

Augustana

Augustana College
Sioux Falls, SD
57197

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY ANNUAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Summer 2005

FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR...

We lament the resignation of Deb Carlson last January who made the difficult decision to return to the Twin Cities area to be closer to family and other opportunities for her family. She recently accepted a faculty position at Normandale Community College. We wish her the very best. We miss her!

Next year will bring another significant change to the department. Lee Johnson has announced that he will retire at the end of the year after a long and distinguished career spanning 40+ years! The word is also out amongst the students. In response to demand from students wanting to take one last course from this fine teacher, we added a second section of Lee's Comparative Anatomy and Physiology this Fall!

It is hard to contemplate the department without Lee and Deb, but times and lives march on, and so will the department. To this end, we will be conducting two faculty searches this coming year. One of the positions will be in the field of evolutionary developmental biology. Evo-devo is an emerging field in biology right now. With this position, we look forward to maintaining a strong presence in developmental biology within the department, but also attracting someone to teach a course in Evolutionary Biology. Over the years we have had senior

seminar sections that dabble with evolution, but we have never had a regular course offering focused on evolution and we think there would be considerable student interest in such a course. The other faculty search will be in the area of Cell Biology/Biochemistry.

We would appreciate YOUR HELP in letting us know if you are aware of good potential candidates for these tenure track positions. Additional details on the positions may be found on the Biology Dept. web site. Please contact Mike Wanous who will be chairing the searches.

This year we began work in earnest on a plan to expand and renovate the Gilbert Science Center. While the building has served us very well for the last 40 years, it is showing it's age plus

our space needs have changed.

We are in the early stages of a fairly long process. If the actual work start five years from now, that would be fantastic. If you have thoughts please let us know. We have included students and alums in these preliminary discussions and we would WELCOME any thought or ideas that you might have. We will continue to share details as plans unfold.

In the meantime, we are not resting on our laurels with our current building. This past year, we have really enjoyed using a renovated GSC 169 as a flexible classroom/lab (see photos). The large fixed benches were removed and replaced with movable tables which are easily rearranged into



*L to R: (Front) Steve Matzner, Ann Vogelmann, Libby King, Val Olness, Eric Liknes
(Back) Maureen Diggins, Paul Eglund, Amy Lewis, Craig Spencer, Lee Johnson, Deb Carlson*

various configurations throughout the day. For small advanced classes, we often use a horseshoe arrangement, while large classes may use rows or a big circle. For labs, the tables are arranged in pods for small group work, including pull down power cords for use of microscopes, computers, and other equipment. It is amazing how one thing that has come out loud and clear from current biology students is a desire to have more study spaces and “hang-out” spaces in the building. Some departments provide such space, but other than our busy seminar/journal room, we don’t have such space. Rather than waiting for the renovation, we have converted the office in the back of GSC 141 (Mac lab) into a BBB Biology study room. In addition, some booths from the Huddle cafeteria are being installed along the outer walls of the computer lab next to the Biology study room to provide spill-over space for studying and biology group project work. The students seem eager to have some of their “own” study space available next Fall.

Craig Spencer
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Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you happy, well and full of hope for the future. There have been many changes in my and my family’s life this past year, and because of those changes you will not be hearing from me in future newsletters.

Because of my mother’s declining health, I took personal leave from Augie for the spring semester. After seeing how frail she was, I decided that being with her until the end was very important. And so with sadness I resigned my position at Augie. I comfort myself with the possibility that I may return some day. After a serious decline soon after I moved, my Mom has regained some ground so we have some pleasant time left to spend together.

I will always treasure my years at Augie. I learned so much from the community, my colleagues and my students, and there is no way to thank you for that knowledge.

Dan, Jack and I are currently living in my “hometown” Edina, where we have just purchased a home. After a lot of private tutoring and some substitute teaching at the high school level, I start teaching at Normandale Community College in August. Normandale is a well-respected community college in the Twin Cities, yet is nothing like Augie – this position will definitely present a different set of challenges. Jack is going to my old junior high (now called a middle school) and is doing well. He is playing lots of hockey and caddying at Interlachen Country Club (a place I will only be able to visit as a guest and not as a member). Luckily (for his head) we were able to talk him out of lacrosse for the summer, and he plans on returning to soccer next year. Dan is working as a paraprofessional at an elementary school in our district.

For those of you who graduated this year and I

missed at graduation – I wish you success as you embark on a new path! For those of you who I did see at graduation – it was wonderful to send you off in person! Go out there and make a difference! To all of those who keep Augie dear in your hearts, I wish you good health and much happiness!

Peace to all in these troubled times,

Deb Carlson
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Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I can’t believe it is already the end of summer and we are getting ready for the new academic year! The summer has flown by! We had 16 undergraduate biology majors funded to work on research this summer: some with us here at Augustana, some at the USD School of Medicine in Vermillion, and some at USD SOM labs here in Sioux Falls. Fourteen of the students were supported by the BRIN (Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network) grant from NIH. The grant is awarded to the School of Medicine, but Augustana is a primary partner. We have finished the first 3 year phase of the grant and have just completed the first year of Phase II which goes for 5 years.

I was fortunate to work with 3 students this summer. Matt McDougall, from Brookings, SD, worked with me on chronic hyperleptinemia and vascularization of ovarian follicles (using our fat yellow mice, of course). Mitch Weber, from Fremont, NE, worked with Dr. John Brannian and me looking at Pioglitazone treatment of obese yellow mice and possible effects on gene expression and insulin resistance. Finally, Cody Henriksen, from Arlington, SD, worked with Steve Matzner and me, looking at the effects of extracts of *Acorus calamus* on glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity in the obese mice. Some Native Americans feel that a tea made from the roots of this plant help with Type 2 diabetes. In addition to their scientific prowess, all 3 young men are athletes (two wrestlers and a football player) proving that athletes can have brains AND brawn!

I am program coordinator for the four undergraduate schools involved in the BRIN grant and so am supported half time by the grant. We have two wonderful temporary young faculty who help us meet



World Wide Web:

Augie’s Home Page:
<http://www.augie.edu>

Biology Department Home Page:
www.augie.edu/dept/biology/index.html

all our teaching obligations - Dr. Amy Lewis and (soon to be Dr.) Erik Liknes. Erik filled in for us when Deb Carlson left in January to move back to Minnesota with her family. We miss Deb tremendously, not only her kindness and good humor and good teaching, but also for all the many tasks she took on for the department, quietly and efficiently.

Lee Johnson has decided to retire in the fall of 2006, so we will be searching this fall for a developmental biologist as well as a cell biologist/biochemist (Deb's position). What big shoes to fill in both cases!!!

On a positive note, the addition of Dr. Paul Egland to the department has been a great blessing. We lured him away, you may recall, from a postdoc at NIH, and he has taken over the microbiology courses as well as portions of the cell bio course and the introductory bio course. Paul is a gifted teacher, whom the students love, as well as a talented researcher. He works on bacterial interactions in biofilms on teeth and has a recent publication in PNAS (Nov. 2004), if you would like to check it out.

When new faculty start at Augie, the BRIN grant provides a pretty good start up package; so we are about to take possession of a beautiful new confocal microscope. Paul definitely needs it for his research, and several other faculty (both from Augie and the School of Medicine labs here in Sioux Falls) are eager to use it as well. Mike Wanous, who has just returned from a great sabbatical in England at the John Innes Institute, has his eye on the confocal for sure! As we get new, state of the art equipment, we are mindful that our building is 40 years old! The time for renovation and expansion of the Gilbert Science Center is fast approaching (many of us would say it is long overdue). This past year we undertook an architectural study of the existing building and the expansion needs of the science division (funded in large part by a generous alum)! After many meetings with the architects and a trek by the GSC Building

Committee to some colleges in Iowa with new and/or renovated science centers, science faculty and staff and students met with the architects in a charette, an intensive planning and design workshop. One day soon we hope to share the designs with you, via our website. Then will begin the task of fund raising in hopes of breaking ground perhaps five years from now.

A renovation and expansion of GSC will come none too soon. We have talented and enthusiastic students and faculty in all the sciences. In biology, we graduated 39 bright young majors this spring, 20 of whom are going on to graduate or professional schools (a large portion of whom are going into medicine, of course). Opportunities continue to multiply for our graduates who do not go on to graduate or professional schools (at least not immediately). We have at least 10 recent graduates serving as research technicians in School of Medicine labs here in Sioux Falls, including the Cardiovascular Research Institute. We also have alums at EROS data center, Hematech (which clones cattle embryos carrying genes for making human antibodies), and Novartis Pharmaceuticals (which bought out Grand Labs, maker of animal vaccines). All these labs are also good about taking our students part time while they are still undergraduates.

Please do come to visit us whenever possible. And if you know any promising young cell biologists or developmental biologists out there, please urge them to watch for our position announcements in Science this fall. After all, we were fortunate to have Paul apply for our microbiology position urged on by the persistent encouragement of one of our loyal alums (right, Nancy?). Meanwhile, please keep us in your thoughts as you are always in ours.

Cheers!

Maureen Diggins
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Thanks to Departmental Contributors-

A great big thank you to those who made contributions to the Biology Department this past year. These extra funds were used to help remodel an old fixed-bench classroom (GSC 169) into a modern, flexible seating room with state of the art electronics (see photo). We have enjoyed this room immensely. In addition, your contributions helped to fund incubators and dissecting microscopes for teaching labs along with furniture for a Tri-Beta Biology student study room.



Once again this will be a little rushed because my annual summer trip to Maine begins day after tomorrow. This is the fifteenth running of my workshop up there at U. Maine's Darling Marine Center and we have a full complement of colleagues from across the country so it should be interesting as usual. There likely won't be any clam or mussel eating because of the extensive red tide on the East Coast, but the lobsters still should be excellent.

Possibly the most interesting happenings this year have involved planning for the modification and addition to GSC. You no doubt will be hearing more about this elsewhere in this newsletter and in other ways, but I will say that we have had some very inspiring meetings with architects in the concept phase of the project. We have hoped from the beginning to have a compact central core of teaching and research labs that would flow naturally into each other while maintaining an open vista to the outside world. This mix of compactness and openness presented a challenge, but we're very pleased with the concepts that the architects generated. There also are some very forward-looking plans for dedicated student work and study areas. The plan looks both utilitarian and beautiful to this point.

As an alum and a faculty member who has taught and worked in GSC since the day it opened, I feel a particular responsibility in this process. All of us who have received the blessings made possible by the planners and the donors to the current building are challenged to do as well for students of the next forty years. I, for one, sort of feel Sven Froiland and Will and Dilwyn looking over our shoulders. The same could certainly be said for Roy Kintner and V. R. Nelson and others who still could literally look over our shoulders. I enjoyed visiting about all this with some of you in CA and AZ during January and expect that a number of us will be getting together around this project here or there in the near future.

This was an intriguing year of teaching for me especially because I was teamed with two of our bright young faculty members in Biology 120. Eric Liknes is one of our leave replacement faculty members and Paul Eglund is our new microbiologist. I was really impressed with the energy, enthusiasm, and focus that they brought to the job and with the very, very positive responses that they received from students. If the changing of the guard in the Department continues to add such able young people to our already established but still "young" faculty, we will leave this Department in very good hands. By the way, it seems to me that Augustana is assembling an exceptionally strong young faculty across the campus. They make the future look truly bright around here and Augustana's very best years actually could lie just ahead.

We will be searching for two new members this Fall to join the Department in 2006. One will replace Deb Carlson and the other will replace me as next year will be my final year of teaching. There does

eventually come a season for all things and I think (with considerable mixed feelings) this is the time for me to make this life change.

It has been a joy to see a number of you here and in my travels. Please, especially now, stop in if you go by even if for only a brief visit.

Best wishes.

Leland Johnson
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Transitions. I have been thinking about transitions this past year, perhaps because Deb Carlson left the department this year and Lee Johnson is retiring next year. Also I was up for (and received) tenure this past spring. Getting tenure changes one's perspective from thinking about this as a "short-term teaching gig" to actually being the replacement for the likes of Tieszen, Prescott, Blankespoor, Johnson, etc. Except for Maureen Diggins, Johnson's retirement next year will be an almost complete turnover in the Biology Department in the last 15 years. Hopefully the department has maintained and built upon the strengths of the past. I was struck this past year by how much of a legacy lives on in our curriculum, our department philosophy, and even scholarships. Every spring we have the enjoyable (but usually not easy) task of selecting the Froiland, Rosine, and Rogers scholarship awardees. These scholarships reflect their namesakes as the Froiland is given out to promising freshmen, the Rosine to a "well-rounded" junior biology major, and the Rogers to a major with strong interests in ecology/environmental issues. Legacies live on in smaller ways as well. One thing that got me thinking along these lines was finding some of Dilwyn Roger's slides in a drawer in the ecology lab. Including some of my slides with his, I put together a plant biomes slideshow for my plant ecology class. Tiezen's legacy lives on in the "Plant of the Day" which I still incorporate into lectures. I think of Gil Blankespoor every time I take a class on a field trip to Makece or Cactus Hills/Great Bear, especially as I am leading them up a particularly steep hillside. I think of Lansing Prescott whenever I dole out 1/4 points and Oscar Will whenever I am in the middle of a particularly good lecture and catch myself rolling up my sleeves/taking off my wristwatch. I plan on writing down some of the stories that Johnson and Diggins tell in Biology 121 this year. I think my personal favorite is the Johnson story about the Australian kids that ran through the jungle "collecting" land leaches on their legs then jumping into the ocean to watch them DIE in the salt water.

On the research front, I had two student research papers published in the South Dakota Academy of Science with Katie Derr (2003) and Laura Gooch (2006) and am working on the manuscripts from a couple of previous year's projects. I have two research projects this summer. Elizabeth Kaspar (Sr, Lincoln NE) is working with a graduate student at SDSM&T, myself and Drs. Lee and Kerri Vierling at the University of Idaho trying to understand the connection between avian abundance and diversity (using avian point counts) and

3-D forest structure (using laser scanning technology) in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Meghan Calhoon (2004) is also assisting with this project and will begin graduate studies (U. of Idaho) this fall.

Cody Henriksen (Sr, Arlington, SD) is working with me on another collaborative project with Dr. Maureen Diggins and Dr. Neil Reese (SDSU). We are using the lethal yellow mice which suffer from adult onset obesity and Type II diabetes. The goal of this project is to assess the potential of *Acorus callamus* (a plant with reported medicinal properties) in treating Type II diabetes. Specifically we will be looking at whether a "tea" made from *Acorus* rhizomes has any effect on glucose or insulin levels in the lethal yellow mice.

As for some updates from this past year, perhaps the most memorable project from my plant ecology class looked at whether goldenrod stems (infected with the gall fly) were less resistant to xylem cavitation. This requires spinning the stems in our centrifuge (in a specially designed rotor). This worked well until the stem broke and the gall started flying around inside the rotor, causing the centrifuge to be unbalanced. Luckily the two students (who for the interests of making sure they do get their diplomas shall remain nameless) were able to hit the stop button on the centrifuge, but it did do nearly \$2000 damage to the centrifuge. I taught Plant Function and Structure as a writing component this past spring (so I now teach two W-component courses). Graduation seemed particularly difficult this past year. I'm always a bit sad at graduation, but I had apparently become quite attached to this year's group of seniors and will miss them very much. We had our "Summer Research Party at the Matzners" in June with at least 30 people attending (both biology and chemistry persons). I made a "butter chicken", my "chickpea curry" and featured a "vindiloo" which is a vinegar-based curry. Two former classmates, Elizabeth Mathew (1991) and Karin Matchet (1989), stopped by this summer and I enjoyed catching up with each of them.

Home life has been equally challenging, especially when Jetty leaves me several times a year for American Chemical Society Meetings (she somehow got on to 3 different national committees). We did have a nice break from the kids in April as my parents watched them while Jetty and I went to the live broadcast of Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion". My message "Thanks LaVonne and Norval for watching the grandkids, we are in the Jacuzzi suite tonight" actually was read by Mr. Keillor on the air. My oldest turned double digits this past year! Both Daniel and Josh have been taking Karate after school (I'm not sure if this was a good idea as they seem to really enjoy practicing on dad). Luke seems to be following in the footsteps of his older brothers in his love of anything dinosaur and his propensity for head injuries (he has a lovely shiner right now). Hope this finds you well.

Best wishes.

Steve Matzner
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I am writing from my sabbatical at the John Innes Centre in Norwich, England. Our family has spent the last year here and it has been an amazing opportunity filled with both wonderful discoveries and some challenges. The history here is wonderful. For example, in the village of Wymondham where we live, we have an abbey (church) built in 1107 and a pub, the Green Dragon, built in the 1300s. It has been fun exploring the U.K. and some of the continent. There are many cultural differences between the U.S. and the U.K., which surprised us. It is said that we are two countries divided by a common language. We have also had the privilege of visiting friends in Madrid, Paris, and Prague.

My research has focused on understanding how homologous chromosomes recognize each other to pair properly in meiosis. In wheat, the situation is complicated by the fact that the plants have six sets of chromosomes. (We have two sets, one from mom and one from dad.) Using in situ hybridization of DNA probes to chromosomes, I have obtained some beautiful photos of chromosomes in the various stages of pairing in meiosis. Another opportunity this year was serving on a National Science Foundation grant review panel in Washington, D.C. It was an honor to contribute to this important selection process, and also to learn more about the NSF and the grant review process from the inside.

I look forward to the coming academic year as I assume the responsibility of department chair. I am excited for the opportunity to lead this dedicated community of scholars as we continue to strive for excellence in teaching our students.

Mike Wanous
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**CONGRATULATIONS TO
2004-2005
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS !**

Sven G. Froiland Scholarship in Biology

Aaron Burkhardt	Sioux Falls, SD
Kelly Larson	Brandon, SD
Mark List	Beemer, NE
Nick Masyga	Wells, MN

Dilwyn Rogers Ecology Scholarship

Kari Pabst	Sioux Falls, SD
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Will Rosine Memorial Scholarship

Sarah Demke	Rock Valley, IA
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Y.T. Johnson Pre-Medical School Schol.

Andrew Ellsworth	Madison, SD
Aaron Graumann	Sioux Falls, SD
Matthew McDougall	Volga, SD
Angela Mattke	Spicer, MN
Abbey Mello	Yankton, SD
Nicholas Milanovich	Dickinson, ND
Andrew Neilson	Yankton, SD
Jennifer Onberg	Rosemount, MN
Jacob Quail	Volga, SD
Colleen Zimmermann	Sioux Falls, SD

I guess an introduction is in order. I'm Paul Eglund, the new microbiology professor here in the Biology Department. I moved here along with my wife, Kristi, and daughter, Claire, just in time for the fall semester of 2005. Prior to moving to Sioux Falls, Kristi and I were both postdoctoral fellows at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. Kristi now has her own lab in South Dakota Health Research Foundation and is an assistant professor at the USD School of Medicine. We're enjoying being back in the Midwest, and life in Sioux Falls. Compared to what we were used to in the Washington D.C. area, it's certainly a peaceful, safe and relaxed community. We really appreciate being closer to our families in Iowa and Minnesota, too.

My major responsibility here at Augustana is teaching our two microbiology courses, as well as team teaching in our core courses for biology majors. The switch from full time research at the NIH to teaching at a small college was a bit of culture shock, but team-teaching with veteran Lee Johnson in Biol. 120, and having lots of help and support from Libby King in the micro courses was reassuring and made it very enjoyable. It's great to be able to teach a smart bunch of kids about my favorite topics. Outside class, I serve as a co-advisor, along with Craig Spencer, to the Tri-Beta club. It's been a fun way to get to know the students.

On the research front, I am continuing my research on interactions among oral bacteria that I started during my postdoctoral fellowship at the NIH. In short, I study metabolic interactions that occur between different species of bacteria that compose dental plaque. I have found that two of the species of bacteria that are found in dental plaque send signals to each other, resulting in changes in gene expression. Kelley Vannatta (2006, Owatonna, MN) is working with me this summer on understanding how and why these two species communicate with each other. Our research was supported this summer by the NIH BRIN grant. Speaking of BRIN, the grant has provided funding that allowed me to purchase a new confocal scanning laser microscope for the department. Making a big purchase like this is a real thrill to a microbiologist! Several of us in the department, as well as a few scientists from other institutions in the area, are looking forward to using it for our research. It will be one of only about four confocal microscopes in the whole state, and it's right here at Augustana!

I've enjoyed meeting graduates and friends of the department. Please stop on campus if you're in the area.

Paul Eglund
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BIOLOGY FACULTY SEARCH

We ask for your help in spreading the word about 2 tenure track searches this coming year. Closing date is October 7, 2005. For more information contact the chair: mike.wanous@augie.edu or call him at 605-274-4712

Assistant Professor–EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY.

Augustana College invites applications for a tenure-track position in the Department of Biology to begin September 2006. Duties include teaching 2 courses each semester. These are developmental biology, evolutionary biology, team-taught introductory biology courses, and possibly a course in the candidate's specialty during our January term. While teaching is a major component of the position, productive research involving undergraduates is expected and is a long-standing tradition in the department. The college is situated in an area experiencing rapid growth in biomedical, biotech, agricultural, and environmental research; offering collaboration opportunities in various research areas. Applicants must possess a Ph.D. A commitment to the mission of a church-related liberal arts college is expected.

Assistant Professor– CELL BIOLOGY-BIOCHEMISTRY.

Augustana College invites applications for a tenure-track position in the Department of Biology to begin September 2006. Duties include teaching 2 courses each semester. These are cell biology, biochemistry, team-taught introductory biology courses, and possibly a course in the candidate's specialty during our January term. While teaching is a major component of the position, productive research involving undergraduates is expected and is a long-standing tradition in the department. The college is situated in an area experiencing rapid growth in biomedical, biotech, agricultural, and environmental research; offering collaboration opportunities in various research areas. Applicants must possess a Ph.D. A commitment to the mission of a church-related liberal arts college is expected.

Our Faculty Associates:

Libby King, M.A. from Univ. of Missouri at Kansas City; Certified as Specialist in Microbiology by, and member of, American Society of Clinical Pathologists. Libby began with Augustana in 1994 and teaches labs in General Microbiology and Genetics in the fall and labs in Introductory Microbiology and Cell Biology in the spring. In addition, Libby serves as a technician for the department, preparing labs for the introductory courses as well as microbiology, genetics, and cell biology.

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Amy Lewis, Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from South Dakota State University. Amy joined the Biology Department in the fall of 2004 as an Assistant Professor. This past year she taught Biology and Human Concerns, Biological Principles I, Ornithology, and team taught Intro to Environmental Science last Interim.

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Eric Liknes, M.A. in Biology from the University of South Dakota. He is currently working towards a Ph.D. in Biology at U.S.D. Eric also joined the Biology Department as an Assistant Professor in the fall of 2004. He has taught Biology and Human Concerns, Biological Principles I, Cell Biology, and Biological Chemistry. During Interim he team taught Winter Ecology and Outdoor Adventure.

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Ann Vogelmann, Ph.D. in Plant Sciences from Indiana University. Ann served as a Faculty Associate with Augustana in 1997-98 and Adjunct Assistant Professor from 2000 - present. She has taught the Human Anatomy and Intro to Environmental Science courses. She also teaches labs in Human Physiology and Biological Principles I and II.

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2005 Science Education Update!

It is August and, thus, my well-being is threatened due to non-compliance with newsletter deadlines. Consequently, there will be a return to the Cliff Notes version!!!!!!

Travel:

- 2004 and so far in 2005, has seen me accruing an enormous number of frequent flyer miles! Thailand in January of 2004 to set up the Interim course: Thailand in the 21st Century – a Contradiction of Cultures.
- Brazil in the summer of 2004 for a couple of weeks – our first rainforest experience was thrilling, but not so thrilling as the journey!!! I got bumped from the flight in Washington DC and, because my husband had a meeting scheduled at the conference in Brazil the following day, we made the decision to split. This would have been an uneventful split IF the conference had been in Sao Paulo. Unfortunately, the conference was a 3 hour drive away with buses provided by the conference organizers – buses which were only available for 24 hours, and I was arriving 24 hours too late!!! When my husband learned of this he gallantly decided to “miss” the provided transportation and meet my plane (we had managed to communicate long enough to convey this vital information). Unfortunately he waited at the wrong terminal!!!! I thought he had gone on ahead as planned and, even though my Portuguese is non-existent and there appeared to be very few Brazilians at the airport who spoke English, I gathered that the only options I had to reach my destination were (a) to get to the bus station and take a bus or (b) take a very expensive taxi ride. I opted for option b primarily because I had all the luggage (when they bumped me they also off-loaded my husband’s luggage), and the image of me hauling more bags than I had hands from bus to bus did not excite me. In the meantime, my husband had an APB out with United airlines – discovered I had arrived

and was nowhere to be found, so he opted for public transportation (easy because all he was carrying was his briefcase). Both of us experienced our fair share of anxiety on our respective trips – for different reasons – particularly when I arrived ahead of my husband and discovered he was not where I thought he would be!!! But there was a happy ending – the conference was a success – we even got in some exciting horseback riding and, because my souvenir shopping funds had been decimated by the taxi ride, my husband was spared the agony this trip!!! Perhaps I should write a book!!!!!! Our side trip to Iguassu Falls and the rainforest was, however, blissfully uneventful but ecologically delightful.

- January 2005 saw the implementation of the interim course - Thailand in the 21st Century – a Contradiction of Cultures. It turned out to be a very eclectic experience indeed. Because of the majors of the students involved – primarily nursing and pre-med – some last minute changes were put in place and several school visits were replaced with health care visits. We spent the first week in Bangkok exploring the culture, customs, and food and making a South Dakota/Native American presentation to both the high school and middle/elementary school attached to Chulalonghorn University. King Chulalonghorn was the prince in the movie the King and I, (the number one son) who was educated by the English governess, Anna, and who went on to “Europeanize” Thailand – his influence was indeed dramatic!! By the way, the Thai people disavow the events in the movie as pure fiction – Anna and her son were real, but the reality ends there!!!!!!

We then traveled to Khao Yai National Park for a few days of bird-watching and elephant spotting. The difference in the ecology and the climate were dramatic to say the least, and a welcome break from the overwhelming heat and humidity of Bangkok. We then

made a long road trip to northern Thailand, based in the Chiang Mai region, where the elevation made the climate much more conducive to pleasant temperaments! We visited rural health institutions, from the very primitive and terribly under-equipped, to the better equipped but still extremely understaffed. All are working hard in prevention as well as treatment of all diseases and illnesses, but are particularly concerned with AIDS. One of the centers even had an ongoing AIDS research project with John Hopkins University. We made a hair-raising trip in the mountains (the border between Thailand and Myanmar), to visit a couple of hillside tribes where we looked at both their education and healthcare services and their hillside agriculture – it’s amazing how much they can accomplish with, what we would consider, primitive facilities! Despite language barriers we seemed to communicate well – dancing with the ladies of the tribe (in full native costume), talking with their “head-man”, buying from their little store, and being treated to a display of local music and opium pipe smoking (generally frowned upon in Thailand). The “chief” lady of the tribe was quite taken with my freckles (with which I am well-endowed) – touching my arms and face with a look of concern on her face (I suppose she thought I had some kind of skin disease). The Hillside terraced agriculture is an attempt to stop the slash and burn approach and educate the tribal farmers in alternative ways to conserving what is left of the Montagne rainforest. We made a long trek down the mountain to the terraced fields and, it seemed, an even longer one back!!!! We also were entertained by the wife of the farmer in their hut on stilts – which was basically a huge one roomer accommodating parents and nine children – some of whom were grown and married - but which had a television!!!!!! We also made the obligatory visit to the infamous Golden Triangle and spent a few days in Chiang Rai – where we again contributed mightily to the local economy – and discovered the karaoke talents of at least one of our group!! Back in the heat and humidity of Bangkok we learned more about the health care system of Thailand visiting two very different healthcare facilities – a very modern and well-equipped private hospital and a public hospital which was not so well-equipped, but very crowded. We were extremely well-treated and well-fed wherever we went in Thailand and we brought half of Thailand back with us - I feared being denied access to the plane. There was little reference to the tsunami and

its effects the whole time we were there. My Thai counterpart said the best way to help was not to stay away – we did our share to keep the Thai economy afloat!! All in all – a very successful experience with nobody getting sick from the food or drink, and only two scares where passports are concerned!!!!

I made yet another Asian trip in April – this time to South Korea for the wedding of our youngest son. This time my husband and I managed to complete the trip together!!!! I have logged enough Asian air miles to last me for a while but I assume in another 12 months I shall get the wanderlust again.....we’ll see.

Life at “the little house on the prairie” is much different these days. My husband retired from the USDA after 37 years and, after 15 years of maintaining two residences in two different states, we are “consolidated”. So far we have managed a peaceful coexistence!! We just had an old fashioned “wall raising” – all our sons, wives, and grandchildren congregated at the “little house on the prairie” to build the sorely needed retaining walls. We moved 40 tons of rock in less than a week and it held up to a rainstorm!!!!!! I’m now in the throes of planning what perennials to plant – lots of South Dakota natives you can bet.

The quote for the 2005 is:
 “It is one of the most beautiful compensations

of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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The Biology Department was well represented at the South Dakota Academy of Science Meeting on April 8 - 9, 2005. Fifteen biology majors participated in the poster session at this meeting.

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