

# Feather Notes

Upper Iowa University eNews



June 2008

## Peacocks help in Parkersburg, Iowa

By Lea DeLuca

Volunteers from the UIU community helped pick up the remains of homes, buildings and treasured belongings in Parkersburg after a deadly tornado devastated the town on May 25.

UIU senior **Tiffany Baker** approached **Daryl Grove**, director of student leadership and activities, with the idea to organize volunteers from

UIU. After seeing Parkersburg on the news, Baker knew she wanted to help in some capacity. Baker recalls when her hometown, Sigourney, had parts destroyed by strong winds in the summer of 1997 and people from neighboring

towns came to help. This experience, along with her family instilling the importance of volunteerism, led Baker to propose the trip to Parkersburg.



As the UIU volunteers came into town the morning of June 2, they first saw busloads of people cleaning up fields and trying to restore the landscape. Grove said silence fell over the van at the first glimpse of the tornado's aftermath.

"I don't have the words to describe what happened to Parkersburg," Grove said. Most of the UIU volunteers were stationed on the golf course. Grove and three others were sent to town by the sheriff's office to cut down trees.

Grove said the town was

basically divided in half. "One side was utter devastation and the other side had houses moved off their foundation, but they weren't swallowed up."

UIU senior **Emily Maiers** was one of the Peacock volunteers. "I just wanted to be a part of helping and I know they can use as many volunteers as possible. I've never seen destruction like that before and it was a real eye-opener." Maiers said she was pleasantly surprised to see so many volunteers

in Parkersburg. Maiers was told that approximately 1,300 people came to help the prior weekend.

**Zack Bauer**, sophomore at UIU, worked in the fields outside of town by raking debris in piles and later drove into Parkersburg to continue the volunteer work. Bauer said it was overwhelming to drive into the town. "It was like a bad dream."

**Jennifer Ranheim**, director of recreation and wellness, compared the volunteer experience in Parkersburg to helping those affected by hurricane Katrina. "We were in New Orleans almost a year after the fact and we thought it was bad, but to come to this right after (the tornado), I couldn't even put it into words how bad it was. This affected me a lot more than New Orleans, because it is my home state." Ranheim said that while work-

ing in Parkersburg she would stop at times and survey the remains of the town, for it was hard to believe the level of destruction. "These peoples' lives are in piles of rubbish down their driveways. You want to do as much as you can to help," said Ranheim.

Baker said, "I'm so thankful for the students and faculty that took the time and who were able to help those in need. I know while we were there, it felt like we didn't make a difference, considering how damaged the town was, but we did. We didn't just clean up a field or fill a couple of Dumpsters; we gave hope back to the residents of Parkersburg. We let others know that people care, and the more people see others caring, the more they will be motivated to help." Grove said volunteers will be needed in the months ahead. For information on how to help, call the Iowa Concern Hotline at 1-800-267-9111. Be sure to check in at the volunteer trailer located at the intersection of Highways 14 and 57.

### UIU Volunteer Group

Organizers: Tiffany Baker and Daryl Grove

Kate Grover • Sheila Noska • Penny Fink

Laura Carmody • Lori Swenka

Emily Maiers • Michele Myrom

Brandon Heying • Debra Walker

Derek Stolarzyk • Brock Bowman

Brett Ingersoll • Jesse Pleggenkuhle

Melanie DeBoer • Diane Michael

Kim Knapp • Emily Knapp

Tricia Pugh • Zack Bauer

Katie Reihmann • Jennifer Ranheim

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# High waters affect UIU centers

Upper Iowa University and her people have not been immune to the effects of recent severe weather in Iowa. While Fayette has been relatively high and dry, our centers in Waterloo and Cedar Rapids have been indirectly affected by rising waters in those cities.

The Cedar River, which passes through both communities and numerous others in northeast Iowa, rose quickly during the week of June 8. The Waterloo Center, which luckily sits in a high area of the city, was not directly hit with the high water but did face other problems. Center Director Michael

Davidson said the biggest problem was travel delays for students and others traveling to the center. What usually was a 15-30 minute drive turned into an hour or more because of road closures throughout the city. It was especially difficult for anyone needing to cross the river as bridges were closed.

Through it all, though, the center remained open during the days, “limping along to keep up with the business of the University here,” Davidson said. Night classes were cancelled due to curfews in the city, travel limitations and other issues. Day classes, however, continued as best they could. Davidson said the students were doing the work as assigned and not letting the disaster affect their educations. One student in the class – an education class requiring students to perform reading assessments of children – even brought a child in to the center to perform the assessment as the elementary school and the young student’s home were both inaccessible.

Luckily, Davidson knew of no UIU employees who were wiped out by the floods. Some students had been displaced,



This is one of several bridges in Waterloo that cross the Cedar River. While the bridge is dry, the streets surrounding it were low enough to be engulfed by the rising water. Eventually, nearly every bridge in the city closed due to the high water.

including some who’d lost their homes only weeks earlier in tornadoes that wiped through the area.

Down river in Cedar Rapids, the story was similar. Center Director Kristi Tisl said their problems were mostly travel delays, as well. The brand new center sits on a hill quite a distance from the river, so there was no water at the center. All of the downtown area of Cedar Rapids was closed due to the water, and many areas in the city were without power or gas. For the UIU center, “It’s just a hassle at this point for us,” Tisl said. “We’re thankful.”

Tisl said the greatest threat to the center building was



Pioneer Graphics, the company who prints UIU’s alumni magazine *The Bridge*, is only two blocks from the Cedar River in downtown Waterloo. Their building was surrounded by water, but luckily the sandbags kept the damage minimal.

a storm drain at the bottom of the small hill. If that had become overwhelmed by the huge amounts of water, it could have caused water to back up into the building.

Despite the center’s relative safety, classes were cancelled there for several days as a precaution to not encourage unnecessary travel within the city. At one point, the entire city had only one bridge over the river open.

Tisl also stated she had not heard of any UIU personnel or students being affected by the evacuation, but added it may be some time before she hears from anyone who was.

## Lending a Hand

UIU is offering a helping hand to a company in Cedar Rapids that lost its offices in the recent flooding.

Tim Hunt, associate vice president for UIU’s Extended University, and Guy Wendler, Stamats Communications, Inc. president and CEO, have negotiated a lease for Stamats to utilize 5,040 square feet of space at UIU’s new facility in Cedar Rapids.

Stamats, a national leader in higher education marketing, suffered significant flood damage to its downtown Cedar Rapids office in early June. Work to restore the building is expected to take six months.

“We are grateful to have been given access to this excellent facility during our transitional period,” said Wendler.

“Flood damage to our building caused us to seek temporary office space that accommodates approximately 60 people and is wired for large, electronic-file usage. The Upper Iowa University facility is a great solution.”

Upper Iowa University is a current client of Stamats. “We plan to convert some classroom space into temporary office accommodations for our friends and colleagues at Stamats,” said Hunt. “Through the reconfiguration of our facility space, we are pleased to help a local business that has been affected by the flood.”

Stamats moved its employees, along with computer equipment, into the facility in late June. The group plans to return to their own building in mid December.

## Madison Center students work to solve 'murder mystery'

Some students at UIU's Madison Center are taking a break from the heat of summer to cool off in the ice age. Specifically, they are looking into theories of why the large mammals of the late Pleistocene epoch went extinct.

Center Director Alan Capelle, whose background is in science, is teaching the special topics class. He developed the course with help from faculty in the science division on the Fayette campus.

"This is currently an unsolved 'murder mystery,' so to speak," Capelle said, "and is incredibly fascinating for the entire class."

The course includes field trips to the Kenosha County Museum, which Capelle describes as one of the best in the state; a special screening of the new documentary *Journey to 10,000 B.C.* via the History Channel; and an optional behind-the-scenes tour at the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History. Students



At the Chicago Field Museum, students were able to see a variety of artifacts from the Pleistocene epoch, including this skeleton of a prehistoric deer known as an Irish elk. The animal had antlers which reached 9-10 feet across.

are utilizing the scientific method to analyze and weigh the various extinction theories and devise respective hypotheses based upon a thorough review of the literature.

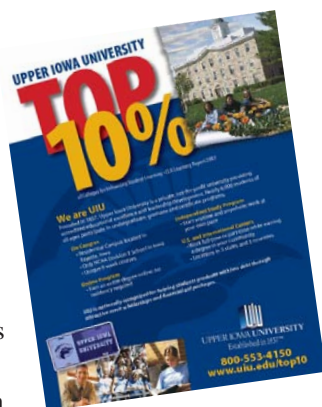


Madison Center Director Alan Capelle, left, and students Melissa McMickle, Tim McGuire and Jean Broge visit the Chicago Field Museum for a look back in time. One of the highlights of the trip was a chance to see Sue, the most complete tyrannosaurus rex skeleton in the world.

## UIU to auction off signed Super Bowl program

Want to own a piece of sports history and help UIU at the same time? Here's your chance. Eli Manning, quarterback of the 2008 Super Bowl-winning New York Giants, has signed a copy of the official Super Bowl program that contains an ad from UIU.

UIU will place the signed program for sale by auction on the popular Web site e-Bay. The funds generated from the sale of the program will be used to support student scholarships at UIU. For more information on when this will occur, watch UIU's Web site as well as your e-mail inbox. We'll let you know as soon as we have it ready to go.



## Welcome to our newest employees!!

### Travis Hunt

IT Support Specialist, 563-425-5308

### Linc Morris

Vice President of Enrollment Management,  
563-425-5279

### Katie Reihmann

Financial Aid Assistant, 563-425-5274

### Pam Reinig

Vice President for Marketing and  
Communications, 563-425-5773

### Catherine Rihm

Administrative Assistant, Des Moines Center,  
515-225-1800

### Sean Sailsbury

IT Enterprise Support Technician, 563-425-5842

### Hope Trainor

External Degree Assistant, 563-425-5376

### Timothy Turnbull

Online Recruiter/Academic Advisor,  
515-369-7781