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## The Voice, Summer 2008: Volume 53, Issue 4

Dordt College

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# THE VOICE

DORDT COLLEGE

SUMMER 2008

VOLUME 53

NUMBER 4

“  
We learned  
how to think  
creatively  
about how  
to deal with  
problems  
related to  
health.”  
”



INSIDE

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Alumni and  
Parents Weekend  
dates are set



Anna Fedders (left) and Emily Hiemstra (right) assess children's hair, skin, eyes, and nutritional status.

## Nurses take their training abroad

Sally Jongsma

Five nursing students got a better sense of the many sides of nursing during a spring break trip to Haiti in March. Ranae Draayer, Anna Fedders, Emily Hiemstra, Jena Mouw, and Robin Van Zandbergen, all seniors in Dordt's nursing program, helped organize and staff the first NICL (Nurses Internationally Changing Lives) spring break service trip.

The five nurses traveled to Pignon, Haiti, in the central plateau region of the country, to spend a week working with missionaries JeanJean and Kristie Mompremier of United Christians International. They helped Kristie, a nurse, with nutrition clinics and first aid classes. Despite the initial culture shock that is inevitable when people of privilege immerse themselves in the lives of the "poorest of the poor," they quickly came to respect

and care for the cheerful and happy people who came to the mission compound for care.

"They were very grateful for the basic first aid information we tried to teach them," says Hiemstra. She and her classmates hope that some of what they were able to share will allow people, who already do not have enough money to feed themselves, to avoid having to pay for basic medical care. Medical care is available but people in the community cannot afford to make use of it, say the nurses.

"We answered a lot of questions. They were hungry for knowledge," Hiemstra adds.

The women spent three afternoons assisting with the nutrition clinics already set up by Kristie. On these days, 150-200 children came to be served a good meal, after which they were weighed and checked.

"There is a lot of neglect and abandonment, often because parents need to go elsewhere to find

work," says Fedders. Ten and twelve-year-olds are left to care for younger children. The median age in the country is seventeen. Almost all children have the distended bellies typical of bodies full of parasites; diarrhea and upset stomachs are common. The nurses passed out vitamins and medications they brought with them to treat these conditions. As she recalls the clinics, Van Zandbergen says she found it the best part of the week.

"It was a joy to work with the children. With joy and enthusiasm, they play soccer in bare feet among the rocks and thistles," she says. Clinics for the widows and widowers involved taking blood pressures, offering vitamins, and providing treatments for such things as parasites and scabies.

"The dirt is full of parasites and people are so poor that they make 'cookies' out of clay and

(Continued on page 2)

# Truly confident or simply smug

## Research grants fund summer studies

Several students will spend their summer doing research, thanks to grants received by their professors. Two students will work with **Dr. Doug Allen** under a grant from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. The project involves using satellite data, meteorological fields, and computer models to study the transport of various trace gases in the stratosphere, the layer of air from about 10-50 km above the Earth's surface. The sub-contract will provide stipends for Allen and students **Justin Krosschell** and **Jon Trueblood**. It also funds computer software and travel required for the research.



Allen

**Dr. Edwin Geels** received a second renewal of a grant from the National Science Foundation Northern Plains Undergraduate Research Center. Geels and sophomore **Mike Olthoff** will continue to study the use of small cell bees as a method for controlling the parasites and diseases of honeybees. For the project, Geels and Olthoff will manage hives and monitor parasites as well as conduct laboratory chemical analysis of wax, honey, and bees.

**Dr. Carl Fictorie** also received the second renewal of a grant from the National Science Foundation Northern Plains Undergraduate Research Center. He and two students, **Rachel Antvelink** and **David Christensen**, will continue to look for a catalyst from the byproducts of cellulytic biomass used to produce biodiesel fuel. Their goal is to minimize the need for external feedstocks or expensive custom catalysts.

## Adams updates found online

Drs. Charles and Pam Adams continue to make steady progress in recovering from a serious car accident on February 17. They have both moved to Quality Living Inc. in Omaha to continue rehabilitation. You can continue to read updates on the Caring Bridge website at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/charliepamadams>

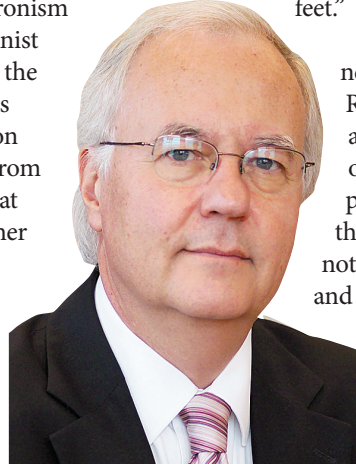
Dr. Carl E. Zylstra

Not long ago, I heard a preacher comment during a sermon: "You can see from this passage that Jesus really was Reformed." The congregation tittered. But the pastor was serious. It's not that he didn't understand the anachronism of describing Jesus as a Calvinist a full fifteen centuries before the birth of John Calvin. Nor was the pastor trying to impose on Jesus a creedal formulation from the Reformed confessions that wouldn't be written for another millennium and a half.

What the preacher intended to get across that day was the conviction that if anyone from any theological tradition—including Reformed—ever goes beyond the teachings of Jesus and the Word his Spirit inspired, then they've gone too far. Any worldview based on anything other than the revealed Word of God and the teaching of the Incarnate Word the Scripture reveals becomes a cultic conceit that should be pushed aside as fast as possible. On the other hand, a conviction that one's own position is humbly shaped by the Word and Spirit of our Living Lord can result in the kind of confidence that enables true service in the Savior's name. I like to think the latter is what the preacher I heard that day had in mind.

I must confess that folks sometimes accuse Reformed Christian colleges and scholars of an arrogant smugness that seems to fit the "If we believe in this or that way, then surely Jesus would have believed it too" attitude. There is a difference between being confident and being cocky. And I'm not sure Calvinists

have always been very good at making the distinction. I've heard, far more often than I would have wished, the accusation that "You Reformed people always seem to think that you have a corner on biblical worldview—and that the only way the rest of us Christians get to share in it is to grovel awhile at your feet."



Dr. Carl E. Zylstra

I'm equally concerned lest a newfound self-awareness leads Reformed academicians to abandon the biblical insights our tradition has developed and passed on to us. It seems to me that the solution to smugness is not despair over the convictions and principles of the past. The better approach is one that gladly and confidently shares the insights of our tradition so that we can be guided in the future as to what Jesus really did teach and what the Scriptures really do proclaim.

As Dordt College moves boldly into the second half of our first century, perhaps we can be forgiven the sometimes adolescent swagger that somehow our own beliefs and insights were always "the best on the block." But I also hope that no one expects us now to forgo the confidence that the insights we've developed during our first fifty years can serve us in good stead for the future, too. I even hope that more and more folks will be able to benefit from some of the lessons we had to learn and hone as we struggled to fashion a firmly biblically based academic institution in our corner of the Great Plains.

I've previously noted in this column the observation made a dozen years ago by an author that he was impressed that Dordt College had a mission statement for our radio station that was several times longer than

the Athanasian Creed. He didn't really mean that as a compliment. He believed that Dordt College was far too apt to rely on lengthy and involved statements of principle without understanding how those principles need to take form in daily life. I don't believe he was completely on track. Those statements of principle hammered out during the founding years of our college's history are still serving us well as we shape a high quality, faith-infused college for the future.

Yet the critic was right to this extent. It would be a shame were we to allow a pile of documents and multiple volumes of our history to create in us a smug satisfaction that somehow the Golden Age of biblical thought was ushered in by the founding of Dordt College. Should that sort of smugness ever take hold among us, the Lord has his ways of frustrating even our best efforts. As the Bible makes clear, God simply "will not share his glory with another"—even us.

I do hope that Dordt College and its supporting constituency always remain confident in carrying out the mission formulated in our documents. To the extent that God's Word does form and mold our thinking, we have a divine mandate to share those insights with coming generations that may be attracted to join our college—and also with those colleague institutions and scholars with whom we share our task. When we pursue our legitimate tasks with a truly God-given confidence, we'll be learning from others even as they will learn from us. And then, hopefully, we'll all be glad that we have learned together from the risen Christ we serve. Authentic confidence, without smugness, in the leading of the Spirit of Christ will help us make sure that Soli Deo Gloria remains more than just our college motto—and that all the glory truly will go to Him alone.

## Week shows another side of nursing

(Continued from page 1)  
water and salt to curb their hunger," says Mouw. The water, too, is contaminated. People must drink out of streams, where they wash and animals urinate and defecate. Although filtering systems are being set up in some areas, Pignon has no access to clean water.

"The week really changed my focus," says Mouw. "I came to realize that nursing isn't just about individual patients, but that there is a real community aspect to health." Fedders adds, "We didn't do much of the typical nursing things like giving shots, but we learned how to think creatively about how to deal with problems related to health."

"It opened our eyes to the many opportunities out there if you are willing to stretch yourself," says Van Zandbergen. "We used our skills in ways we wouldn't have and couldn't have thought of before."

Although the parasites the women treated will likely come back and although they couldn't solve the scarcity of food



Ranae Draayer weighs children who come to Pignon for the weekly nutrition clinic.

problem, the five Dordt seniors believe they did some good and they also were changed through the experience.

"People are so grateful for what they get and have such a sense of hope, despite circumstances that are difficult," says Hiemstra, who found herself looking at her own life differently.

"We are so consumer-oriented and materialistic," says Van Zandbergen, who says she almost feels guilty at times for having running water.

"It makes me feel less attached to 'stuff,'" says Fedders. "I feel like I don't need as many things and hope I will be more generous with what I have." She continues, "Lots of

people here are in better situations—they have plenty of food, clothing, and medical care, but they are not happy. We're spoiled," she says, adding how just the week before she was grumbling that her washing machine was not working quite right.

The five women expect to stay in contact with JeanJean and Kristie. Has it changed them in lasting ways?

"I'd like to think it will," says Fedders. She admits that it's hard to think outside of your own culture when you're immersed in it. But the memories of the full, rich singing and the joy on people's faces will not leave her soon. Neither will the distended bellies and the incredible poverty.

# Hoekstra brings leadership experience to a new position

A first interview with Dordt's new provost

Sally Jongsma

Dr. Erik Hoekstra describes his first six weeks back on campus as jumping into the deep end of a swimming pool—and mostly swimming, despite the volume of work that needs doing each spring at any institution.

Hoekstra began his duties as provost on March 1, almost two months earlier than first planned. As provost, Hoekstra is the chief academic officer at Dordt College, but he describes his role as one member of the Administrative team.

It's been an unusual spring on campus. Two of the three academic deans have been off campus. Dr. John Kok, dean of the humanities, is on leave, and Dr. Charles Adams, dean of the natural sciences, has been in the hospital since a serious car accident on February 17. (For more on the Adams's conditions go to [www.caringbridge.org/visit/charliepamadams](http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/charliepamadams).) A new Core Curriculum is poised to go into effect in the fall, requiring additional time to work out the details and to balance faculty loads and schedules. And several new faculty members needed to be hired.

Hoekstra is quick to express his appreciation for the many on campus that pitched in and took on additional responsibilities because of the unexpected convergence of events this spring. He also appreciates the assistance and advice that Dr. Rockne McCarthy has given him as he begins. Hoekstra thrives on tackling such challenges. As he talks, his energy and enthusiasm for the work shows—and never as strongly as when he talks about how he hopes to lead the campus community. That leadership is based on the servant leader model.

"We need to glorify God not just through the results of our organizations, but in how we run them," he says. "In my personal mission statement I've said that I want to help create organizations that amaze people and glorify God in the way they operate," he continues. He's tried to do that in the world of business and plans to work out of that perspective at Dordt College as well. In his experience, Christian organizations and non-profits, especially, have a predisposition to artificial harmony rather than productive conflict. Such an approach can pull an organization down rather than allow it to grow and develop, he says.

Hoekstra believes that collaboration, transparency, responsibility, and accountability are needed for organizational health. That conviction and his leadership style have been honed in the past eight years through his work as a Principal and Partner of Harbor Group, a holding company for six engineering and construction, industrial automation, and management consulting businesses. As a former board member at Northwestern College in Orange City, he helped set up a Center for Servant Leadership there. And servant leadership is the model he urged as an organizational management consultant for companies and organizations across the country.

Hoekstra points to I Corinthians 13 as a



Dr. Erik Hoekstra was named Dordt's first provost in January.

call to show love by doing what is in the best interest of others. For leaders, that means, in prayerful discernment, trying to understand how members of a community best work together for the benefit of both individuals and the organization—essentially, giving servant leadership.

"If you go to Barnes and Noble and look for books on organizational leadership, a third of them will be on that style of leadership," says Hoekstra. "The world is beginning to see what we know—that working in sync with the created order works best." He calls it leading as imagebearers.

Hoekstra agrees with Steven Covey, who points out in his book *Speed of Trust* that trust is a crucial component in leading. Trust is a dividend that allows an organization to get things done, and lack of trust is a tax that slows things down, according to Covey. Without trust, leaders and coworkers always have to be checking on each other and have less time to do good work. Hoekstra adds, "Sometimes trust breaks down, but then members of the community seek forgiveness of one another and work for healing as they go on."

Although Hoekstra has come most recently out of the business world and has helped many businesses adopt such a model, he believes it is a model for all organizations, including families, churches, schools, and service organizations. Leaders, parents, and teachers in a community help distribute responsibilities and hold people accountable.

"We are 'we,' not 'us' and 'them,'" says Hoekstra about the kind of environment needed to work in this way. "As a leader I need to extend trust, assuming that people act out of their best intentions. When something isn't going well, I need first to ask how my behavior may have created this."

That's his goal, but he also knows it's not an easy one to live up to. "Research shows that the most productive businesses and organizations are those with the happiest employees." He prays that under his leadership Dordt College will continue to be a productive institution.

## Dr. Erik Hoekstra: A brief profile

**As an undergraduate at Trinity Christian College, Dr. Erik Hoekstra majored in history and philosophy and intended to go to seminary—either that or get his Ph.D. and teach.**

"But when I graduated, I didn't feel that I could be a pastor without deeper life experiences than I'd had," he says. So he became a branch manager for a wholesale florist in Michigan. He began to feel called to business and enrolled in an MBA program at Western Michigan University. After receiving a Rotary Scholarship, he completed his MBA in the Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University.

Upon his return to the United States, Hoekstra spent four years as the chief operating officer at Eastern Floral in Grand Rapids—but academia continued to pull. When Eastern Floral was sold, he was hired to teach business at Dordt College.

Having grown up in the Christian Reformed Church, Hoekstra's parents always had told him he could go to college wherever he wanted, but they would help finance his education only if he went to Calvin College, Trinity Christian College, or Dordt College. When he saw Dordt's ad for a business professor and read "The Educational Task of Dordt College," he was impressed with its commitment to being an integrally Christian institution.

As a business professor, Hoekstra taught courses in marketing, entrepreneurship, ethics, and international business, as well as supervising an internship program and helping develop curriculum for emphases in human resources and public administration. During this time, he began a Ph.D. program at Iowa State

University in Organizational Learning and Human Resource Development. In 2000, he became a principal and partner with Harbor Group, serving as the CEO of Harbor Consulting Group, a strategic planning, human resources, and leadership consulting business.

Hoekstra completed his Ph.D. in 2003 and has continued to write about organizational leadership. He contributed to the book *The Manager as Change Agent* and collaborated on chapters for several edited volumes, among them "Changing the Way We Manage Change," "Critical Issues in HRD: A New Agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," "Improving Learning Transfer in Organization," "Delegating for Leader Development," "Leadership: Integrating the Public, Private, and Not-for-Profit sectors."

### Books that helped shape Hoekstra:

*First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers*

*Do Differently*

by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman

*Leadership Is an Art*

by Max Dupree  
*Servant as Leader*  
by Robert Greenleaf

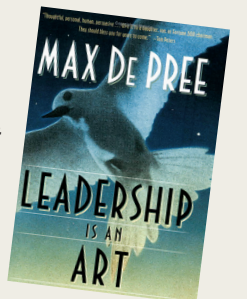
*The Fifth*

*Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*  
by Peter M. Senge

*The Five Temptations of a CEO* by Patrick Lencioni

*The Speed of Trust: The One Thing that Changes Everything* by Stephen M.R. Covey

*The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle* by James C. Hunter



# Equipped for a time like this

In third grade, my dream and sole purpose in life was to be a starter for the Chicago Bulls. I grew up on the south side of Chicago during The Dynasty—watching the great Jordan, Pippen, Kukoc, and Rodman—and I was sure I wanted to play basketball for the rest of my life.

I remember telling my sixth grade camp counselor that, although I believed in God and I knew that heaven would be amazing, I secretly didn't want Jesus to return because I had stuff I wanted to accomplish on this earth before being whisked away to another world.

I had big dreams for my life. God's plans are big too, just different.

Toward the end of my freshman basketball season in high school, I tore my ACL (knee ligament), but I figured I would be back for my sophomore season. The week before tryouts, instead of just signing my sports physical, my pediatrician heard a heart murmur that he hadn't heard before. I was devastated. I had open heart surgery on December 15, 2001. The procedure failed. A week in the hospital and dozens of specialists later, I was headed for my second open heart surgery and a new mechanical heart valve.

Still, my greatest concern was to get back on the basketball court as soon as possible. As the months went by and recovery progressed nicely, the possibility of playing in my junior year was looking bright—until, playing baseball with my brother, I tore my ACL again. Sitting in the hospital the night before my fifth surgery in one year, I was ready to quit. Basketball was out of the question. Looking back now, I know I was being melodramatic when I told my mom that I wasn't going to live through the surgery.

It may sound a bit cheesy, but God gave me a hug. I was a bit disappointed that I woke up after surgery the next morning, yet from that point on, I have had no doubt that God exists.

A second defining time in my life was the semester I spent on the Middle East Studies Program (MESP). I learned to love Middle Eastern culture and made many friends. One in particular was my host sister Heba, who had recently graduated from Cairo University with a degree in English Literature. We had incredible conversations about politics, religion, gender roles, television shows, girl stuff—we covered it all. She asked me about the inconsistencies she has seen in Christianity, and I asked her about the differences between the Islam she described and the Islam I had encountered on the street. As I tried to answer Heba's questions—questions that were never on any of my theology tests—I realized that just believing God exists was not the end of my spiritual journey.

In Cairo, I was able to serve at a Sisters of Charity orphanage in Mukattam or, as tourists call it, Garbage City. I will never forget the MESP program director telling us that he puts his food scraps in a sealed container and sharp objects in another container because a child likely will sort the trash. Seeing the poverty, walking the streets and seeing four, five, and six-year-olds sitting in piles of trash, sorting what could be reused and sold for food, my eyes

were opened and I was left with a sense of urgency to help *those* children. Not just children like them, but those who are suffering and dying now.

Our main task at the orphanage was to love the children, to hold as many as we could. Many times we would lay one child on each leg, have one child curled up in one arm, while scratching another child's back and making faces at two others on the floor. These children needed to feel a human touch. Sadly, most of them are not really orphans, but their families are too poor to feed them. Many infants go home once they are strong enough; handicapped children stay until the sisters can't care for them anymore.

One little boy has back spasms. Every muscle in his back tenses up when his senses are overstimulated; so, if a child screams or the lights flash or even if he gets really excited, his body contorts. One day after this had happened several times, I picked him up and held him as tight as I could—purely for selfish reasons. I just wanted to make it better so I didn't have to watch him suffer. I'd seen him wince from pain, but never cry. Even at such a young age he realized tears wouldn't bring comfort. But after I had been holding him for a bit, his little body relaxed and instead of bending away he bent towards me and sank into my arms, looking up at me with tears in his eyes. I felt awful for the pain he felt, but it seemed as though for a time his humanity was restored and he was allowed to be a child, crying because something hurt. This broke my heart. And although it may seem like the typical "I went to an orphanage and it changed my life" story, I'm convinced that when you see what real pain, real hopelessness, real joy looks like, you begin to realize what breaks the heart of Jesus.

I spoke at my high school graduation and reflected on the story of Esther. I talked about how God had put each of us in the class of 2004 for a specific purpose, that he blessed us with Christian education so that we could flourish. My thoughts were focused only on how God was equipping me for my life. But when I read that story of Esther again, I see God's hand at work in placing Esther in the position of queen and having Mordecai at the gate to intercept plans to murder the king. I found myself chuckling—the king

forgets he owes Mordecai his life until one evening when he decides to have the records of his kingdom read to him—which *happens* to be the night before Haman plans to have Mordecai executed. Really? It's not a coincidence that Esther was queen and that when she went to talk to King Xerxes about the plan to execute the Jews, he did not kill her, as he had done to his former wife in a demonstration of his power when she disobeyed him. God is not mentioned once in the book of Esther, but his hand is clearly at work.

It seems so obvious to me now that God didn't put Esther in the place he did for her own well-being. It's so easy to think that God has equipped us for a specific plan and that that plan is for me, my career, my relationships. But Esther's story is not that at all. She was placed in that position for such a time as this—not to be queen, but to save the Jews. It wasn't about Esther; it was about God's people.

My sixth grade faith was admittedly one-dimensional—God exists. Good. And he is on my team. Even better. But MESP awakened the spiritual reality that it's not about me, it's not that I choose God, but that he has equipped me to be a blessing to this world and to be part of his larger plan. My challenge

to you is to reflect on the very real ways God is working in your life. Perhaps it's through trials, where he is gaining your trust or piques your interest, perhaps there are major changes in your life and you are taking a completely different path than you had intended, or maybe God just wants your attention focused back on him.

I share my story with you not for pity or comparisons sake, but as an example of how God's hand is at work. I have no doubt that God gave me a passion for basketball so I could make it through a tough year. I have no doubt that God paved the way for me on MESP to open my heart to the marginalized. God's plans are extravagant, and although we don't know exactly what they are, I find it exciting to look out and see the very specific and unique gifts, talents, and even trials he is using to shape me and you and equip us for just such a time as this.

*We praise you for moving mountains. For not just setting the world like a clock and letting us go. Thank you for your constant presence. Thank you making us a part of your plan. Help us, Father, to look to you for guidance, to be patient when our plans aren't working out as we had hoped, and the logic of your plans surpasses our humanly wisdom. God, use us. We want to be a blessing to your world. Father,*

*I lift up a special prayer for those children in Garbage City, the sisters*

*who have dedicated their life to serving them, and the churches that faithfully support the charity. Father, give us a sense of urgency to be with those whose pain breaks the heart of Jesus. Show us these people and equip us to love them as you do. Father, in your son's name, we lift this prayer, our goals, our lives.*

*Amen.*

*Several Dordt College seniors lead chapel during their last semester on campus.*

*Emily Wierenga spoke earlier this spring. Emily majored in political studies with a minor in international affairs. In her four years at Dordt she has been challenged to live Christianity not as a label but as a lifestyle, questioning the structures of this world and struggling with inconsistencies, while finding hope in persistence and joy in community.*

*She will teach English in Korea next year.*



## Dordt Engineering students show senior projects

The Dordt College Engineering Department held its annual presentation of senior design projects on Wednesday, May 7.

The five projects demonstrated were:

**An Observatory Roof Automation Project** designed by Andy Schroedermeier, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Jesse Van Essen, Sioux Center. Sponsored by Dordt College.

**A Sorghum to Fuel Ethanol Fermentation System** designed by David Ellerie, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Peter Hondred, Sioux Center; Ben Lehman, Baldwin, Wisconsin; Andy Olthoff, Sioux Center. Sponsored by Dordt College, Vermeer Manufacturing, and the Iowa Energy Center.

**A Fuel Ethanol Distillation System**, designed by Josh Groen, Sioux Center; Dan Steenbergen, Red Deer, Alberta; Nathan Toenies, Randall, Minnesota; Daryl Visser, Burlington, Washington. Sponsored by Dordt College, Vermeer Manufacturing, and the Iowa Energy Center.

**An Auditorium Microphone Positioning System** designed by Scott Elders, Grandville, Michigan; and Brandon Wipf, Hitchcock, South Dakota. Sponsored by Dordt College.

**A "Teach a Man to Fish" Aquaponics System**, designed by Amanda Arkema, Pella, Iowa; Luke Herron, Anton, Colorado; Sarah Schaap, South Holland, Illinois; Joel Sikkema, Ridgetown, Ontario; and Jeremy Westra, Mount Vernon, Washington. Sponsored by Dordt College and Northwestern College of Orange City, Iowa.

These projects and projects from previous years may also be seen at [http://www.dordt.edu/academics/programs/engineering/senior\\_design/](http://www.dordt.edu/academics/programs/engineering/senior_design/)



Michelle Vis was one of four students from Dordt's education program who opted to do their student teaching in Rehoboth or Gallup, New Mexico.

# Student teachers learn and teach in the classrooms of Rehoboth

Julie Ooms

Dordt College's education majors have a choice to make before doing their student teaching: Will they do their student teaching locally, in schools near Sioux Center, or will they decide to do at least part of it off campus? Many student teachers choose to venture outside of northwest Iowa. And a few—this year, those few were Rebekah Oudman, Kim Beimers, Leesa Schmidt, and Michelle Vis—felt called to go a bit further outside their comfort zones to the schools in and around Rehoboth, New Mexico.

Student teachers who go to Rehoboth teach either at the Rehoboth Christian Schools or in the public school system in the nearby city of Gallup, according to education professor Cella Bosma.

"Most of the students, especially those in the public school system, come off the reservation. Many of them have had a completely different life experience than the student teachers," Bosma adds. "Student teaching at Rehoboth Christian and the area schools is definitely an experience outside

the Dordt 'bubble.' The student population there is much more diverse than in the Dordt area, poverty is a huge issue, and the tribal religions are still very strong in those areas." As they teach, Dordt student teachers like Oudman, Beimers, Schmidt, and Vis need to gain a sensitivity not only to different kinds of learners but different kinds of people. "Student teaching in Rehoboth helps students understand what people God's world is made up of," says Bosma.

"It was hard to relay the message to the students at Rehoboth that we truly cared about them, because the trend is for people to come for only a short time, serve the campus, and leave," says Beimers, who taught a multi-age fourth and fifth grade class at Rehoboth Christian. "In reality, that is what we did. We came for eight weeks, served the campus, and left. But I hope that my impact on those students was greater than that," she says.

Vis, who taught struggling readers in grades one through six at Rehoboth Christian, says, "There were tough times when I found out that some of the kids I taught didn't have beds to sleep in, or that

the kids who struggled the most didn't have parents who could help them or were willing to help them. That was probably the hardest thing." The four women came away from their time at Rehoboth, however, with a new perspective on the diversity of learners they are called to teach.

Bosma's hope is that teaching in the Rehoboth area is more than just an "experience" for student teachers. "I hope student teaching at Rehoboth helps these students to see that there's a diversity out there that teachers need to be sensitive to," she says. "College students—and all of us—need to understand that the world is not all about us. I hope these students were able to not just learn about their diverse students, but with them and from them."

The four women who student taught at Rehoboth this past spring certainly would say that they have done so. "I poured my heart into my student teaching because I truly had a love for the school and my students," Beimers says. As teachers and Christians, these four students were able to bless and be blessed by the students they taught, however briefly.

# MacMillan joins Bread for the World conference

Junior Laura MacMillan, an elementary education major from Elmhurst, Illinois, is passionate about caring for the creation. She's also an activist. As a sophomore, she started a campaign to reduce paper waste on campus. That got her involved with the Justice Matters Club, which focuses on social justice issues, and its daughter club, the Creation Care Club. Today she takes a leadership role in heightening awareness of waste and the good use of resources around campus.

"I'm also very supportive of social justice issues," she says, adding that Gen 300, "Calling, Task, and Culture," has given her an opportunity to pull together many things she's been doing and thinking about as she considers her responsibility as a citizen in

today's world. While she admits that sometimes talking about the problems of poverty and materialism and environmental care can be overwhelming, it's also convinced her even more strongly of the need to get involved.

That's what pushed her to apply for a scholarship to the Bread for the World Leadership Conference to be held in Washington, D.C., in June. From June 14-17, seventy-five people between the ages of



Laura MacMillan

seventeen and thirty-five will gather in the nation's capital to learn how to organize and empower people to work for justice, especially in relation to those who are hungry. Following the conference, participants will lobby members of Congress on issues relating to food and poverty.

"It's exciting and a little intimidating," MacMillan admits. But she believes that it is her responsibility to encourage her future students, as well as people in her church and community, to be active citizens. The best way to do that is to model it. Following the expense-paid opportunity to participate in the leadership conference, MacMillan will do advocacy work for Bread for the World for the next year.

# Students, alumni learn to ask the right questions about ag and biotechnology

Julie Ooms

The word “biotechnology” often conjures images and ideas that are not positive. Some might recall seeing cloned sheep on the news and worry that humans will be cloned next. Others envision couples in comfortably furnished doctors’ offices picking “designer genes” for their children out of glossy catalogues. And, to be sure, Christians and Dordt students—especially those who have taken Gen 300, “Calling, Task, and Culture”—alike have encountered the “dark side” of what humans could be capable of doing with biotechnology.

Agriculture Professor Duane Bajema and Biology Professor Tony Jelsma would argue, however, that this negative view of biotechnology focuses mainly on the extremes and doesn’t take into account all the benefits biotechnology has on our lives.

“Christians are called to develop creation and take care of what we’ve been given,” says Jelsma, who teaches biotechnology classes to students from a variety of majors—biology, business, and agriculture, to name three. Through the work of professors like Jelsma and Bajema, Dordt students are learning to be informed stewards of creation through their work with biotechnology. And some of these students, past and present, are using their knowledge to help change how Christians view both biotechnology and agriculture.

The first problem Christians run into when thinking about biotechnology is probably defining it. “It’s a weasel,” says Bajema, laughing, when asked to define it in layman’s terms. “It can mean a lot of different things, in many different areas.”

Jelsma agrees, and he describes biotechnology in a series of steps. “At the simplest level, biotechnology is manipulating living organisms for our purposes,” he says. “It could be as simple as planting a garden or farming crops or selectively breeding livestock for a certain trait.”

The next level involves modification, Jelsma continues. “One step up from simply manipulating is genetically modifying plants and animals. An example of this would be what’s called “Round-Up Ready” corn, which has a gene in it to make it resistant to Round-Up weed killer.”

And then there’s one more step: “Another layer of biotechnology, usually involving microorganisms like bacteria and yeast, involves using organisms as molecular machines to do things for humans. For example, yeast is used in the production of ethanol, and scientists have tried to modify bacteria to digest oil so they can be used to clean up oil spills.” Then he laughs. “The funny thing about the oil-digesting bacteria is that most of the time, the bacteria in the water can do a fine job on their own, without any biotechnology at all.”

Biotechnology clearly isn’t all about cloning and harmful genetic manipulation. A lot of the food we eat every day was produced with some kind of biotechnology, in fact. “Most of the corn you buy has been genetically modified in some way,” Jelsma says. But Christians need to be informed enough about biotechnology to be able to



“There’s nowhere else in the nation where students have the opportunity to witness and observe such cutting edge biotechnology in agriculture,” says agriculture professor Duane Bajema. Dr. Allan Kramer (’74) (left) gives students a tour of the work his company, Sioux Biochemical, does in this area.

ask the right questions, and discern when it’s going in the wrong direction.

“Pragmatism should not take over when we’re dealing with biotechnology,” Bajema says. “We can’t keep doing things with living organisms just because they make more economic sense; we have to remember that we’re dealing with living things.”

Jelsma agrees, and gives two considerations he thinks everyone involved in biotechnology needs to keep in mind. “With things like selective breeding, changes are gradual,” he says. “But with genetic manipulation, we see changes very quickly, in one generation instead of several. We need to always ask whether or not the environment can support this change.” His second consideration involves genetic diversity. “God created the world genetically diverse,” he says, “but when you’re breeding for the perfect cow, for example, you’re ignoring the created diversity of cows. We were created with diversity; why are we getting rid of it?”

When Christians study biotechnology, they are able to ask those kinds of questions, Jelsma and Bajema agree. However, Christians should not just ask questions about biotechnology—they also should be involved in it. Several Dordt students, from graduating classes ranging from 1985 to 2008, are working in or planning to work in agricultural



Dorene Vander Zwaag found that agriculture jobs include more than farming. She has worked for Trans Ova Genetics for nearly eighteen years.

biotechnology. Several of these alumni work at a Sioux Center-based company called Trans Ova Genetics. Trans Ova conducts research and helps its clients improve their herds of cattle through biotechnological processes like in vitro fertilization. (More information about Trans Ova Genetics, its goals and procedures, and the company’s views on animal care can be found online at [www.transova.com](http://www.transova.com).)

Dorene Vander Zwaag, a 1985 graduate who majored in ag business, has been working at Trans Ova in Sioux Center for eighteen years.

“I started as an embryologist, doing things like freezing and thawing cow embryos and traveling to bring them to farms. Now I’m a client service representative. I spend three-quarters of the day on the phone talking to potential clients, scheduling cows for in vitro fertilization, giving results, and helping them with questions.” Vander Zwaag likes her job very much. She says she started her years at Dordt as a social work major, but after a summer work-study job at the Dordt farm caring for animals decided she wanted a career with animals. “I remember taking agriculture classes with a lot of guys who knew they were going to graduate and go home to take over the family farm,” she says. “I didn’t have that option, but I quickly learned that there is much more to the agricultural world than just farming.” In 1989, she remembered a field trip she’d taken to Trans Ova, applied for a job there, and got it.

Vander Zwaag says that, if she didn’t have the background in science that she does, she’d be more wary of biotechnology, too “Because I know what goes on scientifically, I know it’s not scary or voodoo-ish; biotechnology is a way of using creation to help people add value and health to their livelihood.”

Three more Dordt graduates, Robyn Blankespoor Kelderman (’02), Jennifer Anema (’06) and Shawna Muilenburg

(’07) also work at Trans Ova. Kelderman enjoys her job, both because it is extremely interesting and intense and because it allows her to work part-time while raising her family. “I always liked the scientific side of agriculture,” she says, “and the work I do is very practical for being a mom.” She took a job at Trans Ova shortly after her son was born in 2005. Her job also involves in vitro fertilization for cattle.

While at Dordt, Kelderman started in the pre-veterinary program, but as she took more classes, Kelderman says, “I realized that there’s so much more to ag than just being a farmer or a veterinarian. There’s a science side, a business side, a teaching side—a huge variety.”

When asked how Christian stewardship of creation relates to her work, Kelderman emphasizes the need for an informed perspective. “The biggest thing I learned at Dordt about how to view biotechnology is that I need a well-rounded education so that I can form an informed, Christian perspective on what I do. And we need to always be aware that, whatever improvements and strides we make in this area, we’re called first to study and take care of what’s around us. We also need to remember that God is still in control of these things, not us.”

Another Dordt student—Robyn Van Wyk, a 2008 graduate—also plans to take a job at Trans Ova. She will be working in one of Trans Ova’s barns, caring for in vitro and cloned calves. Van Wyk says that while at Dordt, she’s learned how important it is to evaluate ideas in areas like biotechnology.

“In class, we were introduced to a lot of views and ideas about how agriculture can work,” she says. “As Christians, we need to evaluate these ideas instead of just accepting them because they’re new or because they’re common. I know I need to take a second look at the ag practices I see and evaluate how they fit in with being a steward of creation.”

Bajema’s description of biotechnology as a “weasel” still stands. It’s a difficult area, but one that needs the involvement of Christians.

“I think some people think Dordt, or Christians in general, are against biotechnology. We’re not, but that doesn’t mean we’re afraid to ask the questions others don’t want to ask,” says Jelsma. “Since we’re dealing with living things, there are extra concerns. If you build a bad bridge, you can always demolish it and start over. But when you alter something alive, the consequences last a lot longer. Then again, so do the benefits.”

Bajema and Jelsma agree that the impact biotechnology will have on the future of agriculture and other areas of life will be tremendous. It is because of that impact that Christians need to be involved. “We want our students to be willing to ask the questions others aren’t asking,” says Jelsma. “We need to plant people in industries who are grounded in the Word and know why they need to ask those questions.” And as Christians involved in biotechnology ask questions, they can help companies make sure they are not harming creation, but developing it and caring for it.

# Ag students receive an I-CASH grant

Jane Ver Steeg

Doing their homework was a rewarding experience for three Dordt agriculture majors, who were awarded an \$835 grant by the Iowa Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (I-CASH) to fund their class project.

Ben Werkhoven from Monroe, Washington; David Prins from Lacombe, Alberta; and Jon Van Keulen from Surrey, British Columbia; were partners in a group project for Dr. Duane Bajema, in which students pick a topic of interest to them, identify a problem or question, review background information, prepare a study proposal, and complete the project.

The trio selected dust explosions, an issue that has been in the news in Northwest Iowa following a grain elevator explosion. The students constructed a sealed chamber model, using powdered coffee creamer to illustrate how flash fires occur. Grain dust, like powdered creamer, is not especially flammable, but when grain is dumped into



Pictured with their model grain dust simulator are (from left) Ben Werkhoven, Jon Van Keulen, and David Prins.

a grain silo, some of the finer dust particles can remain suspended in air surrounded by oxygen. This mixture can be ignited by a spark, resulting in an explosion.

The group also created a safety handbook on dust explosions and has given a presentation on the topic to five high school agriculture classes.

Part of the assignment was to write a grant proposal for possible funding for the project. Bajema notes that students learn appropriate skills and gain valuable experience through assignments such as this. Receiving a grant validates the importance of their work, plus it gives them the resources to move forward with their creative ideas.

In funding the dust explosion project, the Iowa agency noted that the students presented an “excellent written application, which made good use of funds and ranked very well in categories of introduction, goals, methods, evaluation, and budget.”

They continued, “This is a refreshingly interesting project and quite different from what we usually get. As 17-19-year-old farm kids could be working at local elevators, it would be important for that group to learn about this hazard.” They noted that the model can be used repeatedly for demonstrations that “are attention-getters” and that would also be applicable beyond commercial agriculture, as farmers sometimes operate private elevators.

# Ag department is awarded a grant for a bioenergy demonstration project

Jane Ver Steeg

An agricultural research project to be conducted by Dordt College’s agriculture department, Practical Farmers of Iowa, and Marshalltown Community College has been awarded \$138,000 in grant funding from North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE).

“Bioenergy and Diversity from Sustainable Systems and Crops” was among fifteen proposals awarded full funding by NCR-SARE, out of 127 projects submitted.

The cooperative effort will fund side-by-side field comparisons at the Dordt College Agriculture Stewardship Center and the Midwest Center for Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture of Marshalltown Community College. Each crop site will be planted in replicated blocks with either a continuous-corn system or a three-year “gateway to sustainability” rotation of corn, soybeans, and winter/spring small grain/forage with legume underseeding. Student interns at each school (with faculty assistance) will document the environmental impact, energy, and economics of these systems and communicate results to classmates, farmers, and future farmers (FFA).

The Iowa Energy Center will offer technical expertise to interns and participate in field days and workshops at which farm-scale bioenergy options will be presented. The two college partner sites were chosen to give visibility to the project through field days, accessibility to agriculture students hoping to farm, and public media.



Chris Goedhart

The project is designed to demonstrate a basic cropping system that uses a fraction of the energy that continuously planting corn does with a net energy output that can be essentially the same and at the same time support a diversity of farm enterprises in a sustainable way.

The goal is to bring farmers, scientists, and other community members together to exchange information, acquire skills, and develop solutions for optimizing agricultural economic returns, sustaining environmental quality, and efficiently addressing global and national energy concerns.

In writing the proposal, Derrick Exner of Practical Farmers of Iowa says, “Farmers

want and need to know about 1) actions they can take that will make their own farms and communities more energy secure, and 2) how they can participate in bioenergy industries without sacrificing either the farm’s resource base or the range of enterprises that characterize diversified farms.”

This demonstration project will focus on the benefits of sustainable agricultural systems, such as highly positive energy balances and net reduction of atmospheric carbon, to address issues such as global warming and energy independence.

Dr. Chris Goedhart, agriculture department chairperson, said the project will also demonstrate currently available and near-term options like on-farm biodiesel processing, on-farm sorghum processing for ethanol, the efficacy of biofuel byproducts as livestock feeds, and, looking ahead, a variety of cellulosic crops compatible with sustainable farming systems.

While the field trials are at the core of the proposal, energy-related work in process at Dordt College will be incorporated into the educational outreach. Dr. Ethan Brue and engineering students at the college are currently developing farm-scale equipment for processing sweet sorghum and producing ethanol by fermentation/distillation.

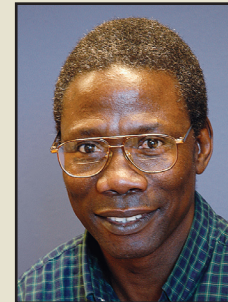
Dordt agriculture students will present their research to high school FFA and science classes on issues of agricultural sustainability, environmental quality, and enterprise diversity through the demonstration of integrated cropping systems for the production of bioenergy.

## Campus Capsules

### Campus pitches in for a truck

Dea Lieu graduated from Dordt College last spring and

returned to his home country of Ivory Coast and the family he’d left for four years to



Dea Lieu

pursue his education in the United States. Dea Lieu’s goal is to help people in his country learn new ways to farm so that they can better feed themselves and their families. His organization, Engaging the Fight against Poverty, is committed to showing poor farmers how to farm in a way that is more effective, more efficient, and more sustainable. He also wants to share his faith and finds people very open to the gospel. To do his work, he must travel to far flung villages across poor, rutted roads.

Two Dordt staff members, Ron Rynders and Rich Haan, traveled to Ivory Coast in January to visit Dea and saw his need for a pickup truck to do his work. Working through their church, First Christian Reformed Church in Sioux Center, and Partners Worldwide, they raised \$10,000 of the \$15,000 needed for Dea to purchase a pickup. At the end of the year, Rynders challenged the college community to help raise the last \$5000.

“I was completely amazed and humbled at the way some people responded,” says Rynders. “One student came in and wrote a check for \$20. Then another came in and laid a \$100 check on my desk.”

Many in the campus community contributed checks of \$50, \$100, even \$250. “We are so close that I dare to tell you that the pickup is nearly reality,” says Rynders. “We asked Dea to start looking in earnest, now that we’re this close, so that if he finds something good, he can buy it. Pray that he can locate a good vehicle at an affordable price.”

To learn more about Dea and his work go to [dealieu.blogspot.com](http://dealieu.blogspot.com).



# A SEMESTER IN EUROPE

## SPICE OFFERS AN UNFORGETTABLE SPIN THROUGH HISTORY

Story and photos by Mark Volkers

**F**inding the entrance is akin to uncovering the history you've come to see. In the mountainous region of Provence, France, is the *Musee de Desert*, the museum of the desert. It's not a literal desert. That's the term used to describe a barren land. A wilderness. It's an apt, one-word description for much of the Huguenot epoch in Protestant France in the seventeenth century.

The entrance to the *Musee* is deep inside an old, stone farmhouse with attached additions that have been built over the years. Arrows point visitors through ever smaller, narrower, darker corridors until at last they reach the reception desk. It's a quiet place, befitting the horrific history of this time in France's history. A self-guided tour lets visitors walk through the Edict of Nantes, when the French monarch Henri IV recognized Protestantism in 1598. The tour continues through the revocation of that edict in 1685 by Louis XIV, when Protestantism became illegal and the bloodshed began.

Through letters, paintings, artifacts, and journals, the suffering becomes real. Pastors were hunted down and imprisoned or killed. People were arrested for worshipping and having Calvinistic-style implements of worship. On display is a pulpit fashioned from wine barrels that can be quickly converted back to a barrel to escape notice from the king's men.

### 1. Tower of Constance

A short journey away from the *Musee* is the city of Aigues-Mortes. Students spending their semester with the Dordt-sponsored SPICE (Studies Program in Contemporary Europe) program move by bus from the *Musee* to the Tower of Constance.

At the *Musee*, students read of Marie Durand, a young Huguenot woman the authorities arrested



Zwolle is a charming town of canals, bicycles, cobblestone streets, and shops.

in 1730. Marie was imprisoned in the tower for thirty-eight years. All she had to do was recant her Protestant beliefs and she would be released.

She refused.

With that story fresh in their memories, students alight from the bus and climb the steps of the thirteenth century Tower of Constance (*Tour de Constance*). They stand where Marie stood for thirty-eight years. They look out the narrow slits in the stones that she looked through. And they touch the word she and her fellow prisoners etched into the stone: *Register* ("Resist" in patois).

### 2. Van Gogh

The Dordt-sponsored SPICE semester in Europe isn't just a brush with history. It's a tangible reliving of the events in Western Europe that make the West what it is and that make Christianity, as we know it, what it is today.

Not far from the tower in Aigues-Mortes is the charming city of Arles. Vincent Van Gogh lived here for many years, some years on his own, some in a mental hospital. Many of his most famous paintings were done in Arles.

One of them, the *Café Terrace on the Place du Forum*, was done on a narrow street by a city square.



The Café Terrace on the Place du Forum as it looks today and as Van Gogh painted it in 1888.



Avignon, France in 1309 became the home of the popes, who were fleeing the violent chaos of Rome. The Palais was built between 1335 and 1364 on a natural rocky outcrop at the northern edge of Avignon, overlooking the river Rhône.

SPICE students stand where Van Gogh placed his easel and take pictures of each other. A few days later these same students are in the Kröller-Müller Museum near Kampen, Holland. This museum contains dozens of original Van Gogh paintings, including the *Café Terrace on the Place du Forum*. Students study Van Gogh's art. They walk in his footsteps. They retrace history.

### 3. Living

SPICE students are matched with Dutch host families. Each student lives with a host Mom and Dad for the semester and becomes part of the family.

That includes having a bicycle.

Because fuel is expensive in Holland, parking is at a premium, and towns are easy to bicycle around, the vast majority of Dutch people take bikes to work and school. Each student is given a bicycle and joins the throngs of people on the morning commute. Zwolle, a lovely town of canals and steeples and cobblestone streets, has special traffic lanes with turn signals—just for cyclists. SPICE students leave their cozy Dutch homes in the morning, cycle to school, and cycle home again at the end of the day. There they do their homework, eat dinner with their family, join in family activities like birthday parties and reunions, church dinners

and volleyball games, and get together with new friends and other SPICE students.

### 4. Studies

The heart of the SPICE program takes place in Zwolle, Holland, at the *Gereformeerde Hogeschool* (GH). The GH, known in English as the Reformed University of Zwolle, has a close relationship to Dordt College. While there, SPICE students get to choose from four tracks of study: Dutch studies, Dutch language, International Business, and International Ministries.

Because travel from Holland to most Western European countries is relatively easy and inexpensive, students also have ample opportunities to see the great cities of Europe, experience hundreds of years of history, gain a global perspective as part of their education, and make international contacts that can benefit them for years to come.

### 5. Ministry

More than a thousand miles to the East, students who opt for the International Ministry Track of studies are spending eight weeks in Kiev, Ukraine.

It's still Europe ... but a whole different part. This is Eastern Europe. Post-communist Europe.

steps in the caves. With candle in hand, students join Orthodox Ukrainians as they walk through the narrow caverns with barely a whisper, praying before the icons, looking at the bones of those ancient ascetics and meditating on their own faith.

It's a far cry from the inside of a North American Evangelical Church or a Sunday School class, but students soon realize that this ancient faith is part of the "holy Catholic Church" they talk about every time they recite the Apostle's Creed.

And so they learn from the Orthodox. And the "strange" becomes less strange. Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise, founder of Kiev and protector of the Orthodox in the eleventh century, now becomes part of a student's lexicon, along with names like Saint Augustine or Abraham Kuyper.

### 6. A Cave in the Desert

Back in Provence, France, in the mountains above the Tower of Constance, SPICE students explore yet another cave.

This one was not for Orthodox ascetics but for Huguenot Christians hungry to worship together, no matter what the cost.

During the time of religious persecution, Huguenots would wander here into the "desert," two by two to avoid arousing the monarch's suspicion. They would enter this large cave tucked into a remote valley. They would preach. They would pray. They would sing.

SPICE students, on a quest to uncover this history in Southern France, move into the cave and sing. The Romanian students sing in Hungarian. The Dutch professors sing in Dutch. The North Americans sing in English. And God understands them all.

Being away from home for a semester is its own form of the desert, but that's where the greatest growth takes place. And that's the beauty of the SPICE program. The semester is perfectly structured so that worlds are enlarged. Rich understanding of God's Kingdom is gained. History becomes real. The world becomes a bit smaller and lasting friendships are forged.

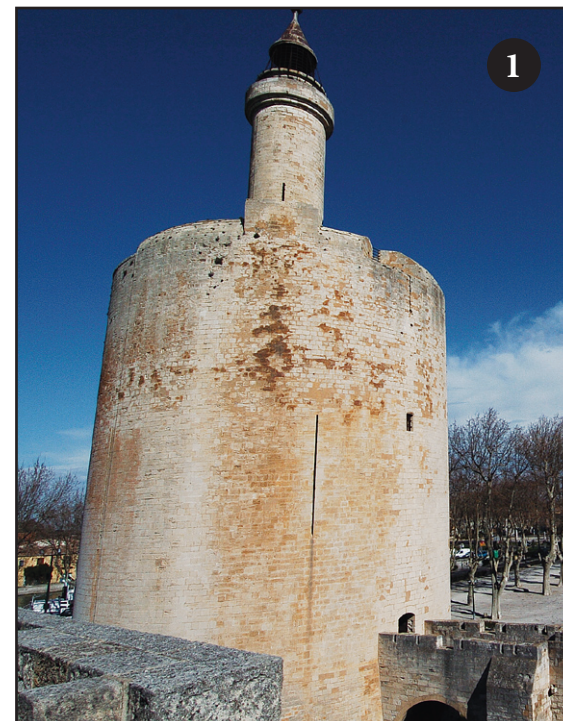
Students who uncover this treasure agree that "SPICE" is the right name for something that adds this much flavor to a student's life.



Classes at the Gereformeerde Hogeschool (GH) in Zwolle are taught in English. Dutch students can choose from four tracks of study: nursing, education, social work, or theology and religion.



Kiev Monastery: SPICE students who choose the International Ministries Track spend eight weeks in Ukraine, exploring Orthodox Christianity and post-communist Eastern Europe.



Tower of Constance: Marie Durand spent 38 years in this tower during the reign of Louis XIV because of her Protestant beliefs.

### About the program

**T**he SPICE Program has been a Dordt College Off-Campus Program since 1983.

**Who attends:** About fifteen Dordt students and a handful of students from other colleges enroll in SPICE each year. This year students came from six other colleges.

**What it costs:** \$13,380 (US) – subject to change based on Euro/US\$ exchange rate. The program fee includes tuition, fees, room and board, I.S.I.C. card, program related excursions—including an eight-day trip to Aix-en-Provence, a bicycle for use during the program, and transportation to and from Amsterdam Schiphol airport. Airfare to/from the Netherlands is not included in the program fee.

**Who to contact:** Corinne Hentges, corinneh@dordt.edu, coordinator of off-campus programs or check out [http://www.dordt.edu/academics/programs/off\\_campus/spice/](http://www.dordt.edu/academics/programs/off_campus/spice/)

**Where it happens:** The Reformed University, a mid-sized university in Zwolle, is the host institution for the program. Students live in homes with Dutch families. Zwolle is a city of 115,000 with several types of universities, colleges, and high schools. It provides services for many neighboring communities. It is located about 120 kilometers from Amsterdam.

## Kevin Timmer becomes a doctor

Engineering professor Kevin Timmer successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in April at Iowa State University. Timmer's research adds to the science of how carbon converts to gas during biomass gasification.

"Gasification likely will be part of our energy future," says Timmer.

Gasification is a high temperature process that can be used to convert plant and animal material into liquid and gaseous fuels.

It can also be the first step in making bio-renewable plastics.

Although gasification has been around for a long time, it is only recently getting attention as a commercial technology due to concerns over climate change, the cost of foreign oil, and Middle East instability. Biomass has the potential to be a renewable, carbon-neutral source of energy and chemicals. Timmer's research focused on carbon conversion during biomass gasification in hopes of making the process more efficient.

"Gasification has some advantages over fermentation, the process used in ethanol production. One big advantage is that you can use any plant or animal material," says Timmer. In a time of increasing demand for corn and grain for both food and energy, the ability to use other biomass sources could become even more important. Gasification, along with cellulosic fermentation, could take some pressure off the high demand for corn.

An ongoing challenge for gasification is that it produces a dirty gas that needs cleaning—gas that contains pieces of charcoal, which is rich in carbon and other contaminants. Improving the carbon conversion efficiency will yield cleaner gas, less waste, and contribute to a better energy balance.

Timmer developed a methodology that allowed him to better understand the carbon conversion process. That methodology is currently being used by other researchers at Iowa State University as they investigate the gasification characteristics of various types of biomass including switch grass and wood chips. The results of his research are reported in his dissertation, "Carbon conversion during bubbling fluidized bed gasifications of biomass."

With his doctorate behind him, Timmer will team with Dr. Ethan Brue to conduct biomass-to-energy fermentation and gasification projects on campus.



Kevin Timmer

## Schelhaas's passion lives on

Sally Jongsma

It's pretty important that you enjoy your work if you are to stick with one job for your whole career," says English Professor David Schelhaas. He should know. He has spent his entire professional career teaching, and he has enjoyed it. Schelhaas, who attended Dordt College for two years when it was a junior college, began teaching high school English right out of college and spent the past twenty years teaching English at Dordt College.

"I like what I teach, and I like people," says Schelhaas.

Something else made teaching a good match for Schelhaas—his passion for life and learning.

"I'm interested in the world I live in and care quite a lot about what happens in it," he says, tracing that tendency back to an extended family that thrived on discussion. That propels him to start, join in, and vigorously encourage his students as they discuss issues and ideas in the literature they are reading and that they face in the lives they live.

It's a trait that former students remember well. Renee Van Groningen wrote, "When I first entered your class of 'EnviroEnglish' my freshman year, I had no idea what I was getting into. Little did I know that that class would be the beginning of my life-long quest to seek justice in this world and at the same time find beauty in the art of words."

"Professor Schelhaas made me the teacher that I am today," wrote Jill Eerfmeijer. "He made me a lover of words. He gave me the tools I needed to build real relationships with my students and then showed me how to use them by building a relationship with me. He inspired me to create lessons that fill minds and hearts instead of just pages and time. He taught me to teach with passion and conviction because he taught with passion and conviction."

Schelhaas's colleagues appreciate the same traits. "Rarely a day goes by when he doesn't say something unbearably witty. And no matter how outraged he may be, over some kind of injustice, political or



David Schelhaas

otherwise, he is always human when he stops and talks, a wonderful chemistry of passionate outrage, compassion, insight, and wit," says colleague Dr. Mary Dengler.

But while passion inspires and engages, it alone is not enough to make a good teacher. It needs to be grounded in knowledge that gets students excited about learning and teaching. Schelhaas himself loves learning.

"When I first looked into coming back to Dordt to teach, I occasionally got advice that it would be difficult to teach alongside people who had formerly been my professors," says Dr. Leah Zuidema. "These well-intentioned advisors didn't know the Dordt English department, and they clearly didn't know Dave. A few weeks ago, I was teaching some of Flannery O'Connor's short stories. I mentioned to Dave that I was revisiting some of the notes I'd taken the first time I discussed these stories, as a student in his English 200 class. We ended up talking about a paper he had written about 'Parker's Back,' about an article that I'd read about the piece, about why we taught these stories, and about the discussions we would have in each of our English 200 classes in the week ahead. It

was a chance to circle back and see what had stuck from years ago, as well as to keep moving together down the teaching road. That's what I really appreciate about Dave: In his teaching he also continues to be a learner, and he welcomes the rest of us to join him in the fun."

"Part of the blessing of teaching at Dordt College is to be in an environment where colleagues help you be engaged professionally and where you can publish," Schelhaas says. He believes that to "stay where you are" is not only a travesty but a poor model for students that leads to poor teaching.

Schelhaas knows he'll miss the kind of energizing discussions that happen when he opens up literary texts with his students, discussions in which they all learn something about life. While not all of his students caught his passion, many did and for that he's grateful.

Sharla Derksen Kattenberg remembers the especially beautiful day her teaching methods class studied Robert Frost's poem, "Nothing Gold Can Stay": "He read the poem to us, then had us go outside and examine all the plants that were, at that very moment, gold. I was shocked to find out there were so many. Every spring, now, I take special note of the multitudes of golden plants and think of Robert Frost's poem. And I feel regret when the gold, this 'hardest hue to hold,' changes rapidly to summer's green."

Schelhaas's years of teaching experience also were passed on to his students. In the retirement tributes by former students solicited by his colleagues, students wrote about how his encouragement had made them more confident teachers, how his advice to befriend troublesome students was some of the best advice they'd received, and how much they still used many of the practical tips he offered.

Wayne Dykstra sums up what many English teachers taught by Schelhaas feel. "David Schelhaas oozed a passion for literature and, I am sure, has propelled and inspired many to go into the trenches and attempt to be the teacher he has been for so many years."

## FACULTY NOTES

**Dr. Mary Dengler**, professor of English, was a keynote speaker at the Lexington Christian Academy's Cultivating Inquiry Conference 2008: The Global Schoolhouse. This conference was held in Lexington, Massachusetts, on April 11 and 12. Dengler presented a paper titled: *This Matter of Calling: The Connection between Worldview and Scholarship*.

Dengler also took four Kuyper Scholars, freshmen Meredith Crilly, Matt Gerrellts, Rachel Koopmans, and Robert Minto, to the Kuyper Conference "Civil Society and Sphere Sovereignty," held at Princeton Theological Seminary from April 17 to 19. They also were accompanied by **Dr. Roger Henderson**, philosophy, and **Dr. Keith Sewell**, history.

**Professor Ed Starkenburg** of Dordt's education department served on a state accreditation review team of the teacher education program at Wartburg College

of Waverly, Iowa, in early April. This is Starkenburg's ninth assignment to an evaluation team for the Iowa Department of Education.

**Dr. Jonathan Warner**, professor of economics at Dordt College, has been awarded grant funding for a research proposal submitted to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). Warner and project director John Gorlorwulu, a professor of economics at George Fox University, were awarded a grant of \$9,700 to fund research on the topic, "The Nature and Consequences of Weak Financial Markets in Post-Conflict Countries: The Liberian Case."

Warner also gave a presentation on the Hawarden Scrip Plan at the Day of Learning at Northwestern College in Orange City on April 9.

*The Reckoning*, a documentary film on the Dutch resistance in World War II

based on **Dr. James C. Schaap's** *Things We Couldn't Say* and for which Schaap wrote the original script, was featured at Sioux City's grand old Orpheum Theater as part of Tolerance Week, an annual event in Sioux City. Schaap also lectured on "dejudification," the plan by which the Germans sought to rid the Netherlands and all of Europe of its Jewish population. The week-long celebrations concluded with a Shabbat at the Sioux City synagogue, a service attended by a number of Dordt faculty, many of whom were part of the 1991 Conference on Suffering and Survival held on Dordt's campus.

Schaap continued his tradition of attending and speaking at the Calvin Festival of Faith and Learning. His story "January Thaw" appeared in the February *Perspectives*. You can hear mp3 downloadable readings of Schaap's stories on his blog, [Siouxlander.blogspot.com](http://Siouxlander.blogspot.com)

# Theatre arts will miss Schelhaas's imprint

Sally Jongsma

Jeri Schelhaas always has been a teacher. As a young girl, she would play school with whoever she could round up. And she always played the role of teacher. The only time she even thought about becoming anything else was when she dreamed about being an actress for a brief spell while at Dordt College. But opportunities for students at small Christian colleges weren't there in theater in the sixties, and she soon returned to her original goal. She has not regretted that choice, and over the years she has found an amazingly varied array of opportunities. She has taught elementary, high school, and college students, and she has found that teaching cycles blend well with family life. Teaching also gave her the opportunity to read, write, and perform—all of the things she enjoys most.

At Dordt for the past twenty years, Schelhaas has taught both part-time and full-time in the English, theater, communication, and general education programs. She often filled in for others on leave but was always more than a fill-in. Pressed to pick a favorite area, she chooses theater.

She attributes her interest in theater to her mother who, unlike most women born around the turn of the century, graduated from high school. Her mother thrived on participating in "Declamatory Contests" and plays, retelling those experiences with



Jeri Schelhaas

such enthusiasm that Schelhaas couldn't help but share her mother's excitement. In high school, she became involved in plays and participated in state speech contests, for which Iowa was known in the middle of the century. At Dordt, she regularly had major roles in theater productions. As a high school teacher, she led forensics teams and coached students to excel in speech contests and debates.

"Students learn so much from speech," she says. "Confidence, thinking skills, how

to research."

Her favorite course has been "Fundamentals of Acting," the introductory course for theater majors. She's enjoyed working with students who have focused primarily on the outward expression of acting, helping them find the motivation and inner life of their character and make it believable. "Doing character analysis is great fun," she says.

Schelhaas is just as enthusiastic about helping her students think about theater from a Reformed kingdom perspective. She challenges them to think about the contribution theater can make to culture, how it can ask questions of an audience, help influence the choices they make, and give them fresh and unforgettable ways to look at the world.

"So many students have benefitted from her guidance in both theater classes and in productions," says Dr. Teresa Ter Haar. "Jeri has been a thoughtful teacher, encouraging her students to understand what it means to be a Christian and a theater artist. She is passionate and has always pushed her students to see and feel more deeply what theater can provide to a broken world."

One of the things Schelhaas likes most about theater is that "everybody needs everybody." "It's a collaborative art," she says. Those with minor roles or behind-the-scenes roles can make or break the production just as much as those with leads. Everyone needs affirmation and

encouragement and all have to value each others' contributions, she continues.

That approach to her work has earned her respect and appreciation.

"One thing that she has always taught me is to believe in myself and always push myself to greater goals," says senior Melissa Schans. "She challenges all of her students to always reach for their goals."

Her colleagues have deep appreciation for her, too, and nominated her for the Gold Medallion Award she received this year from Region V of the American College Theatre Festival.

"Jeri is creative, always trying to think of innovative ways to present the production's subject," says costumer Sue Blom.

"Jeri throws everything she has into the productions she directs and raises those participating in the production to unbelievable levels of excellence. The numerous ACTF awards and nominations prove Jeri's great skill in directing and her passion for theater. She bubbles over with enthusiasm for her craft and generates wonderful ideas for future endeavors," says Professor April Hubbard. "Students, faculty, and staff in the theatre department and college-wide appreciate her devotion to serving Christ through her teaching and production work. I have had the honor of working with her and learning from her example how to work tirelessly, inspire students, and give the glory to God at all times!"

# Weidenaar ends his second career

Sally Jongsma

Bernie Weidenaar does not hesitate to say that teaching is harder than he expected.

"Any transition takes effort, but this one was more of a challenge than I figured on," he says with his signature wry grin. Six years ago Weidenaar moved from industry to teaching. He had spent the first thirty-six years of his professional life in the chemical industry, much of it in sales and marketing.

"Fortunately, I had a lifetime of experience to draw on," he says, recalling the first couple of years of teaching. Even the many marketing presentations he made did not give him the level of angst he felt each time he entered the classroom those first months. Six years later, he smiles and says, "Now that it's feeling comfortable, maybe I shouldn't quit."

But despite his classroom learning curve, Weidenaar jumped right in with contributions to the department, to students, to the college, and to the community.

"Bernie brought a number of creative ideas to the table for strengthening our business programs," says Dr. Sherri Lantinga, Weidenaar's dean. He helped explore a joint construction management program with a local community college; he emphasized the need for an international business program; and as the chair of the Institutional Planning Committee for two years, he pushed administrators to focus on growth potential.

Weidenaar's years of business experience provided him with stories enjoyed by both his colleagues and his students. And anyone



Bernie Weidenaar

in the business department who hears expressions such as "at the end of the day," or "I hate it when that happens," or getting in "deep weeds" immediately will smile and think of Weidenaar. In anticipation of his retirement the department dubbed March "The Month of the Bernster" and posted a range of humorous photos and comments about him, including the following list:

#### A Few of the Things We Like About The Bernster...

His passion for business (and especially the chemical business).

His extensive business experience and marketing expertise.

His willingness to serve whenever asked: in the department, college, church and community.

His knowledge of planes and flying and his willingness to start a flying club at Dordt.

His innate ability to determine what will get people into "deep weeds."

His "I hate it when that happens!" expression.

His willingness to accept the more-or-less thankless job of department chair

His lovely wife Marilyn!

His extensive knowledge about (yes, we might even say love affair with) furlfural.

His hat (which he should wear more often).

His support of the arts (theater, painting, etc.).

His good nature when beaten like a drum with something such as The Month of the Bernster.

His desire to work with students when he could have retired.

His willingness to cook us burgers at the end-of-year senior's party (but DON'T touch his grill!).

His leadership at our department meetings.

His willingness to spring for just about anything. (Is this guy really Dutch?)

Lantinga adds words of appreciation: "Bernie is also a man of compassion and generosity who happily reaches out to those in need, from giving guest lectures to proctoring a colleague's test to checking in with hurting people on faculty and staff." And, this time, Weidenaar really does plan to retire.

## FACULTY NOTES

In April, **Dr. Leah Zuidema**, professor of English, presented a paper titled "Understanding Participation in Online Genres: Accounting for the Role of Technologies" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in New Orleans.

Zuidema's chapter titled "Parawork" appears in *Handbook of Research on Virtual Workplaces and the New Nature of Business Practices* (eds. Pavel Zemliansky & Kirk St. Amant; published 2008 by IGI Global). Parawork is a concept Zuidema developed to help think about how to organize informal spaces and activities that support people in their professional development. The chapter introduces and illustrates the concept and explores some of its practical implications.

**Dr. Delmar Vander Zee**, professor of biology, served as an external reviewer for the biology department program review at Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Vander Zee spent two days on campus after which he presented his report.

**Dr. Thomas Wolthuis**, professor of theology, has given regular presentations on how to read Scripture for a monthly Bible study at First Christian Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa. He gave a similar presentation at Landsmeer Ridge Retirement Home in Orange City.

**Dr. Doug Allen's** paper "Earth's Other Moon: An Exercise in Computational Dynamics" has been accepted for publication in the *American Journal of Physics* and will appear sometime between June and September 2008.

# 2008 Spring sports wrap up

**Mike Byker**

*Sports information director*

The baseball team finished the year with a 13-22 record and a 10-14 Great Plains Athletic Conference record. The Defenders ended one game short of making the GPAC post-season tournament.

The team boasted a .301 batting average and had a 5.74 earned run average. Dordt was led in hitting by Chris Liebhart's .383 batting average in 60 at-bats. The senior played first base for the Defenders much of the second half of the season after he was unable to be a regular starting pitcher because of an elbow injury in 2007. Travis De Jong closed his career with a .382 batting average and left his mark on the all-time record books with 120 hits, ranking fourth, and fifth all-time runs batted in with 73. He was fifth with 382 at-bats in his four seasons. De Jong also ranks second all-time in doubles with 29 and fifth all-time in total bases with 180.

Travis Feekes made a dramatic improvement from his freshman year with a .352 batting average and 38 hits, with ten stolen bases. Junior Dillon Peters continued his steady play with 39 base hits and already ranks in the top ten for career at-bats, hits, and singles, with 335, 106 and 88 respectively. Jed Bennett had 14 hits in 45 at-bats for a .311 batting average, and Bobby Lutke batted .309 with 34 base hits. Josh Bowers narrowly missed the .300 mark with a .298 batting average and a team-high three homeruns.

Bryan Diemer was the win leader on the mound with a 4-1 record and a 5.06 earned run average while Patrick Sinnema pitched 44 innings with a 3.89 earned run average and a 2-4 record with a team high 27 strikeouts. Alex Jansen and Daryl Visser were 3-3 and 3-2 respectively in capping their four-year careers, and Chris Liebhart appeared in eight games. Jansen was a reliable starter during his four seasons with 158 innings logged, and Liebhart had 146 innings pitched with 102 strikeouts which ranks him tenth all-time, despite being limited for a year and a half.

DeJong was named to the all-GPAC second team while Feekes, Liebhart, Evan Pheneger, Peters, and Diemer all earned honorable mention.

## Golf

The golf season ended in the NAIA Region III championships. The Defenders recorded a two-day total of 630 for third place in the seven-team field, ending the season ranked third in Region III.

The Defenders carded a 311-319 in the two-day event and were led by Jared Rempel's third-place total of 150 (73-77). This marked the third year in a row the Defenders qualified for the Regional meet, and it was their best finish. They qualified for the event with a second-place finish at the GPAC championships with a 613.

Dordt was led by Rempel's season low average of 75.44. Collin Broekhuis and Jason Kroese also ended the year with sub-80 averages, with Broekhuis at 78.79 and Kroese at 79. Jordan Janz and Matt Zwart both spent the season hovering around the 80 mark and ended the year



Chris Liebhart ended his career as a first baseman, after already earning a spot in the record book for his pitching. An injury last year kept him from pitching this year, but still allowed him to earn a .383 batting average.

at 80.25 and 81.46 respectively. Zwart and Kroese were both seniors.

The Defenders established a two-day low score record of 590 at the Central Dutch Classic hosted in Oskaloosa, Iowa. They placed second at the Midland Lutheran Invite, and their second place finish at the GPAC was their best finish since the formation of the GPAC in 2000-2001.

## Softball

The softball season ended with a 5-33 record. The Defenders were led by Becca Hengeveld's .333 batting average and team-high three triples and 42 base hits. The sophomore also had a team high 19 runs scored. Amber Soodsma and Sarah Seymour, a pair of freshmen, had 27 and 25 hits and seven and eight doubles respectively. Seymour had three homeruns and led the team in runs batted in with 16.

The Defender pitching staff leaned heavily on Amber Soodsma and Sarah Visser with 92 and 88 1/3 innings pitched respectively. Soodsma had a 4.18 earned run average, with a team high 90 strikeouts. Visser led the team with three wins and struck out 78 batters.

Hengeveld and Seymour both claimed GPAC honorable mention from the conference coaches.



Becca Hengeveld

## Men's Tennis

The men's tennis team completed its regular season with a pair of losses in Nebraska to conference rivals Nebraska Wesleyan and Hastings.

The Defenders, fighting injuries all season, finished 5-11 overall and 2-5 in the league, despite a makeshift lineup that had players playing at higher positions than anticipated at the beginning of the season.

Jake Compaan managed a 9-7 overall record at #1 singles and was 9-7 in doubles play including 4-3 in GPAC play. Tim Walstra, playing with a bad wrist most of the season, went 9-3 overall and 4-3 in the GPAC. He was 7-5 in doubles play and 4-3 in conference play. Joel

Wiersma earned a 5-10 overall record and a 3-4 record in the GPAC while Ryan Haan was 4-10 overall and 6-8 in doubles play. Christopher Castellanos, a freshman, was 6-10 in singles play. Lance Nieuwsma missed much of the year with a knee injury, and Ben Boekeloo, Dordt's number one singles player in 2007, missed the season with a shoulder injury.

## Women's Tennis

The women's tennis season ended on Friday, May 2, in a 5-4 loss to Concordia in the NAIA Region III semifinals. The Defenders had beaten Concordia the week before to help secure a first place tie in the GPAC regular season standings and a co-championship with Nebraska Wesleyan.

The Defenders finished the year with a 7-1 GPAC record and

stood 8-9 overall. 2008 marked the fourth straight year the Defenders advanced to the NAIA Regional tournament. Alanna Dake played most of the season at #1 singles and #1 doubles, compiling a 9-8 overall record in singles play and an 11-6 doubles record. Betsy Borr was 9-1 in doubles play this season while compiling an 8-2 record at #2 singles. Borr and Dake teamed at doubles most of the season.

Steph Helmus capped a fine season with an overall record of 15-2, splitting time between #3 singles and #2 singles and #1 doubles and #2 doubles. Helmus was 10-7 in doubles play. Sandra Buesselmann played a limited schedule, focusing on the conference matches, compiling a 7-2 singles mark and an 8-2 doubles mark at #4 and #3 respectively. Melanie De Young reached double digits in singles play with a 10-7 record and was 4-5 in doubles matches.

## Track and Field

At press time the track and field team was preparing for the NAIA national meet. Jen Kempers qualified for the national meet in the 3000-meter steeplechase, 1500 meters, 5000 meters and met the provisional standard in the 800 meters and the high jump. She also qualified in the 4 x 800 meter relay team with Sierra Zomer, Joy Horstman and Tami Wieringa.

Kempers earned individual honors during the season, being named the outstanding female performer at the Sioux City Relays and at the GPAC championships in early May. She also was named the Hauff Mid-America Sports/GPAC Women's Outdoor Track and Field Athlete-of-the-Year. Kempers accounted for 28 Dordt College points at the Great Plains Athletic Conference championship. The 2006 NAIA national champion in the steeplechase and runner-up in 2007, she won the steeplechase at the 2008 conference meet and claimed second in the 800 and 5000 meter races. Kempers also scored points in the high jump with a seventh place finish. All totaled, Kempers has met either the automatic or provisional qualifying standard for the NAIA national

meet in the 800, 1500, 5000, steeplechase, high jump and 4 x 800 meter relay.

Kempers took third place in the 800 meters at the NAIA national indoor track and field meet earlier this spring and was a part of a 4 x 800 meter relay team that also took home

third place from the meet in Johnson City, Tennessee. She is the first Dordt College track athlete to win the yearly honor from the GPAC.



Jen Kempers

# Uncle Ron says farewell to Dordt

Julie Ooms

In 1990, Ron Rynders heard about an opening for Director of Admissions at Dordt College and decided to apply. He didn't get the job—it went to Quentin Van Essen, who still holds the position—but he did take Van Essen's vacated position as Director of Placement and Planning. Though the title has changed over the years to Director of Career Services, Rynders—or "Uncle Ron," as he's known among students—has been counseling and guiding Dordt students toward their vocations for eighteen years.

Rynders' present office is a snug, square room complete with a couch and coffee table topped with a cloth runner. From his doorway, one can see most of the offices in Student Services, as well as three walls of shelves lined with books aimed at students who are writing resumes, preparing to take their GREs or LSATs or MCATs, or scoping out possible careers. Rynders has loaned many a Dordt student a book or three from those shelves; they usually remember to give them back on time. There's also a shelf filled, oddly enough, with board games. Those board games are part of what Rynders calls the "avuncular" spirit, or the spirit of being "like an uncle," which he hopes he has been able to convey to students during his years here.

"Having come here at forty-five, I was at the age of most students' parents, or



Ron Rynders

their uncles. I could reach students that way—I could be a 'safe spot' for them when they really, really needed it," Rynders says. "I hope I was able to give students academic hope and that I helped them esteem themselves more." Rynders has helped guide students through their college years, from their first days at Dordt with his involvement in the peer counseling program during orientation until they've graduated.

Students' difficulties haven't changed

much over the years he's been at Dordt, Rynders says. "I think technology and expenses and clothing styles and how many piercings kids have change, but the challenges are pretty much constant." He's seen a lot of students come into Dordt with the wrong assumptions, and he's worked to help them discard those assumptions and truly figure out what they're meant to do upon graduation.

"Left to themselves, many students make the assumption that college is all about freedom and independence, but it's just like any other epoch of life. You still need discipline." Many of his "victorious" moments, as he calls them, occurred when he helped students take responsibility for their studies and their lives, and he says he's very hopeful about today's students.

"This generation has extra problems," he says, "like temptations on the internet, raunchy movies, video games—the world has changed. But along with that is a rise in the level of sainthood, I think. We have more spiritually mature students at Dordt than we did before."

Rynders hopes that, after he's left Dordt, the college continues to attend to the avuncular. "We have a wonderful foundation," he says. "We've got strong Christian and academic pillars and sturdy walls, and a good roof over our heads. Who will hang the pictures? Where do the curtains come in?" Rynders is passing that task on to someone else.

**Distinguished Scholar awards are given to seven incoming freshmen each year.** Recipients of this \$10,000 award must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.75 and a minimum ACT score of 30 or minimum SAT score of 1320. As part of the selection process, each applicant is also asked to write an essay. The awards are renewable for an additional three consecutive years if the recipient maintains a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50. This year's group is unusual in that all are men, and all but one are majoring in engineering.

**Daniel Baas**

Dakota Christian High School  
Corsica, South Dakota  
Engineering

**Jason Friend**

Sunnyside Christian High School  
Zillah, Washington  
Engineering

**Michael Gorter**

Unity Christian High School  
Sioux Center, Iowa  
Business Administration

**Joshua Pearson**

Atwater Cosmos Grove City  
High School  
Grove City, Minnesota  
Engineering

**William Sorensen**

Home schooled  
Cologne, Minnesota  
Engineering

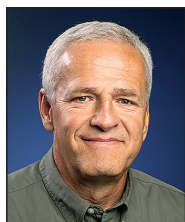
**Nicholas Van Ee**

Central Wisconsin Christian  
High School  
Fox Lake, Wisconsin  
Engineering

**Nathanael Vruwink**

Unity Christian High School  
Hudsonville, Michigan  
Engineering

## EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES : July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008



*Pictured left to right, top to bottom*

**10 YEAR**

Glenn Bouma

Director of the Recreation Center /Campus Events Coordinator

Shirley Folkerts

Adjunct Business Administration Instructor

Helena Geels

Art Gallery Assistant

Barb Hoekstra

Director for Student Learning Assessment and Coordinator of Instruction

Sherri Lantinga

Dean of the Social Sciences and Professor of Psychology

John Slegers

KDCR News Director

Mark Tazelaar

Professor of Philosophy

Tom Van Den Bosch

Admissions Counselor, Volleyball Coach

**15 YEAR**

Ingrid Mulder

Library Reference Desk Assistant

Curtis Taylor

Director of Planning, Special Assistant to the President

Sheryl Taylor

Director of Library Services

Eldon Vander Berg

Maintenance/Custodian

Wilma Vander Berg

Custodian/Housekeeping

**20 YEAR**

Pam De Jong

Director of the Academic Skills Center

Pat Pollema

Executive Secretary to the Vice President for College Advancement

Barb Schaap

Scholarship and Grants Coordinator

**25 YEAR**

Calvin Jongsma

Professor of Mathematics

Don King

Associate Professor of Political Studies

**30 YEAR**

Duane Bajema

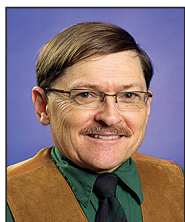
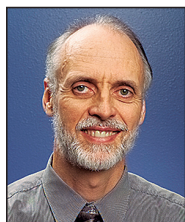
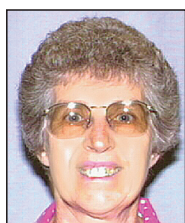
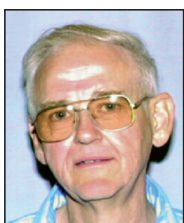
Professor of Agriculture

Fred Haan

Director of Purchasing and Copy Center Services

Rick Vander Berg

Athletic Director



# Alumni council holds its spring meeting

## Wes Fopma

As I put these thoughts down, I'm wondering if spring will ever arrive in northwest Iowa. I have a feeling we're going to proceed right to summertime. It's been an especially cool—and snowy—spring this year.

Despite the weather, the Alumni Council had a productive meeting in early April. This year we returned to having two meetings of the Alumni Council, and both meetings were well attended. Highlights of the spring meeting include firming up our plans for a fall Alumni Weekend, awarding Alumni Association scholarships to three juniors, and making changes in how we will be awarding the Distinguished Alumni Award.

## Alumni Weekend

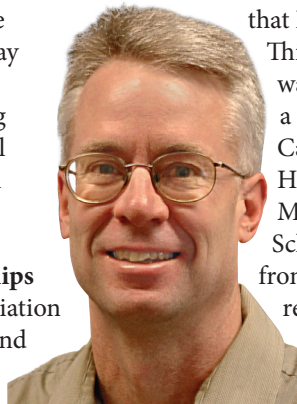
As noted in the last *Voice*, Alumni Weekend will be held Friday and Saturday, September 26 and 27. Please put these dates on your calendar. We hope to see many of you then. The weekend will begin with an Alumni Business Connections breakfast, followed by a 5 or 10K run, an outdoor Kid's Carnival, the Alumni Tailgate Party prior to the football game, and a battle of the bands competition. The highlights of

the day will be the second home varsity football game on Saturday afternoon and a concert for the whole family featuring "Dueling Pianos" on Saturday night. We'll send more detailed information later in the summer.

## Alumni Association Scholarships

Each year the Alumni Association awards one \$2000 scholarship and two \$1500 scholarships to encourage excellence among students in their academic work and to encourage personal and spiritual development. By means of these scholarships, the Alumni Association also demonstrates its strong support of Dordt College's perspective. To be considered for a Dordt College Alumni Scholarship an applicant must have a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.25, complete an application form, and have a Dordt College faculty member complete a personal character reference.

After the applicant pool was narrowed to seven candidates, the Alumni Council interviewed the remaining applicants. This task is always one of the Alumni Council's favorite activities, because it allows them to see and talk firsthand with the best students



Wes Fopma

that Dordt College has to offer.

This year the \$2000 scholarship was awarded to Lynn Edwards, a psychology major from Cannon Falls, Minnesota. Elaine Hannink, an English major from Modesto, California, and Emily Schoenfelder, a nursing major from Dimock, South Dakota, received the \$1500 awards.

In addition to these upperclass scholarships, the admissions office awards nineteen \$1000 Alumni Association scholarships to incoming freshmen. Award winners come from each geographic region in which we have an Alumni Council representative. Funds for all alumni association scholarships are raised each spring when student callers contact alumni for contributions to the scholarship fund.

## Distinguished Alumni Award

Between 1992 and 2006, the Alumni Association recognized one individual each year with its Distinguished Alumni Award. The recipients distinguished themselves by giving evidence of living out a reformational worldview and by demonstrating exemplary service to the

community and the world. But noting that there are so many encouraging stories to tell, the Alumni Council has decided that beginning in 2009, they will recognize one Distinguished Alumni Award winner from each of the three academic divisions of the college. Those divisions are currently humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. You can find a list of the departments under each of these divisions at [www.dordt.edu/offices/academic\\_affairs/academic\\_governance.shtml](http://www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs/academic_governance.shtml).

The alumni office and Alumni Council would like to thank Rodney Lamfers ('95) of Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Faith (Rylaarsdam, '96) Rietveld of Bellflower, California; Heidi (Visscher, '88) Sikkema of Bradenton, Florida; Laryn Bakker ('98) of Hyattsville, Maryland; and Elizabeth (Van Oord, '96) van der Wier of Beamsville, Ontario; for their years of service to the Alumni Council. If you see one of these individuals, please thank him or her as well. We are currently looking for people to replace these retirees in their geographic areas. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested in serving on the Alumni Council please contact me at (712) 722-6028 or at [wfopma@dordt.edu](mailto:wfopma@dordt.edu).

## ALUMNI NOTES

**Darlene (Sybesma, '61)** Van Den Berg died on March 3, 2008, in Medford, Oregon. Following two years at Dordt College, she earned a B.A. degree in education from Calvin College. She taught elementary students at schools in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Utah, and Oregon. She married David Van Den Berg in 1964 and raised a son, Mike, and daughter, Kris, who also attended Dordt. Darlene played the piano for worship services in her church for more than thirty years, and she also taught many piano students. Sacred choral music was a lifelong interest. She sang in the Rogue Valley Chorale for almost thirty years, traveling to Europe with the Chorale twice to sing concerts. She also loved gardening, sewing pine needle baskets, reading, and RV travel.

Pastor **Dale Claerbout** ('67) published his first book, "God's Covenant with The Creation: A Theology for Ecology." It confronts nature-grace theology with a creation-covenant interpretation of Genesis. The book is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). Claerbout lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is a minister in the Presbyterian Church, USA.

**Randall Van Zee** ('74), who once finished a race across the United States despite a broken pelvis, died from injuries he suffered when a car struck his bike near his home on April 4, 2008. Van Zee had been riding for fifteen years—about 1,000 miles a week, 50,000 miles a year.

Relatives said Van Zee always biked for others: to raise money for wheelchairs overseas or for a variety of medical causes. Van Zee was a state vocational rehabilitation counselor and last year won a governor's excellence award for job performance. Van Zee graduated with a social work degree and later earned a master's in counseling from Boston University.

**Robert Ross** ('75) serves on the Code Development Committee of the International Energy Code of the International Codes Council. Ross, who lives in Austin, Texas, represents the National Association of Home Builders in the code development process.



Twenty-two members of the class of 1958 came to campus on May 16-17 to celebrate their 50th Reunion. Alumni from California, Michigan, Montana, Arizona, Minnesota, and Iowa enjoyed tours of campus and Sioux Center. At Friday evening's banquet, alumni were presented with a medallion and heard from Dr. Doug Ribbens, a professor at Dordt College in 1958, Dr. John Hulst, former president of Dordt College, and Dr. Carl Zylstra, current president of Dordt College. On Saturday morning, they ended the weekend with a celebratory chapel service where Rev. James Lont, their graduation speaker, from Holland, Michigan, brought the meditation. Front row left: James Schaper, Mardelle (Bakker) Werkman, Theresa (Jouwstra) Tinklenborg, Marilyn (Jansen) Brummel, Connie (Ledeboer) Berghuis, Evelyn (Graves) Bootsma (Row 2) Bud Vis, Stella (Dahm) Vis, Andrew Brummel, Diane (Duistermars) Marra, Warren Marra (Row 3) Nellie (Huisman) Van Donge, Christine (Posthuma) Walhof, Cornie Rylaarsdam, Nelson Vander Pol, Abel Vander Woude, (Row 4) LeRoy Talsma, Roger De Stigter, Gene Van Stedum, Eldon Vander Berg, Fred Walhof, and Wilson Haarsma.

**Jon Ahrenholz** ('79) is a supervisor at the Puget Sound Blood Center Donation Clinic.

**Bob Sytsma** ('79) is a partner in the accounting firm of Varner, Sytsma, and Herndon ([www.vshcpa.com](http://www.vshcpa.com)) located in Bellingham, Washington. Bob has worked in public practice since graduating. He attended classes at Golden Gate University Graduate School of Taxation and earned the Accredited in Business Valuation (ABV) credential granted by the AICPA. He is an active member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Washington State Society of Certified Public Accountants, and

the Business Valuation and Litigation Support Services Section of the AICPA.

**Scott Soodsma** ('82), who coached both the Unity Christian (Hudsonville, Michigan) boys and girls varsity basketball teams this season, was named the Class B boys coach of the year by The Associated Press.

Former Cal State-Stanislaus head coach **Cindy Nikkel** ('87) joined the Central College (Pella, Iowa) staff as an assistant volleyball coach. Nikkel was the volleyball program director at Ripon (California) Christian High School from 1987-98, leading her team to runner-up state finishes

twice and earning coach-of-the-year honors five times. Nikkel was head coach at NCAA Division II Cal State-Stanislaus from 1998-2004. The squad's 19-13 record in 2002 set a school mark for most season wins. She received an NCAA Sportsmanship Award in 2000. Since moving to Pella with her family, Nikkel has served as eighth grade coach at Pella Christian and also coached an AAU team. She is an experienced camp and clinic instructor.

Edward and **Marlene (Kuizenga, '86)** Hoetmer's daughter Yanise Elisabeth was born on May 31, 2003, in Haiti, and arrived home in Canada on October 28, 2005. Nadege Rose, born March 12, 2005, in Haiti, arrived on December 5, 2007.

Rich and **Sandra (De Jager, '87)** Kwant announce the birth of Terri Lynn on March 16. She joins Martin, Samuel, Cassandra, Heidi, Valerie, and Nathan.

**Heather Bouwman** (ex'87) has had her first novel, a middle-grade children's novel, published. *The Remarkable and Very True Story of Lucy and Snowcap* will be available in bookstores in September 2008. Heather and her family live in St. Paul, Minnesota.

State Bank and Trust of Fargo, North Dakota, has appointed **Carmen Lodewyk** ('90) as a document imaging officer.

**Tim** ('90) and **Vonda (Vander Pol, '90) Brands** announce the birth of Madelyn Grace on April 23, 2008. They live in Bloomington, Minnesota.

**Mark Geels** ('91) of EFS Group has been included in Consumers' Research Council of America's 2008 edition of the "Guide to America's Top Financial Planners." The selection is based on a system that awards points for education, years in practice, and affiliations with professional associations and organizations. Consumers' Research Council of America is an independent research firm based in Washington, D.C., that evaluates professional services throughout the country.



▲ Dale ('91) and Kathy (Van Hofwegen, '93) Wubben welcomed their fourth child, Alex Dale, on August 28, 2007. He joins Kaiden (5), Hailey (4), and Devin (18 months). They thank God for blessing them with four healthy children.

John ('92) and Janeen (Ybema, '92) Klompier welcomed Abigail Jane on June 17, 2007. She joins Ethan, (6), Anneke (4) and Evan (2). They live in Zeeland, Michigan.

Jerry ('93) and Melanie Van Grouw announce the birth of Kate Louise on December 14, 2007. She joins twins Andrew and Julianna.

Paul and Robyn (Bosma, ex'95) Hamstra welcomed Calvin Martin on January 10, 2007. Calvin joined Jonathan (6) and Miriam (4).



▲ Lynn (Verhoef, '95) and Kevin Roberts announce the birth and adoption of Natalie Joy. "Natalie was born into our arms on March 8, 2007, in Denver, Colorado."

Laura (Kuiper, '95) and Steve Slings had their first child, Sofia Joy, on December 20, 2007.

Donavon ('95) and Diane (Schinkel, '96) DeJong announce the birth of Levi Henry, born on November 29, 2007, in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Levi joined big sister Myah four days before her third birthday.

Terry and Jennifer (Meinders, '96) Thorington announce the birth of Carletta Lynn on March 24, 2008, in Des Moines, Iowa. She joins Isaac (2).

Shane and Joy (Veenstra, '96) Scholten welcomed Ethan Shane on January 10, 2008. They live in Pella, Iowa.

Corlin ('96) and Rachael (Visser, ex '98) Feikema were blessed with a daughter, Marissa Marie, on February 18, 2008. Erica (6) and Cody (3) welcomed her home.

Scott ('97) and Stacey Zylstra announce the birth of Adyson Joy on February 29, 2008, in Sioux Center. Big sisters are Tara (5), and MyKayla (3).

Todd and Gena (Koning, '98) Bloemendaal announce the arrival of Koen Matthew on March 27, 2008.

Josh ('98) and Shawn (Hoksbergen, '98) Visser announce the birth of Sylvie Jane, born on November 29, 2007, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Sylvie joins Jacob (5) and Anna (3).

Izzy ('98) and Kim (Weeks, '98) Huygen welcomed Naomi Kimberly on March 9, 2008. The Huygens live in Edmonton, Alberta.

Mitch ('99) and Kay (Kleinjan, '99) Shooks announce the birth of Josie Anne on February 15, 2008, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Josie joins big sister Clara (2).

Alissa (Beckering, ex '99) and Tim Stuive announce the birth of Nathan Dean and Ella Shermae on December 24, 2007, in Holland, Michigan.

Micah ('00) and Kelly (Van Arendonk, '00) Nikkel announce the birth of Chloe Grace on February 17, 2008, in Pella, Iowa. Chloe was welcomed by Erica (6), and Luke (4).

## Taylor helps trigger talk

It's been a labor of love for Bob Taylor ('99) and his partners at Passenger Productions. The "Trigger" videos they created were released recently by Zondervan.

The Trigger videos are just that—short videos to trigger conversations in youth groups or classrooms about difficult issues young people encounter in their lives or in the lives of those around them. Some topics push teens to talk about the church, their faith, their relationships, the Spirit. Some point to difficult issues like cutting, extramarital sex, pornography, and bulimia.

"We wanted to create something that would reach kids like we were in high school, sometimes struggling with their place in church, not particularly interested in youth groups as we knew them," says Taylor.

Passenger Productions is a video production company based in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It's made up of five people with Dordt College connections: Joe Hubers (ex '01), who attended Dordt for only a year because Dordt did not have a digital media major at that time; Darin Vander Well ('03), a biology major; Todd Montsma, a current resident director; and Seth Dekkenga, a grandson of emeritus communication professor Martin Dekkenga.

The series of short, thought-provoking videos creates an opportunity for leaders or teachers to engage young

people. They do not tell them what to talk about or ask specific questions. It is not a curriculum to plug in, let run, and follow up with a couple of questions.

"They're more like movies without an ending," Taylor says. He describes the DVDs as tools to help leaders as they walk beside

those they work with—resources to help them not only deal with the tough issues in their lives but also to see the healing and hope Christ brings.

"Leaders are very important in this process," says Taylor. They need to understand the young people they work with and know what they are thinking about and dealing with.

"We would like to help ministries that do not have the budget to hire good video work," say Taylor and Montsma.

Serving others is a strong motivator for all of those involved in Passenger Productions. The group has produced one documentary, "Riding With Ghosts" which tells the story of some Lakota men and their struggles living in the world of the white man.

They continue to believe that media is the loudest voice in today's culture, so Taylor says they take seriously something he learned from Bob Briner's book *Roaring Lambs*—that Christians need to make good art not just for Christians but to be a salt and light in the world and to give a voice to the voiceless.



Bob Taylor



Todd Montsma

Derrek James was born to Amy (Van Dam, '00) and Corwin Runia on November 19, 2007, in Sioux Falls South Dakota. "Derrek was our little miracle who touched our lives with great joy for twenty-two days. Jesus called him home on December 11, 2007."

Alisa (Feenstra, '00) and Ross Boonstra ('00) announce the birth of Chloe Anneke on April 5, 2008, in Edina, Minnesota.

Cheryl Wierda ('00) and Joel Kuyvenhoven were married on March 10, 2007. They live in Kelowna, British Columbia.

Kimberly (Punt, '01) and Charles De Berg ('01) announce the birth of Cayden Charles on January 27, 2008, in Willmar, Minnesota. Big sister Kara (2) welcomes her new playmate! The De Bergs live in the country outside of Prinsburg, Minnesota. Charles works for Fagen Engineering in Granite Falls, and Kimberly taught piano lessons.

Kent ('01) and Sandee (Alsum, '01) Hoksbergen live in Randolph, Wisconsin, and where Kent is the agronomy manager at the Grand River Coop in Markesan. Clay James, was born on February 12, 2008, a brother to Cole (2).

Ben and Renae (Vander Stelt, '01) Bieri announce the birth of Jacob Thomas on March 17, 2008. He joins big sister Avery.

Dylan ('01) and April Haak announce the birth of Trevor Vaughn on April 6, 2008, in Richland, Washington.

Jaron ('02) and Anne (Schelling, '01) Vande

Hoef announce the birth of Micah John on March 10, 2008. Jaron is an electrical engineer at Interstates in Sioux Center, and Anne is a first-grade teacher at the Netherlands Reformed Christian School in Rock Valley. They also have two daughters, Aleksa (6), and Leah (3).

Kim (De Groot, '01) and Luke Darling announce the birth of Brianna Dawn, born on February 14, 2008. "Our Heavenly Father welcomed her into his loving arms shortly after her birth. She is loved and missed by her parents and big brother Logan (2)."

Kris ('02) and Janna (Holwerda, '02) Hulstein had a baby boy, Brandon Thomas, on April 8, 2008.

Thomas ('02) and Amber (Hoogland, '02) De Jong announce the birth of Jaidyn Marie on April 11, 2007, in Greeley, Colorado.

Michelle (Gruppen, '02) and Kyle Sytsma announce the birth of Benjamin William on January 14, 2008, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Kyle is a network administrator at Great Lakes Computer. Following maternity leave, Michelle finished the school year teaching full-time at Calvin Christian High School in Grandville, Michigan, where she also coaches junior varsity softball and assists with varsity girls' basketball. Next year she plans to teach part-time. In 2005, Michelle helped to open a seasonal ice cream shop called Sundaes in the Heights in Grand Rapids. She manages the shop during the summer months.

Karoline (Dockter, '02) and Carl Bootsma

announce the birth of Carson Peter on July 22, 2007 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Ryan ('02) and Laura De Koekoek were married on August 4, 2007. They live in Lombard, Illinois.

Brian and Reanna (de Haan, '02) Bergman announce the birth of Hudson John on January 1, 2008. They live in Hanford, California.

Scott ('02) and Sara (Van Essen, '03) Van Grouw announce the birth of Nicole Marie on April 15, 2008. She was welcomed home by big brother Jamin (2).

Josiah Murphy ('03) writes, "I've been keeping busy in Ohio since returning from China. Initially, I was employed in the insurance industry, but I've found very fulfilling positions in two organizations: my days are spent as office manager and program coordinator for C-Print captionists and ASL interpreters at the Youngstown Community Center for the Deaf; my nights are spent as an EMT-B with the Damascus Volunteer Fire Department."

Laura (Cowherd, '03) and David Gutierrez ('01) announce the birth of Natalie Faye on July 23, 2007. She joined Elijah David (2). David and Laura both work with World Impact. They finished planting a church in South Hollywood in March 2007. Dave is now Group Volunteer Coordinator, working with groups that spend a day to a week doing service projects. Laura is a full-time mom and does some event coordinating, helping at the ministry's thrift store, and substituting at the Christian school.

► Jennifer (Berkompas, '03) and Seth Atsma ('02) announce the birth of Annika Ruth on March 4, 2008, in Bremerton Naval Hospital.

Sarah (Palm, '03) and Jesse Possail announce the birth of Kira Beth on October 12, 2007, in St. Cloud Minnesota.

Leann (Veenstra, '04) and Lance Nunnikhoven ('04) announce the birth of Landon Thomas on December 8, 2007, in Des Moines. Big brother Noah (2) welcomes him.

Chris ('04) and Stephanie (Lems, '04) Kuperus announce the birth of Sage Carlyn on December 12, 2007.

Trina Korthuis ('04) and Chad Baron were married on July 13, 2007, in Lynden, Washington. Trina is a preschool teacher at Lynden Christian, and Chad is the owner of Crave Impact Promotions.

Dan ('04) and Lauren (Knight, '04) De Boer were blessed by the birth of a daughter, Oaklyn Maria, on December 30, 2007.

Angela (De Jager, '05) and Andon De Boer ('04) were married on April 12, 2008. They live in Harrisburg, South Dakota.

Matthew ('04) and Leah (Van Wyhe, '06) Vande Vegte announce the birth of Jason Daryl on March 5, 2008.

Rob ('99) and Leah (De Groot, '05) Bruxvoort welcomed Sydney Jo on January 24, 2008. They live in Sharon, Iowa.

Cassandra Lokker ('06) recently published her first book, *Beyond the Fury*. She describes the book as historical fiction with an inspirational message. You can read about the book at [www.cassandralokker.com](http://www.cassandralokker.com)

Tessa (Hemnes, '07) and Brian Kooiker announce the birth of Sydney Anna Mae on December 28, 2007, in Bellingham, Washington. "Since Sydney's arrival, I've cut back to teaching one day a week. I teach 3rd/4th Math and Science at Lynden Learning Lifestyles (Lynden School District.) Brian drives truck in Lynden, and together we own Circle K Ranch, a horse boarding/training stable.



The *Voice*, an outreach of Dordt College, is sent to you as alumni and friends of Christian higher education. The *Voice* is published four times per year to share information about the programs, activities, and needs of the college. Send address corrections and correspondence to VOICE, Dordt College, 498 Fourth Ave. NE, Sioux Center, IA 51250-1606 or e-mail to [voice@dordt.edu](mailto:voice@dordt.edu).

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**EVENTS**

**ALUMNI WEEKEND**

SEPTEMBER 26-27, 2008

- VISIT CLASSES
- FALL MUSIC FESTIVAL
- PRESIDENT'S BRUNCH
- ACADEMICS IN ACTION
- THEATER PRODUCTION
- VOLLEYBALL, SOCCER
- MORE



- FOOTBALL
- BUSINESS CONNECTIONS BREAKFAST
- OUTDOOR KIDS' CARNIVAL
- TAILGATE PARTY
- BATTLE OF THE BANDS
- CONCERT FEATURING *DEUCES WILD!* DUELING PIANOS
- MORE

**PARENTS' WEEKEND**

OCTOBER 17-18, 2008



THE **VOICE**  
 DORDT COLLEGE

SUMMER 2008

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**Ag department prepares its grads for biotech**



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**SPICE offers cultural and historical immersion**