Beyer and House receive Distinguished Alumni awards

Fred Beyer ’72 and Deanna Howell House ’61 are recipients of the 2003 Distinguished Alumni awards. These awards were presented during the 30th and 40th UW-Stout reunions held on October 17-18, 2003.

Fred Beyer, a technology education teacher at Shawano Community High School, Shawano, Wis., has educated and motivated students for the past 31 years. Mary Jo Ambrosius, associate principal of Shawano Community High School, stated in her letter of support for Beyer’s nomination: “Fred inspires and challenges students by blending music, his unique 50’s style and humor throughout the day. Fred’s good-humored nature is contagious among the staff and students, which in turn motivates the students to enter a vocational field. One look at his car-desk and students are hooked and want to experience more!”

Beyer’s enthusiasm, passion and creativity in the auto-tech education field, not to mention the neon signs, old gas pumps, and jukebox that grace his classroom, have termed Shawano Community High School “Hot Rod High.”

Deanna House taught family and consumer education classes for 19 years before forming Deanna House Specialties to publish her cookbooks and schedule her numerous food demonstrations. In addition to her food and nutrition demonstrations, House has also authored and published four cookbooks. In her letter of support for the nomination of House, Patricia Reisinger commented, “Deanna House is an entertainer par excellence as she imparts food and nutrition information in her demonstrations. She has had as many as 500 people in attendance at those demonstrations. Deanna is extremely proud of her affiliation with UW-Stout, and anyone attending one of her demonstrations will come away with the knowledge that Stout helped create this efficient, incredibly bright, humorous woman who enjoys life.”

House served on the Stout University Foundation Board from 1992 to 2002, and was chairperson of the scholarship committee for six of those years. As chair, she oversaw changes in the scholarship application and the annual awards ceremony, and helped to create a more accurate evaluation form related to the application. “During her ten years on the board, Deanna missed only one meeting. Knowing that it was 20 hours per round trip, she attended three board meetings and one scholarship award ceremony per year—it speaks of her commitment and loyalty to this institution,” said Reisinger.

The Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to a UW-Stout graduate who exemplifies the philosophy of UW-Stout. The recipient must demonstrate professional distinction and achievement, as well as contribute to his or her community.

J. Huff Stout Award recipient – Patrick Spielman

Patrick Spielman ’58 was awarded the James Huff Stout Award on March 12, 2004. This is the highest honor awarded by the UW-Stout Alumni Association.

Spielman used his UW-Stout degree in industrial education well. He devoted 27 years of his life to teaching woodworking at the high school and vocational school levels. To this day, his former students look up to him with great respect and gratitude for the lessons they learned. He not only taught woodworking techniques, but also woodshop safety and the importance of teamwork.

John Sawyer, a student of Spielman’s in junior and senior high school, recollected that more students wanted to take his classes than space allowed. He explained that when students were registering for their classes they were to, “walk across the gym to the teachers’ tables to register for the classes they wanted.” However, for those wanting to take Spielman’s woodworking class, an all-out sprint to Spielman’s table occurred with young men pushing and shoving to be the first 12 to 14 students in line. The ones that were lucky enough to get Spielman’s classes then trudged over to the less important classes, such as math and English.

Another student, Greg (Fuzzy) Sandstrom, used the bedroom set that he made in Spielman’s industrial arts class for more than 30 years. He recently retired it to a spare bedroom. Sandstrom remembers the values that Spielman instilled in his students. “Pat didn’t want anything leaving the shop and going home that you truly couldn’t be proud of,” Sandstrom said. “He was also innovative enough to teach a construction class in which we learned the basics of home building – something that could be used for the rest of our lives.”

In addition to teaching, Spielman writes and illustrates woodworking books. He has written more than 65 books, many in collaboration with his wife. He also created and produced Home Workshop News, a magazine dedicated to the art of scroll sawing. His books have influenced professionals in the field. To many, he is considered “the world’s leading woodwork author.”

A colleague of Spielman’s, David Venditto, expressed his respect for Spielman. “It wasn’t until Patrick and I attended several woodworking conventions together that I witnessed firsthand the immensely significant contributions he has made to the lives of people who have read his books and articles on woodworking,” he said. “Patient fans lined up at our booth to speak with Patrick and tell him how much his ideas and writings have enriched their own experiences with woodworking. I witnessed the same support for Patrick’s work at another important trade convention, this one in the United Kingdom.”

Another one of Spielman’s Kids Works Gift Shop and Spielman’s Kids Works Gift Shop located in Door County, Wis. His wood products, which he designs and manufactures, can be found throughout the county. Spielman has dedicated himself to his profession and to his community. He has served on the Gibraltar Town Board and on the Door County Chamber of Commerce Board. The Lion’s Club can also boast of his membership for 15 years.

He works hard to protect the area’s natural resources and to improve its economic health. Spielman has exemplified UW-Stout’s hands-on, minds-on philosophy through his teaching and his success in business. He has enriched the lives of his students and others.
Great Depression cookbooks

In 1966, Janet Van Amber Paske graduated from UW-Stout with a B.S. in home economics education and a minor in English. These degrees, coupled with her mother’s inspiration, produced the Great Depression cookbooks. Paske’s mother, who lived during the Great Depression, invited her daughter to join her in documenting the lives and recipes of those who had lived during the Great Depression. Thus, Van Amber Publishers was born. Paske (married to Richard Paske BS ’64) has co-authored and self-published the Great Depression cookbooks of which there are now four volumes. The stories and accompanying recipes, told in the words of those who lived them, were gained from interviews or from individuals sending their stories and memories to the publishers.

A story from one of the cookbooks tells how a family living in Jackson, Minn., delivered a 4th of July to their four children: “There was no money to drive anywhere to take the children to a picnic. They’d have to stay at home. The children were instructed to bring the following quotes: “For children there was no money to drive anywhere to take the children to a picnic. They’d have to stay at home. The children were instructed to bring the delicious mellow flavor of the popcorn. Water was drawn from the well icy cold to make lemonade.

Everyone in the family remembers that 4th of July deep in the 1930s. But that wasn’t all.

James Huff Stout Award

James Huff Stout, the founder of UW-Stout, believed that education was best achieved by “learning through involvement.” The implementation of his educational ideals and philosophy brought positive changes to the community and to the lives of thousands of individuals. The curriculum of the university continues to reflect his philosophy.

The James Huff Stout Award, designed to honor his ideals, is presented to a UW-Stout alumna who exemplifies Stout’s hands-on, minds-on philosophy. The Alumni Association Board looks for the following characteristics when nominating an individual:

The James Huff Stout philosophy:

- Significant and broad professional accomplishments and contributions that benefit the lives of others
- Demonstrated, forward-looking leadership creating positive changes or innovation that influence and benefit the person’s profession or colleagues

Community service

- Significant civic service contributions
- Demonstrated, ongoing involvement and positive influence in the community, state or nation

Continued involvement with UW-Stout

- Supportive of the university’s mission, programs, students, faculty and staff
- Ongoing professional connection and involvement that benefit the university

All nominees must be living UW-Stout graduates of any year, school or college program. UW-Stout faculty, staff, administrators and former employees are eligible.
Gomons turn passion into gold

If someone had told Kyle Gomon in 1989, when he graduated from the University Wisconsin-Stout with a degree in industrial technology, that someday he would own a winery, he might have said, “No way!” However, in time, he became fascinated with wine and turned his fascination into a career.

It wasn’t just the “tasting” of wine that attracted Gomon but the science behind the product. “I found it fascinating to take a raw material like grapes and go through a natural process to produce something that’s drinkable,” he said.

In 1994, his wife, Bobbi ’90, bought him a winemaking kit for his birthday. This started Gomon’s hobby as a winemaker. Eventually, as his skill improved, he entered his wines in amateur competitions and, lo and behold, he won awards.

After finding success at state fair competitions, the Gomons decided that they would turn their successful hobby into a career. “With Bobbi’s background in business and marketing and my background in engineering, we had a great combination to start a business,” Gomon explained.

In order to make their dream a reality, they both quit their corporate jobs and began making wine in their home in North Lake, Wis. To spark interest and to introduce their product, the Gomons gave away hundreds of bottles of wine to local stores and restaurants. After several businesses expressed interest, they began to look for a facility to hold their winemaking business.

The Gomons found what they were looking for in a 2,000-square-foot building in downtown Delafield, Wis., located about 40 miles west of Milwaukee. The Mason Creek Winery, named in honor of the creek which runs behind their home in North Lake, opened on October 13, 2001.

The winery has grown considerably from producing 1,500 bottles out of the Gomon’s home in 2000 to 23,000 bottles in 2003. Twenty-five retailers in southeastern Wisconsin sell the Mason Creek label. These retailers, which include grocery, liquor and specialty stores, account for about 25 percent of the winery’s sales.

The Gomons would like to sell to restaurants, but without a distributor, this is difficult. During the summers, Mason Creek Winery is transformed into an outdoor haven. Free live musical performances are held in a courtyard where guests can sit and listen, bring their own picnic lunches and enjoy their favorite Mason Creek wine. These outdoor events have been so popular and successful for the winery that the Gomons hope to double the size of the courtyard in time for the summer of 2004.

Along with expanding the courtyard, the Gomons would like to increase wine production, as well. Even though other small businesses in Delafield are closing, their winery is prospering. As it now stands, their facility cannot handle an increase in production. They will need to either enlarge their present facility or move to a larger building.

Not only do the winery’s sales confirm the success of the Mason Creek Winery, the 11 international awards they have won for their wines also prove the Gomons’ success. In 2003 alone, they won a silver medal at the San Francisco International Wine Competition for their Gomon’s Gold, a silver medal at the Indy International Wine Competition for the Mason Creek River Red and a bronze medal at the Eastern International Wine Competition for their Riesling. In addition to these award-winning wines, Mason Creek Winery also produces Merlot, Chardonnay, Red Zinfandel and Cranberry using Wisconsin cranberries. The grapes for all of the Mason Creek wines are obtained from California, New York, Oregon and Washington.

The Gomons, who never imagined themselves as winemakers when they left UW-Stout 15 years ago, continue to strive toward their goal of providing a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere for their customers, as well as a delectable product. They hope that their young sons will also follow in their footsteps.

“A meal without wine is like a day without sunshine.”
- Anthelme Brillat Savarin

Living and teaching in Egypt

Charlene Woyczik knows that she would not be having the adventure of her life if she had not graduated from Stout with a degree in early childhood. Woyczik, a 1996 graduate, worked in Wisconsin for about five years, but she was “always wanting to be going someplace more interesting, but really didn’t know how to get there.”

However, she found out. Armed with her degree, a desire to teach kindergarten through third grade only and a yen for adventure, Woyczik attended an International Teacher Fair in Waterloo, Iowa. There she found out about teaching opportunities in foreign countries. According to Woyczik, schools overseas are eagerly looking for qualified kindergarten and pre-kindergarten teachers. She applied to a few schools and was offered teaching positions in five countries in Asia, South America and the Middle East. And why did she choose Egypt? “Egypt sounded like it had the best deal,” Woyczik reported.

Woyczik has been happily teaching a third grade class at an American International School in Cairo, Egypt, for more than a year. The students in her class are from wealthy families because the school is a private “high-class” one.

Woyczik reported that these students have maids and drivers to constantly look after them, making it hard at times for them to learn to do things for themselves. “They are a pampered elite with parents who dote on them,” she said.

Outside of the classroom, however, Woyczik does come into contact with children from the lower class. These children, starting at the ages of eight or nine, work to help their families. She sees them selling fruit and vegetables from wooden carts pulled by a donkey or collecting, sorting and extracting recyclable garbage. Education for these children is limited to the free government schools. Classes are large with an average of 50 students, and corporal punishment is used. Children who fall in the middle class bracket have a few more options. Their parents pay to send them to school where the children learn basic literacy skills in Arabic and English.

Woyczik asks herself what she can do to help the children in her midst. To the “chosen ones” she works to impart the need for generosity to those not so fortunate. Under her direction, the students participate in food drives and fund-raisers for orphanages and children in less affluent schools. Unfortunately, she has discovered that she cannot help everyone. “It’s definitely a humbling place, and yet I have learned much about human needs here,” she said.

One thing that she has learned is the importance of fostering relations with her neighbors and friends. In Egypt, socializing on a lengthy and regular basis with neighbors and shop owners is customary. If she allows herself, she could easily visit for three or four hours straight on a Saturday. “Some people get very upset with you if you don’t sit and talk for at least a half hour, and when you go, it is always too soon,” Woyczik said. She compares this habit with the fast pace of Americans who hardly know their neighbors anymore. And she prefers it.

Sometimes Woyczik finds herself wondering if she is dreaming or if this is really her life. She said, “I constantly find myself in a sobering moment (swimming/snorkeling in the Red Sea, sleeping under the stars in the Sahara Desert, dawn at the top of Mt. Sinai with hundreds of foreigners from all sorts of religions and regions) where I think, ‘God, I am so lucky to be here.’ Who would have thought that I could be standing right here, a farm girl from the hills of Waumandee, Wis., all on her own out here? I am so blessed.”
The Smiling Pelican Bakeshop

In the fall of 2001 when much of the world was in a state of shock over the events of Sept. 11, a happy event took place in Maiden Rock, Wis. The Smiling Pelican Bakeshop opened its doors, and the alluring smells of breads, scones, quiches, specialty pastries and chocolate delicacies issued forth.

Sandra Thielman ’87 is the proprietor of this shop. Her dream in opening the Smiling Pelican Bakeshop was to create a small-town bakery with baked goods made from “scratch.” Thielman chose an old house for her bakery, wanting to provide her customers with a warm and cozy “grandma’s kitchen” atmosphere. This open kitchen allows friendly conversation between the cook and client while Thielman creates her magic.

In addition to providing tasty and healthy homemade baked goodies, Thielman prefers to work part time, which she thinks enables her to have a healthier lifestyle than many Americans. Since graduating from UW-Stout, she has traveled to Europe where she was struck with the difference between the average work schedules of Americans compared to that of Europeans.

The association charged a small entrance fee and the proceeds went to the men’s club team and the women’s varsity team.

As a result, Thielman has already been up for many hours. In addition, by closing the shop for the winter, she views it as a gift for her customers. The reprieve that she enjoys during the coldest of the Midwestern year energizes and prepares her for the demanding schedule she maintains during the months the shop is open.

And a demanding schedule it is. When the Smiling Pelican opens its doors at 8 a.m., Thielman has already been up for many hours. In order to have fresh bread, cookies and pastries ready for her morning customers she begins her workday at 1:30 a.m. and doesn’t end until 7 or 8 p.m.

The bakery offers a variety of delectables made from scratch with a weekly changing menu. Thielman uses local produce as much as possible. For example, in the summer when blueberries are in abundance, she packs them in overflowing pies and rich cheesecakes. When fall comes around and apples are begging to be cooked, customers can find apple-filled pastries and cakes. The rich oranges of late fall squash also brighten Thielman’s creations.

Make a point of visiting the Smiling Pelican Bakeshop at W3556 Hwy 35, Maiden Rock, Wis., before Thielman closes the doors and goes into hibernation for the winter. Be prepared to stay and visit awhile in the kitchen before you leave. Have a cup of coffee inside, or sit outside and enjoy the flowers that surround the shop. Treat yourself to a homemade quiche and a raspberry truffle, a golden scone or a flaky turnover, or go home with a loaf of warm, fresh-baked bread tucked under your arm.

Volleyball Alumni Association spikes interest

In January of 2003, ten years had passed since Mark Mantegna ’93 and Todd Gawronski ’93 had graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Still, they felt up to challenging the university’s current men’s volleyball team to a game. They contacted their former teammates and, much to their surprise, everyone was excited about the idea of getting together for their current men’s volleyball team to a game. They contacted their former teammates and, much to their surprise, everyone was excited about the idea of getting together for their current men’s volleyball team to a game. They contacted their former teammates and, much to their surprise, everyone was excited about the idea of getting together for their current men’s volleyball team to a game. They contacted their former teammates and, much to their surprise, everyone was excited about the idea of getting together for their current men’s volleyball team to a game.

In January of 2003, ten years had passed since Mark Mantegna ’93 and Todd Gawronski ’93 had graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Still, they felt up to challenging the university’s current men’s volleyball team to a game. They contacted their former teammates and, much to their surprise, everyone was excited about the idea of getting together for their first reunion and volleyball tournament.

As a result of this favorable response, Mantegna and Gawronski decided to invite all former men and women players to UW-Stout for a reunion tournament with a date set for September 15, 2003. The UW-Stout Alumni Volleyball Association was official. The association, comprised of former male and female players and the current UW-Stout head coach, gathered e-mail addresses for over 150 former players and sent out invitations. Players graduating from as early as 1979 to mid-March. The exact opening date depends on the weather.

In operating a small-scale business, she is able to maintain the personal contact with her clientele that she values. Also, by closing the shop for the winter, she has time to be rejuvenated when her doors open in the spring. The reprieve that she enjoys during the coldest of the Midwestern year energizes and prepares her for the demanding schedule she maintains during the months the shop is open.

The tournament continued the next day with four men’s teams and three women’s teams competing. Despite the fact that many of these players had not played competitively for a while, the matches were close. The 1993 men’s team won the championship game versus the class of 2000. The women’s team, made up of players from the late 1980s and early 1990s, won the championship against a team from the late 1990s.

When the final matches were played, the players, tired but happy, gathered at the Mardi Gras restaurant to socialize and plan for the second annual Alumni Volleyball Challenge to be held September 17 and 18, 2004. The UW-Stout Volleyball Alumni Association hopes that this event will bring even more alumni who are interested in participating. Once again, they will be inviting all former club and varsity players.

If you are interested in participating in this annual event, please contact one of the following UW Stout Volleyball Alumni Association members:

- Todd Gawronski
  todd.gawronski@berlinindustries.com
- Mark Mantegna
  mantegna@bellouth.com
- Jennifer Carter Edmund
  jennifer.carter@kohls.com
- Lara Wegner Zwick
  latars@asol.com
- Jill Jolliff
  jolliffj@uwstout.edu