

Cotter *Ramblin's*

2007 - 2008



Cotter Teachers

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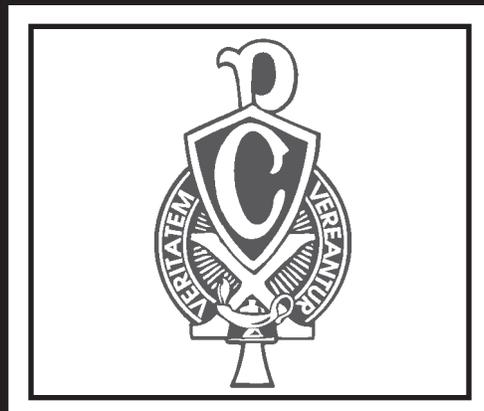
Rambler Alumni

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Cotter Junior High School Principal

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Cover Photo

The Cotter Bands senior class is pictured with the "new & improved" Cotter Schools sign. The band is currently practicing long hours in preparations for the upcoming field marching season! Don't miss the half-time show at the Homecoming football game on October 3rd!

The Cotter Seal (pictured top left)

The triangular shield, a defense against evil, represents the moral strength and integrity that characterizes Cotter students. The "P" or the Greek letter Rho, and the "X" or the Greek letter Chi, are used as a two-letter combination that represents the name of Christ.

Traditionally the Roman lamp is symbolic of the light of knowledge radiating the flame of truth.

The Latin motto "Veritatem Vereantur" is translated "Let them respect the truth". The inspiration for this motto comes from Pope Pius XII's Pax Romana (letter on the Apostolate of the Laity) in which he stated that the primary objective of all Catholic education should be "giving to young minds a respect for truth and guiding them along independent lines of thought, indispensable to their intellectual maturity."

From the President



Dear Cotter Community,

I often engage in conversations with people regarding school effectiveness. I have been surprised by just how many people equate an effective school with top-quality facilities and advanced technology. Yet the single most important factor in students' education is the teacher. For those fortunate to be educated at Cotter, they have been blessed to be taught by some of the finest. In this issue of Ramblins, we pay tribute to the Cotter faculty. Those highlighted in the following pages were chosen not only for their long-term contributions to Cotter, but they also seem to be representative of their colleagues, past and present.

Excellence in the teaching faculty is essential to Cotter's success. Quality teachers not only have an expertise in their field and a mastery of how to deliver it, but they also have an intangible ability to motivate and inspire young people to realize the good things they can become and accomplish in life. The administration and trustees of Cotter Schools have improved our faculty salaries, benefits, and technology as we seek to always attract, retain, and recognize truly effective educators.

For almost one hundred years, Cotter teachers have taught our students with care, compassion, and respect. Our main focus has always been the ultimate success of our students. Throughout our history, Cotter teachers have purposely tried to make a difference in students' lives. They have encouraged our students to learn of themselves, their faith, and their world. Generations of Cotter students undoubtedly have their own collection of stories about our teachers. Some are humorous; others heartfelt. Some involve teachers who challenged students to work harder or who provided a little extra help at just the right time. Needless to say, every Cotter graduate knows stories of teachers who gave unselfishly to instill in their students joy for learning and self-assurance.

In the pages that follow, this edition of Ramblins spotlights a small sample of those who have committed themselves to Cotter students and families. To all teachers who have been employed by Cotter throughout the years, thank you and God bless.

Live Jesus in your heart. Forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig W. Junker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig W. Junker, Ed.D.

Principal Update



Cotter High School Principal, Sandi Blank

Sr. Benedict Mary, OP was my first grade teacher. She taught me to read with enthusiasm, to print to perfection, and to make flash cards long before I knew how really helpful they could be.

Sr. Anna Marie Becker, OSF was my high school economics teacher. She taught me that hard work pays off, that being a young woman heading off to college was exciting, and that you could be anything you wanted to be if you put your mind to it.

Dr. Ron Zwonitzer was my college anatomy professor. He taught me how amazingly awesome the human body was in all of its parts, that learning was a lifelong endeavor, and that teaching looked easy if you loved what you were doing.

When I think of “inspirational teachers” in my personal life, these three people always come to mind. They knew how to capture my attention and they made me see so much more than what was right in front of me. There was a dignity and an intelligence about each of them that made them seem larger than life; but it was that same dignity and intelligence that made them so approachable and so willing to share what they knew.

As I visit classrooms here at Cotter I see history repeating itself. I see “inspirational teachers” who are making a difference in the lives of our students each and every day. We have teachers who make students write and edit and rewrite until the words flow. We have teachers who challenge students to solve difficult math and science problems until perfected only to give them more difficult ones to take them to the next level. We have teachers who know the advantage of speaking multiple languages and who dauntingly share this gift with their students. We have teachers who see the world in all of its historical beauty and who have the passion to communicate that to others. We have teachers who make music and art come alive for their students in very tangible ways. We have teachers who lead by example in matters of faith and in their service to others and who lend assistance and support to their students both in and out of the classroom. Inspirational teachers come in all shapes and sizes, makes and models, but what they all have in common is the uncanny ability to touch lives forever. Thank you, Cotter teachers, for all that you do to make a difference.



Cotter Junior High School Principal,
Dave Forney

Cotter Junior High School has enjoyed another year in the Roger Bacon building. We have had a productive year of learning and activities.

Cotter Junior High School graduated 46 8th graders this past May. These students will head on to a busy but enjoyable high school career. A successful sports season, music year and theatre year have provided us with entertainment and joy. Teachers at CJHS provide students with a caring atmosphere, as well as a solid education. This year’s 7th and 8th graders raised funds throughout the year to help support charities such as the Dan Corcoran House, Habitat for Humanity, Food for the Poor as well as many others.

One of the highlights of the school year was our trip to Eagle Bluff Environment Center in Lanesboro, MN on February 20-22, 2008. This three day/ two night event is one well worth experiencing. Students and staff challenged themselves through various activities while learning about our environment. It is a great bonding time for us as a learning community.

Receiving end of the year awards were Amanda Blue, 8th grade Student of the Year; Brittany Meurer, Brennan Devine and Anthony Wilma, 8th grade girl and boys of the year; Micaela Trainor and Gus Cochran, Januschka Award recipients; Emily Krause and Jacob Johnson, 7th grade girl and boy of the year.

Advancing The Mission



Director of Advancement, Megan Strange '94

We are all part of something remarkable... the Cotter Family... and I'm personally thankful to be a member of such a caring, supportive, and faith-filled community. During my two years back at Cotter as the Director of Advancement, I have been reminded about what makes being a Rambler, whether as a student, alum, or through your Affinity, something to be terrifically proud of!

If it's not a student amazing me with his intricate 7th grade Science Fair project or her beautiful singing voice at a spring concert, it's the roar of a crowd at a packed basketball game as everyone cheers on the team with that great traditional chant, "WE ARE COTTER!"

It's also the alumni who I run into at an event who can remember every teacher, every classmate, and every memory from their senior year class trip, all with enthusiastic fondness. It's about everyone, who because of Cotter, has developed life-long relationships that bring them back together throughout their lives to celebrate weddings, children's births, career accomplishments, grandchildren, as well as to support each other through hardships and losses. It's about each and every student who walks in the door as a 7th grader and walks out six years later to go on to change the world in magnificently positive ways, as so many of our alumni have.

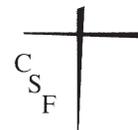
So thank you all for your role in the rich tradition of the Cotter Family history. Thank you for your support in ways big and small and thank you for keeping connected to Cotter. Remember... Once a Rambler... Always a Rambler!

Catholic Schools Foundation

In 1986, a group of committed volunteers created the Catholic Schools Foundation of Winona. This entity was formed to help ensure the future of Catholic education in Winona through the establishment and growth of an endowment. Since its inception, CSF has been able to distribute earnings of over \$2.3 million essential dollars to help our schools carry on their missions. This has been possible due to the immense generosity of the many supportive individuals, families, and businesses that have made gifts, both large and small, to the CSF endowment.

The Father Paul Nelson Legacy Society was named in honor of a pillar of commitment to Catholic Education in Winona. Fr. Paul Nelson served the Catholic Schools in Winona for over 20 years and truly embodies the spirit and principles of Catholic education. He has inspired countless others to do the same. This Society honors and recognizes the generosity and vision of those who, like Father Paul Nelson, are committed to the advancement of Catholic education in Winona, and to ensuring its viability for generations to come through their deferred gifts.

If you have made provisions for the Catholic Schools of Winona in your estate planning or would like more information about joining the Father Paul Nelson Legacy Society, please feel welcome to contact Megan Strange, Director of Development for The Catholic Schools Foundation of Winona at 507-453-5102, or Peter Walsh, Chair of the Father Paul Nelson Legacy Society, at 507-454-4605.





*"The mediocre teacher tells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
The great teacher inspires."*

In the following pages we pay tribute to a sampling of Cotter's great teachers. They are among a larger group of inspirational people who have devoted their lives to the love of learning and to the business of "lighting fires" in our students...



Live for Christ, Learn for life, Love one another.

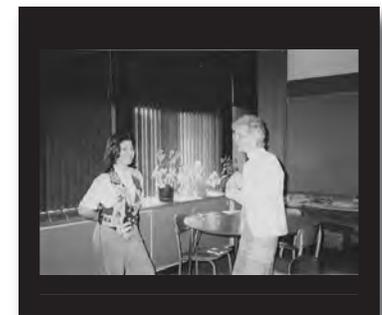
Rita Haugh and 50 Years of Dedication to Catholic Education

It started when she played school with her older sisters... begging them to bring home their extra worksheets from school and to teach her to read. By the time she was five, Rita Haugh knew she wanted to make school her life. When she graduated from the College of St. Teresa, she made the move to the other side of the desk and has been inspiring young lives the whole way through.

Miss Rita Haugh's first teaching experience came with a room full of first graders. For two years she taught at this level before finding her niche teaching junior high English. Nearly every year since then, Miss Haugh has taught some combination of English, literature, and/or religion. For 50 years, Miss Rita Haugh has been a presence in Catholic education. To Miss Rita Haugh, "Cotter is a place where the mission statement is not just words on paper, but are truly lived, so that we are a Christ-centered faith community, where the values of the Gospel are evident in the way we treat one another as faculty, and are transmitted to our students and expected from them in their treatment of one another." Father Theodore Hesburgh, former President of the University of Notre Dame inspired her with his three basic goals for Catholic education: competence, compassion, and community. Undoubtedly, these qualities have been woven into her classroom. Miss Haugh firmly believes that every child who walked through the doors to her classroom deserves to leave with a sense of competence. We have witnessed her acknowledging each student's God-given gifts so that those gifts may be a source of personal happiness and the child's way of giving service to humankind.

Miss Haugh is also known for teaching her students a spirit of compassion. She has helped develop her students respect for the uniqueness of every individual, a strong sense of their need for one another, and a willingness to respond compassionately to those whose needs are greater than our own. As one of her students remembers, "Miss Haugh was my 7th and 8th grade religion teacher. As most middle-school aged girls do, I went through a rough patch in 7th grade. On a day that was particularly hard, she passed out pieces of scrap paper to everyone in the class, enough pieces for each student, around 24. She then told us to write down a nice thing about each person in the room on the individual pieces of paper. We then gave our classmates their compliments. We all ended up with 24 compliments from our peers. At the end of class she squeezed my arm and asked me if that helped. It did. I still have those pieces of paper." Throughout the years, Miss Rita Haugh has effectively raised her students' awareness of their place in the world. It is her belief "that we all have a responsibility to a faith community, an obligation to a political community, and a membership in the global community, all of which cry out for our interest, our concern, and our involvement."

Father Paul Nelson once told Rita, "Your students will forget the minutiae that you teach; they'll forget the facts; they'll remember who you were, how you lived." He was right. In her 29 years in the Winona Area Catholic School system, and 50 years in Catholic education, through her words and actions, Rita will be remembered.



“Mr. Nitti... is probably why I took every math class Cotter had at the time by the time I was a Junior”

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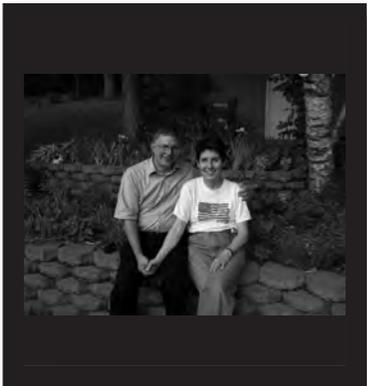
Cotter Veteran Teacher Don Nitti: The Math...The Man



He didn't always love math. In fact, through 8th grade, Mr. Don Nitti hated math (arithmetic to be exact). He didn't like memorizing and as a result, didn't learn the multiplication tables until he was in 7th grade. It wasn't until his senior year of high school and the encouragement of his Algebra teacher that he starting thinking about teaching. Because of his patience, ability to listen to student's ideas, calm demeanor, and gift of challenging the students to think critically, Mr. Nitti credits his senior math teacher for influencing him towards a career in education.

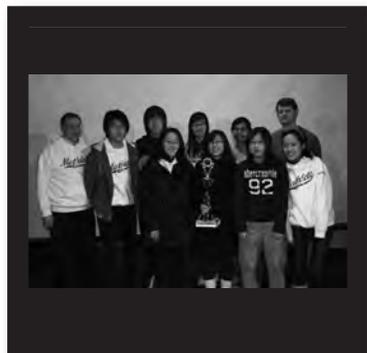


Don came to Winona to attend Saint Mary's University. Upon graduation in 1969, he returned to the Chicago area to teach at his alma mater. At the time the salary for a fulltime teaching position was \$6,200 for the year. He taught there for two years before returning to Winona to complete his graduate work. The next year he started teaching at St. Stan's in Winona and stayed for 13 years until the Catholic Schools consolidation in Winona. Mr. Nitti was the first teacher to begin teaching Algebra to 8th graders at St. Stan's and he began the Math Counts program, as well. After the consolidation, none of the teachers were guaranteed jobs in the new system. For that reason, he sent out many applications and was eventually offered a job at Cotter and one at a school near his wife's (Jan) home town. The other job was for significantly more money. In the end, however, he and Jan chose Catholic schools over money. This past school year marked Mr. Nitti's 38th year teaching in Catholic schools--36 of them in Winona.



Mr. Nitti chooses to teach in Catholic schools for many reasons. Primarily, he can be himself. He can talk about what is important: faith and values.

“I would be unable to work where I had to spend all of my time on discipline. Students in Catholic schools have a lot going for them. They are concerned about doing well and they have families that are involved. That makes my job so much easier when we work together.”



When Mr. Nitti first started teaching, math wasn't really “in fashion.” The arts and social sciences were important to people and math seemed to have less significance. It wasn't long before the space race began and math and science were viewed as the stars of education. The students in his classroom started coming to him with more motivation. His goal at the time was to convince his students that they were capable of more than they thought they were. He doesn't like to answer the question, “What can I use this for?” when a student thinks learning math is not relevant. He would much rather discuss the benefits of learning for its own sake. According to Mr. Nitti, “It may be great to get the needed credentials for a good job, but to develop a learned person should be the goal of education.” When students are interested in learning and he works together with them to increase knowledge, he feels a sense of accomplishment.

The mission of the Cotter Mathematics Department is to “help each student see mathematics as a life skill...by stretching themselves beyond their comfort zones, developing reasoning skills and connecting their knowledge to other areas of their lives.” It is no surprise why Mr. Don Nitti fits so well into the academic realm at Cotter.

"all persons share the responsibility of safeguarding the planet and the peoples who inhabit it."

La construcción de puentes culturales mediante la enseñanza Nancy Bambenek and building cultural bridges through teaching

Choosing to teach was not a difficult decision for Mrs. Nancy Bambenek. From her earliest memories, she loved to play school. Now, Mrs. Bambenek says she "works school." Initially, the challenging part for her was determining what to teach, finally settling upon "students" as her choice. With a background in elementary education and Spanish as a Second Language, she had many possibilities. Over the years, Mrs. Bambenek has taught elementary school, middle school, high school, university classes and adult/community education. And her favorite place or level depends where she is at the moment.

Mrs. Bambenek's first teaching job was as a substitute teacher at Minnetonka Senior High School. She was the 20th substitute they had for a Spanish teacher who was on sick leave; the students were determined she would only last a few days, but her passion for teaching prevailed and she completed the year. After teaching Spanish to 7th-9th graders at Minnetonka East Junior High, she temporarily retired from teaching to get married and to have a family. Her next teaching job brought her to St. Stanislaus Grade School in Winona. When the Winona Area Catholic Schools decided to consolidate, Sr. Mary Donald asked Nancy if she would be interested in beginning a Spanish program at the new St. Stan's Middle School. The next 11 years were an incredible experience for her since middle school languages were very rare and she was able to create her own curriculum. Finally, in 1996 Mrs. Bambenek made the move to Cotter where she remains today.

Mrs. Bambenek chooses to teach in a Catholic school because, simply, she believes in God. She's been educated in a Catholic elementary school, high school, and college and even two Catholic post-graduate universities. Because of a plethora of wonderful role models, both lay and religious, she has been exposed to "fine minds, excellent principles, a standard of values and morals upon which to base decisions, upon which to base a life style." Teaching at Cotter allows her to share values and a Catholic Christian ethic that is the foundation of her life.

Everything Nancy reads, watches, or experiences deliberately gets translated into an activity to help students learn. She love games of all types and tries to make up new ways to integrate fun into what they are doing. A favorite Cotter memory for Mrs. Bambenek was trying to get her class to understand the meaning of a vocabulary word: pacer (it means to graze). She got on the floor on all fours, mooed like a cow and pretended to eat hay. Fortunately the students thought it was humorous; unfortunately, they didn't understand it, not even the student who lived on a farm!

Mrs. Bambenek believes in a global society in which "all persons share the responsibility of safeguarding the planet and the peoples who inhabit it." She feels we have a responsibility to share the wealth both in material terms and spiritual, ethical, and moral terms. In her opinion, in order to accomplish this task, it is essential to know and understand other languages and cultures including their history, vocabulary, customs and beliefs.

Spanish is not an easy class with an easy grade. Since it is the fourth most spoken language in the world, it is important for Mrs. Bambenek to get her students to master the basics. This requires attention to detail and practice. She says, "Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved without effort. I am still a learner. Every day I find out how much more I have to learn but also how neat it is to be able to communicate with someone from another culture. I think that learning a language is making a contribution to the cause of global understanding in our world."



What do Fishing, Black Jelly Beans, Larry Bird, and Cotter all have in common?

Randy Lisowski- the Alum, the coach, the teacher, the friend



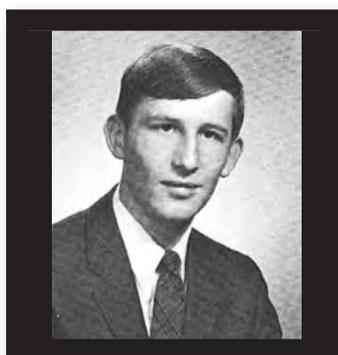
He's worn many different hats around Cotter. Whether you know him as a classmate, Senior class advisor, Director of Intramurals, football, golf, basketball or track coach, Department Chair for the Health and Physical Education or Social Studies departments, Athletic Director, Dean of Students, Vice Principal, Director of Student Life, Assistant Principal, teacher, or as an Alumni of Cotter, there's a good chance you've gotten to know Mr. Randy Lisowski (RL) throughout the years.

RL started at Cotter in 1976 as a part time social studies teacher. The other half of his time those two years was spent teaching physical education at St. Mary's Elementary. Looking to get more involved, RL volunteered to coach Cotter's junior high football team. And so it began.



RL lives by the notion that "somebody is always watching." It is with this mantra that he ended up at Cotter for all these years. According to Randy, had he not volunteered to coach the junior high football team in his first year at Cotter, he would not have received a call to take on the role of head football coach at Cotter, which in turn has led to countless other opportunities and unforgettable experiences in his 32 years at Cotter.

What RL cherishes most about working at Cotter is that it is a place that's "truly blessed with great kids." He recognizes the sacrifice that families endure to keep Catholic education a priority. RL views this as his vocation; he's been called by God to teach. He was inspired to teach by a social studies teacher he had at Cotter, Sister Killeen. Though she was tough, he knew she believed that RL could be a better student than what he was. She held him accountable. RL is motivated as a teacher knowing that he can make a difference in the lives of students.



Ask anyone around Cotter what kind of man RL is and the unanimous response you'll receive is that he's a guy with rough exterior but has a heart of gold who sees each student for the special individual he or she is. The respect is mutual. As RL reflects on his teaching career so far, he is most proud of the number of students who return and thank him for preparing them not only for college but more importantly, for life.

RL truly bleeds Cotter blue. We're grateful he answered his call.

"Randy is the teacher that has the gruff exterior, but has the heart of gold. This is particularly true when it comes to those who are searching for someone to truly care about them. This role becomes ever more pronounced as we enter a world where success (in school, business, etc.) is the only standard by which to judge a person. Randy understands that the real measure of a teacher is to help students on the road to becoming good people"

—Mike Donlin

"They are the ones that bring out the best in me and I hope I do the same for them"

Faith . . . Scholarship . . . Service . . . Dissection . . .

Principal Sandi Blank's Mark on Cotter's Tradition of Excellence

Mrs. Sandi Blank was loving every minute of being a stay at home mom when she received a call from a former college professor asking if she'd be interested in teaching a few lab classes at Winona State University. It didn't take her long to say yes since the practical part of science is what she truly loves.

For two years Mrs. Blank taught zoology and physiology labs to nursing students at Winona State University. Just when she thought her teaching career was over, she received a call from Sr. Eileen Haugh, (principal of the "old" Cotter Junior High) asking if she was interested in teaching 8th grade Earth Science. At the beginning of August she interviewed for the position and walked out an hour later loaded with an armful of books and a new part-time job. Much to her surprise, her one-year contract turned into a 27-year (and counting) career at Cotter! After four years of teaching at the junior high level, she moved to Cotter High School to teach biology and anatomy. Today she still teaches anatomy and serves as the principal.

Throughout her years at Cotter, Mrs. Blank has served as a class advisor for all grade levels, been the NHS advisor, chaperoned the senior class trip since 1989 (only missing once), and has been involved in the Cotter Auction for over 20 years. Above all, her favorite activity is attending the students' extracurricular activities.

As an educator, Mrs. Blank believes that it is her job is to reinforce a student's natural curiosity by providing a variety of learning experiences, to help each child to develop his/her God-given talents, and to promote an understanding of self. She wants students to believe that life-long learning is a gift that they give themselves. Any cat dissection is her favorite teaching memory because it is such a turning point for students in their understanding of how living organisms are put together, how everything fits, and the relationship of the parts to the whole. It is during the dissections when Mrs. Blank says form and function come together.

Mrs. Blank chooses to work in a Catholic school because the school community is able to live the gospel message daily in a very active manner. Being able to help educate a student's mind, body, and spirit collectively is also a reason she chooses to work here.

Looking back on her teaching career, Sandi is most proud of the possibility that she might have had a slight influence in the career choice of a few students who have become doctors, dentists, veterinarians, nurses, science teachers, etc, after taking biology or anatomy.

Mrs. Blank gets her inspiration and motivation to teach from the kids that walk into her classroom each fall. She says "They are the ones that bring out the best in me and I hope I do the same for them."



Get to know...

Rita Haugh

Family: four older sisters, four older brothers, two younger sisters and two younger brothers.

Hometown: Grew up on a farm near Easton, MN about 30 miles south of Mankato.

Favorite Color: blue and green; it's a tie.

Favorite food: used to be popcorn until I discovered Moose Tracks frozen yogurt.

Favorite Book: way too many to count, but I especially like the author Stanley Gordon West, Geraldine Brooks' *Year of Wonders*, and Anne Perry's Victorian-era mysteries.

Hidden Talent: It isn't really too hidden: I'm the one you see walking around the lake reading (and never fallen in!). Another, I've been taking piano lessons off and on since the age of 9 and I'm *still* taking them!

On a rainy Saturday or on a day off, I... love to read, write letters (real letters, not emails), play the piano and bake...and if it isn't too rainy, I like to take long walks.

Don Nitti

Family: Married to Janet for 37 years. We have five children, all of whom have graduated from Cotter. Andrea '92 lives in Winona and our oldest grandchild is in seventh grade in Cotter Junior High. Andrea's husband Brandon is the Cotter Junior High math team coach. Christina '94 is a nurse practitioner at the Winona Clinic and is waiting for her husband to get his immigration papers to come and live in the U.S. Emily '96 teaches fourth grade in a Spanish Immersion school in the Twin Cities. Ben '00 has finished his Masters at the U of M and is working as a Mechanical Engineer also in the Cities and Anthony '03 is in graduate school for marine biology in St. Petersburg FL.

Hometown: Grew up in Elmwood Park, IL (suburb of Chicago).

Favorite food: This is easy. Spaghetti.

Favorite book: Recently I have liked the books by Dan Brown, but before that I would say *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene.

Hidden talent/interesting fact about you: I like to do things for myself. I learned a lot from my father-in-law and so have tackled just about everything around the house. Construction, electrical, plumbing, etc. I used to run my own small engine repair service during summers.

What is your favorite memory from when you were in school? Meeting my wife when I was a junior in college. I was dating another girl and she found a blind date for one of my friends. I'm married to that blind date.

On a rainy Saturday or on a day off, I... like to fix

things. I like to work around the house. I also like to drink tea and do the crossword puzzle.

Señora Bambenek

Family: Oldest of 12 children. Married to Jim '63 for 36 years. We have two daughters: Catherine (Trina) '90 and Liza '95. Trina and her husband, Matt Myers, have two children making us the grandparents of Madeline Wenonah (age four) and Peter Joseph (age two).

Hometown: I was born in Minneapolis and grew up in the rural areas of Western Hennepin County near Hamel. We have lived in Winona for 34 years.

Favorite color: BLUE

Favorite food: lasagna

Favorite book: *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey

If you could travel anywhere, all expenses paid, where would you go and what would you do? I would go back to Spain and visit my friends in Madrid and Barcelona.

Hidden talent/interesting fact about you: I knit, sew and when I grow up, I want to write children's books.

On a rainy Saturday or on a day off, I... READ or work in my garden.

Randy Lisowski

Family: Wife, Deb and Sons Zach '96 and Aaron '01

Hometown: Winona, MN

Favorite Book: *Slaughter House Five* by Kurt Vonnegut & *Trout Magic* by Robert Traver

On a day off, I... love to go fly fishing for trout on Garvin Brook.

Sandi Blank

Family: Married to Jim '66 Children: Sally '89 (International Channel manager for Vaddio in Minneapolis) Daniel '92 (Head Groundskeeper for the Buffalo (NY) Bisons AAA baseball team) and Bridget '95 (Associate with the Cunningham Group Architecture firm).

Hometown: Born and raised in Joliet, IL; graduated from St. Francis Academy, class of 1968. I came to Winona to attend the College of Saint Teresa and have been here ever since.

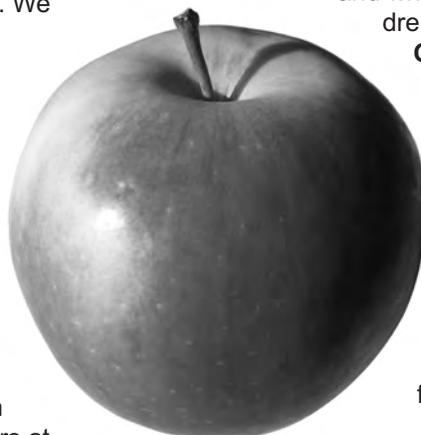
Favorite color: blue

Favorite food: Pizza

Favorite book: *Mr. Blue* by Miles Connolly

If you could travel anywhere, all expenses paid, where would you go and what would you do? Europe – visit every country, see every major attraction. I have been there a few times but never long enough!

On a rainy Saturday or on a day off, I... like to bake, watch old movies, take a road trip.



Volunteer of the Year Award

Cotter High School recognized **Mark & Majda Brickl** and **Sue Ryan** with the annual Volunteer of the Year award. This award recognizes people who have substantially volunteered their time and talent to make Cotter a better place. Mark & Majda Brickl have selflessly contributed countless hours to many Rambler activities and have most recently played key roles in the very successful and very creative Cotter Show Choir Goes Green technology fundraiser. Mark and Majda have also been very active with the Cotter Auction. Anyone who knows the Brickls knows how much they truly care about Cotter and the success of the students here.



Sue Ryan has been a tireless worker for the athletic booster club. She is an incredibly humble person who wants no recognition for the many projects she has successfully run for the boosters. Sue is a very organized person who is able to take a task from beginning to end. She is a great team player, always volunteering to help. More than anything Sue is known for being a friendly person who is always willing to volunteer her considerable talents.

St. Joseph Award



Cotter High School honored **Rita Haugh** and **Sr. Lavonne Krebs** with the **2007-2008 St. Joseph Award**. This award is one of the most prestigious honors Cotter awards annually. The St. Joseph Award is named after Cotter's patron saint, and it is presented to people who give extraordinary time, talent, and treasure to the Cotter community. Rita is retiring this year after 50 years of teaching, over 30 of which have been at Cotter and WACS. Sr. Lavonne will be moving to Rome to care for aging Sisters in her order. Sr. Lavonne has been teaching in Winona's Catholic Schools for over 20 years. They have absolutely gone above and beyond for the Cotter community. These award recipients have offered their gifts so that an excellent faith-based education is possible for Cotter students.

The Cotter family recognizes and congratulates Rita Haugh and Sr. Lavonne Krebs for their amazing loyalty and commitment to Cotter and Catholic Education.

Student Life

Campus Connections

Do you want to brush up on your French? How about learning Feng Shui from those who are practiced? Or perhaps you are like me, and are intensely invested in a love of culture and it's beauty. We at Cotter, invite you to develop a meaningful relationship with our boarding students who make their home at the Cotter



Residence Center. This past year, the CRC was host to 74 young adults from Cameroon, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, South Korea, and Mexico. These young hearts, bright minds, and brave spirits have woven their way into our hearts, and make Cotter the global community that we are. Come, visit our website and take a glimpse into the lives of these our friends. Catch up on our Spring Break trip to Chicago, IL. See the new faces of our students who visited from Okinawa Japan. Explore the activities that these students have participated in this year. See the photos and read the articles. Their individual and group journeys will take your breath away.

Campus Ministry

13 seniors served as leaders of faith through the Campus Ministry Class this past year. The purpose of the class is to empower students to be disciples of Jesus in the world today, to draw students to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community, and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

There were many first semester highlights and accomplishments that we are very proud of:

- A Christmas party at Sauer Nursing Home
- A 6th grade retreat at St. Stan's
- Raising money for flood victims. Proceeds went to the United Way
- Raising awareness about animal cruelty. Proceeds went to the Humane Society
- Buying Christmas gifts for four local families affected by the August flood
- Raising awareness about the ease and importance of recycling, especially at Cotter
- Serving as the Sacristan each Friday at 8am for our weekly Mass

Campus Ministry students also planned, coordinated and lead a number of all school events including:

- "Mix It Up Day," a national effort to encourage students to include others and break out of cliques
- Advent reconciliation, which included a beautiful illustration of forgiveness
- Three all-school Liturgies: Back to School, All Saints Day & Grandparent's Day, and the Advent Celebration
- Two Prayer Services: one focused on peace in our daily lives, the other on gratitude and thanksgiving

If you have other ideas regarding how the Campus Ministry class can continue to strengthen the Cotter community and lead in faith, please contact our Campus Ministry teacher, Marisa Corcoran at mcorcoran@winonacotter.org.

Volunteer at Cotter

Volunteer involvement is essential to our school's success, and this success positively affects our students. That is why we are asking you to make a difference by allowing us the privilege of working with you as a volunteer. For volunteer opportunities, please contact the Advancement Office at (507)453-5100 or email development@winonacotter.org.

Cross Cultural Ministry Project

The Cross Cultural Ministry Project has been around for about 12 years and was started by former Cotter President Jim Devine. It is one of the most talked about experiences of current students and Alumni. Through CCMP, students have the opportunity to travel to another city, experience a different culture, serve people in need, and learn more about Jesus and his ministry of service. This summer, 54 students will travel to six cities throughout the United States hoping to do just that.

Students will travel to:
Greensboro, NC
St. Louis, MO
Center Point, WV
New Orleans, LA
Kansas City, MO
Benton Harbor, MI

Throughout the year, students and families work hard to raise the funds necessary to cover the cost of their mission trip. Our most successful fundraiser is making and selling Apple Pies. Seven Saturdays throughout the year, student and parent volunteers work all day to make the delicious homemade pies. Students are then responsible for selling the pies, although most are ordered before the pies are ever made. From Christmas and Thanksgiving sales this past year we were able to raise over \$5,000!

Students also make soy candles in our very own candle lab in the Roger Bacon Building, sell frozen foods such as Butter Braids and Puffins, and participate in a few annual fundraising events such as the Jim Devine Golf Tournament in the fall and the Pancake Breakfast in the winter.

Thank you for your prayers, concern and support!



Mark Your Calendars
for the
Cotter Athletic
Hall of Fame Ceremony
October, 11 2008

For more information visit
www.winonacotter.org

Athletics

The **boys' cross-country** team went into the season with high expectations, returning several key runners from last year's section championship team. Unfortunately, injuries to Brian Conover and Jacob DeMarais hurt the team's chances and Cotter finished 7th in the HVL and 9th in the section. Despite these disappointments, there were several



indicators that point to future success. We had our largest group of junior high runners in eight years, led by 7th graders Bobby Mullen and Jacob Johnson. Jacob won the first race of his career with a victory at the Stewartville meet. The 9th grade class, led by varsity runners Greg Gernes, Eric Mueller, and Barry Nelson, also did very well. We had good numbers in all age groups and excellent senior leadership from Jacob, Donny Wasinger and Andrew Fricke. They will be missed, but their dedication and enthusiasm will continue to inspire the team. The obvious highlights of the 2007 Boys Cross Country season were the performances of Donny Wasinger. Donny won 11 of 12 meets, including his first HVL championship and his second Section 1A title. In an exciting race, Donny defeated last year's champion, Kevin Lachowitz of Perham, to earn the first Cross Country State Championship in Cotter's history, with a time of 15:52 for the 5K course at St. Olaf. Adding to his championships in the 1600 and 3200 meter races at the 2007 State Track and Field Championships, Donny is now a three- time state champ!

The **girls' soccer** team continued to improve in 2007. The team finished at 7-10-1, two wins ahead of last season. After injuries took five players out of the lineup, four talented 7th and 8th grade players stepped up to play major roles for the last half of the season. With 16 experienced varsity players returning, team expectations are high for improved performance and success next season. Junior Renee Pecarina was named to the All-Conference team and Junior Gretchen Theis received Honorable Mention. Renee Pecarina also received the team MVP Award while Gretchen Theis was named the Outstanding Defensive Player. The Rookie of the year award went to 7th grader Paige Gernes. Sophomore Sarah Eichenberg received the Dedication Award and Sophomore Becky McCormick received the Unsung Hero Award.

The Cotter **girls' cross-country** team experienced a successful fall! Sara Wasinger ('09) repeated with All-Conference Honors at the HVL meet. As a team, Cotter also finished 4th at the HVL Conference meet. At the Section 1A meet, the girls finished 7th. At the end of the year, Sara Wasinger earned the Most Valuable Runner Award.

Receiving the Coach's Award were seniors Michelle Kirkvold, Emily Sharpe, and Stephanie Smith for their dedication to Cotter Cross Country for the past six years.

The 2007 **boys' soccer** team ended the season with a 7-8-1 record. Due to the team chemistry and strong senior leadership, the team once again advanced to the second round of the playoffs. The votes for team awards this year were very close, but the following individuals were chosen by their teammates as the winners: Fils Mwizerwa received the team's MVP Award. Defensive Player of the Year went to Matt Brickl. Sam Werle was chosen as the team's Most Improved Player, and the Tim Prusha Leadership Award went to Ryan McCormick.



Eighth grader, MacKenzie Brosnahan made Cotter proud when she qualified for the **state swim meet**. MacKenzie is pictured with Jr. High Principal Dave Forney, Pat Bowlin and her parents Paul and Jan Brosnahan.

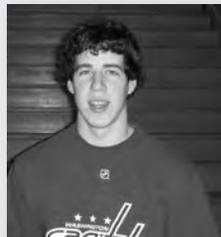
The **volleyball team** showed great improvement over the course of the 2007 season despite their record of 5-15. Cotter was led by Senior middle hitter Jenny Gilbertson. Gilbertson was chosen the team's MVP and Rory Biesanz was chosen as the team's Most Improved Player. Congratulations to All-Conference player, Jenny Gilbertson. The future looks bright for the Cotter volleyball program.

The 2007 **football** team finished the year with a 6-4 overall record. The Ramblers lost a tough 30-28 game to Triton in the season's final regular season game that deprived them of a share of the conference title. With an exciting, high-powered offense, the Ramblers were never out of a game. Thomas O'Brien was named the Team's MVP and *Winona Daily News* Player of the Year. Andy Wolfe set a school record in catches (60), yards (1,002) and touchdown receptions (16). Doug Gernes was named the team's Outstanding offensive Lineman and Patrick Bowlin was named the team's Top Defensive Player. Thomas O'Brien, Patrick Bowlin, Andy Wolfe, and Doug Gernes were named All-Conference, and *Winona Daily News* All-Area 1st team. Joe Conway, Mike Sullivan, Taylor Waldorf, Beau Brackey, Mike Turek, and Hayden Kelly were named All-Conference Honorable Mention. O'Brien received Special Mention on the All-State team, while Gernes, Wolfe, Bowlin, and Sullivan received All-State Honorable Mention.

The Cotter **girls' basketball** team finished with their third consecutive season of 20 wins or more by finishing with a record of 20-7. The season marked the end of the careers of Jenny Gilbertson and Laura Erickson. Gilbertson leaves as the school's all time leader in points, rebounds, and blocked shots. Gilbertson was named the First Team forward by the Associated Press this year, and finished as a two-time All-State player. Erickson scored her 1,000-point in a regular season win over Caledonia to become the fourth girl in Cotter history to achieve that milestone. Laura was a two-time All-Conference player. Season highlights included two wins over Hayfield who finished fourth in the state, and a 20-point regular season win over Caledonia. With 3 starters returning and a B-squad team that finished with a 21-2 record, the team is optimistic about reclaiming the HVL and Section championships in 2009.



The Cotter **boys' basketball** team finished the year with a 21-7 record. The Ramblers top season highlight was a thrilling 71-70 home win over LaCrosse Aquinas, the Wisconsin state champion for Division III. The Ramblers defeated Rochester Lourdes twice, including a hard fought 66-63 overtime win at Lourdes. The Ramblers finished second in the HVL gold division, suffering two close losses to HVL and section champion LaCrescent by a combined four points. Patrick Bowlin became the school all-time leading scorer in the win over Aquinas and finished his career with 1,417 points. Bowlin was named All-Conference for the third time, and Honorable Mention All-State for the second time. Andy Wolfe and Joe Conway were also named All-Conference.



The cooperative sports teams which combine the talents of Cotter and Winona Senior High School athletes had a number of team and individual accomplishments. Senior Joey Nadeau became the all time leading scorer in **boys' hockey** in goals and points. Nadeau was

named Honorable Mention All-State and helped lead the team to a successful 12 win season. Sophomore **gymnast** Lexi Burnikel was third in the state in the floor exercise and gained All-State honors. In the all-around competition at state, Burnikel finished 13th out of 31 competitors. The team was once again Big 9 champions and won their 50th consecutive dual meet.



The **dance team** had a great season! Their scores improved dramatically throughout the year and by the end of the season were double what they were from the first competition. For the first time in school history the team competed in both Jazz funk and high kick. The dance team had an awesome cheering section at each of their competitions. Thank you parents and fans for all of your support!

Athletics



Cotter **track and field** experienced an outstanding season in 2008. School records were broken in boys 800m, 1600m, and 3200m runs (Donny Wasinger '08), the girls' discus (Nikki Beyer '11) and the girls' long jump and high jump (Lexi Burnikel '10). Six All-Conference athletes were crowned: Sara Wasinger '09, Lexi Burnikel '10, Donny Wasinger '08, Patrick Bowlin '08, Brian Conover '09 and Mike Sullivan '10. At the Section 1A meet, Lexi Burnikel advanced to the state meet in the long jump. At the State Meet at Hamline University, she finished 12th. Donny Wasinger had another outstanding season for the Cotter boys' team. After winning the 3200 and 1600 at the Section 1A meet, Donny found himself heading back to state. On Friday evening, he won the 3200 in a very exciting race with a time of 9:22.42.

Saturday afternoon he won the 1600 with a time of 4:15.20, which also broke the state Class A meet record. Wasinger's victory gave him his fifth championship (3200 & 1600 in 2007 & 2008 as well as Class A Cross Country champion in the fall of 2007). Donny received All-State honors. End of the year awards recognized Wasinger as the boys' MVP and Lexi Burnikel as the girls' MVP. The Coach's Award went to Brian Lubahn and Gillian Rendahl. The Cotter Rambler Award went to Patrick Bowlin and Sara Wasinger. Receiving the Olympic Award were international students Alex Chen and Lindsay Im. Finalizing awards were two individuals who received Academic All-State honors: Patrick Bowlin and Lexi Burnikel. Cotter track and field graduates a great senior class who led by example this year. In doing so, our younger athletes have gained skills and leadership qualities to lead Cotter to a successful season in 2009.



The **baseball team** returned to state for the second time in three years. As they did in 2006, the team finished in 3rd place. The Ramblers started the season with a 4-8 record, but got hot late in the season, winning 15 of their last 18 games to finish with a record of 19-11. The team was led by 10 talented seniors, 7 of which were starters. Seniors Thomas O'Brien and Andy Wolfe were named all conference. O'Brien was

named the section tournament MVP as the Ramblers defeated rival Rochester Lourdes for the section title. Coach Mat O'Brien completed his third and final year as Ramblers head coach. Coach O'Brien had tremendous success as he led the team to two HVL and two section championships. We wish Coach O'Brien well as he and his family move to the Twin Cities area.

The **girls' softball team** kept their tradition of winning the HVL championship for the third consecutive year, and 15th in the last 16 years with a perfect 13-0 record. However, the Ramblers streak of eight consecutive trips to state came to an end with a heartbreaking 1-0 loss to Zumbrota-Mazeppa in the section championship game. The Ramblers finished the year with a 20-6 overall record. Laura Erickson was named All-State first team by the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Laura finished her career as the schools' all time leader in doubles (35), home runs (10), and extra base hits (53). Junior Whitney Wisecup along with Erickson were named All-State for Class AA by the coaches association. Erickson and Wisecup were named All-conference along with Allie Gernes, Jenny Gilbertson, and Anna Buege. Freshmen Lauren Bowlin was the team's primary pitcher and posted an 8-3 record with impressive pitching victories over ranked teams St. Charles and Zumbrota-Mazeppa twice.

The **girls' tennis team** closed out a successful 2007 season with a fourth place finish in the section tournament. This year the rambler finished with an 11-10 record. The team was led by two seniors: Kate Mahlke and Jessica Giers. Cotter battled through the Hiawatha Valley League with a 6-4 record and finished third in the conference behind Cannon Falls and Lourdes. Leading the Ramblers was Allie Gernes and Jillian Wunderlich who both were named All-Conference players. Allie Gernes finished with a 12-7 record playing at #1 singles and #1 doubles and was named MVP. Jillian Wunderlich finished with a 12-5 record and was named the team's Toughest Competitor after playing much of the season with a fractured foot. Jessica Giers was named Most Improved Player. Kate Mahlke was named Most Intense Player. Allie Gernes was seeded 3rd in the section tournament and eventually lost in the semi-finals to take 3rd.

Like last year, the Cotter **boys' tennis** team was once again led by a core group of seniors. This year the reigns were passed to Joey Nadeau, Jake DeMarais and Ross Heymans. All three contributed on the varsity level for numerous years and this year it was their turn to lead a group of younger and less experienced players. During the season the team had some growing pains and took several bumps along the way, however, by the time the section tournament rolled around their best tennis was about to come forth. Playing in a very competitive section (1A), Cotter stood toe-to-toe with top ten ranked Waseca but came up short losing 3-4, including two 3-set matches. Next year, with a good core of established varsity members returning, hopes to continue on its march back to the top of section 1A.

It was an interesting season that started out extremely wet with only one practice before the **boys' golf** team's first meet. With that in mind the boys and girls put forth a great effort and stayed positive even though conditions were not ideal. On the boys side, Cotter placed in the middle of the HVL at the HVL Championship. Andrew Fricke received All-Conference honors ranking 15th in the HVL and Aaron Theis ranked 16th for the season. Fricke has been All-Conference 3 of his 4 high school years and Theis has been selected for two consecutive years. They rebounded at the Sub-section tournament at The Bridges and qualified four boys, Andrew Fricke, Aaron Theis, Brian Keane, and Garrett Welle, to advance to the Section tournament at The Jewel in Lake City.

Numbers were down for the **girls' golf team** this year with only eight golfers on a consistent basis. The varsity team stayed positive and Jessica Giers qualified for the section tournament. Kendra Koetz and Rory Biesanz missed the cut by two and three strokes respectively. Jessica's attitude remained positive and she shot her best nine hole score of her career at the section tournament on a very tough course.

Both the boys' and girls' teams have committed to playing over the summer and some players are even getting lessons. With some strong off season work we will continue to improve.



Tell Us Who... Revealed

Congratulations to **Ann (Throne) Christensen '78** who was the winner of our first "Tell Us Who" contest in the last issue of Ramblin's!

Don't forget to send in your answers to this issue's picture on page 26

Correct Answer: (L-R) Bob Eckles, John Nett '38, Mark Ayotte '78, Tony Langowski '78

Activities

Cotter Band

Throughout the year, Cotter band students distinguish themselves through participation in the solo-ensemble contest, HVL and WSU Honor bands, the Dorian Band Festival and MMEA All-State Band. The concert, symphonic, and jazz bands consistently earn "superior" ratings at various large group contests.



Hiawatha Valley League All-Conference Honor Band

Cotter High School Band students selected to participate in this year's Hiawatha Valley League All-Conference Honor Band were (front l to r): Jacob DeMarais '08, Emily Sharpe '08, Hayden Kelly '08 (middle l to r): Ryan McCormick '08, Matt Brickl '08, Peter Knepper '08 (back): Jun Su Kim '08, and Brian Lee '08.



WSU Honor Band

Cotter High School Band members selected for the Honor Concert Band were (front L to r): Joanne Yim '08; Jocelyn Won '08, Liz Kilkus '09, (back) Tony Speltz '09, Emily Sharpe '08, and Emily Brom '10.

The **math team** finished third in the state during the regular season and came home with a second place trophy from the state tournament.



The Winona Cotter **speech** team enjoyed a very successful and fun season in 2008. Rambler speakers competed in seven invitational tournaments along with the HVL meet, sub-sections and sections. The Ramblers brought home team trophies from the Chatfield and Spring Grove invitationals, earning third place team honors at each meet. Though no Ramblers qualified for the state meet this year, Cotter did have six entries in the section 1A tournament: Rachel Jungwirth ('09) and Kirsten Czaplewski ('09) in Duo, Tyler Speltz ('09) in Extemp Reading, Tony Speltz ('09) in Humorous, and Cooper Boland ('10), Kyle Marek-Spartz ('09) and Mike Turek ('08) in Discussion. Jungwirth/Czaplewski and Turek were section finalists. With a large group of speakers returning next year, the 2009 season looks very promising!

Cotter Choir

Cotter's choir program had a stellar year. Two Cotter students had the honor of being the featured soloists at the HVL All-Conference Honors Music Concert. The Concert Choir earned three out of three "superior" ratings at the Large Group Music Contest. During the Solo Ensemble Music Contest, Cotter vocalists received four out of four "best in site" awards.



Above: HVL Honor Choir (Front L-R) Sarah Deering, Barb Bruner, Gillian Rendahl (Back L-R) Karl Butenhoff, David Skeels, Beau Brackey, and Tim Olstad.

Below: Music Listening competitors Ryan Chae, Charlotte Inman, and Maria Ustavalkova.



Cotter's production of Joseph and the Amazing Technical Dream Coat certainly ranked as one of our finest, selling out at all three performances.

Cotter Excellence

2008 Awards Day



Gillian Rendahl
Cotter Student of the Year

Freshman Boy of the Year: John Schwend
Freshman Girl of the Year: Kelsey Whaley
Sophomore Boy of the Year: Jackson Penning
Sophomore Girl of the Year: Mary Horton
Junior Boy of the Year: Tyler Speltz
Junior Girl of the Year: Rachel Jungwirth
Senior Boy of the Year: Jacob DeMarais
Senior Girl of the Year: Caitlin Bambenek
Cotter Student of the Year: Gillian Rendahl



Senior Girl of the Year
Caitlyn Bambenek



Senior Boy of the Year
Jacob DeMarais

Below: John Leaf Memorial Male Athletes of the Year Award- Patrick Bowlin & Donny Wasinger.
 Paul Gardner Memorial Female Athlete of the Year Award- Jenny Gilbertson
 Jim Mohan Sportsmanship Award - Andrew Wolfe and Laura Erickson



12th grade Cotter Award Winners

Patrick Bowlin
 Dong-Bin Lee
 Stephanie Smith
 Mike Turek
 Leonides Victoria
 Donny Wasinger

11th grade Cotter Award Winners

Kirsten Czaplewski
 Sam Forney
 Lindy Kramer
 Kyle Marek-Spartz
 John McGrory
 Laura Nicklay
 Whitney Wisecup
 LinFeng Yang

Right: James J. Carroll Memorial Music Award
 Jacob DeMarais
 John Phillips Sousa Band Award
 Emily Sharpe



10th Grade Cotter Award Winners

Lexi Burnikel
 Nicole Kirkvold
 Ben Mahlke
 Scott Malotka
 Sam Werle



Left: Senior Choir Award Winners
 (L-R) Sarah Deering, Tim Olstad, and
 Gillian Rendahl.

9th Grade Cotter Award Winners

Lydia Feuerhelm
 Greg Gernes
 Becca Rettkowski
 Nivedita Singh
 Emily Skeels

Veritatem Vereantur



On Sunday June 1st, the Cotter Class of 2008 graduated in commencement ceremonies held at Saint Mary's University. The ceremony began with a Baccalaureate Mass presided by Fr. Rick Colletti. The senior class voted Mr. Frank Smith as faculty commencement speaker. In addition, Class Salutatorian, Ben Lee and Class Speaker Rory Biezanz offered words of reflection, vision, and advice to the class as they look forward to a exciting new adventure.

Once A Rambler... Always A Rambler





Liza Bambenek '95 pictured with "No Country For Old Men" star Javier Bardem

Liza Bambenek '95

Winona native makes Hollywood name for herself

By Cynthia Porter - Winona Post

In film industry terms, one glance at Liza Bambenek's resume proves that she is living "The Dream." The 1995 Cotter graduate worked on the film crews for Academy Award winners "No Country For Old Men" and "The Departed," as well as a host of America's favorite movies and TV shows, and in some ways, she said, it is every bit as thrilling as one might think.

Coffee with the Coen brothers. Dinner with Francis McDormand. Elbow rubbing with the likes of Woody Harrelson, Martin Scorsese, Jack Nicholson, Leonardo DiCaprio and on and on and on.

As a moving image art major at the College of Santa Fe, it was and is the life that Bambenek and every film student in the world dreams of, and the path that led her there wasn't as difficult as she expected.

That path, Bambenek said, amounts to fortuitous choices in her first days out of college, when she headed for New York City to work on a small project and then for free on a few small films just to bolster her resume. "The film industry is kind of a small industry," she said. "I know that sounds crazy, but at some time you're going to work alongside people who are going to make it. When I did films for free I happened to work for free next to the right people."

Bambenek, daughter of Jim and Nancy Bambenek, calls it a stroke of luck that her early hard work caused her name to get circulated as people she worked with moved up the film ladder. "My name got passed along a chain of really wonderful people," she said. "There have been a few moments in my career when I said, 'Wow, I feel extremely lucky to have had this path lead me up to this.' The short version of that is, it's who you know." Bambenek said she also gave her career a boost by foregoing Hollywood or New York and settling back in New Mexico, where lucrative government incentives bring an inordinate number of films to the

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region to shoot. Directors look for local professionals like Bambenek to work on the crews, and it has created a boom of work both in the state and for Bambenek. "I have a Hollywood job and live in a beautiful place," she said. But the idea of

Hollywood glamour is really a myth in the film business, Bambenek said, with endless days and sometimes excruciating conditions the norm rather than the exception.

For "No Country," in which many of the scenes of the movie take place at night, Bambenek spent a month straight going to work at five p.m. and working all night long. On other projects, the crew would be up by three A.M. to shoot a sunrise, routinely working 16-hour days that sometimes stretched to over 20. "You're kind of at the mercy of the story," she said. It's the payoff of fancy

Hollywood movie making. "If I went to work for 12 hours a day I'd be really, really excited about that. For all the cool romantic fantasy stories about movie making there are as many mornings at three A.M. in the

pouring rain. I have a love-hate relationship with the film industry because of it."

On the set with the Coen brothers, Bambenek said, life

shooting a film was as good as it could get. The men are nice, she said, and personable, and liked to chat with her because they are also from Minnesota. But "as good as it could get" also meant coming home most every night grimy with dirt caked under her fingernails from the remote desert locations they shot at, weary to the bone and with

precious few hours before she had to go back and do it again. At the end of each day, Bambenek said, each crew member gets a call sheet for the next day's schedule. What time that day will start or even where she will be are usually a mystery, and shooting

schedules like that often last for months. The reason there are hundreds of people on a film crew, Bambenek said, is because making a film is like building the pyramids. Roads only go so far into those perfect settings you see on the screen in the cinema, so semi-trucks haul gear as far as they can, then it is transferred to pickup trucks, then ATVs, then wagons, and then the equipment is carried by hand. And that is day after day for three months or more.

Lenses can weigh up to 70 pounds each, other equipment more, and a viewer in the theater can't begin to imagine what it took to get some shots. For every beautiful panoramic of a valley, it

probably took 20 guys to haul a crane up the hill to get the shot. "Then the director changes his mind and you have to haul it up a different hill instead," said Bambenek.

"Sometimes you don't finish one scene for two weeks. That's why films take so long to make."



But the end result, Bambenek well understands, is magic, and crews form tight bonds and take collective pride when their films do well in the box office and with critics. "I don't claim any fame at all but I'm certainly proud of being part of something that is recognized," she said. "Even when you don't win an award, you're like, oh my God, I'm working with the Coen brothers."

It was a love of movies that first drew Bambenek to study the craft of shooting films. "The reason I got into movies was being swept away by a story. I love to go to the movies, especially to a matinee when I'm the only person in the theater. The big screen takes up your whole imagination," she said.

Even so, being behind the scenes on so many films has rubbed away a little of the magic.

"Sometimes you wish you didn't know how it all worked," she admitted. "I'll still have the emotional response, but then I'll



think, ‘Wow, they must have worked hard to get that shot.’”

Seeing movies she worked on is even more surreal. “The first time I go see a movie I worked on I think, ‘Oh, that’s the day the truck broke down, and that’s when we had to float equipment across the river on a raft,” she said. It takes a second viewing to truly appreciate the story that for months became obliterated in the business of making the film.

And there is something deeply satisfying about the times when in casual conversation someone asks, “Oh, did you see that movie?” and Bambenek thinks to herself, “I helped make that movie.” But for all its recognition and reward to be part of a film crew, it takes an exacting toll on personal relationships while a film is underway.

Over the years Bambenek has formed close friendships with many people in the industry, in part from the many long hours they spent working together on projects. But for her friends or personal relationships not in the film industry, it’s almost like Bambenek simply drops off the face of the earth for months at a time. “My friends in the industry get it, but it’s difficult to explain to people not in it, that this is something they should want in their lives. Things and people in your life have to accept that your life is the most inconsistent thing on the planet.”

Bambenek knows her career has cost her relationships, and she wonders about the point when she may want to have a lasting relationship and start a family. At this point, she joked, she wouldn’t even be able to keep a pet alive. “It’s not all convertibles and celebrities,” she said. “Now I’m 31 years old at the point of trying to consider if the payoff that I get from these experiences once every three years is worth the tradeoff.”

Bambenek is exploring her creative side, and thinking about ways to balance a work schedule in the film industry with other efforts that satisfy her in different ways. She has a little art show of her photographs in a Santa Fe restaurant, and some of her proudest projects are the films that carried an important message, perhaps even bringing about change.

Fortunately, as her success on film crews has grown, so too have her offers and her ability to be selective about how much and on what she’d like to work. “I can work for three months and take three months off if I want to and there is enough money in the bank,” she said. “I have the liberty to decide when I’m working, but then when I’m working, I’m working.”

And for Bambenek, who is where film school graduates today dream of being, there is no shortage of work coming her direction if she chooses to take it. At this point in her career, Bambenek said she feels fortunate to have production managers calling her to see if she’d like to join a crew, and she feels truly blessed that this path has allowed her to love the films that she has worked on. “For me it never felt like chasing down a paycheck, but chasing down great projects,” said Bambenek.

Not long ago, Bambenek got another one of those phone calls.

Would she like to go to Rome and another location for a few months to shoot the sequel to the Da Vinci Code, the production manager asked? “I said, ‘Wow, that sounds fantastic!’ But then I thought, do I really want to do that right now?” It’s a blessing to be asked, Bambenek said, and an even bigger blessing to be able to choose.



Reunion Updates

2008 Reunion Contacts and Dates

<u>Year</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Reunion Date</u>
1948	Phil Feiten & Ed Kohner	September 26 - 27, 2008
1953	Ginny Kulig	September 2008
1958	Carole Wooden	October 10-11, 2008
1968	Mary (Williams) Bamebenk	October 10-11, 2008
1978	John (J.P) Plachecki	TBD
1983	Mark Waldorf	October 3-5, 2008
1993	Heidi Wisniewski & Nancy Judy	Cancelled
2003	Leah Troke	September 13, 2008

Class of 1955...

Chuck Vaughan and Jack Tomaskek have volunteered to provide a newsletter for **1955 grads** in preparation for their 55th reunion. Further information can be obtained by writing to Chuck at:

W276N1606 Spring Creek Drive
Pewaukee, WI 53072
or by email at: vaughance@juno.com

Class of 1966...

The **Class of '66** celebrated turning 60 at a "group birthday party" that was held in Winona for all class members this summer on July 18th and 19th. It was a two evening affair with a pizza/river party the first night and a "birthday party" the second night. Happy 60th Birthday class of '66!



The smiling class of 1999 celebrated their 10 year class reunion on June 21st, 2008. They reported that a fun time was had by all!

Alumni Spotlight

Jeff Glowacki '85

Graduation Year: 1985

College Attended: USC (BS- Int'l Finance) & UCLA (MBA- Finance)

Family: Mary and Jaxson (two year old son); Brothers: Rich '82 and Jim '84

Where you currently live: Los Angeles

Current Occupation: Managing Director, Bessemer Trust (NY based

Investment Management firm)

How Cotter helped prepare you for this career or life after high school: Taught me how to lead a balanced life and move to someplace warm. Snow in April??? C'mon...

Activities involved in at Cotter: basketball, football, track, golf, Nat'l Honor Society, & the MPU (Co-chairs Hugh Costello/Chris Gardner).

Favorite Cotter Teacher: Dan Shrake, who knew Latin could be made so fun. "Brevior saltare cum deformibus mulieribus est vita"

Favorite Cotter Memory: Despite some athletic achievements, my finest Cotter hour comes from the world of academia. I was fortunate enough to play basketball and golf my senior year under the best basketball coach I ever had, Mike O'Brien. He doubled as my English teacher. Coach OB implemented a spelling/vocabulary contest in which he administered weekly exams to all students in our grade. He tracked/posted all scores outside his office while keeping a running total so he could crown Cotter's first ever spelling/vocabulary champ. It was a very competitive and spirited contest that climaxed in a dead heat between Pam (Polus) Stockhausen, Kevin Mulrone (class Valedictorian), and myself. Coach was forced to up the ante going into the final exam week to decide a victor. In a sign of his fortitude and righteousness, he had correctly deducted a point from each of my combatants scores while leaving mine unblemished and rightfully crowned me the champion (circa 1985). I still well up thinking back on the moment.

Interesting fact since graduating from Cotter: I can be seen on the season finale of the TV show Scrubs every year and yes John Holien, I can still dunk in my 40's.



Jeff pictured with adorable son Jaxson

Tell Us Who...



See Page 19 for last issue's identification and winner

Back in this issue of Ramblins is our "Tell Us Who..." contest. If you can identify at least two of the folks in this picture from the Rambler archives, your name will be placed in a drawing for a great Cotter prize!! We'll ID the photo and announce the winner in our next issue of Ramblin's. Good luck!

Send your answers to:

Ramblin's "Tell Us Who..." Contest

Attn: Megan Strange

1115 W Broadway

Winona, MN 55987

Alumni Updates



1



2



3

1940's

Phil Feiten ('48) and **Barbara Bittner Owecke ('50)** were married on May 24, 2008 and are living in Winona.

Michael J. Galvin Jr. ('48), a shareholder in the firm of Briggs and Morgan, Professional Association, received The Northern Star Boy Scout Council 2007 Distinguished Community Builder Award. The Distinguished Community Builder Award was given to Galvin in response to his outstanding leadership and thoughtful guidance as a true builder of a wide range of community educational, youth and legal organizations—and his contributions as a community leader. He received a standing ovation at the June 25, 2007, celebration and fund-raiser for the Northern Star Council's Exploring Program. Galvin has been involved with scouting for many years and has formerly served as chair of the board of directors for the St. Paul-based Indian-head Council, one of two councils that merged in 2005 to form today's Northern Star Council. He has also been active with the co-ed scout exploring program for several years. **1**

1950's

Mary Edel Beyer ('50) is listed in Marquis Who's Who in the World 2008, 25th Edition. She currently holds many offices and positions in the Winona community.

Carl Troke ('53) and his wife Bonnie celebrated their 51st anniversary on October 20, 2007. They are the proud grandparents of 9 grandchildren.

Carol (Breza) Wooden ('58) and her husband **Bob ('57)** enjoyed a wonderful trip to western National Parks in September 2007 and welcomed their 13th grandchild in February 2008.

1960's

Nancy Neumann ('60) retired from Little Company of Mary Hospital, after working 42 years as a CNA. She will become an Associate of Little Company of Mary Sisters. She will be commissioned on December 7.

Judi (Rozek) Lindahl ('63) retired in September 2007, after 14 years as Executive Assistant to the Head of School at Brook-

field Academy in Brookfield, Wisconsin. Judi moved back to Dubuque, Iowa, to be closer to children and grandchildren.

Chris (Mertes) Antoff ('65) recently retired after 23 years with Home Federal Savings Bank.

Annette Kaufman ('68) is happy to announce that her daughter, Marielle Alana Mohs, attended Benilde-St. Margaret this school year.

1970's

Dorian Colvin ('71) was recognized by "Who's Who Among American Teachers" for 2006-2007.

Marilee Barrientos ('74) celebrated 30 years with the County Attorney's Office in January 2008.

1980's

Joseph Kaehler ('80) is employed by the City of Morgantown's Parks and Recreation Commission as the manager of the Metropolitan Theatre in Morgantown, West Virginia. The "Met" is a fully restored, 900 seat theatre that is host to plays, concerts, and community events. Joe is responsible for all operational aspects of the "Met" and for him, it is a dream job! Joe and his wife Pam, a health care administrator, have been married 21 years and have three children, Alexzandra (12), Zachary (11), and Patrick (9), two dogs, and three cats.

Deborah (Crawford) Beach ('82) and her husband Bill celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary along with some dear friends with a trip to Kauai and missed the snowstorm of the century!

Patrick Mullen ('88) and wife Sandra, were blessed with twin boys, Jack Harvey and Ryan Benton, born at Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage, AK on July 19th, 2007. The twins were also welcomed by their sister Nicole (4) and brother Alex (2). Proud grandparents are Floyd and Joan Mullen and Bob and Stella White.

Alumni Updates



1990's

Josh Bengfort ('92) and Kristin Wirgler were married on January 18, 2008 at Lake Tahoe, California.

Aaron Repinski ('92) has achieved the professional level of Master Hypnotist. He owns Hypnotic Solutions of MN, a hypnotherapy business, and travels the United States performing stage shows. Aaron and his wife Michelle live in Lewiston, MN, and have two children: River Repinski, born in 2005 and Dominique Elam, born in 1993.

Cullen Sheehan ('93) is campaign manager for Sen. Norm Coleman's re-election campaign. He lives in Cambridge, MN. **5**

Angela (Vogel) Daley ('94) and her husband Chuck welcomed their first child Nathaniel Henry Daley on Saturday, April 12, 2008. Angie, Chuck, and Nathaniel live in Charlotte, NC, where Angie works for the Charlotte Observer. **3**

Amber (Boehmke) Tritabaugh ('94) and her husband Jason welcomed their fourth child, Scarlett Olivia, on August 28, 2007, and will celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary in October. Amber is a corporate and securities paralegal with the Maslon Law Firm in Minneapolis, and Jason is a systems analyst for Hennepin County Medical Center.

Monique Kierlin-Duncan ('94) was married in 2006 to Brent Duncan. She earned her Ph.D. in Genetics from Duke in 2007 and is currently doing HIV research in Atlanta, Georgia.

Sarah Hively-Johnson ('94) and Jamie Chesler were married on June 21, 2008, in a lovely ceremony at the Big River Room in Winona, MN. Many family members and friends joined in celebrating Sarah and Jamie's day including the Cotter Alums pictured above (L-R) Ben Fratzke, Barb Zanzig, Megan Strange ('94), Alyssa (Gostomski) Carter ('94), Sarah (Hively-Johnson) Chesler ('94), Jamie Chesler, Jeremy Wilzbacher ('93), Erin (Moen) Hopkins ('94), Samantha Murray ('94), and Matt (Chinske) Pronchinske ('94). **6**

Justin Barrientos ('94) and Marie Plaskett's daughter Karianna shows her Cotter pride in her "Future Cotter Rambler" t-shirt. Karianna will turn 2 in October. Justin works for HBC in Winona where he is the Productions Operations Coordinator. **4**

Andrew Baechler ('95) and Ben Baechler ('95) were featured on the cover of the November 2007 issue of *Minnesota Business Magazine*.

Mary Eileen (Costello) Fitch ('95) and her husband, Dan, welcomed a new daughter, Lucy Kathleen, on July 3, 2007.

Anthony Piscitiello ('96) will be starting a new job as Director of Alumni & Community Relations at LaSalle Academy—an all-boys Catholic high school run by the DeLaSalle Christian Brothers since 1848 in NYC.

Beth Byron ('97) is working for Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) going into schools and educating the students about clean energy.

Amy Burns ('98) and Brian Flug were married on June 29, 2007 in Chippewa Falls, WI. They recently bought a house in Chippewa Falls. Amy graduated from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse in 2004 with a Masters in Physical Therapy and is currently practicing in a sports medicine clinic.

Ryan Flynn ('98) is a faculty member in the Radiation Oncology Department at the University of Iowa. He married Fran Haas on June 3, 2006.

Gretchen Heaser ('98) graduated from the University of WI Stevens Point with a Bachelors Degree in Wildlife, minor in Biology. Currently based out of Hinckley MN at St. Croix state park, the largest state park in MN, Gretchen enjoys a variety of tasks in her position from prescribed burning, writing management plans, to invasive species control.

Andy Wojciechowski ('98) and his wife Megan moved into their first home on October 31, 2007.

Annalise M. Nawrocki ('99) has completed her first year of work toward a doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology. She received her bachelor's degree in molecular biology and genetics from Northwestern University in 2003. Annalise has also worked at Prescott Medical Communications Group in Chicago as a medical writer and senior account executive. **7**



2000's

Valerie (Lubinsky) Bakke ('01) and her husband Matthew had their 2nd child, Nora Jean Bakke on June 11, 2007. She was born at Douglas County Hospital in Alexandria MN. Grandparents are Doug and Marty Bakke and Leo and Joyce Lubinsky. Their first child, Eland Viking Bakke, is 3 (8/30/04).

Katie Farr ('01) married Joel Reed on June 2, 2007 at St. Mary's Church in Winona, Minnesota. Katie and Joel are both employed at Technigraph, and live in Minnesota City.

Katherine (Vogel) Rothering ('02) and her husband Cody welcomed a son, Brody William Rothering on Feb. 25, 2007. Katherine works on the labor and delivery unit at Community Memorial Hospital in Winona.

Chris Shea ('03) competed in the 2007 Ford Ironman Wisconsin race. The race consists of 2.4 miles of swimming, 112 miles of biking, and 26.2 miles of running. Chris finished in the top 1% in swimming, the top 60% in biking and the top 80% in running. He finished the race in 11 hours, 43 minutes and 52 seconds, #485 overall, out of 2209 finishers. Chris is currently working as a State of Wisconsin Park Ranger in the Wisconsin Dells area.

Zach Grusznski ('04) has been selected to play guitar in the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Student Honors Recital for the third consecutive year.

Jess Weisbrod ('04) finished a successful basketball career at Saint Mary's University. For the second straight year, Jess earned First-Team All-MIAC honors.

Cliff Kaehler ('07) and his family's farm, Kaehler's Homedale Farm, earned two national championship titles during the Simmental show at the 2008 National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado. K-LER Sweetness earned the titles of Champion Junior Simmental heifer and Overall Champion Simmental heifer. K-LER Sweetness was bred and raised by Cliff and Seth Kaehler. This heifer is the only Simmental in recent history to win both the Junior and the Open shows. **2**

Emma Napieralski ('07) attained Dean's List honors in her first semester at the Carlson School of Management-University of Minnesota.

Once a Rambler... Always a Rambler!



Chris Cichosz ('95), Heather (Wilma) Lande ('99), Sister Daniel Marie Kukowski ('55), Mike Gostomski ('58) and Dr. Craig Junker join in celebrating Mike's accomplishments at the 2008 Alumni Career Day celebration.

This past January, Cotter proudly honored Cotter Alum, Michael Gostomski, class of 1958, with the Fourth Annual Cotter **Alumni Achievement Award**. Mike was selected for his devotion to his family, faith, profession, heritage, and to Cotter and Catholic education.

Cotter Alumna and Director of Advancement, Megan Strange ('94) offers, "Mike is definitely someone our students can look up to. He's a role model as a family man, a community member, a business person, and he genuinely demonstrates what it means to give of yourself to help others."

The Cotter Alumni Achievement Award is presented in conjunction with the Cotter Alumni Career Day which welcomes back Alumni to share their career and life experiences with its students. Mike Donal O'Callaghan, class of 1946 and two-term Governor of Nevada were honored in 2005. Robert Kierlin, class of 1957, Founder of Fastenal, The Hiawatha Education Foundation and former Minnesota State Senator was honored in 2006, and Father Paul Breza, class of 1955, devoted Catholic priest and preservationist of Winona's strong Polish Heritage, was honored in 2007.

For more information about the Alumni Achievement Award or if you would like to nominate a Cotter Alum for this honor, please visit the alumni pages of the Cotter website at www.cotterschools.org or contact the Advancement Office at 507-453-5100 or email development@winonacotter.org.

Nominations for the 2009 Alumni Achievement Award are due by October 31, 2008.

Send Us Your Address Updates, News & Photos!

We would love to hear from you!

Let us know how you are doing and what you are up to by updating your contact information and submitting your news to the Alumni Office.

Don't forget the pictures... wedding photos, family, and vacation pictures... we would love to see them! You can email your updates, news, and photos to

development@winonacotter.org or visit the Alumni pages of the Cotter Website www.cotterschools.org. Feel free to contact us anytime at 507-453-5000 ext. 5132.

5th Annual Cotter Athletic Hall of Fame

Cotter High School is excited to announce the 5th class of inductees to the Cotter Athletic Hall of Fame. The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to celebrate past successes of athletes and coaches who have demonstrated excellence at Cotter. The Hall of Fame Committee, has selected the following people for the fifth class of inductees. Congratulations to: Cheryl (Vogel) Barker ('87), Pat Bowlin, Amy (Burns) Flug ('98), Jack Lawrence ('51) and Randy Lisowski ('69). These athletes, coaches, and their families will be recognized at a banquet in their honor on Saturday, October 11, 2008, in the Hiawatha Room located at 360 Vila Street on the Cotter campus. For ticket information please call 507-453-5000 ext. 5132 or email: development@winonacotter.org

Mark Your Calendar...

August 25	First Day of School
September 8	CCMP/James Devine Golf Tournament
October 3	Cotter Homecoming
October 8-24	Cotter Phonoathon
October 11	Cotter Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony
November 5	Grandparent's Day
November 7-8	Cotter Fall Musical
December 22-January 2	Christmas Break
January 26-30	Catholic Schools Week
January 29	Alumni & Career Day/Alumni Achievement Award
March 23-27	Spring Break
April 25	30th Annual Cotter Auction
May 31	Cotter Baccalureate Mass and Graduation

The Ramblin's Staff

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