



# LETTERS

## A Case of Misdirection

I really enjoy *Sooner Magazine*, especially Summer 2005.

My initial journey to Norman in 1955 was much like that of Fredrik Holmberg in 1903. I was there for an intramural volleyball tournament on North Campus and to meet with the Chemistry Department about attending graduate school. I asked an OU student how to get to the campus and his directions sent me to the mental hospital. I looked for that guy for two years but never saw him again. My interview with Dr. J. C. Colbert of chemistry paid off with an MS in chemistry.

I also read of the possible demise of Parkview Apartments. After six weeks in the old plywood housing (called the breeding pens by students), we lived in Parkview on the railroad tracks.

Thanks again for a wonderful publication.

*Walter Bishop Jr., '59 ms chem  
Claremore, Oklahoma*

*Editor's Note: While less colorful than the students' appellation, the University's name for the prefabs was Sooner City.*

## Let's Hear It for the Original

Broadway abounds in revivals, so why not revive a winning poster such as the now-vintage image of the OU football player lifting the diminutive ballerina in a "new, improved" version? [Summer 2005] Well, good try, but as it often happens, the original remains the gold standard for the art form.

Proper attribution for the photography was given to longtime University photographer Gil Jain. But you neglected to credit the major creative force behind the tough athlete/dainty dancer concept: Bill Williams, OU director of publications. And one other tiny quibble in favor of the oldie: its punch line. "We've Got It All" just packs a bigger wallop than the more grammatically correct but mundane "We Have It All."

I suppose in another 20 years (2025!!) we can look for this year's classic to be updated again. Hmm, how about a women's basketball player lifting a male

flautist for a change? Or maybe—more radical yet—someone should come up with a brand *new* poster idea.

*Betty B. Brown, '76 mls  
Norman, Oklahoma*

*Editor's Note: Reader Brown was in a position to know as an OU Publications editor from 1975 to 1979. Also involved in the creation of the original poster were Sooner Magazine's own art director George Dotson and his now-wife, Teresa Rankin.*

## Riding with the Blue Moth

Your readers may recall from "Bill Hancock's Road to the Final Four" [*Sooner Magazine*, Winter 1998] that OU graduate Hancock was an accomplished bicyclist. At the time of the article, he had already ridden in an event called "Bike Across Kansas" and had negotiated the 500 miles between Kansas City and his hometown of Hobart—without SAG (support and guidance). A self-described "geek" in high school, Hancock had made himself into an athlete by running marathons (including Boston and New York) and biking long distances.

The training hardened him for his toughest task: dealing with the death of son Will in the Oklahoma State University [basketball program] plane crash in 2001. Devastated, Hancock put aside the cross-country bike ride he had been planning and, with wife Nicki, tried to get through one day at a time. Nicki taught school, and Bill worked for the NCAA. Eventually, Hancock decided to bike from the Pacific to the Atlantic as he had earlier planned. Nicki agreed, and the pair set out from Huntington Beach, California, with Nicki towing their camper and serving as Bill's faithful SAG. It would be an epic journey of 2,746 miles to Tybee Island, Georgia.

After the journey's completion, Hancock wrote a book called *Riding with the Blue Moth*. The "Blue Moth" of despair visited the author frequently along the way, but the two kept going and saw the world anew. As one personally acquainted with Hancock and having received almost daily e-mails

from him during his trip, I thought the book might be anticlimactic for me, but it wasn't. The work is a beautiful love song to Will and a legacy to Karen and Andie, Will's widow and daughter. I recommend it to anyone.

*Edgar L. Frost  
'61 ba journ, '67 ma russian  
Norman, Oklahoma*

*Editor's Note: The former longtime administrative director of the NCAA's Final Four basketball tournament, Bill Hancock, '72 journ, became the first full-time administrator of college football's BCS in December 2005. He and Nicki live in Kansas City.*

## A Little Bit of Cross History

The Fall 2005 issue of *Sooner Magazine* arrived here today. This reminded me that another anniversary of the passing of President [George L.] Cross is upon us. I am sure that many others who very much admired the man have already, or will be writing to remember Dr. Cross as a man, or in some official capacity as he served the state of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma.

When the first stories began to be printed to describe the humanity and wit of the man, I started watching for someone to describe an event which I witnessed in the spring of 1965, but the person never came forward. This incident so vividly illustrates the way that Dr. Cross approached a fellow man who was in pain that the person to whom it happened must retain the memory of someone showing kindness as he suffered great agony.

I came down the steps from my office in the Carnegie Building as Dr. Cross came out of Evans Hall on his way to lunch. We walked north on the North Oval and struck up a conversation... We arrived at Boyd Street with a group waiting for the signal to change. When the walk light turned green, the group surged forward, except for one man who stepped off the curb and started west—directly into the path of an automobile. An arrow-shaped strip along the front fender

caught the man's right trouser leg and twisted him just enough for the piece of chrome to go through both of his legs about mid-thigh. The strip broke loose and left the young man impaled. Dr. Cross turned to me and said, "Call an ambulance!" then sat down and took the man's head in his lap and began trying to soothe him.

The ambulance arrived and took the man away without my getting to see the end of the incident, so I don't know if the man knew who had come to his assistance—perhaps not. I wonder if you can find some way to encourage someone—the victim, the driver, or one of the students who witnessed the event—to come forward to settle this for me. Why has there been no mention of it, as those who witnessed it were surely impressed by the President of the University sitting in the street holding the head of a wounded and bleeding man. I don't even remember seeing a mention of the incident in *The Norman Transcript*.

*Charles R. Galbraith, '68 ed.d  
Huntsville, Texas*

### Jeanne and David

I received my *Sooner Magazine* today and, as usual, set it aside to enjoy later. Finally, I opened it up. I was delighted to see the article on Jeanne Hoffman Smith. I have known Jeanne for more than 40 years. She is someone I admire, list as a mentor and enjoy as a friend. She is one of the more remarkable women whom I have ever met. I am in awe of all that she has given to OU and Oklahoma.

As I kept reading I came across the article on David Levy and his book on OU's history. In the mid-'60s I was a student of his. I certainly was not one of his outstanding students, but he inspired in me the desire to look beyond the small world and myself to see what was going on around me. He was an outstanding teacher. I ordered the first volume of his book tonight and look forward to the next volumes.

As a graduate of the University (class of '69, BA in English), I am more and more impressed with all that is happen-

ing at OU. The *Sooner Magazine* is one of them.

*Margaret C. Malloy, '69 ba english  
Nichols Hills, Oklahoma*

### Married to a Fish

Thank you is not enough to write, nor say—your article on my husband ["Still in the Swim of Things," *Sooner Magazine* Fall 2005] was the most "unbuyable" treasure of a gift to him, and, at this time of year, there is no other way to express it. Jay [Upchurch] did the interviews, got the photos, checked on ideas, worked so hard—and it was a great presentation.



Former OU swimming star Graham Johnston, here with wife Janis at the Straits of Gibraltar Swim in October, continues his winning ways at age 74.

We knew swimmers can't completely "evaporate" from OU's past history—but with no present swim team, we didn't dream there would be interest.

We've heard from so many OU friends from all over the USA, Canada and South America, who were "Boomer Sooners" when we were.

Since you printed the *Sooner*, on October 2, 2005, Graham swam from Europe to North Africa (Spain to Morocco), called the "Straits of Gibraltar"—solo—5 hours 9 minutes—10-plus miles—the oldest one (74) to ever do it since records started being kept in 1928! Next year he

hopes to do the "Sea of Galilee" at 75.

I married a fish, and I love him so.

*Janis Johnston, '55 bs ed  
Houston, Texas*

*Editor's Note: In the 1954 OU Swim Team photo accompanying the Graham Johnston article, the student manager should have been identified as Lanny Ross, '58 bus, of Clinton, a past president of the OU Alumni Association.*

### A Sooner Flying Legacy

Great magazine. You have done an outstanding job keeping alumni informed on the continued evolution of Sooner life. I found your article "Flying Sooners" [*Sooner Magazine*, Fall 2005] both interesting and informative. I received a BS degree in Aviation Education in 1982. The program was relatively small in comparison to today's. The emphasis was similar with many of the students interested in commercial aviation. However a group of us had a different calling into the air. We went on to the military.

USAF ROTC Detachment 675 utilized the OU aviation department at Max Westheimer airport for USAF flight screening. In 1981 Col. Kelm (professor Aerospace Studies Det 675, retired in 1982) flew with each of the pilot candidates to evaluate their ability to comprehend basic aviation skills. Many of the military pilot candidates received their private pilot rating as well as multi-engine, commercial, instrument and instructor ratings through the OU aviation program. OU has a long and proud tradition supporting the military. I hope this relationship is still in place.

I was also a member of the resurgent Alpha Eta Rho fraternity and flying team in 1979 through 1982. We had a good run, doing well in regional events and qualifying for the national competition yearly. My Sooner experience prepared me for the exciting career I have had as a fighter pilot and now a senior officer in the USAF.

*Terrence Fornof, Col. USAF, '82 bs ed  
Las Vegas, Nevada*