The Crescent and the Cross
Can Christians and Muslims find common ground?

Also
Northwestern’s Oman Semester
Dog handler Riley DeVos
Art by Rein Vanderhill
Rein Vanderhill will have more time to work on his paintings, like this Lake Michigan shoreline landscape, now that he has retired after 36 years on the art faculty.

Across the Faith Divide
When beliefs differ, Christ’s command to love our neighbors as ourselves begins with understanding.

Arab Spring
During Northwestern’s first Oman Semester, students lived in the Middle East and learned what it means to be Christians in a multi-faith world.

Top Dog
A dog handler’s visit to Riley DeVos’ fifth grade classroom led to a lasting friendship and success at dog shows around the country.

On the Web
Your Turn
Share comments about any article in this issue, including your thoughts about interfaith dialogue.

visit classic.nwciowa.edu

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A New View of God’s World

Many institutions of higher education are committed to sending students abroad to study for a few weeks, a semester or even a year. With the global marketplace and graduates are entering today, learning in another country has perhaps never been more important.

However, at Northwestern we view global education through the lens of our Vision for Learning (www.nwciowa.edu/vision), which makes our approach distinctive. Northwestern doesn’t send students abroad just to study and experience another culture, as important as that may be. Similar to all students’ learning at NWC, we want their experience to better prepare them to trust, love and worship God, engage ideas, connect knowledge and experience, and respond to God’s call.

Before sending students abroad, our faculty and staff work diligently to ensure they are strongly rooted academically and spiritually—ready to experience other cultures and learn more of what it means to pursue God’s redeeming work. Northwestern’s study abroad experiences engage students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God’s redeeming work.

Up to that point in my life, I saw the world from a very limited perspective. This trip gave me a new vision of God’s world and my place in it. In a similar way, our students are experiencing this with the added benefit of an academic component. Our ministry team conducted baseball clinics, played games against national teams, and shared our faith in Christ publicly and personally. What impacted me most was staying with host families in two of the countries and learning how much we had in common even though it seemed we were so different.

Merging our mission and Vision for Learning, these programs are rich experiences for growth that integrate faith, learning and living in community.

In the summer of 1990 I had the opportunity to experience something like this myself. I spent five weeks traveling with Athletes in Action, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, to what was then Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Holland and Spain.

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Northwestern’s study abroad experiences engage students in courageous and faithful learning and living that empowers them to follow Christ and pursue God’s redeeming work in the world—a big, diverse world. This is yet another way we live out our mission.

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God-honoring thing to do was to keep trying to get pregnant naturally. We believed if God wanted us to be parents, he would make it happen. Knowing what we faced gave me the determination to keep going. My fifth pregnancy resulted in a healthy son, and an eighth pregnancy resulted in a healthy daughter. Our story doesn’t have an entirely fairy tale ending, though. Both my children have been tested and also carry the inversion, like I do. As a result of that, I face the harsh reality of living in a broken world with a defective gene. I can accept that for myself, but who of us would want that for our children? In my body, I face the harsh reality of living in a broken world with a straw man and lumping acceptable medicine with the destruction of human life. Never have I been asked to reflect on the implications of that test for my family. 

From the Classic website
The following excerpts are from reader-posted comments about Classic articles at classic.nwciowa.edu.

Designer Genes Reactions
Thank you so much for this insightful, fact-filled article written from a much-needed Christian perspective. I chose to be tested for Huntington’s disease, and the implications of that test for my family has weighed heavily upon me. God led me to this article, and when I read it, a huge burden rolled off my shoulders. I appreciate Dr. Tolsma’s thoughtfulness and ability to give students the “right answer.” She is acknowledging that these situations are incredibly complex and require prayer and God’s leading in each affected person’s life. I value the sanctity of life and the purpose of suffering to develop Christ-like character in the one suffering and those who come alongside to help. But God’s ultimate goal is healing and restoration: “He will wipe away every tear.” Likewise, statements from “Faith in Our Genes” are very troubling. Through science, Dr. Smart sees ways to not only care for creation, but also to repair and improve it. God declared his creation good. It is not in need of repair. Dr. Tolosa says, “Try to empathize with parents like Morgan’s who, because of advances in genetic science, might be faced with heartbreaking decisions.” She is encouraging situational ethics, not biblical/Christian for God’s creation. More Tolosa: “On the other hand, thoughtlessly rejecting genetic technology is not living out our calling to be thinking Christians.” This is an extraordinary claim! Are we to believe we can’t call ourselves “Christian” if we reject destructive embryonic stem cell research? Fyansworth writes, “Bight biotechnologies like genetic screening and testing tend to lead to God, as some comment worry. Maybe. But, Tolosa argues, blood transfusions, vaccines, antibiotics and organ transplants were viewed skeptically as playing God at one time. Never have Christians object to these life-altering medical advances.” … “Meanwhile, unused embryos already exist.” She is creating a straw man and lumping acceptable medicine with the destruction of human life. Fyansworth concludes, “Christ did, after all, help the lame to walk again.” But Christ did NOT destroy human life to help the lame to walk again. It appears the theme of this article is that man, based on his own perceived goodness, can create heaven on earth. That is indeed troubling coming from a Christian college.

Shining Like the Son
Eighteen Northwestern students are serving as Christ’s hands and feet around the globe this summer. As members of the college’s Summer of Service (SOS) team, they’re volunteering as short-term missionaries in Cameroon, Fiji, Ghana, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Trinidad, Uganda, Ukraine and the United States. The students—who represent 13 different majors—are assisting pastors, physicians, teachers and other missionaries in churches, hospitals, orphanages and refugee camps. They are teaching English, caring for AIDS orphans, leading worship, administering microfinance loans, and delivering community health programs with ministries such as Africa Inland Mission, the Luke Society, Pioneers and Wyldlife. For information about the students on the 2011 SOS team—including their dates of service and ministry details—visit www.nwciowa.edu/sosteam.

New Online Director
Rebecca Hoey was nearing completion of her doctoral degree, working with faculty to design curriculum, mentoring new online teachers and raising four young children. But when she heard about an opportunity to build an online learning program at Northwestern, she knew she couldn’t pass it up. “I have a passion for online learning; it meets needs for so many students,” says Hoey, who joined the staff as director of online learning in June. “Northwestern has offered a great educational experience to traditional-aged undergraduates on campus for years. I’m taking a look at what we do so well and how we can translate it online,” she says. Maybe there’s a parent who’d love to be a teacher, but she can’t come to Orange City to earn her degree. Perhaps an outstanding volunteer youth leader has a dream of studying youth ministry, but he needs to keep working to pay the bills. As Hoey builds the framework for Northwestern’s program, one of her roles is that of a champion for online learning. “I’m working with faculty to help them see how online learning can be just as rigorous as what happens in the physical classroom and how community isn’t dependent on geography,” she says. “You don’t have to be in the same place. It’s all about the relationships you’ve built with other people.” Hoey is also in the process of choosing a learning management system for online courses. Her immediate goals are to pilot some courses next spring using the new system and to offer numerous courses next summer—including one from every general education area. Hoey encourages alumni to let her know what they’d like to see in Northwestern’s online program. E-mail her at rebecca.hoey@nwciowa.edu.
When classes begin this fall, a new $3.5 million residence hall on Northwestern's campus will welcome 68 students as the hall on Northwestern's campus. "Overwhelmingly, the comments have been positive," says Patrick Hummel, director of residence life. "People have really liked the space, particularly the common spaces we built into it." In placing students in the hall, Hummel and his staff held 24 spots for freshmen, another 20 for sophomores, and the remainder for juniors and seniors.

Summer in the Lab

Four senior science majors are participating in competitive off-campus research projects this summer. Samantha Toy is looking at the mechanism of a relatively new form of chemotherapy used to treat abdominal cancers in her research at Des Moines University. Elizabeth Stevens is at the University of Missouri, working on a team that is synthesizing new molecules for potential use in the treatment of Type 2 diabetes. Adam Verhoef is studying replication proteins in the University of Iowa's Biochemistry Summer of Undergraduate Research Fellowship program. And Anna Yarrow is researching cloning and expression of human nuclear protein modules fused to fluorescent chromophores at South Dakota State University.

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Information about Northwestern College can now be accessed via smartphones at m.ronsio.w.edu. The latest NWC news and sports scores, event calendars, a campus directory, facility hours, directions to campus and even cafeteria menus are available at the mobile site.

Registrar's Office Promotions

Two staff have been promoted in the registrar's office. Sandy Van Kley '95 has been promoted to assistant registrar and Austin Nyhof '06 has been promoted to associate registrar. Van Kley, a member of the registrar's office since 2001, had served since 2005 as assistant registrar. She replaces Charlie Couch, who became registrar at the University of Northern Colorado after 13 years of service at Northwestern. Nyhof joined the office in 2007 as the assistant registrar.

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Escape to Iowa

Nobuko Noguchi spent Japan’s March 11 earthquake under her bed—and the days following it and the resulting tsunami short on food, milk and diapers for her toddler sons.

She lives in Tokyo, more than 200 miles from the Fukushima nuclear plants damaged in the tsunami, but as a nurse, she worried about the risk of radiation exposure for Yuki (4) and Naoki (1). She told her mother, Junko Nagao ’70, “I want to go to Orange City.”

Nagao contacted her former Northwestern roommate and friend, Char (Van Zanten ’72) Granstra, Sandi (Mouw ’71) Carlson, and Barb (Jacobs ’70) Lubbers, who arranged for Noguchi and her sons to spend April, May and June in Orange City while her husband, a surgeon, helps with Japan’s recovery.

Despite Iowa’s spring thunderstorms and a tornado touchdown in a nearby town, Nagao said, “I feel safe here.”

Melodious Prof

Music professor Dr. Luke Dahn has composed works performed by the Buxton Brass and the Moscow Conservatory Studio for New Music, but he’s a teacher at heart. And a pretty good one at that, according to students whose nominations led to him being named this year’s recipient of the $1,500 Northwestern Teaching Excellence Award.

“We especially do well balancing the class time between lectures, projects and assignments in a way that we are able to apply what we’re learning with his and our peers’ guidance,” Rachel Lynn wrote in a letter of nomination. “Although we ‘learn a lot in class, we also have time to have fun. He takes something that would otherwise be tedious, like music lab, and makes it academically challenging and fun with games using Christmas carols and percussion instruments.”

“Not only is Dr. Dahn great at teaching classes, but he genuinely cares about his students,” Lynn continued. “He is up to people stepping by when they need help with assignments, and he tries to keep up with students’ lives. He also integrates faith into the classroom in a way that encourages real life application of questions about our God-given gifts and the church.”

Jessica Kleveland wrote, “Dr. Dahn is one of the most respected professors because of his knowledge and willingness to answer questions when a student is having a difficult time understanding the material.”

Dahn, who joined the faculty in 2007, teaches music theory and composition. He earned a doctorate in music composition from the University of Iowa, where he served as an visiting assistant professor. He also received a Master of Music degree from Western Michigan University and a bachelor’s in music from Houston Baptist University.

Dahn’s compositions have been performed at the Eastern Academy of Music, the 14th International Saxophone Meeting in Slovenia, Harvard University’s Memorial Church and the N.O.V.O. Dudovia Encounters of New Music Festival. Several of his works have been recorded on the Albany label, included his quintet, Paramount, winner of the 2010 League of Composers’ International Society of Contemporary Music Composers Competition.

Honors Roll for Service

Northwestern has been named to the 2010 President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in recognition of its strong commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement. Northwestern, honored for the fifth year in a row, is among just 114 schools chosen “With Distinction.” Only two others are from Iowa.

The Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers the annual Honor Roll award, recognized a total of 641 colleges and universities for their impact on issues from literacy and neighborhood revitalization to environmental justice. Honorees were chosen from 851 applicants based on a series of factors, including the scope and innovation of service projects, the extent to which service-learning is embedded in the curriculum, commitment to long-term campus-community partnerships, and measurable community outcomes.

“Northwestern has always had a strong commitment to service, and being named to this year’s Honor Roll is a wonderful recognition of our current commitment,” says Marlon Haverdink ’97, Northwestern’s director of service learning. “I’m continually encouraged by the willingness of our students to give of their time to serve locally, nationally and globally.”

Last year, 662 NWC students were engaged in community service, including delivering groceries for the Orange City Food Pantry; building homes for Habitat for Humanity, organizing a festival to raise money for a transitional housing facility, and coaching youth football and soccer teams. Over spring break, students bought English to Somalian immigrants, assisted with health clinics, repaired homes and performed other tasks at 14 locations around the world. In addition, another 470 students were involved in academic service-learning, putting classroom knowledge into practice by helping area agencies and businesses.

“So many of our students have a vibrant faith in Christ, which propels them to seek out ways to serve others. Combine that with both Northwestern’s commitment to provide avenues for them to put their faith in action and the ministries and organizations that so graciously partner with us, and the result is over 30,000 hours of service,” says Haverdink.
cardiac arrest, Gammon’s father, John, a firefighter, alerted Jordan. The new graduate performed CPR while his dad raced through the airport to find an automatic external defibrillator.

“I was impressed watching him, because he engaged and just went right to it,” John Gammon told The Orange County Register.

“Three days before that, I had been tested on it,” said Jordan Gammon.

“It was a little stressful, but my training took over.”

The newspaper reported that a doctor and an airport employee with a defibrillator arrived to help. The device analyzed the woman’s heart rhythm and delivered a single shock, at which point the rescuers found a pulse. Local firefighters arrived soon after, taking the woman to a hospital.

She underwent open-heart surgery but appears to be doing well. Authorities believe the 33-year-old woman had a pre-existing condition that was exacerbated when she ran to catch a flight.

For Jordan, the rescue was a reminder of why he wants to become a full-time firefighter, following in the footsteps of his father and both of his grandfathers. While at Northwestern, Jordan was a two-year member of the Orange City Fire Department.

“I enjoy helping people, and it’s always interested me,” Gammon told the Register. “Being able to help this lady was a blessing.”

Orange City Fire Chief Denny Vander Wel says Gammon and fellow Iowa native Taylor Malm ‘11, who also seeks a career in firefighting, were excellent additions to the local force. “They are both very good citizens who will do well in this profession.”

Northwestern’s Newest Graduates

Northwestern’s alumni numbers grow by 251 after degrees were awarded to the college’s class of 2011 during commencement ceremonies May 14. Nearly all of the graduates were granted a Bachelor of Arts. The exceptions were 21 students who earned Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees.

Among the employers hiring these latest Northwestern graduates are Interstates Control Systems, AmericanEagle.com, MOC-Northwestern graduates are Interstates Control Systems, AmericanEagle.com, MOC.

The Arts Add Business Smarts

Starting this fall, Northwestern will offer a new minor in arts administration for art, music and theatre majors who want to broaden their options in the arts-job market. The program is “a pragmatic addition to our fine arts programs,” says Dr. Robert Hubbard, chair of Northwestern’s theatre department.

“Our student artists are very talented,” he adds, describing the awards they’ve won as performers and their experience with productions, concerts and exhibits.

But he says, “Few artists make their living solely through performing or producing art. This minor enables them to offer administrative and promotive skills to arts organizations that want employees who also understand art, artists and creative endeavors.”

In addition to courses in business and public relations, the new minor requires an internship. Arts students have interned through the Chicago Film Studies Center, last spring, a Northwestern student interned in arts management at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

The Good News

Class

Christian Witness

Instructor

Dr. Michael Andres

Associate Professor of Religion

Students in Dr. Michael Andres’ Christian Witness class may not be able to say what “postmodernism” means. But they know how it feels: like trying to grab onto Jell-O.

In a cultural context where the ground is constantly shifting, how does one stand up for just one way, one truth?

“A few students come into the class with a gung-ho, preach-it-on-the-street-corner view of Christian witness,” says Andres, “and I appreciate that impulse. But more of them are skeptical of that model. They perceive Christians who witness that way as pushy salesman. They think to press your beliefs on someone might be arrogant or intrusive.”

For students who are wondering how to witness, Andres’ class offers practical models. It also seeks to encourage young Christian witness in postmodern relativism to anchor themselves—to have confidence in their ability to know and speak the truth.

Andres teaches students about a holistic Christian witness that comes straight from Scripture. It includes verbal proclamation (evangelism), reasoned defense (apologetics) and social action (justice). “Paul may be the best example,” he says, adding that in addition to understanding Christ’s teachings and preaching them boldly, Paul also advocated for the weak and vulnerable.

Andres also points to Christian leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and John Perkins to show students what holistic Christian witness looks like. “Like King, Perkins opposes racism and fights for civil rights,” says Andres. “He also values a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and isn’t shy talking about how much he wants to know Jesus and share the Good News.”

Texts and Assignments

Among the six books students read for Christian Witness are these:

• When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor … and Yourself, by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
• The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism, by Timothy Keller
• Good News and Good Works: A Theology of the Whole Gospel, by Ronald Sider

Students also participate in a class-wide service-learning project. In fall 2009, when the class was last offered, students met with the leadership and members of Trinity Reformed Church in Orange City. Based on what they learned, they wrote and presented a “Strategize of Christian Witness” proposal uniquely suited to the church’s theology and members’ social action passions.
This spring, Dr. Mike Yoder emptied his office of the anti-war slogans, Latin American artifacts, field corn and old-fashioned canning jars that served to let students look into his life during his 28 years at NWC. An Illinois farmboy, Yoder attended college and then, as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War, volunteered as a self-supporting missionary to Brazil. There he taught English, learned Portuguese and served to let students look into his life during his 28 years at NWC.

Raised Mennonite, Mike Yoder is opposed to all forms of violence, including war. The newly retired sociology professor says his pacifist convictions were always respected by a majority of his NWC colleagues and many of the students. ‘I’ve always been an outsider,’ says Yoder matter-of-factly. He describes being one of the only Mennonites in his public school, learning to live in a Latin American country, and feeling tension as a peace advocate being one of the only Mennonites in his public school, learning to live in a Latin American country, and feeling tension as a peace advocate

“arounds the Green”

Barry Brandt ’69, Northwestern’s athletic director, was elected to a one-year term as president of the NAIA’s Athletic Directors Association in June. He will also sit on the NAIA’s Council of Presidents. Brandt served as vice president this past year and as secretary the two previous years. He says his national role has been a great professional development opportunity. “I’ve gotten to know athletic administrators and coaches from all over the country and what issues they’re dealing with and learn from them.”

While the NAIA has seen a number of schools leave for NCAA Divisions II and III, Brandt says a number of strong issues have been raised in recent years, including looking at how to improve marketing and working on guidelines related to membership issues.

The resulting 220-page report was his parting gift to colleagues. It highlights the challenges ahead, including educating students who are part of an ‘entitled’ generation—one that often prioritizes a ‘fast-paced culture of fun and friends’ over a culture of academic seriousness.

It also highlights strengths of Northwestern’s culture: It’s an authentic, caring Christian community that trusts, intellectually and emotionally, that faith and knowledge are inherently connected—that to seek God means embracing God’s world with curiosity and openness. “It’s what I’ve grown to love about the Reformed faith,” says Yoder. “Reformed Christianity values faithfulness and intelligence.”

De Jong Retires

As reported in the fall issue of the Classic, Ron de Jong ’71, vice president for external relations, retired this summer after 40 years of service to Northwestern’s admissions efforts. He continues to work for his alma mater on a part-time basis, cultivating donors in his role as a senior advancement officer.

What is one of the biggest challenges in working with students?

Some students focus on activities rather than classes, but I understand that because that was me. I came to Northwestern to play volleyball and run track and sometimes studied just enough to get a good grade rather than to truly learn. I changed, though, and I hope to encourage my students to have appropriate priorities as well.

How has your teaching style changed during your years at Northwestern?

In the beginning, I survived by teaching exactly the same way I had been taught. Over time, my teaching has evolved to stress understanding. I’m constantly asking, “Does this make sense to you?” I don’t want my students memorizing; I want them understanding.

How do you relate to your students?

I’m very transparent—what you see is what you get. I want my students to really know me. (Plus, it’s easier to keep my stories straight by always telling the truth!) Some students focus on activities rather than classes, but I understand that because that was me. I came to Northwestern to play volleyball and run track and sometimes studied just enough to get a good grade rather than to truly learn. I changed, though, and I hope to encourage my students to have appropriate priorities as well.

Describe yourself in three words:

Sincere, fun, committed.

What do you do in your free time?

I love to do anything outdoors—like gardening, volleyball, camping, water sports and boating. The hotter and more humid the weather, the better.

Name one thing you’d do with more time and money.

Travel! I have dreamed of going to Australia since childhood to watch kangaroos and see the Sydney Opera House.

What is Northwestern’s greatest quality?

Northwestern has two. The first is our active Christian perspective in everything we do. Second, Northwestern’s campus on campus is unique and very intentional. Students experience community here in a way that’s different from anywhere else.

Do you have a favorite spot on campus?

I have a corner office with two windows—I have a corner office with two windows—every accountant’s dream.
Retrospective

by Tamara Pynaroff

Of the expansive windows of Rein and Margo Vanderhill’s home in Alton, Iowa, is the couple’s native prairie, living art that changes color and texture with the seasons.

Inside the high-ceilinged studio and living spaces, the white walls are covered with the couple’s paintings, including Rein’s outsized berries and blooms and landscapes of the Lake Michigan shoreline. An imitation of Greek iconography frames a 10-foot doorway.

“I need to get on a ladder and work on that some more,” says Vanderhill. He’ll have time. Vanderhill retired this spring after 36 years as a professor in Northwestern College’s art department.

“I feel like Peter Pan,” he says, “because even though I’ve gotten older, my students have stayed the same age.” Fresh-faced and full of creative juices.

As longtime director of the college’s Te Paske Gallery, Vanderhill says, “I’ve had a show closed or painting removed under nearly every president since I came.” He sounds, maybe, a bit mischievous, contributing to an occasional art-fueled uproar.

The truth, though, is Vanderhill doesn’t aim to have doors closed on an exhibit. But as an artist and committed, sometimes confrontational Reformed Christian, he takes to heart his responsibility to open eyes—and hopefully minds—to the power of sometimes provocative, always evocative art.

“[Art] is a dynamic relationship between the artist, viewer and the Creator of us all,” he wrote in a 1997 essay for Perspectives: A Journal of Reformed Thought after a brouhaha over an exhibit. “Art by its very definition deals with truth … That is why [making and viewing art] is exciting, difficult, fearful and rewarding.

“Experiencing art is not safe, secure or predictable.” That’s been true of Vanderhill too.
Red Zone

Track and Field

Broken Records

The Raiders set 20 school records in indoor and outdoor track this year. Six athletes earned NAIA All-American honors at outdoor nationals. Charity Miles finished second in the 5,000-meter run and joined Dawn Gildersleeve, Brittanah Hobbs and Teresa Schiebel to place third in the 4x400 relay. Matt Huesman finished third in the high jump and Logan Ogles placed sixth in the discus. Miles was named the outstanding female performer at the GPAC outdoor meet.

Baseball

Sharing First

Northwestern tied for first place in the GPAC with a 16-6 mark. The Raiders finished 26-19 overall. Matt Nagstad received NAIA All-American honorable mention after compiling a .456 batting average with 43 runs and 29 stolen bases. Nagstad and Eddie Pastalaff were named to the all-conference first team, with Steve England, Clint Gingerich, Taylor Morris and Mike Zoellner chosen for the second team.

Softball

Strong Finish

Going 14-8 in April, the Raiders finished 16-22 overall. Matt Nagstad received NAIA All-American honorable mention after compiling a .456 batting average with 43 runs and 29 stolen bases. Nagstad and Eddie Pastalaff were named to the all-conference first team, with Steve England, Clint Gingerich, Taylor Morris and Mike Zoellner chosen for the second team.

Men's Golf

Two All-Conference

Neil Maleske and Ryan Kiewiet made the all-conference team, placing seventh and 11th, respectively, in the four-round GPAC qualifier.

Women's Golf

Second Best

The Raiders shot the second lowest round in the program's history, 335, at the Dordt Invite. Maggie (Achieved) Ranzenboom, who recorded Northwestern's best-ever single-season and career scoring averages, placed second in the GPAC qualifier and was joined on the all-conference team by Taylor Klein, who placed seventh.

Tennis

Competitive

The Raiders placed fifth in the GPAC with a 4-4 record, 7-10 overall. Nessa Summers made the all-conference first team.

Scholar-Athletes

Honor Roll

Twenty-two Raiders in spring sports earned NAIA Scholar-Athlete recognition, including 13 in track. Repeat honorees included Laura Starr in tennis and Sara Hess, Heidi Heidbreder, Jordan Langer, Charity Miles and Jenna Sorensen in track.

Cross Country

New Head Coach

Kerly Weid '03, head track coach since 2004, now is also head cross country coach. He will be assisted by Dale Thompson, who led the program for 30 years.

For more on Raider sports, visit www.nwcraiders.com

To fulfill President Virgil Highway 10 sat as quiet as its name. Eventually, a small student center in Union (now Hospers) Hall limited campus recreational opportunities.

The tool now sits in his garage at home, where it has found a new purpose—as did the factory it helped renovate and the student center it built.

The life of the building mirrors the life of the college," says Thompson. By 2007, the facility underwent another renovation, allowing for more light and greater visibility to student services, among other accommodations to the changing times. This summer sees more construction on the center. A $1.5 million project will result in fitness center improvements such as new flooring, lighting and heating.

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Faithful Christian witness among Muslims starts with learning to love ‘the other’

Centuries ago, a man raised to believe in many gods became increasingly disturbed at the idol worship in his hometown. Convinced there was only one God, he boldly preached against the sanctuary that housed the idols and opposed the powerful tribe that controlled its access. When his message threatened the tribe’s lucrative business among idol-worshipping pilgrims, he and his small band of converts left the only home they had ever known.

From those ignoble beginnings in 613 A.D., the followers of Muhammad have grown to an estimated 1.5 billion people. Approximately 22 percent of the global population is Muslim. With Christians at 33 percent, that makes Islam and Christianity the two largest religious faiths in the world.
Although Islam had its origins in what is now Saudi Arabia, four out of five Muslims today live outside the Middle East—many in Africa and Asia, where they encounter half of the world’s Christians. Less than 1 percent of Americans are Muslim, but Islam will soon pass Judaism as the second largest religion in the U.S.

Increasingly, this is a multicultural, multi-religious society,” says John Hubers, ’76, a former missionary to the Middle East who joined Northwestern’s religion faculty last fall to pass his knowledge on to the next generation of Christian leaders.

Hubers was in the context of Muslim-Christian relations. While in seminary, he spent a year in Egypt, interning with RCA missionaries surrounding the city.

Islam teaches it was on such a retreat in 610 A.D. that Muhammad heard a voice command, “Recite!” and thus began a 20-year period of revel- ations that became the Quran—the “Recitation.” For Muslims, the Quran is Islam’s one miracle.

“Muslims believe that Muhammad received, word for word, this direct revelation from God, dictated by the angel Gabriel,” Hubers explains. That many believe Muhammad was illiterate makes the Quran seem even more miraculous to the Muslim faithful, as it’s widely seen as the most powerful, poetic book ever written in Arabic.

Convinced he had been chosen as a prophet and claiming to be the Messenger of God, Muhammad continued to preach of one God and a coming Day of Judgment until he and his followers emigrated to Yathrib, 250 miles north of Mecca. There he united warring tribes into one faith community that eventually became known as Medina, or “The City of the Prophet.” It was the birthplace of Islam as a religious, political and social movement.

Eight years later—after a series of battles with the ruling tribe of Mecca—Muhammad returned to his hometown followed by 10,000 men. After receiving the key to the city and declaring amnesty for most of his enemies, he made his way to the Ka’ba, the center of idol worship, entered the sanctuary, and destroyed all the idols inside.

The Rev. John Hubers spent a dozen years in the Middle East and is working on a doctorate in world Christianity and global mission. An evangelical with both experience and expertise in Islamic studies, he joined Northwestern’s religion faculty last fall to pass his knowledge on to the next generation of Christian leaders.

Hubers has another reason for championing interfaith dialogue besides preparation for a world Christianity. Understanding, he says, is important for witnessing.

“Whether it’s my atheist neighbor or my Muslim neighbor, the best way to share the love of Jesus Christ is to know who they are—to understand how they see the world.”

For Muslims we’re going to meet who are practicing another religion are going to be Muslims. They tend to be very well-educated community members—doctors, engineers, technology specialists—if our graduates work in any major corporation in America, they’re almost certainly going to be working with Muslims.”

Hubers has felt called to the ministry by the time he was a high school junior. After graduating, he and his wife, Lynne (Lenderink ’76), were sent by the RCA to Bahrain, where they taught English. It was there they realized their calling to ministry in the context of Muslim-Christian relations.

Two years later, the Hubers returned to the U.S. John could earn a Master of Divinity degree from New Brunswick Theological Semi- nary. While in seminary, he spent a year in Egypt, interning with RCA missionary Dr. Harald Vogel ’57 and learning more about Islam and interfaith relations.

After serving an RCA church in New York, the Hubers returned to the Middle East, where John pastored churches in Oman and Bahrain for 10 years. His parishioners were expatriates—foreigners from Asia, Europe, Africa and America who were living in the Arabian Gulf—and as their pastor, Hubers encouraged them to develop an informed, sensitive, caring Christian witness to Muslims.

Now working on a Ph.D. in world Christianity and global mission at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Hubers is following a similar calling as a professor. Few people with an evangelical background have both experience and academic credentials in Islamic studies. His goal is to share his wisdom with the next generation of Christian leaders who will increasingly be involved in Christian-Muslim relations.

“Whether it’s my atheist neighbor or my Muslim neighbor, the best way to share the love of Jesus Christ is to know who they are—to understand how they see the world,” Hubers says. “So when I’m teaching World Religions, the first thing I say is we need to understand these faiths from the perspective of the people who hold them.”

Kendra Dahlbacka ’10 is doing just that. She participated in a Spring Service Project in Minneapolis her junior year, teaching English to re- frieges from Somalia, a predominantly Muslim nation. During their SSP, the students also visited a mosque, ate at Somali restaurants, and shopped at a coup, or Arab/Muslim market.

Now a third grade Spanish teacher in a Minneapolis suburb, Dahlbacka is taking Arabic classes at a Muslim community center, where she’s the only non-Muslim in a class that includes people from Somalia, India, Kenya and Pakistan. Her classmates are there to learn to read the Quran, Islam’s holy book. She is there to learn Arabic in order to understand Muslims and their culture.

“Still in the listening part,” says Dahlbacka, who has spent time with the other women in their homes.

God has given a burden for Muslims to Dahlbacka, who says they are misunderstood and portrayed as villains by the media. “People are afraid to love them because of 9/11 and the things that have happened that have marred relations between Muslims and Christians,” she says. “But Jesus went out of his way to be with people who were marginalized, and in a lot of ways, Muslims are marginalized in the U.S.”

Whether it’s my atheist neighbor or my Muslim neighbor, the best way to share the love of Jesus Christ is to know who they are—to understand how they see the world.”
Islam and Christianity hold some beliefs in common: the revelation of God through nature, the existence of angels and Satan, the sovereignty—"the God." It’s as if you are the God—because Allah in their language means ‘that to which we submit.’"

"Where the two faiths diverge is in their understanding of who Jesus is. It’s a challenge trying to share Christ with people who have an alternative understanding of him."

"That’s not to say Christians shouldn’t share their faith with their Muslim neighbors. Dalhousie advises: Love people, pray for opportunities, and God will do the rest. Hubers stresses the importance of genuine, caring friendships. "Among the Muslims I’ve known who have become Christians," he says, ‘most were loved into the faith—not argued into it.’"

"Relationships with understanding, non-prejudiced Christians are especially important at a time when many Muslims are experiencing discrimination and hatred.Originally from Morocco, Said Ben Saïda has lived in the United States for more than 20 years and in Orange City since 1996."

"Things get hard after 9/11," he says. "Some people look at me and just say ‘I am a non-Muslim’ and won’t talk to me, or will say I am a Muslim, and they won’t have anything to do with me."

"Ben Saïda was raised as a Muslim by devout parents. ‘My father never drank alcohol,’ he says. ‘He never looked at another woman. He told us to be honest and work for our living. Don’t steal. Don’t cheat.’

"When his brother married a woman from Granville, Ben Saïda accepted his invitation to join them in Iowa. He settled in Orange City after meeting his wife, who converted to Islam after they were wed."

"Small-town life suits him. After meeting his wife, who converted to Islam after they were wed."

"When the same poll was conducted seven years later, that figure had grown to 34 percent."

"While it may be human nature to view those unlike ourselves with fear and suspicion, Christ models another way. Leonard says—it’s the way of relationship maintained by the tools of love, humility, forgiveness and bearing with one another when we clash.”

"But when Muslims believe the Quran is the very words of God, when the Quran contradicts the Bible, they believe the Bible is wrong. "Hubers says, ‘They think Christians have tampered with Scripture, twisting it to fit our Trinitarian ideas.’"

"Without a Savior, Muslims envision a future in which—at a time no one knows—the world will end and God will measure people’s good deeds against their bad.

"Many Christians, however, see ungodliness within the Muslim faith, seeing Allah as the God of the Bible. Those who argue the two are different focus on ways in which Muslims’ perception of Allah varies from what Christians know of the nature of God."

"The two stopped talking about religion but continued their friendship. One day, as Andersen was helping him work on his roof, Ben Saïda turned to his neighbor and said, ‘No, I love you, and you love me. You want to save me, and I want the best also for you. Let’s not close ourselves to this communication.’"
Understanding Islam

The 5 Pillars of Islam

1. Shahadah
   The testimony of faith
   "There is no god but God and Muhammad is God’s apostle."

2. Salat
   Ritual prayers
   Made five times a day at sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening.
   friday prayers are led by a mullah.

3. Ramadan
   The holy month of fasting
   During which Muslims abstain from food, drink, smoking and sex from sunrise to sunset in order to increase their remembrance of God and His blessings.

4. Hajj
   Pilgrimage to Mecca
   The duty of all able-bodied Muslims once during their lifetime.
   Strictly monitored community-building experience.

5. Zakat
   Almsgiving
   A voluntary tithe of 2.5 percent of a person’s income that is given to the poor.

Sunni and Shi'ite

Disagreement about who should succeed Muhammad continues to divide Muslims to this day.

The majority of the followers supported Abu Bakr, the prophet’s friend and loyal companion. Today they are known as the Sunnis.

The Shi’ites, on the other hand, support the claim that Ali, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law, was his successor. Today they are known as the Shi’ites.

Jihad and Infidels

In his book "The Origins, Evolution and Fate of Islam," author Reza Aslan says that all of the words in Arabic that can be translated as “jihad” come from the root word "jihad," which means “effort.”

In its primary religious connotation, it means the struggle of the soul to overcome sinful obstacles that keep a person from God. In its political connotation, the word means "war," "struggle," "striving," or "great effort."

Shariah Law

Shariah Law is Islamic law based on the teachings of the Quran, the Hadith (stories of Muhammad and his early companions), and historical rulings by judges. There are four schools of Shariah Law, so there is no agreement among Muslims as to what constitutes Shariah Law.

Only two countries have Shariah as the law of the land: Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

Worries about the spread of Shariah are unfounded, Hubers says. "If it's so important for Muslims to impose Shariah Law in their societies, then why do Muslim-majority countries not have Shariah as the law of the land?" he asks. "Some of the greatest opposition to that comes from other Muslims."

Part of that resistance stems from the fact that punishments that are part of the stricter interpretations of Islam are very harsh—for example, cutting off the hands of thieves and stoning adulterers. "That gets magnified in the press, so this incredibly complex system of law and code and rule gets boiled down to two things," Hubers says.

What makes Shariah Law most problematic for Christians is its punishment for apostasy. In a strict interpretation of Islamic law, anyone who converts from Islam to another religion can be put to death.

"Even where that's law, it's rarely been carried out by the courts," Hubers comments. "Part of that resistance stems from the fact that punishments that are part of the stricter interpretations of Islam are very harsh—for example, cutting off the hands of thieves and stoning adulterers. "That gets magnified in the press, so this incredibly complex system of law and code and rule gets boiled down to two things," Hubers says.

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W

When students in Northwestern’s Oman Semester attended an interfaith lecture by Georgetown University’s John Esposito soon after arriving in Muscat, Ellen Tolsma, as a woman, had to sit in the back of the Grand Mosque.

Surrounded by local Omani women in traditional Agal-dress, she smoothed her own colorful head covering, smiled, and introduced herself in halting Arabic to the young woman sitting beside her. The woman’s response was in English. It was also overwhelmingly warm, welcoming and enthusiastic.

When her new friend, Fathiya, invited her on a family outing to Muscat, Tolsma was a little nervous about an all-day car trip with people she barely knew. But when Fathiya came to pick her up, Tolsma’s apprehension disappeared: “As Fathiya walked toward me, her warm, open smile and enthusiastic response was in English. It was also overwhelmingly warm, welcoming and enthusiastic.”

Through Fathiya, Tolsma also met Hadeel and LuLu, who invited her for coffee, family dinners and overnights. “I even attended a traditional wedding,” she says, “which is an honor usually reserved for family. My relationships make me want to return to Oman—to friends who have changed my life forever.”

This past January, Northwestern launched the Oman Semester with six students. They lived in the “Old City” of Muscat in the capital of Oman, the cultural and political center of the most peaceful, open and welcoming country in the Middle East. Oman, on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, provided a balmy semester by the sea for the students, who didn’t seem to mind leaving Iowa’s icy roads and snowy campus behind.

The Oman Semester grew out of collaboration among former Al Amana Centre director the Rev. Michael Boe, Northwestern sociology professor Dr. Scott Mennema; and Dr. Douglas Carlson, associate dean of the Global Education Center. Since 2004, nearly 30 students have studied in Oman for a few weeks as part of Northwestern’s study abroad program.

Carlson has visited Oman several times, including in 2007 to help shape the semester-long program. “People ask, ‘Why Oman?’ but anyone who has been there has experienced the Omanis’ warm welcome for Americans and their deep respect for the week of RCA missionaries,” Carlson says.

“Northwestern’s mission statement affirms our commitment to engaging students in courageous and faithful learning and living,” he explains. “Studying abroad in the Middle East—especially right now—creates so many opportunities for that engagement.”

Northwestern students lived at the Al Amana Centre in the historic Date Palm House that was once the home of RCA missionaries. A 12-foot wall encloses a lush lawn under date palm trees, long-ago gifts of the Arabian Peninsula, which provided a balmy semester by the sea for the students, who didn’t seem to mind leaving Iowa’s icy roads and snowy campus behind.

“Just beyond the gate, a remnant of the wall that once surrounded Muscat, a towering portal to the sea, a marketplace filled with sweet aromas of sandalwood and frankincense. Booths overflow with bright palmshattas, saffron and nut-filled dates. Omani families wander the cobblestone paths, children playing and babies perched on fathers’ shoulders.”

It’s a short walk from Al Amana Centre, through the souq, to the comiche of polished marble walkways along the sea and shady gazebos of golden filigree. Most evenings Tyler McKenney met Ali and Ahmed on the corniche. They often talked late into the night about life in Oman and America, discovering many similarities,” he says of his new friends. “Ahmed was determined to teach me Arabic, and I taught him English. They are two of the friendliest people I have ever met.”

In addition to studying Arabic for six hours each week, the students also attended an astronomy class at Sultan Qaboos University and engaged Omani culture through independent research projects guided by Ahmed Al-Mukhaini, a professor and attorney who is a leader of Omanis’ human rights community and former adviser to two U.S. ambassadors.

In a course on Christian-Muslim relations led by Al Amana Director the Rev. Doug Leonard, students read Theologis et Religiones by Paul Knitter. “Studying Knitter’s book while in Oman pushed my faith into places I was not expecting,” says Kameron Toews. “I wrestled with ideas I had not thought about before and came out with a more developed idea of Christianity and how it relates to other faiths. My own faith has become stronger and more mature.”

Weekend trips offered a broader understanding of Oman’s culture and, Nic Leither says, “Travel was the best way for friendships to grow within our group.” Students visited a 3,000-year-old archaeological site, hiked Oman’s “Grand Canyon,” snorkeled coastal reefs, swam in wadis, rode camels, and saw giant sea turtles lay eggs on a moonlit beach.

Leonard says Northwestern’s first Oman Semester offered profound encounters with Islam and Arab culture through relationships. “By the second week, students were playing soccer, going out for coffee and having dinner with Omanis’ friends.”

“By semester’s end, amid tears, embraces and promises to attend future weddings, they realized they had changed. Their souls were enlarged with the joy of following Christ’s countercultural leading—his outrageous calling to befriend the other.”

SUMMER 2011 Northwestern Classic

ARAB SPRING

by Grete Hellevang Carlson

Students in Northwestern’s first Oman Semester visited Muscat’s Grand Mosque several times for interfaith lectures taught by the Rev. Doug Leonard, associate dean of the Global Education Center. Since 2004, nearly 30 students have studied in Oman for a few weeks as part of Northwestern’s study abroad program.

In addition to learning Arabic at Sultan Qaboos University, students also traveled throughout Oman, including to Wahiba Sands, where they rode camels.

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DeVos, a senior elementary education major from Le Mars, Iowa, showed Zach twice at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York’s Madison Square Garden and at the Eukanuba National Championship in 2006 and 2007. Her work with him and other dogs has led her to become known as one of the nation’s up-and-coming dog handlers.

She handles dogs for other owners around the country, is working toward becoming a junior showmanship judge, and is trying her hand at breeding the next generation of dog show winners. DeVos also trains misbehaving dogs and does some grooming.

It all started in the fifth grade with a book about show dogs and a visit to Tom De Koster’s (’64) class by dog handler Mary Fedders. Fascinated with the cairn terrier and Fedders’ stories of dog shows, DeVos volunteered to write a thank-you note to the classroom guest. “I told her I wanted to show dogs someday,” says DeVos. Impressed, Fedders invited the girl to join her at a local show and allowed her to show a puppy.

It was an inauspicious beginning—placing second out of two entries—but DeVos was hooked. “I thought it was the best thing ever.” Two years later, DeVos brought home a puppy on Christmas Eve. It was Zach, handpicked as a great show prospect by Fedders.

While a high school student, DeVos went to shows 40 weekends a year with Zach and other dogs. Spending only a few hours a week with her dogs while at Northwestern has helped her realize how much she misses them.

“I really like that I can take a dog and, within a few minutes, develop a bond with it. And I love the feeling of teamwork in the ring. It’s amazing that a dog knows what I want just from the way I look at him,” says DeVos, whose dogs have won nearly every award possible except for best in show.

DeVos’ ability to make dogs respond to her is the result of a studious devotion to her sport. “She reads everything she can get her hands on about dogs,” says Fedders, who co-owns all her dogs with the Northwestern student. “She observes other handlers and learns from them.”

During the summer, DeVos ramps up her dog show schedule, handling at shows from Omaha to Fargo and Minneapolis to Chicago. It’s a schedule she could see herself doing for years as a special education teacher.

DeVos has several dog show friends who are also going into special education. “There are so many similarities between how you work with dogs and children,” she says. “You need to be patient, loving and caring, but sometimes you have to be firm.”

DeVos spent the previous two summers teaching teens from Girls Inc. to do dog training as a way to help build their confidence and learn a life skill. She knows from personal experience how effective that can be. “I used to be incredibly shy; I would be in tears talking in front of a group. Having to carry myself as a teenager in front of people at a dog show and be seen as somebody who knows what she’s doing helped me more mature and self-confident.”

Watching from the sidelines for most of that time was Fedders, the mentor who saw something in a wide-eyed fifth grader and gave her many opportunities. “She’s like my kid,” says Fedders. “We’ve been to shows around the country, done breedings together, walked puppies together. When you’re waiting hours for puppies to be born, you become quite close. I think she’s really a special young lady.”

A rare breed, indeed.
Red Ties

MARK ROEHNENDAAL ’01 Director of Alumni Relations

An ongoing discussion among alumni directors concerns whether Homecoming is for students or alumni. Of course, the easy answer is that it’s for both groups. However, that doesn’t necessarily solve the question of what events make for a successful Homecoming.

Students might want to start their activities to be a break from normal college life. Alumni want to reminisce and reconnect—go back to college, in a sense. When it comes to alumni participation in Homecoming, the main question I try to answer is, “What inspires people who no longer live here to come back?”

As we plan for Homecoming 2011, we’re discussing numerous and other activities for alumni and students alike. “Affinity” seems to be a common thread and a concept that crosses campus lines. In addition to class reunions, we’re also offering reunions organized around student groups, activities and traditions. Watch the Homecoming publicity or visit www.nwciowa.edu/homecoming to learn if teams, clubs or other student groups you used to belong to are having reunions. Or better yet, contact me to initiate one.

Maybe you’d like to gather the cast of Godspell, anyone who had Harlan Van Oort ’82 as an RA, or biology majors who also went to the University of Iowa—let me know and we will try to help you plan an affinity reunion.

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Maybe you’d like to gather the cast of Godspell, anyone who had Harlan Van Oort ’82 as an RA, or biology majors who also went to the University of Iowa—let me know and we will try to help you plan an affinity reunion.

One affinity gathering of sorts happening this year is our Donor Appreciation Banquet, taking place Sept. 30, the Friday evening before Homecoming.

This new event is for NWC supporters whose love of the college has led to seven-figure lifetime giving milestones. If your generous or consistent donations qualify you as a donor who’ve given annually for more than 20 years, and givers who’ve reached six- and seven-figure lifetime giving milestones, if your generous or consistent donations qualify you, you’ll receive an invitation to the event in August.

And if you haven’t returned to campus in awhile—or even if you visit regularly—come for Homecoming this October 1. We’re eager to welcome you back.
Still Working

At age 85, Jeanette (Rutteboom ’39) Van Voorst realized retirement wasn’t for her. She had been a stay-at-home mom for her eight children until her husband’s health required them to move off their farm near Sioux Center when she was 48. She worked at the Orange City hospital for 38 years, first as a nurse’s aide and then as a surgical technician.

A year after retiring, however, Van Voorst felt lost. “I wanted to keep busy. You go backwards fast if you just sit around,” she says. So Van Voorst returned to the surgery area at Orange City Area Health System.

“You feel like it’s something you can do,” she says. “You’re not just sitting there. You’re performing something.”

Van Voorst, who has earned a Shining Star award by the Sioux City Journal as a recipient of a Shining Star award by the Sioux City Journal, is now attending the annual meeting of the Iowa Hospital Association in Des Moines as a volunteer receptionist. She works at least one day a week providing comfort and insider knowledge for patients and their families.

“I’ve always been interested in people,” she says. “My dad was a doctor and I thought I’d do something with that.”

Van Voorst, who has worked at Orange City Area Health System four years ago, this time as a volunteer receptionist at the Orange City Area Health System, is also a past president of the Orange City Area Hospital Auxiliary. She is a member of the Orange City Area Hospital Auxiliary’s Shining Star award committee.

“Van Voorst is an outstanding health care professional and an outstanding community volunteer,” says Orange City Area Hospital Auxiliary President Jerry Johnson.

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Strongman

When he flexes, Jona Leo’s biceps is nearly two feet around.

Leo started powerlifting in 2002. “My competitive spirit wasn’t by 4 feet 6 inches,” says Leo. “He tried for three years and bested his personal record of 705 pounds. Three times he came close to a PR but never quite made it. This time he’s aiming for three clean lifts and besting his personal record of 705 pounds. On different lifts: the squat, bench press and deadlift.

When he flexes, Jona Leo’s bicep is nearly two feet around.

Interested in strength training through high school and college, Leo lifted in a retirement community in Sioux Falls, where he also trains and travels to meets throughout the Midwest.

A strength sport, powerlifting resembles weightlifting but focuses on different lifts: the squat, bench press and deadlift. A win at last August’s national meet entitled Leo to one of eight spots on the U.S. competition in Orlando over Labor Day weekend and hoping for another trip to the worlds next spring. This time he’s aiming for three clean lifts and besting his personal record of 705 pounds.

by Tamara Vynograd

Crystal (Drury ’95) and Nick Smietor ’02, daughter, Aneake Ruby June Raagan (4)

Ashley (Adams ’95) and Kendall Stanislav ’05, son, Andrew John, joins Madison (1) Eric and Rachel (Timmer ’97) Kruger, son, Jacob Jeffrey Cole and Katie (Scheunig ’07) Filling, son, Landyn Clair Nicole (Simmelink ’92) and Caleb Elstro ’09, daughter, Kendryl Keesee

National champion powerlifter Jona Leo competed in the world championships in Austria this May.

Marriages

Sara Dekker ’05 and Timothy Nicholls, Marshalltown, Iowa

Emily Hennager ’06 and Kevin De Vries, Monroe, Iowa

Julie Hageman ’08 and Brandon Archer ’10, Rochester, Minn.

Craig Menke ’00 and Nikkielite Pippin, Coralville, Iowa

Kathleen Knope ’10 and Dan Mark, Fort Collins, Colo.

Alayna Carlson ’11 and Caleb Kestler ’11, West Davenport, Ia.

Karina Smith ’13 and Drew Noremacher ’11, Orange City

The couple reside in the city listed.

In Memoriam

Garrett S. (Briick ’85) ‘75) Hauge died May 21 in Orange City, at age 65. After graduation, he attended Northwest Missouri State University, where he was established in 1970-1980. He was a member of the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra, the Iowa City Community Orchestra, the Des Moines Civic Light Opera Company and the Des Moines Civic Ballet.

In 1996, she and her late husband, Mert ’77, received the Alumni Association’s Distinguished Service to Northwestern College Award. She is survived by two sons, including Dan ’71.

Cynthia Bracewell ’38, age 98, of Sioux Center, died May 19. She was a teacher at Kimberly Elementary School for 28 years. Her survivors include two sons and a sister, Joyce Kooy ’31.

Dr. Otto Van Raakel ’45, age 88, of Waterloo, Iowa, died April 1 in Ames, Ia. He attended Northwestern Missouri State, Harvard and Columbia universities, and graduated from Iowa State College of Veterinary Medicine. He served in the Navy and then worked at Abilene Vet Clinic for 44 years. He is survived by his wife, Rosalie; two children, including Kermit ’71; and five siblings, including Glenn ’53.

Dr. Keith Poppen ’52 died April 4 in Sioux City at age 78. He worked for more than 35 years for Conoco Petroleum in Sioux City, retiring as vice president of sales. He also owned a construction sales business. He was a member of St. Mark Lutheran Church, the Sioux City Construction League, the Morningridge Masonic Lodge, the Scottish Rite, and the Abu-Bakr Shrine Temple Pestle Patrol. He is survived by two children, a brother and a sister.

Marvin Borgardt ’53, age 78, died Jan. 14 in Mason City, Iowa. He graduated from the University of South Dakota with a degree in accounting. He worked for the Internal Revenue Service for many years, and then served as an auditor for client services of the state Supreme Court. He was a member of First Presbyterian Church and Veterans of Foreign Wars. His survivors include two sons and a brother.

The Rev. Elmer Vander Ploeg ’55 of Lynden, Wash., died March 5 at age 85. He attended Northwestern Junior College, Hope College, and graduated from Western Theological Seminary. He served churches in Beloit, Illinois; Cecina, S.D.; Lynden, Wash.; St. Anne, Ill.; and Maple Lake, Minn. He is survived by his wife, Debbie; five children, including Julie Jacob ’83; and a sister.

Leon Ann (Reinsma ’61, ’63) Aalberts, daughter, Analiese Ruby, joins Rock Valley, Iowa, died March 21 after a lengthy battle with cancer. She was a high school social studies teacher for six years in Council Bluffs, Iowa, before moving to Fort Morgan, where she worked at the Social Security Administration office for nearly 27 years. She was a member of United Presbyterian Church. Her survivors include her husband, Scott; two daughters; her parents; and two sisters, including Peg Smith ’74.

What makes one child follow in her parents’ footsteps and another choose a totally different path? Teresa (Rummett ’94) Van Oosterhout studied this question as it pertains to migrant families for her doctoral dissertation in sociology from Michigan State University. Specifically, she wondered, what motivates some to go to college while others continue doing farm work?

“The main thing is parental influence,” Van Oosterhout says. “If parents are encouraging kids to continue their education, that tends to be what they will do.”

Strong connections outside the close-knit migrant community also matter—a teacher, coach or counselor, or friends already in college. Van Oosterhout’s research was a chance to deepen relationships she had begun building as coordinator of a mentoring program for migrant kids in west Michigan, which has a large population of Hispanic workers for the region’s fruit farms.

“The majority in this area are U.S. citizens and legal residents who are working hard to support their families,” says Van Oosterhout, who now writes grant proposals for the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance. “They’re some of the most dedicated workers I’ve ever heard.”

by Sherris Barber Wilson ’98
Changing Hearts and Minds
by Robert Bogdanffy

During the spring semester, I studied in Washington, D.C., through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities American Studies Program (ASP), I interned at the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), an organization that addresses identity-based conflicts by incorporating religion as part of the solution.

I worked alongside Dr. Douglas Johnston, the president and founder of ICRD and author of a recently published book, Religion, Terror and Error: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Challenge of Spiritual Engagement. He previously directed Harvard University’s Executive Program in National and International Security.

He is also a devout Christian. It was my privilege to learn from him not only many professional lessons, but also about the proper Christian engagement of conflicts in light of our calling to be peacemakers.

My research at ICRD dealt mainly with radicalization as a result of alienation, some of which has given rise to violent extremists. I learned that, when fighting terrorism, it’s important to understand the causes of radicalization and terrorism—causes like injustice, social and individual alienation coupled with political struggle, and a certain amount of Quranic misappropriation. (To be fair, causes like these can also serve as catalysts for democratic change—as they did during the Arab Spring.)

I also learned that the overwhelming majority of Muslims resist extremism just as much as any other sane person. In fact, culturally and religiously, most are admirably devout, hospitable and peaceful.

Compete with one another in doing good works: Whether one believes the Quran or not, isn’t that wise counsel? This is what ICRD is pursuing—initiating a competition of good works instead of fueling an ever-increasing negativity with vitriolic rhetoric.

Although I believe U.S. military actions against tyrannical regimes are commendable, I cannot help but think of the cost in terms of historic debt. The yearly budget allocated for one U.S. soldier is enough to build 20 schools in Afghanistan. Perhaps I lack the understanding of what it truly costs to change a regime, or perhaps in the long run, this will become a telling statistic of an inefficient government and a narrow aperture.

Either way, change cannot come without a shift in thinking, and while this involves many things, it categorically mandates a soft power approach. The fundamental ingredient of this approach is a global citizenry armed with broad knowledge. Anyone who makes an effort to understand someone different from themselves can be part of furthering peace.

How much do we know about the Afghan people? How much do we truly understand the average Muslim’s worldview? There are 1.5 billion Muslims sharing the world with us, and yet the majority of us don’t know the five basic pillars of Islam.

American social writer and philosopher Eric Hoffer said: “A war is not won if the defeated enemy has not been turned into a friend.” After my internship, I believe more than ever in working toward world security through changing people’s hearts and minds—including our own. Micah 6:8 encourages followers of God to do justice and walk humbly. It’s hard to project love and humility with an M16 in your hands.

In one of my ASP classes, Dr. Steve Garber, director of the Washington Institute, challenged us with a vision of Christian engagement that starts with learning more about the world and those sharing the planet with us. He said: “We are called to love the world. Do we love the world enough to learn about it?”

Robert Bogdanffy is a senior political science major from Petrosani, Romania.
For the fourth year in a row, Northwestern College has been named a Groundwater Guardian Green Site by The Groundwater Foundation. Of the 25 U.S. sites honored this year for responsible use of chemicals and water, pollution prevention, and water quality, Northwestern is one of only five colleges.

Northwestern’s water-friendly practices include applying fertilizer based on nutrient analysis, maintaining a no-application zone around surface water and active wells, selecting plants adapted to the region’s climate, disposing of toxic substances properly, and irrigating lawns at night to reduce evaporation.

Northwestern also received a growth award for implementing additional groundwater-friendly practices, including adding two additional detention ponds to capture runoff and challenging students to curb water and energy consumption.