The Courage to Change
by Mark Putnam, Central College president

“Together, we embrace the possible. For the courage to change is Central.”

Most meetings are not memorable. From time to time, however, something happens that sticks with us. We remember the circumstances not because of the content of the discussion—but for the moment of discovery. For me, these are usually circumstances in which a single phrase can change everything, for better or for worse.

Years ago, I served on a project team to prepare for the implementation of a new campus-wide administrative software system. My role was to offer insights into technical-focused colleagues as I often thought of an adjustment that could serve the organization well. One day, as we were reviewing the scope and schedule of the project, a team member said in exasperation, “We will get this project done on time and on budget, as long as we don’t have any more bright ideas.”

The project indeed was completed on time and on budget, but it failed in many respects to serve the broader needs of the organization.

By contrast, I was in a meeting a few years later with a different set of colleagues considering the possibility of developing a new educational program. This was a seasoned group of leaders, and we were quite equal to the task presented. As we deliberated, one of our team members looked at the rest of us and said, “We know we can do this, and it’s easy. So let’s try something hard.” We all smiled and took up the challenge for the sake of being demanding of ourselves and pushing our thinking to a higher level. Ideas surfaced, and our ambitions were more fully expressed. This project also was completed—but at a level of success beyond what we would have anticipated.

Each challenge and opportunity we encounter usually presents us with a range of options. Sometimes it makes sense to keep it simple, remembering that “perfect is the enemy of good.” Yet there are those occasions when, if we don’t push for something more, we lose out on a chance to do something great. Discernment is what separates the two, and it takes collective wisdom to determine the best course.

I admire those who push themselves, those who seem willing to step outside circumstances not because of the content but for the moment of discovery. For me, these are usually circumstances in which a single phrase can change everything, for better or for worse.
AROUND THE POND

 Tradition is Central

What's your birthday worth without a dunk in the Pond? It's seemingly random but always awesome traditions like this that make Dutch life truly Dutch. In the 160 years since Central was founded, faculty and students have created educational and outrageous traditions fondly remembered by alumni and, in some cases, still celebrated by students today.

PIETENPOL CUP

Women's sports weren't always prominent at Central—and women were craving competition! Dean Henry Pietenpol started the Pietenpol Cup to provide such an opportunity to the young ladies. The contest between freshmen and sophomores was to let the underclassmen guys show off their strength—and maybe impress the ladies a bit. A game of tug-of-war, the Frosh-Soph Pull often didn't include football players for fear of injury, but many other games on campus got fueled up to take on the competition. Timmer fondly remembers his time spent out at the pond—and in it. "The water was dirty and often very cold," he says. "I know by experience."

CENTRAL EXPLORES STUDY ABROAD PARTNERSHIPS IN BRAZIL

The Institute of International Education has selected Central for the 2013 Brazil initiative of their International Academic Partnership Program. The college will participate in a year-long series of training activities to learn how to implement and sustain partnerships with institutions in Brazil. The program will culminate with a study tour to Brazil in spring 2013 to meet with potential partner campuses.

"Not only is Brazil rich in cultural and environmental diversity, but it is hard to ignore Brazil's growing influence regionally and globally as a consequence of its rapid economic, political and social transformation," says Lyn Issacson, associate dean for global education.

Central will explore a range of educational settings in Brazil to identify the best fit between institutions and the types of partnerships that would be of mutual benefit. Options might include student exchanges, short or long-term enrollment options, internships, service-learning, field-based work or other experiential learning opportunities and opportunities for faculty to develop and share expertise.

SON OF ALUMNUS RETURNS FOR HORN RECITAL

In October, Randall Faust, professor of music at Western Illinois University and a hornist of the Camerata Woodwind Quintet and LaMome Brass Quintet, was in-residence at Central and a guest artist at the Sunday Concert Series. The son of Claire E. Faust ’41, Randall never attended Central, but the college

still holds a special place in his heart as the first campus he ever visited. As a child, Randall attended numerous concerts of his father’s former students studying at Central.

Faust offered his recital as a gesture of his family’s gratitude to Central, where his father played with the orchestra. Students were able to work with Faust during two recitals in which they received feedback from the original composer, and they also attended master classes and music lessons with Faust.

A number of faculty members contributed to the performances, as well. Associate professors of music Mark Babcock and Cynthia Doggett accompanied Faust on the organ and clarinet, respectively. Claudia Anderson, adjunct instructor of music, accompanied Faust on flute and Paul Kovacovic, assistant professor of music, joined in on piano.

"I really enjoyed my recent residency at Central College," said Faust. "It was a pleasure to meet President Putnam, associate dean for global education, and often very cold," he says. "I know by experience."

"After all these years, the Groundhog Day scene is still a huge hit with the students," says Fegley. "You can visualize a huge mob of lemmings all trying to squeeze onto that little cliff at the same time—mass chaos and lots of lemmings falling into the pond!"

Although the tradition has changed today, the costume-clad participants still carry on the spirit of the original race. "I think it's great. A really fun and totally inane tradition!" Fegley says of today's race. "It's clear that succeeding generations of lemmings, including both of my kids, have had every bit as much fun with the race as we did in the late '70s!

THE FROSH-SOPH PULL

With juniors and seniors dominating the athletic fields, the Frosh-Soph Pull lets the underclassmen guys show off their strength—and maybe impress the ladies a bit. A game of tug-of-war, the losing team was dumped in the Vermeer pond. Held in the fall every year, the Frosh-Soph Pull often didn't include

natural something like...
ATHLETICS UPDATES

Highest national finish, first men’s cross country conference title for Central

The Central men’s cross country team doesn’t expect to wait another 32 years for an NCAA Division III national meet appearance. Qualifying for the first time since 1980, the surprising Dutch used an all-underclass lineup to capture 13th at the NCAA meet in Terre Haute, Ind. Nov. 17, the best program’s future.

Sophomore Eli Horton earned all-Iowa Conference honors. Central finished with 33 points and Joe Dunham took coach of the year honors. Horton was named the league MVP, used a dominant performance to win the program’s first-ever Iowa Conference title. Horton was named the league MVP, and Joe Dunham took coach of the year honors. Central finished with 33 points with defending champ Loras next at 50.

Topping last season’s 10-7-1 mark, the Dutch were 12-6-2 in 2012, tying the school season wins record. Mike Kobylianski, in his second year, shared Iowa Conference coach of the year honors.

Junior forward Alayna Bailey was a first-team all-league pick, while sophomore midfielder Emily Saville was named to the second team. Bailey scored a team-high six goals and ranks third on the school career scoring chart.

The Dutch were fourth in the league and won their first conference tourney game since 2007 when Liz Daniels knocked home the winner with just 5 seconds remaining for a 2-1 triumph over Simpson.

SURPRISING CENTRAL MEN’S SOCCER TEAM REACHES FINALS

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But the Dutch had to play without the team’s No. 1 player, sophomore Taylor Hill, who was sidelined by illness. The team still managed a third-place finish, freshmen Cheleshy Shroy and Emily Fisher were second- and third- place finishers, respectively. Smith and Van Tasell made huge strides after finishing 15th and 25th, respectively, a year earlier. They led Central to the Buena Vista Invitational title and a second-place showing at the Central Fall Invitational.

DUTCH WOMEN’S TENNIS TEAM SHOWS PROMISE

Coach Steve Tyler is excited about the future of the Central women’s tennis program.

With four freshmen and two sophomores in the team’s top seven, the Dutch posted an 8-4 dual mark and were fifth in the Iowa Conference standings.

Rockies Angler Allgood and Megan Davis were the team’s top two players while team captain Chelsea Johnson, who played at No. 3, was the lone senior in the lineup. Another freshman, Anna Bowser, reached the finals in the B Flight of the league tournament.

ZEMPEL NAMED TO ALL-LEAGUE VOLLEYBALL SQUAD

Freshman libero Tori Zempel earned all-Iowa Conference honors for the Central volleyball squad.

Zempel ranked second in the conference in digs with 4.72 per set, with a season-best 42 against Webster (No. 3).

Central again qualified for the six-team Iowa Conference tournament—the Dutch have never failed to gain a berth—but injuries and a daunting schedule contributed to an inconsistent 9-20 campaign. Six seniors will be lost to graduation.
Alumni with unbreakable spirits persevere through adversity most people can’t even imagine. In the process, they discover the people and places they call home.

“Life is never going to be easy. At some point it will get hard, but if you keep pushing, you’ll get there. And when you get there, you’ll look back and say it wasn’t really hard.”

Photos by Paul Gates
WINTER 2013

Alumni and Adversity

"THE SOUND OF BULLETS"

The August 2012 day Freenaz '07 presented his master's dissertation at the University of Damascus, he almost died several times.

On his return trip home to a small town near Damascus, Syria, he found all four checkpoints into the city closed. At one, an elderly driver trying to hide his way through had a Russian rifle held to his head. Freenaz approached the soldier and put his hand on the gun. “Take it easy,” he advised. But the soldier yelled that he would shoot Freenaz, too. He backed away. “I don’t know what happened to that old man,” Freenaz says. “I sometimes see him in my dreams.”

At the last checkpoint, a soldier shot 25 rounds above Freenaz's car, as a warning not to approach. As a last resort to get home to his wife and infant son, Freenaz drove through the bushes. A sniper shot his car. “I was chosen for a scholarship from the U.S. Department of State. The goal of the program was to give students from other regions a better understanding of U.S. institutions, society and culture. Central College hosted Freenaz for his junior and senior years. At Central, I was the ambassador of my country in the U.S., trying to help my American friends understand my culture,” says Freenaz. “I tried to mirror the culture of the Middle East, which is the land of the major religions.”

To be a better ambassador, Freenaz was determined to get involved on campus. He became a resident advisor, a member of the Student Senate, a student representative on the board of trustees and assistant president of the International Club. “Freenaz was a very bright student and really well-liked on campus,” says Debra Hunt ‘03, former international student coordinator at Central. “He was the kind of person who could break through cultural barriers with ease and educated a lot of American students to have a better understanding of the Middle Eastern people.”

AGAIN AN AMBASSADOR

After graduation, Freenaz returned home to Syria. “I made a firm commitment to stay there and use my American education to help build bridges between the American and Syrian cultures,” he says. “This time I was the ambassador of the Americans in Syria.”

This, if anything, was harder than his first task. Syrians do not have a positive spin on about Western culture, particularly the United States. “They only know Americans through movies and official news, which portray Americans as evil, bloodthirsty, materialistic, ill-mannered people,” says Freenaz. “The media brainwashed Syrians to hate the Americans.”

Freenaz did his best to make the people around him see the true picture of American culture—what he had witnessed at Central. He felt he could connect the two cultures through teaching. Freenaz taught middle school while earning his master's degree. Life was pretty good for him in Syria; he had a job and he was getting an education. But the same could not be said for most of his countrymen. “The close circle around the president owned everything,” he says.

THE ARAB SPRING

In the wake of protests and revolutions throughout the Middle East in the spring of 2011, demonstrations began in Syria in March. Freenaz says the first protests were peaceful and that none of the demonstrators were armed; following the lead of other mass protests throughout the region.

“During the first protests that came out in my area, nine people were killed,” he says. “I saw the Syrian forces shooting on protesters. I saw three of the nine collapsing on the ground after bullets had run through their bodies. However, the official news of the government claimed it was outsiders. They said it was foreign armed gangs paid by America, who killed Syrians so that the Syrians hate their government.”

SNIPERS AND SHRAPNEL

The government responded to the peaceful protests with heavy-handed force. In the summer of 2011, the Free Syrian Army was formed by deserting soldiers and civilians opposed to the government. Since then, the country has descended into full-blown civil war. According to the New York Times, nearly 40,000 people, mostly civilians, are thought to have died in the conflict; tens of thousands have been arrested, and hundreds of thousands have been displaced as refugees.

The rebel forces have been gaining ground, as well as international favor. Although divided by ethnicity, religious and political differences, the rebel factions created a united group in November, which the U.S. has officially recognized.

Freenaz has witnessed much of the violence firsthand. One evening, ten seconds after saying goodnight, his neighbor was shot in the stomach. Other family members and friends of Freenaz have been tortured or injured by shrapnel at protests.

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DEATH OR ESCAPE?

After witnessing so much violence, nothing else seemed to matter. Freenaz was convinced that he was destined to die in the fight for freedom. He wanted to speak out for freedom and democracy—the ideals he learned in America and at Central. Even though it would mean his death.

It was then that he heard from his dear friend Zach Wagner ’10. It was a fateful moment—because Zach had a different perspective. Zach believed that Syria didn’t need another voice for freedom right now. The guns would only silence Freenaz. Instead, Syria would need intelligent, free-thinking people to help rebuild the country once the conflict was over, people like Freenaz.

It didn’t take too much convincing. After all, Freenaz loved his wife and son. He didn’t want to die. He decided to leave Syria.

Wagner got in touch with old contacts at Central, including Jim Zaffiro, professor of political science, who set the legendary Central network moving. Before long, they had raised nearly $4,000 for Freenaz and his family so they could make the trip to Egypt.

Freenaz and his wife and son arrived safely in Cairo in September. His parents and sister’s family, including five children, joined them in November. The alum couldn’t be more grateful to his fellow Dutch for what they did for him and his family.

“It is with your help that I decided to get out,” he says. “I was preferring death with dignity fighting for freedom with my tongue over ending up in a refugee camp or begging in the streets of another country. I am more needed for my country in the future. I am needed when the new page of Syria is opened.”

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“Cancer forces us to re-order our priorities. It teaches us that life is a blessing and that we shouldn’t let a single moment go unlived.” That is the philosophy of Above and Beyond Cancer, a non-profit that organizes adventure-based programs for cancer survivors. It is also what Corey McMordie ’02 has learned from his battle with cancer. And what he reaffirmed within three months. It was a great loss. Corey’s encounter with cancer has encompassed more than 25 years and several dear family members. When he was just five years old, his grandfather was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. The two were extremely close, and Corey spent long hours working on projects in his grandfather’s garage. The older man continued on with a bright smile and a fierce determination. But 10 years later, his grandfather was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away from a rare secondary cancer in his small intestine. “Although he is gone, I still carry his spirit with me, smiling through all the challenges life throws my way,” says Corey. While dealing with the grief from his father’s death, Corey began experiencing the first symptoms of what would eventually be diagnosed as Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Before it was over, he would go through two lymphadenectomies, several rounds of intense chemotherapy, a drug trial, a stem cell transplant and, finally, radiation therapy. The pain and frustration he experienced were intense.

Side effects from the stem cell transplant included chills, fever, cramping, nausea, vomiting, aching all over, chest tightness, shortness of breath, headache, rapid heartbeat, decreased blood pressure and much more. Without an appetite, Corey didn’t eat for two weeks and lost 15 pounds. He barely had enough strength to stand. It took nearly two months from the date of his transplant for his sense of taste and strength to return to normal.

Following in the footsteps of his courageous family members, he tried to stay cheerful. “I’ll never forget laughing with friends as we went through a box of wigs that had been donated, despite how I was feeling,” says Corey. His mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She had a year of treatment before going into remission. Her recovery was a great relief to the McMordie family. But three years later, Corey’s father was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died at home from his battle with cancer. And what he reaffirmed during the trip, Corey struggled with altitude sickness, but it was worth the view from the top. At Crater Camp, down inside the non-active volcano cone, the group hung flags across the glacier for those who had passed away from cancer, including Corey’s own family members, and those who were fighting cancer at the time.

“I think I gained a new perspective on life and on being more compassionate,” says Corey. “On this trip, we all shared something in common—we had all been touched by cancer. It was neat to meet other people who had been down that same journey.”

CANCER IS HERE TO STAY

Since returning from Tanzania, Corey has stayed involved with Above and Beyond Cancer, while continuing to work at Wells Fargo in West Des Moines. He participated in Race Across America, supporting eight cyclists as they biked from coast to coast and taking 12-hour shifts as a driver. He also ran the seven-mile Living History Farms Off-Road Race in November with the Above and Beyond team.

In June, Corey plans to push himself even further, participating in a coast-to-coast marathon relay. He will run his first-ever marathon somewhere in the Midwest and then pass the baton off to the next runner making their way across the country. Each of the marathoners, including Corey, is raising money for cancer research in support of his run.

“As a survivor, cancer will always play a role in my life,” says Corey. “I will always carry with me the memories of those I have lost and honor those who have survived. I have my grandfather’s smile, my mother’s drive and my father’s sense of humor. It is those traits they shared with me in the face of adversity that gave me the strength to overcome my own personal battles.”

“What advice do you have for people going through hardship right now?”

“Go out there and live each day to the fullest. You never know what tomorrow is going to bring. There’s no limit to what you’re capable of accomplishing. If you can get through some of those hard spots, you can go on to accomplish great things.” – Corey McMordie ’02, cancer survivor

“I think a lot of people are facing hardship. I think everybody is. You have to make yourself get up every day and say one positive thing that’s going to happen today.” – Sheila Holzworth ’84, blind competitive athlete

“Life is never going to be easy. At some point it will get hard, but if you keep pushing, you’ll get there. And when you get there, you’ll look back and say it wasn’t really hard.” – Omer Ali ’12, Sudanese refugee

“Corey’s cancer has now been in remission for more than four years. Filled with a new love for life, he took advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to spend two weeks in Africa last January and climb Mount Kilimanjaro, the fourth-tallest peak in the world and the highest on the continent. In Tanzania, the Above and Beyond group spent time learning about the culture of the Chagga and Maasai tribes, which Corey particularly enjoyed. They spent seven days on the mountain, traversing bamboo forests, old lava flows, an immense crater and a barren desert before finally reaching the summit at sunrise. During the trip, Corey struggled with altitude sickness, but it was worth the view from the top. At Crater Camp, down inside the non-active volcano cone, the group hung flags across the glacier for those who had passed away from cancer, including Corey’s own family members, and those who were fighting cancer at the time.”

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When his uncle came over to say his father would be calling the next day, Omer Ali ’12 hadn’t seen his dad in more than two years. In truth, the 10-year-old Sudanese boy wasn’t even sure his father was alive. Omer is one of eight children and two cousins who for many years lived with him like brothers. He was born in Sudan, right on the border of what is now two separate nations—Sudan and South Sudan. For many years, Omer’s father was a high official in the government, until that government fell out of power. He was one of the first leaders kicked out the country.

The Ali children were used to not seeing their dad for months at a time, but they always heard from him after a while. Now, it had been two years, and they were convinced the new government had finally caught up with him. When Omer’s family finally talked with their father the next day, on the only phone in the neighborhood, his news was surprising—and hard to take. He wanted to call the next day, Omer Ali ’12 hadn’t seen his dad in more than two years. In truth, the 10-year-old Sudanese boy wasn’t even sure his father was alive. Omer is one of eight children and two cousins who for many years lived with him like brothers. He was born in Sudan, right on the border of what is now two separate nations—Sudan and South Sudan. For many years, Omer’s father was a high official in the government, until that government fell out of power. He was one of the first leaders kicked out the country.

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SIGHTED WORLD
Sheila grew up in northern Des Moines, right on the edge of the countryside, where her parents own 10 acres. She describes herself and her five siblings as “pretty wild,” running through the ravines and woods with their hunting dogs and horses.

But the household was disciplined, as well. When Sheila was blinded at age 10 in a freak accident caused by orthodontic equipment, she was expected to keep up with her chores—scooping dog kennels and cooking dinner on Thursday nights. After spending several weeks in the hospital, she was so eager to get home that she didn’t even seem a burden.

“Kids are very resilient,” says Sheila. “I never remember this major bump in the road or this major tragedy. My parents had six kids; they couldn’t treat me any different. My dad told me, ‘You live in a sighted world, and you are whole. I see. You go to heaven and you are whole. I will probably look at myself and say ‘Holy Cow! Why didn’t they tell me to comb my hair?’”

GOING DOWNHILL
It’s true that Sheila’s natural rebellious streak continued at Central—she would stop by Jaarsma Bakery with friends at 4 a.m. for broken pieces of pastries—but she also settled down and discovered better ways to use her competitive nature.

“I was very competitive before I was probably even born,” says Sheila. At Central, she became president of the Gator Ski Club, which traveled around snow skiing. She then began competitive snow skiing and water skiing. She won gold medals and set world records for slalom and downhill skiing at the U.S. Association for Blind Athletes national competition and the 1984 Blind Olympics.

GOING UPHILL
Certainly, nobody was going to tell Sheila she couldn’t climb the 14,410-foot summit of Mount Rainier. In 1981, as part of a team of nine physically challenged climbers, and in honor of the International Year of Disabled Persons, Sheila became the first blind woman to scale the mountain.

“It was cold. It was stressful. It was the most unusual, athletic thing I’ve ever done in my life. But it was also one of the best experiences of my life.”

The group reached the summit at 10:42 a.m. She and another climber snuck up a beer, which exploded in their faces from the pressure. But it was a beautiful, sunny day, and Sheila was elated. Until the news came that it was time to start down.

“I’m thinking to myself, ‘Get down!! My goal was to get up here! You’re not helicoptering us down!’”

The achievement was an inspiration to thousands of disabled people, who thanked the climbers for their feat. “It really opened up their eyes to realize they could do things if they could push themselves, get out, get a little help,” says Sheila.

SEEING CLEARLY
Sheila has continued to inspire thousands in her work as a motivational speaker at events across the country. She also worked at Principal Financial Group for 24 years as a trainer and development leader.

Since her mother passed away four years ago, Sheila’s father, Dr. Paul Holzworth, can often be seen at her kitchen table for dinner. A prominent Des Moines physician in his 80s who still works four days a week—he is a testament to the stalwart Holzworth spirit. The two are often together, fishing every sidewalk to get to her townhouse. The bookstore sent her textbooks to the Iowa Department for the Blind to be transferred into Braille. Staff let Sheila use their own cars so she could travel to give motivational speeches around the Midwest.

Sheila’s roommate Tammy Wilson Evans ’84 often traveled with her to skiing competitions and speeches. The two have remained close since graduation, and their mutual respect and love is obvious. “There wasn’t anything that she didn’t want to do or that she didn’t try to do,” says Tammy. “Nobody was ever going to tell her, ‘No, you can’t do that.’"

CLIMB TO THE CLOUDS
“Whenever it’s a sunny blue day and I’m gone—if I’m gone—and you look up, the biggest cloud will be mine,” says Sheila Holzworth ’85. “Mine and all my friends.”

Those are difficult words to say for a woman who has already been through so much in her life, but she says them with a smile—and a stubbornness that they’re not really going to come true, despite the doctors’ prognoses.

Sheila has always been rebellious—had an off-color sense of humor, a competitive edge. It’s what led her to ride horses through the deep waters of Beaver Creek when she was eight years old. It’s what made her hang her roommate’s lingerie out the window of the Alpha Delta Epsilon house at Central. It’s what gave Sheila the courage to climb Mount Rainier in Washington state as a blind 19-year-old college student.

And it is giving her the energy to keep living life to the fullest right now—buying a new puppy, riding a jet ski, getting thrown off a horse and breaking seven ribs—even though she has been diagnosed with serious adenocarcinoma, a type of cancer.
For a zebrafish, it depends on the water it’s swimming in. Ellen Du Pre, professor of biology, is working with four students, as well as biology colleague Nicole Palenske, to study the effects of triclosan on heart rate. The tiny fish, which can be as small as an eyelash when newly hatched, is transparent, and the students can easily count the heart beats under a microscope.

Triclosan is a chemical used in disinfecting soaps, and it has made its way into tap water systems. In preliminary research, Du Pre and students have learned that when fish are exposed to certain levels of the chemical—specifically the levels found in drinking and surface water—heart rate goes down significantly. This may be linked to a decrease in metabolism, which some scientists have suggested may be a contributing factor for some of the high childhood obesity rates in the U.S.

“It does make me nervous,” she says. “I don’t think people realize all the chemicals we are being exposed to. I don’t think our bodies are prepared to deal with them all.”

The research done by Du Pre and her students was recently chosen from more than 3,500 submissions by the National Council on Undergraduate Research for presentation at the 2013 conference. The students will present at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse in April.
Thomas Robbins ’91 was appointed special assistant to the president and executive director of the University of Dubuque’s Performing Arts and Campus Center, which is slated to open in the spring of 2013. Tom and wife Barbara live in Dubuque, Iowa, with their son.

Lois Owens ’92 and Shane Thomas of Denver, Colo., rode their bikes to the summit of Mt. Evans in Colorado, where they exchanged vows on August 19. In January they moved to Melbourne, Australia, with Lori’s company eSN International, where she is the general counsel.

Will Breeden ’93 is a lieutenant commander serving in the United States Navy. He is stationed in Aiea, Hawaii, with Karla and their four children.

Jim Pliittbrock ’94 is a Title One reading teacher at Kalona Elementary School in the Mid-Prairie School District in Kalona, Iowa. Jim and husband William live in Kalona with their two daughters. William is a curriculum director for the College Community School District.

Claudia Gomez Cruz Rivera ’94 was recognized by the University of Iowa Board of Regents with a Staff Excellence Award for her contributions to programs that benefit the university and have a significant positive impact on the state of Iowa. Claudia and husband Diego live in Coralville.

Christopher McMorran ’95 is a lecturer in the department of Japanese studies at the National University of Singapore. He teaches courses on Japan’s geography and history, including a field study trip to Japan each year. The course reminds him of his study abroad experiences to Hangzhou, Yucatan and San Sebastian. This fall Chris received two teaching awards for his overseas course. Chris and wife Hisako live in Singapore.

David Wilkie ’95 is a fabrication shop foreman at Mid-States Mechanical Services, Inc. in Mankato, Minn., where he has worked with wife Chrystal and their two children.

Brian Meyers ’96 of Ankeny is a quality control tech II at Siwek in Des Moines. Julie Wiley Weinstein ’96 is an information technology specialist for the Department of the Navy at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Julie and husband Brian Weinstein live in Portsmouth N.H., with their two sons.

Brian Row ’97 is a human resources business partner at Vermeer Corp. in Pella, where he lives with wife Sara and their two children.

Lisa Jeremiah ’96 and Tim Keosabban of Richardson, Wash., were married Nov. 19, 2011. Lisa is a senior analyst at FLT Consulting in Olympia.

Janie Kercherhouse ’94 was named market president at U.S. Bank in Pella. Janie and husband Patrice Wisse ’97 live in Pella with their two boys.

Janie Hiscock Cash ’95 is the office coordinator at Russell J. Moadle, CPA, in Tiffin, Iowa. Janie and husband Rob live in North Liberty with their two sons.

Annie Kiel ’97 is assistant director of admissions programs at Drake University in Des Moines. She was named Fellow of the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Professional French Masters Program. She received her master’s degree in French studies from the university and has been active in the programs at Amiens and husband Adam live in Des Moines with their daughter.

Kristi Van Rosyan Hagerty ’90 is a proposal specialist at Rockwell Collins Inc. in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where she lives with husband Justin Hagerty ’99 and their two daughters. Justin is a bank examiner at FDC in Hawatha.

Scott Hasken ’91 was promoted to vice president and chief controlling at Tailspin in Lisle, Illinois. Scott and wife Mindi Langstrand Henken ’92 live in Aurora with their two children.

Carrie Wester Schwab ’81 is an administrative assistant to the president at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Carrie and husband Martin live in Angola, Ind.

Nicholas Brougham ’92 is a load solution architect for Aspect Software based in Omaha, Neb. Nicholas works from his home office in Phoenix City, Ala., where he lives with wife Emma and their three children.

Angela Willers Carlson ’92 is financial aid associate director at Carleton College in Dubuque Iowa, where she lives with husband Neil and their son.

Jill Frost Vander Noesel ’92 is a product launch coordinator at John Deere Des Moines Works and husband Todd Vander Noesel ’91 live in Des Moines with their two children. Todd owns and operates DogPro Kennels.

Van Hoeksmolen ’92 is an assistant professor and program director with the Department of English at Marshalltown Community College in Marshalltown, Iowa. Van and wife Stefanie live in Coralville with their daughter.

Corey Vorthmann ’92 was named to the Midlands Business Journal’s “40 under 40,” the Omaha magazine’s top executives and power list. Corey is the supervisor of secondary education for the Council Bluffs Community School District. Corey and wife Annie live in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Amanda Cox Sterretts ’08 is senior health informatics solutions coordinator at Tailspin in West Des Moines. Amanda and husband Phillip live in Norwalk with their two young sons.

Janie Hiscock ’95 of Marion was named as Evan’s assistant. She is currently an information analyst at Emerson Process Management.

Matthew McCombs ’04 is EVP/chief operating officer at DHCU Community Credit Union in Maine. Matthew and wife Angie live in Bettendorf, Iowa, with their two daughters.

Megan Treaton Eaton ’05 is a part-time preschool teacher for Highland School District in Riverside, Iowa, where husband Clay Eaton ’06 is an elementary educational teaching specialist. Megan and Clay live in Washington with their son.

Rachel Bolen ’06 and Matt Murphy of Cornelius, Iowa, were married Oct. 6. Rachel is a physical therapist at Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Iowa City.

Sarah Gragg ’06 leads his duties as legislative liaison for the Governor Branstad Administration. Adam and wife Crystal and daughter Gregg ’07 live in Johnston. Car is a commercial banker at Wells Fargo Home Mortgage.

Trent Vaughn ’90 is an assistant director at Capri College in Newton. He is an animal lover and enjoys spending time with his daughters and granddaughter. But there are a few things he misses about the Midwest.

“When I looked at Iowa is that I was treated very well by just about everybody while I was there. We have very good memories of Pella.”

Read the full Q&A with Bill Julian online at civils.central.edu. civils.central.edu

Where are they now?

South Korea, for a two-year assignment teaching English as a vehicle to build cultural exchange among children of parents in the United States military.

Kathy Greenendyck Johnson ’79 is a student success specialist at Iowa Valley Community College in Grinnell, where she lives with husband Stan.

Mark Coast ’82 of Denver, Colo., rode their bikes to the summit of Mt. Evans in Colorado, where they exchanged vows on August 19. In January they moved to Melbourne, Australia, with Lori’s company eSN International, where she is the general counsel.

Bill Julian, a political science professor in the ’70s and ’80s, as well as associate dean, served Central for almost 20 years before moving onto Monmouth College in Illinois. He remembers his time at Central fondly—

“Lots of little opportunities to do things.”

everything from debating marijuana’s legalization to sleeping through a final exam.

“I had an eight o’clock final, and I slept through the thing. Got up, and I’m absolutely frantic. Fortunately it was a fairly small entry-level class so we worked out a rescheduling of it,” he says with a laugh.

Retiring after more than 40 years in academia, Julian moved to mountainous Loveland, Colo., to be closer to two of his daughters and granddaughter. But there are a few things he misses about the Midwest.

“From what I looked at Iowa is that I was treated very well by just about everybody while I was there. We have very good memories of Pella.”

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RESPELIERs WENdA

Brian Respeilers ’07 and Charlotte Benda of West Des Moines were married Aug. 4. Brian is a sales representative for fixed income sales and trading at Wells Fargo Securities in Des Moines. Pictured in the front row (left to right): Brian Respeilers ’07 and Charlotte Benda Respeilers, Second row: Kayla Pilling Hagwood ’04, Josh Respelier ’07, Alanna Rago ’07, Brett Jones ’07, Andy Green ’08, Ben Bollard ’07, Dave Schilling ’09, Tracie Schmuhl Schilling ’09, Todd Creek ’09, Bryan George ’06, Marty Hagwood ’07, Matt Hagwood ’06, Jake Pearson ’05, Alex Miller ’10. Back row: Adam Wolf ’07, Brett Dienoch ’08 and Michael McLaughlin ’06. CIVIS T A S C E N T R A L. ED U W I N T E R 2 0 1 3 2 6 2 7
Jane Rohner helped them acquire a Vermeer chipper, which was used to complete the project. Stan of Pella helped them with forest restoration after Britt informed them of the need.

Nicholas Rohner is a personal trainer at Aspen Community Living in Des Moines.

Teamwork:

Bob Vermeer is a community living service coordinator at Candeo. Megan Blanchard is a family support worker at Anytime Fitness Corp. in Pella. Victoria Drouin is an intermediate level social worker at Anytime Fitness Corp. in Pella.

Megan Walker is a personal trainer at Aspen Community Living in Des Moines. Cassie Elsloo teaches Spanish at Carlisle High School.

Elyse Day is an assistant volleyball coach at Central College. Adam Kiefer is a personal trainer at Azure Fitness in Pella.

Marisa Hill is a personal trainer at Aqua USA in Des Moines. Sara David teaches Kindergarten at First Baptist Church in Pella.

Alicia Rosien teaches seventh grade math and science and eighth grade language for ELIC. Jenae Jenison is a personal trainer at Azure Fitness in Pella.

Tyler DeLisle is a personal trainer at Azure Fitness in Pella.

Chelsea Grieger is a grounds maintenance assistant in the office of Governor Terry E. Branstad in Des Moines.

Tara Adams is a personal trainer at Aqua USA in Des Moines.

Johnathan Kowalik is a personal trainer at Aqua USA in Des Moines.

Andrew Kowalik is a personal trainer at Aqua USA in Des Moines.

Ashley Kruger is a personal trainer at Azure Fitness in Pella.
University of Ohio in Oxford. Allison Miller is working toward a juris doctorate from Drake University Law School in Des Moines.

Nate Rouse is working toward a degree in medicine including physician’s assistant at Des Moines University in Des Moines. Abbie Nitschke teaches third grade in the Hampton Dumont School District in Waverly, Minn.

Virginia Vergott teaches IB algebra, trigonometry and general math at William C. Hoskyn High School in Aurora, Colo.

Katie Nothup is working toward a master’s degree in physical, occupational and speech therapy from Midwestern University in Downers Grove.

Will Overton is a staff assistant for Congressman Michael Burgess in Lewisville, Texas.

Amanda Trusty is a dual emphasis student at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in Alva.

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Meet the Future

For the November Meet the Pros event, alumni who work for the government returned to campus to meet with future professionals in their field—Central students.

For most of the time Phil Jenery '02 was at Central, Meet the Pros wasn't yet a reality. It would have been the kind of event this account associate at LS2group, a government and public affairs firm, would have loved to attend.

Instead, he returned in November, as a professional who works in government, this event's theme. “This is a way I could give back, in a sense, to Central,” Jenery says. Students asked about his involvement in presidential campaigns, what the campaign lifestyle was like and how to get involved in the field. “Overall, the students had really insightful questions, and I feel I opened up the pond. It was a magical moment,” says Hicks. “I learned that as a young professional, you have the time to switch jobs and look for opportunities that are enjoyable.”

Everyone in Graham Hall that autumn day had one thing in common: a shared Central experience. That connection was enough for the alumni to see something of themselves in the students—and to see a future for them, too. “Connections are one of the most important things to accomplish while in college,” says sophomore Allison Zuel, “because they help students go farther than they ever imagined.”
Alumni Spotlight

Chartering a Radical Course

Justin Tiarks ’06 knew he would dedicate his life to service, but he didn’t know how much of an impact he would make after just a few short years. After graduating from Central with an elementary education degree and endorsements in special education and reading, Tiarks snagged a job in Des Moines teaching fourth and fifth grades at a school with underprivileged students. Soon realizing he couldn’t understand what his students’ lives were really like, he took a year off and worked full-time in a homeless shelter.

“I learned what it was like to live in a neighborhood ravaged by drugs and gangs,” he says. “I befriended broken men at the homeless shelter and saw what life could turn into for my students without the radical intervention a quality education can provide.”

After finding his true passion, Tiarks got hitched and moved to St. Paul, Minn., with his wife and began teaching at a charter school, St. Paul City School. A pre-K to eighth grade school in the Frogtown neighborhood, Tiarks teaches fifth grade, where two-thirds of the students are English language learners and the population is primarily Latino, Hmong and African American.

After just a few years at the school, Tiarks was nominated to be the board chair of the board of directors. He feels privileged to take on the role and help students find their passion in life. “We have a huge population of immigrant families at our school, and we are the hope their children have of making a better life for themselves,” says Tiarks. “It’s a blessing to be a part of every day!”

Read more about _______________ at civitas.central.edu!