marshmallow fluff with a spoon."

She said she "mocked Pop-Tarts" at the beginning of the trail, choosing to eat oatmeal because it was more nutritious. But as the days turned into weeks, she ended up eating lots of them. "They're easy to pack and delicious," she said.

AUGUST 19

I'm a few days away from the half-way point on this here Appalachian Trail! The other day I crossed the 1,000-mile mark and I'm delighted! Right now I'm in Duncannon, Pennsylvania, livin' large in the famous Doyle Hotel. 'Twas one of the original Anheuser-Busch hotels (the way they all should be) and it's got character for sure. Lemme tell ya that $18 sure isn't Holiday Inn style, but hey, you don't get the stern "now, the hot water WILL BURN YOU" lecture to go with the room key.

The bears in Jersey must've been hiding from me, except for that one that I heard outside of my tent one night (didn't sleep very well after that - feeling like a well-wrapped bear-burrito in the ol' one-person tent).

Overall, things are mighty fine, can't complain about a single thing. I'm actually kind of looking forward to the possibility of walking in the rain tomorrow. I've been way too spoiled with nice weather lately. It's time this trail get tough, ya know?!

AUGUST 27

Grrrreetings everyone! Things on the trail are just spectacular. Harper's Ferry WV was a neato place to be, and ... now I'm at Bear's Den Hostel, just up from Snicker's Gap. This place is like a small castle, used to be a private home, but now the Appalachian Trail Conference runs it as a hostel for hikers and anyone else. I highly recommend it (you can drive here, you don't have to walk 1000 miles).

Oh my, I just realized that I have taken a shower each of the last four days! Looks like I'm going to be in Virginia for quite some time, 550-ish miles to be nearly exact. Only four more states to go!

SEPTEMBER 24 (HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MEGAN!)

I've been hiking with this dude named Dances With Moose for most of Virginia and it's kind of nice to have a buddy to hang out with. We're pushing to Erwin, Tennessee, so that we can hopefully take Sunday off at this cool hostel called Miss Janet's.

SEPTEMBER 27

Many thanks for the splendid b-day greetings!! I spent my birthday hiking 23+ miles, wiping out 3 times (yeah, still clumsy), but I took in some amazing views and got up to 6,000+ feet for the first time since Mt. Washington. Life is splendid!!! Right now I'm taking a day-off at Miss Janet's House (only one of the finest hostels on the trail) in Erwin, Tennessee. Myself and my hiking pal, Dances With Moose, are eating and drinking ourselves silly, loading up on calories for the final 3-week push to Springer Mtn. and the southern terminus of the trail. 'Tis Lookin' like the end-date will be around the 15th of October at the rate I've been walking. Say, if you're ever in Southern Virginia, check out the Grayson Highlands, they're amazing!!

OCTOBER 15, 10:35 A.M.
MEGAN IS DONE!! WOO HOO!

OCTOBER 16

So here I am back in the heartland. The trail has been walked, and it's time to move on to something new I guess. My dad and brother walked the last 0.9 miles with me up to the top of Springer Mtn. on Friday morning. Kinda freezing cold, foggy, and windy on top, so the celebration was short, but oh so sweet. My bro came through with bottle of Oatmeal Stout to give my journey an appropriate end. Right now I'm feeling relieved, happy, sad, stiff from the car ride, etc. Kinda weird to be done. Anyone wanna go camping?

Posted by: Oatmeal Stout, ME > GA '04

Megan Sweeney

2004 forestry

Hometown: Ames, Iowa

As a special highlight, she said, there were half a dozen places on the trail where hikers could order a pizza directly to the trail.

"One time I stopped at a forest service office and I ordered two pizzas, one for me and one for a guy I was hiking with. We sat out in front of this place and both finished off a whole pizza in the middle of the day and hiked 10 more miles."

Eating binges are legendary for thru-hikers, including the famous "half gallon challenge" race to see how fast you can eat a half gallon of ice cream in one sitting. "It's just a total kid moment," Sweeney says. "You definitely want to die afterwards. Just curl up in a ball." She did it in just under an hour but swears she saw someone do it in four minutes.

Camaraderie is high among thru-hikers, and Sweeney developed close relationships with the hikers she met. Despite a stereotype of long-distance hikers being loners and oddballs, Sweeney said you actually need to like being around people because it's not a solo experience.

"People think, 'Well, you must be searching for something or have something lacking if you want to go on this voyage,'" she said. "But the people I met were the most together people. There's that T-shirt that says, 'Not all who wander are lost.' I think most people just wanted a fun time in the woods."

When we talked to Sweeney last summer – eight months after she completed the Appalachian Trail – she was working as a utility forester for a company called Appraisal Consulting Research and Training in Sonora, Calif. She liked her job, she said, but she told us that she thought about the trail every day and wondered how long it would be before she would be able to afford to do another long-distance hike.

"I would do it again in a second," she said.

So we weren't surprised when we talked to her just before we went to press and she gave us this update:

"I'm leaving today from Ames to begin a westbound road trip, culminating at the southern terminus of the Pacific Crest Trail on the California-Mexico border," she told us in an e-mail. "I'll begin hiking north, hopefully finding myself at the end of the trail at the Canada-Washington border in about five months.

"So I guess my job title has changed from 'utility forester' to 'unemployed wanderer,' and I'm thrilled. I hope to go to graduate school in the fall of 2007, but right now I'm not committing to anything besides walking in the woods and having fun."

COMPETITIVE BY NATURE

It took two years for Eric VanDenBerg to train for Minnesota's Border to Border Triathlon.

And it only took one day to make him want to throw in the towel and go home.

VanDenBerg and a teammate were a two-person entry in the grueling four-day triathon in August 2004, a race consisting of 500 miles of biking, running, and canoeing, where many of the teams were made up of three and four people.

He had been preparing for the race, getting up at 4 a.m., running on the treadmill, meeting his teammate each weekend to become stronger in the canoeing portion, riding miles and miles on his bicycle.

But Day One of the race, a 220-mile bike ride, began with a terrible headwind. VanDenBerg was nervous, filled with adrenaline, and he biked too hard, too fast. By the end of the day, his team was in second place, but, he said, he was "shot."

"If there was any way I could have bowed out and come home, I would have," VanDenBerg said 18 months later. "But hey, you train for two years, you spend a lot of money, and you don't want to let your teammate down. It would be humiliating."

So he continued.

But Day Two of the race didn't start out so well either. VanDenBerg and his teammate misjudged the location of the starting line and began the bicycle race a full five minutes after the other teams had left.

Amazingly, they caught up, and at the end of the day, they held a slight lead overall.

"After feeling terrible after the first day, [being in first place] was a pretty euphoric feeling," he said. "All of a sudden, this race I'd worked for for two years, we were ahead. You start to think you've got a chance."

Day Three was a 50-mile run, divided between teammates. VanDenBerg, who considers running his top sport, said the pace of the run made this the most difficult day. After the run, his team was 18 minutes

behind the leaders but still in second place.

That left only one more day: canoeing.

VanDenBerg's team won the canoeing portion, hands down. And then they waited...and waited...and waited to see if their closest competitors came in within 18 minutes.

Unbelievably, VanDenBerg's two-man team won.

"It was real unusual for us not only to win it, as a two-man team we ended up beating all the three-man teams and the four-man teams," VanDenBerg said. "So it was phenomenal...the best athletic achievement I've had. Probably one of my proudest moments."

VanDenBerg's competitive racing began relatively late in life. He was a "mediocre" runner at Ankeny High School in Iowa, and he didn't run again until about 12 years out of college.

"It was actually on a dare that I started running again," VanDenBerg said. "A young guy at work challenged me to a 10K race in the Twin Cities, so I started training. I was determined not to let him beat me. So we got to the race, and I think I beat him by over four minutes."

That was about 10 years ago, and VanDenBerg says the competition has "just gotten more and more intense."

In addition to the Minnesota Border to Border win in 2004, he previously raced Border to Border as a three-man team. He's run marathons. He's competed in the Midwest Multisports Duathlon Series (run/road bike/run), and he's planning to participate in the Kickapoo Reserve Dam Challenge (canoe/bike/run) and the Chippewa Triathlon (canoe/mountainbike/run) this year, among other races.

He's a "real competitive person by nature," and he's a stubborn competitor. He once suffered a femoral stress fracture during a run, and he walked eight miles on the broken leg. He's determined to break his own records and to compete with others in his age range – and younger.

He rarely runs or bikes "for fun," but he does ride a tandem bicycle with his wife, Debbie, and he once ran the Quad-City Times Bix 7 in a Spam can.

It's a funny story. VanDenBerg works for Hormel, makers of Spam luncheon meat, and when his brother convinced him to run Bix (a race too crowded and far too short for VanDenBerg's talents), he and Debbie decided to enter the costume contest.

"Debbie was Spam Lite and I was Regular Spam," VanDenBerg said. "I started out in the back of the pack, but I took off, and even in the Spam can I can outrun some of those people. It was just a continuous passing of people, and they'd say, 'I got passed by a Spam can! I can't believe it!'"

The VanDenBergs got another surprise at the end. They won the costume contest.

"Man, usually you go to a big race and you run like crazy and you get a T-shirt or something," VanDenBerg laughed. "I go run in a Spam can and I win $200."

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“To have the satisfaction that you won the race… it was just an unbelievable feeling.”

Eric VanDenBerg

1983 computer engineering

Hometown: Ankeny, Iowa

Supervising design engineer for Hormel Foods

Austin, Minn.

ANGELA WHITE:
LONG-DISTANCE MOUNTAIN BIKER

THE NEXT BIG THING

"For me, it's always just having to do more and more and more. How can I make it more challenging for myself?"

Angela Faiferlick White

1994 community & regional planning

Hometown: Fort Dodge, Iowa

Director of planning for La Plata Investments LLC

Colorado Springs, Colo.

Angela White had just one more mountain pass to cross to complete her first Leadville 100 race. She had biked 85 miles...only 15 miles to go...and she was on a rock-star pace.

And then it started to rain. Lightning flashed across the Colorado sky. It began to sleet.

She was soaked, and freezing, and afraid she would lose her fingers and toes if she continued. So she, along with countless frozen cyclists, dropped out of the race.

She laughs about it now, about how a race isn't worth losing your fingers and toes, about how the stupid T-shirt and belt buckle they give you for completing the race isn't worth getting struck by lightning. But make no mistake, Angela White is a competitor. She was back in the race the following year. And she finished.

She finished the next year, too. And then she looked for a new challenge, the Next Big Thing.

That thing was the La Ruta De Los Conquistadores, a three-day mountain bike race across Costa Rica that is often billed as the toughest mountain bike race on the planet.

White and her husband, Joe, began training for the November 2005 La Ruta in December 2004. They averaged four to five days a week on their bikes, riding on some of the most beautiful and demanding trails in Colorado and Arizona. As the race grew near, White focused on long mountain bike rides, riding eight hours a day on the weekends and shorter rides during the week.

One week before La Ruta, White was overflowing with anticipation. She couldn't wait to get there, to complete what she'd been working toward for nearly a year.

"People will be there from all over the world," she said, her voice filled with wonder. "The terrain is just incredibly hilly; over the three days, we'll climb 30,000 feet. That's amazing to me, because on a good day [in Colorado] you maybe climb 6,000 feet. Then there's the mud; a lot of the climbs are up steep, muddy slopes.

"We've been training with eight-hour rides. Anything more than eight hours becomes a mental game. Now I have to be mentally strong to get through the rest of the day. I hope there are a lot of toucans and monkeys for entertainment."

White's singular goal for La Ruta? Finish the race.

Of the 450 total cyclists who began the competition, 271 finished – only 25 of them women. White was one of them.

Afterwards, White looked back on the race with a new perspective. The first day had 15,000 feet of climbing, she said, and the heat made her feel as if she were in an oven set on "broil."

"The mud was so deep and slippery that it was like walking up a down escalator with a bike that weighed 50-plus pounds from the sticky clay. The mud was so deep that going downhill was like trying to run down a magic carpet ride at an amusement park," she said.

White confirmed that La Ruta was, indeed, a mental race. She said each day she divided her thoughts into "things to focus on" (legs feel good; friendly *ticos* with water, oranges, and good cheer; incredible scenery; fabulous tuna-and-white-bread sandwiches at each checkpoint) and "things to ignore" (the heat, the lack of skin on her butt, the mud, the weight of the bike, the steepness of every climb, how far to the next checkpoint).

"I tried not to focus on the incredible exhaustion that I had never experienced before," she said.

White said the race taught her that she does have physical and mental limits. It also taught her, she said, "that at this point in my life, a race isn't about how fast I can do it. It's about discovering that there's more to the world and yourself than you know."

After competing in about 100 increasingly difficult mountain bike races in the past 10 years, White says she'd like to take some time off.

"I keep telling myself, 'Next year I'm golfing!'" she laughs. "I am golfing all year!"

SEE JOAN RUN

When Joan Hellman was growing up in southeast Iowa, the ninth of 13 children, she always wanted to be like her older sisters. Her sisters ran cross country in high school, so as early as the second grade, Joan ran, too.

She ran for fun. She ran to keep in shape. In college, she ran to keep off the "freshman 15."

While she was earning her first degree at Iowa State–a 1995 BS in ceramic engineering – Hellman ran her first marathon.

Today, running a marathon is practically an everyday occurrence for Hellman, who trains year-round for competition in Ironman Triathlons and ultraruns of 50 miles and more.

The official Ironman Triathlon began in Hawaii in 1978 and is the ultimate distance triathlon. A number of qualifying events are held around the world each year leading up to the Hawaii competition, and Hellman has finished nine, including triathlons in Arizona, Wisconsin, California, Washington, and Idaho. In each race, the athletes swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, and then run a full marathon of 26.2 miles.

Hellman qualified for the upcoming Ironman World Championships held in Kona, Hawaii, by winning the women's 35-39 age group at the Ironman Arizona triathlon in April.

Qualifying for the championships in Hawaii had long been one of Hellman's top goals. She also says she'd like to bike across the United States someday. But ultrarunning (competitions beyond the marathon that are often 50, 100, or more miles) continues to dominate her "lifetime list of things to do."

She has competed in half a dozen 50-mile running races, and she attempted the 100-mile "Javalina Jundred" race last fall in Arizona but had to withdraw after 75 miles when she developed a severe blood blister on the bottom of her foot.

During ultrarunning season, Hellman trains by doing a 50-mile run every weekend. She casually refers to 30 miles as a "short" run.

"As warped as it sounds, a marathon doesn't seem like anything," Hellman says. "I mean, it's something – you respect it; however, when you do Ironmans, it doesn't seem like that big of a deal because it's just one small portion. So it's all relative."

Hellman runs every day, and that means running in the heat of the Arizona desert, where she's lived since 2000.

"I'm one of those weirdos that actually likes it when it gets really hot," she laughs. "I find it nice when it starts to get above 100 and even 110 because that's when people go indoors to the air conditioning. You can go out and run on the greenbelt for miles and miles and not see anybody. It's more peaceful."

Hellman is clearly focused on two things in life: training for athletic competitions and her career with General Dynamics, where she works with the U.S. military's largest defense project.

When she runs, she thinks about work. When she works, she "gives 150 percent," but upcoming competitions are always in the back of her mind.

"People on the outside looking in would say that's all I do. I work and I train," she says. "When competitions get closer, you start to get excited. You get giddy and giggly, thinking about all the possibilities. Two days before the race, when your body is in good shape and you know you've just 'got it all' at that moment, it's just sort of fun."

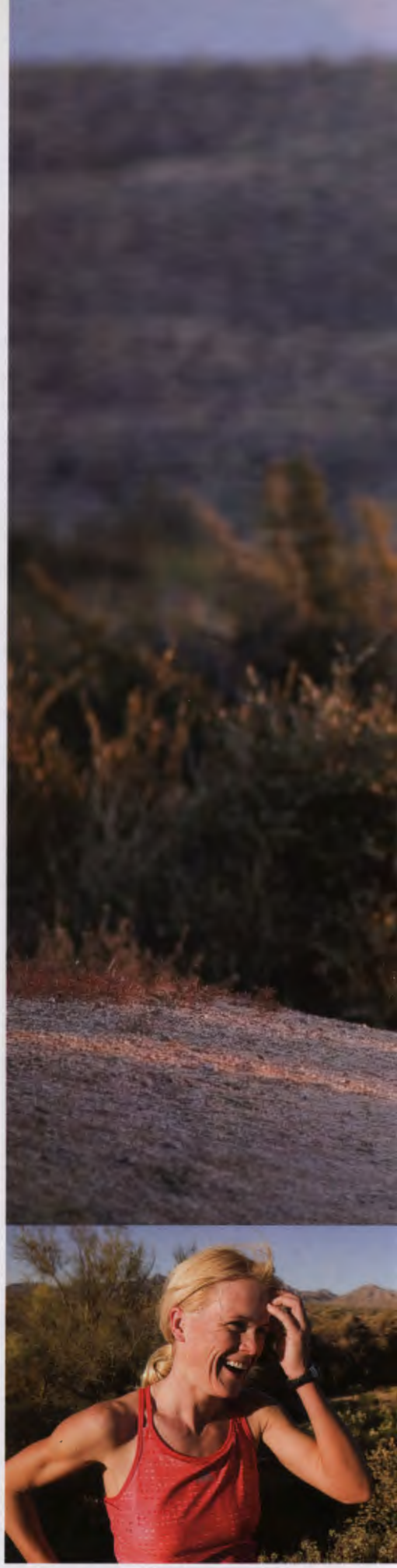
Hellman's positive attitude is contagious. Her philosophies on life and work and competition are the same: "Be happy in the moment." She says there's nothing you can't do if you want it badly enough.

"The more you do, the more you find out you CAN do," she says. "The limits we set on ourselves? We define them. People underestimate themselves a lot more than they should."

Take that 100-mile race, for example. Exhausted after 75 miles and crippled from the pain of a blood blister, when Hellman dropped out she said she'd never do it again. Competing in the Javalina Jundred was, she said at the time, the stupidest thing she'd ever done.

And then, the very next day, she read the newspaper account of the race, and there were finishers who were running BEHIND her during the entire race. And she knew she'd have to do it again next November.

"I have unfinished business," she says.



Joan Hellman

1995 ceramic engineering;
1999 computer science

Hometown: Fort Madison, Iowa

General Dynamics technical point of contact with the Future Combat Systems project

Scottsdale, Ariz.

> "You get sore, yeah, but you get used to it pretty gosh darn quick."

WWW.ISUALUM.ORG VISIONS 21

SAIL AWAY

> "I really find I allow my competitive juices to come out through my sailing. I always want to be racing."

Windy city: Doug and Jean Steffenson on Chicago's Lake Michigan

Doug Steffenson was six months old the first time his mother and father took him to a sailing regatta.

As the story goes, Mike and Jean Steffenson put their baby son in a basket in the tent at the regatta with the ladies who were in charge of registration and left him there so they could go sailing.

You might say sailing is something Doug Steffenson was born to do.

Living in Davenport, Iowa, Steffenson's family sailed on the Mississippi River and went to sailing regattas throughout the Midwest. While other kids were going to the Grand Canyon or Disneyland, the Steffensons spent their summer vacations sailing up and down the East Coast, from Long Island to Maine.

In fifth grade, Doug Steffenson started racing with his parents, beginning with simple jobs. Eventually, in high school, his parents let him "drive," and his competitive juices began to flow.

Now Steffenson, an attorney in a Chicago law office, races his own Lightning class sailboat on Lake Michigan.

But it is the Race to Mackinac, in which he has competed nearly a dozen times, that's the "classic race." More than 100 years old, the 333-mile Race to Mackinac is the longest freshwater race in the world, and it's THE race in the Chicago area.

Steffenson has been a crew member on a number of sailboats competing in the Race to Mackinac, including the 70-foot *Chance* and the 40-foot *Impulse*. In 1999, *Impulse* took first place in its section; in 2004, *Chance* took third.

"I enjoy being a member of a crew on these boats," Steffenson said. "I think I've demonstrated to the boats' owners over the years in the races that we've done that I am a good member of the crew and they can depend on me. I can do most any of the jobs they have on the boat."

The Race to Mackinac is never easy, taking between 36 and 60 hours to complete. Lake Michigan sees high winds – or it can be flat as glass. Steffenson says that at its center, Lake Michigan feels like an inland sea – when you can't see the shore, you realize how much water is out there.

Sometimes the wind turns off and that's it – you're done. You turn on your engine and motor back to shore. Other times the wind is frighteningly strong – like the time the winds went from being light and variable to 50 miles an hour in a span of five minutes, breaking the mast on Steffenson's boat and giving the crew an "intense" experience.

Steffenson's physical endurance suits him for distance sailing races as well as shorter races in his 19-foot Lightning.

"You have to be strong," he says. "It's a lot of upper-body strength, a lot of abdominal work. After sailing all weekend, come Monday morning you feel it in your legs, and you feel it in your stomach."

Besides sailing, his family is the most important part of his life, Steffenson says. His parents, Mike ('59 chemical engineering) and Jean ('60 zoology) still sail. They have their own boat in Maine that acts as their summer home.

When Steffenson married his wife, Jean ('89 marketing), she started sailing with him.

"She had to learn how to sail, and I had to learn to appreciate the St. Louis Cardinals," he laughs. "It was a trade-off."

The Steffensons are now raising their two daughters, 7-year-old Hannah and 2-year-old Liesl, to race with them.

"I've always told people that the girls were our crew expansion project."

Doug Steffenson

1988 JMC & political science

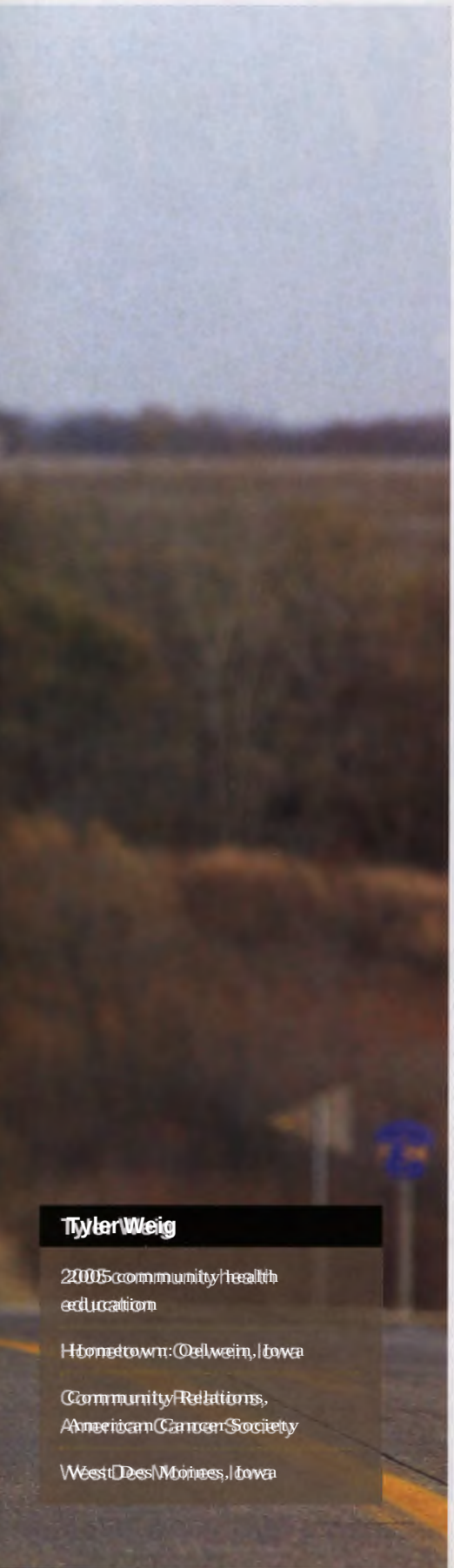
Hometown: Davenport, Iowa

Attorney with Nyhan, Pfister, Bambrock, Kinzie & Lowry

Chicago, Ill.

CYCLING FOR A CURE

"Each day I'd think to myself, 'Here we go. We're heading to Bend, Oregon, or wherever. That's our destination for the day.' I wouldn't be thinking, 'Oh, geez, I have 3,800 miles to go.' I'd be thinking 'Bend, Oregon.'"



Tyler Weig

2005 community health education

Hometown: Oelwein, Iowa

Community Relations, American Cancer Society

West Des Moines, Iowa

Never underestimate Tyler Weig. Once he gets something stuck in his head, he's determined to follow through.

Here's an example: A couple of years ago, when he was a student at Iowa State, Weig decided, on a whim, to run the Des Moines Marathon. It didn't occur to him that this might be a bad idea, given the fact that he hadn't ever actually done a running race, unless you count the 400 meters in 10th grade. So, having no long-distance running experience whatsoever, Weig "trained" for two weeks and then ran 26.2 miles in the Des Moines Marathon.

So when he told his friends he was going to bike across the United States after graduation, they didn't question that he'd really do it. Never mind that the longest bicycle ride he'd ever done was RAGBRAI (once, in 2001) and that he didn't even own a road bike.

"I was sitting in my pajamas in front of the computer over Christmas break during my senior year at Iowa State," Weig said. "A friend and I had once talked about how much fun it would be to ride across the country, and at that point in time, I hadn't really thought about what my future held. So I said to myself, 'Let's see if we can make this happen.'"

That germ of an idea grew into a 51-day cross-country odyssey, starting in Florence, Ore., on June 4, 2005, and ending in Virginia Beach, Va., on July 24. In all, Weig put 4,000 miles on a bike he borrowed from Bike World in West Des Moines.

Weig prepared for the trip not by conditioning his body to ride long distances; rather, he spent all his time plotting his route, securing overnight stays with friends and family and ISU grads and friends-of-friends, and working with his sponsoring organization, the American Cancer Society (ACS).

The key to the successful ride, Weig says, was the relationship he built with the ACS. That's what gave his journey meaning.

"When I first went to the American Cancer Society to propose the idea [that I'd bike across the country to raise money and awareness for their organization], I think they thought I was crazy," Weig laughs. "But I was persistent. I knew what the benefits of a ride like this could be, and how big of a help it could be to ACS."

Weig said the ride was more than a physical challenge; it was a fundraising ride. He stopped at cancer facilities along the way, meeting with families and individuals whose lives were affected by cancer. He stopped at American Cancer Society offices. He met with the media. He raised a total of $17,500.

"My motto was 'raising awareness one pedal at a time,'" he said.

Weig said the ride itself was "an amazing experience, to say the least. Every state has its own beauty. It's just amazing how you can see the country on a bike. It doesn't even compare to driving in a car, going 70 miles an hour. You really get a chance to see how slowly things change."

Weig averaged about 85 miles a day on his bike, generally riding about 8 hours each day. He biked in every kind of weather: snow, sleet, hail, wind, rain, and heat. At the end of one particularly wet, frigid day in the mountains of Oregon, his shoelaces were frozen together.

He camped, along with his ride manager Mark Fetterhoff, about 30 percent of the time. The rest of the nights were spent in the homes of family, friends, and generous strangers and ISU alumni.

The ride was a life-changing experience.

"It's amazing how you can transform in a two-month period," he said. "It's a way to lose yourself and find yourself at the same time."

After a "bittersweet" finish in Virginia, Weig returned to the real world, working in community relations for the American Cancer Society in West Des Moines. And he gave his bike back to Bike World.

Since his cross-country ride, he hasn't committed to any long-distance travels, but in typical form, he's set his sights on a new challenge: Next fall he plans to compete in an Ironman Triathlon.

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MOUNTAIN MAN

It might be easier to list the sports in which Brad Stamp doesn't participate than those he does. Because he skis and snowboards and mountain bikes. He hikes and runs and snowboards.

He rock climbs.

He ice climbs.

He launches himself off 40-foot, snow-covered cliffs.

He does winter pentathlons.

He hunts elk.

And this, he says, is normal behavior for people who live in the mountains of Colorado.

"I barely stand out above the average," he insists.

Yeah, right.

Stamp once competed in two 100-mile mountain bike – and we mean ***mountain*** bike – races in back-to-back weekends. All told, he's done six races of 100 miles each.

He's completed the grueling 24 Hours of Moab mountain bike race, once as a two-person team, twice as a four-person team, and once solo. In fact, finishing the Moab, Utah race as a solo rider is one of Stamp's greatest accomplishments.

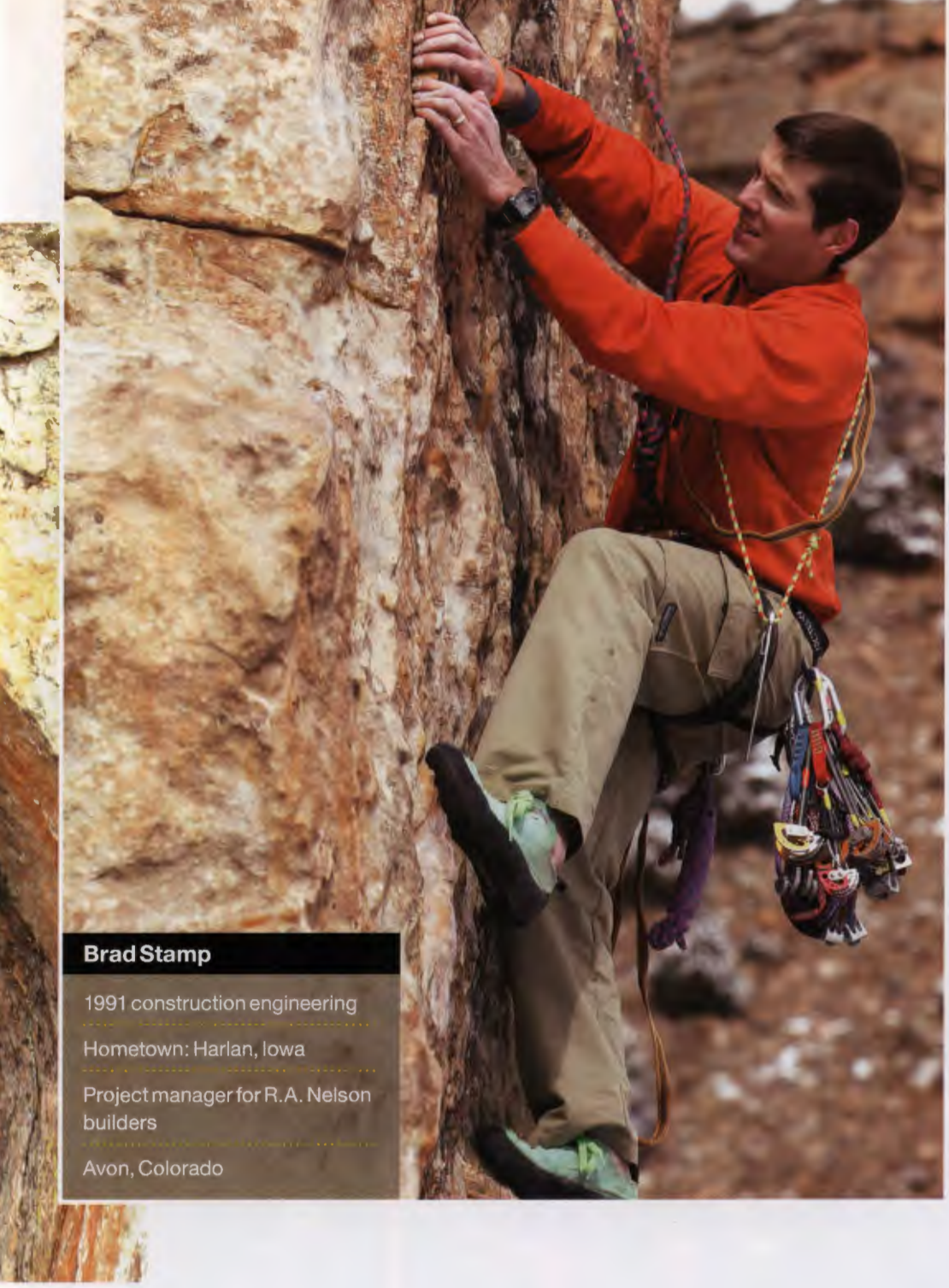
"That's a pretty major event," he says. "It's one of the top mountain bike races in the country. It's a technical terrain. Sometimes you have to get off your bike; you can't even ride. It's not easy. You ride day and night, more than 200 miles."

To train – and just for fun – Stamp bikes in excess of 180,000 vertical feet of elevation gain every year, and he's hiked about half of Colorado's 14,000-foot mountains.

Stamp approaches every mile with the mentality of an engineer.

"I have this Excel spreadsheet that I use to track all my biking, hiking, running and skiing stats to give myself goals to beat," he says.

26 VISIONS SUMMER 2006



Brad Stamp

1991 construction engineering

Hometown: Harlan, Iowa

Project manager for R.A. Nelson builders

Avon, Colorado

> **"Sometimes you think, 'I don't ever want to do THAT again.' But then you do."**

Growing up in Harlan, Iowa, Stamp enjoyed hunting with his father, skiing with his family in Colorado, and riding RAGBRAI with his mom.

"I remember one soggy Monday [on RAGBRAI] when everybody wanted to quit riding," he remembers. "I was only like 13, and my brother was 14, but [my mom] wouldn't let us quit. That kind of spirit from my mom is in me as well."

Stamp tapped into his endurance during college when he joined ROTC. He found that he was a pretty good distance runner.

Now he wouldn't dream of living anywhere but the mountains of Colorado, where he literally jumps from one adventure to the next.

"I do something almost every weekend," he says, although he "stays around the house more" now that he and his wife, Kerry ('92 finance), have a daughter, Emma, who is nearly two.

"There's just something in you that just says, 'Look at that mountain! I've been looking at it all week long at work, and now I get to go hike up it... or ski down it... or bike up it.' Afterwards, you have such a sense of accomplishment."

Stamp says mountain bike racing has given him the most success, but he's ready to "move on" and spend more time hiking, rock climbing, and mountaineering. He'd someday like to hike up Mt. Ranier in Washington, or maybe climb Kilimanjaro, or go trekking in Nepal. Eventually, he'd like to climb all the "fourteeners" in Colorado.

"I'm just an average person that really likes to push myself."

28 VISIONS SUMMER 2006

Viva la VEISHEA!

If you weren't able to be at Iowa State this spring for the return of VEISHEA, you really missed something special. We've never seen so much sunshine … or so many happy people eating pancakes and cherry pies! It was truly a return to the great traditions of VEISHEA. The *Iowa State Daily* proclaimed: "VEISHEA done right." We couldn't agree more. **Photos by Jim Heemstra**

WWW.ISUALUM.ORG VISIONS 29

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It's time to take it to the top!

Dear Alumni, Students, and Friends,

I just can't tell you how exhilarating these past few months have been. When we topped our membership goal of 50,000 last year, **making us the second-largest paid-membership-based Alumni Association in the Big 12 conference,** we thought we had really reached the top. But we were wrong. So many of you have come up to me recently, obviously filled with Iowa State pride, saying, "Reaching 50,000 members is great! Now

we need to be No. 1. What will that take? How can we help our Association achieve this goal?" This outpouring of positive momentum (we currently stand at 50,140 members) makes me think we CAN become No. 1 in the Big 12, and YOU can help us do that.

But first, I think it's important for you to know how Iowa State University and the ISU Alumni Association compare to our peers, so I've put together some numbers (see chart at right) so you can see how we stack up. As you can see, Iowa State ranks second in the Big 12 in terms of number of actual paid Alumni Association members and in the middle of the pack of the schools with whom Iowa State compares itself nationally. But, of course, all of that is relative to the size of the school and total alumni. Six of our peers have more than 300,000 addressable alumni; Iowa State has about 196,000. So in sheer paid members, the opportunity is ours to seize.

In order to increase Association memberships and move up in the rankings, the entire Alumni Association staff and board are doing all they can to connect with alumni, students, and friends. But sometimes it takes a personal "push" from someone they know. Maybe that's you! If you could just take the time to think about your friends, co-workers, and family members who graduated from Iowa State or who are big Iowa State fans and ask them, "Are you a member of the Alumni Association?" If they are not, convince them of the value and importance of being a member. This would go a big way toward increasing our overall membership.

Think about your former roommates, your neighbors, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, and best friends from Iowa State. Look them up in our online alumni directory–you have access because you are a member – to check to see if they are members. If not, send them a quick e-mail and ask them to join. We know they'll be glad they reconnected with you and with Iowa State, and they will thank you for it. (To access the online directory, go to www.isualum.org.)

We believe there is no reason that we can't move our Association to the No. 1 spot in the Big 12 and be one of the strongest, most vital alumni associations in the country. The future is unlimited! We truly have just scratched the surface. **Together, we WILL go all the way to the top!**

I truly thank you for your membership and your future involvement with this effort and with Iowa State University.

Yours for Iowa State,

Jeff Johnson
President, ISU Alumni Association

How the Iowa State University Alumni Association membership stacks up in the following peer groups

Institution	Year that Dues Program was Initiated	Student Enrollment	Addressable Living Alumni	Alumni Association Members
RANKING IN IOWA				
University of Iowa	1872	29,238	211,238	53,895
Iowa State University	**1932**	**26,000**	**196,000**	**50,140**
University of Northern Iowa	1978	14,000	91,000	8,700
RANKING IN THE BIG 12				
University of Texas	1913	50,000	361,136	71,000
Iowa State University	**1932**	**26,000**	**196,000**	**50,140**
University of Kansas	1890	26,531	182,502	46,342
Texas A&M University*	1942	41,716	280,000	44,127
Kansas State University	1874	23,180	138,866	39,872
University of Missouri	1936	26,985	186,936	36,390
University of Nebraska	1972	22,000	185,000	37,390
Oklahoma State University	1920	24,000	202,973	30,803
University of Oklahoma	2001	28,631	185,000	31,000
University of Colorado		32,000	165,000	29,326
Texas Tech University*	No dues	28,365	127,333	29,497
Baylor University	1978	13,019	101,547	14,945
RANKING AMONG PEER 11 SCHOOLS				
University of Illinois	1983	41,938	560,243	138,545
Ohio State University	1879	57,748	405,000	126,650
Purdue University	1919	69,098	333,000	65,570
University of Minnesota	1904	55,000	318,000	56,000
Iowa State University	**1932**	**26,000**	**196,000**	**50,140**
Texas A&M University*	1942	41,716	280,000	44,127
University of Wisconsin	1861	41,169	331,706	37,000
Michigan State University		43,000	390,000	36,000
University of California-Davis	1972	29,637	156,926	25,635
North Carolina State University	1998	29,957	142,131	19,415
University of Arizona	2005	37,000	190,000	6,700

*Operates annual fund rather than membership dues program.

University Honors Alumni and Friends during 2006 Distinguished Awards Celebration Weekend

Iowa State honored 11 outstanding individuals, couples, and corporations during its Distinguished Awards Celebration, held April 20-22, 2006. Honors were bestowed during a public ceremony on Thursday afternoon as well as at a more formal event on Friday evening. Awardees also participated in the VEISHEA parade, college events, and other campus activities.

Distinguished Achievement Award

Lauro F. Cavazos
PhD '54 Physiology
Professor, Tufts University
School of Medicine
Former Dean, Tufts University;
President, Texas Tech University;
and U.S. Secretary of Education
under President Reagan
Concord, Mass.

"Iowa State is one of the great institutions in the nation. I proposed to my wife at the campanile. The bench is still there! Fifty-one years of marriage and 10 children later, I owe Iowa State an awful lot."

Distinguished Achievement Award

Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista
PhD '80 Economics
Secretary of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Mexico
Mexico City, Mexico

"What can you say about a place that gave you everything that made you what you are? Iowa State shaped my character."

Note: The Distinguished Achievement Award (established 1961) and Honorary Alumna/Alumnus Award (established 1968) are sponsored by the Iowa State University Alumni Association. The Order of the Knoll Awards are sponsored by the ISU Foundation. To view the full biographies of awardees and photos of the weekend, go to **www.iastate.edu/~president/DAC/06/**

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Distinguished Achievement Award

Deborah A. Diersen-Schade*
BS '78 Animal Science; MS '81 Nutritional Physiology; PhD '84
Research Fellow and Nutrition Scientist, Global Regulatory and Scientific Affairs, Mead Johnson & Company
Key research: Infant nutrition
Evansville, Ind.

"Iowa State will always have a special place in my heart. I've worked with some of the top nutrition scientists in the country, and they're Iowa State grads."

Distinguished Achievement Award

James L. Oblinger*
MS '70 Food Technology; PhD '72
Chancellor, North Carolina State University
Raleigh, N.C.

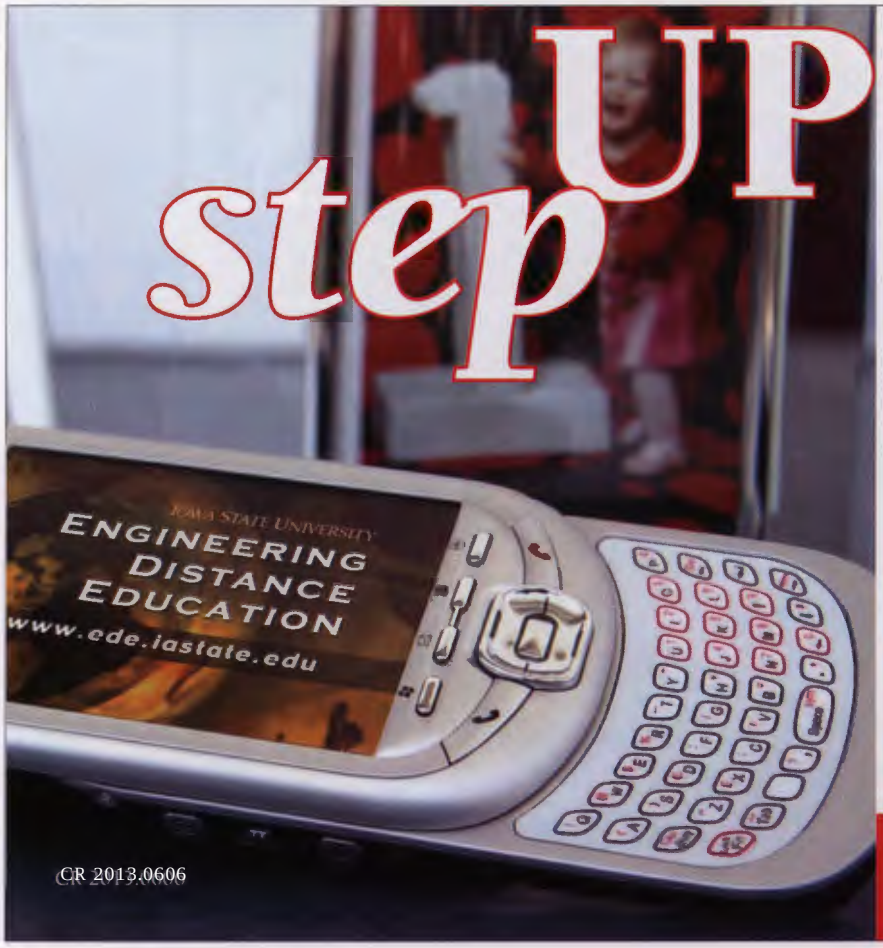
"Tonight is what a great university is all about. I have relived part of my history at Iowa State. It is as if I have never been gone from this place."

Honorary Alumna Award

Christina M. Hixson
Trustee, Lied Foundation Trust
Founder of the Christina Hixson Opportunity Awards Program
Las Vegas, Nev.

"We're doing so well with all these young people. Someday they'll be famous. You'll be honoring them, and I'll be here to see it."

*Annual member, ISU Alumni Association **Life member, ISU Alumni Association Note: Only ISU degrees are listed



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Honorary Alumna Award

Bobbi Reiman[**]
Philanthropist and volunteer
Helped establish Reiman Gardens and the ISU Alumni Center
Greendale, Wis.

"People have asked me for years where I went to college, and I hated to say I never had the opportunity to go to college. Now I can say, 'I'm an alum of Iowa State.'"

Honorary Alumnus Award

Neal E. Smith
Attorney, Davis, Brown, Koehn, Shors, and Roberts
Iowa farmer
Former Congressional Representative from Iowa, 1959-1995
Des Moines, Iowa

"I am deeply honored by this award. The first time I ever visited campus, I was 13 or 14 years old…and I said, 'Someday I'm going to go to Iowa State.' But I didn't have the money."

Order of the Knoll Campanile Award

Gerald A. and Karen A. Kolschowsky[**]
BS '62 Agricultural Business (Gerald)
Chairman Emeritus, OSI Industries, Inc.
Key contribution: The Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Program
Oak Brook, Ill.

"The ISU Foundation showed us the way to do something we knew we wanted to do but didn't know how to do it." – Gerald Kolschowsky

"We were blessed to make this contribution. It was a dream that became a reality. I say thank you to YOU for letting US do a job." – Karen Kolschowsky

The Order of the Knoll is Iowa State University's most prestigious donor recognition organization. Members provide the financial leadership that transforms lives and creates opportunities at ISU. They provide essential support for Iowa State – whether it's in the form of lifetime support, annual giving or both. A variety of benefits are available for members. To learn more, visit www.foundation.iastate.edu/donor/order-of-the-knoll.html.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION

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Order of the Knoll Cardinal and Gold Award

Jack Cosgrove

BS '56 Electrical Engineering
Retired President of Rockwell Collins
ISU philanthropist, supporting a variety of university areas
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

"This is really a shared award with [my wife] Dilla and my family. The money we're spending is our kids' inheritance,,,so thank our kids!"

Order of the Knoll Corporate/Foundation Award

Monsanto Corporation

Generous supporter of research in agriculture and other areas of the university, plus equipment and graduate fellowships
Ankeny, Iowa
Represented by Ted Crosbie,** Vice President
BS '73 Agricultural Education, MS '76 Agronomy, PhD '78 Agronomy
Earlham, Iowa

"Monsanto shares Iowa State's passion for excellence. It is a great pleasure to work with Iowa State's graduate and undergraduate students,,,"

Order of the Knoll Faculty/Staff Award

James and Katherine Melsa**

BS '60 Electrical Engineering (James)
Retired Dean, ISU College of Engineering
Iowa State leaders, volunteers, and philanthropists
Naperville, Ill.

"Iowa State brought the two of us together. We are very grateful to Iowa State and very honored by this award." – James Melsa

"Thank you for the opportunity to be here and be involved. We have been so blessed," -Kathy Melsa

To nominate outstanding alumni and friends for these awards, go to **www.isualum.org/en/awards**

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Wanda Sours
BS Home Economics Education, 1941; ISU Home Economist 1941-1943

Detroy Green
Agronomy Professor, 1964-1989; Associate Dean of Agriculture, 1989-1995

Ramona Esbeck
ISU Home Economics Extension, 1948-1956; Assistant State 4-H Leader, 1956-1976

Wallace Sanders
Civil & Construction Engineering Depart., 1964-1998; 13 years in University Admin.

Pat Kern
Home Economics Student, 1942-1945

Tom Hannum
BS Zoology, 1941; MS Psychology, 1949; Psychology Professor 1952-1989

CYCLONE FOOTBALL 2006

AUGUST

31	TOLEDO	7 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

9	UNLV Cardinal Rules Day* Hall of Fame Weekend	6 p.m.
16	at Iowa Hy-Vee Cy-Hawk Series	TBA
23	at Texas	TBA
30	UNI Family Weekend	6 p.m.

OCTOBER

7	NEBRASKA Golden Rules Day+	TBA
14	at Oklahoma	TBA
21	TEXAS TECH Homecoming	TBA
28	at Kansas State	TBA

NOVEMBER

4	KANSAS	TBA
11	at Colorado	TBA
18	MISSOURI FB Letterwinners Reunion	TBA

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MEET THE STORM

Alumni Center UPDATE

Project signs have gone up, and trees on the Alumni Center site, between Beach Avenue and the northwest parking lot of the Iowa State Center, have been recently cleared in preparation for the Alumni Center building project. At press time, architects were on track to complete construction documents by June 27, and bid opening day is scheduled for July 27.

Architect illustration: aerial view of the ISU Alumni Center, looking northwest.

New face at the ISUAA

Katie White

Katie White ('00 biology) joined the ISUAA as its advertising and corporate relations manager on Feb. 1 after working in ISU's Office of Admissions. Katie's responsibilities will be selling ISUAA advertising and sponsorship opportunities to businesses and corporations. To inquire about sponsorship or advertising opportunities, please contact White at 515-233-1411 or e-mail kswhite@mchsi.com.

We asked Alumni Center donors Roy and Sandy Uelner about their decision to make a gift to the ISU Alumni Center:

Roy: "I was fortunate to be on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and to be president back in the '80s. Even then, there was a dream that someday we would have an alumni center. So now when this dream is going to turn into reality, we just want to do our part to help build the center.

"We're great believers in what the Alumni Association does to keep people connected to the university. The alumni center was something that we wanted and needed for many, many years."

Sandy: "We truly believe that it will be great for the alumni to have a building of their own where they can come and stop and learn about the university and the campus. I just think it's going to serve a tremendous purpose."

Roy: "When we learned about the possibility of supporting the board room, there were a couple of factors that were important to us. Number one, the board room is going to be a beautiful place. Secondly, it's going to really be important for the operation of the Alumni Association, but also it's going to be available for other Iowa State activities. That was very important to us – it's not just going to be a place off on the hill that will never be used except for Alumni Association board meetings."

Sandy: "I have always said that Iowa State prepared us for a really productive future, and over the years we have chosen to give back in different ways. If we hadn't had that ISU education, we probably wouldn't be giving this gift today."

Roy and Sandy Uelner

Roy: ISU '57 industrial engineering
Retired president of Deutz-Allis Corp.

Sandy: ISU '58 home economics journalism
Homemaker

Involvement with the ISUAA:
Chair of the Board of Directors 1984-85 (Roy)
Board of Directors 1982-86 (Roy)
Co-chairs of The Circle, 2005 to present
Brookfield, Wisconsin
Sons Steven ('84) and Scott, both married, three grandchildren

About the Uelner's Alumni Center gift:
$900,000 total gift: $500,000 cash gift to name the Alumni Center's executive board room, plus a deferred $400,000 estate gift for the Alumni Center Endowment Fund

For more information on making a gift to the ISU Alumni Center, contact:
Dan Saftig, president of the ISU Foundation
515-294-4077, dsaftig@iastate.edu
Or Jeff Johnson, president of the ISU Alumni Association
877-ISU-ALUM, jjohnson@alumni.iastate.edu

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ISU Alumni Association Board of Directors announces new directors and officers for 2006-2007

The ISUAA Board of Directors approved the election of the following new directors at its spring meeting on May 12-13. Elected directors whose board terms end in 2011 are:

- **Faye K. (Weber) Abbes** ('83 dietetics and food science), senior account manager for national accounts with Quantum Foods, Danville, Calif.
- **Steven H. Cox** ('86 marketing), senior director of sales training and professional development for Merck & Company, Doylestown, Pa.
- **Ronald J. Hallenbeck** ('71 finance), government and education accounts manager for IBM, Ames, Iowa
- **K. Dwayne Vande Krol** ('93 accounting), senior manager for Deloitte Tax LLP, Clive, Iowa

Three additional directors were appointed during the meeting:

- **Barbara D. Correll** ('96 exercise science), vice president, Cohn and Wolfe, Chicago, Ill. (to complete the board term vacated by Jeffrey Whitton)
- **Brad Bishop**, a senior in Industrial Engineering from Fairfield, Iowa, representing the Student Alumni Leadership Council
- **Melvin Weatherwax**, Ankeny, Iowa, representing non-alumni members

The board also approved the following new officers for the 2006-07 term:

- **Kevin Drury** (1983 agricultural business), chair, Urbandale, Iowa
- **Jon Fleming** (1975 meteorology), chair-elect, Ames, Iowa
- **Randall Hertz** (1976 animal science), vice chair of finance, Nevada, Iowa
- **Deborah Tharnish** (1977 English), vice chair of records, Des Moines, Iowa
- **James E. Anderson** (1993 industrial engineering), immediate past chair, Lake in the Hills, Ill.

ALUMNI SOCIETIES UPDATE

The inaugural meeting of the Society of VEISHEA Alumni and Friends was held during VEISHEA, April 22. More than 20 society members (representing six decades) were present and voted to approve the 2006-07 officers and constitution. Other societies that will be formalized in the near future include Cardinal Key, ISU Daily, Journalism Alumni and Friends, Black Alumni, College of Agriculture, and Alumni Band.

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Shining stars

Students thrive in Honors Program's challenging curriculum and nurturing environment

Wherever you set the bar, honors students will jump higher. That's how Gene Takle describes the drive and determination of these students at Iowa State University. As the interim faculty director of the Honors Program, he's committed to students and creating an environment that fosters academic excellence.

"We believe very strongly that in honors education, our students should actively participate in their learning. Most honors classes are limited to 25 students, which allows for more discussion, more interaction, and the opportunity to explore a wider range of ideas," Takle explained. "We challenge students to design their own academic programs and require that they take a higher level of responsibility to design an active-learning experience. Honors students really respond to this challenge."

Simply put, honors courses are not *more* work – they're *better* work. Takle and the rest of the staff work diligently to both maintain the traditional high quality of the ISU Honors Program and to implement new initiatives, such as expanded undergraduate research. But they couldn't do it without private support.

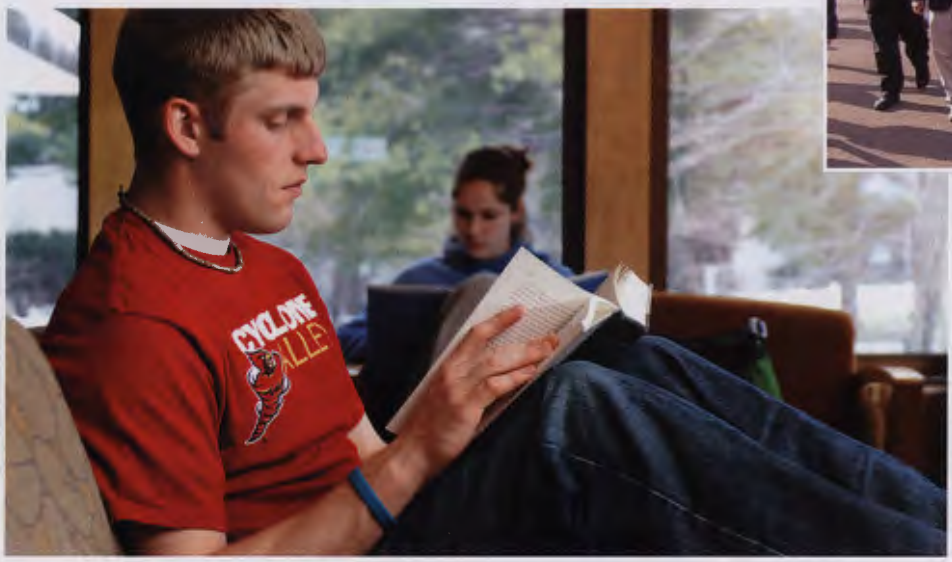
"We are very dependent on and grateful for the philanthropic support we get from friends and alumni. Without those funds, there are a lot of things we would not be doing," said Brandy Cunningham, assistant director for the Honors Program. "The Honors Student Board, the student organization for all honors students, operates solely on private support. The students plan many academic, cultural, and social activities every year, and it's a huge part of the community and student experience in honors."

Private funds were responsible for the recent construction of the new Jischke Honors Building that houses the program. "We have this beautiful, wonderful building that has space for students to gather, study, and socialize," said Cunningham. "The students love being here."

Because of the tremendous success of the Honors Program and the impact it creates, the university has identified it as a fundraising priority. Additional private support would help the program improve and expand in a variety of ways. Initiatives aimed at increasing undergraduate and summer research opportunities, funding to assist students with study-abroad expenses, and the expansion of honors course offerings are all areas of concentration. It's an investment that has a positive effect on the whole campus.

Because of the tremendous success of the Honors Program and the impact it creates, Iowa State has identified it as a fundraising priority.

"When you have a critical mass of students in the classroom who have designed their own active-learning program, they tend to ignite discussions that get other students involved as well," Takle said. "Honors students tend to be campus leaders



Above Ruth Neil, far right, walks with a group of team members past the White House. Neil, who is currently working in Washington D.C. as part of a semester-long internship at the National 4-H Council, is a licensed tour guide for the organization. She is also conducting research about Iowa 4-H history as part of her honors project while working in the nation's capital.

Left Chris Deal reads in the lounge area of the Jischke Honors Building. The building was designed to have a space where students could gather to study or just relax.

40 VISIONS SUMMER 2006

and add to the learning environment on campus."

With about 1,300 current student members and about 4,000 graduates of the program, the Honors Program is constantly working to recruit the best and brightest. As a result, the quality of the program helps boost the reputation of the entire university.

"Criteria set by *U.S. News and World Report* for determining a university's ranking include A.C.T. and S.A.T. scores of the incoming class," Takle said. "High-ability students who seek out ISU because of the innovative opportunities through the Honors Program increase the average scores of incoming students and subsequently improve our national ranking."

Chris Deal, whose tenure as Government of the Student Body vice president recently ended, said the Honors Program is appealing in many ways. "The professors are always very engaging and I feel like I get a lot more out of those classes," he said. "When you're in a class with other honors students, you want to push yourself to do better, and most of us are trying to beat each other. But we also help each other and meet for study sessions before tests. It's just a really great atmosphere."

Ruth Neil, a senior in public service and administration in agriculture, agreed.

"It's definitely encouraging to be around other people who understand when you're disappointed that you got an A- in a class," she laughed. "We call that 'honors failing,' but you can't say that to most students because they'd laugh at you. Honors students understand."

The Honors Program helps students achieve academic excellence by providing a strong support system, a challenging curriculum and a smaller community within the larger institution. The Freshman Honors Program Seminar was created nearly 30 years ago as the first step in helping students make the transition into college life.

Trivia contest makes fun of complex questions

You'd expect honors students to enjoy trivia.

Every year, KQ, the ISU campus radio station, holds the trivia contest to end all trivia contests. It's a 26-hour quiz that reveals one question at a time, every six minutes.

"We stay up all night and take shifts gathering questions and working on problems," said Ruth Neil, a senior in public service and administration in agriculture. "It's incredibly wacky and fun."

This year, Neil's team from Anders House in Barton Hall won the contest by a 10-point margin. Here are just a few of the questions:

- Decode this ACME code: HEHSTGNUEK CHOOG.
- In what year was the requirement that area codes have a middle digit of 0 or 1 dropped?
- Solve Y" + 2Y' + 10Y=0 Y0 = 1, Y0' = 2, Y' = dy/dt.
- What fish has a name whose Spanish translation is an anagram of its English name?
- How many atoms are there in .350 mol of $C_6H_{12}O_6$?
- How many ways are there for eight men and five women to stand in a line so no two women stand next to each other?
- How many integers under one million have digits which sum to nineteen?
- On "Sex & the City," how many times did Carrie go to the Hamptons?

"We're recognized nationally as having an outstanding Freshman Honors Program, and I do think it makes us more attractive to prospective students," said Cunningham. "It's a great way to introduce them to ISU and to the community and all it has to offer."

Students describe the curriculum as the best of both worlds. Smaller class sizes, more personal attention, and all of the opportunities available at a larger land-grant institution contribute to an exceptional college experience. The honors research mentorship program lends itself to this theory by giving freshmen the opportunity to conduct research with a faculty mentor their first year at Iowa State.

"It's a great way to get your foot in the door, not only as an undergraduate student, but as a freshman," said Deal, a junior in mechanical engineering. "Not very many people can say they've had that opportunity."

Not only is the opportunity available early in a student's college career, but the faculty and staff work to ensure it's a valuable and rich experience. "Students don't realize how much they're learning about research at the freshman level, and they often don't realize how much responsibility they were given in the research project until they're upperclassmen," Takle explained. "It's an enormous growth opportunity."

Unlimited opportunities, hands-on experiences, and knowledgeable faculty and staff are all ingredients to a high-quality and successful Honors Program. As fund-raising momentum builds, academic excellence and the students remain top priorities.

"The students are always our priority and the focus of our entire staff," Cunningham said. "It's a joy to work with them, and it's rewarding to see them succeed."

Kim Davis is the assistant director of communications for the ISU Foundation.

Where the heart is

For ISU's 18th men's basketball coach, there's no place like the state of Iowa

Growing up on a farm in Cascade, Iowa, Greg McDermott watched his older brothers go off to college to learn the family business. And, naturally, they went to the place where Iowa's aspiring agriculturalists go: to Ames. From an early age, Iowa State University was part of McDermott's life.

Like his brothers, McDermott enjoyed farm life, even serving as FFA president. But ultimately it was basketball – that pure and perfect game of grace and grit which he loved to play, analyze, and even organize – that captured his heart. And when it came time for McDermott to go to college, he followed his own path to Cedar Falls, where he would don the Purple and Gold on Jim Berry's Northern Iowa basketball squad.

McDermott thrived at UNI, earning all-conference basketball accolades, a history degree, and an opportunity to play professional hoops overseas. After highly successful coaching stints at Wayne State and North Dakota State, McDermott became the head basketball coach at his alma mater in 2001.

"Basketball has taken me to some great places. I've met so many wonderful people and developed so many special relationships as a result of this game," McDermott says. "Basketball has definitely given more to me than I've given to the game of basketball. I owe it a lot."

McDermott has seen the world through basketball, but his roots remain distinctly Iowan. And Iowa's a small state, a place where things tend to come in serendipitous full circles. On March 21, 2006, the university that once meant something sort of far away to a little brother shooting baskets in Cascade provided a defining moment in the life of Greg McDermott. The opportunity is now his to lead Iowa State basketball to the top. In his home state, with family and friends standing beside him, Greg McDermott's dreams are coming true.

The newest Cyclone is the first to admit it's been a whirlwind year. He led his Panthers to a school-record 23 wins and another NCAA tournament appearance last season, all while his wife of 18 years, Theresa, battled breast cancer ("For the first time in my career I didn't hang on to the victories as long…at the end of the day it's just a game, and this is just a job," McDermott says).

> "My challenge is to make myself be patient and understand that this is a marathon. We want to build a program that's going to be successful many, many years from now."

And before he even unpacked his office at Hilton Coliseum this April, he was on the road recruiting players to Iowa State, which was hit hard by defections following the dismissal of McDermott's predecessor, Wayne Morgan.

"The coaching change happened so fast for [the players]," McDermott said. "They [found out they] lost a coach late Thursday or early Friday, and by Tuesday they had a new coach. That's a traumatic experience for a young person."

McDermott should know; he experienced a coaching change following his third year at Northern Iowa, when Eldon Miller took over the Panther program.

Ultimately, some of the players on ISU's 2005-2006 roster decided to pursue other opportunities, about which McDermott says he harbors no ill will. "Iowa State basketball will go on for many years, and Greg McDermott will hopefully be coaching here for many years, but these players

only have a short window to compete at the college level. And they have to do that at a place they think fits them best."

Finding new players who do think ISU is a good fit became McDermott's challenge in April, when he found himself having only a month to recruit several players to a university that was still largely a mystery to him. He's found some great fits, but also acknowledges that it's unrealistic under the circumstances to expect to fill out a full 13-scholarship roster for the upcoming season. "My challenge is to make myself be patient and understand that this is a marathon," he says. "We want to build a program that's going to be successful many, many years from now."

For having played the recruiting game so late, McDermott has been amazingly successful—something he credits in large part to ISU's already stellar reputation. Hilton Magic, he says, epitomizes the Cyclone basketball tradition.

"Iowa State is an easy product to sell," he says. "The fact that Iowa State has some of the best fans in the country is not a well-kept secret, and that's made it easier for us to make [recruiting] inroads in places where we haven't been involved all year. We're selling an opportunity to play in a great conference and to play in front of some of the best fans in the country and in an arena that has historically been difficult for opposing teams. We're [also] selling a family atmosphere that we're trying to build in our program.

"It's important that the young people who join our team are choosing Iowa State for more reasons than just Greg McDermott or one of my assistant coaches, but because they really truly believe the total package is a fit for them," McDermott adds. "And that's why we'll do a thorough job of selling what life at Iowa State will be like. That will help get them through a tough day somewhere down the road, because they're not always going to agree with everything I say or do. They're gonna need to look at themselves in the mirror and understand that they chose to come here for all the right reasons."

When players choose Iowa State for the love of Iowa State, McDermott says the on-court product will always be successful. "I know they're going to give 100 percent and play with passion and be proud of what the front of their jerseys say. If they do that, they'll be doing everything that the coaches and fans can ever ask of them."

As for next season? "We'll be a team that can defend and rebound," he says, "and always give ourselves a chance to win. Will we win them all? Probably not. But we'll represent the university in a way that will make the fans proud. And there are educated basketball fans at Iowa State, so they understand some of the challenges that we're faced with. They've supported this program through good times and bad for as long as I've been watching Iowa State basketball, and I would expect that would be the case regardless of how our season turns out."

It's hard to dispute that a lot of Iowans will be pulling for McDermott's Cyclones when the 2006-2007 season rolls around. As someone who has embraced friends, family, and the game of basketball from Denison to Dubuque, home for Greg McDermott isn't just Cascade or Cedar Falls: it's the state of Iowa, where moving 90 miles to Ames is just another of many homecomings.

And it's good to be home.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Sanderson is new ISU wrestling coach
After one of the most successful wrestling coaches in NCAA history announced his retirement in late March, Iowa State athletics director Jamie Pollard saw it only fit to replace him with the NCAA's most prolific wrestling student-athlete. Cael Sanderson (art and design '01) was named the new head wrestling coach at Iowa State on March 31, replacing Bobby Douglas, who is one of only three coaches nationallly in history to win more than 400 duals. Douglas will remain on the ISU staff as assistant athletics director while Sanderson takes the reins of the wrestling program. Sanderson was Douglas' most successful wrestler, posting an undefeated 159-0 record and winning four national titles before going on to win a gold medal in Athens at the 2004 Olympics.

Gymnastics team wins Big 12, advances to Super Six
Iowa State's gymnastics team captured its first Big 12 championship since 2000 by beating the Nebraska Cornhuskers, a team that had previously won seven of the nine Big 12 titles in conference history. Janet Anson finished second in the all-around at the conference meet and became the first Cyclone ever to garner Big 12 gymnast-of-the-year honors. Coach K.J. Kindler was named Big 12 Coach of the Year for the third year in a row. The Cyclones competed at the 2006 NCAA North Central Regionals held at Hilton Coliseum and eventually advanced to the Super Six at the NCAA championships for the first time in ISU history. The team finished sixth at the championships, held in Corvallis, Ore.

An Olympic moment
If you were one of the 50 million people watching the opening ceremonies of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games, odds are good that you saw Nawal El Moutawakel, the first African Olympic gold medalist and 1988 graduate of Iowa State. El Moutawakel carried the Olympic flag with seven other women, a flag-bearing first for the ceremonies.

Here's a sampling of upcoming events on the ISU campus and of alumni events across the country and around the world. Events are subject to change. For more information, visit the Alumni Association Web site: www.isualum.org or call toll-free 1-877-ISU-ALUM. Details on university events can be found at http://event.iastate.edu

JULY

1-7 Special Olympics National Games, ISU and Ames
4 University holiday
6 Cy's After Five: Wellman's Pub, Des Moines
7 Summer Session I ends
14-16 Iowa Games, ISU campus
15 Alumni Travel: Family Adventures in Costa Rica (through July 24)
18 Alumni Travel: Journey of the Czars (through July 31)
18 Alumni Travel: Alaska (through July 31)
26 Alumni Travel: Alumni College in Krakow, Poland (through Aug. 3)

AUGUST

1 Nominations due for Distinguished Achievement and Honorary Alumni Awards
3 Cy's After Five: Trophy's Sports Bar, Des Moines
4 Summer Session II ends
5 Summer commencement
7 Alumni Travel: Discovering Lake Michigan (through Aug. 14)
10-20 Iowa State Fair
11-12 ISUAA Board of Directors retreat
17-19 Destination Iowa State
21 Fall semester begins
23 Welcome Fest for ISU students
23 Ames Chamber/ISU Business After Hours, Reiman Gardens
24 Football Pep Rally
25 SAA/Cyclone Alley Welcome Back BBQ
27 ISU Alumni Association Day at the Iowa Cubs
31 Cyclone football vs. Toledo

SEPTEMBER

6 Alumni Travel: Romance of the Blue Danube (through Sept. 19)
7 Cy's After Five: Okoboji Bar and Grill, Johnston
8-9 **ISUAA Club Leadership Conference**
9 Cyclone football vs. UNLV
11 Fall Convocation
11-16 "Beat Iowa" Week
12 Alumni Travel: China's Ancient Silk Road (through Sept. 26)
14 Irvin Mayfield and the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra, Stephens
16 Cyclone football at Iowa
18 ISU Community Visit & Alumni Reception in Waterloo, Iowa
19 College of Engineering Career Fair, Hilton
20 Business/LAS Career Day
21 Vet Med Teaching Hospital Groundbreaking Ceremony
22 Annual Memorial Union Birthday Chili Supper
22-23 AIDA, Stephens
23 Cyclone football at Texas
23 Alumni Travel: French Riviera & Provence (through Oct. 5)
23 Alumni Travel: An Irish Classic (through Oct. 1)
25 Alumni Travel: Alumni College in Lake Constance – Germany, Austria & Switzerland (through Oct. 3)
27 SAA T-shirt Day
29 Alumni Travel: Galapagos (through Oct. 8)
29 **Legacy Migration**
29 College of Engineering Reunion Weekend
29 Cyclone Family Weekend (through Oct. 1)
30 Cyclone football vs. Northern Iowa
30 Department of Landscape Architecture Iowa ASLA/SSLA7 Parents Weekend Tailgate

OCTOBER

5 Cy's After Five: Hessen Haus, downtown Des Moines
6 Order of the Knoll Celebration, Hilton
7 Cyclone football vs. Nebraska
7 College of Engineering Alumni Tailgate
7 Agronomy Tailgate
8 Alumni Travel: Alumni College in Chianti, Italy (through Oct. 16)
11 Alumni Travel: Vietnam (through Oct. 26)
14 Cyclone football at Oklahoma
15-21 **Homecoming Week**
20 Cyclone Grill-Off, Pep Rally, ExCYtement in the Streets, Mass Campanile and fireworks
20 Honors & Awards Ceremony and Reception
20 ISUAA Board of Directors' fall meeting
20 RENT, Stephens
21 Homecoming tailgate and silent auction
21 Cyclone football vs. Texas Tech
21 Family of the Year Society Reunion
24 Ag Career Day
25 Haunted Iowa State program, ISU Cemetery
27 Alumni Travel: In the Wake of Lewis & Clark (through Nov. 2)
28 Cyclone football at Kansas State
29 San Jose Taiko, Stephens
30 ISU Community Visit & Alumni Reception in Muscatine, Iowa

BRUNNIER ART MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

- Weather in Art (August 22 - March 18)
- The Murals of Grant Wood and Christian Petersen (September 13 - November 27)

MORE 2006 ALUMNI TRAVEL TOURS

- Holiday Markets in Vienna & Salzburg (Dec. 4-12)

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By Gregory L. Geoffroy

Appreciating the true value of our 'One Community'

It is often said that you don't really appreciate the value of something until you lose it – or almost lose it. That certainly describes our experience with VEISHEA over the past two years.

We are truly blessed in Ames, because we have one of the best "town and gown" relationships of any university community in the nation. Ames has grown as Iowa State has grown, and Iowa State has been able to grow because of the wonderfully supportive community in which it exists. This is a symbiotic relationship of the best kind.

Visible examples of the benefits of this great relationship today include the Cy-Ride bus system, the Ames/ISU Ice Arena, and our ability – as one community – to host such important events as the Iowa Special Olympics Summer Games, the Iowa Games, and, this summer, the first-ever National Special Olympic Games, as well as Odyssey of the Mind World Finals and Destination Imagination. In addition, such wonderful university facilities and programs as the Reiman Gardens, University Museums, and Season at Stephens are significantly enhanced and expanded thanks to the very strong support they receive from community volunteers.

Since 1922, VEISHEA had been one of the centerpieces of the Ames/ISU "town and gown" relationship. Beginning in the late 1980s, however, growing problems with activities surrounding VEISHEA – not VEISHEA itself – began diverting attention away from the positive aspects of VEISHEA and its original purpose of showcasing the university, and created dangerous situations for students, visitors, community residents, and others. Then, in 2004, as a result of continuing and escalating problems, I suspended VEISHEA. It was time to step back and take a very serious and comprehensive look at the problems that had developed around VEISHEA, and, more importantly, the underlying causes for those problems.

"This was the most important VEISHEA in the 84-year history of this tradition, and our students proved that they were up to the challenge." Gregory L. Geoffroy, ISU President

It took a year, and the work of many university and community people on two groups – ISU students, faculty and staff, Ames residents, the business community, and university and city leaders – but it was well worth the effort. What we accomplished through that joint "town and gown" effort not only saved VEISHEA, it resulted in a series of recommendations and actions that address the differences and tensions that naturally exist between students and community residents, and which will serve to strengthen this "town and gown" relationship we value so highly.

One of the key recommendations from the Commission on Community Relations was to embrace "One Community" as our goal and ideal. In many ways, Ames and Iowa State have always been "one community" in spirit, but officially identifying it as an ideal, and adopting many of the excellent recommendations of the One Community Implementation Committee, have made an important statement about our intentions and our priorities. "One Community" has become the focal point of our "town and gown" relationship, and a beautiful mural, designed and installed at the entry to the College of Design last fall by our design students, now stands as a symbol and reminder of the importance of this ideal to Ames and to Iowa State University.

I am especially proud of the role that our students have taken in all of these efforts – from understanding why it was necessary to suspend VEISHEA to their active participation in studying the problems associated with VEISHEA, in their relationship with Ames residents, and especially for their tremendous efforts in developing a plan to save VEISHEA and then to organize one of the best VEISHEA celebrations ever this past April. This was the most important VEISHEA in the 84-year history of this tradition, and our students proved that they were up to the challenge.

I also want to thank the many faculty and staff, Ames residents, and ISU alumni and friends who attended and participated in VEISHEA this year. You and our students helped make VEISHEA 2006 a celebration to remember – for all the right reasons!

Sweet celebration

Some of Iowa's summer festivals are as corny as, well, Iowa sweet corn. The 26th annual Adel Sweet Corn Festival, held Aug. 13, 2005, attracted 10,000 people to the central Iowa town for a parade, live entertainment, food and craft vendors, and a 5K race – but mostly for the golden taste of sweet corn. Organizers report that between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., more than seven tons of hot, buttery sweet corn was given away free on the town square. Enjoying the summer harvest are the Mikkelsen sisters of Adel: Maddie, 8; Claire, 4; and Lauren, 6. The 2006 Adel Sweet Corn Festival will be on Aug. 12. PHOTO BY JIM HEEMSTRA

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